

# Milu

Fortitude Valley, Queensland, Australia

Eileen Kamp



Founded in 2002, Milu is a relatively new company focused on providing quality shoes to trendy, yet price-conscious customers. The retailer recently called upon Eileen Kamp to design a store concept that could be rolled out to other locations. “The brief was to design a fit-out that reflected Milu as a brand that customers would be proud to recommend, due to its ability to be stylish yet affordable,” explains Kamp. “The three keywords that the client provided as a basis for the design were *fashion, comfort* and *freedom*.”

Because of the roll-out plans the client set a strict budget, and the design had to be flexible enough to accommodate men’s and women’s shoes along with a growing range of accessories. Important to the Fortitude Valley location was the creation of a space that fully utilized its natural sunlight and maintained a sense of airiness. “These two existing qualities of the space were important as they reflect the vibe of this trendy Queensland location,” says Kamp.

“While the six meter high ceiling [almost 20 feet] and abundant natural light certainly provided a beautiful sense of space, there was a risk that the store was almost too lofty for the product on offer,” continues Kamp. Other challenges included an inaccessible mezzanine level at the rear of the store and interior windows shared with neighboring tenants.

To meet these challenges a full-height feature wall was constructed at the rear of the space. The lower half of the wall was constructed of reclaimed, 100-year-old bricks painted with a light whitewash. The mezzanine level was eliminated

with a reversed stud wall that provides privacy from the neighbor’s windows. Essentially, the space was made smaller. “The design decision to close off some of the available space worked well in creating a tighter store environment that put more focus back on the product,” says Kamp.

The bricks provide a warmth and texture that offsets the otherwise clean and crisp interior, however it was at first feared that the existing floor structure could not hold the weight of a brick wall. The possibility of using faux brick was explored, but ultimately rejected. “In this particular space they did not provide the look we were aiming for,” states Kamp. “In the end, it was decided that the bricks would be cut in half, which not only lowered material costs, but also helped to reduce the weight of the wall. The result gives the store a point of difference that the customer can appreciate.”

The strict budget required the designers to be especially resourceful in their choice of design features while providing the needed brand identity. “The restrained selection of finishes and simple, clean lines of the fixtures were chosen to reflect the effortless style of the Milu brand, as well as to provide a classic backdrop that has flexibility to grow with the company and its requirements,” concludes Kamp.

DESIGN: **Eileen Kamp**, Sydney, Australia

CONTRACTOR: **Michael Doherty Shopfitting**, Brisbane, Australia

SIZE: **753 sf / 70 m<sup>2</sup>**

