

# Architects fly back to '60s for glamour

Designers looked to history for a new take on office space, writes **Stephen Crafti**.

In the 1960s, air travel was a luxury associated with glamour and a sense of occasion that required the right attire.

A woman dressed in a Courrage orange wool suite and gloves would not be out of place on a flight from Melbourne to Sydney, jet alone an international adventure.

"We started the design process by looking through the historical archives, including fashion," says interior designer Adele Winteridge, director of Foolscape Studio, whose team was given the commission to create the new office space for the Australia Pacific Airports Corporation (APAM) at Melbourne Airport.

Although not apparent for most of those using the airport, this new space, approximately 2500 square metres, is located on a mezzanine, accessed by an existing elevator.

The relatively long and narrow floor plate, with limited direct natural light provided a blank canvas for Foolscape Studio, whose task was to accommodate approximately 200 staff working on both the "land" and "air" side of the business.

"One of the initial challenges was to ensure those working

outside of the building didn't have to pass through security several times a day," says Winteridge, who integrated this thoroughfare allowing access to the tarmac into the overall design.

Foolscape Studio not only worked closely with the staff at the airport in tracking their typical movements on a daily basis, but also with Manapan, in creating specialist furniture for executive suites and boardrooms within the office. Manapan is an Indigenous-run furniture maker based in east Arnhem Land.

"We were interested in the idea of movement from the outset, both the runway here, and when it came to the bespoke furniture, the form of the runway at Milingimbi Island, where the pieces were made," says Winteridge, who was keen to create a variety of soft and organic spaces that provided a sense of calm and tranquillity (albeit thousands of people are moving inside and outside of the airport on a daily basis).

Given the relatively narrow floor plate, a sense of motion was achieved by skewing the direction of workstations and hubs off centre. Skylights and barrasol



The fit-out was a collaboration between Foolscape Studio and Manapan.

capturing the Australian landscape.

The furniture a collaboration between Foolscape Studio and Manapan, also creates a unique Australian Down Under "voice".

"We looked at the landing strip on Milingimbi Island," says Winteridge, pointing out the fine crisscross marquetry embedded in the board table.

"I brought these ideas to the team on the island and further elaborated on the brief," says Mark White, founder of Manapan, who was delighted to show Manapan's talent at this year's furniture fair in Milan.

"I wanted furniture that was warm and welcoming, far from corporate," says White. "Something where you could see the talent from our guys."

Although there's a sense of formality at the point of arrival, with the reception desk and executive offices nearby, a more relaxed atmosphere is experienced within this fit-out.

Organic-shaped "hydration points" (a place to sit and drink), framed with plants, creating a sense of the outdoors and the freedom that travel generates for people, whether they're about to take off, or, as in the case of staff at Melbourne Airport, an oasis in the middle of a relatively frenetic environment.

staff have the option of a variety of environments, including trestle-style benches, "hydration points" or informal lounges.

The open plan industrial-style kitchen is popular and also doubles as a core meeting area when larger functions are required (two adjoining meeting areas with operable doors allows the entire eastern end of the floor to be opened up entirely).

Foolscape Studio created a number of enclosed offices for executives, as well as a 'shifting tonal colour palette' to define work areas, from dark mossy greens to paler greens and soft yellows,

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Mark White

light canopies further create a sense of the outdoors, along with generous indoor planting.

"Greening the workplace was integral to the design, particularly given the restricted natural light conditions," says Winteridge.

As well as fixed workstations