

**Project Location**  
618-644 Chapel Street  
South Yarra  
Victoria

1\_Palace Cinema's luscious  
foyer featuring decadent  
furniture and accessories.

**Client**  
Palace Cinemas:  
Antonio Zeccola  
Benjamin Zeccola

**Design**  
Hecker Phelan  
and Guthrie:  
Hamish Guthrie  
Paul Hecker  
Hugh Lane

**Schiavello Project  
Solutions**  
Peter Thompson  
Adam Terrill

**Area**  
500 m<sup>2</sup>



# RAVISHING DRAMA

An alluring glow of soft golden light radiates through the shop window and draws me in off a wet, cold Chapel Street. As I step into the theatrically furnished space, complete with heavy black curtains, ornate fringed lamps and delectable furniture, I attempt to decipher what this fantastical place is that I have entered.

\_The Palace Cinema's new foyer is an ambrosial delight. Designed by Hecker Phelan and Guthrie (HPG) through the trusting guidance of Palace's owner Antonio Zeccola, the result is a surprising combination of lush materials, eras and other-worldly themes, evoking a sensory explosion. \_Customers linger for drinks at the bar and lounge on the circular gold velvet banquette, adorned with diamond button detail. Gothic chairs and black Baroque mirrors that echo themselves into eternity emerge under spotlights through the dark backdrop. These focal points behave in what Hugh Lane of HPG describes as 'a series of intimate theatre sets, within a dark Parisian salon.'

\_With the intention of offering a sophisticated meeting place before a movie, and for luxurious reflection afterwards, Palace Cinema's foyer and bar encapsulate the cinematic experience, providing a memorable night out. Creating an environment between the imagined and the harsh bustling reality of the outside world, HPG provide a transition zone which envelopes the movie watcher. As Hugh Lane continues, HPG have 'taken great delight in creating a wonderful buffer space through careful use of finishes,

lighting and décor'. Antonio Zeccola wanted to offer patrons 'something different from the standard suburban cinema experience, to avoid the harsh finishes and bright lighting which typically jar the senses immediately after the darkness of the cinema auditorium.'

\_The enriched experience was aided by Schiavello's Project Solutions (SPS) team, acquiring the head contractor role. Schiavello was chosen for the client's confidence in their demonstrated track record to deliver successful solutions. SPS demonstrated their commitment to delivering within the twelve week deadline, and in particular, on a type of project atypical for Schiavello. Adam Terrill (SPS) elaborates, 'The project was set on a very tight timeframe with an expectation of a quality high class finish. Some specified products were either not available or suitable. We had to shop with the client far and wide in order to meet the project expectations. It was a very rewarding project considering restraints that were in place from day one.'

\_Palace Cinemas are renowned for exhibiting impressive art-house, cutting-edge and international cinema, and each year host highly-acclaimed cinematic events, including the Italian and Greek film festivals. A playful and opulent piece of theatre in itself, the design of the Palace foyer acts as an extension of the superior selection of films on show; as well as the eclectic cultures and celebration of the art form that is cinema.