



Ruffles Lodge

Photography: Nic Bailey

At the ridge of the mountains of the Gold Coast Hinterland, away from the erratic vivacity of the Gold Coast, lies the Ruffles Lodge and Day Spa. Once a boutique retreat housing three villas and an executive suite, owners John and Jan Nicholls had visions of a luxurious retreat with exceptional day spa facilities enjoying spectacular coastal views. John called on old friend, Reg Smith, to collaborate with him and make these dreams a reality.

In 2005, the AJ+C Brisbane team set to work to design additions to The Lodge including a state-of-the-art Day Spa, Owners Residence and three new Villas complete with their own plunge pools. Led by Brisbane Director Colin Janes, Nicola Middleton and her team joined forces with John and his builders to create this beautiful oasis.

"The relationship worked because it was still based on trust and friendship" Nicola Middleton explains. "We understood our role and fulfilled it to the client's needs, also offering advice during later stages."

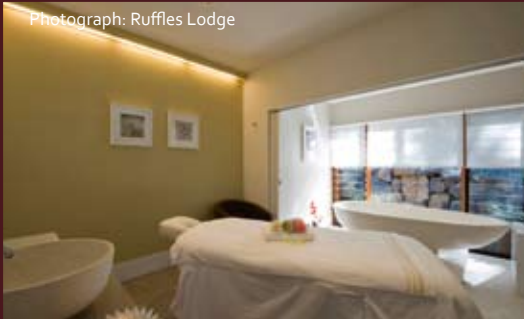
Photograph: Nic Bailey



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Photograph: Ruffles Lodge



The extension is away from the original lodge that sits atop the ridge. The new villas are nestled in the bush, creating private, tranquil spaces. The new office, residence and spa take advantage of a clearing that was to be a tennis court, providing superb views over the valley to the Gold Coast skyline. The additions AJ+C designed have not only expanded the accommodation capacity of the lodge, but opened up new facilities for wedding receptions, business conferences and yoga retreats. The Tree House Villas with plunge pools are very popular with guests. "The design is just terrific," said owner, John Nicholls. "It is really very appealing, with aged timber floors and tremendous views into the valley. We constantly get compliments on these beautiful villas." When asked about the design, John praised AJ+C's ability to match the established themes but still incorporate AJ+C's style.

The Nicholls haven't looked back; "The spa is going extremely well. It has all just been fantastic". Their next step? From May this year, Ruffles Lodge will be part of the Peppers Group, a collection of luxury retreats and resorts across Australia and New Zealand.

Michael Heenan critiquing international architecture

Principal Michael Heenan has been invited to sit on the international jury for the 2010 World Architecture Festival awards, to be held in Barcelona.

The jury will include Barry Bergdoll, the Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Matthias Sauerbruch from Sauerbruch Hutton Architects, and others.

This invitation follows AJ+C's win at the World Architecture Festival in 2009 for the Berry Sports Hall.

Michael has also been invited to Chair the Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) Awards for Excellence Jury in the Commercial and Interiors categories. He will be joined on the Jury by former national president Bob Nation and Group GSA director Lisa-Maree Carrigan.

There have been over 200 entries in the AIA awards this year. Design architects will present their work in person to the Jury in a festival of architecture at Tusculum on 20th and 22nd March.



Milson Island moves ahead

The Milson Island Recreation Hall is ready for construction. This new multi-purpose sports hall is one of a suite AJ+C has designed for NSW Sport & Recreation. AJ+C has also recently won the bid to design the renovations of the existing heritage listed Milson Island Dining Hall and Kitchen as well as a new Recreation Hall just a boat trip away in Broken Bay. These projects will be led by Director John Whittingham and Principal Michael Heenan.



Hammondville Seniors Living ready for construction

Soil will soon be broken for a new HammondCare development at Hammondville, in south west Sydney. It will consist of the first 10 of 45 independent living units (ILUs) and a new village centre, linking this project with earlier stages of ILUs at the Village. AJ+C has worked with HammondCare since 1995 when we designed the world leading dementia specialised facilities, The Meadows and The Pines. These projects set a new benchmark in the design of purpose-built environments for the care of people with dementia. We are also in the process of submitting a development application for HammondCare's new Centre for Positive Aging Care with a view to completing the design and construction by the end of this year.



