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Dear Reader,

We believe in reflection, reinvention, longevity. The dominant theme of USM Modular Furniture is that there is a sustainable solution at the center of every action; that with the same basic approach, every product can be designed and manufactured and used for generations. Thinking, creating and experiencing also typify the principle of modularity, which is what makes the USM open furniture system unique.

In the current issue of “spaces”, our “focus” article addresses thoughts and actions, words and deeds. Before every development and every action, exists a defining concept, or, as Paola Ghillani puts it: “Everything always begins in the heart of the company with the strategy.”

Paola Ghillani is a fascinating person. Previously, she held an executive position in the pharmaceutical industry and as CEO of the Max Havelaar Foundation, she promoted fair trade. Now she is the owner of “Paola Ghillani & Friends”, a firm that advises small and mid-sized companies on sustainable practices.

A look at our global references in this issue reveals tremendous variety in terms of colors and products, as well as a broad range of specific and individual design solutions. From the Bundeshaus, the federal assembly building in Bern, Switzerland, to installations in private homes around the world, furniture that can be customized to meet any need. As such, to reflect the way you want to live.

We hope the new issue of “spaces” provides you with sustainable enjoyment.

USM Modular Furniture



Achieving real results
from a passionate **vision**
based on ideals.



The dream of making our world a better place through ethical, sustainable business practices is what drives Paola Ghillani. She wanted to be an alchemist; instead, she became a pharmacist working in the pharmaceutical industry. Then she changed course and achieved great success promoting fair trade as the CEO of the Max Havelaar Foundation. Since 2005, she has been leading her own company, “Paola Ghillani & Friends”, a consulting firm that advocates the development and implementation of sustainable and ethical practices in business.

Gaby Labhart interviews the businesswoman Paola Ghillani.

Ms. Ghillani, you once said: "Every person has to start with themselves, the first step is always self-awareness." When did it begin for you? Paola Ghillani: I began focusing on human development as I was a small child, and everything that was negatively affecting this development really bothered me. That's why fairness is so important to me. And respect. It all began very early on, although I think that it always takes women a bit longer to find self-confidence, to really respect themselves. I don't know the reason for that. Maybe it's in the genes.

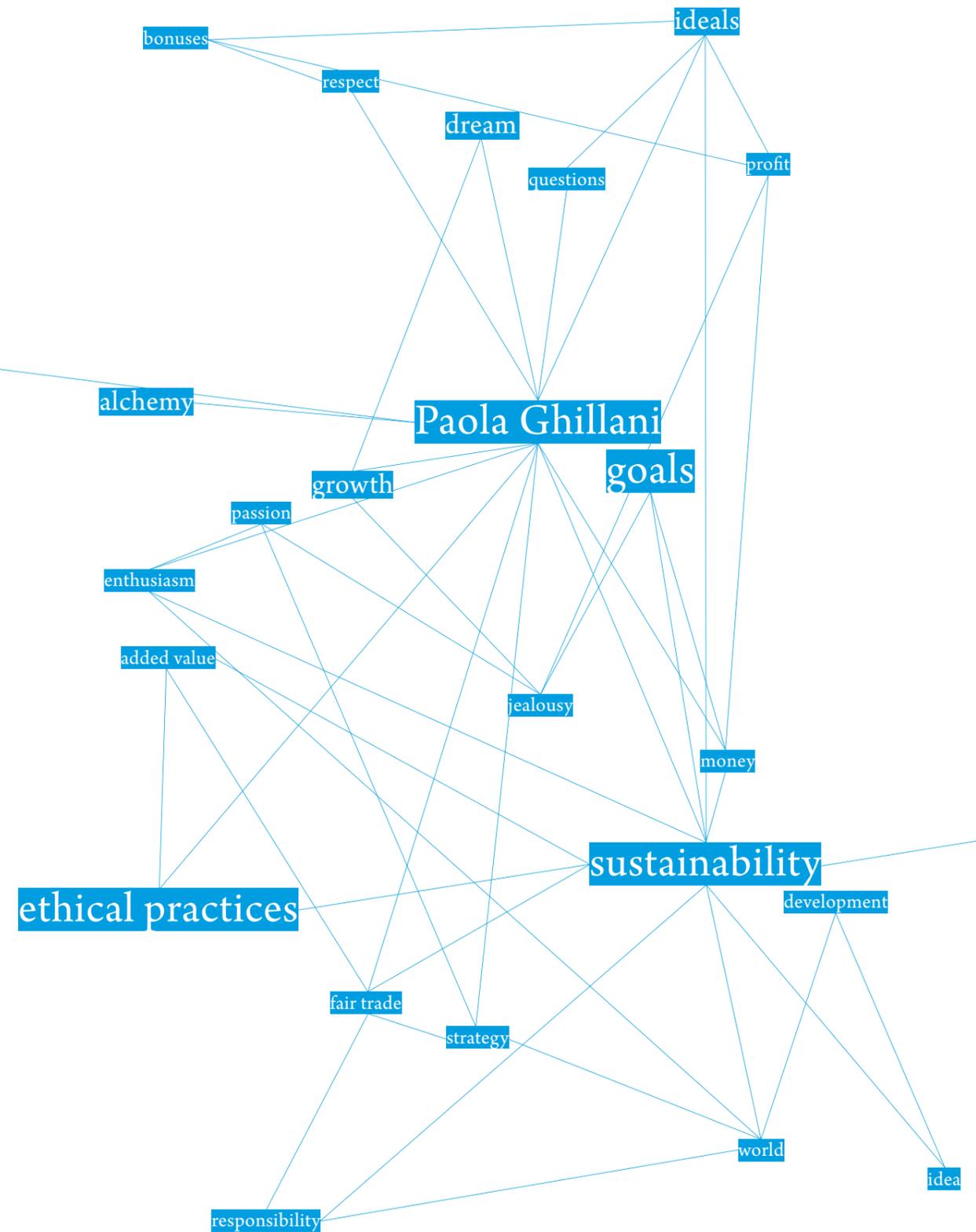
Or maybe it's due to education or surroundings. Certainly, those as well. But it was always there within me – the search for meaning in life, the joy of contemplating philosophical questions.

But you became a pharmacist? I am a generalist; I'm interested in everything. As I became a pharmacist, I was always focused on the fact that although medications heal the symptoms, they unfortunately don't deal with the causes. But it was my career path, and I have learned a lot. I probably should have studied alchemy.

Did you work in a pharmacy? I always knew that I didn't want to work in a pharmacy. But I was interested in business administration, marketing, corporate strategies and leadership. I was lucky to be able to work in international marketing research in the pharmaceutical industry right after I finished my degree. I was, as usual, the right person in the right place at the right time. I felt it. (She smiles.) And thus, in this environment, I was able to discover my talents and my passion — analyzing situations, developing and implementing strategies, managing. I had a wonderful career in the pharmaceutical industry, especially for a woman. That's something you shouldn't underestimate. Back then, in the nineties, the only people in executive positions were men with military backgrounds. I was already a rare bird there: at least ten years younger than my colleagues, female and with different ideas about leadership. For me, it was about integrating sustainable, efficient, socially and environmentally responsible goals into the strategy as an added value and proving that it works. Luckily, I always had good results!

How did you become CEO at Max Havelaar? I saw a small ad in the newspaper. It really was a very small ad. (She grins.) You could tell that they didn't have a lot of money. I applied for the job. I was familiar with Max Havelaar's products; I believed in fair trade; I knew that it could work. But I regretted that it didn't become a business model. It seemed to me as though people wanted to soothe their guilty consciences by purchasing these fair-trade products. Back then, there were only pioneers, mostly hardcore environmentalists that were purchasing those products.

What happened after you submitted your application? I received a polite rejection: "Thank you for your application, but unfortunately you are not on our short list; you have no experience in developmental issues." They were right. I had traveled a lot, but I had only dealt with strategic and operational management on international and national levels. Four months later, I got a call. A representative of six Swiss relief organizations wanted to meet me. They were the six organizations that had founded the Max Havelaar Foundation. The foundation was having financial problems, and the founders absolutely wanted Max Havelaar to finance itself. And they wanted this to happen within eighteen months.



Wow, that's quite a requirement ... Now I don't know whether I was blind or deaf on the day of that meeting, but I said that I could do it. And I was sure that I could. It was my goal to draw up a business model and prove that it would work. And it did.

You came from a globalized, profit-oriented private company, from the pharmaceutical industry of all places – in short, from the enemy camp. The enemy came, you could say that. I began with a small team, six people. Together, we found a good path, analyzed the situation and asked the right questions.

Such as? **What is our dream? What do we want to achieve with Max Havelaar over the next ten years? But I wanted to involve the stakeholders, too: the producers, the buyers and wholesalers, from the smallest to the largest. We distilled our dream into one phrase: “Fair trade as a matter of course.”** And then there were also very clear strategic goals, such as innovation: Launch at least one new product per year so that more producers in developing countries could benefit from fair trade and consumers and buyers would get used to the concept.

So did you have to make ads? (She laughs.) I am a very introverted person! We hardly had any marketing budget, so I had to put myself out there – in speeches, in the media, explaining what the problems of the banana trade are, that it's not the same as with rice or coffee. Innovation and raising awareness. And the third step was implementing the strategic partnership with the large wholesalers. That was extremely important and difficult. But after two years, we were not only able to finance our own operations but were even turning a profit, which we invested in new products – not in bonuses! (She laughs.) The entire thing was sustained by a huge amount of enthusiasm on the part of everyone involved. It was a wave of positivity. The awareness level increased to 87 percent. For bananas, 50 percent of the market share. Fair trade as a matter of course. We've proven that. You know, in the beginning, people laughed at me: “But you're from the private sector, Mrs. Ghillani ...”

Were you too successful? There was some jealousy, but that's human nature. I was a businesswoman, not a manager. I always led as if it were my own company. You know, I can be very stubborn and not always easygoing.

