

Nexus Designs have a reputation for designing interiors which have a particular harmony with a natural environment while injecting a vibrant relationship between people and places. Their work has a hint of asceticism. And like a masterful oil painting, it is often what is left out which makes the finished design more rewarding. It is therefore fitting that Nexus should have been chosen to design the interior of Yulara, a multi-million dollar resort beside Ayers Rock.

Yulara

Bringing the outside inside

Janne Faulkner and Harley Anstee of Nexus Designs saw the Yulara Tourist Village as a unique opportunity for the interior designer. As Janne says, "It gave us the chance of working in a virgin setting where nature dictates the form and style of both architecture and interior design. It opened up a palette of unique colours whose depth, wonderfully unlikely contrasts and combinations can only be guessed at by urban Australians: the red of the sand, the soft grey-green of the spinifex, the corn hues of the desert grasses shading to grey and the softest mauve.



"We see the village both as a work of art, and as a place for people which must appear as a logical extension of its surroundings. It must also work as a series of pleasant interconnected spaces in which visitors, having arrived by plane or bus, can relax and feel at home. Public spaces like foyers, bars, restaurants and shops have their own identities as well as a sense of excitement. Bedrooms should be easy and familiar places in which the tourist can relax while absorbing the novel and unexpected scale of the desert, its colour and vastness."

Yulara Tourist Resort

The Yulara Tourist Resort is located just outside the Uluru National Park in the heart of Central Australia. The park covers approximately 1,325 square kilometres and is situated 460 kilometres by road south-west of Alice Springs. Contained in the park are a number of unique geological formations including Ayers Rock and the Olgas. Ayers Rock is the Park's most popular attraction and is a leading tourist attraction in Australia. In 1982, about 86,000 people visited Ayers Rock and the Uluru National Park. With the construction of the resort this figure is expected to increase substantially. The resort commenced construction in April 1982 and will be completed in September 1984 at an estimated developed cost of \$140 million. It will cater for 5,000 visitors per day and approximately 400 residents in a virtually self-contained village. It will also contain its own water supply, power generation plant,

communication system, waste disposal services and road system. Where possible, passive energy design incorporating low energy systems, in particular solar energy, is used. Planning maximises spectacular views of Ayers Rock and the Olgas.



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1), 2), Yulara at dusk.
3) Looking through the bar lounge towards the main restaurant.
4) Designed by Philip Cox and Partners, Yulara is designed to harmonise with the landscape...
5) ... and is sited to witness the varying moods of Ayers Rock.
6) Nexus devised a cohesive colour palette for the interior, the different areas of the complex each having their own identity.

The designers

Architects: Philip Cox and Partners
Interior Design: Nexus Designs
Graphic Design: Max Robinson

