

# Rothe Lowman

CREATING DISCIPLINED CLASSIC ENVIRONMENTS TO SHOWCASE MODERN MASTERPIECES IS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR ROTHE LOWMAN.

Ensuring their clients enjoy unfaltering design excellence accompanied at all times by outstanding levels of client service and professionalism is the simple philosophy of Melbourne outfit, Rothe Lowman. This, together with unsurpassable quality, is what has seen the highly respected firm build a platform of success and achieve industry acclaim. Typically renowned for projects within the commercial domain of design and architecture, Rothe Lowman recently set upon a residential project in an exclusive area of Melbourne that resulted in a home that has set a new precedent for modern living.

Led by Senior Associate, Tom Vinall, the Rothe Lowman team was on a mission to fulfil its client's desire to downsize from their previous living space whilst ensuring specific lifestyle requirements were met. "Across any project, our aim is to provide genuinely personal, hands-on service from concept to completion" says Vinall. He is an architect's architect bearing no prescriptive style (a proper answering of the brief always comes before any ego) whose particular creative intelligence comes out across a disparate range of projects within the company.

Among his countless assignments at Rothe Lowman designing commercial buildings, residential ventures have begun to figure and in his most recent project, the delivery is one of luxury with a more discreet style, effortlessly melding multi-faceted space. The result is comfort with a Zen aesthetic of stark geometry. This particular client's brief included a packed program of specific requirements; incorporating expansive areas of glass to capture panoramic views of the city and bay skyline and the concept of a home-gallery space to display an outstanding contemporary art collection. The detailed and intricate collaboration

between designers and client was challenging, yet resulted in one of Vinall's most impressive works of art – not to mention one that he is most proud of.

Instrumental in a great outcome is the client's faith in their choice of architect, to create and realise their vision. "We spend a lot of time with the owners to establish exactly what their vision, expectations and requirements are before we move forth with the project," says Vinall. "We love what we do and take pride in achieving the best look and results, that's why these clients become friends and the best recommendations of our workmanship," he adds. Over a number of discussions and meetings with the client, Vinall established key parameters that would inform the overall design: creating comfortable surroundings with the finest materials and a design that escapes categorisation as either traditional or modern.

Recurring themes revolved around the building as canvas, the backdrop for other visual stimulants, such as the client's collection of contemporary art, as well as a naturally occurring work of art – the ever-changing sunset over the Melbourne city skyline. This important dialogue revealed that this was more than a residential project in a prestigious Melbourne suburb; it was part art gallery, part home and part office. A specific, somewhat programmatic, brief followed which ultimately informed the layout and arrangement of internal spaces. The result was rewarding for architect and client alike. The project's strong design and collaborative approach produced a built form the client is proud to call home.

Known simply as a 'calm and very good designer' by his peers and clients, it's Vinall's dynamic confidence and a fierce sense of self-belief that makes him trusted and respected by all who work





alongside him. Often juggling multiple projects simultaneously, it's crucial that the passion and fire remains ignited. "I'm always researching, reading, thinking about new products, materials and uses. This doesn't come from one particular place or inspiration – it's all around me, my mind is always ticking," says Vinall.

So, does his increasing reputation bring with it additional pressures? "No. You simply have to be as good as can be, regardless of public opinion. You will always have to work with different constraints and requirements," he says. A realist, he acknowledges a lack of a definitive creative signature, but perhaps it can be found in his direct approach and attitude. This directness is mirrored in his aesthetic by way of sharp lines along with a black and white aura that still welcomes the flow of new ideas and energy.

Talented perfectionists is an obvious descriptor for the team at Rothe Lowman. As for Vinall's advice on becoming a talented perfectionist, he suggests "Be patient enough to take on responsibility and have the confidence to work in another city around the world. Explore, experience and create." Then it seems, you shall achieve.

#### BOX BRIEF

**SPACE** ■ A sense of connectivity between spaces and levels was critical in the residential project. Integral to achieving this was the design of an open, sculptural staircase linking intimate, internally focused areas with large spaces on the top floor

**SERIES** ■ Blending style and design expertise with the inspirations of acclaimed painter Dr John Olsen, Rothe Lowman created the new Art Series hotel in Melbourne, The Olsen

**SECOND LIFE** ■ A team of Rothe Lowman interior decorators was responsible for the sleek new refurbishment of the rooms at Crown Plaza Melbourne

**SERVICES** ■ Professional design, management and advisory services across architecture, interior design, property analysis and environmentally sustainable design (ESD)

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