On September 1, 2005, you opened your own consultancy firm, “Paola Ghillani & Friends”. Who are those friends, and what exactly do they do? Everyone who believes that the world can be made more livable through the use of sustainable business practices. Those are the friends: individuals, companies, governments, competitors, even enemies. It doesn't matter. Not all of them like me. The important thing is that all of us, whether we're buying, producing or managing, integrate sustainable development into our day-to-day work. We consult and advise companies, we help adjust existing business models to the needs of a sustainable business and implement them successfully.

Was it a big step? Fair trade, sustainable business, sustainable development – they are exactly the same. There are three goals: to operate successfully, to assure social and economic development and to embrace environmental responsibility. And this can only happen with respect. Respect for the whole line, the whole trade chain. It has to be a win-win situation for all participants. That also means traceability of goods and financing, as well as transparency in the decision-making process; transparent governance is a key concept.

Respect, responsibility, transparency – terms that are not so popular right now ... And I can tell you why. Everyone is always talking about fallible companies and managers who haven't taken their social and environmental responsibilities seriously. But these companies and executives didn't fulfill their economic responsibilities in the first place, and now we've seen the consequences on the social and environmental levels. Take Enron, for example, the energy giant, one of the world's largest corporations. At Enron, the top executives simply didn't do their jobs but instead created an ego system. And then they manipulated the numbers to increase the stock price so that their own bonuses were bigger. And then they laid off thousands of people from one day to the next without any sort of severance plan. In terms of economics, these managers were not reliable, even though they were handsomely paid to be.

Does it have to do with the size? It is a combination of factors. It has to do with the size and with our system, which allows investors to bet as they would in a casino. Everything is a bet. They bet on whether people are able to pay the interest on their mortgages or not. They act as if profits could be maximized forever so that a few can profit from it. But it is only a few who can't stop betting, just like in a casino.

Is it better at small and mid-sized companies? Most of my clients are small and mid-sized companies, and most are shaped by a family. It often works out very well. Maybe it's because family businesses sustainably develop and respect the lifecycles of their businesses and their employees.

With a direct relationship to the product? **With family businesses, the story often goes like this: Someone invents something. In the best case, there is demand for the invention. Great. Then come growth and the challenge of bringing the invention to market. Innovations that satisfy a demand, that respect a sustainable, continued development so that the lifecycle of the company can continue as long as possible.** USM is an example of what I mean: manufacturing something that responds to a practical demand; it isn't superfluous. You can change it, it lasts forever. I'll keep my USM furniture for my entire life. And if I couldn't keep it anymore, then I could always sell it. It never loses its value.

Have you ever had enough of sustainability? It's a word that is sometimes overused. The term and everything that is meant by it cannot be misused for too long – or else financial analysts, consumers, the media and employees will start asking questions. People are informed, and they know that lies don't get you very far.

Do you want to train people to reassess their thinking? (She laughs.) You could say that. To the point where we do not need labels anymore. Rather than the brands themselves – USM or Weleda or whatever – stand for sustainable business. Everything always begins in the heart of the company with the strategy. In my opinion, my job is to be a little like Socrates, whom I adore – that is, to ask questions. Socrates calls this type of method maieutics. The questions are the midwives who help deliver a solution.

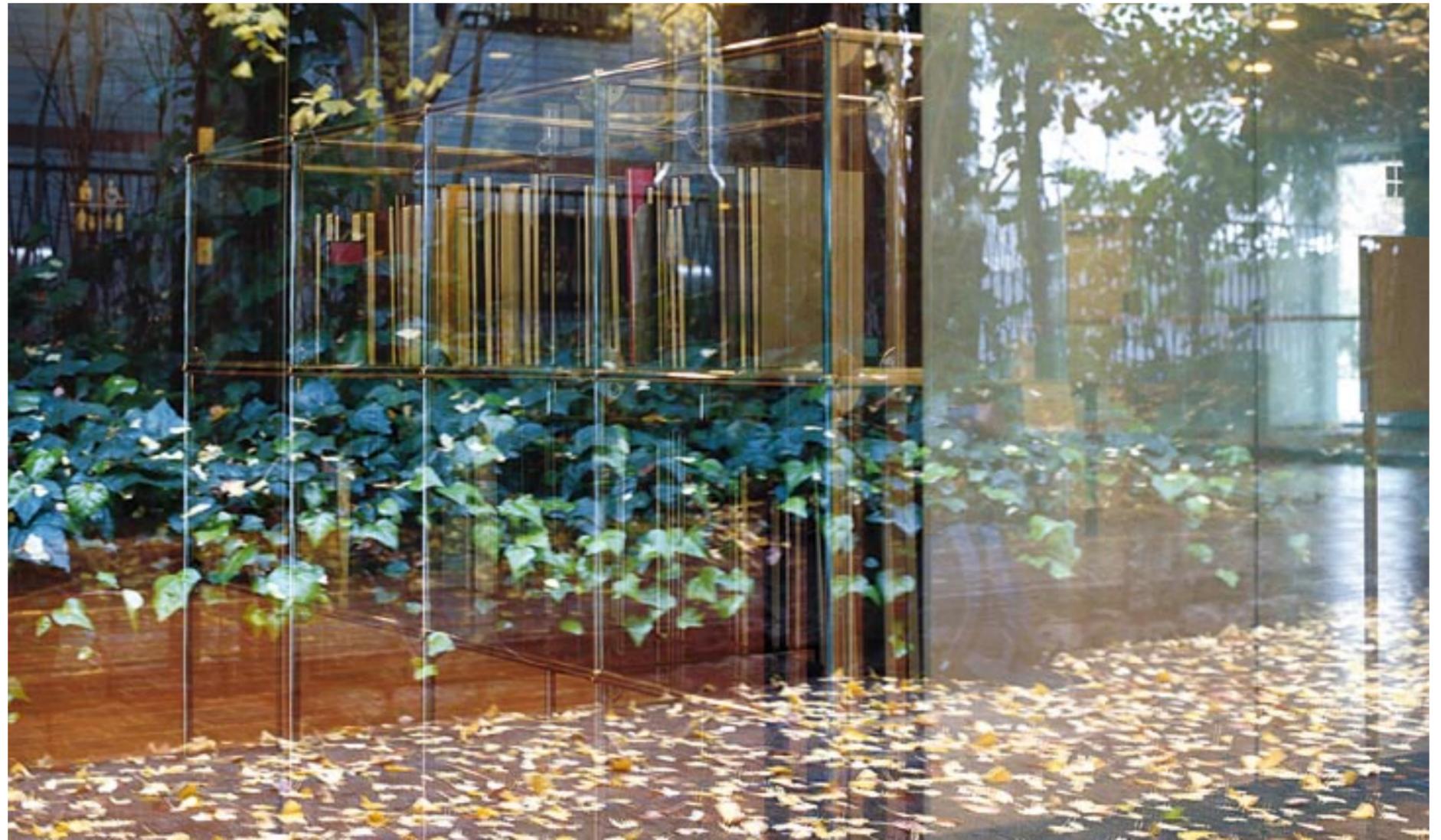
You probably have to ask the same questions over and over again. Yes, but that's the fun part. And I have my companions: Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Confucius, Rudolf Steiner and Gottlieb Duttweiler. The idea came to me that we are on earth to assure our continued development, to regard life as a process of initiation. It is important to accept this guiding principle and integrate it into our everyday lives. Every person has to start with themselves.

From the countryside to the city, from the mountains to the sea, from east to west and from north to south, our tour of impressive USM locations has again taken us halfway around the world. The geography and culture of the places we have visited are as different and varied as the uses we have encountered for USM furniture. A fashion design company in New York, a notary in Tenerife and a winemaker in Saint-Emilion – these clients among many others, have personally designed their USM furniture. For more examples in action, please visit the “Living” and “Working” sections at www.usm.com.

locations

Bern Dettelbach Dusseldorf Osnabruck Paris Tenerife New York

Stavanger Wedemark Stuttgart Tokyo Saint-Emilion Blaubeuren Hoogstraten



Infinite space



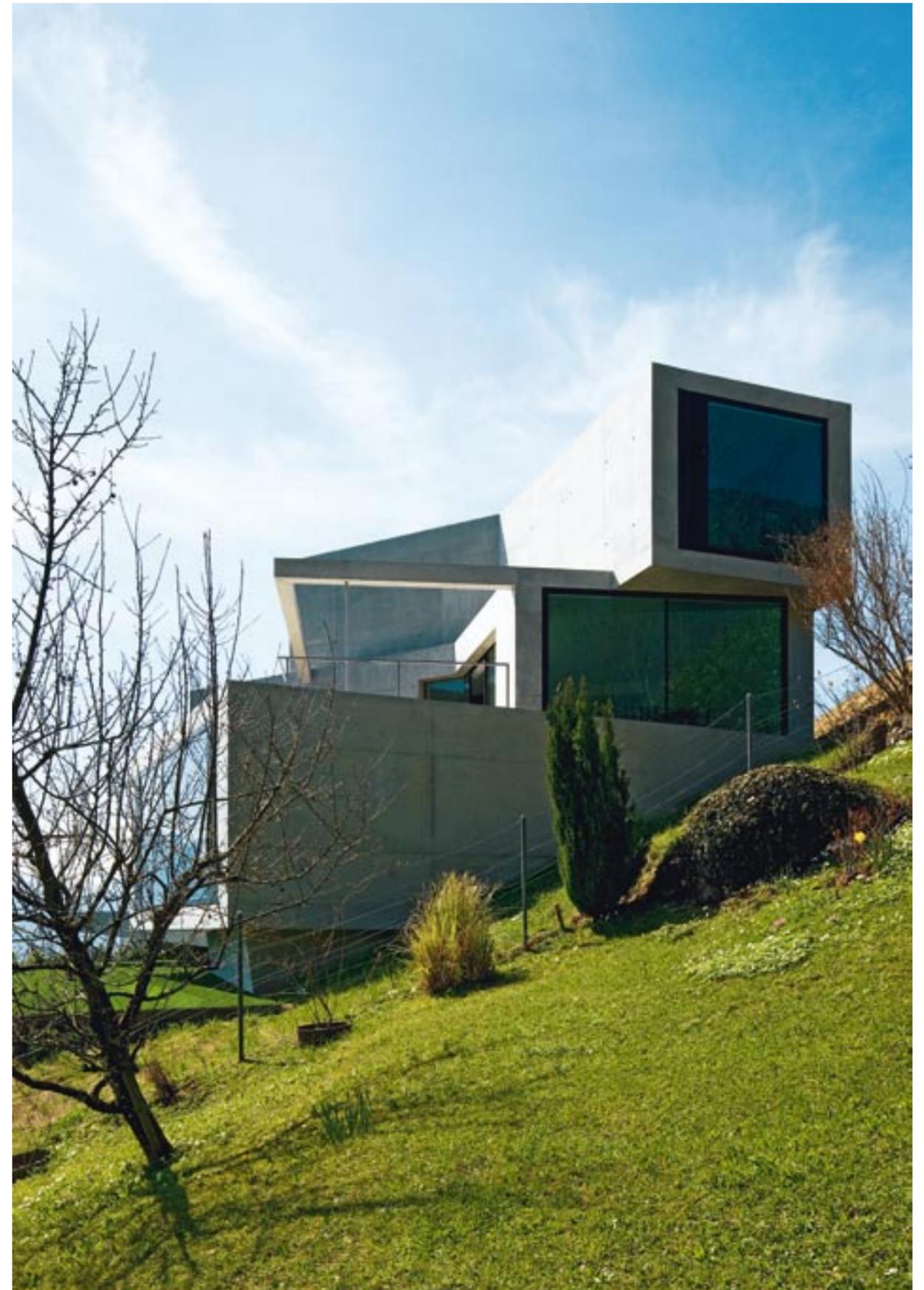
Ildiko Sragli designed the glass stairwell (next page, right) leading to the second-floor study (left) to appear as if it is floating, without being anchored to the wall. USM Haller in matt silver and black is used throughout the space, in

