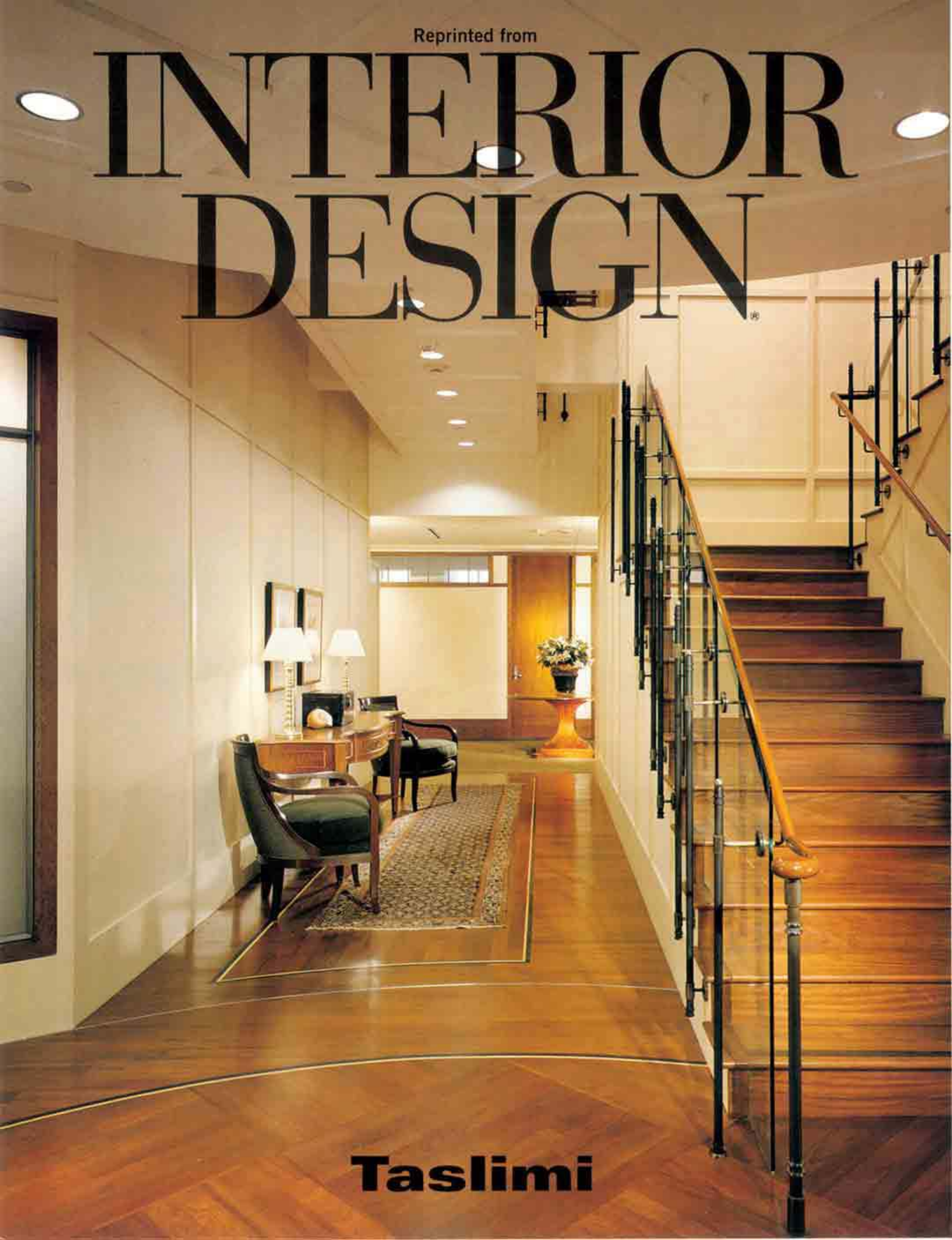


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# INTERIOR DESIGN



**Taslimi**



Area interprets a California aesthetic for Ziffren, Brittenham, Branca & Fischer in Los Angeles.

## Legal Eagles

TECHNICALLY, IT'S A LAW FIRM. Realistically, it's a power broker and deal maker, specializing, to cite a *Forbes* article, in "linking the entertainment business to the rest of corporate America." Ziffren, Brittenham, Branca & Fischer has negotiated many of Hollywood's mega-business deals, including: Ted Turner's acquisition of the MGM film library; Ron Perelman's purchase and conversion of independent television stations into Fox affiliates; and Circuit City's recent introduction of the new Divx technology, a delivery system for the emerging DVD movie market. When this 20-year-old law firm, along with several other heavy hitters, purchased a building at 1801 Century Park West in Century City, it brokered a deal of its own. After interviewing 12 local firms, the client team commissioned Area, whose partners Henry Goldston and Walt Thomas are well known to media executives as well as the legal community, to design its 35,000-sq.-ft. share of office space.

