



# Merewether Surfhouse

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erewether Beach Pavilion originally occupied the Newcastle site providing facilities for swimmers since 1937. Unfortunately, it had been allowed to deteriorate

to the point where the structure was deemed unfit for use and was demolished prior to our involvement.

“The new three-storey building was designed by Crone Partners. The building is glazed between cantilevered concrete decks with a lapped timber front. Our firm, CO-AP, was commissioned by the venue operators to design the interiors for all three levels. We wished to offer a formal yet relaxed Surfhouse experience with a unique character of its own place.

“There are different tiers of dining, each with a different experience—barefoot at the base and formal above. The top floor offers fine dining with access across a bridge at street level. To the right is the restaurant and to the left is a bar where you might wait for a table or just enjoy a drink. The bar leads to a balcony deck for a more relaxed outdoor lunch. As the customers move from the entrance towards the restaurant, bar or terrace, the expansive view unfolds in a filmic fashion.

“Two intersecting double-barrel forms separate the two zones; 81,000 wine bottle corks were hand glued onto these forms. This texture looks fantastic and acts as an acoustic baffle between the more noisy bar area and the quieter restaurant.

“The middle level contains the function rooms. The floorplan is very flexible with movable acoustic wall panels able to be positioned into seven different space configurations.

“The lowest level on the promenade contains the cafe, kiosk,

*When designing the establishment in Newcastle, New South Wales, Tina Engelen of CO-AP Architects knew how much customers like to walk in with sand on their feet*

storage and service areas. The kiosk serves takeaway beach food and was recently changed to include a Piz-za & Gelato Bar. Here, we introduced green fishscale tiles on the

bar front, ‘Chi Chi’ pendants, ‘Aalto’ stools for Artek matched with tabletops in gelato colours. This and the larger cafe are the sort of places where you are welcome inside with sand on your feet.

“Timber, aluminium and polypropylene furniture was selected throughout to avoid corrosion from salt spray. Function and comfort were paramount, with perforations and open-weave materials selected to allow for filtered views. ‘Hoffman’ dining chairs for Thonet with woven cane backs give a beach feel, while ‘Hiroshima’ dining armchairs for Maruni add a touch of sophistication to the dowelled rear banquette.

“The oversized, colourful curved lounge in the bar was custom designed by CO-AP to form a walled corner with a gaggle of Maruni ‘Hiroshima’ stools, ‘Float’ poufs for Paola Lenti and low-height teak bar tables tucked inside.

“Externally, we mixed ‘Schultz 1966’ armchairs and Knoll twin lounges in white mesh on cast aluminium frames with Knoll ‘Spark’ dining and lounge chairs [all available from Dedecce, [www.dedecce.com](http://www.dedecce.com)] to evoke sitting on deck while sailing.

“We think the Merewether Surfhouse signage on the outside of the building is beautiful. Designed by our friend Mary Libro of Feeder Communications, the triangular form references the lifesaving flag and immediately makes you think of the beach. We instantly loved it. She also designed the menus, staff badges and cafe wallpaper with repeat triangular motif.” ○

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