

Life & Leisure

Skye Suites Sydney serviced apartments the new jewel in Crown Group's portfolio

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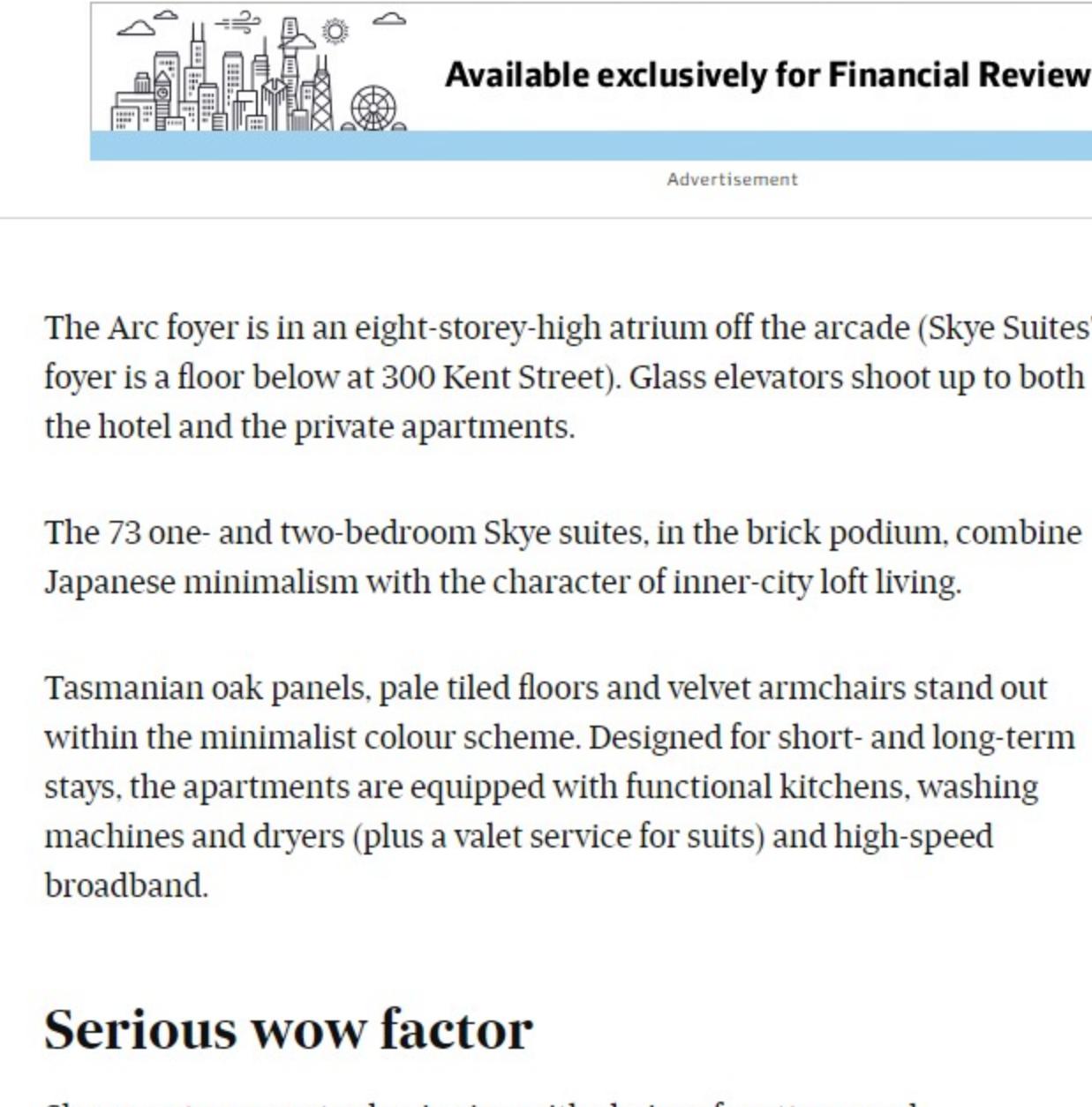
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The triangle between Barangaroo, the QVB and Martin Place is Sydney's latest accommodation sweet spot. Right there, businessmen in town for work and tourists visiting for play can now stay in the newest serviced apartments in the CBD, the second hotel by the Crown Group.

Not Crown Resorts of the casino empire but the 20-year-old property development company led by Indonesian-Australian Iwan Sunito.

Skye Suites Sydney occupies nine floors of [Arc](#), a striking new 25-storey highrise designed by the Tokyo-born Sydney architect Koichi Takada.



Crown Group's Iwan Sunito, left, and Arc building architect Koichi Takada at the newly opened Skye Suites. James Atcock

At street level, Arc presents as a handsome 19th-century warehouse, its red-brick columns holding up elegant arches. Twin towers above are topped with arched ribs that look from a distance like white armadillo shells.

A constantly shifting 12-metre light sculpture by the Melbourne-based studio Ramus Illumination floats above an airy arcade running through the development from Clarence to Kent streets and bisected by the cobblestoned Skittle Lane.


