

NUMBER 2

INTERIOR DESIGN



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Best Picture: California

Got milk? How about Yahoo! or Miller Lite? If you do, chances are that TV commercials influenced your decision. All those commercials, some of the wryest ever to hit the screen,

what lies beneath

text: edie cohen photography: art gray

Something isn't quite as it seems at Tool's commercial-production site in Los Angeles



are the output of Tool of North America, a production company in Los Angeles. Off-camera work for those award-winning campaigns took place in equally edgy Santa Monica environs—designed by Marco DiMaccio.

Fun and functionality, the workplace's vibes, echo the ethos of Tool. Commercial production is a multiphase, collaborative endeavor in which staff and freelancers juggle casting call, storyboards, location scouting, editing, and budgeting. Not only members of the production crew but also representatives from the advertising agency and the client company can be on-site at any given time. Therefore, accommodating sheer numbers (up to 80) became a prime program consideration, as was fostering interaction. The setup works like Tool works.

“So many production companies have gone out of business recently. This space gives the feeling that Tool’s been around.” →

Above: Neon signage identifies the 1930's bow-truss building.

Opposite: The reception area's concrete desk, topped in zebrawood, was fabricated off-site. A gallery of campaign shots hangs above three leather-covered polished-aluminum chairs.









And will continue to be, "DiMaccio says of the 10,000-square foot bow truss building, formally a plumbing warehouse.

Once DiMaccio patched the concrete floor, sanded the bricks and timber, and added 10 skylights, he and his staff apportioned quarters in a roughly symmetrical scheme. Front and center is the reception area, which does triple duty as a photo gallery and, during casting calls, an anteroom. Along both sidewalls, DiMaccio placed runs of offices, their glass fronts supported by a steel beam at the 12-foot-high mark: 11-foot stretches of steel hardware stabilize the 1/2-inch-thick glass and prevent it from bowing. Office furnishings combine the refined (Arne Jacobsen chairs) and the ad hoc. Desks are nothing more than varnished folding tables; storage units are basic maple bookshelves.

"They needed just a few semi-secluded spaces and private offices," says DiMaccio. "The remainder is common areas, no place to run no place to hide." A staff kitchen occupies a rear corner. Along the back wall, signature pieces by Le Corbusier, Eero Saarinen, and Charles and Ray Eames appoint a lounge. It's fireplace adds coziness: DiMaccio's bare-bulb pendant fixture provides whimsy.

Running down the center is a concrete spline anchoring a row of folding tables equipped with fluorescent tubes and Aeron chairs. These bare essentials serve the needs of freelance production crews.

On either side of this island →

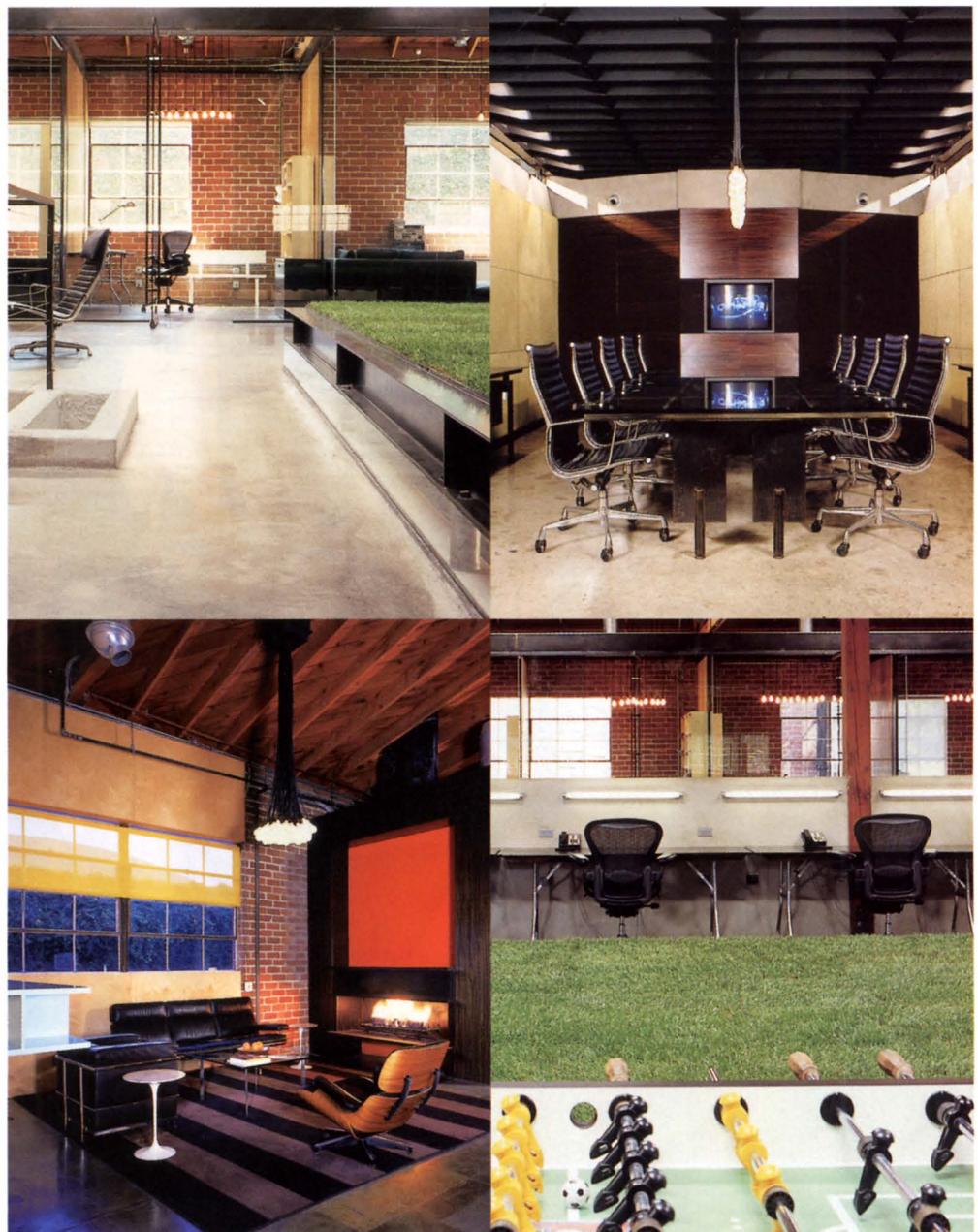
A field of sod, one of a pair, covers the roof of an underground conference room. Arrayed along a sidewall are glass-fronted offices and the staff kitchen, all furnished with Arne Jacobsen side chairs.

