

Steering changes at the club

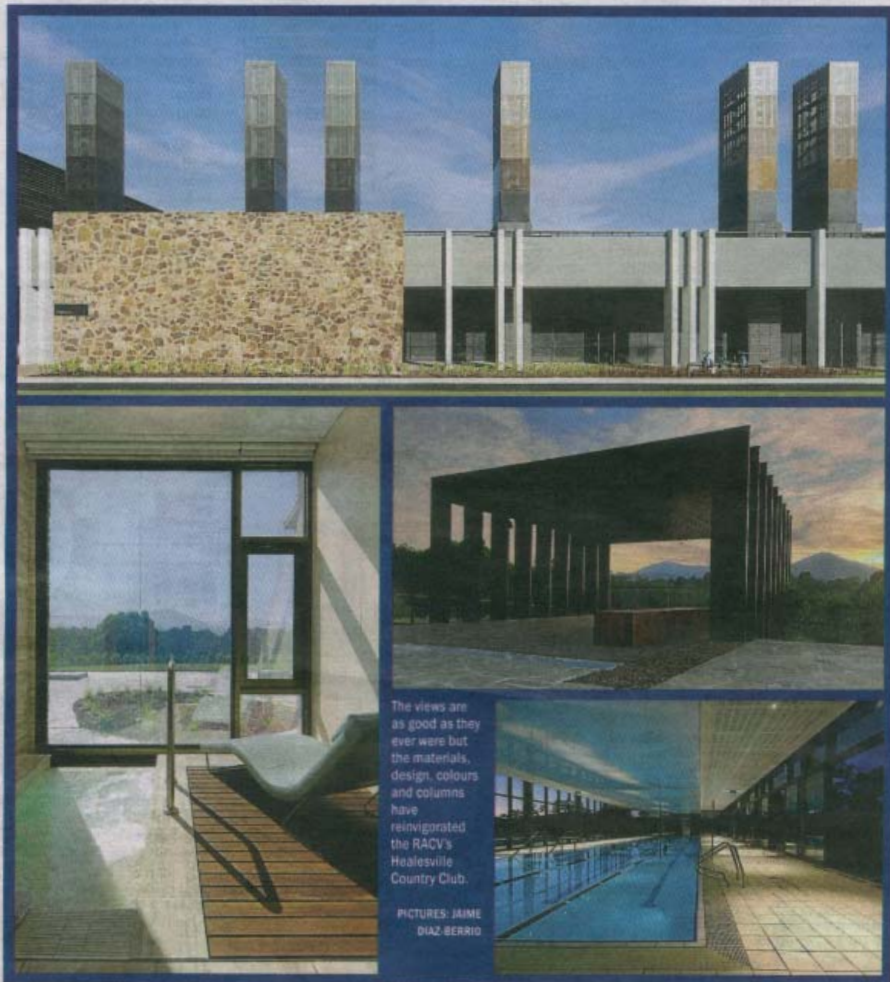
This retreat has broad appeal, writes **Stephen Crafti.**

THE RACV Country Club in Healesville was always a popular destination for RACV members. Virtually untouched since the early 1970s, the building's impressive views of the Dandenong Ranges were sufficient to attract visitors. Its raked ceilings and stone fireplaces provided a touchstone for members keen to escape the city.

"The views are still as captivating but the facilities needed upgrading. The 40 guest rooms were quite cell-like and meagre by today's standards," says Architect Tony Battersby, a director of SJB Architects, which managed the development.

Originally designed by the Demaine Partnership in 1972, the club's sentimental value among its members guided the architects to integrate the past and the present. "Colin Jordan [RACV chief executive] is a visionary. He wanted us to create the most outstanding club of its kind in the region. But he was thinking of world standard," says Battersby, whose brief included new kitchen facilities, conference rooms, guest rooms, a pro golf shop, an indoor swimming pool, gymnasium and wellness centre.

SJB Architects + Interiors (headed by interior designer Andrew Parr) took the initial cue from the majestic trees surrounding the club. Like the trunks of the established eucalypts, with varying shades of coloured bark, the palette for the new buildings extends from black and dark bronze to champagne. Timbers, stained black, offset the Coldstream stone façade. However, the most distinctive architectural feature are 24 "totems", varying in height from four to 12 metres, they are clad in perforated aluminium and anchored on charcoal



The views are as good as they ever were but the materials, design, colours and columns have reinvigorated the RACV's Healesville Country Club.

