



# MoVida AQUI



*Architect Adam Dettrick took the bull by the horns—producing the third interpretation of Melbourne’s Spanish-inspired MoVida restaurants*

“**T**he original MoVida and MoVida Nextdoor were very successful and after a couple of years, the opportunity came up for a much bigger venue. [Restaurateur/chef] Frank Camorra decided it was time to expand as the other restaurants were so overbooked.

“I started working on this building in 2008 and the restaurant opened in November 2009. It was a new building—still in construction—so we got the opportunity to change a few things to suit the restaurant. For instance, we added openable louvres down the side of the building where we introduced some dry bars facing north.

“The idea was to bring that MoVida identity but reinterpret it slightly. There’s a strong tradition of guerrilla art that MoVida identifies with but it didn’t seem right spraying graffiti on a brand new building.

“So we introduced a milk-crate installation in the restaurant, including the milk-crate light fitting over the bar. I’d discovered underground artists who build things out of milk crates—basically people—and hang them around train stations and places like that. We also used all sorts of things from the MoVida movement in Spain, bringing plenty of colour to the interior.

“The restaurant is 350 square metres and seats about 170 people. There’s a back-of-house area but the main kitchen is open. We use the kitchen and bar to really activate the restaurant. It has a very vibrant feel; there’s so much action happening there.

“When it came to the kitchen design, there was a lot of input from Frank and the team. The chefs spend 10 hours a day in the kitchen, so it’s a bit much for an architect to say you should put your pan rack over there rather than over here. It’s really just making sure you have a good dialogue with the staff that use the kitchen. I’m very fortunate that Frank was the chef and owner of the business. He is very hands-on, as are all his head chefs.

“Lighting was very important at MoVida AQUI. We designed all our own lighting, capturing that beautiful uniform and industrial ambience. Frank wanted a warm interior and at the same time, he wanted that edgy feel. So we used fluorescent battens hanging from the

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ceiling on raw steel sections. Then we added our own diffusers—acrylic diffusers that hang as blades on either side of the light. They look great and are quite economical.

“I did get to go to Spain, checking out various tapas bars. I also helped MoVida select the furniture for the restaurant, with pieces from SuperStudio in Barcelona ([www.superstudio.com](http://www.superstudio.com)). The fitout provided a really good level of decoration but Frank and his team personalised it by adding artwork. We set aside areas where they could hang paintings in the future, and the lighting is all set up for this as well.

“One day MoVida might make the leap to Sydney. They need to find the right spot, in the right area, in the right building. So far, the planets haven’t aligned appropriately, but we’ll keep you posted.” ○

WORDS: KERRYN RAMSEY PHOTOGRAPHY: TREVOR MIEN