

WORDS MARG HEARN  
PHOTOGRAPHY ANSON SMART

INTERIOR DESIGN GREG NATALE  
DESIGN  
LOCATION SYDNEY | AUS  
PROJECT THE OPTOMETRIST

# UNDER THE ARCHES

The traditional residential approach adopted by interior designer Greg Natale for the fit-out of The Optometrist in the Westfield Sydney centre was not about projecting a nostalgic look and feel. Rather, giving consideration to the small size of spectacles, Natale chose to break the space up with traditional wardrobe-style display cabinets and steer clear of integrated displays.

The spectacle displays are backlit to create the effect of the product glowing. “Good retail design is all about the product,” says Natale. “I wanted the shop to look like a beautiful room that you embellish with furniture.” The cabinetry, which is both a functional furniture element for showcasing the spectacles and a sophisticated decorative element, illustrates Natale’s philosophy of integrating architecture, design and decoration in a project.

The lighting technique of concealing the light source was borrowed from high-fashion retail spaces. It’s a technique that prevents glare and light bouncing off glass lenses, which is an important concern in this kind of retail environment.

Dramatic arches across the façade are repeated in the gentle finish to the top of the cabinets – a strong decorative statement and clever reference to round spectacle lenses. Mindful of creating a point of difference in a busy shopping centre, Natale framed the seemingly impossible, thin entry columns in Nero Maquina stone slab. “It’s really important that the shopfront says something about your shop.”

Highlighting Natale’s penchant for playing with contrast to create visual interest in a space is the selection of washed Oak timber flooring, which also adds warmth to the fit-out.

Natale is a designer who embraces decorative elements. In The Optometrist, this is evident in the cabinetry legs, which are a modern interpretation of a bygone era, and Tom Dixon’s ‘Small Cone’ pendant lights, which were chosen for their contemporary

form. The finely detailed wallpaper adds texture and avoids homogenous stark white walls in a brief that essentially called for a black and white colour scheme.

Layout-wise, the client simply requested that the retail space would provide for sunglasses on one side and prescription glasses on the other, with provision for casual seating for trying on spectacles, and two consulting rooms for eye-testing in the back of house.

“I didn’t want The Optometrist to be just another store with another chandelier,” says Natale. And it certainly isn’t just another store. The opulently simple fit-out meets the brief perfectly, and creates an identity for the retail space in a large shopping centre.

*Marg Hearn is a freelance writer based in Melbourne.*



## THE OPTOMETRIST

INTERIOR DESIGN Greg Natale Design  
PROJECT TEAM Greg Natale, Stewart Horton

BUDGET \$280,000  
TIME TO COMPLETE 11 months (total)  
TOTAL FLOOR AREA 60m<sup>2</sup>

GREG NATALE DESIGN  
(61 2) 8399 2103 gregnatale.com

LIGHTING From dedece and Euroluce.

FINISHES Stone from RMS. Dulux paint.  
Rug from Designer Rugs. Floorboards from Precision Flooring. Wallpaper from Baresque. Laminates from Laminex and Tesrol.

FIXED & FITTED Hardware from Industrial Expressions, Häfele, Dorma, and CS Cavity Sliders. Fixtures from Caroma, and Clipsal.

Baresque (61 2) 9966 8470 baresque.com.au  
Caroma 13 14 16 caroma.com.au Clipsal  
1300 202 525 clipsal.com.au CS Cavity  
Sliders (61 2) 9905 0588 cavitysliders.com.au  
dedece (61 2) 9360 2722 dedece.com  
Designer Rugs (61 2) 9550 9933 designer-  
rugs.com.au Dorma (61 2) 9645 6455  
dorma.com.au Dulux 13 23 77 dulux.com.au  
Euroluce (61 2) 9380 6222 euroluce.com.au  
Häfele 1300 659 728 hafele.com.au  
Industrial Expression 1300 173 846  
industrialexpression.com Laminex 13 21 36  
laminex.com.au Precision Flooring  
(61 2) 9690 0991 precisionflooring.com.au  
RMS (61 2) 9316 9677 rmsmarble.com Tesrol  
1300 837 765 tesroldoors.com.au Thonet  
(61 2) 9332 1600 thonet.com.au

ABOVE AND LEFT The arch motif is repeated throughout