

Crystalbrook Kingsley, a Landmark Reimagined into a Five-Star Hotel

A design story that celebrates what has been and what is to come

Newcastle, 3 June 2021 – Crystalbrook Collection has transformed Newcastle’s iconic Council Administration Centre into a sustainably-considered, 130 room luxury hotel.

Christened Crystalbrook Kingsley, a reference to Newcastle’s earlier name of Kingston which dates back to 1804, the once-in-a-lifetime recreation preserves the local heritage and embraces the environment while becoming the city’s first five-star hotel.

The Roundhouse

Known locally as the Roundhouse, the brutalist building was originally built in 1977 by Newcastle City Council as an administration centre by locally based architects Wilson and Suters in collaboration with Melbourne-based architects Romberg and Boyd who were inspired by Boston City Hall, Massachusetts.

Crystalbrook Collection engaged local architectural firm EJE Architecture for the recreation. The design intent was to strengthen the identity of the iconic building by elegantly completing the existing structure with a rooftop addition and introducing a human scale to the ground plane with a protective transparent porte cochère. Strongly focusing on the existing structure, the design concept worked with the rhythm of the façade created by its existing concrete blades.

The colour and materials of the additions are recessive in their nature; accentuating, celebrating and not competing with the concrete masonry for which the Roundhouse is known.

EJE Architecture Director, Barney Collins, said: “Our design is subservient to the existing building and successfully retains the beauty of the original structure. It is respectful to the true qualities of this representative example of the Modernist, Brutalist style in Newcastle.

“Our intention was to create a contemporary and elegant look while softening the proportions; showcasing a vision of modern architecture while preserving the historical value of the existing brutalist structure.”

Interiors

The same consideration to Crystalbrook Kingsley's exterior was skilfully extended to the inside, designed by Melbourne-based Suede Interior Design.

Hints and glimpses of birds, footprints, and feather motifs in the Crystalbrook Kingsley brand colours of yellow and charcoal, tell the story of Newcastle's mining past – the canary free from its cage – immortalising the little bird in the timeless style of the hotel.

To balance the visual weight of the architecture, Suede Interior Design created an internal space with undulating forms, warm gold hues and plush materials which result in a clean and sophisticated, refined yet comfortable, luxurious experience for visitors.

Rooms and suites feature carefully designed pieces to continue the language from the architecture, juxtaposing its past with modern, contemporary forms.

"Our aim was to create a design that not only reflected Newcastle, but something that would be culturally connected and relevant to its location. The use of curves and rhythm within the guest rooms and public interiors mimic and pay homage to the lines of the architecture of the building," explained Clifford Rip, Founder and Principal at Suede Interior Design. "The interiors, therefore, are both nostalgic and effervescent, the kind of design personality that is considered yet effortless in its sophistication."

The Rooftop

The rooftop space will open with Roundhouse restaurant (named after the Novocastrian nickname of the building within which it's housed) and Romberg's bar boasting panoramic views of Newcastle city and Nobby's Head.

Guests arrive in the original heritage elevators. The elevator doors open to Romberg's featuring a lowered 10-metre marble bar allowing uninterrupted views.

Roundhouse restaurant features full-grown olive trees that line the rooftop's central corridor. The use of large glass ceilings over all the tables allows one to feel as though they are dining in the groves in the day and under the stars in the evening.

Sustainability and Responsible Luxury

The architectural concept for Crystalbrook Kingsley observes Crystalbrook Collection's value of Responsible Luxury endeavouring to protect the environment and create sustainable experiences that enhance rather than compromise the guest experience.

Construction involved local suppliers where possible who reused and retained as much of the original fabric within the building and recycled all demolished materials through local recycling facilities.

Crystalbrook Kingsley also features key furniture pieces made by a local carpenter using reclaimed timbers with natural dyes and sealers, carpets made from environmentally friendly 100% undyed sheep yarns, and earthenware and key decorative pieces crafted by a nearby potter.

LED lighting throughout the building, occupancy sensors on every level, and block-out curtains work to reduce energy wastage.

Crystalbrook Kingsley will also feature all Crystalbrook's environmental practices including a single use plastic free environment, a 100% waste-free bathroom, upcycled brand items and the use of technology, such as in-room tablets and mobile check-in, to create paperless environments and experiences.

Crystalbrook Kingsley opens Wednesday, 9 June 2021. Bookings can be made by visiting crystalbrookcollection.com.

Editor's Notes – What's in a name? Well, all our love, sweat and tears as we see our family of hotels grow. Please note, Crystalbrook hotel names should not be shortened or altered. E.g. Crystalbrook Kingsley should not be referred to as The Kingsley or Kingsley.

Correct hotel names:

- Crystalbrook Albion
- Crystalbrook Bailey
- Crystalbrook Byron
- Crystalbrook Flynn
- Crystalbrook Kingsley
- Crystalbrook Riley

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About Crystalbrook

Crystalbrook is one of Australia's leading sustainable and innovative independent hospitality companies. Each hotel in the portfolio carries an authentic expression of its location, a passion for responsible luxury, considered design and a twinkle of fun for a uniquely enriching experience.

Crystalbrook's portfolio includes:

- Crystalbrook Riley, Cairns, Queensland
- Crystalbrook Albion, New South Wales
- Crystalbrook Byron, Byron Bay, New South Wales
- Crystalbrook Bailey, Cairns, Queensland
- Crystalbrook Flynn, Cairns, Queensland
- Crystalbrook Kingsley, Newcastle, New South Wales – opening 9 June 2021
- Crystalbrook Brisbane – opening 1 July 2021

The Group also owns and operates a collection of ten restaurants, three spas, Crystalbrook Superyacht Marina in Port Douglas along with Crystalbrook Station and its subsidiary pastoral businesses.

Responsible Luxury

[Responsible Luxury](#) and sustainability is at the forefront of the way Crystalbrook thinks and operates.

At a glance:

- Operating a single use plastic free environment. No plastic straws, water bottles or single use bathroom amenity bottles (in the past two years the Group has saved over three million plastic bottles from entering landfill)
- Farming their own beef
- Sourcing at least 80% of produce from within a three-hour drive of each hotel
- Use of technology, such as in-room iPads and mobile check-in to create paperless environments and experiences
- Use of recycled and upcycled materials. Examples include key cards made from recycled wood, coat hangers made from recycled paper and toothbrushes made from sugar cane and cornstarch

Crystalbrook Collection and Ghassan About Group

Crystalbrook Collection is part of Ghassan About Group promoted by international entrepreneur and philanthropist Ghassan About. The group is a multi-business conglomerate engaged in automobiles, real estate, hospitality, FMCG, food, retail, bespoke catering, media and logistics. In business for more than two decades, the group operates from its global headquarters in the United Arab Emirates with offices in Australia, Belgium, Jordan and Turkey.

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