

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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Finding your groove: The Monocle global style survey

Why Koreans are the kings of the department store, Brazilians are refashioning the mall and everyone is wooing young Turks



GUNZE: A singlet man – the undergarment powerhouse from Japan

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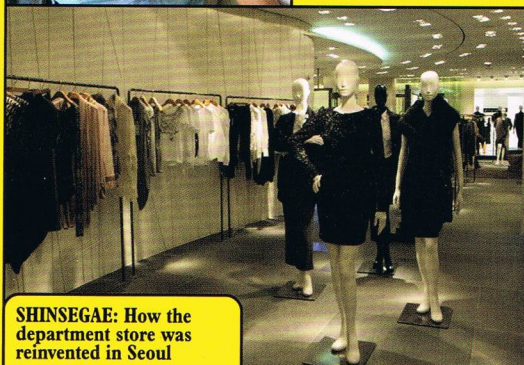
STYLE DIRECTORY

A 44-page guide to the brands, business trends and buyers of 2010

- 01 KEY STREET TO SHOP
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- 10 SLEEK TIMEPIECES
- 25 COMPANIES TO WATCH



SATURDAYS: Surf's up for the retailers riding fashion's next big wave



SHINSEGAE: How the department store was reinvented in Seoul



TEAMLAB: Creating a media empire with the humble coat hanger



TRUNK CLOTHIERS: London's latest elegant outfitter for men



+ DETAILS: Compliment-catching eyewear and old-school watches

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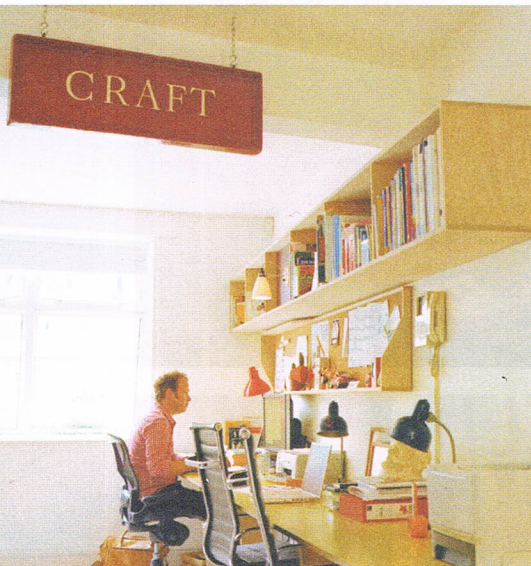
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HOME AT THE OFFICE —Global

Preface

Bosses are wising up to the benefits of creating a more humane workplace. Not only does this give staff a sense of pride and belonging but it also expresses a company's ethos to clients. Welcome to the anti-office.

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PHOTOGRAPHERS

*Weston Wells, Taro Terasawa,
Christina Fallara*

There's a quiet revolution taking place in the way offices are being designed. The scale and nature of work is changing in an increasingly globalised business environment. Successful businesses are working across time zones, 24/7, enabling their staff to connect with foreign bureaux and clients as needed, not just in local working hours. Such a change calls for a new working environment – some way between the frenetic ballet of the trading floor and the crèche-like gimmickry of Silicon Valley. Open-plan, strip-lit spaces no longer seem appealing but nor do spacehopper races at lunchtime.

More grown-up, considered and individual, the best new offices feel domestic. They are inspired by bosses wanting their staff to feel at home while at work – it helps bring comfort when the pressure is on and hours are long.

These new offices are being created by a growing breed of architects and designers who know how to interpret the meeting point between corporate identity and humane environment and build something that's good both for profits and for the mind.

Beyond impressing visiting clients (though there's clear financial potential here too), investing in the design of an office that promotes genuine employee satisfaction cuts the cost of staff turnover and absenteeism and ensures optimum loyalty, pride and production that comes from working in a happy environment.

