

All the curves and edges

Sitting proud at the entrance to Brisbane apartment complex The Ambrose is a stunning curved precast staircase that perfectly befits its host's sculptural fluidity.

The Ambrose is a \$160 million development by Kokoda Property, comprising 174 apartments and two retail spaces, that emanates pure sophistication and enhances the urban appeal of inner Brisbane suburb Milton.

The building's design intent is to evoke the memory of a shell, where intricate façade fins provide shade and add textural contrast. They are interspersed with living walls that climb the full height of the building and give context within the building's subtropical landscape.

The precast contribution: customisation like no other

The feature staircase isn't the only precast in the structure. In fact, precast's contribution to this project is significant.

As well as the feature entrance staircase, Master Precaster Euro Precast manufactured over 1,000 precast concrete elements – starting from the third basement level and finishing at the roof deck – in its expansive undercover facility in Sherwood, Brisbane.

According to National Precast CEO Sarah Bachmann, undercover facilities are not something every precast manufacturer has.

"The result of manufacturing inside has benefits for workers, as well as for the quality of the precast, and it means that the manufacturing process is not at the mercy of the elements," she says. "Many don't have undercover facilities, and when construction programs have been heavily impacted by rain and floods, knowing that manufacture can occur ahead of program is a boon to builders. It can even allow them to make up lost time."

The elements manufactured for the project included wall panels, rectangular columns, circular columns, stairs, stair landings, lids and core boxes. A mix of single and double height elements were supplied.

According to Ms Bachmann, the feature staircase is testament to the flexibility of precast and to the capability of the organisation's Master Precaster members. "Precast's customisation is like no other, giving architects and designers a medium to create any shape, colour or texture, or to replicate patterns, shapes and other materials to blend seamlessly with existing structures and contexts," she says.

"What we see here is a precaster who was originally known for producing wall panels for high rise residential developments, now having a great reputation for tackling complex shapes.

"This curved staircase is case in point. The company now manufactures many elements that traditionally would have come from a precaster who might be more well-known for its architectural capabilities. It's a credit to the Euro team."

Honesty, reliability, quality and service

With factories in Queensland and Victoria, Master Precaster Euro Precast prides itself on repeat business due to its foundation values of honesty, reliability, quality and service.

The company has developed a reputation of being one of Australia's leading precast



manufacturers and delivers quality structural and architectural precast across high profile projects in Melbourne and Brisbane. With a strong focus on value engineering, the in-house drafting, engineering and construction management teams work closely with clients from concept to erection, to ensure a seamless construction process.

As a Master Precaster, Euro has been audited by National Precast for Quality Safety and Environment (QSE) as well as its track record, in-house technical capability and flexibility, its customer service, its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its involvement with industry beyond its company walls.

Benefitting from broader industry involvement

Euro has been a long-time member of National Precast, according to Ms Bachmann.

The benefits of involvement with industry – and in particular through membership of National Precast, the industry's peak body – cannot be understated, she says.

"Master Precasters like Euro are plugged in to other industry stakeholders. They know what others are doing and how they are doing it, and they are a step ahead because they stay abreast of the latest technology and products," says Ms Bachmann. "Importantly, they have met our audit requirements and show exemplary practice throughout the business. That has flow-on benefits to clients, builders, designers, and end users."

"There's a lot to be said for working with a precaster who is engaged and passed our Master Precaster audit requirements, as it helps to ensure a positive precast experience and because it mitigates risk from the start."

Grins all 'round

Euro Precast Queensland's General Manager Jeff Stratford is proud of the Euro team's achievement and attributes the project's success to the company's culture, capability and approach to doing business.

He says that while the company doesn't necessarily want to get into the business of curved precast staircases, this install really highlights the strengths of the Euro Precast business, and the benefits of having everything in-house.

"We were able to engage proactively and



Fluid curves and crisp lines are evident in the render of The Ambrose's entrance, representative of the building's sculptural fluidity.



A magnificent curved precast feature staircase in the entrance of The Ambrose showcases Euro Precast's flexibility.

early with Hutchinson Builders, as well as the project's engineers and architects. Regular and open communication enabled us to finalise the manufacturing and installation methods and keep all parties closely involved and updated right through the process," he says.

"Hutchinson Builders and their design teams had an open invitation to the factory and regularly visited to discuss and view progress. In the case of the feature staircase, all of this open communication enabled a seamless installation of a very complex element.

"The install certainly attracted a lot of attention and there were ear-to-ear grins as the cranes released and the Hutchinson team – led by Luke Nicolas, Project Manager – was able to christen the curved stairs with their first official traverse."

It's a sentiment echoed by Kokoda Property, which says it was pleased to partner with each team to establish the iconic development. ■

Project: The Ambrose
Location: Milton, QLD
Client: Kokoda Property Group
Architect: Cottee Parker
Engineer: Bornhorst & Ward
Head contractor: Hutchinson Builders
Master Precaster: Euro Precast