

# BATHED IN GLORY

An icon of Manly's culture has been resurrected with all its heritage appeal to host another generation of Manly bathers.

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**L**et's revisit the 1930s... A time of high-waist swim shorts and fabulously feminine corset one pieces, when publicly changing into bathers was a criminal offence, sunbaking was 'healthy' and male swimwear sat at least 15cm above the precariously low position it now rests.

We are now in 1933, the year the Manly Bathers Pavilion came to life: the bottom floor dedicated to gender-split change rooms, while the Tea Rooms occupied the upper floor. How quaint! A pier was built to connect the Pavilion to Manly Wharf, transforming the area into both a swimming safe-spot, and tourist icon teeming with beach towels and modest cossies.

It wasn't all Betty Boop bonnets and seaside shenanigans for the Manly Pavilion though. Fast-forward to 1958 and a fire burnt out the upper roof, leaving only the bottom floor open for change-room business. At the opposite end of the element scale, 1974 brought with it a violent storm that destroyed the pier link with Manly Wharf. And shortly after, the Steamship Ferry service ceased operations. Leaving the building to fall into a state of disrepair... until now.

Since 2008, workers have meticulously followed the instruction of owners Dennis Catalan and John Codling, and Squillace and Nicholas Architects to restore, extend and reinvent the glory days of the Pavilion. Now, 75 years after Manly bathers first emerged from the Pavilion dressed and braced for an ocean dip, it has been re-incarnated and is set to revive that era of simple, sunny pleasures.

The construction, mind you, was far from simple — with heritage constraints, difficulties associated with a venue perched on pylons above water, and specialist builders in dinghys attempting to catch falling debris. The restoration has been a successful, but demanding one. The venue now encompasses separate dining spaces, a terrace with an impressive view, an entry foyer that quite literally screams antiquity and bathrooms that hurl guests back to the bonnet wearing, sunscreen defying 1930s.







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## ALL ABOARD

The venue has attracted quite a crew. Experienced restaurateur David Gray — who has spent 17 years in the industry and owned and operated two Manly venues prior to the Pavilion — is joined by rising star chef Jonathan Barthelmess and James Parry, who've devised an Italian menu with distinctive Mediterranean accents. Barthelmess previously worked as head chef at Coast, initially under cooking legend Steve Manfredi. Parry, who previously worked at Icebergs and Oscillate Wildly, was the winner of the 2009 Josephine Pignolet Young Chef of the Year Award. The house mixologist, Grant Collins brings to the venue experience from both Water Bar and Zeta Bar, while sommelier Michael Watt brings extensive knowledge and has created an international wine list specifically for the venue.

## TROUBLESOME TIDINGS

Restoring and extending a heritage building propped above the ocean is always going to have the occasional complication. In the case of Manly Pavilion, this came in the form of a burnt-out floor, tidal zones and environmental marine life concerns.

Much of the fabric and materials in the upper floor of the Pavilion were destroyed in the late 1950s fire, making the restoration process of the space, now dubbed The Heritage Room, additionally complex. And as with the restoration of any heritage building, heritage interpretation images are to be included in the venue as a historical commemoration. So the Pavilion's interpretation images sit in window frames in the corridors that, due to heritage constraints, had to remain intact.

If the heritage restrictions weren't challenging enough, the reconstruction of a wharf certainly was. Construction specialists had to work around the mood of the ocean, only able to labour in low tide. Complying with nature-determined work hours, the next consideration was the marine life. Workers ditched steel caps for waders, floating in dinghys and catching the falling debris from the wharf to avoid polluting the



water. And we mustn't forget the penguins. The locality is home to a delightful, endangered population of Little Penguins. Workers had to keep them in mind at all times and to ensure this, a Penguin Warden was selected amongst the crew, who took on the responsibility of monitoring their well-being. This project was certainly unique.

### REBIRTH OF MANLY HERITAGE

The Pavilion has endured quite a facelift. While the Tea Rooms have been transformed into The Heritage Room, a contemporary addition has come aboard: The Restaurant Pavilion.

The Heritage Room connotes the seashore heritage perhaps greater than any part of the venue. Much of the timber framing has been restored, and archways have been produced that reference the original building plans: a snapshot of what was conceived almost 80 years prior. Speaking of which, in the 1930s the space used to host social dances. You can almost hear the tickety-tack of dance steps in the new parquet floor and the bulk-headed ceiling brings ballroom to mind, while Australian-designed Dean Phillips LED crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling cap off a revival of the room's playful history.

The space is lined with sash-lock windows, and filled with natural timber tables and chairs; well at least half the room is — a double-sided gas fireplace splits the personality of the room. Left of the flames sit the natural timber settings, while to the right, powder coated wire terrace chairs are used: a whiter, brighter, more wharf-style aesthetic. Make that dual personality a triad. The private dining room gives up to 20 guests the chance to enjoy the water view on their own terms.