lies Tool's real pride and joy—These particular objects of affection are the 15-by-26-foot patches of sod.....and what's beneath them, namely a pair of subterranean conference rooms. Building the 450-square-foot spaces entailed four weeks of excavation, a 12-foot-deep retaining wall, and 24 cubic yards of poured concrete.

DiMaccio designed the conference rooms' tables of steel and glass, chose Eames Soft Pad chairs, and installed audiovisual equipment in a wall surfaced in zebrawood. Walls clad in mohair-covered sound-soak panels allow preproduction meeting to stretch to four uninterrupted hours, rendering the bunker analogy apt in both literal and figurative applications.

Got Light? (It's the obvious question.) The rooms' sod roofs are raised 2 feet above the warehouse floor, and steel-framed clerestories provide ambient light to supplement illumination from DiMaccio's bulb pendants.

Similarly dramatic features can be found in Tool's other locations which were all inspired by DiMaccio's original and playful approach to design. ▶



Opposite: Steel hardware imparts stability to the offices' ½-inch-thick glass fronts, preventing them from bowing.

Top, from left: Below the sod, steel-framed clerestories transmit light to a subterranean conference room. Its walls are clad in zebrawood and mohair-covered panels; chairs by Charles and Ray Eames surround a custom table of steel and glass. **Bottom, from left:** In the lounge, a bare-bulb pendant fixture offsets classic pieces by Eames, Le Corbusier, and Eero Saarinen. A central row of folding-table desks accommodates freelancers.



- 1 RECEPTION
- 2 FREELANCE ISLAND
- 3 CONFERENCE ROOMS
- 4 KITCHEN
- 5 LOUNGE

SIDE CHAIRS [KITCHEN, OFFICES]: FRITZ HANSEN. TASK CHAIRS [OFFICES, FREE-LANCERS' ISLAND], CHAIRS [CONFERENCE ROOM], WALNUT-BACKED CHAIR [LOUNGE]: HERMAN MILLER. LEATHER-COVERED SEATING [LOUNGE]: CASSINA. SIDE TABLES: KNOHL.



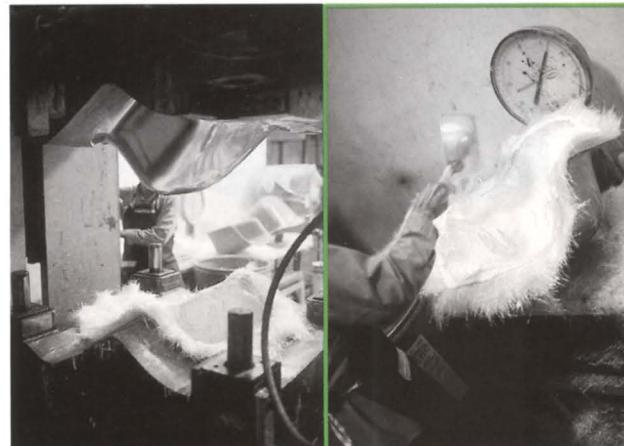
freezeframe



shaping up

To reproduce Charles and Ray Eames's fiberglass Shell chairs, Los Angeles manufacturer Modernica revived a technique from 1950. "It's a high-tech process, but there's an element of handworking and eyeballing," says co-owner Frank Novak. First, white glass fibers are made in what Novak jokingly likens to a cotton-candy machine: "It's very Willy Wonka." Modernica then creates a fiberglass preform—in approximately the shape of the finished seat, minus the strength—and checks carefully for consistency. The approved preforms are laid in a two-part steel mold, over which resin is poured from a saucepan. [A robot is being developed for more

efficient distribution.] Subjected to 40 tons of pressure in the heated mold, each resulting chair displays a unique surface pattern, remaining faithful to the Eames honesty in materials. "Sit and Stay Awhile," page 132. —J.R.



going green

Is that a putting green at Tool of North America, Los Angeles? Actually, this 15-by-26-foot expanse of grass—one of a pair—covers the top of a subterranean conference room at the commercial-production site. The solution, devised by designer Marco DiMaccio, provides privacy without impinging on the openness of this 10,000-square-foot bow-truss warehouse building.

The sod rectangular sits in a raised steel frame, with the resulting 2-foot gap enclosed by glazing. Viewed from below, the



glass segments become clerestories that allow light to penetrate the bunkerlike 450-square-foot conference room.

Creative? You bet. But sometimes Tool's high-

energy types need a brain break, and it's not a golfing crowd. Enter the foosball table, where some of the staff's liveliest interactions occur. "What Lies Beneath," page 146. --E.C.

