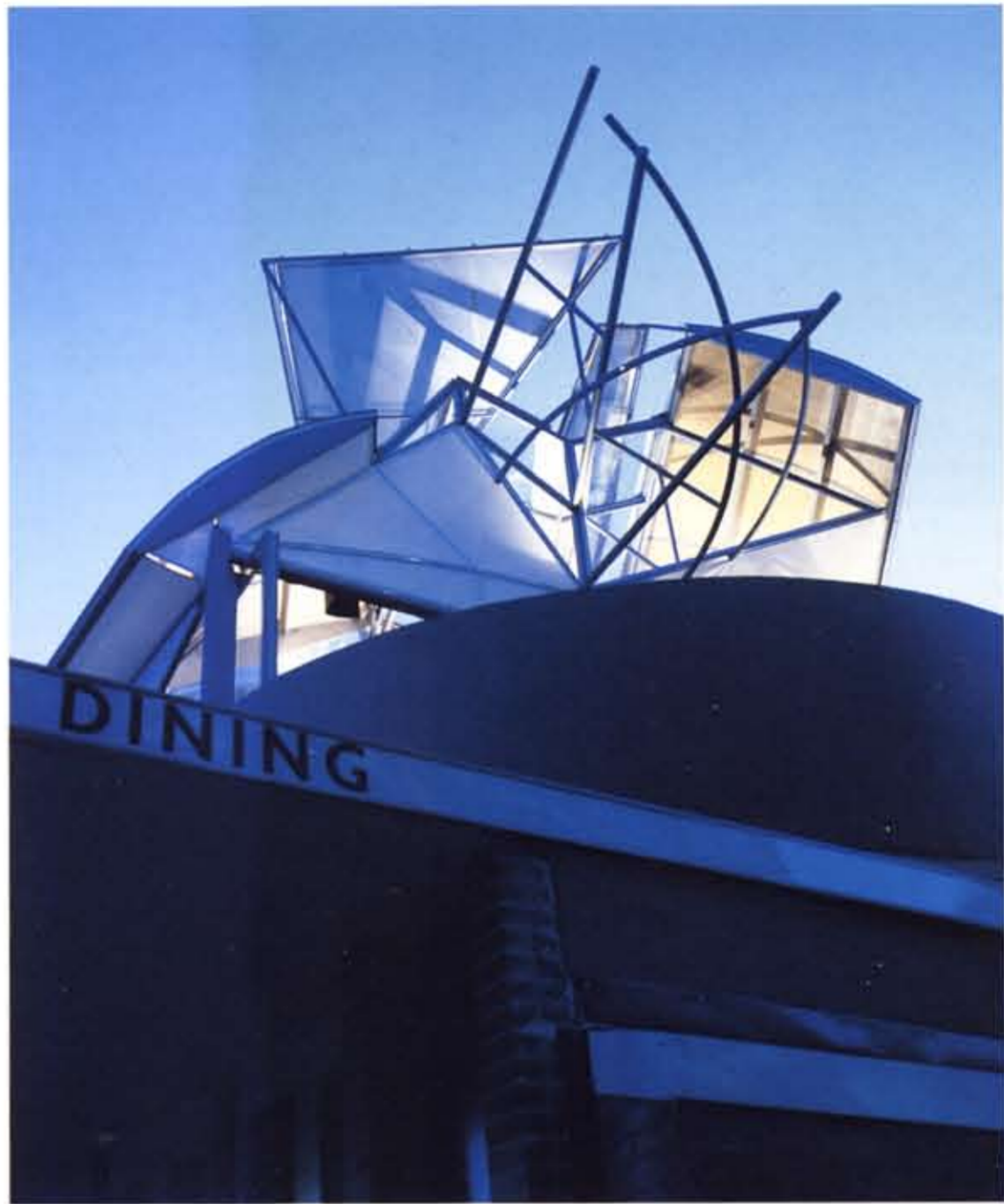




Opposite: Richard Goodwin's roof sculpture has opening 'wings' that allow ventilation to the level of The Atrium. This picture: a curving passageway strikingly finished in Dulux 'Strawberry Patch' enhances the Union Hotel's Art Deco heritage.



CRACKNELL LONERGAN

UNION HOTEL

A REMODELLED SYDNEY HOTEL WITH A STRONG ART-DECO HERITAGE IS CROWNED BY A DRAMATIC ROOF SCULPTURE. TEXT: PENELOPE BARKER. PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS COLE.



■ North Sydney's refurbished Union Hotel is a union of many facets – past and future, function and fun, architecture and art – providing a range of facilities for a wide variety of patrons, and resulting from an unusual collaboration by the design team, architects Peter Lonergan of Cracknell Lonergan, Patrick Nicholas, Bill McMahon, Peter Niemes, Scott Colman and Tom Ferguson, and sculptor Richard Goodwin.

The late 1920s pub, with its classic Art Deco curves, was originally designed by Sydney Ancher, whose practice, Ancher and Prevost, designed a huge number of Sydney pubs at that time. The Union's owners wanted to provide a full range of services, affordably and stylishly, while recognising the heritage values of the building and incorporating a strong public art agenda to reflect the fact that pubs of that time supported a culture of artists through pub mirrors and decorative elements, and as bohemian meeting places.

