

Right in the Middle

Six Degrees is known for turning recycled materials into something unique, but when those 'raw' materials constitute English Oak and Queensland Maplewood panelling from the MCC's Long Room, unique is just the start. Middle Park Hotel was established in 1889, as the world rushed to Victoria's gold fields. Its early 19th century grandeur is preserved and mixed with 21st century contemporary urban style by Six Degrees and owner Julian Gerner of the Melbourne Pub Group, who wanted to capture the essence of a New York-style boutique hotel while keeping true blue to South Melbourne pub culture. On paper it looks a tough balance to get the combination of a sporting club and bar to marry convincingly with Manhattan chic. But Middle Park Hotel takes it all in its stride, right from walking under the Fifth Avenue-style canopy, or through the original MCC Member's wrought iron gates at the Armstrong Street entrance, under the enormous deer fallow chandelier in the foyer, and across the MPH insignia carpet to one of the 45 beer taps at the 70m-long bar... phew! Far from being totally disparate inspirations, it seems that Gerner and Six Degrees have picked out the finer points of the Melbourne pub tradition and blended them with New York boutique touches to craft the Middle Park Hotel into something cosmopolitan yet classic that blokes want to hang out in.

In the kitchen, Paul Wilson (ex-Botanical) is consulting chef, combining with fellow Brit, head chef David Marshall, to make his famous food more accessible. Tipped off by the antique luggage trunks in the foyer, up above the expansive gastro pub are 25 boutique hotel rooms with bay, lake and city views. Each room is a luxurious mix of Rennie Ellis photographs, high Victorian ceilings with ornate cornices, chiropractic beds, Waverly Merino wool blankets, complimentary Wi-Fi internet access, and white marble and European porcelain bathrooms with GHD straighteners for the ladies. Middle Park Hotel is definitely not middle of the road.

Richard Hallam of YSI designed the audio system at Middle Park Hotel, which is split over four zones controlled by a Cloud zoner. Richard chose small Quest 2-way wall mounted speakers for the main bar to get speech clarity and coverage for the sports broadcasts. He then decided to stick with them throughout all zones because of their small size, nice aesthetic and quality sound. Australian Monitor and QSC amplifiers were utilised throughout the system that can route audio from any of the TVs around the main bar to anywhere in the hotel.

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