both workspaces and more intimate settings such as the library and bedrooms. After a trip to Kilimanjaro, the designer and her partner were inspired to install an interior climbing wall (next page, below left).

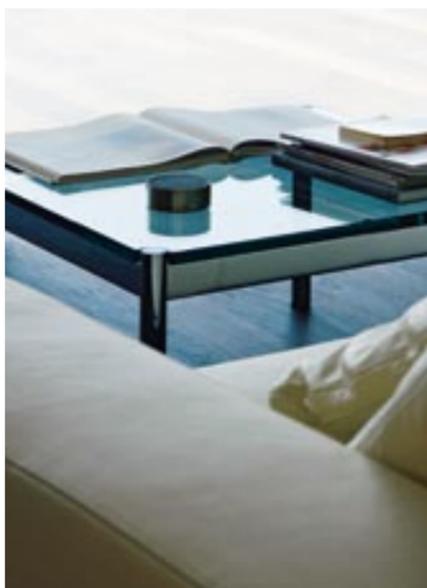
Fresh Beginnings Ildiko Sragli and Barry Appelman bought a duplex loft on Murray Street in Lower Manhattan in April 2001, just months before the devastating attacks of 9/11. Nearly a decade later, the neighborhood has literally risen from the ashes, as businesses and tenants have returned and new buildings have sprouted from desolate urban plots. “All of these buildings are new,” Sragli says, gesturing at the bursting skyline from the vast window of her living room. Sragli is no stranger to transformation. She came to the United States from Hungary as a political refugee in 1986 and soon earned her interior-design degree from Parsons in New York. “I’m totally aware that this is amazing,” she says, walking through her pièce de résistance, a 2,042-square-meter (6,700-square-foot) apartment. “I used to live in a closet.” The gut renovation, which took about three years to complete, resulted in a modernist glass box atop a 12-story building. “I really wanted to keep it simple and logical,” the interior architect says of the spatial scheme. Although the design underwent many changes, one feature remained constant from start to finish: USM Haller, which Sragli chose for the way its steel-and-glass construction seems to blend into the surrounding cityscape and for its versatility. “I wanted to have the same aesthetics in both the live and work environment yet not feel that it was a sacrifice in either direction.”



Forever Adi Herzog has built his dream house in Weggis: a large garage for six classic Porsches and three spacious rooms. The garage doubles as a workshop, complete with car lift, where the business economist works on his favorite cars. Each of the three mini-lofts, stacked one on top of the other, has a different view. When he wakes up, he is greeted by the Rigi; when he is working, he looks out at the Bürgenstock; and when relaxing and enjoying life, Lake Lucerne is at his feet. Herzog loves the elemental and enduring, which is why his heart belongs to these old Porsches, with their reliable engineering and timeless design. The building materials he chose for his house are concrete, steel and glass. And for the interiors, only basic, enduring pieces were considered: a stereo system constructed entirely of metal, a table made out of the wing of an old DC-9. And the central component: the USM Haller modular furniture system. Herzog is fascinated by the simplicity, the multiple possible combinations and the extreme durability of the USM elements. The authentic character of its materials and solid construction remind him of his classic cars. There's nothing superfluous to disturb the functionality, and they last forever.



Like giant picture frames, the glass facade offers a view of Lake Lucerne and the foothills of the Alps. The few objects placed in these rooms have a precise, honest materiality. Among them is the USM Haller modular furniture system – a fundamental feature in Adi Herzog's house.



Jewel-Box Kitchen This stately mansion, in Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood, was designed in 1878 by the prominent architect Edward Kendall and later inhabited by Colonel Nathan Turner Sprague, an entrepreneur who was described as "one of the best known citizens of Brooklyn." More than a hundred years later, the three-story house has been taken over by a multigenerational family determined to celebrate the architectural legacy of the landmarked building, while updating the living quarters to reflect their contemporary taste.

"I have a lot of admiration for the original architect of the building, and it was a lot of pressure to honor his brilliance," says Monika Norwid, an interior designer who, in 2007, bought the brownstone with her parents, brother and sister-in-law. One of the boldest moves she and her family made was to relocate the kitchen from the garden level, where the servants used to do the cooking, to the parlor floor, which has become the family's communal area. (The rest of the house is divided into individual apartments.) To offset the dark-wood paneling in what was formerly the formal dining room, Norwid filled the space with USM Haller glass showcases, which allow light to travel unobstructed from the adjacent Victorian solarium. "I thought it would be fun to create a kitchen that doubled as a laboratory – an airy, glassy, experimental place where you can play with food and wine and discover new flavors," the designer says.

In the middle of the room stands a USM Haller standing table with a yellow lacquered glass top – glowing like a gemstone in a jewel box of a kitchen – which Norwid used as a reference to the stained-glass windows the decorative artist John LaFarge designed for the house. She was drawn to USM, she says, for its functionality, high quality, adherence to environmental standards and, of course, flexibility. "It gave me the sense that I was fully committed to the concept of the kitchen, but I wasn't committed to the exact dimensions of it," she says. "It can grow and shrink and be modified with the needs of the family." Also, although the cabinets are freestanding, they needed to have the same sense of solidity as built-ins. "It's really important that USM cabinetry be built with such technological precision that it does not move," Norwid says. "The last thing you want is things trembling or not secure. USM just feels like a tank." The ultimate measure of the design's success is one simple fact: "I can't get people out of there!"





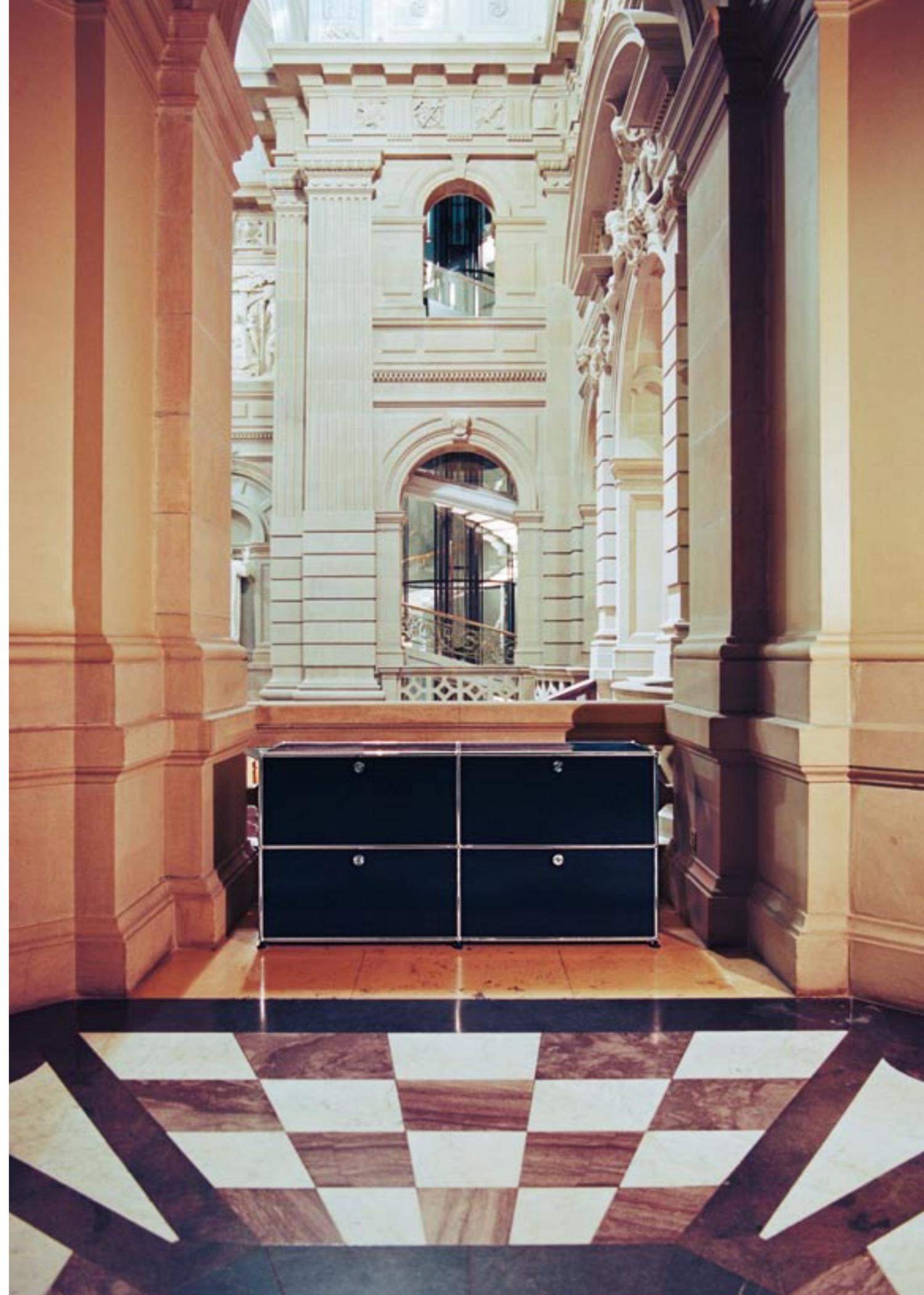
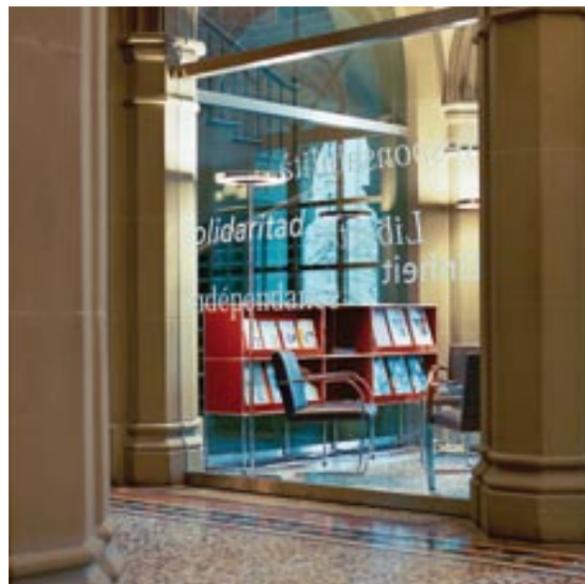
USM Haller glass showcases are used to display glasses and ceramic dishware. Also they bridge the dark wood paneling with the bright glass solarium adjacent to the kitchen.



