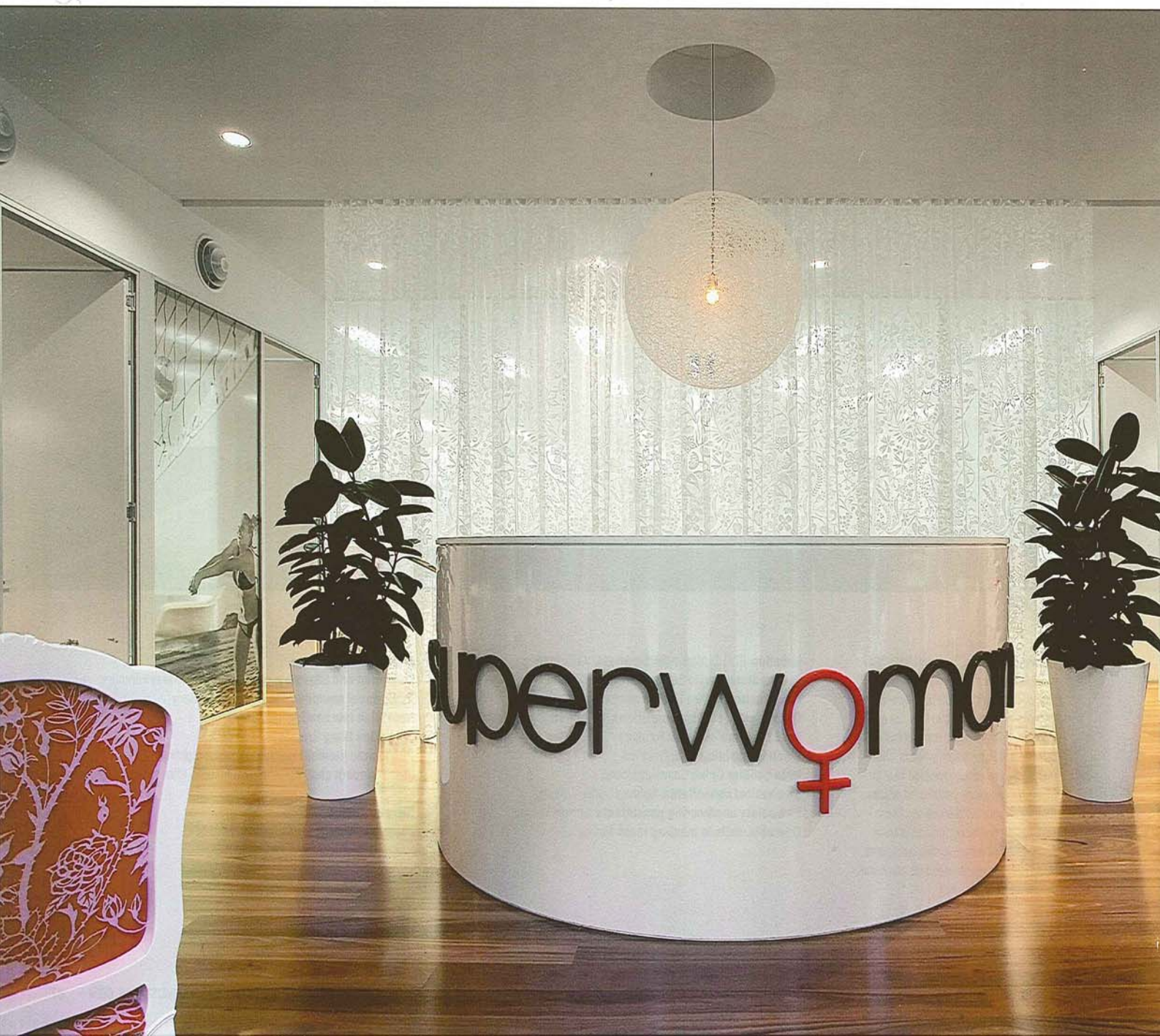


FIRM BUT FAIR

This feminine office fit-out is designed for a company providing financial services for women. While the services are empowering, the decor gives a softer impression



Below Making the clients feel at home takes a literal meaning in this office design. The financial advisory company, Superwoman, has a female clientele and the use of domestic elements, with a commercial finish, provides an unimposing welcome. Blackbutt floors further warm the space.