"Spend money and give a sense of permanence." What welcome words to commercial interior designers who are typically told to hold down costs in line with five- or ten-year business leases. Since Ziffren et al. were partial owners of the building, they, along with the Area team, were committed to upgrading

the '60s spec structure, which had already been sensitively remodeled by Barton Myers Associates.

Along with the generous checkbook came the directive for "an anti-stereotype," Goldston relates. "They wanted none of the Hollywood glitter and glamour, none of the high gloss lacquer and chrome." Yet they also rebelled against the staid look associated with conservative law firms. "They wanted traditional," Goldston continues, "but a cool, hip California traditional."

Throughout the offices—not just the ground-level reception/conference center and top two attorney floors illustrated—a →

*Opposite: A stairway of glass, iron and Brazilian cherry links the eighth and ninth floors.*

MILLWORK: F.K.ANDERSON & SONS. LOUNGE CHAIRS: NANCY CORZINE. UPHOLSTERY FABRICS: DONGHIA; OLD WORLD WEAVERS. WOOD FLOOR: RODE BROS. HANDRAIL: COLUMBIA FABRICATING. LAMPS: CITY ANTIQUES. LIGHTING CONSULTANT: ALFRED SCHOLZE. ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT: MARTIN NEWSOM. CONTRACTOR: TASLIMI CONSTRUCTION.

*Below: Floor-to-ceiling beveled glass scrim extends eight ft. adjacent to the reception area.*

SEATING: MARTIN BRATTRUD; NANCY CORZINE FABRICS: SPINNEYBECK; CARNEGIE; JOSEPH NOBLE; OLD WORLD WEAVERS; HINSON. RUGS: MANSOUR. LAMPS: HRS.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JON MILLER, HEDRICH BLESSING







polished townhouse quality belies the building's origins. Walls and ceilings are detailed to become substantial planes; warm woods abound; light-enhancing treatments permeate each floor. Private offices encompassing roughly 400 sq. ft. ring the perimeter with assistants' stations outside.

The junction between the eighth and ninth floors provides the most visible expression of the new architecture. Area was concerned, however, not only with supplying physical linkage through a new stairway, but also with creating a heightened sense of visual access between these two levels. Previously, attorneys had been concentrated on a single floor. When presented with the new scheme, they voiced concern about potential isolation. Addressing the issue, the architects removed a good portion of the floor/ceiling to create a bridge situation adjacent to the stairway. And yes, Goldston responds, the lawyers actually do use the bridge for informal conversations.

The other main challenges focused on lighting—both artificial and natural—plus installation of the requisite accessible ceiling. "We devised a system of soffiting to make the ceiling look traditional," says Goldston, "and we integrated downlighting." Opposite each elevator, a backlit section of frosted glass framed in cherry gives the illusion that there is daylight beyond.

Furnishings, materials and other special treatments walk the fine line between traditional and contemporary. "It took three presentations to hone the elements and refine the image," Goldston continues. Common grade cherry, "picked for its imperfections, sap marks and irregular grain, not economics," he says, dominates as cabinetry. Brazilian cherry is used for flooring, with English yew, East Indian laurel, wenge and makore selected for inlays and accent pieces.

Area credits extend to Kathy Troutfetter and Susan Armstrong. —*Edie Cohen*



*Above: Assistants' work stations are made of cherry with granite counters.*

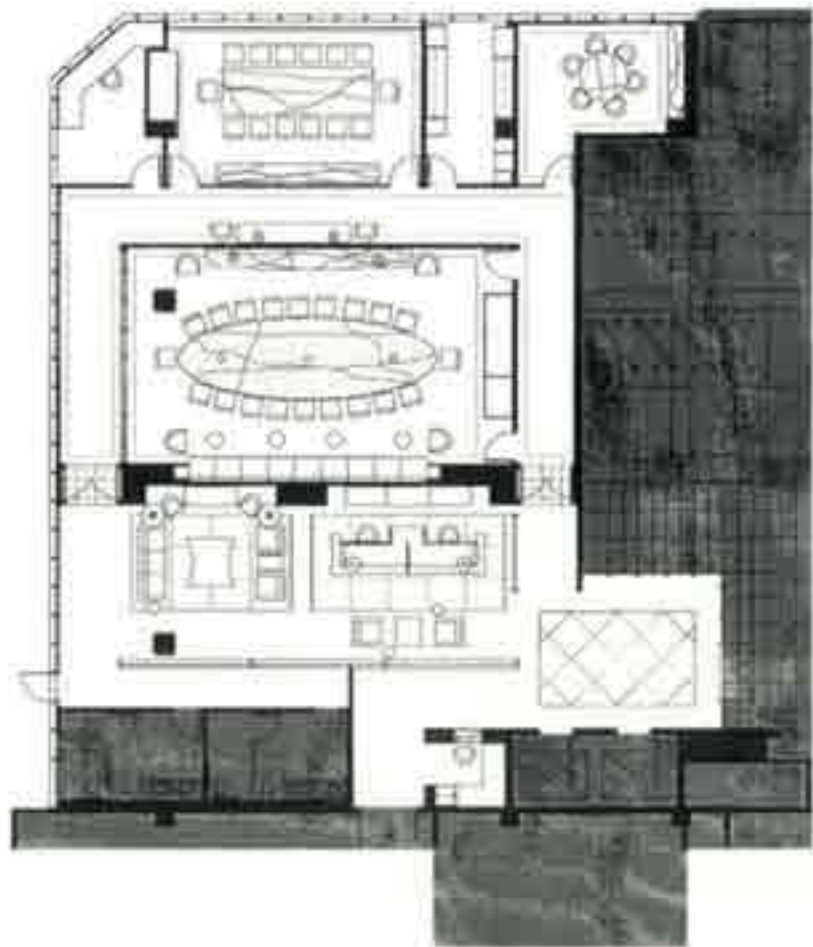
*Left: Reception area includes custom yew credenza and coffee table of makore and granite.*

