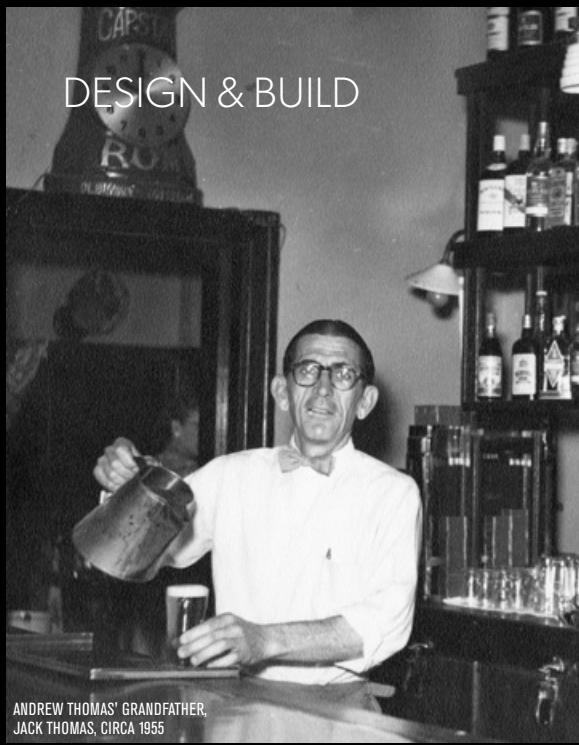


## DESIGN & BUILD



ANDREW THOMAS' GRANDFATHER,  
JACK THOMAS, CIRCA 1955

## THE BUILD

"Anything he does, he does it the right way," says Kelly. "And they don't do it 'til it's right. We had this whole hotel completely designed and tendered, and Andrew said 'You know what? The kitchen's in the wrong spot'. We changed the entire design; moved the kitchen, got rid of the steak concept, and got this amazing 80-person function room. It took us a year to change it all, but it was the right thing to do."

Thomas echoed that the timeline of the protracted job was kept at hand by planning. "It's been a two and a half year process," said Thomas. "By the time we said 'that's the way we'll go', and determined what time of the year we could do it logistically; in winter we could lose some of the beer garden, and be open again in time for summer."

The re-invention of the main foodservice area – originally a period-specific 1950s addition – was a detailed plan that encompassed the ancestral considerations and future potential although in the end slightly hamstrung by its own methodical timeline and the transient nature of regulation. Project Management company **Artazan Property Group** (APG) were brought into the fold following the tender to work with the Thomas' traditional builder, **The Chillie Group**.

"One of the better ones," summarises Cian Fitzgerald, APG project manager. "We put forward a contract instrument and negotiated with the builder, to make sure all the I's are dotted and T's crossed, because often there'll be scope missed and things.

"Chillie Group has worked with the Thomas' family for a long time – there's a bit of a relationship there. Andrew's a good guy to work with. And David's in-there as well. He's got his finger on the pulse.

"I think it's a good way to build hospitality jobs, 'cause there's the option to change things along the way; yes they will charge you for it, but they don't overcharge because they're thinking long-term, and they'll make sure they get it perfectly right. Whereas some of the more commercial builders, they might go in lean and make some money during the job. They did a good job."

During the course of the project, BCA (Building Code of Australia) regulations were updated, in particular codes governing access and environment.

"When you do a renovation over a certain size, you trigger the requirements of the access code. That means ramps everywhere, and it's no small thing," reports Fitzgerald. "You can't argue your way out of it, and costs can add up. You can't have anywhere that someone with a wheelchair can't access, so if you figure the whole venue under a DA, you could get hit with having to upgrade everything.

"Pubs need to be quite clever before they put in a DA and start triggering anything. Think long and hard about what can be done without suddenly needing to put chair lifts everywhere and do major structural works. For example, handrails are very difficult; they have to protrude past the bottom of the steps by 300mm and this is often not possible, so you have to get an alternative solution.

