

THE NEW BABY

Urban Pad helps the Railway Hotel Cocktail Bar get on the right track.

STORY: MARK DAVIE

*The Railway Hotel: 29 Chapel St, Windsor VIC
(03) 9510 4050 or www.therailway.com.au*

Sunk into a tub chair, mocktail in hand, watching her guests party away the night wasn't exactly the way Anna Musker pictured herself spending the opening night of her new cocktail bar. But the Railway Hotel owner was pregnant, eight months pregnant, so staying off her feet and the booze was the order of the night. Not that the impending bubs had stopped her much before. The hard working owner had laboured with Andrew Mitchell of Urban Pad to get the new-look bar off the ground, to the point of finding herself struggling to hang flocked acoustic panels on the wall — while balancing on a banquette — because her protruding belly was getting in the way.

Now, bubs is in a pram, and the new mother is back at the Railway with Mitchell filling in venue about the new addition to the family, the Railway Hotel Cocktail Bar. The pub has been in the family for 25 years, and with Anna at the helm the Railway still retains its old pub style feel, just with a new shell. They actually had a cocktail bar previously, but Anna felt the design was a bit too "conservative with the last one. We do great cocktails, so creating the right atmosphere for the drinks was really important." Having worked on the main hotel refurbishment, Anna had no qualms about calling Mitchell back, and he immediately got to work with the new brief; don't be conservative!

Set down the Windsor end of Chapel Street, Mitchell wanted to infuse a touch of the urban tattoo and graffiti culture, into the space. Far from an Ed Hardy tribute or recreating the spray-paint murals of a brick train tunnel, the infusion is a collection of flouro-backlit lightboxes with vibrant Studio Equator graphics.

The vibrancy of the colour palette all started from the Perspex mirrors that make up the bar front. A diehard fan of European design trends, Mitchell couldn't help but incorporate some of the poppy colours and mirrored surfaces of European styling in the design. To go with the Perspex mirrors and lightbox graphics, there

are vinyl banquettes, coloured velour pillows, green-flocked cantilevered lamps over the bar, as well as custom designed lighting features made of discarded circuit boards by Haasch.

With all those vibrant accents, it all sounds a bit too candy shop to warrant late night cocktails. But the bar never really sees the light of day, so as the lights dim to an iris-friendly low, the palette is refined to subtle hues over a predominantly black and brown base.

There are two entrances to the cocktail bar; one from the main bar and restaurant, and the other from a Chapel Street entrance that heads straight upstairs to the outdoor courtyard. With traffic flowing in both directions, the transition between indoors and out can become a thoroughfare, so Mitchell raised the height of the banquettes and tables to prevent customers feeling dwarfed by passers-by. "The last thing you want is people bumping past you at shoulder height," explained Mitchell. "With this raised seating area it's quite comfortable if people are standing round you or walking past."

Another element customers found lacking in the previous design was an outside area. So the offices made way for the new courtyard, which has a Fytogreen garden wall to keep the space from feeling stark, mosaic tiling covering the walls and foam sculpted banquettes, more lightboxes, Tait Jak + Jil outdoor wire-frame furniture and an Alternative Surfaces crushed quartz and resin carpet that's hard-wearing and suitably grippy. For the winter months, or the unpredictable Melbourne cold snaps, a Jetmaster gas fireplace is the perfect addition to small courtyard.

A dash of vibrant colour, a dose of customer suggestions, six months, a baby, and almost \$400,000 later, Anna and Andrew have effectively created a second venue at the Railway, and the result is anything but conservative. Showing that sometimes being a little out of this world is precisely what's required to have a little success in it. [venue](#)

AUDIO

Dave Wailes from Mixed Bag Music installed a new audio system to go with the refit at Railway Hotel Cocktail Bar. The brief included the requirement to have the system work as a separate zone for private functions, but also be able integrate into the same audio inputs as the rest of the venue when needed. The system had to be discrete and reliable while taking the audio level up a notch over the previous system, with local inputs for DJs and the main bar. And while he was at it, Dave made a few changes to the whole venue's system to make sure everything plays happily together.

There are six Turbosound Impact 55 speakers in the cocktail bar on one Australian Monitor XA1400 amplifier, and two Impact 65s in the outdoor area

on an Australian Monitor XA1000 amplifier. A Quest sub-woofer that was intended to be part of the original main bar installation, but sat unused, was recommissioned in the cocktail bar to keep costs down. A dbx Driverack PA+ Digital Signal Processor handles EQ, Crossover and Limiting for the system. And to improve signal routing and remote volume control for the whole venue, Dave incorporated an Australian Monitor ZRM4 zone mixer into the equation. The ZRM4 has six mic/line inputs and four zones, connected to four remote volume control wall plates, two in the main bar and two in the cocktail bar. The new configuration is a cost-effective means of simplifying audio level settings for the four main zones; the main bar, main bar outside area, cock-

tail bar and cocktail bar outside area. This also enables independent source selection of audio for any zone in the venue, be it the DJ, microphone or in-house BGM system. The upgrade also meant adding the capability of routing audio and video in case the room needed to be used for corporate bookings. The end result is a system designed for maximum flexibility, ease of use, reliability and cost-effectiveness.

Mixed Bag Music:
(03) 9428 0025 or dave@mixedbagmusic.com.au
Audio Telex (Turbosound, Australian Monitor):
(02) 9647 1411 or www.audiotelex.com.au
Group Technologies (Quest):
(03) 9354 9133 or www.gtaust.com
Jands (dbx):
(02) 9582 0909 or www.jands.com.au



CONTACTS

Urban Pad (Interior Design):
(03) 9533 8700 or www.urbanpad.com.au

TM Design Group (Architect):
(03) 9646 9932 or www.tmdg.com.au

Metro Fire Builders:
(03) 9878 8111

Tait (Jil Bar Tables, Jak Stools & Banquettes):
(03) 9416 0909 or www.tait.biz

Lounge Designer Furniture (Circa Tub Chairs):
(03) 9562 6833 or www.lounge.net.au

Artemide (Rastaf Halogen Downlights & Tolomeo Table Lamps):
(03) 9349 3310 or www.artemide.com.au

Haasch Design (Custom Light Fitting Over Bar):
(07) 3851 1360 or www.haasch.biz

Studio Equator (Light Box Graphics):
(03) 9510 8855 or www.studioequator.com.au

Grant Dorman (Eijffinger Duchess Striped Wall Paper):
(03) 8525 8825 or www.grantdorman.com.au

In-ex Living (Acrylic Mirror Panels):
(03) 9813 4550 or www.in-ex.com.au

Alternative Surfaces (Quartz Carpet Terrace Floor):
1300 760 877 or www.alternativesurfaces.com.au

FytoGreen (Garden Wall):
(03) 5978 0511 or www.fytogreen.com.au

Jetmaster (Heat & Glo Gas Fireplace):
1300 538 627 or www.jetmaster.com.au