WALL FABRIC: **CARNEGIE**. LAMP: **NANCY CORZINE**. ANTIQUE BOX: **CHARLES JACOBSEN**. VASE: **KOSTA BODA**.

*Opposite: Area's signature conference room contains generous banquette seating.*

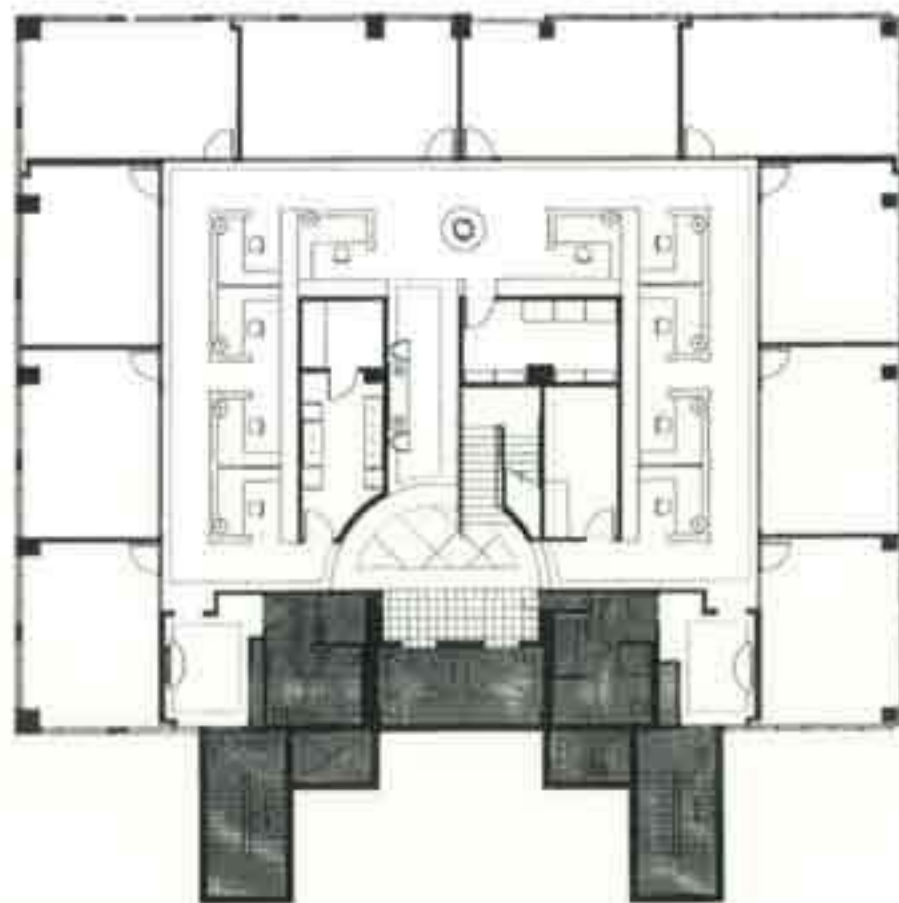
LOUNGE SEATING: **MARTIN BRATTRUD**; **NANCY CORZINE**. CONFERENCE CHAIRS: **NIENKAMPER**. OCCASIONAL TABLES: **SHANNON & JEAL**. FABRICS: **MYUNG JIN**; **RODOLPH**; **HBF**; **CARNEGIE**; **BRENTANO**. WALLS: **CUSTOM WALLS**; FABRIC: **KNOLL**. CARPET: **LEES**; **BENTLEY**. LAMPS: **HRS**.





GROUND FLOOR

0 10 20 40



EIGHTH FLOOR