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Room By Room

SPACES THAT LEAVE A LASTING IMPRESSION

Gray Matters

Charles Allem envisions a thought-provoking hub in Miami's chic Design District



MIAMI HAS COME a long way. "When I think of what it was like eight years ago and where it is now," says designer Charles Allem, "it has changed dramatically. It has become a truly international city, in large part because of Art Basel. That energy, as well as the calmness of the ocean, drew me here."

So alluring was the pull of this newly acculturated tropical paradise that Allem moved his headquarters from New York to Miami's revitalized Design District. He calls the

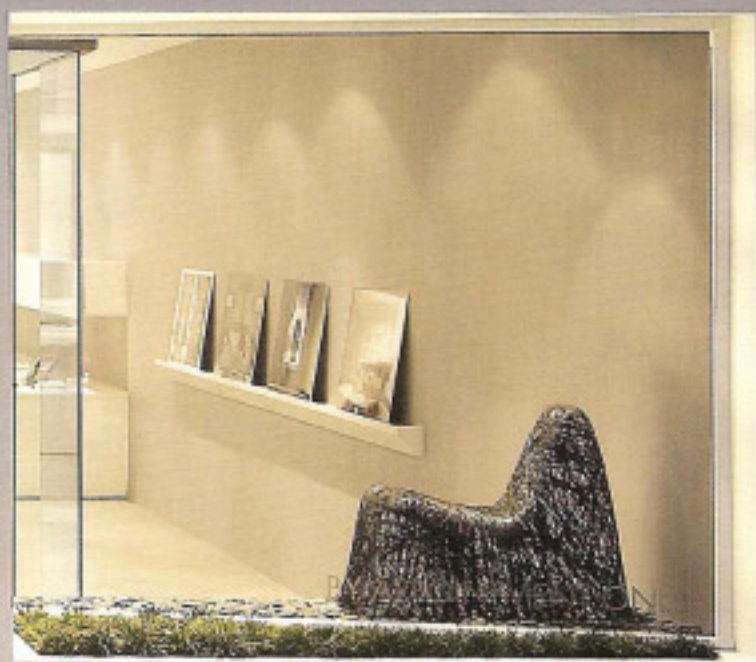
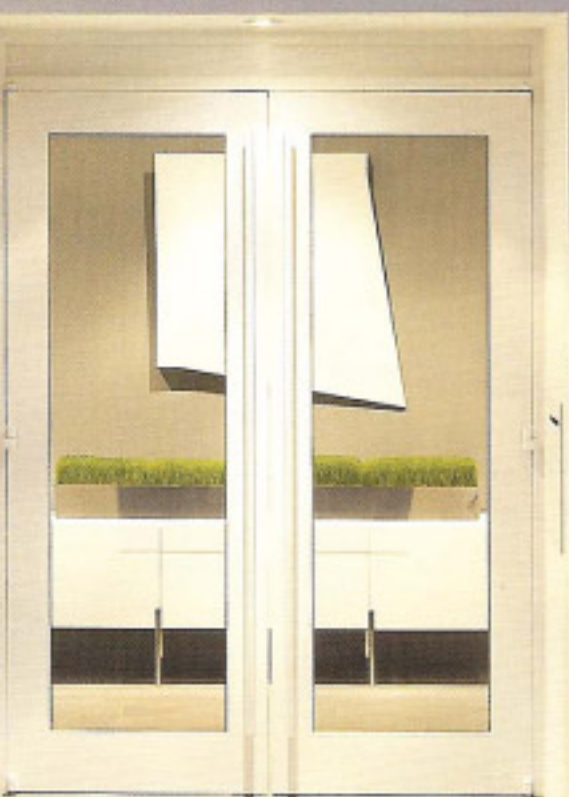
resulting 2,400-square-foot storefront building he outfitted in gray and white "a laboratory of design, a minimalist studio and a clean tank in which to think."

It is an ultraluxe little think tank, to be sure. "I wanted everything very fitted, very bespoke," Allem explains. So he began with tables and desks clad in pristine white lacquer. "I could have used laminate," he concedes, "but I give my most when I'm in a beautiful environment. Besides, anything fabulous requires maintenance."

Workspaces are delineated by Lucite partitions, keeping things open and airy while still private. Transparency also dictated the design of the conference room, basically a glass cube behind the reception area. Allem designed the conference table (although equipped with the latest technology, he says proudly, "you don't see a single wire"), which he surrounded with classic Saarinen Tulip chairs.



LEE JARROLD



Room By Room

It all sits in a gunmetal gray envelope—gray painted walls, gray limestone floors and, in the conference room, a gray acrylic sisal rug set into a recessed section of floor. All other accents, except for brushed-steel window boxes filled with wheatgrass, are white, or very nearly so: the creamy Tulip chairs; a white-lacquer credenza in the entrance topped with a white wall sculpture by California artist Tony DeLap; a white 1950s French plaster sculpture; and white cabinetry in the library.

The office is paperless, so everything is archived on Apple Cinema Display 23 computers. Music is piped in through a Bang & Olufsen audio system, and the front windows boast rotating displays of “objects of desire,” from 1950s glass vases to fiber-and-resin Random chairs by Dutch artist Bertjan Pot.

“There’s a wonderful collaborative energy here,” concludes Allem happily.

JORGE S. ARANGO

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Previous pages: Designer Charles Allem chose a sleek gray-and-white backdrop for his Miami headquarters. Bertjan Pot Random chairs and propped photos depicting Allem's apartment flank the entrance; the 1950s plaster statue (far left) is from Regine Neussle Gallery in Miami.

Below: Minimalist workstations face lightbulb paintings by Prawech Pranaprom. Right: A wall sculpture by Tony DeLap hangs in the entrance. Below right: In the conference room are Saarinen Tulip chairs and a work by Gavin Perry.



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