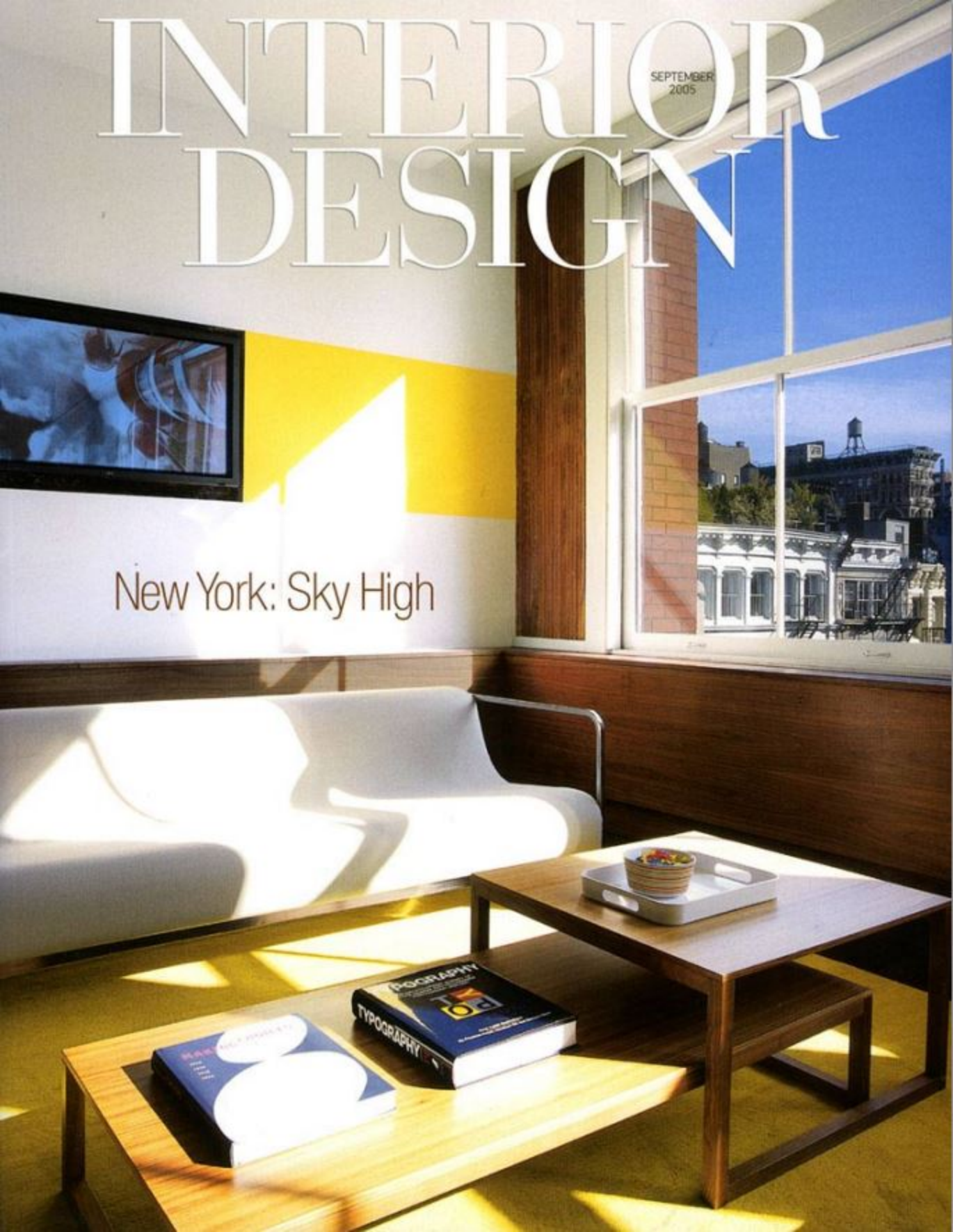


INTERIOR DESIGN

SEPTEMBER
2005

New York: Sky High



Left, from top: Each of the two edit suites is furnished with custom walnut desks, engineered to exacting specifications, and Emma Gardner's rug in hand-tufted New Zealand wool. In the conference room, Michele De Lucchi's blown-glass pendant fixtures hang above a table with a plastic-laminate top; the walnut shelving is custom. **Right:** The feature wall offers access to miles of wiring.

Opposite: On the roof deck, Howell assembled a pair of Lievore, Altherr, Molina's lounge chairs covered in wool felt, Morten Georgsen's glass-topped table, and Paul Smith's wool rug.



a "knot." Actually angular, this volume juts down from the ceiling to display a hollow core lined with adhesive plastic in the spirited orange-red computer-generated pattern of Framestore NY's brand graphics. An alcove in the wall behind the "knot" shelters the "hot desk," a walnut-veneered counter where visiting London technicians can work, seated at leather-covered task chairs that Howell copied from 1940's plywood versions found in Mexico.

Permanent production staff work at a walnut-veneered communal desk right outside Collins's office, the only enclosed one on the premises. (To prevent it from feeling shut off, Howell inserted a corner window at eye level.) Farther down the hall are the pair of edit suites, a far cry from the austere technician's boxes one might expect. Monitors and visual-effects systems, such as a safe-area generator and tablet, are arranged with ergonomic precision on custom walnut desks specially imported from London—their pared-down handsomeness belies their sophisticated engineering. While editing work progresses, clients from, say, Miller Genuine Draft can watch from the comfort of a cotton-upholstered couch.

