

INTERIOR DESIGN

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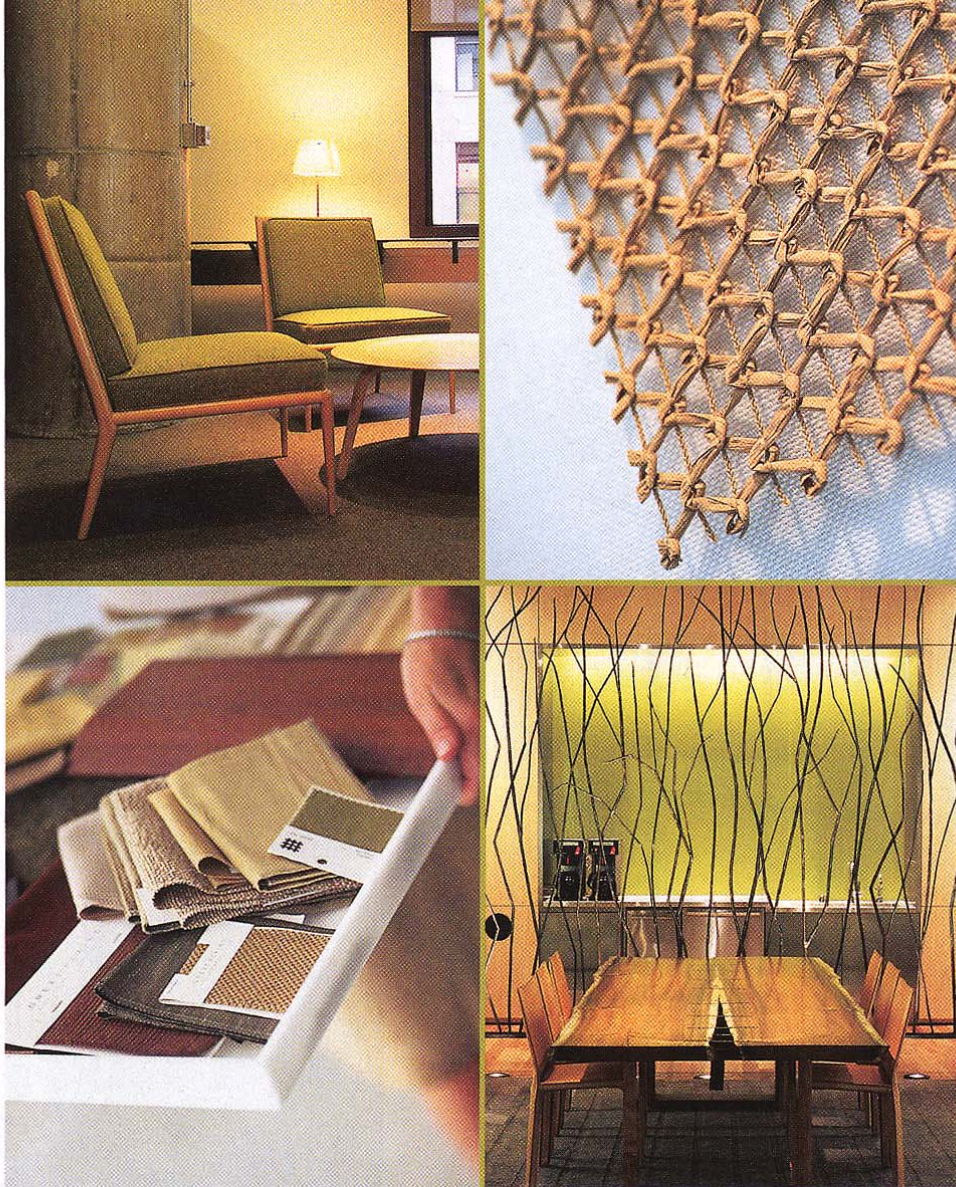


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a new attitude

From buttoned-up to opened up, Gensler's airy new San Francisco headquarters embraces change and collaboration



Above, clockwise from top left: A project room furnished with tweed-covered chairs and an ash table by Charles and Ray Eames. A square of fabric displayed in the library. The custom iron screen between reception and a café backed in custom laminated glass. An acrylic tray of fabric samples. **Below:** Custom sliding glass doors enclosing the design studio.

Opposite: Gensler designed the reception desk, fronted in lacquered MDF and topped in etched glass. A fallen black-acacia tree yielded lumber for Lawrence Gandsey's 12-foot-long table, surrounded by Mario Bellini's Cab chairs covered in leather.



tables, chairs, and sofas furnish a broad sunlit gallery; workstations benefit from runs of windows on both levels; pinup areas are accessible. And flexible charette studios reemphasize Gensler's redefined focus—not only on formalized architectural services but also on graphics, branding, consulting, product design, and retail rollout.

A dramatic elevator lobby immediately signals Gensler's change of direction. The firm's crimson logo is stacked in a 6-foot-tall column of clear cast resin, and richly luminous walls of red laminated glass get the blood pumping.

Inside, design principal Collin Burry and his 10-member team began by stripping the space down to its original brick walls, left raw, and its concrete floor and columns, which retain the patina and nicks of the industrial era. Burry cites the round columns, set in a 20-foot grid, as "one of the great virtues of the building," and he used the formation as an organizing system. Rows of columns determine the placement of the 200 workstations, clustered into studios of 15 to 20, and the open reception areas, arrayed around the perimeter of each floor plate to benefit from 8-foot-tall windows that receive direct sunlight for most of the day. Columns also delineate conference, meeting, and project rooms, all floating in the center of the space to express the historic structure.

Environmentally conscious, Burry thought minimum-impact where possible. "By employing indigenous and recycled materials, I introduced nature into the design," he explains. Flooring in reception is madrone, cut from cleared trees and coated in a water-based clear finish, and a fallen black-acacia tree yielded lumber for the area's table.

He also chose Gensler-designed items, such as the lacquered MDF reception desk, the gallery's felt-covered sofas, and the fluorescent →