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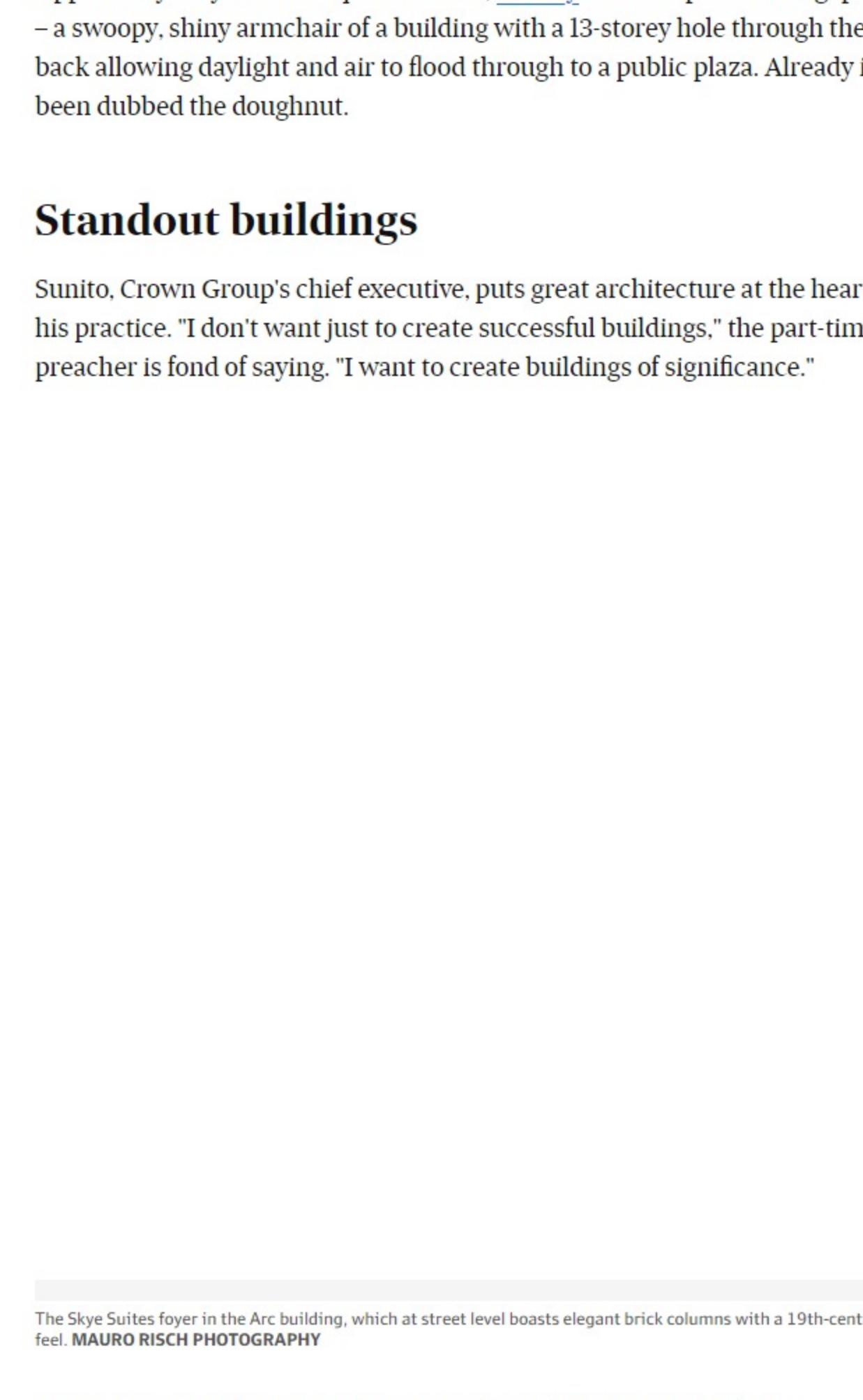
The Arc foyer is in an eight-storey-high atrium off the arcade (Skye Suites' foyer is a floor below at 300 Kent Street). Glass elevators shoot up to both the hotel and the private apartments.

The 73 one- and two-bedroom Skye suites, in the brick podium, combine Japanese minimalism with the character of inner-city loft living.

Tasmanian oak panels, pale tiled floors and velvet armchairs stand out within the minimalist colour scheme. Designed for short- and long-term stays, the apartments are equipped with functional kitchens, washing machines and dryers (plus a valet service for suits) and high-speed broadband.

Serious wow factor

Skye curates your stay beginning with choice of mattress and airconditioning preference, and takes note of whether you are a whisky or a champagne kind of person, recording the information for the next time you stay. iPad sign-in, app entry and a digital compendium in your room (forget the old plastic folder of maps and menus) complete the picture.



