

Vibrancy, Vitality & Victory

Queensland group wins awards and admiration with innovative store design



V for visionary:

The award-winning V Pharmacy Group design features bright colours, easier access for prams and wheelchairs, a more visible presence for the pharmacist, and consulting rooms for visiting professionals such as a dietitian and naturopath.

Chris Brooker

Queensland's V Pharmacy group has been rewarded for its bold new vision by winning two national retail design awards.

Design Portfolio, headed by retail design guru Yuri Bolotin, won Best Store Design and Innovation in Retail awards at 2006 National Retailers Association Awards, for the pharmacies' design.

Mr Bolotin said the design, featuring bright, bold colours and clean lines, was based on the concept of creating energy and boosting health.

"The design is cheerful, slick and interesting and is intended to generate energy. We feel it provides something fresh and innovative to pharmacy

design."

"A lot of pharmacies are quite plainly boring, but they don't have to be. Health should be about fun: if you're well you want to be happy and stay well if you're sick you want to feel better. You feel healthier in a brighter environment."

Classic retail design principals of traffic flow, signage and department organization were incorporated in the final look, Mr Bolotin said.

He and V Pharmacy managing director, Nick Loukas, also redesigned the V Pharmacy Group's

branding and logos as well as its in-store signage. Even the name was part of this marketing campaign. He said

"V stands for vibrancy and vitality. The V name is also deliberately obscure; we felt it would be more interesting to have a name that wasn't literal or descriptive."

Mr Loukas said he was "thrilled" by the awards and the final design, which had been warmly received by customers.

"To be honest we were anticipating complaints from older customers in particular, because it is quite a radical departure from typical pharmacy design. But apart from on person who objected to the use of orange, the response has been uniformly positive."

Mr Loukas says the colour scheme combined with

easy access and attention to customer needs creates an ambiance that appeals to the public.

"It's so far detached from the usual conservative look of pharmacies that it really does appeal to people. We were very conscious of the need for people to be able to move around with wheelchairs, prams or shopping trolleys, so we have catered for that in the design. Also, we have comfortable seating for waiting customers. Simple things like these really enhance the customer experience."

The design has a strong front-of-shop focus, with a pharmacist easily accessible to customers, Mr Loukas said. He has removed non-health items from the store, and incorporated rooms for visiting medical

practitioners into the store.

"We have combined a strong retail offer with a strong professional offer. We have a naturopath and dietitian who visit, a nurse on staff and a prominent diabetes focus. To enhance this we have dedicated consultation rooms, which were specifically designed for this role."

V Pharmacy currently has stores in Cairns and Smithfield in Queensland. Mr Loukas said two more stores are soon to open with others to follow.