Below right Low-hanging lights, downsized tables and anchoring rugs all give the reception waiting areas an intimate feel. The tables are small to emphasise that these are waiting spaces, not consultation spaces. The Louis chairs are painted in white trim, a departure from the more usual gold treatment – the effect is slightly whimsical.

Designing the interiors for a new kind of office calls for a new set of aesthetic values. One approach is to reinterpret classic themes to create a fresh design vocabulary.

This inner-city office is home to Superwoman, a company offering financial services that cater specifically for women. Interior designer Greg Natale has reflected Superwoman's niche business ethos in the design and material finishes for the open-plan space.

"While Superwoman is a corporate identity, I wanted the office design to take a different direction to classic office fit-outs – one that would provide the business edge but also make female clients feel instantly at home," says Natale. "A central element of this office project is introducing reinvented residential elements in

commercial-grade materials and finishes – the resulting effect is both eye-catching and relaxing."

Entering the offices, the reception counter is directly ahead. While this might have been separated from the offices behind by a glass wall in a more traditional fit-out, here Natale has backdropped the curved counter with flowing diaphanous curtaining.

Flanking the counter to left and right are rubber plants, more usually found in domestic conservatories and hallways. Just inside the front door are waiting areas, with intimate groupings of chairs and tables. The look is warm and inviting.

"There's a decidedly feminine aesthetic at the reception, but it comes with a corporate twist," says Natale. "Louis chairs may look the picture of domestic comfort,





but here they are upholstered in tough commercial Tord Boontje fabric from Kvadrat Maharam," he says. "On the walls behind, flowery wall elements are actually tough vinyl decals, also by Tord Boontje."

The tones of the orange chairs and aubergine wall decals also reflect Superwoman's corporate colours. Six consultation rooms, set off to both sides of the space, feature life-size decals depicting images that are also part of the Superwoman corporate profile.

The softened aesthetic does not stop at the reception area. The curtain behind the reception desk is repeated a few metres back, with the space between designed as a play area for clients' children.

Beyond the layers of curtaining and the play area, the open-plan Superwoman offices feature workstation dividers in the same tactile orange felt material as the Louis chairs in the reception area.