The Restaurant Pavilion brings additional flavour to the table. The reminiscence of the 1930s-bathing hub is less demanding here; this room is about the food, the wine and the dramatically lit dining experience, but the view is certainly paramount. Oversized sliding doors provide a passage to the outdoor Terrace, while the outdoor roof deck is filled with wire frame bar tables and chairs

### Audio

Nathan Purcell from CIS Allure installed the AV system in Level 2 of the Manly Pavilion. The Dynalite lighting system is comprised of DDLE 802 MO and DLE 1203 leading edge dimmers to give a total of 110 dimmable lighting channels for ultimate control over the venue mood. Audio and visual distribution is taken care of by Crestron, with a CNX AV2 dual bus control system with Ethernet kit providing the brains, CNAMP 16-channel 60W amplifiers delivering the brawn, a CNX BIPAD 16 source/8 room stereo audio distribution processor plus and 8 room bi-directional CAT5 audio distribution processor, and a CNX PVID 8x3 Video Matrix with 8 rooms of CAT5 output. On the receiving end of most of that video are NEC 4620 commercial LED panels. The speakers are by Sonance architectural speakers with 16 Visual Performance 45 and 6 Visual Performance 65 series speakers designed to fit a variety of hole shapes while delivering audiophile sound, and 10 Mariner 62 weather resistant speakers for outdoors.

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for anyone wanting to smell as well as look at the view. And of course, a glass of champagne is as good an excuse as any to absorb the view outdoors.

The restaurant is a modern addition to the venue, characterised by stone, copper and stained timber, a neutral colour scheme and polished concrete floors gilded with marble chips. The bar is tiled in black, and framed by bronze columns, an architectural reference to Miles Van Der Rohe's revolutionary Barcelona Pavilion, which on a separate historical note, showcased in 1929 — just four years before the construction of Manly Bathers.

The venue's character extends beyond the main areas, infiltrating the staircases, corridors, entry foyer and particularly the bathrooms. The Romanesque entry foyer is dramatically tiled, with images of 'Renaissance Ladies' scattered haphazardly throughout the walls. Dim lighting, aging artwork and mismatched furniture compliment the foyer, which collectively breathe antiquity into the space. The bathrooms are a play on the change rooms of old. Cream-white mosaic tiles cover the walls, while the basins are antique originals, thermo-glazed pink for the ladies, and black for the mens.

## ON THE HORIZON

There is one awaited section of the venue that is yet to come to life: the bottom floor, which once housed the Manly Bathers changerooms, soon to be the Manly Pavilion Function Room. Still within the process of approval, the space has undergone basic heritage restorations and is set to become an extension of the Restaurant Pavilion.

Following suit, this part of the project was also complex. Not too long ago, the room housed a swimming pool that connected to an underground operating tunnel, which connected to a shark tank! The passage was previously used as a training ground for scuba divers, which as culturally rich as that may be, certainly increased constructive complications. The pool has since been filled and the space rejuvenated, no longer able to facilitate shark-eager divers, but ready to offer guests a refined space to hold a function. Speaking of the future, a proposal is being formulated in regards to rebuilding the bridge that once connected the Pavilion to Manly Wharf that would allow residents and visitors of Manly to walk along the water separating the two. **venue**

## CONTACTS

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**2** Tait (Jak Chairs & Jil Tables):  
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**3** Kezu (Emu Series):  
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**4** Thonet:  
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### Space Furniture:

(02) 8339 7588 or [www.spacefurniture.com.au](http://www.spacefurniture.com.au)

### Contempo Furniture (Tables):

(02) 9726 6794 or [www.contempofurniture.com.au](http://www.contempofurniture.com.au)

### Temperature Design (Stainless Drums & Tile Tables):

(02) 9331 0116 or [www.temperaturedesign.com.au](http://www.temperaturedesign.com.au)

### Living Edge (Maxime Lounge):

(02) 8596 8888 or [www.livingedge.com.au](http://www.livingedge.com.au)

### Royal Upholstery (Custom Ottomans):

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### NSW Leather Co (Upholstery Leather):

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### Coco Republic (Lamps):

(02) 9647 1577 or [www.cocorepublic.com.au](http://www.cocorepublic.com.au)

### Anibou (Ceramic Blue Occasional Table):

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### Light Culture (Suspended Crystal Ring):

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### Feltex Carpets Commercial:

1300 130 239 or [www.feltex.com.au](http://www.feltex.com.au)

### Precision Flooring (Timber Flooring):

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### Academy Tiles (Floor & Wall Tiles):

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### Di Lorenzo (Wall Tiles):

(02) 9692 0542 or [www.dilorenzo.net.au](http://www.dilorenzo.net.au)

### Natural Floor Coverings (Grey Floor Mat to Gallery):

9960 6921 or [www.naturalfloor.com.au](http://www.naturalfloor.com.au)

### Annandale Timbers & Moulding:

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### Heritage Profiles & Mouldings:

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### All Plaster Products (Plaster Details):

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### Barrisol (Acoustic Panels):

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### Arte Domus (Inset Stone at Maitre'd):

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