research discuss analyze reason
debate manage study plan
concentrate communicate interpret
act evaluate politicize intervene
decide develop reject influence
commit structure formulate specify –
USM in the Swiss Bundeshaus



Governing with Style Democracies, dictatorships, conservative and liberal parties – governments are influenced by many and varied forces. But what most of them have in common is an imposing parliament building – a magnificent historical structure whose grandeur and symbolism are exceeded only by that of cathedrals. The well-known Parliament building in Bern, known colloquially as the Bundeshaus, also belongs in this category. Completed in 1902, it has been rebuilt many times in its more than 100 years of use. But with its latest renovation, the resulting patchwork has given way to a unified, lasting solution. In the process, the designers had to find the right balance between modern parliamentary operations and landmark preservation considerations – a requirement that is perfectly suited to USM Haller. The modular furniture system harmoniously integrates into both the modern rebuilt offices and the historic rooms and halls, and thus, in its own way, also represents a little piece of Switzerland.





Permanent and temporary work spaces for the members of parliament and parliamentary groups on the fourth floor. The modularity of USM Haller (shown here in graphite black) can be adapted to meet the changing needs of parliamentary operations over the long term.



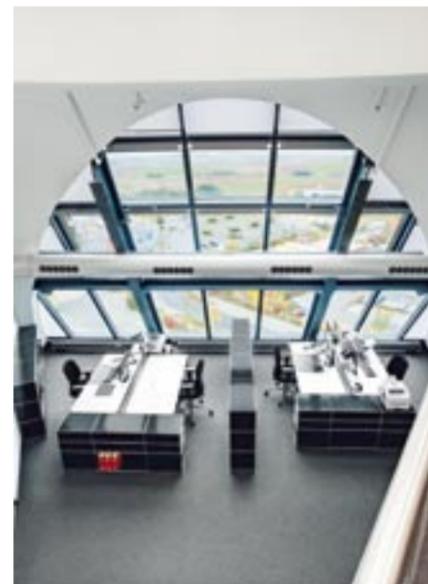
space invention



The former IMAX building, in Dettelbach's Mainfrankenpark, is 33 meters (108 feet) high – and thus one of the tallest egg-shaped buildings in Europe. Churfirten M&A Consulting

is located on the top two floors, where it uses the USM Haller modular furniture system in their offices as well as in the client reception and consulting areas.

A Good Egg The top floors of the former IMAX building in Dettelbach's Mainfrankenpark make for an extravagant facility: The walls of the egg-shaped structure curve into a dome, creating an almost churchlike effect in the space below. For Churfirten M&A Consulting, a partner company of Churfirten Wealth Management in Liechtenstein, the structure's peculiar shape was one of the reasons the company chose this location. The senior executives wanted a transparent office environment with an interior that was as elegant as it was functional, so they selected USM Haller shelves, sideboards and tables. The client reception space, located directly under the dome, is also furnished with the USM Haller furniture system. Glass dividing walls let clients see into the offices, which emphasizes the company's dedication to transparent business practices. The decision to specify USM as a unifying element among the various areas was no accident: One of the chief executives came to appreciate the quality of the classic furniture designs in his former position in the banking industry and didn't want to go without them in the company's new location.



The work spaces of Churfirten M&A Consulting have an open and spacious style, allowing employees to concentrate and work efficiently.

Matte stainless-steel elements, glass dividing walls and the elegant surfaces of the USM Haller modular furniture system give the rooms a sophisticated look that communicates the company's standards to clients.

Great Even Behind the Scenes Königsallee, the famous boulevard in Dusseldorf, is known even outside the city by its nickname, Kö. Companies that build or rent here are never content with understatement. This is true for Linklaters LLP, one of the world's leading corporate law firms, located in two remodeled landmarked buildings built in the early 20th century. (More offices are located on a floor of a building constructed in the late 1970s.) The previous tenant of this gorgeous space, with coffered and stucco ceilings, was also no small fry: Deutsche Bank, which has been on the Kö since 1975. Development 9, the Leipzig-based architecture, design and media company, created a successful synthesis of polished grandeur and modern subtlety for the corporate law firm. Spaciousness and minimalism are evident in the renovation of this approximately 2,000-square-meter (6,500-square-foot) office space. Linklaters did not want an open floor plan, so the architect created single and double offices using glass dividing walls. The central areas of the building now house common areas, kitchenettes, an open archive space and two libraries. And since binders and folders are not particularly attractive to look at, Development 9 suggested storing them in USM Haller sideboards.





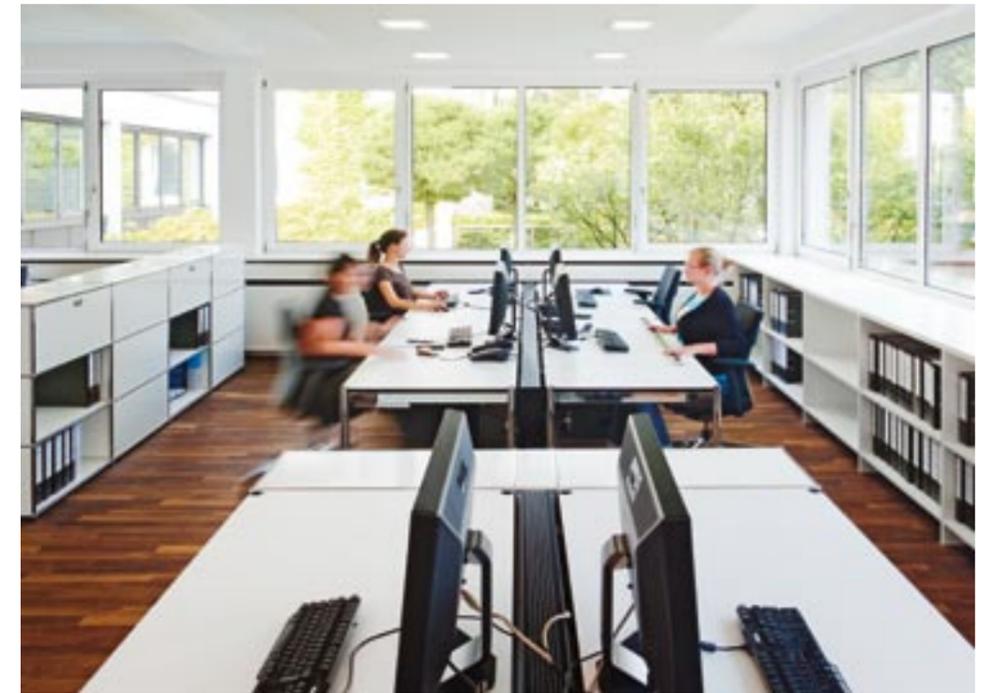
Archive and library areas at the Linklaters LLP headquarters in Dusseldorf. The archives of a leading corporate law firm must always be accessible. Graphite black and ruby red sideboards from USM take care of that – and they are even easy on the eyes.

Outlook, Insight The felt on the chairs and stools in the meeting areas are green to mirror the trees outside the windows. Every design element is carefully considered at the headquarters of pbr Planning Office Rohling AG in Osnabruck. The architects' workstations are divided between two of the firm's several buildings: a former residential structure from the 1950s and a flat-roofed addition from the 1990s. USM Haller in pure white perfectly contrasts with the smoked, oiled oak floors in the addition, just as it does with the lighter, natural pine floors in the older building. The USM Haller four-table combinations with sideboards visually divide the space and give structure to the expansive office.

pbr Planning Office Rohling is among the largest architectural and construction engineering companies in Germany, with more than 400 employees at eight locations in Germany and one in St. Petersburg. The staff oversees the entire building process, from the initial concept, through the drafting stage, to the moment the keys are handed over. This much is clear: A lot of skill is required – a fact that is reflected in their own work environment. Here, everything is coordinated, down to the smallest detail, including the USM Haller tables with cable ducts, which offer an elegant solution for hiding all the cords for lighting, computers, and other equipment.



Planning, designing and engineering for extensive construction. Various disciplines are brought under one roof.