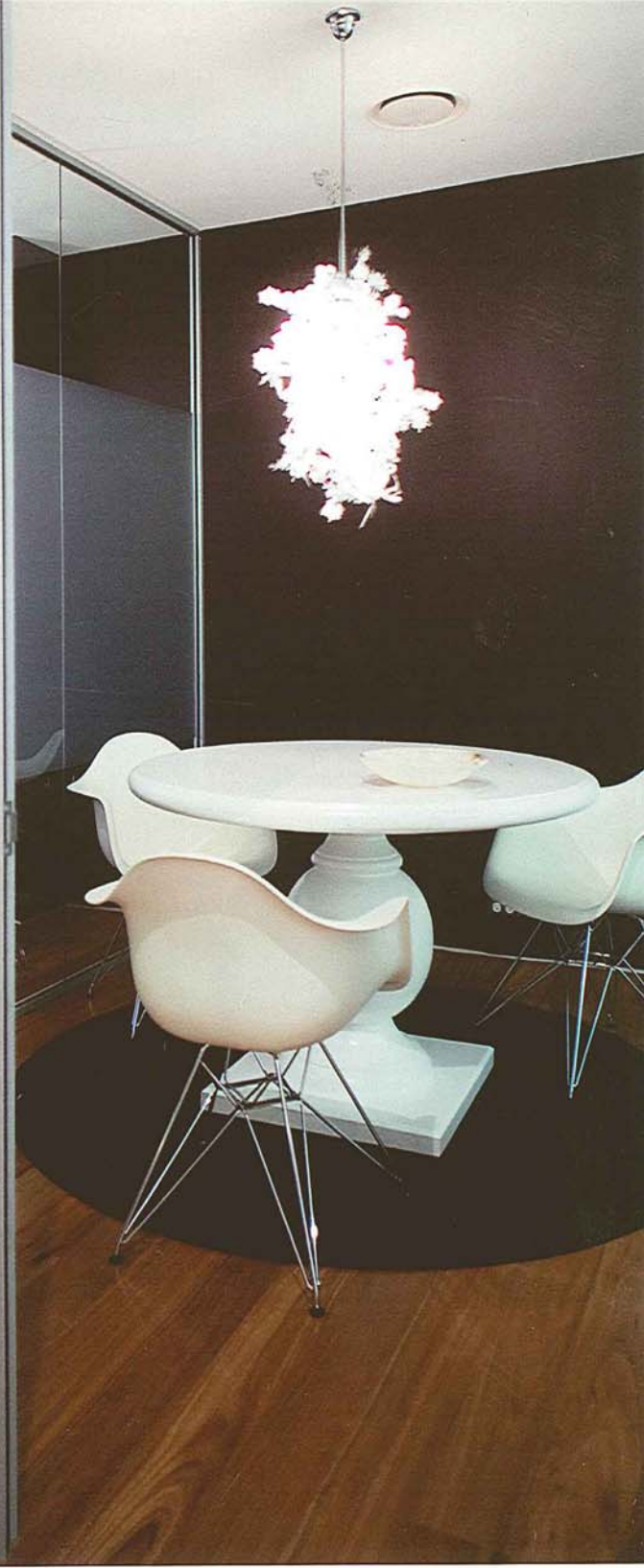
"Lighting was an important part of the design," says the designer. "In the reception, domestic lights are set low over the groups of tables and chairs, creating an intimate and welcoming atmosphere.

"However, in the office area commercial task lighting follows the lines of the workstations below. The fittings are set low to create a localised sense of operation."

Overall, the design weaves a gentler style with work efficiency – both clients and staff feel at home.

Above At the business end of the office, workstations line the space. Here, too, residential-look material is used to dramatic effect.

Facing page This consultation room, as with other elements in the design, plays with expectations. The typical office glass consulting box is reinvented with a domestic-style table and chairs. The distinctive pendant can be scrunched up to take various forms – typical of the entire fit-out, this light fitting combines functionality with a light-hearted aesthetic.



Location Superwoman Financial Institutions, Sydney

Designer Greg Natale DIA, Greg Natale Design

Construction Tricorp

Flooring Boral blackbutt 130mm-wide, floating, pre-finished single-strip boards; Marmoleum Global 2 anti-static vinyl, in Kyoto, from Forbo; Potion Wizard velour round rug by Supertuft

Wallcoverings Tord Boontje vinyl decal from Kvadrat Maharam

Paints Royal Silk, Dulux Vivid White by Dulux

Reception chairs Pecare/Louis chairs, upholstered in Tord Boontje fabric from Kvadrat Maharam

Reception tables Saarinen tables with white Calacatta marble tops from DeDeCe

Office furniture Smart stations with mid-height screens from Stylecraft; Money workstations upholstered in Tord Boontje Prince #404; finance workstations in Tord Boontje Prince #104; orange X15 pedestals from Planex

Office chairs Papparazzi Shot task chairs from Interstudio; white moulded plastic Eames armchair with Eiffel base from Work Arena
Additional furniture Parisian dining table round white #46-061.17 from Carina Sherlock; sheer Tord Boontje curtain; fabric from Kvadrat Maharam

Lighting Moooi Random Light from Space Furniture; Tord Boontje Garland light from DeDeCe

Drapes Sheer Tord Boontje curtain with Kvadrat Maharam fabric

Signage McKinnon Direct

Story by Charles Moxham

Photography by Sharrin Rees



To view a floor plan and additional images go to Trendsideas.com/go/22725