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COMMERCIAL Kitchens

SERVING DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS

A feast for the eyes

Sydney, Australia's
new airport McDonald's
is turning more than
hamburgers



Photography by Michele Aboud, courtesy Landini Associates

A special supplement to:

COMMERCIAL
Construction & Renovation

Mark Landini,
Creative Director
Landini Associates

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The iconic golden arches are always going to catch your eye. But the new McDonald's at Sydney International Airport's Terminal 1, a glowing yellow glazed kitchen set high above the eating area, is one for the books.

Working closely with the team of designers and strategic thinkers from Landini Associates, McDonald's Australia is giving fans of its world-famous quick service brand a totally new experience. The restaurant's vertical design maximizes its airport footprint while also providing a peek into how the magic is made; a feast for the eyes.

We caught up with Mark Landini, Creative Director at Landini Associates, to get his thoughts on how McDonald's newest flagship model is helping set the tone for the brand's presence around the world.

Give us a snapshot of the brand.

McDonald's is the world's largest, and arguably most iconic restaurant brand, with tens of thousands of locations globally. Landini is proud to be part of the ongoing evolution of the McDonald's brand and creator of a new international flagship model, Project Ray, whose designs help enunciate McDonald's continuing leadership and core values of innovation.

What type of consumer are you targeting?

The initiative was to challenge Millennials' expectations of the brand. In response, Landini Associates and McDonald's created Project Ray, which initially launched in December 2015 at Admiralty Station in Hong Kong. It has since rolled out internationally and continues to do so. Landini Associates' scope of work included the complete reinvention of the international restaurant chain, including brand positioning and master planning, architecture and interior design, graphics, packaging, work wear, and design standards and guidelines for roll out.



Photography by Trevor Mein



How does the design of the restaurant cater to what today's consumers are looking for?

In a world where everything is getting increasingly chaotic, it's time to be quiet and let the food and services do the talking. As such, Project Ray is an exercise in simplicity. It is designed to be a place of respite from the noise of today's urban life. The energetic environments that have been the signature for McDonald's are now replaced with a simpler, calmer and more classic feel.

What are some of the adjustments you made to your business model surrounding the recent state of events?

Meeting today's challenges required that Landini Associates looked beyond McDonald's established norms and "reinvent normal" — that is to take time to reconsider what went before and sometimes start anew—to appeal to a like minded, sometimes younger, but always broad audience.

What kind of conversations are you having with your customers?

We conceived Project Ray to be a "holistic toolkit of parts" that can be fine-tuned by

location and customer profile. Understanding these differences allow the furniture, balance of materials and layouts to be adjusted accordingly. Finishes like concrete, glass, stainless steel and oak form a palette of stylish simplicity. They create a backdrop of recognizable neutrality, promoting the service, product and people who come to enjoy it. Mix these ingredients one way to tell an urban story, then another to localize it.

Walk us through how and why the restaurants are designed the way they are?

The Times Square location in New York offers a good example of how our design process works in practice, giving back space to the food and service.

It doesn't get more "bustling" than Times Square, so behind a new three-story glass facade we created a calming interior that provides a number of vantage points onto the vibrant NYC streets below. We toned down the visual color that is typical to the FSR category, in favor of abstracted oversized yet minimal wall treatments that nod to the heritage of McDonald's iconic products and golden arches.

A number of different seating options and a self-order kiosk system enhance

functionality and allow for a variety of different guest experiences, all realized with the Project Ray material palette of concrete, glass, metal and oak. Another Landini innovation is the yellow staircase that injects vibrancy and visually connects all three levels. The design is instantly recognizable as a McDonald's, and it's also recognizable as a unique New York restaurant. This ability to create an exceptional experience for customers is the heart of the "why" behind the Project Ray design approach.

It also doesn't harm to mention that the restaurant design won a Gold award at the 2019 NYC Design Awards for Best Interior Hospitality Project.

Other awards include:

2019 Retail Design Institute of America Class of 2019 (Best Designs Globally in 2019)
Project: McDonald's Times Square

2019 Retail Design Institute of America Innovation: Branding
Project: McDonald's Times Square

2019 Retail Design Institute of America Innovation: Digital Integration
Project: McDonald's Times Square



Photography by (left to right) Andrew Meredith (images 1 and 2), Ross Honeysett