Fifty pbr employees at USM workstations coordinate the entire building process, from the initial concept, through the drafting phase, to the moment the keys are handed over.

This USM Haller piece has found a perfect spot: between a portrait of Victor Hugo and frescoes of the painter and sculptor Philippe Serond.

art déco – art abstrait

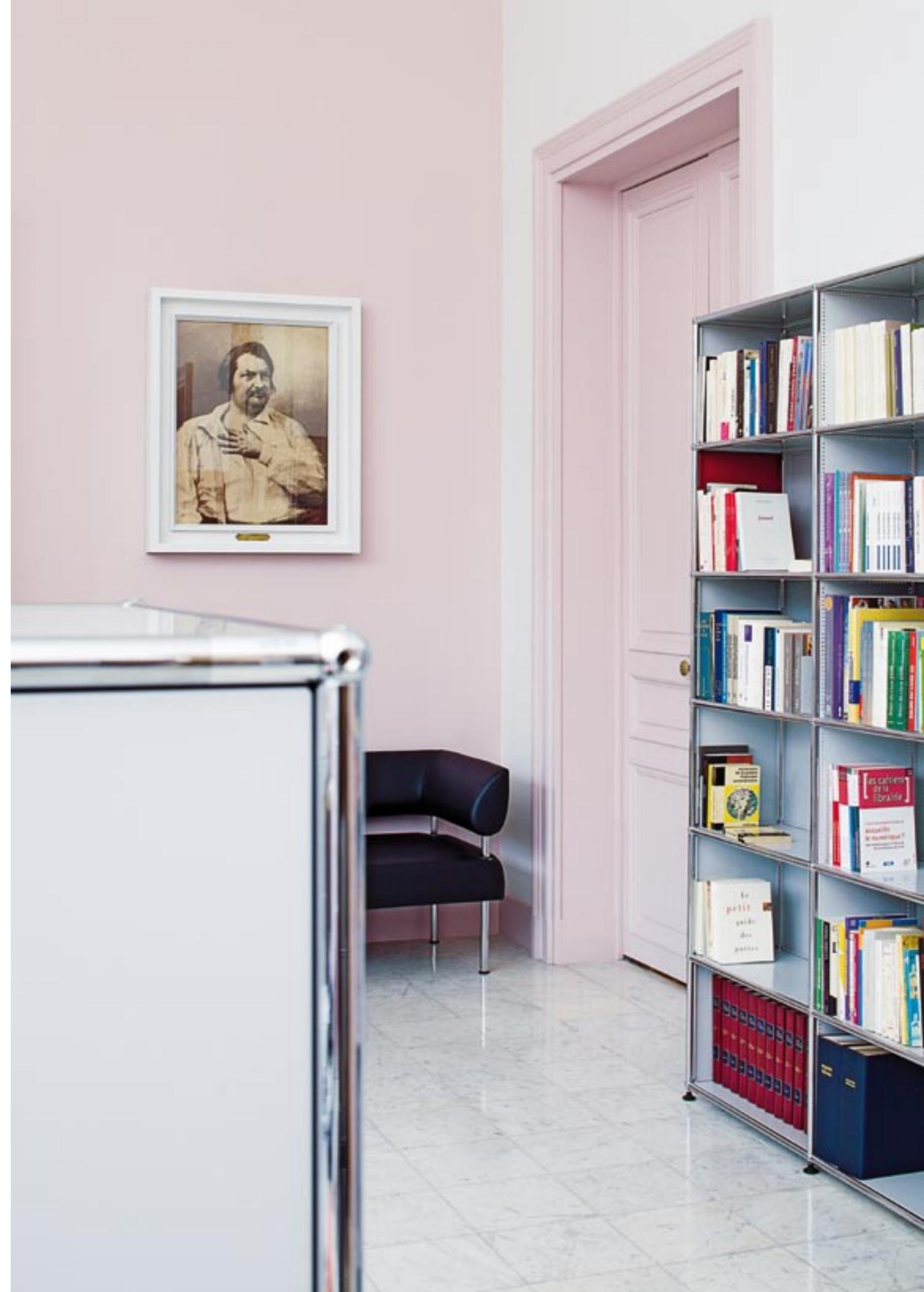


A Bridge Across the River of Time The Hôtel de Massa was built at the end of the 18th century on the Champs-Élysées, which at the time was situated in the middle of the countryside. Since 1929, it has housed the Société des Gens de Lettres (SGDL), an organization founded in 1838 by the writers Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and George Sand to represent the rights of authors.

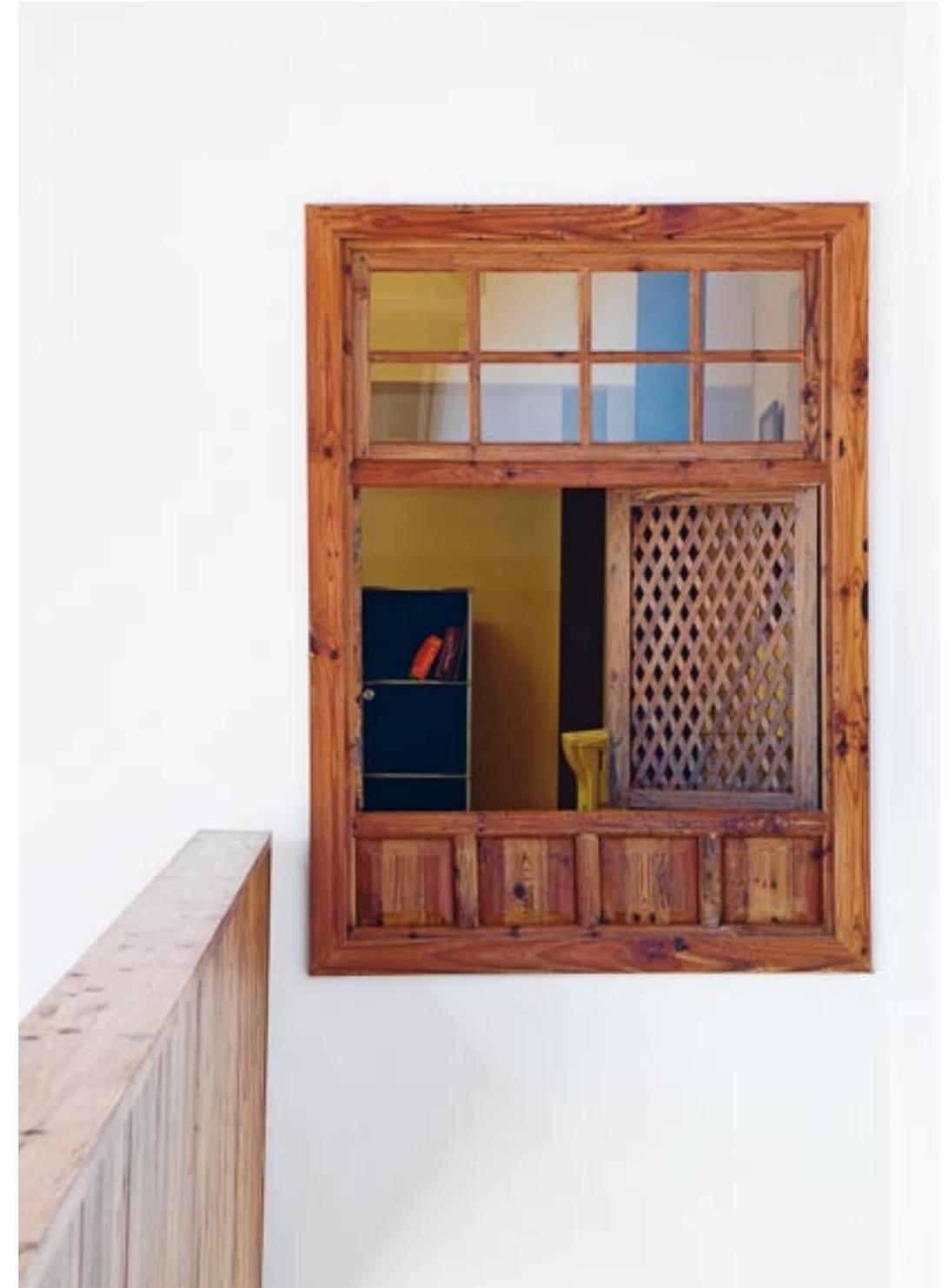
In the course of its turbulent history, the Hôtel de Massa came into the hands of two businessmen in 1926: Théophile Bader, director of the department store Galeries Lafayette, and André Lévy, a real estate investor. These gentlemen were not interested in the building per se but rather in owning a piece of real estate on the Champs-Élysées. The building, however, was, and still is, a protected landmark and could not be torn down. So between 1927 and 1928, the businessmen had the structure transported stone by stone to the observatory at the southern end of the Jardin de Luxembourg and then sold the building to the SGDL for the symbolic price of one franc.

As a token of gratitude to the Galeries Lafayette, the president of the SGDL ordered all of the furniture for the building from the famous department store. Bader delivered the order but never sent a bill. Thanks to his generosity, the building is now in possession of a unique collection of 110-piece collection of Art Deco furniture.

In 2009, SGDL decided to update its furnishings, but it was not easy to arrive at a stylish combination of 18th century architecture, Art Deco furniture and contemporary office equipment. USM Haller, in pure white and ruby red, was chosen because the furniture has the sort of timeless quality that ensures that it will not dominate the atmosphere of the rooms. Because they were deliberately configured with a low profile, the furnishings allow open sight lines of the large spaces and to the portraits of the society's founding fathers, including those of Hugo and Balzac.

