The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS

Indoor

Ex Animo: Samantha Drummond part 1, prelude

3 minute read



Henry Thai
henry.thai@thepropertytribune.com.au
14 April 2021, 12:02 pm



Samantha Drummond was one of the key individuals in the interior design of Marina Bay Sands, orchestrating a large team of artists and designers. Image – Canva.

- Started out renovating Melbourne restaurants, and working in bars and nightclubs
- Developed appreciation for business aspects of design in Melbourne

The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS

In the first of a series on Samantha Drummond, one of the minds behind Marina Bay Sands, Four Seasons Resort Macau, and other projects, we explore her roots and how she got into designing some of Asia's most iconic projects…

"It's great to hear an Australian accent," said Samantha Drummond, as we started our video call. Each person was on the other side of the world, she in Denmark, myself, in her native Australia.

Samantha Drummond, the Managing Partner of Habitus Design Group, is a powerhouse that has led some of the world's largest and most iconic projects, including Marina Bay Sands in Singapore and Solaire Resort & Casino in the Philippines.

From Melbourne to the world

The conversation begins with her humble beginnings in Melbourne where she started out at the Balaclava Hotel.

A job offered to Ms Drummond by her grandfather whilst still in school, the hotel pub was where she first developed a fascination for hospitality.

The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS



The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS

Above: Samantha Drummond. Image – Supplied.

"I just wanted to learn everything, so I spent time in the kitchen, on the floor, behind the bar, I just learnt everything I could. And then I thought, 'I really like this, I really like the service side of it'"

Spending some 15 years in the industry she quickly came rose through the ranks, eventually taking the helm of well-known bars and clubs across Melbourne.

"I loved to also renovate the spaces, I was doing fashion parades and doing really high profile events for people,"

Samantha Drummond

Ms Drummond said she had the opportunity to work with the late Michael Gudinski, doing afterparties for international labels like Madonna, Sting, and Prince at Carousel.

"Through that period I learnt how to manage peoples expectations, and how to be innovative, put concepts on, it's kind of 'what's going to draw people in? what's going to captivate them and keep them here?' From menu styling to the interior, I kind of fell into it, it wasn't something I was trained as a discipline to do."

The path to Asia

Ms Drummond started her own small design firm specialising in restaurant design in Melbourne but outgrew that. With her eye towards designing larger spaces and hotels, her Asia calling only seemed right.

The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS

"It's daunting when you go to a different country and culture by yourself when you're a single female, and I went there because Melbourne is relatively small, and I had renovated most of the restaurants I knew there."

The calling to Asia was always there, Ms Drummond said she had a deep fascination with the Asian culture and "left as soon as [she] had the opportunity".

"Las Vegas Sands discovered me on a building site, asked if I wanted to go to Macau and that was that."

There are very few people in the world with Ms Drummond's skill set, she said: "a client asked me to do a lot of the design myself because they couldn't find a specialist to do these large volume spaces with connectivity and adjacencies which are quite complex, and require a different mindset of thinking."

The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS



Ms Drummond was one of the key individuals in major integrated resorts such as Marina Bay Sands, Four Seasons Macau, and Solaire Casino & Resort Philippines. Image – Supplied.

Work in Asia was exciting and varied, her Antipodean roots putting her in good stead to walk building sites in harsh weather.

"It's hard work when you're out on these building sites and it's 45 degrees, and you're working with project people, and managing these large scale builds, and anything and everything goes wrong every day, you've got to be in crisis mode every time, and putting out fires and making quick decisions on the ground."

Samantha Drummond

The Property Tribune
AUSTRALIA'S REAL ESTATE NEWS

'Ex Animo' is a new series of interviews and profiles on people in real estate and property.

Subscribe

Stay up to date with Australia's most important property news through our free email service.

Name *

Email *

SIGN UP

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

