

Media release

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A Melbourne CBD icon is reborn with the launch of Garden State Hotel by Technē Architecture + Interior Design

Opening in mid-July, Garden State Hotel will be a superb, purpose-built four-storey bar and hospitality venue at 95 Flinders Lane. Many Melbournians will remember the address as the former location of iconic '80s and '90s hospitality venue Rosati, then a beacon for the city's social set.

The venue is owned and will be operated by Sand Hill Road, the hospitality group behind a string of successful high-end pubs including Bridge Hotel, Richmond Club Hotel, Terminus Hotel and Prahran Hotel. As with the reinvention of these iconic venues, Sand Hill Road has once again partnered with Technē Architecture + Interior Design to unveil its most ambitious project yet, Garden State Hotel.

Technē has completely rebuilt the venue while preserving its distinctive exterior, itself a heritage Victorian era building that began life as a textile mill in 1896. The Technē design centres on a large multi-level beer garden, a startling oasis in the middle of the CBD's network of laneways. Reflecting this verdant theme, the name Garden State Hotel borrows Victoria's century-old state title, 'The Garden State'.

Technē director Justin Northrop describes the project, built by Schiavello Constructions, as an unprecedented opportunity to reinvigorate a substantial CBD site for the hospitality sector.

"Within the Melbourne CBD this is probably no other hospitality venue, based on the spirit of a pub, that offers a comparable variety of spaces and experiences under the one roof," Northrop says.

The hugely ambitious 2000 square-metre project, with a capacity for 840 guests, preserves much of the original textile factory's sawtooth roof while opening its central bays to form a terraced beer garden that has the feel of a Victorian conservatory, a hidden botanical haven to be explored.

Technē is a leader in the architectural design of innovative new generation pubs. The studio has created its own vision for what these spaces can be, a complete overhaul of the traditional constraints of the older typology. Where historically pubs were male-dominated spaces, with a more singular sports and beer culture, today they have evolved to become a sophisticated part of the hospitality sector.

The contemporary architecturally designed pub is a versatile space, with different rooms and areas to support varied audiences and functions. Technē imbues these diverse spaces with intriguing interconnections and a sense of exploration for their guests. While a front bar is still likely to be a vibrant



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community watering hole, bespoke dining areas and beautiful private function rooms create opportunities where the pub now services the entire hospitality spectrum, from casual get togethers to finer dining and corporate events.

The other important trend that Technē's new style of pub is the return to treating hospitality venues as an extension of domestic space. With more and more urban residents living in medium and high-density dwellings, many people are choosing to entertain their friends in pubs. Creating spaces that are warm, welcoming and intriguing, with unique architectural details and design, plays a critical role in this trend of making spaces that contemporary city dwellers can effectively use as their own living rooms.

Technē concentrates on providing vibrant, friendly and liveable pub architecture that meets these needs. This happens in close consultation with its clients, and it often is achieved with some of the smaller touches that follow behind the main architectural design. Using its interior design services Technē works together with clients such as Sand Hill Group to choose the finer details of décor and ornament, the perfecting touches that make or break a new venue as somewhere people want to go or not.

What Garden State Hotel has in common with Technē and Sand Hill Road's earlier projects is the dynamism of its various internal spaces. Technē's design for Garden State Hotel links vertically integrated spaces across four levels, encouraging a sense of exploration and movement throughout the venue.

As well as the multi-level beer garden at its heart, the project involved the creation of a street level public bar at the front of the site and a five-level structure (four of which are open to the public) at the rear. The sophisticated Technē design creates a flow between spaces diverse in function, capacity and architectural inspiration.

The New York-inspired Garden Grill will be the venue's main dining area and also features the Raw Bar, serving Melbourne's freshest seafood. The basement-level Rose Garden is an intimate cocktail bar with chandeliers, eclectic antique wall décor and giant rose motifs hand-painted by local artisans. Other spaces include the Balcony Dining Room, for small group bookings, and The Observatory on the second floor, the venue's premier functions space, which will hold up to 120 people in a light-filled room with views onto both the garden below and the city outside.

Justin Northrop says his firm's established relationship with Sand Hill Road made working on the complex project a fluid undertaking.

"We are able to work effortlessly with Sand Hill Road, having developed effective communication, trust and understanding over a number of years. For Garden State Hotel, together we explored planning diagrams in three dimensional models because the vertical connection between spaces is so critical to encourage patrons to move throughout the whole venue," he says.



Sand Hill Road director Matt Mullins says they had been looking for a CBD site for a long time and were thrilled to secure the Rosati location, a place he and his partners remembered fondly. Today, the site is bordered by the rechristened AC/DC Lane and Duckboard Place, at the centre of a hospitality culture that is more vibrant than ever.

“In our travels, we’ve learnt that Melbourne is world-renowned for two things: its laneways and its incredible gardens. The laneway bit was covered – we’re slap-bang between four of the most famous laneways on earth. But our pocket of the CBD is seriously short of gardens. We wanted to provide a lush oasis for busy city workers and residents surrounded by the concrete jungle. Technē and builders Schiavello Constructions delivered that for us, and I have to say the results are amazing,” Mullins says.

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