

Hq.

GOOD DESIGN IS GOOD BUSINESS

KEN LEWIS MASTER BUILDER

BARRY DILLER'S
DESIGN GAMBLE

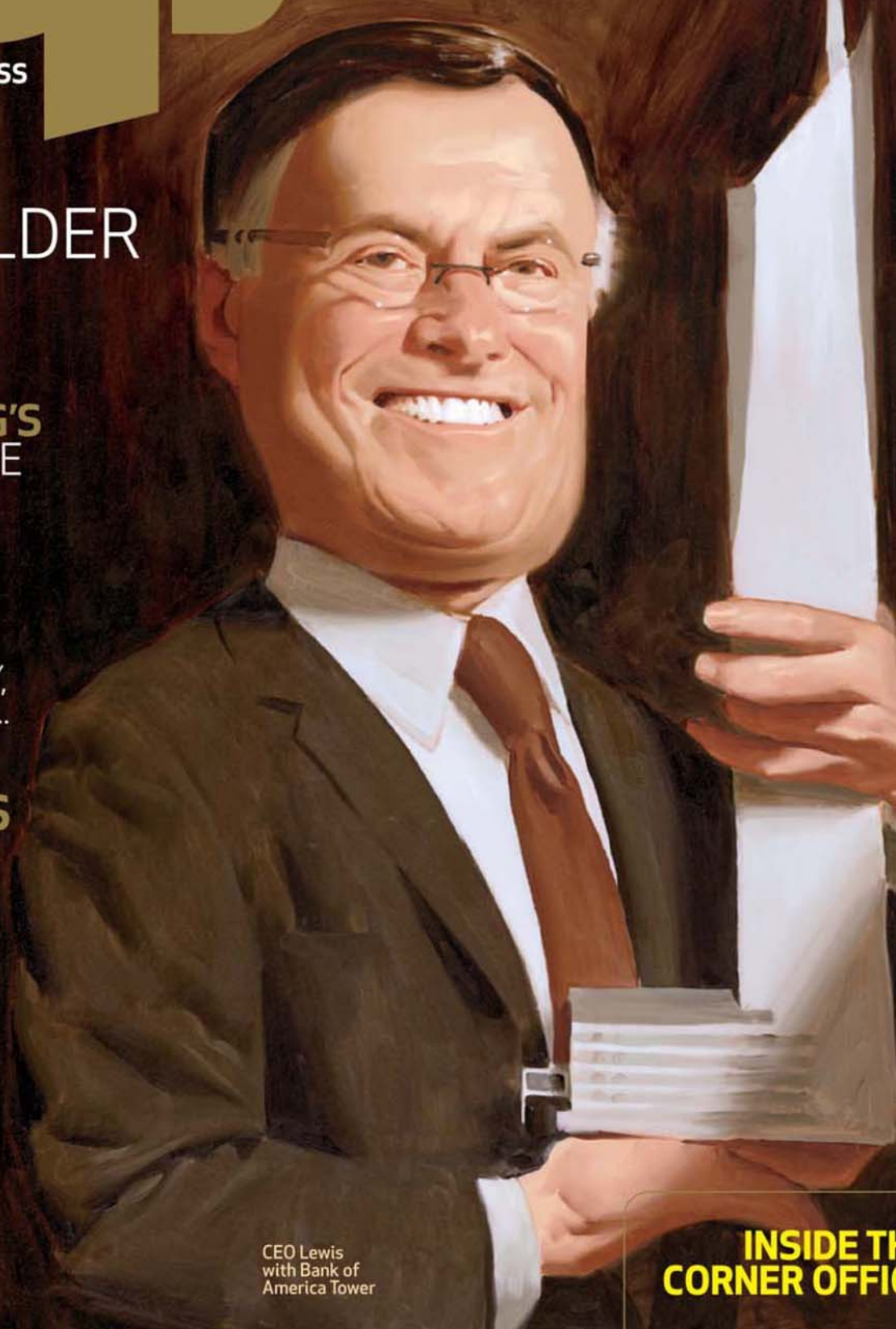
MIKE BLOOMBERG'S
IDEAL WORKSPACE

TOP 20
PLACES TO WORK

CASE STUDIES
WELLS FARGO, OGILVY,
GENZYME AND MORE...

LAW FIRM'S LOOK
SAVES MILLIONS

Research: Why Your
Office is Radically Wrong



CEO Lewis
with Bank of
America Tower

**INSIDE THE
CORNER OFFICE**

Location: Culver City, Calif. **Co-Presidents:** Dan Burrier and Heather MacPherson

AN AD AGENCY'S TUNNEL VISION

CAN ARCHITECTURE GENERATE CREATIVITY? AT OGILVY'S WEST COAST SHOP, BOTH THE TALENT AND THE CLIENTS SEEM TO THINK SO. WITH TILTED WALLS AND ANGLED RAMPS, THE FREE-FLOWING ATMOSPHERE HAS LURED TOP RECRUITS AND LED TO RISING REVENUES. BY CHRISTOPHER HAWTHORNE

If you've watched the television series *Mad Men*, which chronicles the Scotch-soaked misadventures of a group of advertising executives in early 1960s Manhattan, you have an idea of how an ad shop is supposed to look: slick and modern, as crisply tailored as an executive's suit. Yet a visit to the decidedly untucked, over-the-top West Coast headquarters of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide—the giant global agency that invented the phrase “Don't Leave Home Without It,” among other memorable slogans—is a reminder that the *Mad Men* image is long out of date.