A new addition creates a strong third façade facing the street at the rear of the hotel, highlighting the presence of the new dining room and emphasising the importance of fine food to modern Australian urban pub culture. Atop the new restaurant is a rooftop function room protected by a glass, fabric and steel roof by sculptor Richard Goodwin [see overleaf], its steel wings opening on a fine day to give the impression the structure is some strange winged creature that has alighted there momentarily.

Fronting the Pacific Highway, The Local is the public bar, its design a restrained contemporary comfort zone that would not alienate long-term patrons who regularly pop in for a beer and a look at the races on the wide-screen television set into the wall. The inevitable poker machines are tucked unobtrusively away in a curving corridor off this bar, giving easy access and privacy to those who enjoy a flutter and tucking them out of sight for those who find the clattering presence of the machines less

Opposite: the bars in both the dining area and The Atrium on the roof are finished in metallic car duco. This page, clockwise from top left: the roof sculpture glimpsed from street level; Bar Blah Blah, with chrome furniture from Anibou and light fittings that echo the skylights; the curved line of the bar and the terrazzo floor have been retained; the dining area.



than conducive to social ease. A TAB, another Australian pub tradition, is also accessed from The Local.

Entered from the second original façade facing a side street off the highway is Bar Blah Blah, a younger, livelier space featuring a curved bar clad in rows of narrow, coloured tiles, an original circular skylight and chrome tables and bar stools from Anibou.

Lonergan replaced the original stair to the upstairs lounges with a sweeping, hot pink curved stairway to provide "something grander and more processional". Upstairs, comfortable function areas feature strong colours, open fireplaces, cane seating and a steel bar coated with metallic car duco in a golden ochre tone.

"I use colour as an associative finish rather than a decorative finish," says Lonergan. "It should be inviting but stick in people's minds as a memory of place – a kind of mental mapping." Lonergan used six Dulux colours throughout the project, with paler colours echoing the original tile colours of the hotel and strong accent colours of red and brown as directional indicators, moving customers through the spaces and emphasising the importance the designers placed on creating a flow of spaces linking distinct areas for patrons with differing requirements.

Appropriately, the finishing touch will be six pub mirrors for the exterior walls, commissioned from AE Harradence, illustrating famous sporting subjects from Dawn Fraser to Phar Lap.

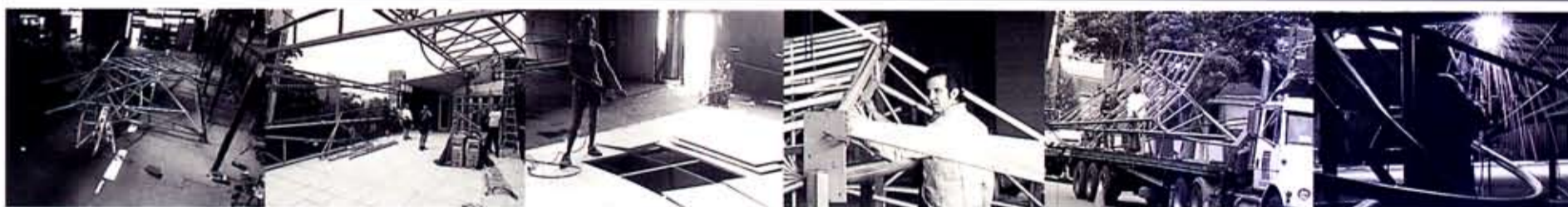
Client: Transmedia. **Architect:** Julie Cracknell & Peter Lonergan. **Project team:** Peter Lonergan, Bill McMahon, Patrick Nicholas, Peter Niemes, Scott Colman, Richard Goodwin, Tom Ferguson. **Builder:** The Avnir Group. **Furniture:** Anibou. **Publican:** John McGurk.



Clockwise, from left: a new curved stair echoes the hotel's Art Deco origins; subtle illumination from within the joinery units of the bar of The Local, with its translucent glass panel above.

ON THE ROOF

RICHARD GOODWIN



This picture, crafted from steel, Zinalume, fabric and glass, Richard Goodwin's sculpture has added a challenging element to the Sydney skyline. Above, from left: the construction

"I believe in the notion of the parasite," says artist and architect Richard Goodwin, who sees his extraordinary roof sculpture for the Union Hotel as a parasitic adhesion to the building. "I wanted the building to turn itself inside out and reveal social information to the public realm, becoming extroverted." The steel, Zinalume, fabric and glass sculpture was built in a large temporary studio, dismantled and rebuilt on site.

"We've always been keen to incorporate public art in our work," says architect Peter Lonergan. "In this case, the clients supported the idea of a public

gesture and Richard became part of the design team from the start."

Goodwin was given free rein with the site. Though he has many public art projects under his belt, this one, he says "is the first built as conceived, without being diluted".

"Richard came in ready to defend every spar," recalls Lonergan, "and looked shocked when I said 'It's great.'"

Artist/architect: Richard Goodwin. **Builders:** Richard Goodwin, Leggio Artistic Wrought Iron, Creative Covers and Awnings, Argos Roofing, Architectural Glass Projects. **Engineer:** Partridge Partners.