

Hotel Profile

The Astor Hotel, Goulburn

The Astor's Attic makes a big impression

Goulburn's Astor Hotel has just unveiled a sophisticated and versatile new space for functions which is turning heads and quickly booking out for live bands, weddings, parties and the like.

Located on the first floor of the Astor Hotel, *The Attic* is a perfect combination of old and new elements which work together to create a warm and inviting space for people to interact in.

"With *The Attic*, we wanted to create unique, flexible spaces that could comfortably accommodate different types of functions," said hotel manager Sean Griffiths.

"Being in a smaller community, you have to be flexible, so this new space has the ability to cater to multiple functions at any given time, or one large event."

The Griffiths family have owned the Astor for some time now and *The Attic* is the final stage in the hotel's transformation. No stranger to the ins-and-outs of the industry and customer satisfaction, Griffiths has worked hard at keeping the hotel fresh and appealing to his clientele. It ticks all the right boxes – 40 accommodation rooms, quality food and beverage facilities, outdoor and designated smoking areas and now top-notch function spaces.

Once the name and branding for *The Attic* were developed, Griffiths appointed SoCo Creative to refurbish the first floor venue, having worked together on another of the family's hotels. Headed by Odile Chauvet,


SoCo's team of talented interior design professionals took Griffiths' brief and brought the space to life.

"The concept of discarded and inanimate objects that would typically be found in storage, was the inspiration behind *The Attic*," Chauvet told *Hotel News*.

"As the branding had already been developed, the design itself needed to incorporate elements representative to that of pieces that had been lying around, aged and unused.

"With this in mind, they are featured with *The Attic's* design."

From the moment patrons climb the theatrically-lit staircase and enter *The Attic*, they are met with a bespoke, 3D mural designed by Dear Henri and eye-



The Attic is a unique, flexible space on the hotel's first floor, accommodating different types of functions and events.

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catching objects hanging from the ceiling including antique ladders and watering cans. The hanging elements and the dark, opulent curtains have been used to break-up what is normally one large space into a collaboration of contemporary and vintage elements, adding depth and privacy at the same time.

Watering cans with cascading ivy are suspended over the bar area which has remained in its original location. The custom-designed wallpaper is made of old newspaper articles from the sports section of the *Goulburn Post* and the custom pendant lights which hang over the dining area have been made from crab pots.

Reflecting the raw, industrial feel of the space, polished concrete flooring is teamed with the existing exposed brick walls and custom-designed carpets by Korda Design. *The Attic's* branding has also been integrated into the furniture and floor, as well as in the stairs up to the first floor.

"By maintaining the bar in its original location, polishing the existing flooring and incorporating pre-loved items, we have added character whilst bringing the space to life," Chauvet explained.

"We explored different avenues during this project and cleverly used sustainable and cost-effective solutions to contribute to the feel of the space without compromising on the intent of the design, as well as building upon the idiosyncrasies of the original building."

The lighting scheme, which was created by Malaya Blonde, is warm, moody and dramatic and very much creates an eerie, attic feel. In keeping with the whole 'attic' feel, Malaya Blonde set out to create a lighting scheme which is warm, moody and dramatic.

Blanket lighting was avoided and the lighting is very much focused on the design's feature elements and finishes. Accent lighting grazing onto specific features like the hanging water cans and quirky wall-mounted artefacts contributes to the general ambience of the space in an indirect manner, as well as creating dramatic shadowing onto the surrounding floor and wall surfaces.

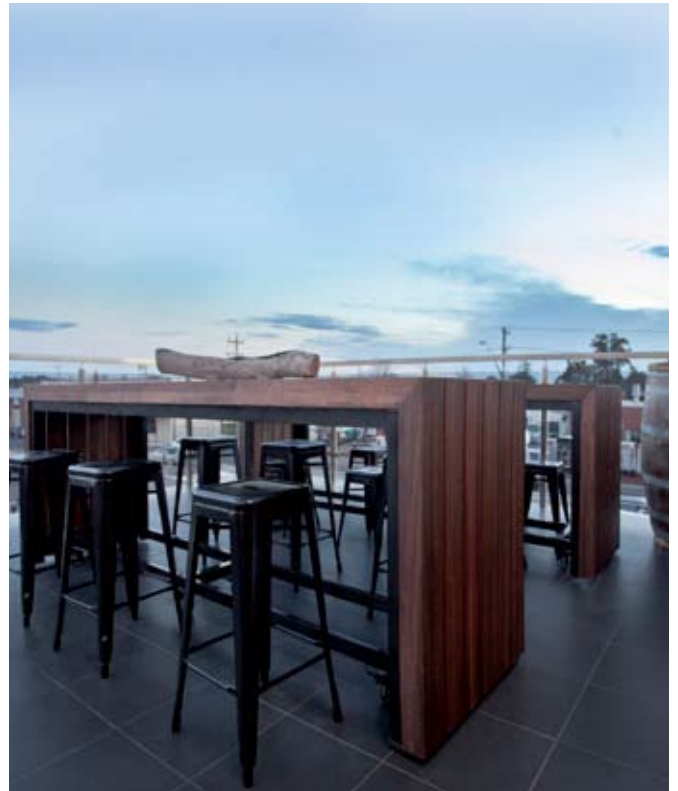
Small, surface-mounted spotlights painted black disappear into the dark ceilings which helps contribute to the whole industrial feel, energy efficient LEDs are used to the fascia of the bar and under lighting below the banquette seating works to highlight the exposed brick wall.

With its winning design and dedicated function team, it was imperative that *The Attic's* food offering would complement this redevelopment – and it does not disappoint. Hotel manager Sean Griffiths knows all too well that today's customer is sophisticated in their dining choices and will vote with their feet.

"Food and functions drive our sales day and night – it is a critical element," he said.

Of course the whole experience has to be right and lucky for us, SoCo have done it again and the results really are spectacular.

"They spent the time to understand our vision and then nailed it. "They were mindful of our budget and time frame and the room has been very well received." **HN**



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