



## Energy

### PROJECT

Victor Churchill

### LOCATION

132 Queen Street, Woollahra, NSW

### DESIGNER

Dreamtime Australia Design

### BUILDER

Beebo Constructions Pty Ltd

### PRINCIPAL GLASS SUPPLIER

Viridian

### PRINCIPAL GLAZIER

Micos Architectural Division

### GLASS SPECIFICATIONS

\*OptiView™ – 12.38 mm

Viridian SuperClear™ – 12mm

Viridian Thermotech E™ IGU

Viridian Renew™ Self Cleaning Glass

Viridian ComfortPlus™ Neutral Glass

\*OptiView™ is a trademark of Pilkington Group Limited



## A CUT ABOVE THE REST

Text – Samantha Senior  
Photography – Paul Gosney

One of the latest projects from Dreamtime Australia Design has seen Australia's oldest butcher transformed into a unique shopping attraction for meat lovers. Victor Churchill is the first foray into retail for father and son team, Victor and Anthony Puharich, who own Vic's Premium Meats wholesalers, Australia's leading meat suppliers to some of the finest restaurants in Australia, China and Singapore.

While Anthony and Victor only recently acquired the store in the inner Sydney suburb of Woollahra, its history dates back 133 years. Keen to infuse some of that history into the store's identity, the name Victor Churchill is a tribute to the Churchill family who created Churchill's Butchers in 1876 and to Victor Puharich.

"The name fits the brief perfectly as we wanted to instill tradition and history into the design from the outset," says Dreamtime Director Michael McCann.









Inspired by Anthony's travels and interest in European charcuteries, Michael and the Dreamtime team have created a boutique butcher experience, which has successfully blended the look and feel of a traditional European butcher shop, with modern, cutting-edge design elements. Having been described in the media as the 'Bulgari of butchers' and 'Tiffany meats', at first glance with its European styled facade and well-designed display window, Victor Churchill could indeed be mistaken for a high-end jewellery store. Peer closer into the double glazed, refrigerated vitrine though and you will soon notice that in place of glittering jewels sits an ever-changing array of hanging meat and poultry, all displayed on stunning custom-made copper and glass shelving, along with items set into an illuminated ice display. OptiView™, a non-reflective glass from Australian glass manufacturer Viridian, was used to enhance the display window by minimising the reflection that can occur in retail shop fronts.

Take hold of the solid copper sausage shaped door handle to step inside and you will see the attention to detail continues.

"Rich timber wall paneling, timber beamed ceilings with hand carved copper fretwork and an Italian Calacatta marble slab

floor, sliced into mosaic tiles then re-laid in book matched slab form with marble wall coving in an Australian-first installation by stonemasons Gitani Stone form the base," says Michael.

Custom copper refrigerated cabinets line a wall displaying premium meats and other specialty products made on-site under the direction of chef Romeo Baudouin, while a charcuterie counter displays quality cured meats for sale from around the world. Dutch Berkel meat slicers are used to manually cut the meat. "Unlike electrically powered slicers which produce heat, the manual slicers can slice the finest cuts of meat, without the risk of spoiling it" says Michael.

Not far from the counter, a museum quality, antique Berkel floor-standing slicer, restored in Europe especially for Victor Churchill, is on display for customer viewing. A skylight above the charcuterie provides natural light for staff working at counter.

"We specified a combination of Renew™ Self Cleaning Glass and ComfortPlus™ Neutral glass for the skylight," says lead designer, Sally Gordon. "The Low E coating was essential because of its temperature control properties. This was paramount in order to protect the staff working below."

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Many elements that are traditionally positioned behind the scenes instead take centre stage at Victor Churchill, segregated only by glass. Additionally, with the interior space relatively small at 190m<sup>2</sup>, glass provided a strategic way of creating different zones without a heavily partitioned feel.

Staff assist customers from the middle of the shop, while behind a floor-to-ceiling glass wall butchers work away within a refrigerated space on round floor-to-bencht top timber butcher blocks. With each block surrounded by recessed in-floor up lights, the butchers are undoubtedly on show, their backdrop an old sandstone wall.

"The sandstone wall wasn't part of the original design," says Michael. "It was discovered during demolition and it was decided to keep it and highlight its unique, historical value. While it doesn't look completely at home with the shop's elegant European timber décor, this only heightens its uniqueness."

In an innovative display of recycling, the hot and cold kitchens located to the rear of the store feature walls clad in animal hide, from Texas based leather artist, Kyle Bunting. As Dreamtime wanted to ensure that every detail was visible to customers,

they specified Viridian SuperClear™ glass in front of the sandstone wall and hide panels in the kitchen.

"We wanted every detail of the material to be on display. This was especially important in front of the hide where the beautiful texture would have been lost had the glass not been clear enough for each hair to be defined and visible. It was so successful that you really have to look twice before you see the glass," says Sally.

Rather than being tucked away at the back of the store, the cool room has been transformed into another eye-catching feature. Behind a floor-to-ceiling glass wall, specialty cuts of meat slowly pass by customers, hung from a custom designed cog gear. To the rear sits a metal chain rack with larger carcass meat cuts aging, all backed by a stunning floor-to-ceiling back-lit Himalayan salt brick wall. As well as providing a dramatic background to the hanging cuts, the wall of salt infuses the meat with ancient salt and absorbs humidity to create the perfect atmosphere for dry aging the meat.

Back-of-house, the designers' and client's desire to instill history into the store again manifests itself; in the staff dining room of all places.







"Two walls of the staff room, which will double as a meeting room, have been covered in floor-to-ceiling wallpaper with one wall showing black and white photos of the Churchills and the other opposite wall showing photos of Vic's Meats, providing a fascinating combination" says Michael.

Just when it might all be starting to sound a bit over the top, a selection of meat themed, quirky inclusions stop Victor Churchill from appearing too self indulgent. From the aforementioned sausage shaped door handles—which were cast in solid copper from real Vic's Meats' sausages—to the custom designed sausage wallpaper that lines the bathroom walls, Vic and Anthony along with the Dreamtime team have managed to inject a little humour into the concept. In this sense, the pièce de résistance is the 'chook cam' wall.

"A nod to a recent Louis Vuitton window display, multiple video cameras all focused on the daily special sitting within a glass domed display pedestal ensure that the tasty morsel will not escape nor escape attention!" says Michael.

Michael says Dreamtime Australia Design has been blown away by the success of the project and the attention it has received.

"When a client intends to break all the rules yet respect them at the same time it represents the ultimate paradox, which is the most thrilling project to be involved with. Sally, lighting designer, Tim Barry, and myself are honoured to have had the opportunity to be involved."

Commenting on Victor Churchill's recent number two listing in Australian Traveller magazine's '100 Greatest Australian Gourmet Experiences', Michael says, "It certainly was a proud moment to read the list and find Victor Churchill at number two. It is a true testament to all those involved, especially Anthony and Victor Puharich."

Last week, Dreamtime Australia Design was announced as the winner of the Premier Award for Interior Design Excellence and Innovation in the 2010 Interior Design Awards, for its unique Victor Churchill design. The jury said: "This project challenges notions about retailing and the traditional

idea of a butcher shop. The interior reveals a dramatic juxtaposition of old-world production and contemporary theatre. The design intensifies the retail journey and the customer experience. This is a world-class example of retail design and may set a benchmark for retail design globally." Dreamtime Australia Design also won the Retail Design Award and Best Commercial Design (NSW) for its work on Victor Churchill.