Keith Cottier awarded exceptional honour from the University of Sydney

In November last year, the honorary degree of Doctor of Science in Architecture (honoris causa) was awarded to Keith Cottier AM, by the University of Sydney. The ceremony took place at the Great Hall, as part of the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Planning Graduation Ceremony in which Keith also gave the occasional address. This is a rare honour, and all at AJ+C extend their warmest congratulations to Keith.

pipe dreams



If you have visited our Sydney office recently, you would have noticed the transformation of our reception by our photography group 'Retina' into an amazing artistic space of installation photography.

'pipe dreams' is Retina's third end-of-year exhibition and was launched at the end of 2009.

A1@SW1

"The key to this successful working relationship is using the collaboration to its advantage during conceptual stages, and recognising the assets that each party brings to the project."

Nicola Middleton
Senior Associate

A new, innovative urban village is emerging on Brisbane's thriving South Bank, just across the river from the city's CBD. Situated amidst several arts and cultural landmarks, and within walking distance to the high-end retail boutiques of Little Stanley Street, SW1 will eventually comprise of four commercial and six residential buildings. This mixed-use development will offer premium retail outlets, commercial spaces and residential apartments with an inspiring mix of architectural and urban design.

The SW1 precinct was masterplanned by Cox Rayner Architects to comprise four staged series – 'A' to 'D'. The buildings are linked through a central pedestrian spine, with vehicular laneways which connect the surrounding community. To win the project, the client, Austcorp and Property Solutions, envisioned a diverse range of building design and uses. To achieve this, they engaged five architectural practises, encouraging unique designs but using common materials and landscaping to unify each aspect of the precinct.

The AJ+C Brisbane team was asked by Cox Rayner to work in collaboration on the design of the building 'A1' which hosts seven storeys of commercial space plus ground floor retail and services. The lower floors are sculpted to relate to a human scale. This active interplay of built form, external spaces, pedestrian desire lines and landscape mimics the social activity of the streetscape. The ground floor retail is positioned to allow pedestrian connection between the adjacent public park and sunlit urban courtyard created between the 'A' series buildings. Landscape architects Gamble McKinnon Green sought a rainforest effect for the site, opting for tropical foliage such as fern trees and climbing vines to 'green' external walls.

Effective collaboration was key to the success of this project. The AJ+C team was led by Nicola Middleton with Samantha Taylor as project architect. The team worked closely with Cox Rayner and Gamble McKinnon Green to establish and develop design concepts and obtain the development approval. AJ+C then led the documentation and provided construction services to Hutchinson Builders.

The series of buildings and pedestrian walkways that make up the SW1 precinct are due for completion at the end of 2010. AJ+C's 'A1' already has its seven storeys tenanted, including the ground floor dedicated to the Queensland Centre for Photography.

SW1 photography: Christopher Frederick Jones



QCP photography: Christopher Frederick Jones

The Queensland Centre of Photography (QCP) is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates connections between art practitioners and the audience. In 2008, SW1 developers Austcorp and Property Solutions, offered QCP a tenancy as they envisioned SW1 as a creative precinct in South Bank. The new location was the ground floor of A1, also featured in this newsletter, and gave the QCP new exposure and close proximity to other creative agencies in South Bank.

Austcorp approached AJ+C to design QCP's fitout due to our existing knowledge of the tenancy. As a not-for-profit organisation, the QCP had little money to spend and was relying on sponsorship, grants and lots of effort and hours from the QCP team to facilitate their move. AJ+C offered to design the gallery on a pro-bono basis as sponsorship of QCP.

The planning of the layout was a simple response to QCP's brief – providing an inspired and flexible canvas for its various types of photography-based works.

"The fitout had to be built on a lean budget, so the ideas had to be simple and affordable," says team leader, Nicola Middleton. The spaces were designed so that the gallery could be used as four different exhibition spaces simultaneously – each with their own character and scale to suit different types and sizes of artworks.

"The unique layout of the AJ+C fitout allows more space than our previous gallery, even though the floor area is smaller," says QCP Director, Maurice Ortega. "Visitors uncover the exhibits slowly and are surprised by our size." The fitout created a transparency with the outside space. This changes the gallery throughout the day as the light and shadows play with the photographic works. "The artists love it," praises Maurice. "The light changes the mood and compliments the space. We are very happy in our new home."