For starters, the building that houses Ogilvy is hardly a gleaming high-rise box with perfect posture. Instead, it's an old warehouse in the Culver City section of Los Angeles that has been thoroughly re-imagined by the noted California architect Eric Owen Moss. It looks like the offspring of a battleship and a jungle creature—low-slung and ready to spring, with a dark gray, flinty power. Moss dubbed the building *Stealth*—like the bomber that eludes radar.

The building's hard-edged, maverick personality has an energizing quality that Ogilvy's new recruits and potential clients usually pick up on right away. You might not want



“The office creates a little dissonance, which is great.”

Co-President
Heather MacPherson



“For our creatives, it has the right vibe.”

Co-President
Dan Burrier

to put an accounting firm here, but for a company dedicated to pushing corporate clients toward an inventive interpretation of their brands, the match between architecture and mission is impossible to miss. Inside, the space is equally magnetic. Dan Burrier, Ogilvy's West Coast co-president and chief creative officer, felt the building's allure the first time he saw it. “When I was thinking about moving out here from the New York office, I distinctly remember being wowed by the design of the office,” he says. “The effect was so powerful, I stopped and said, ‘Wait, let's have this conversation somewhere else. I don't want to make a life-changing decision based on architecture.’”

The design of the Ogilvy office also has been demonstrably effective for the bottom line. Since Burrier arrived in 2002 (the agency moved here the year before), its staff has more than doubled, from 60 to 130, with room for 35 more employees. Revenue from the office, he says, has tripled.

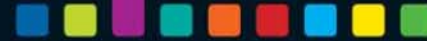
To get inside Ogilvy, you have to navigate a crooked ramp that seems to meander away from the front door. Then, at the reception desk, you find yourself staring down a 44-foot-long tunnel, made of curving steel, that divides the waiting area

from the offices. The tunnel—“our signature,” says Burrier—was the idea of architects Russell Shubin and Ronald Donaldson, who designed the interiors for Ogilvy. It sends a message to employees and potential clients that some unexpected and more inventive version of the ad game—Madison Avenue down the rabbit hole—awaits them on the other side.

The 28,000-square-foot office is a study in controlled chaos and productive informality. Ramps run in every direction. Shard-like glass walls tilt. The ceiling is a tangle of exposed ductwork, while the concrete floor is still splashed with the paint spills that warehouse workers once walked on.

Most staffers sit at clusters of desks in an open plan that furthers the collaborative essence of the agency's work. Burrier and his co-president, Heather MacPherson, sit in a pair of matching suites in the center of the space—the opposite of corner offices. “Ogilvy has a very professional reputation, which means the office is probably a bit more creative than people might expect,” MacPherson says. “It creates a little dissonance in that sense, which is great.”

That dissonance has been part of the lure for recruits. Ad agency em-



Eludes Radar: The "Stealth" building has steps (below) to the indoor-outdoor space called "the pit" and an interior tunnel (below left).



Freeway. They hired Moss to renovate some old buildings and design new ones, all in an aggressively unconventional style.

Now Culver City is home to perhaps the most vibrant collection of art galleries and new restaurants in Southern California, along with offices for Sony, National Public Radio, the Tennis Channel, and a host of design firms and post-production facilities. The place has finally caught up to the vision that Moss and Smith—and early arrivals like Ogilvy—had for it all along.

So it makes sense that the heart of Ogilvy's space actually lies at the boundary between the office interior and the city beyond. It is an outdoor area that employees call "the pit," a big hole created during construction to clean up industrial chemicals that had leached into the soil. Rather than refill it, Moss took advantage of the design opportunities it offered. Now it's a grassy amphitheater and outdoor room that the agency uses as a terrace or, after sliding a set of metal panels into place, as a private but open-air conference room. The space is frequently rented by Ogilvy's clients—including Motorola, Cisco, and Mattel—who use it for their own brainstorming and creative retreats. "The meetings our clients hold here are not finance meetings," says Burrier. "They are freewheeling, how-can-we-redefine-what-we-do meetings. For that, the space is perfect."

It's hard to imagine any of the ad execs on *Mad Men*, with their skinny ties and Manhattan-centric view of the world, getting any work done out here: They'd likely find the offices more distracting than invigorating. But for Ogilvy's L.A. employees, who wear ties about as often as they wear parkas, the workspace is a natural fit. ●

3x

More revenue since 2002, after moving into the office

employees are often highly artistic types working in a corporate world with a certain ambivalence. These offices say quite directly: You won't be quashing your imagination by coming to work here. The office has been "a tremendous draw for all of our recruits," Burrier says. "In particular, it's great for our creatives"—the copywrit-

ers and art directors—"because it instantly has the right vibe."

And the staff likes the 'hood. For years, Culver City, on the west side of L.A., was an industrial backwater. But in the early 1980s, Frederick Smith and his wife, Laurie Samitaur-Smith, the developers, began buying up land here, just south of the 10