PICTURES: JAIME DIAZ-BERRIO

coloured blockwork. "We wanted to create an architectural landmark but we also wanted to create a contemporary rhythm in the landscape, something that could be seen from a distance," says Battersby. Interior designer Andrew Parr used a similar palette of colours for the interiors, expressed in the blackwood and limestone lobby and the subtle earthy tones used for the lounge. While the lounge

retains a clubby 1970s ambience, new stone fireplaces have been added, as well as more subtle lighting. Joinery, containing wine displays, adds to the warmth of the interior. "We didn't want to lose the innate essence of the lounge. But we wanted to create a contemporary as well as comfortable environment," says Battersby. The guest bedrooms,

spread over two wings, were also designed with comfort in mind. Blackwood joinery, together with olive leather bedheads combine with thoughtful lighting, including vanities backlit to create a soft glow. As well as a championship golf course, designed by international golf pro Mike Clayton, the RACV club includes a 3000-square-metre forecourt. Used for RACV car club

rallies, it was also designed for food and wine festivals. Kon Dimopoulos's sculpture, *Blue Tree in a Red Landscape*, in the forecourt acts as meeting point for food, wine and car enthusiasts. The RACV club, which has been entered into the AIA (Victorian Chapter) Awards, isn't glitzy or avant-garde. More importantly, it is fine contemporary architecture that engages a broad cross-section of members.

TRUGANINA
Prime industrial parcel
 A PARCEL of industrial land in Melbourne's fast-growing west will go under the hammer on Thursday, June 16 at 12pm. Lot 2 Palmers Road, Truganina, is being marketed by Colliers International's Tony Juliano, Nathan Bingham and Chris Jones, and is expected to sell for \$10 million to \$12 million. The 24.3-hectare englobo site is being sold with approval in place for a 45-lot subdivision. It is zoned Urban Growth Zone - Schedule 2 (UGZ2) under the Wyndham City Council planning scheme, offering flexible development options with a strong industrial and commercial focus.

TOORAK
Retail property sold
 FITZROYS has auctioned a contemporary retail investment property in Toorak for \$726,000. Shop 8, 521 Toorak Road, sold on a yield of 5.5 per cent. Fitzroys agents Chris Kombi and Charles Emmett handled the campaign on behalf of vendor Fedele Holdings. The property is leased for seven years to established tenant Mai Bradley Hair Salon, with an option for seven more years, and is returning \$40,304.62 a year, plus outgoings and GST. It has a frontage of 7.7 metres and a building area of 88 square metres.

KYNETON
Police station to open
 APM Group has just completed the \$7 million Kyneton police station, which opens this week. The original 19th-century buildings, parts of which have been retained, were built in 1861 and once held Ned Kelly. The station, designed by architects HBO+EMTB, includes an underground stormwater tank for toilet flushing and irrigation and solar gas-boosted hot water systems. The 24-hour station will also house a criminal investigation unit, transport management unit and a sexual offences child-abuse unit.

TULLAMARINE
Reserve price topped
 AN INDUSTRIAL property at 14 Allied Drive, Tullamarine, has been sold at auction by ICR Property Group for \$1,030,000, well above the reserve price. The property, near Melbourne Airport, comprises a fully air-conditioned office, a training room and a lofty clear-span warehouse. Improvements include tinted glass office windows, a concrete-sealed warehouse floor, a car hoist and full landscaping. Total building area is 720 square metres.

BRIGHTON
Freehold sells for \$1m
 FITZROYS has sold a freehold property on the popular shopping strip at Church Street, Brighton, the site, sold with vacant possession, is near the corner of Male Street. A final price of just over \$1 million was achieved after two bidders pushed the price over \$950,000. The 232-square-metre site has a five-metre frontage to Church Street and vehicle access at the rear.

Two Fitzroy properties about to hit market

Two properties in prime positions on Brunswick and Smith streets in Fitzroy are set to hit the market through Colliers International this week.

A block of four retail shops at 382-394 Brunswick

Street on a combined site area of more than 1411 sq m is for sale for the first time in more than 40 years in an expressions of interest (EOI) campaign. The portfolio is tipped to fetch more than \$12 million if sold as a whole,

or from \$3 million each if sold as individual properties. The other property, at 237 Smith Street, is a retail and office building that is available at an asking price of \$3.8 million. Matt Stagg and Jeremy

Gruzewski are the agents for Brunswick Street, while Mr Stagg is also handling Smith Street with colleague Ted Dwyer. The Brunswick EOI closes on June 30 at 5pm, and the Smith Street private sale ends on June 30 at 5pm.



382-394 Brunswick Street