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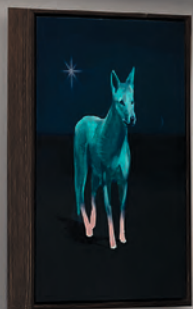
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A workplace that is a home for working.

The working home

Forbes Global Properties Headquarters by Interior designers Studio Griffiths
Interior curation of furniture and art Swee Design
Words *Jan Henderson* Photography *Shannon McGrath*

Opposite: With tableau style arrangements the workspaces are more akin to a home than an office. Page 94: Rich tones, textiles and artworks add a luxurious opulence to the space. Page 95: Sculptural lounges and lighting define spaces physically, but also in this case, as sumptuously outside the normal office lounge. Page 96: Fluted glass gives privacy without closing out the workspace. Page 97: Loose configurations of diverse furnishings provide unusual and interesting places for impromptu meetings. Page 98: The bar, well what can be said, other than fabulous.







A timeless and luxurious aesthetic defines the interior of the new Melbourne office for Forbes Global Properties (Forbes), part of the Forbes media family. With a concept that is sophisticated and perfectly tailored to the brand, this workplace is so much more than simply a place to work, it provides a glamorous and functional destination for clients and staff alike.

Relating to the workplace as a home office, the idea has been flipped to create an 'office home'. As the lines of residential and commercial interiors become increasingly blurred, the design of this workspace by Gillianne Griffiths, Creative Director and Principal Designer, Studio Griffiths, with interior curation of furniture and art by Swee Lim, Principal, Swee Design, is amplifying the trend and doing it with infinite style.


At 315-square-metres, the floorplan has been designed for greatest use and maximum flexibility. The main boardroom with custom-designed table doubles as a place for meetings or dinner with clients; the circular bar becomes the gathering area and promotes communication and connection during and after work hours; and there is the opportunity for intimate chats in a corner,

while team members work in the open plan work space.

Creating a workplace that is adaptable is certainly not new, however, there is refinement in how this space has been so beautifully resolved that sets the bar high for future commercial projects. With the incorporation of a circular motif throughout, it is the detailing and follow through that adds the defining touches to this interior.

The discreet entrance to the Forbes office offers no suggestion of what lies beyond. Stepping into the public area the space is divided into three circular zones, each operating in different modes – a lounge, a bar and a breakout area. To the right, is a boardroom enclosed by fluted glass panels, ahead is the main public area for visitors and clients, while the calming interior of the open plan work space is to the right. With a dramatic colour palette of deep midnight blue in one area and pared back neutrals in the other, this workplace is bold yet, oh so comfortable.

“There is so much to be gained from layering of spaces – making them more compact but also generous in their nature. The aim was to foster a positive environment that allows people to flow freely



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and work closely with others while maintaining a sense of privacy when needed through separate spaces,” says Griffiths.

Adhering to a tight budget, furnishings have been carefully and artfully chosen. In the lounge area there are curvaceous sofas and round-armed Fat Lounge chairs in dark navy blue. A contemporary chaise sofa upholstered in a textured white on black fabric and two caramel covered Puffy lounge chairs sit atop a bespoke rug with custom-designed lighting by Studio Griffiths and ISM Objects. Behind this is a large black timber boardroom table with a fluted base and two curved modular, cobalt blue bouclé upholstered sofas that stretch across the wall and windows at the side.

Multiple coffee and side tables abound and a white buffet with brass trim stands snug against the midnight blue wall that separates this area from the work space behind. With art discreetly hung at every opportunity, this space presents as a grand home rather than a place of work.

In the far corner, a spherical bar (by Studio Griffiths) takes pride of place and becomes a feature of note. There is a mosaic tiled floor underfoot and a sculptural brass mesh lighting installation suspended from the ceiling, while the bar itself features Jurassic travertine marble and brass highlights encircled by nine sapphire blue leather bar stools.

Opposite the enclosed boardroom and to the left of the entrance is a kitchen hidden behind midnight blue bifold doors. When the doors are open, strip lighting casts shadows on the denim blue tiles of the splashback and pewter laminate countertop and, in re-thinking the idea of a European laundry that is tucked away, this kitchen saves space but also provides amenity.

Within the white, bright open plan office, black timber tables sit

side-by-side beneath half-round pendant lights. There is a large central hot desk for up to 12 people by Swee Design, and more desks will soon be added, such is the growth of the business. Tan leather work chairs complement the dark tables and a small furniture grouping with four black high-backed lounge chairs and marble coffee table provides the place for relaxation.

While the floorplate is conservative, Studio Griffiths and Swee Design have worked together to conceive an interior design that is perfectly in sync. As Lim comments, “In terms of our working relationship, the word that comes to mind is seamless. You can’t tell where Gil’s work ends and where mine starts, or vice versa. You see the end result and a great working relationship is when you can create something better together and create a synergy.”

This design promotes the best aspects that an office can offer, with the facility of a sumptuous home and all in the name of better business. With a trusting client, a close collaboration between designers and an excellent builder, the results speak for themselves.

Tracey Atkins, Director, Forbes Global Properties remarks, “We wanted to have a space that is emotional rather than transactional, in which we could conduct conversations and not deals. We wanted a space that spoke to our world – somewhere residential and beautiful and personal.”

There is no better testimonial, and this new Forbes office is helping to forge collaboration and connection through design that speaks volumes of the new workplace.

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