

# WONDERFUL JOURNEY

It's been a year of learning curves for *Wonder* design studio, who have tackled the rollercoaster ride with grace. *Annie Reid* brings us a first-hand account.

They're only one-and-a-half years young, but what a year it's been for Pip McCully and Georgina Armstrong, the two interior designers of Wonder. The friends and former work colleagues sat down for a relaxed coffee one evening at The European, in Melbourne's CBD, and in just an hour (and one glass of champagne) emerged the founders of a brand new company, complete with the name registration and web address. That was September 2009. "The European said congratulations and we went off to start work. It was hilarious!" McCully laughs.

The two met several years ago while working at Hecker Guthrie; McCully on exclusive, high-end residences and Armstrong in the faster-paced world of hotels, retail and commercial projects. Even back then, their design aesthetic was shared. Both love fashion, "things with a bit of soul", and value minimal

but classic design with a refined and timeless bent. What's unique is the way they bring these themes, their personalities and their passion for fashion – they dress similarly – to the design table.

"An initial concept might be showing a piece of clothing or graphics, and trying to invoke a mood and feel as opposed to saying, 'here's how your interior is going to look from the start'," Armstrong explains.

In fact, they'll rarely show another interior first, rather colours, textures or light fittings that evolve together – which is how 'wonder' comes into play. "It's a word that makes you think," McCully says. "And that's what we try to do with the whole journey – create an experience."

With around 35 completed projects to date, and 18 currently on the books, it's been a hectic year of steep learning. They've also just finished their very first residential

project, a one-off, double-storey house in Armadale, and amongst others created the design for the Launch Pad exhibition as part of Saturday in Design 2010.

But their most high profile project is concept store LIFEwithBIRD in Melbourne's GPO. Here Wonder mixed old and new to create a rich gallery experience for the modern clothing range. "This is so much about who we are," Armstrong says.

With the 12-month whirlwind behind them, their dream is to do a runway set design for someone here and overseas. Right now though, their priority is finding a bigger studio. "We started this firm so we could do what we want to do and make great spaces," McCully says. "And if we can do that, I think we'll be happy." ●

**WONDER** (61 3) 9507 5259  
designofwonder.com.au



**Clockwise from top left**  
 » Georgina Armstrong  
 » Pip McCully  
 » LIFEwithBIRD fit-out, GPO, Melbourne