The colour palette

Resort 1

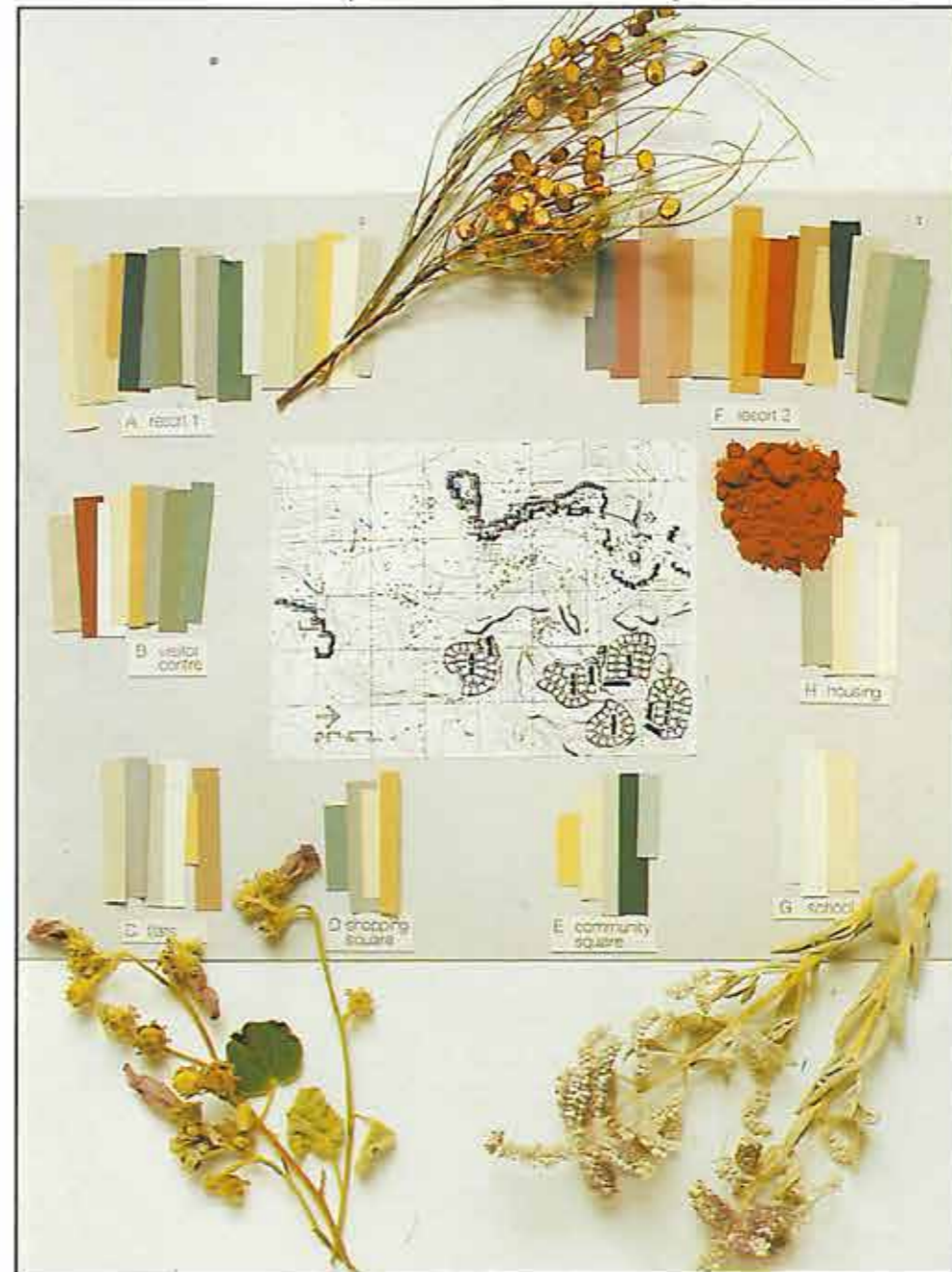
Resort 1 has an atmosphere of natural, understated elegance and uses a cooler palette. This comprises soft blue-greens, grey-greens of the spinifex, deeper greens of the acacias, corn and cream hues of the desert grasses, and pale sand and terracotta colours to be found in the boulders and stone. Included are strong golds of the desert grevillias and the yellow of the mulga scrub.

Resort 2

Resort 2 offers the luxurious sophistication of an international resort. The strong, vibrant palette comprises the wildflower colours of mauves, purples and pinks, a large range of rich terracottas and sand colours, the more sombre tones in the rocks and the bottle green and deep blue-green that emerges in a long view of the landscape. Resort 2 will concentrate more on the strong, warm hues of the desert sands and the ever-changing glowing tones of Ayers Rock itself. This varying play of light and colour will be mirrored in the exciting and extensive use of polished chrome and a high gloss finish on the floors. Generally surfaces will have a more reflective finish than those of Resort 1.

Public areas

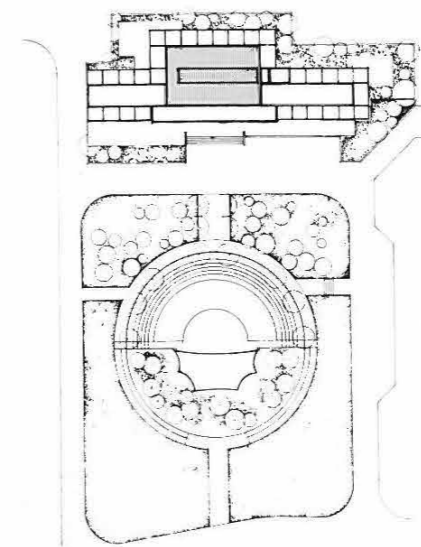
Overall the general feeling is richer and stronger than Resort 1. Differences in texture are more pronounced; heavier weaves in the fabrics, more defined patterns on materials and more concentrated, purer colours. The atmosphere in the public areas has been designed to entice visitors to relax and enjoy their activities in extreme comfort while remaining aware of the resort's tranquil surroundings.