Dandified English tastes come through in colorful striped rugs, Emma Gardner's in the edit suites and Paul Smith's upstairs in the covered seating area on the roof deck. Howell also furnished this outdoor lounge with Lievore, Altherr, Molina's lounge chairs, which swivel to fully capture the panorama of SoHo parapets. That's one view that needs no editing. ■

PROJECT TEAM: **ANTHONY MARTIN, NICOLAS WIENER.**

CUSTOM GRAPHICS VISITORS' AREA: **DUOGAL.** CUSTOM CHAIRS VISITORS' AREA, CONFERENCE ROOM: **CASAMICY.**

CHAIRS (RECEPTION): **FRITZ HANSEN THROUGH TROY, KVADRAT (FABRIC).** SOFA: **DUNE.** RUGS (RECEPTION, DECK): **RUG COMPANY.** TABLES (RECEPTION), CHAIRS (DECK): **THROUGH DESIGN WITHIN REACH.** STOOLS (PRODUCTION ROW): **HERMAN MILLER.** PENDANT FIXTURES (PRODUCTION ROW, CONFERENCE ROOM): **ARTEMIDE.** SOFA (EDIT SUITE): **CLASSIC SOFA.** RUG: **EMMA GARDNER DESIGN.** TABLE (CONFERENCE ROOM): **GROUPE LACASSE THROUGH PALAZZO INTERIORS.** CUSTOM SHELVING: **HANDY DANDY WORKSHOP.** TABLE (DECK): **BO CONCEPT.** MECHANICAL ENGINEER: **THOMAS J. FISKAA ENGINEERING.** PROJECT MANAGER: **GARDINER & THEOBALD.** GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **SPRING STREET ASSOCIATES.**

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| 1 RECEPTION | 4 PRESIDENT'S OFFICE |
| 2 PRODUCTION ROW | 5 EDIT SUITES |
| 3 FEATURE WALL | 6 CONFERENCE ROOM |





Opposite: Howell oiled the existing pine columns and stained the oak floor.

Above: President Jan Collins's enclosed office, the only one at Framstore NY, features an aluminum-framed window.







If you're a state-of-the-art visual-effects and computer-animation studio with *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to your credit, you'd think it would be easy to make a big splash in the Big Apple. But that wasn't the case for Framestore CFC, a London postproduction company that recently expanded to New York, where the market is extremely tight. Framestore NY had piqued the interest of several ad agencies and production companies—however, potential clients weren't buying the lackluster temporary studio space. "The environment didn't give them the confidence that we were up for the job," says Framestore NY president Jon Collins.

So Framestore NY leased the top two floors of a six-story loft building on a boutique-lined street in SoHo and hired David Howell's namesake firm. Drawing on Framestore CFC's roots, Howell devised what he calls a

"quirky Englishman theme" for the 6,000-square-foot space, which comprises an open production row, one enclosed office for Collins, two editing suites, a room for computer graphics, and a conference room—all off a central hallway on the fifth floor—and a penthouse lounge, which opens onto a roof deck.

The tension between science and artistry was at the heart of Howell's concept. In 1999, a designer might have used exposed wiring and industrial materials to emphasize Framestore NY's

technical virtuosity. Howell did the opposite. "It's such a technology-based industry that I chose not to show any of that," he explains.

Instead, he focused on the comfort of Framestore NY's clients—who might spend days or weeks working here. The elevator opens to a reception area that's more living room than antechamber, with residential furniture, walnut-veneered details, and prime south-facing views. The banana-colored faux leather on Poul Kjaerholm's simple side chairs is picked up by the wide horizontal yellow stripe that Howell painted all the way across one wall, interrupted only by a flat-panel TV showing commercials produced by the company.

Howell retained some key century-old elements, oiling the pine structural columns and staining the oak floor, but he juxtaposed them with a contemporary architectural tour de force, a 60-foot-long white plaster-board feature wall that twists and jabs as it makes its way from front to rear. This structure not only encloses the racks of computer equipment that drive the edit suites but also energizes the central circulation path, starting immediately behind reception with what Howell describes as—



Previous spread: For Framestore NY in SoHo, David Howell designed a plaster-board feature wall that incorporates a custom walnut-veneered "hot desk" for staff visiting from the postproduction company's London headquarters. An acrylic and oil-stick on canvas by Brad Fisher is propped on the desk, facing leather-covered chairs that Howell copied from 1940's plywood versions found in Mexico. The cutout is lined in a computer-generated pattern on adhesive plastic.

Left, from top: The custom walnut-veneered desk of the production row shares space with the reception lounge, appointed with a pair of Poul Kjaerholm chairs covered in faux leather by Jean Nouvel, Luigi Ronzoni's walnut-veneered tables, and a steel-framed sofa. Custom walnut-veneered covers hide the radiators.

Right: The main corridor leads to two edit suites, their entries marked by painted stripes. Another Fisher canvas hangs on the wall.

Opposite: A stripe animates a sidewall and anchors a 42-inch flat-panel TV.







high production values

Lively graphics, punchy colors, and an architectural feature wall animate the SoHo studio that David Howell designed for Framestore NY

text: andrew blum photography: adrian wilson