To help with inspiration we've investigated four case studies, interrogated key industry voices and cited the best firms that can convert your office from soulless call centre into cosy HQ. — (M)

01 Boardroom of André Balazs'
New York office

02 Natural materials in HSBC's Shanghai HQ

03 Shinichiro Ogata in his Simplicity
HQ in Tokyo

04 Not To Scale's London office is filled with
finds from vintage markets

OFFICE 01

The elegant loft

André Balazs Properties, New York

"We aim to offer everyone working here the same as we offer guests visiting our hotels," says André Balazs. "We want this office to feel like a home." With high-profile hotels such as Los Angeles' Chateau Marmont, New York's The Mercer and the expanding Standard brand under his property empire, Balazs knows how to make a space hospitable.

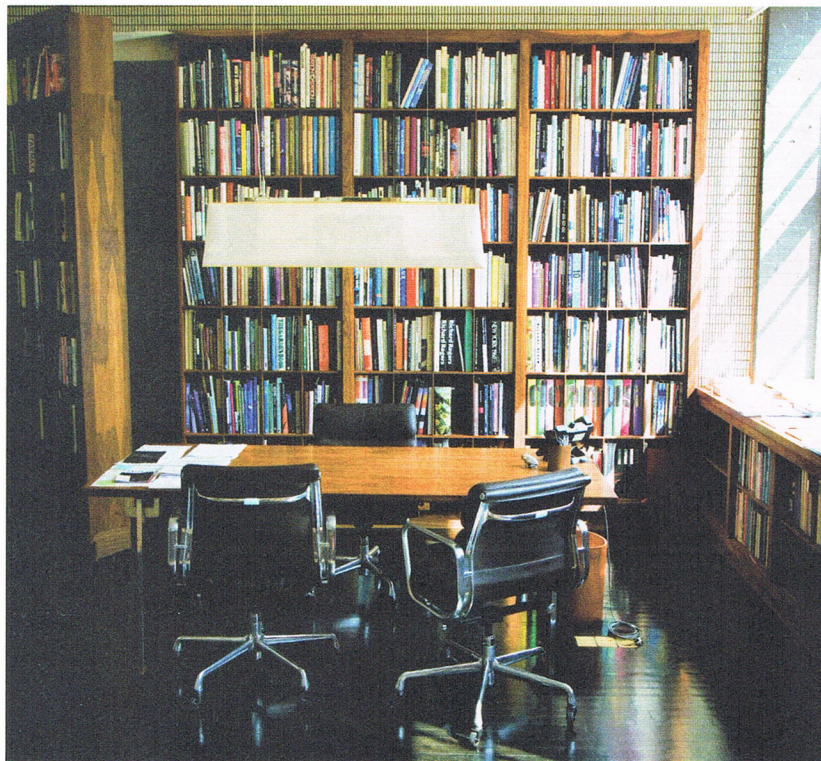
Housed since 2008 on the fifth floor of an old printing works on Noho's busy Lafayette street, the offices of André Balazs Properties feel more like a well-appointed apartment than a corporate space. Where you'd expect a company logo there are photographs of the personalities that have stayed at the hotels instead. So it comes as no surprise that Balazs invited local architects Bonetti/Kozerski Studio – the duo that has worked on his Soho apartment since 2003 – to collaborate on his global headquarters. "A lot of the challenges that André gave us at his apartment, he's given to us here too," says Dominic Kozerski. Enrico Bonetti elaborates, "We all wanted to warm the place up so that it didn't feel like a corporate environment."

The fully equipped kitchen offers an informal gathering space and the largest boardroom feels more like a dining room, with walls covered in photographs and a display cabinet of some of the company's most iconic branding and products.