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The aim was to minimise the extreme climatic variations of the area: the searing daytime heat, the chilly nights and the pervasive dust. Nexus also wanted to provide a comfortable yet stimulating environment for the tourists who will visit the village. The design principles revolve around colour which is the prime interior design element. Large wall areas of distinct colour are used throughout the village to reaffirm the strength and vastness of the outback.

Key elements of the architecture such as columns, trusses, beams and air conditioning ducts are blended with the wall colours in subtle variations. Items of furniture are picked out in deeper tones, which may be a development of the softer tones in the basic palette, or which borrow from the occasional splashes of vibrant colour (like wildflowers or native birds) in the changing Northern Territory landscape. All of the colours used have been chosen from the elements of the outback; the transient hues of Ayers Rock, the desert sands, the



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7) Model of the complex.
8) Plan of the community square which is located at the northern end of the village spine between the shopping square and Resort Hotel 2.
9) The Nexus Designs team:
(left to right)
Denis Holland, Jane Scally, Judy Singer, Marea Panettieri, Noelaine Collette, Christine Bedford, Janne Faulkner, Harley Anstee and Russell Grainger.



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undergrowth and the extraordinary range of wildflowers.

Janne Faulkner takes it further. "What we've done with the interior is to soften the exterior palette to create a cooler environment while still retaining a quality of light in contrast to the excessive heat and glare outside. It was a difficult line to tread using warm tones to create that feeling of coolness, but we think it has worked. This is partly because of its subtlety. From the terracotta we have gone to an apricot or soft terracotta flooring. The carpet is strong terracotta with a dark green stripe which is picked up again in the palette of the paintings. The paintings, which also mirror the palette, weren't commissioned for the building but we went to an enormous

amount of trouble with the architect to select the very highest quality works of Australian art."

Nexus have used numerous finishes, varying from smooth painted wall surfaces to coarsely textured carpets, to mirror the enormous variety of the terrain. The fabric and furniture selections echo the fine, granular appearance of the sands, the roughly hewn surfaces of the rock and the delicate nuances of the flora. Wall textures are basically smooth because of problems associated with dust, and for ease of cleaning.

Fabrics

Fabrics have been selected to combine with the overall aesthetics of the complex. While practicality is a major consideration, design and colour also play an important role. When patterned fabrics are used, the patterns are generally small and unobtrusive, to give a feeling of space and light. Tough and practical natural fabrics like leather, wool, canvas and cotton have been used as much as possible, as these are resilient materials responding to the requirements of a tough, demanding terrain.

Lighting

Generally, lighting is as unobtrusive as possible. Downlighting is used extensively, being recessed into the ceiling spaces wherever possible, and there are numerous surface-mounted spotlights where trusses form the ceiling spaces.

Public Areas

The overall feeling is one of coolness, comfort and intimacy. Its low key atmosphere has selected elements to catch the eye such as the brushed chrome face to the reception counter and bar, and the strong, vibrant hues in the upholstery in the lounge bar. All colours flow through from the landscape outside. Interior wall and ceiling colours blend with exterior walls to echo the colours of the undergrowth. The terrazzo flooring is in varying shades of pale terracotta matching the exterior paving, while carpets are woven from a palette of blue-greens interspersed with terracotta shades.

Lobby Lounge

The warm terracotta shades of the terrazzo flooring link the exterior paving with the internal floors. Terrazzo is cool, durable and practical and the stones used in the aggregate are of Australian origin. Rugs are used on this surface to define seating areas and to achieve a feeling of intimacy by grouping seating together within the overall larger space. The lounge furniture is of Australian design and origin. It consists of chairs and two-seater sofas with co-ordinated coffee tables. The basic structure is polished chrome frame and legs, ash timber surround and upholstered cushions with zip-off covers.