

Taste & Flair

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Feed your imagination

A journey through food, drink, art, and design

Welcome



November is a neither-here-nor-there time of year. It's no longer summer, not quite winter, and not quite full-swing festive season. But it's a good time to turn things around at home, refreshing your interior surroundings with new accessories and stocking up on comfort food and seasonal produce. Set the tone of a room with a new lamp or rug, or give a tired interior a lift with pillowy cushions in jewel colours or berry shades. Scatter plants around your home or workspace and bring in colour and organic shapes for a relaxed feel. Or add a natural accent with a bowl of seasonal fruit. Pomegranates are at their best right now, almonds are

ripening, and late autumn strawberries will be here soon. Picked straight off the tree – and out of the fruit bowl – pomegranates add colour and taste to many of this issue's food features. Michael and Janine Diacono's travels in Jordan inspired a middle eastern feast, Claire Borg's trip to Helsinki brings you berry Vispipuuro, wild mushroom tarts and warming soup cooked outdoors. There are tarts warm from the oven, moreish salads from Greece, and desserts of seasonal fruit. As this magazine goes to print, a thunderstorm rages overhead but there's sunshine on the horizon. While we wrap up Taste&Flair November, we're already at work on our fabulous Christmas issue. Look out for it on 1st December.



Photo by Claire Borg. See feature starting on page 53.

Taste&Flair

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BACK TO NATURE

This busy, multi-functional workspace has a relaxed jungle-by-the-beach feel.

Design: Martina Fenech Adami, Senior Interior Designer, Forward Architects
Photography: Darren Agius

Jungle motifs and organic forms, like the monkey lamps suspended from the walls, are playful elements that make the space feel comfortable and fun

A natural colour palette and materials, plants and organic motifs create a relaxed atmosphere. The built-in leather banquette was designed specially for this space.



Like painting, designing an interior begins with a canvas. What goes onto it depends on what is already there. When Forward Architects were commissioned to redesign a corporate office space, this was a practically blank canvas. There was little of the original aesthetic that needed to be retained.

The client, an international company with offices in multiple locations, needed the same space to serve several functions: breakout areas for informal meetings, a large enough space for a monthly event when the whole staff gets together; space for formal meetings but no spaces to lie unused for weeks on end. The area needed to be flexible and with modular seating so that it could accommodate different numbers of people for varying uses at different times.

The breakout area is designed as a flexible space with lightweight furniture that is easily moved.



The design process began with identifying the different areas of use, including two quiet meeting spaces – a challenge in a busy office where the spatial use is in a state of flux. Fixed points were identified, anchoring the fluidity of the rest of the area. A laptop bar runs along one wall, with multiple power points to allow staff to plug in for battery power. A designated formal meeting area was allocated, but designed to be taken apart and put together again at short notice.

The company's basic mood board is earthy with a calming effect which is important for staff wellbeing. Enveloping the hectic work pace in a calm interior creates an environment that is fun rather than stressful. The designers built on the company's basic mood board, creating a relaxed, fun design with a jungle-by-the-beach theme. Furniture is lightweight and moveable, both functional and sculptural.

The board room seating colour is a muted green, which tones with the jungle theme. The bespoke table is in American walnut.



The board room, normally a dead space when not in use, is a glassed-in extension open to the main office. Curtains can be drawn to provide privacy during meetings, and the furniture can be moved easily for large office gatherings.



The warm textures, soothing colours and carefully planned lighting create an atmosphere drastically different from the usual sterile look of corporate offices.

The floor is covered in a natural coloured vinyl weave which creates a neutral, sand grain effect. Large, round cushions are scattered about, much like pebbles washed up on a beach. There are copious amounts of greenery, both in the planters and in the surface treatment. Rugs, inspired by tribal motifs, add flashes of colour without overwhelming the design.

Jungle motifs and organic forms, like the monkey lamps suspended from the walls, are playful elements that make the space feel comfortable and fun, rather than rigidly corporate. There are occasional touches of bling – a neon-lit sign, a brass beaded effect stool – associated with the industry. Each and every piece was chosen with care. “We thought about how it fits into the overall design concept,” the designer Martina Fenech Adami says.

To reorganise the lighting system, existing soffit inserts were blocked off, the ceiling area and the top part of the walls were painted black, and new track lighting installed with pendant fittings. This redirects the eye away from the older ceiling, focussing attention on the new design. The new lighting system includes “hot spots” which provide warm light for meeting areas, which complements the natural light.

Large, round cushions are scattered about, much like pebbles washed up on a beach.

The ceiling and upper wall were sprayed in a dark tone and new suspended light was installed, transforming the sense of space.

The company workspace is on a relatively high floor of a commercial building and flooded with natural light through its glass external walls. The downside is the distracting and rather unappealing roofscape of the surrounding area. The solution was to cover the plate glass in large see-through decals which let in natural light and allow near visibility while masking the visual clutter beyond. As the day wears on, the natural light filtering through the covered windows casts interesting and shifting shadows on the floor, much like what happens in an actual jungle.

The jungle concept is carried through to the lap top bar. The bar top is in smooth wood with high legged seating in a leaflike design. The tiled backdrop featuring a jungle scene was custom-made. Finding a supplier for the wall tiles was challenging as all 400 pieces had to be individually printed, sealed, and numbered to fit into place. The effort was worthwhile – the innovative design is stunning.

Scatter rugs in a tribal motif add flashes of colour.



400 individually printed tiles make up the customised jungle wall behind the laptop bar.



The designers built on the company's basic mood board, creating a relaxed, fun design with a jungle-by-the-beach theme.



The "jungle by the beach" theme is carried throughout. Large "pebble" cushions are set adrift on a sand-like floor covering. The laptop bar is in wood with high stools in a leaf-like shape.

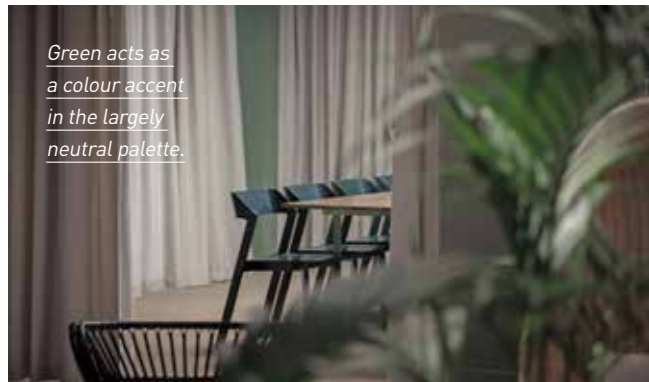
Over in the barista area, there's a beachy, natural vibe with bamboo chairs, lots of natural materials – walnut wood, leather, real plants – and artisan accessories lining the smooth, dark shelves. The mix of metal surfaces and light-absorbing concrete generates an interesting play on light.

The formal meeting room was created by installing glass partitions on part of the terrace, with the inner side of the area open to the rest of the workspace. For privacy, large drapes can be drawn across the glass walls and the open side of the space, cocooning the meeting space. The large boardroom table in American walnut was custom-designed and set on a geometric support system with a hollow metal section in a brass finish. It can be taken apart easily and moved around to rearrange the space for large staff gatherings. The board room chairs are green, which resonates with the overall design.

The ultimate test for any interior design is how it affects its users. And when an office looks like this, who wouldn't want to go to work? ■



The sleek smoothness of the contemporary bar is a foil for the tactile decorative and functional artefacts.



Green acts as a colour accent in the largely neutral palette.



Circular rugs and pebble cushions soften the angularity of the space. The cushions are lightweight and can be moved easily whenever necessary.