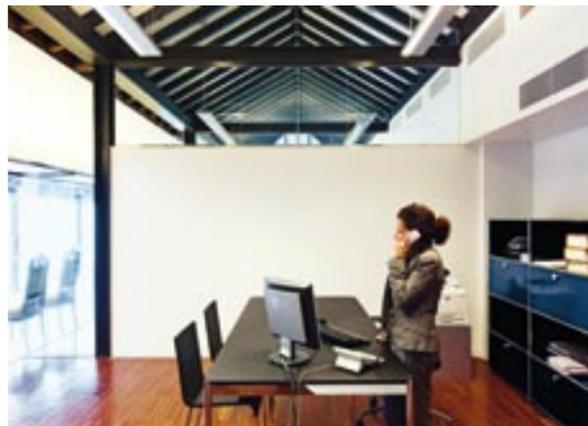


Notarized Tourist Paradise Sun, sand and siesta: those are the attributes generally associated with Tenerife. Throughout the year, millions of tourists flock to the largest of the Canary Islands not only for its pleasant climate but for its natural variety: lush vegetation, unusual rock formations, beautiful sandy beaches and picturesque cities. La Laguna, the island's second-largest city, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site ten years ago. The well-preserved historic city center is dominated by magnificent palaces and religious structures. This is where the notary office of Ana Maria Alvarez Lavers has set up its new headquarters. The original structure, which dates from 1780, was transformed into a modern office building while still meeting landmark preservation requirements. Once again, the USM modular furniture system shows how it can be perfectly integrated into historic structures. That, along with its high quality and absolute flexibility, impressed Alvarez Lavers. Now, she and her staff are excited to work in a modern, bright, functional environment – a successful fusion of heritage and modernity.



“In this renovated antique building, history and modernity engage in a fascinating dialogue.”

Arsenio Pérez Amaral, architect



Wood and stone merge with concrete and glass. The USM Haller modular furniture system and USM Haller table contribute to this symbiosis of old and new. The refined elegance of the work spaces and meeting areas is accentuated by the colors selected: steel blue for the furniture, pearl gray laminate and black linoleum for the tables.

A Tailored Fit Joseph Abboud began his fashion label in 1986, creating menswear distinguished by rich colors, fine fabrics, and superb tailoring. Since then, his company, JA Apparel Corp. has grown beyond suits to encompass the sartorial needs of men and boys, from luggage to sneakers and eyeglasses. Earlier this year, it continued its evolution by renovating its showroom and offices on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan – a sleek space that reflects the company’s new streamlined direction.

The goal was to create an atmosphere that was both warm and modern. Designed by Michael Lopez of TPG Architecture, the 914-square-meter (3,000-square-foot) showroom is devoid of clutter or any other visual impediments that might distract from the latest products on display. The new aesthetic is a significant departure from the former showroom, which, with its cherry-wood walls, plush carpeting and elaborate fixtures, had a stuffy look. “We aspired to create an environment where the design sensibility of each item shown through,” says the company’s president and CEO, Marty Staff, in a statement. “For the first time, our retail partners can easily see that our assorted products indeed do work as a collection.”

To accommodate the executive offices, the architect found a creative way to partition the space: a custom-designed wall set on casters, which can roll and pivot to create a private dressing room for VIP fittings. The office side of the wall contains built-in closets, while the other side features an expanse of hanging fixtures to showcase garments. The minimal pared-down and elegant USM Haller glass showcases fit right in: since the pieces are flexible, they, too, can be rearranged, for the frequently changing installations.



After a more conservative-looking showroom, the brand opted for an industrial-style look, with a neutral palette and exposed ductwork. USM Haller forms an integral part of the ever-changing displays.



HitecVision, Stavanger (Norway)

nordic lights

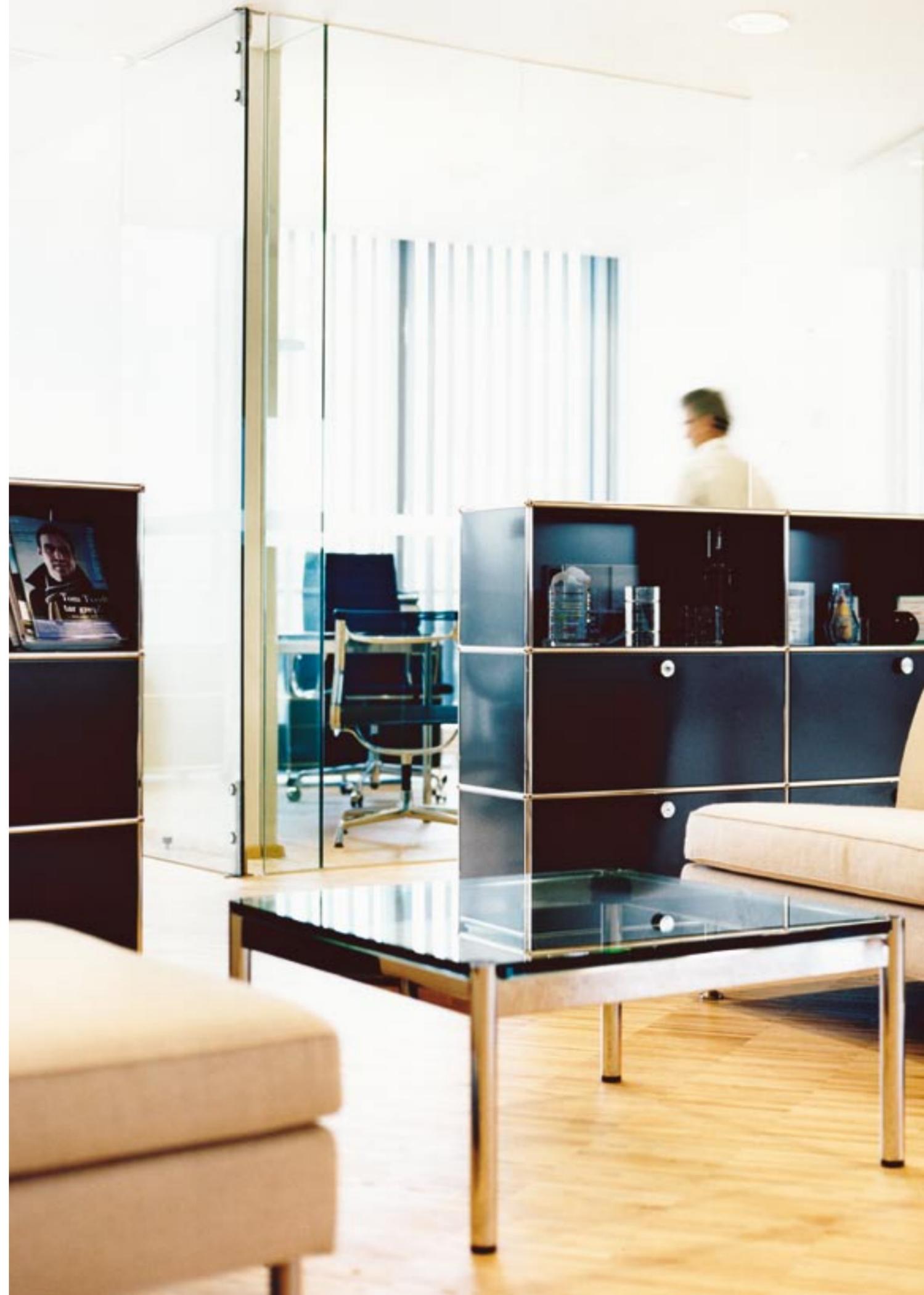


Nordic Lights Looking up at the wide-open sky above the fjord, you can almost hear the yearning sounds of Nordic music. This is Stavanger, in southern Norway. The oil-investment company HitecVision occupies the top floor of a modern building. Light pours through the glass facade, which brings the ocean, mountains and sky into the offices. From the opposite side, you can see an old industrial site, where the base of an oil platform still stands. Long outmoded, it remains a symbol of HitecVision's foundation: In its early days, the company specialized in developing new technologies for petroleum drilling. These days, the private-equity firm manages three top-class investment funds, which invest in companies that deal exclusively in oil and natural gas production. The company has its finger on the pulse of Norwegian economic success while connecting with other parts of the world through its investments. This fluidity is reflected in the office, with its glass walls and spare interior architecture: All of the offices, conference rooms and reception areas are furnished with USM Haller, whose clarity of form perfectly matches the aesthetic and overall transparency of the space.

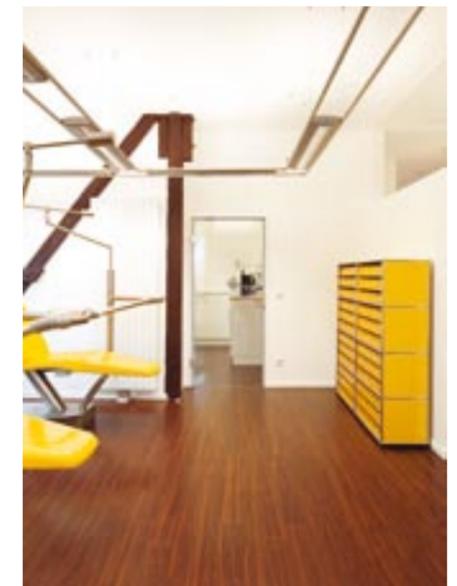




HitecVision's offices in Stavanger get a lot of natural light, contributing to a sense of lightness and transparency. This is where decisions are made and where motivated teams are hard at work. The elegant lines of the USM furniture system lend this modern business headquarters just the right touch of permeability and help to create a clearly structured work environment.

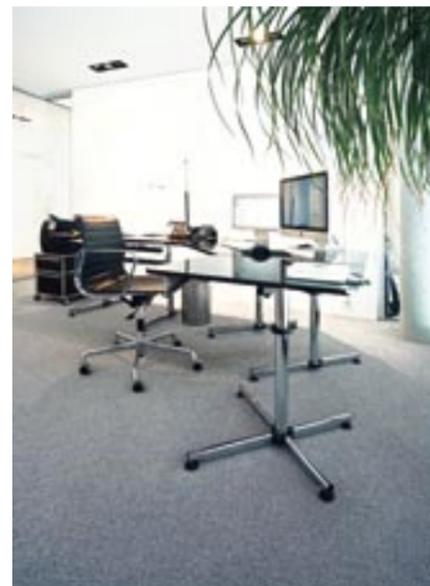


Lots of Sunshine The orthodontic practice of Sabine Steding and Dr. Susanne Schultze-Mosgau is illuminated by tiny shining suns: The chairs, tables, shelves and sideboards glow with a rich golden yellow and help patients relax. The two orthodontists chose the USM Haller modular furniture system for their practice in Wedemark-Bissendorf, just north of Hannover. The system has accompanied Steding in her work for many years; her first practice in Hannover is also furnished with USM Haller but in green. “The USM Haller modular furniture system changes with you and can be expanded and adapted to fit each new situation,” she explains. Moreover, thanks to the timeless design, it is easy to buy additional pieces after several years – even in the same color. The orthodontists and their staff appreciate the functionality and flexibility of USM Haller – but visitors are most impressed by the colorfulness. Children and teenagers, who make up the largest percentage of the clinic’s patients, react very positively to the bright yellow furnishings. But even the adults – the oldest patient was born in 1919 – feel at ease in these sunny surroundings.



