BAR RAISER

The almost viscous form of this unique bar belies the solid nature of its materials.

Words **Nick Green** Photography **Paul Bradshaw**

In the unassuming south-western Sydney suburb of St Johns Park, a finely crafted bar is the focal point of a two-year redevelopment of the local bowling club.

Uniquely cranked and folded in two and three-dimensions, the bar is sculpted from BlueScope XLERPLATE® steel that drapes across an off-form concrete base.

Both steel and concrete have deliberately been left in their raw state. Blasted, ground, burnt and heated, the blue/grey of the steel proudly displays the marks earned during its journey from 6mm XLERPLATE® steel sheet to an eclectic, free-form piece of furniture.

A coat of wax applied each week insulates the steel from the rigours of patrons who attend the bar which is (virtually) always open.

With 16 metres of serving space (eight at the front and four on either side) the bar wraps around a full-height clear glass cabinet, also designed by Cullinan Ivanov Partnership, creating a lantern-like effect.

The bar's 27 individual laser cut-outs are softly illuminated by concealed LEDs, furthering the intended impression of the steel oozing over its concrete base like so much melted chocolate.

Commissioned to design a number of spaces in the wider transformation of the club, Cullinan Ivanov Partnership set out to design and create a bar unlike any you would expect to find in a traditional bowling club.

"Bars can be a very standard thing in clubs – mostly functional rather than aesthetic, and 'chopped and changed' to accommodate more or less beer fonts, cashier points or meat-pie warmers," says Cullinan Ivanov Partnership director, Vladimir Ivanov.

"We didn't want to do a standard bar with a footrest, we wanted something that would last. We chose steel and concrete because they are solid, unyielding materials but we also tried to soften them so the bar would be like a beautiful sculpture."

Steel fabrication for the project was undertaken by Ox Engineering.

"The hardest part was understanding how metal will move during bending and controlling that distortion," says Ox Engineering owner Terry Tisdale.

"We made an extended prototype of the bar using our 3D modelling software, creating a whole corner section of it to ensure we could leave it in a raw finish."

> "It pushes the boundaries of taking raw metal materials and traditional square cutting… turning a bar into a free-form piece of furniture"

3D scanning capabilities allowed Ox to ensure that the installation of the project would be millimetre-correct and straightforward.

The XLERPLATE® steel was then folded and cranked using a 1000-tonne press. The unique cut-outs were produced with a nine-metre laser cutter before hard edges were removed with hand tools.

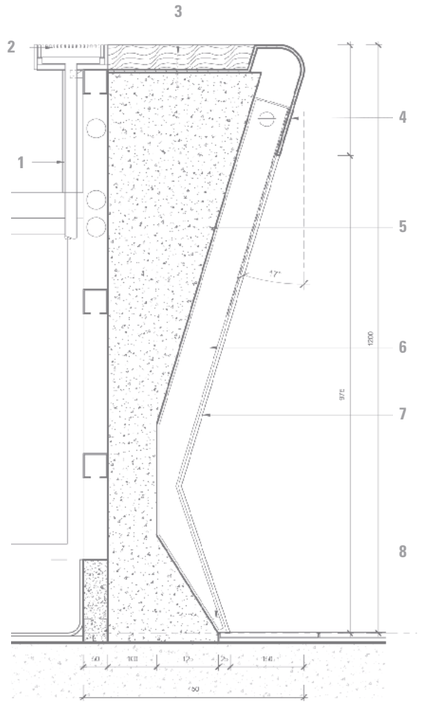
"Because of its compounding angles, it was fabricated in a number of different pieces and then welded together on site. It has quite a bit of bracing behind the scenes to keep it in place and ensure it is nice and square."

The steel was built in two-metre sections and bolted to the top of the concrete. "They aren't actually connected, as we didn't want to hide thejoins, and you can see each panel with a 5mm gap," explains Ivanov. "The steel goes all the way through and gets bolted to the top of a fin that has been cut into shape and slotted into drilled concrete.

"It was a very difficult fabrication, but it is one of the best things we have ever done."

Tisdale is also proud of the result. "It pushes the boundaries of taking raw metal materials and traditional square cutting and turning a bar into a free-form piece of furniture."

Both Cullinan Ivanov Partnership and Ox Engineering report positive in-situ testing. The bar is also a hit with patrons. "I love it and often you can barely see the bar from the amount of people there. Unfortunately it's not in the city or I'd have drinks at 'my' bar more often," says Ivanov. SP



LEGEND

1. Drain pipe
2. Drip tray
3. Timber fixed through to concrete
4. Lighting
5. Off-form concrete base
6. 6mm steel fin
7. 6mm folded steel plate – with laser-cut openings – as bar front and top. Panels are secret pin-fixed to concrete base
8. Concealed fixing

ELEVATION

PROJECT St Johns Park Bowling Club Bar **CLIENT** St Johns Park Bowling Club **ARCHITECT** Cullinan Ivanov Partnership **PROJECT TEAM** Richard Cullinan, Vladimir Ivanov, Jonathan Cullinan and Carol Leung **STRUCTURAL & CIVIL ENGINEER** Partridge Partners **BUILDER** Rohrig **STEEL FABRICATOR AND SHOP DRAWING CONTRACTOR** Ox Engineering **PRINCIPAL STEEL COMPONENTS** BlueScope XLERPLATE® steel **PROJECT TIMEFRAME** Three months