

NEW HOMES



The Starck apartment, right, is the first to be finished in Tribeca, above.

# Starck effect impresses

A renowned French designer has left his singular mark. By Siew-Ching Goh.

**EAST MELBOURNE**  
Tribeca, corner of Powlett  
and Albert streets  
Level 1, apartment P09W

**W**elcome to the apartment that Philippe Starck built. The mega talented, Paris-based, globe-conquering designer was at liberty to do what he wished with this warehouse-like space in the Wharton Building of the former CUB Brewery redevelopment, now known as Tribeca.

The space itself comprises two rectangular zones, one longer than the other, conjoined. On the wall of the long leg are four huge arched windows rising to more than halfway up to the nine-metre ceiling.

Mr Starck leaves the windows well alone and puts in a partial second storey with

shuttered windows opening to the dramatic void with views of the signature windows downstairs. That there can be drama in a void is something of a design high point.

**What the builder says**  
"The apartment has been finalised ahead of the rest of the development and is a demonstration of Starck's fusion of iconic design with 150 years of Victorian industrial history," says Andrew Rettig, chief executive of R. Corporation, which has joined two other companies, Red C and Babcock & Brown, to develop Tribeca, a \$240 million residential and retail project.

Mr Starck's first apartment in Australia is "guaranteed to generate interest from investors wanting to purchase a landmark property with international appeal", says Mr Rettig.

**Floor plans and features**  
Sporting windows au naturel, the kitchen and living zones downstairs are delineated not by walls but by metre-square pillars that also do duty as storage spaces.

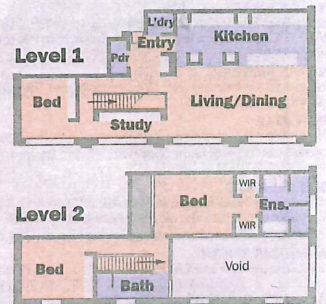
Another demarcation feature is a long island bench that looks like a table — marble on a stout wooden frame. The bench hides the storage devices tucked under it and can be a cool setting for dinner parties or your everyday breakfast bar.

The cooking area, with stone tops and splashbacks, plus a wall of built-in storage spaces, takes up the near wall opposite the bench.

The staircase is another delineator. One staircase wall marks out the entry area and the other has been used to hold floating shelves and a built-in workbench in the galley-style study that runs off a room at the long-leg end of the downstairs area.

This end room and the kitchen area are the only main "rooms" with a flat ceiling. All other ceilings are curved to reflect the arched windows. And if you take a bird's-eye view, you will find the heritage-listed Wharton Building also has curved rooflines.

The curves are repeated in the two upstairs bedrooms, where the ceiling rises in a shallow arc to lead the eye to windows set high in the walls. The main bedroom



suite upstairs is a series of walk-through rooms (bedroom, wardrobe, bathroom, toilet, shower) with no doors. Tiled walls provide a smidgin of privacy for daily cleansing routines.

Starck-designed articles — coat hooks, soap dishes, vanity basin, taps, shower heads, pendant lights — can be seen. Moveable items, such as mirrors, do not come as chattels. Their absence, though, would take nothing away from this white apartment with slate-grey carpets and limed American oak floors.

**The price factor**  
\$1.7 million. For details call Tribeca 1300 884 800. Inspect by appointment.