Since the golden yellow of the USM Haller modular furniture system is defined according to the RAL color system, the other pieces of furniture could be chosen in a suitable shade. From the chairs to the boxes of teeth molds stored in the USM Haller shelves, everything shines in a sunny yellow.

Transparency and Elegance The words “marke und raum” (“brand and space”) can be found on the front doors. These words encapsulate the mission of an advertising firm devoted to corporate design, developing branding, from initial concept to planning and implementation, across all communication mediums as well as at trade shows and exhibitions. The space, at least as far as reiserpartner’s own headquarters is concerned, is light-filled and 400 square meters (1,312 square feet), located a few minutes’ walk from Stuttgart’s city center. reiserpartner moved in a year and a half ago, and according to CEO Michael Reiser, the spacious and airy office is a pleasant place to work. The space is broken up into individual offices, allowing “more concentration, fewer distractions.” Transparency is ensured with large windows and glass walls facing the hall. In the offices, you will find USM Kitos tables with black granite surfaces paired with USM Haller sideboards in graphite black. It has a restrained, elegant appearance, stylish but not intrusive, which, according to Reiser, is exactly the way it should be. “We have actually always been impressed by USM Haller. We appreciate and recognize its value, timelessness and durability.” And black is much easier to clean than you might expect. “You can, of course, see dust and fingerprints, but these are easily wiped away. And then the furniture looks brand-new again.”



showcase



Art Behind Glass Some of the biggest names in design were once students here: Nissan's Shiro Nakamura, Audi's Satoshi Wada and Panasonic's Toyoyuki Uematsu. Musashino Art University (MAU) is famous not only in Japan but throughout the world. Founded in 1929 as the Teikoku (Imperial) Art School, it has taught fine art and industrial design since its very beginning. In 1962, it became a university. Yoshinobu Ashihara was instrumental in the founding of the school of architecture at MAU. A Harvard graduate, he worked with Marcel Breuer in New York in the 1950s and went on to design the spectacular Sony building in Ginza, Tokyo's business and entertainment district. In 1967, he built the university's campus in the Tokyo metropolitan area of Kodaira. The 1974 expansion was the work of his famous student, Yoichiro Hosaka. The magnificent, ten-meter-high (33-foot-high) entrance hall, with its marble floor and white walls, was the perfect venue for a permanent exhibition. And, of course, it was inevitable that the professors and students at the art university would keep a close curatorial eye on the exhibit. The USM Haller glass showcases fulfilled the clearly defined requirements: They hold their own against the dominant character of the entry hall and bring together two elements that do not always coexist: aesthetics and functionality. (The photos shown here are from the "Masterpiece Product Collection" exhibition featuring design classics such as the Butterfly chair by Sori Yanagi, the Braun electric shaver and the Olivetti typewriter.)



Cathedral with Cellar In one of the world's most beautiful and renowned vineyards, on the sun-drenched slopes of the Dordogne Valley, sits Domaine de Château Faugères: Approximately 80 hectares (197 acres) of grapes surround a magnificent 18th-century Carthusian monastery.

When the Swiss businessman Silvio Denz purchased the vineyard in April 2005, he knew he wanted to put in a new cellar. He had it installed on a plateau over the vineyard to utilize the force of gravity, rendering pumps (which can damage the juice from the grapes) unnecessary.

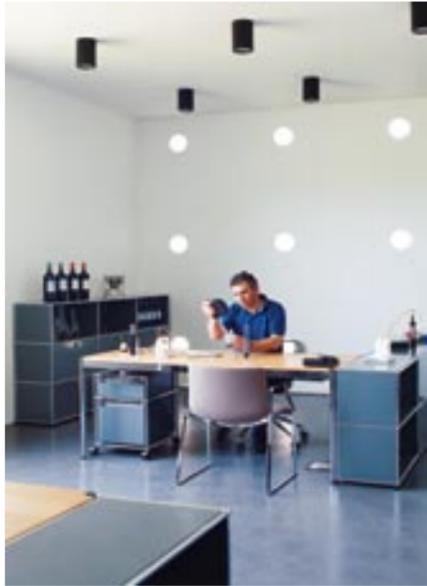
Mario Botta, the star architect from Ticino designed a bold new cellar that makes a clear statement in the otherwise reserved Saint-Emilion region. This wine cathedral is nevertheless harmoniously integrated into the landscape: The stone blocks on the exterior are locally sourced, corresponding to the region's traditional architectural style.

Inside the 3,550-square-meter (11,000-square-foot) Chai – as aboveground wine cellars in France are called – lies the winemaking area; the administration offices, laboratory and tasting room are located in the three-story tower building.

Botta recommended USM Haller, and now the office spaces in the old and new cellars are furnished with USM Haller in mid gray. The color perfectly harmonizes with the floors and the white walls of the new building. The elegant Haut Faugères, the grandiose Château Faugères and the Péby Faugères reserve, all of which are produced here, rank among the finest wines in Saint-Emilion.



Château Faugères, in Saint-Emilion: The new cathedral by Mario Botta towers above the vines and the old, traditional wine cellar (left side).



The clean lines of USM Haller furnishings are right at home in the modern, unadorned interior of the new wine cellar.



Authentic Style When the clothing company Coldwater Creek moved its design operation from Midtown to Soho last November, Elena Petrocco, the company's vice president of product design and development, became the lead designer on the project. With a background in theater-set and interior design, she was uniquely qualified to shape the new workplace, which, at approximately 2,743 meters (9,000 square feet), would provide the employees more room than their old digs and be an inspirational environment reflective of the brand's sensibility.

Coldwater Creek began in 1984 as a home mail-order business. Since then, the Sandpoint, Ohio-based company has become a leading retailer of women's apparel, selling its clothing and jewelry through its catalog, e-commerce site and a growing number of stores. "We're not what you would call a cutting-edge company," Petrocco admits. "We represent simplicity in our clothes." That simplicity translates into everyday pieces that can be mixed and matched and worn with easy confidence.

The relaxed ethos comes through in the eclectic and airy feel of the new offices, which juxtapose modern furnishings with earthy materials. The narrow width of the loft space required an open-floor plan, with the few enclosed offices separated by glass walls. As a result, Petrocco says, "We needed freestanding furniture that would look beautiful from 360 degrees." To her, USM Haller seemed an obvious choice for that reason and because of its pure functionality – a defining characteristic of Coldwater Creek's no-fuss style.







The clean, regular lines of USM Haller contrast with the more organic elements in the space, such as reclaimed floorboards. The library (left) is an enveloping arrangement of glass showcases that holds magazines, books and other

sources of inspiration. Although Elena Petrocco selected pure white sideboards, she used pure orange mobile pedestals to add color (previous page). "I think orange brings happiness and youngness to things," she says.

Contrast in the Cloister The headmaster is called Ephorus; the boarding school is Protestant. One hundred students and 15 teachers live, teach and study on this campus, a former Benedictine monastery that dates back to 1085, in Blaubeuren, near Ulm, Germany. The convent school was founded in 1556, after the Reformation, to provide a first-class education for gifted children – regardless of their family’s class or wealth (the 16th century equivalent of merit-based scholarships).

In 1928, the Blaubeuren Evangelical Seminary became one of the national churches and created a foundation with the state of Baden-Württemberg. All students still receive scholarships, and their average test scores are regularly among the best in the country. A few notable alumni: the 16th century astronomer Johannes Kepler, the Nobel Prize-winning author Hermann Hesse and the renowned journalist Klaus Harpprecht, who was a speechwriter for former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. Girls have been admitted since 1969; today, they are in the majority.

Meeting areas, offices and classrooms are furnished with bookshelves and sideboards from the USM Haller modular furniture system in pure white. A single ruby red piece stands out from the rest and functions as a barrier at the entrance to the office. Why USM Haller? Ephorus Henning Pleitner explains: “This school is 454 years old. We are a cloister. We do not have a fast-paced lifestyle. The endurance and variability of the USM modular furniture system tipped the scales in its favor.”

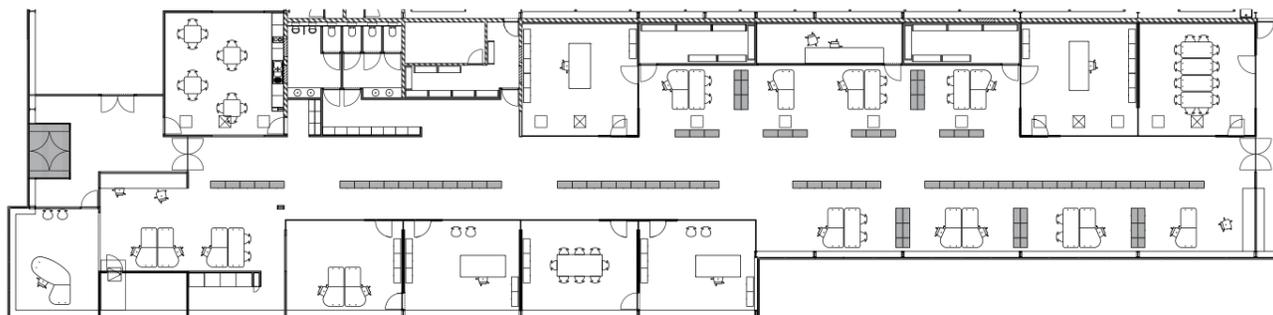
When selecting a color, it was difficult to choose between graphite black and pure white. “Gray,” Pleitner says, “was never an option. We stand for clarity: black or white.” In the medieval rooms, with crown-glass windows and wood ceilings, the pure white now provides a bright contrast.



