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# QHAREVIEW



*Queensland's own hotel publication*

DECEMBER 2012

## ACROSS THE BAR

Coral O'Shea

## FOCUS ON COCKTAILS

Cocktail hour: summer's here

## QHA PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION

Rydges Hotel  
SOUTH BANK



# A PODIUM finish

Rydges Hotel South Bank has unveiled a brand new \$12 million redevelopment, incorporating five state-of-the-art functions spaces and the highly anticipated pool, bar and restaurant concept, Bacchus.

**F**rom the Grey Street entry point, Rydges South Bank has received a facelift, with vertical gardens now lining the exterior, a new-look Porte Cache and four prime-position retail spaces spanning 177sqm.

Designed by the multi-award-winning Base Architects, in collaboration with LA interior designer Tracy Beckmann, the multi-million-dollar redevelopment was built with accessibility and elegance in mind.

Base Architecture director Shawn Godwin said the new and improved Rydges Hotel was the cherry on top of the design vision for the South Bank area.

"The northern end of Grey Street, from Rydges through to the museum, has been in need of a design refresh for some time, so it's been fantastic to see the vision start to take shape and catch up with the rest of the region in terms of its street life appeal," Mr Godwin said.

Internally, the hotel's functions, conferencing and events centre has been completely reworked, with the introduction of a new Podium level. The level encompasses four state-of-the-art adjoining functions rooms illuminated by natural light and with gold leaf wallpaper, exquisitely crafted shell pillars and Italian draperies.

Complete with a standalone private study, the new Podium instalment is capable of housing up to 450 guests for dinner, or 600 for cocktails – a 30 per cent increase on past capacity.

Rydges South Bank Hotel general manager Patrick Lonergan said the refurbishment of the functions centre will be a huge improvement on the capabilities previously offered at the venue.

"We saw a real need for change in our function facilities, and we have made upgrades in capacities and new technology," Mr Lonergan said.

"Each function room is fitted-out with iPad connectivity that will allow our corporate clientele to fully automate meetings and presentations."

Adjoined by exquisite three-metre-high brass doors, the new and improved functions facilities lead out to Bacchus – Brisbane's new pool, bar and restaurant hot spot.

Commissioned by Rydges more than 12 months ago, LA interiors queen Tracy Beckmann has executed an elegant design vision for the Podium level, with interiors built to emulate the rich luxurious vibe of South Florida Beach and Miami.

A strong interior link between the new functions installment and Bacchus has created seamless design synergy, blending the entire Podium level.

Bacchus – with the name derived from the Roman god of food, wine and indulgence – offers all that and more – embracing rich, decadent furnishings with dynamic lighting and a lobby and bar.

Central to the interior design cavalry in the Bacchus restaurant, and perhaps one of the most lavish pieces within the venue, is a four-and-a-half-metre-long onyx marble dining table, inspired by a rare vintage

French 1970s dining table Beckmann found while shopping in New York.

The exquisite poolside terrace further adds to the LA luxe feel, with a broad scope of musical styles to be featured, further adapting to the diverse patronage of the venue.

Jazz, world music and down-tempo grooves will be a starting platform, with nu-disco, soulful house and re-edits of classics played later in the evenings. On Sunday afternoons the music is styled towards a Café Del Mar Ibiza-type feel to mesh with the poolside vibe.

The Bacchus menu, conceptualised by Rydges executive chef Dominic Rose and implemented to perfection by head chef Americo Fernandes, has a strong Mediterranean focus – incorporating locally sourced olive oils carefully selected to match the key flavours of each dish.

Rose said the oil matching process central to the menu would be an entirely new concept for the Brisbane food scene.

"We borrowed the idea from a few venues in New York City who are doing it really well at the moment, and I think Brisbane foodies are ready for it," he said.

In collaboration with Cobram Estate, Bacchus has also bottled a signature olive oil available for patrons to purchase when they dine at the restaurant.

Having a signature restaurant, inspired by high-end New York dining, is an exciting step for the hotel, which is set to see an increase of 35,000 patrons per year and bring an influx of new opportunities to the area.

The Rydges South Bank development

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follows a \$140 million expansion of the entire northern end of Grey Street. According to recent projections, the \$12 million redevelopment of Rydges Hotel, coupled with the recent Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre expansion, should boost South Bank's visitation rate by approximately 135,000 people per year.

Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk congratulated Rydges South Bank Brisbane on the launch of its innovative and tailored conference facilities.

"Brisbane is rapidly growing as a destination of choice for business events, and it is developments and refurbishments like the Rydges South Bank Brisbane

upgrade that only strengthen the city's ability to accommodate Australia's business community," Cr Quirk said.

"Rydges South Bank Brisbane is directly contributing to the growth of Brisbane's business events industry, and is a great example of how Brisbane truly is Australia's new world city."

The hotel's innovative evolution took 12 months to complete and was implemented by Built Builders, and project-managed by SJA Construction Services.

Located on the corner of Grey and Glenelg Street, Rydges Hotel South Bank has evolved from humble beginnings into one of Brisbane's most indulgent and luxurious venues. **Q**

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