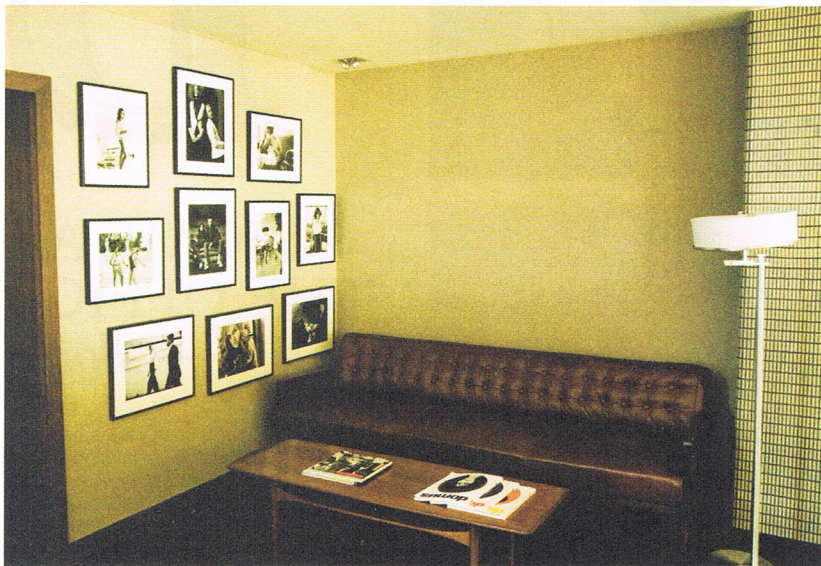
Balazs' private office is surprisingly open to the main space, divided only by a hand-laid glass wall. "A good office is a reflection of the culture that you wish to work in and we're in a very collaborative business," says Balazs. "This office is more about the people who work here than a simple corporate face. We spend a lot of our time trying to make people feel good so I think it makes sense to try and make ourselves feel good as well." — AES
andrebalazsproperties.com

Why it works

- 01 Decoration** There is no bare surface in sight. Walls are upholstered in Kvadrat fabrics, deep-grouted tiles and dark wood panelling.
- 02 Crossing paths** The main open-plan workspace fosters the company's collaborative spirit with flexibility for the teams to work together or separately.
- 03 Facilities** Like any good home, the office has a fully stocked kitchen.
- 04 Under foot** Even the carpeted floor takes into account employees' taste for well-heeled (and occasionally noisy) footwear.



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ESSAY 01

Humanity at work

By Ilse Crawford, creative director and founder of Studioilse

In our London studio we have a terrace that acts as our summer sitting room. We try to grow tomatoes and some of us can tell the difference between starlings and sparrows. We never find our corporate clients complain if we offer lunch al fresco instead of in the meeting room – decisions, ideas and solutions seem to flow more freely out there.

This is not just a creative whim. The Well-being Institute, a think tank at the University of Cambridge, has been using its research on the workplace to develop wellbeing programmes for workers, particularly those in high-stress occupations. Their conclusions are that “techniques which encourage the mindful awareness of one’s sensations, thoughts, and feelings, or techniques which increase the frequency of positive emotions can have beneficial effects on wellbeing, health, relationships and productivity.”

The notion that the perfectly lit, climate-controlled office is the route to productivity at work denies our humanity, and at its core is still connected to the 19th-century tenets of Frederick Taylor, who was the high priest of the Industrial Age: “In the past the Man has been first, in the future the System must be first,” he thundered. At the Ford Motor Company in the 1940s laughter was a disciplinary offence, and humming, whistling and smiling were evidence of insubordination. Henry Ford said, “When we are at work we ought to be at work. When we are at play we ought to be at play. There is no use trying to mix the two.” This idea that work should be hard is still latent in the corporate consciousness and is visible in the aesthetics of a lot of offices.

“Commingling work and play has become more common and more necessary,” says Daniel Pink in his book *A Whole New Mind*. He says that to do well in business we should be masters of empathy, team work and communication.

That’s why we are designing an office for an advertising company. One floor will be a common room and a large terrace will have plants and a bar. There will be outdoor movies, pizza and parties. This is no conceit. People rarely succeed at anything unless they have had some fun along the way.

studioilse.com



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- 01 Balazs' office with bookcase door
- 02 Meeting couch and resting area
- 03 Office kitchen
- 04 Meeting room
- 05 Couch and seating area in separate office
- 06 Employees looking over plans
- 07 André Balazs
- 08 Main office
- 09 Kitchen table