Spectacular Spatial Structure Shortly after World War II, a young man named Mr. Müller moved from Switzerland to Antwerp. He fell in love so he stayed. He sold kitchen accessories and household items made in his home country, including Zyliss products, among others. Today, the Muller Company, in the city of Hoogstraten, about 32 kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Antwerp, is the largest importer and distributor of nonelectric kitchen to household equipment, including everything from glass and porcelain and pots and pans. And Zyliss is still part of the business! Since 2007, the company has been located in a building designed by the renowned Atelier de Bondt, in Antwerp, which has worked for such brands as Esprit, Diesel and Puma. The building is more than 10,000 square meters (32,808 square feet) and includes a showroom, a reception area, conference rooms, offices and storage. In the large office spaces, where the administrative and accounting departments are located, USM Haller sideboards in anthracite gray are used as partitions, adding an impeccable sense of style. A spectacular 50-meter-long (164-foot-long) USM counter spans the entire open-plan office, from the showroom to the storage closets. Management offices and conference rooms are divided by glass walls and distinguished by USM Haller in pure white, golden yellow or ruby red.

The company's Swiss founder sold the established business in the 1970s and retired. The small Swiss flag, which fluttered cheerfully in Muller's logo, didn't disappear until 1993 – after a successful management buyout.

Well-conceived structures in the vast space of the Muller Company, in Hoogstraten: Individual offices, conference rooms, administration, bookkeeping and reception are all grouped around the prominent USM counters in the central corridor, which serve as both room dividers and points of orientation.





The management offices of the Muller Company, in Belgium, a leading importer of kitchen tools, household accessories, tableware and glassware, are divided by glass walls and furnished in white, red or yellow. The huge central counter is 50 meters (164 feet) long.



USM Modular Furniture was first sold in the 1960s. This is a long history in this day and age. Some of the reasons for this longevity are the timeless design, the high quality of the materials, the incomparable modularity – and, of course, the new product developments introduced every year. The result: a classic piece of furniture interpreted according to the latest technological developments and customer needs. Naturally, how USM presents itself has an effect on how it is perceived. So in the “spotlight” section, you will find interesting news on the USM international showrooms, brochures as well as our latest digital tools.

spotlight

news



1 USM showrooms An abstract wall drawing or a concrete furniture grid? It is both: Elements from the basic USM Haller structure contrast with the perpendicular lines of the USM showrooms. Polished chrome meets vibrant color. The showrooms furnished in golden yellow, green and ruby red, represent the current international exhibits throughout the year. The color cycle was launched at the Milan Furniture Fair. You can visit our showrooms in person or online.

www.usm.com

2 Mobile Late this fall, a new free application for the iPhone and iPad will be available from USM. Our modular classics are playfully documented in slideshows, videos and interactive gadgets. And fans get the latest updates from the world of USM on a regular basis.

3 "living essentials" Like life itself, living spaces are in a constant state of change. USM Modular Furniture can be adjusted to our shifting preferences and rediscovered again and again. They express an attitude toward life – treasured objects that accompany you through every situation. The "living essentials" brochure shows a selection of specific applications for the home, including numerous options and price points.

Detailed information –
www.usm.com/living/en

4 Rich color A harmonious color palette is especially important for living spaces. With the latest addition of orange, brown and beige, the USM color selections have expanded. These hues will make any home more elegant and attractive. All colors are available for metal panels, glass countertops and lacquered glass tabletops.

5 Everything at hand Even small, precious items need to be stored and put away. The new drawer from USM offers a place to organize all your personal belongings, closed on all four sides. It is available in all standard USM colors in the following widths: 750 mm and 500 mm heights: 350 mm, 250 mm and 175 mm (30", 20", 14", 10" and 7") and depth: 350 mm (14"). Available beginning January 1, 2011.

6 See how USM will look in your own space With our new Room Viewer, anyone can see how USM will make life more beautiful in their home and at work. Simply upload a photo of your own space, select a piece of furniture in your preferred color, drag and drop it into the picture, adjust the scale if necessary – and you are done. The result can be posted on Facebook or Twitter, sent to a friend or uploaded to our online image gallery.

www.usm.com

news



1



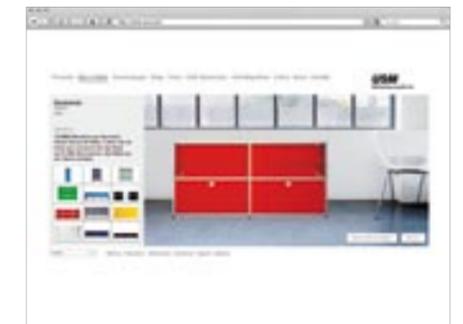
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2



5



6



4

**Ildi + Ko Interior Design, Inc.,
 New York (USA)**

Furniture: USM Haller in matte silver and graphite black
 Sales partner: USM U. Schaerer Sons Inc., New York (USA)
 Architect: Ildiko Sragli, New York (USA)

Private residence, Weggis (Switzerland)

Furniture: USM Haller in graphite black and mid gray, USM Haller tables in transparent glass, USM Haller glass showcases
 Architect: Unger & Treina AG, Zurich (Switzerland)

Private residence, Brooklyn (USA)

Furniture: USM Haller with glass and black panels, USM Haller golden yellow lacquered glass tables
 Sales partner: USM U. Schaerer Sons Inc., New York (USA)
 Designer: Monika Norwid, New York (USA)

Bundeshaus, Bern (Switzerland)

Workplace for approximately 70 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in graphite black
 Sales partner: Teo Jakob AG, Bern (Switzerland)
 Architect: Aebi & Vincent Architekten SIA AG, Bern (Switzerland)

**Churfürsten M&A Consulting
 (a partner company of Churfürsten Wealth
 Management in Liechtenstein),
 Dettelbach (Germany)**

Workplace for six people
 Furniture: USM Haller in graphite black, USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate
 Sales partner: büroforum planen und einrichten GmbH, Würzburg (Germany)

Linklaters LLP, Dusseldorf (Germany)

Workplace for 50 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in graphite black and ruby red
 Sales partner: DIE EINRICHTER L+P GmbH, INHOUSE DORTMUND, Dortmund (Germany)
 Architect: Eric Sayah, Development 9 Architecture. Design. Media, Leipzig (Germany)

**pbr Planungsbüro Rohling AG,
 Osnabrück (Germany)**

Workplace for 175 people at the Osnabrück location
 Furniture: USM Haller in pure white
 Sales partner: TON Ges. für Objekteinrichtungen mbH, Munster (Germany)
 Architects: pbr Planning Office Rohling AG, architecture and engineering, Osnabrück (Germany)

Société des Gens de Lettres, Paris (France)

Workplace for three people
 Furniture: USM Haller in pure white and ruby red, USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate
 Sales partner: USM U. Schärer Fils SA, Paris (France)
 Fresque: Philippe Serond (www.serond.com)

JA Apparel Corp., New York (USA)

Workplace for 35–50 people
 Furniture: USM Haller glass showcases, USM Haller tables in black oak veneer
 Sales partner: USM U. Schaerer Sons Inc., New York (USA)
 Architect: TPG Architecture, New York (USA)

**Notary office of Ana Maria Alvarez Lavers,
 La Laguna, Tenerife (Spain)**

Workplace for 22 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in steel blue, USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate and black linoleum
 Sales partner: Thierry Van den Eynde, Santa Cruz, Tenerife (Spain)
 Architects: Arsenio Pérez Amaral, Amaral y Arquitectos Asociados, Corona (Spain)

HitecVision, Stavanger (Norway)

Workplace for 30 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in anthracite gray, USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate and transparent glass, USM Display
 Distribution partner: Magnar Eikeland SA, Sola/Stavanger (Norway)
 Architect: Link Signatur AS (Norway)

**Orthodontists Steding/Schultze-Mosgau,
 Wedemark-Bissendorf (Germany)**

Workplace for five people
 Furniture: USM Haller in golden yellow, USM Haller golden yellow lacquered glass tables
 Sales partner: Seydlitz GmbH & Co. KG, Hannover (Germany)
 Interior design: Klaus Seydlitz, Hannover (Germany)

reiserpartner, Stuttgart (Germany)

Workplace for five people and associates
 Furniture: USM Haller in graphite black, USM Kitos tables in black granite
 Sales partner: Fleiner Objekt + Office im City Plaza, Stuttgart (Germany)
 Architect: Geisselmeier Architekten, Stuttgart (Germany)

Musashino Art University, Tokyo (Japan)

Furniture: USM Haller in pure white, USM Haller glass showcases
 Sales partner: Interoffice Ltd., Tokyo (Japan)
 Architects: Yoshinobu Ashihara, Ashihara Architect & Associates, Tokyo (Japan); Yoichiro Hosaka, Yoichiro Hosaka Architect & Associates, Tokyo (Japan)
 Interior architecture: Musashino Art University and hhstyle.com, Tokyo (Japan)

Château Faugères, Saint-Emilion (France)

Workplace for seven people
 Furniture: USM Haller in mid gray; USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate and natural oak veneer
 Sales partner: Perspective, Brive (France)
 Architect: Mario Botta, Lugano (Switzerland)

Coldwater Creek, New York (USA)

Workplace for 25 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in pure white and pure orange, USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate
 Sales partner: USM U. Schaerer Sons Inc., New York (USA)
 Architect: Rob Herrera, Idaho (USA)

**Evangelical Seminary, Blaubeuren
 (Germany)**

Workplace for 17 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in pure white and ruby red
 Sales partner: fey messe & objektdesign GmbH & Co. KG, Ulm-Jungingen (Germany)
 Architect: Wilmuth Lindenthal, Ulm (Germany)

Muller, Hoogstraten (Belgium)

Workplace for 28 people
 Furniture: USM Haller in various colors, USM Haller tables in pearl gray laminate
 Sales partner: MUST SA, Brussels (Belgium)
 Architect: Atelier de Bondt, Antwerp (Belgium)

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