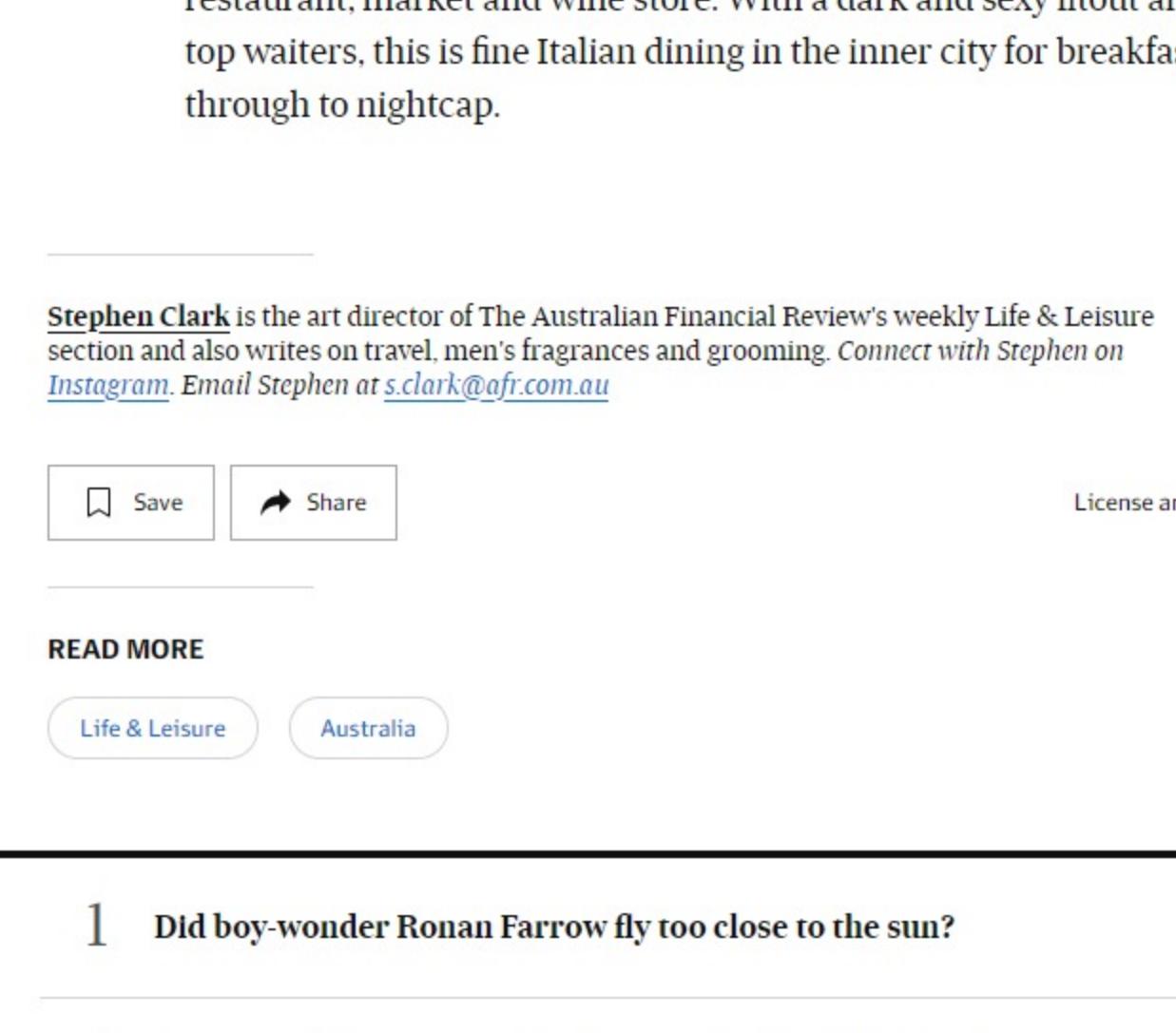
The twin towers of the 25-storey Arc building are topped with striking ribbed, arched roofs. Crown Group

New dining venues will give guests plenty of options when they open next month.

Takada says he likes fresh air when he travels. So each suite has a balcony where you can soak up all the sights and sounds of the CBD, or you can step inside and banish them behind heavy glass doors.

When Takada says "Arc doesn't have bling", he doesn't mean it lacks serious wow factor.

First, the sparkling pool off the Skye foyer is a fairyland of white and turquoise reflections in a sculptural white "ice cave".



The Skye Suites combine Japanese minimalism with the character of inner-city loft living. MAURO RISCH PHOTOGRAPHY +61 430383588

Second, the garden under those elegant arches on the roof is jaw-dropping. Unfortunately, that's something you won't see unless you are an owner of one of the Arc apartments, most of which have already been sold. (The penthouse, with its 360-degree views of the city and harbour is still for sale, asking around \$8 million).

Skye Suites Sydney is the second of Crown Group's hotels after Skye Parramatta, which opened in August last year. The third, due to open late next year, will be at Infinity, another convention-defying, apartments-cum-retail development designed by Takada.

Opposite Sydney's Green Square station, **Infinity** is a little piece of Singapore – a swoopy, shiny armchair of a building with a 13-storey hole through the back allowing daylight and air to flood through to a public plaza. Already it's been dubbed the donut.

Standout buildings

Sunito, Crown Group's chief executive, puts great architecture at the heart of his practice. "I don't just want to create successful buildings," the part-time preacher is fond of saying. "I want to create buildings of significance."

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