

SEXY IN THE CITY

With an eye for sleek glamour, Craig Spencer has created the ultimate tribute to Sydney's entrancing night life. **By Michael Romei**



► **Main image** This city apartment has a full view of the Opera House

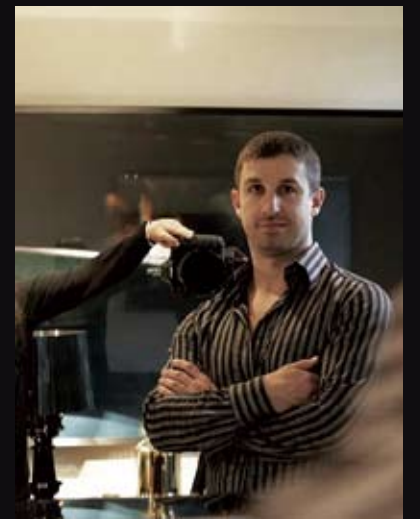
While Craig Spencer profusely denies that he has a personal design style, it is clear from the onset that he possesses a unique character. When asked at what stage in the design process an interior designer should be brought in, his response is as unusual as they come.

"As Frauline Maria once sang in The Sound of Music, 'Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start.'"

This slightly theatrical edge to his personality is reflected in bold, sleek designs that embrace a minimalist style.

"I enjoy using lots of contrasts, texture and layering of material with simplicity and care. Less is more!"

Craig's love of subtle glamour is evident in our featured Sydney apartment. Describing the project as a "sexy" retreat for his client, Craig said the cocktail hour inspired design is one of his most impressive, the only negative aspect being "I can't live there myself!" →



MEET THE DESIGNER

Craig Spencer

- Craig is originally from New Zealand, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Spatial Design
- Started his company, *Craig Spencer Design*, four years ago.
- Won Best Feature Stand at this year's Sydney Home Show
- Craig specialises in residential interiors, though his work extends to commercial and hospitality projects

QUESTION & ANSWER

Can you tell me about Craig Spencer Design?

I began my career working at a series of prominent design companies in Sydney, where I learnt an enormous amount from such talented people as Iain Halliday and Nick Tobias. And as much as I totally respect those people, there came a point where I felt the need to start my own business to provide a tailored, more personal approach to my clients and their needs.

As such, four years ago I started *Craig Spencer Design*, which is mainly focused on residential interiors. The business is about nurturing

relationships with my clients, listening to their needs and creating the ultimate interior to reflect their personalities.

Why should someone enlist the help of an interior designer?

The use of an interior designer has the ability to create harmony and integration, which I believe is the key to creating a balanced home. What we do is unique, specialised and totally tailored. This is our love and passion. I have this saying, which is: 'If you need legal advice, see a lawyer. If you have a cut finger, go to your doctor. If you have trouble seeing, go to your optometrist. If you require your home to reflect your personality and style, then come and see me!'

How should people choose their designer?

Firstly, I believe it is important for a client to be certain of their own needs and requirements, as well as those of their family. People need to have a firm understanding of what their goals and inspirations are, which will tell them what their style is. Gaining this understanding can come from a variety of places, such as recommendations from friends, internet

Lighting was designed to be subtle in order to emphasise the city night views

research, and looking at interior design-based media. To know if a designer is right for you, you should look through their previous work to see if their style is consistent with your own.

Is it important to keep up with trends in the industry?

I tend not to follow trends, but it is still very important for me to be aware of what is out there, support my peers and understand the journey that design takes over time. Our world is loaded with visually inspiring ideas and creations, and it is inspiring to be amongst that. I am constantly evolving as a designer as a result of my surroundings.

How involved do you get in a property?

I am involved with a project from conception through to completion, from the original planning stage through to selecting cutlery through to bed linen!

Where do you source your materials?

That would be giving away all my secrets. I am very well connected!

What's the most satisfying aspect of your job?

I think the most satisfying aspect of my job is the wonderful relationships that I'm able to form with my clients. I work very closely with them, and seeing the smiles on their faces at the end is wonderful.



Design Brief – With his reputation for bold designs, Craig was commissioned to create a city 'bachelor pad' for his client, leading to a sexy and glamorous tribute to Sydney's night life.

My client has a beach-side property on the Northern Beaches, and this is his city 'bachelor pad'. I used to live in the same apartment building as him, and that's how the relationship formed.

The brief was to create a space for 'cocktail hour in the city', which I interpreted as being something theatrical, sexy and glamorous! It's all about glamour in the heart of the city, which we achieved with the project while still keeping the apartment in its original condition and not moving any walls.

We created a sexy environment by using rich, dark, colours teamed with mirrors, great lighting, free flow sheer curtains that add drama, and strong, graphic fabrics to enhance the shapes of the existing classic furniture pieces.

Contrasts were created through the use of polished chrome next to matt timbers, and rich nylon carpets with polished black cabinetry. The idea was to envelope the apartment with strong colours, which would then contrast with the intense lightness from the outside during the day and the bright city lights in the evening. In effect, the darker interior gave the illusion that you could touch the city lights across the street.

Ultimately, this project was a result of natural instinct blended with listening to my client's needs and desires. With the Opera House in full view of the apartment, the location was a dream, and the whole process had no hiccups at all – except that I couldn't live there myself! ■

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Craig's client requested that the design be based on 'cocktail hour in the city'

Are you a designer or a home owner with a recently renovated property? Please contact the Sydney Home editorial department at editor@sydneyhome.com.au



Dark paint colours were used throughout



Free flow curtains were used to add drama



CRAIG SPENCER DESIGN

Contact the team at Craig Spencer Design and add drama to your home. Phone 9698 1534 or visit www.craigspencerdesign.com.au