

ISSN 1324 1613



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PRINT POST APPROVED
PP255003/01936
\$5.95 / NZ \$6.95 INCL. GST

AUSTRALIAN
CREATIVE
APR/MAY 2003

CREATIVE



OLD FAVOURITES

landini associates

AS SYDNEY'S LANDINI ASSOCIATES CELEBRATES ITS 10TH YEAR, CHANTAL OMODIAGBE SPOKE TO THE COMPANY'S ENIGMATIC CREATIVE DIRECTOR, MARK LANDINI, ABOUT THE COMPANY'S SUCCESS.

In person, designer Mark Landini has an air of calm, understated confidence; qualities for which his company, Landini Associates, has also become known. Landini's enthusiastic use of the word "simplicity", to answer a gamut of questions, ranging from his design philosophy to the design

of his studio space, makes clear he has an aversion to over-complicating anything to do with the business of design. This leads me to qualify that Landini is firm on his view that the company is "in the design business, not in the business of design". Semantics perhaps, but a neat distinction that places design at the forefront of this outfit's operation.

Landini Associates is a 20-strong design and brand consultancy located in Sydney's Surry Hills. Technically, it is a multi-disciplinary studio, best known for branded environment



Cruise Bar
Interiors and identity



projects, such as the Volvo Gallery, Lexus Showroom (a project that influenced the collateral), Vintage Cellars, David Jones' Foodchain and The Cruise Bar at Sydney's International Passenger Terminal, but it has also been involved in large-scale branding (graphics) projects such as Shell Optimax, Sheridan Australia (for which the company is currently producing new packaging) and Liquorland.

Many of Landini's contemporaries argue that he is, primarily, in the

business of interior design, but he says that's "a fairly antiquated and internationally redundant attitude".

"We are, primarily, in the business of developing and creating brands," he counters. "Brands have a multitude of customer touch points and channels. As such, we need to take a holistic approach. Think about it, if we didn't cover every aspect of a brand's communication, we could not help in the development of singular and focused businesses."

He also believes that, at the end

of the day, clients don't really care what tools are used to deliver this. "Multi-disciplined and full-service are expressions of the internal make up of design studios, and not the product that they deliver," says Landini. "What's important is understanding the scope of a brand's communication and having the resources to articulate and realise these touch points."

With equal zest, he believes that strategy in design is a given. "It's difficult to deliver effective, commercial design that's not strategic," he says

adding, "both intuition and experience can play a part, but we don't arrive at style or fashion-driven solutions unless appropriate."

Landini Associates' 1993-2001 compendium is a stylish collection of visually seductive work, and shows an enviable client portfolio.

The consistent delivery of deceptively simple design solutions that are considered strategically, creatively and pragmatically effective, appears to be one of Landini Associates' hallmarks.



David Jones Foodchain
Interiors, identity, point-of-sale and packaging



Vitesse
Interiors, identity and packaging

Clients span both national and international brands – Brambles Industries, Hyatt Hotel Group, Telstra, Coles Myer, David Jones Limited, Harvey Nichols, Habitat, Jigsaw, Parliament House, Tesco Supermarkets and Westpac Banking Corporation – revealing a broad playing field and the businesses' ability to compete in a global design market.

The compendium's preface concludes with this statement: "We hope it [the book] conveys how carefully we craft everything we do ... with a single unifying aim: to create simple things that last."

This philosophy can be traced back to Landini's time as group creative director at RSCG Conran Design, and creative director of retail at Fitch RS in London during the '80s. It is no surprise then that the principle of defining complexity through simplicity embodies Landini's approach.

On entering the white Pawson-like interior of the company's headquarters, off Crown Street, it is easy to feel a strange relief from the bombardment of messages outside; its walls are completely free of the visual distractions usually displayed to promote a company's work. It suddenly becomes

clear why the business attracts perceptions of bemusement among peers, and I wondered momentarily, if intent played a part.

With Landini at the helm, the inclusion of three in-house strategic planners, two architects and designers specialising in graphics, interiors, packaging, furniture and product design, Landini Associates presents as highly competent, both in skills and experience. Another way in which Landini gains respect is that he speaks highly of the Australian design market with fewer misgivings than one might expect, despite coming from the UK

market. Indeed, the passion with which he speaks about design, being a designer and the importance of strategy in design, resounds as the necessary ingredients for the sea change we need to evolve design in the Australian market.

Perhaps it is for these reasons that Landini Associates attracts the calibre of clients that it does, as much as for the appeal it wins through recommendation and the quality of its work. It is this process of discovery that grants Landini, and his studio, all the more time to concentrate on the first and foremost reason for being in business - to design.



Sushiworld
Interiors and identity



Telecom NZ "The Shed"
Interiors, fit-out and graphics