



» **Feels Like Home**

The building's lobby looks less like a corporate waiting area and more like a living room, with custom sofas and leather chairs by Rachel Ashwell Shabby Chic Couture. "It's one of my favorite stores," says Shay Hughes, the company's chief operating officer, who spearheaded the renovation. An 80-inch flat-screen displays employee family photos, while a baby grand piano synchs with an iPod and plays itself. "There's also a set of Taylor guitars!" Shay chimes. "We actually have a lot of musicians here." (Accent and coffee tables from Restoration Hardware)

Workplace Wow

An office building on the corner of Front and Beech gets a first-class facelift

//KIMBERLY CUNNINGHAM



Every week Vons delivers fresh groceries to the offices. Items include fresh fruit, juices, PB&J, oatmeal, and waffles. Shay laughs, "One time I saw a guy bringing in waffles, and I said, 'Okay. That's going on the grocery list.'"



◀ Artful Accents

Hughes' partner, David Marino, and wife Patsy are major art collectors. The new office space provided another place for them to display some of their favorite pieces. This painting is by Anja Van Herle.

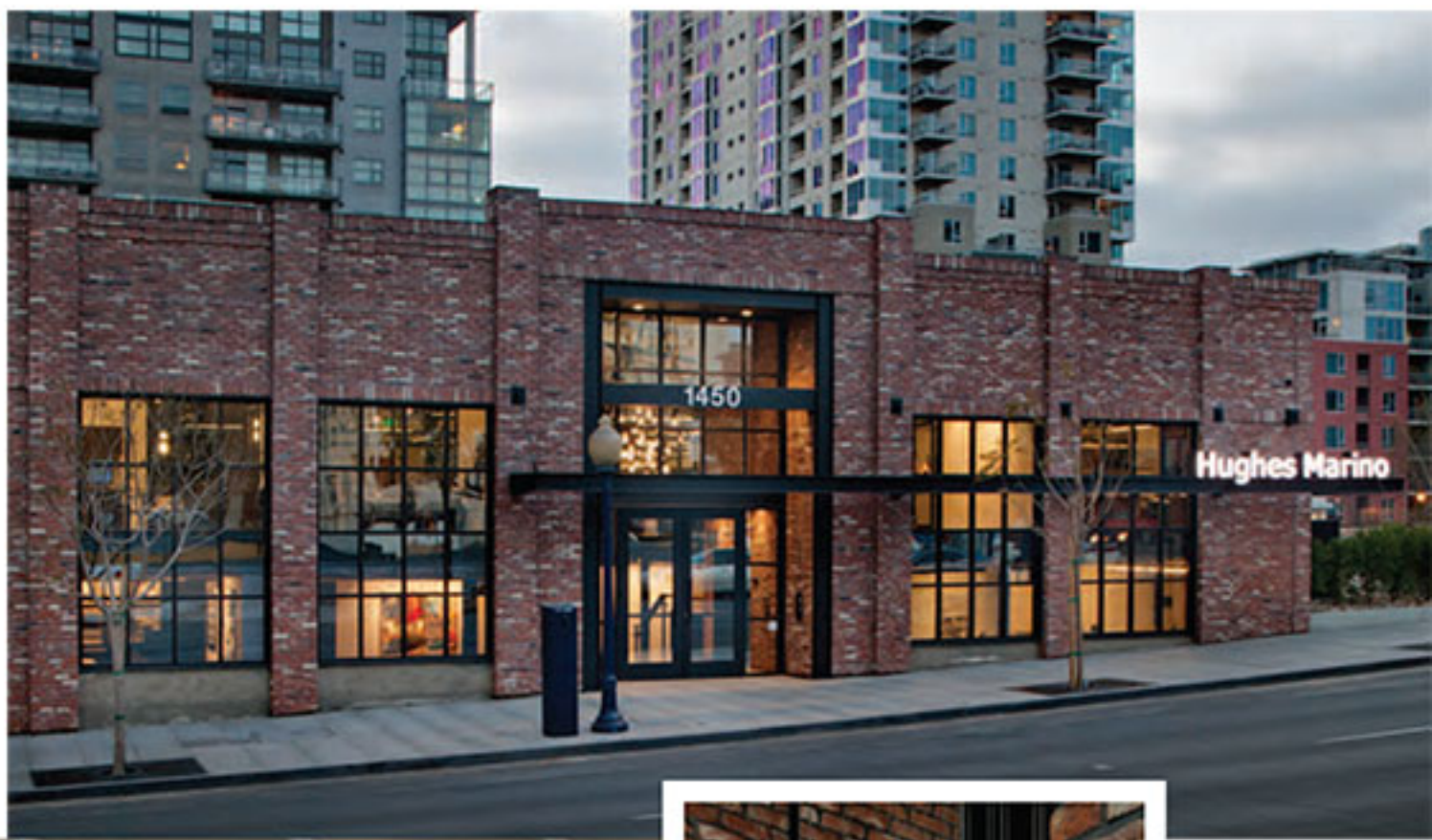
🔥 Table for 25

Every Tuesday, all 25 employees gather around these concrete-topped farm tables. (There are two, pushed together to create a longer look.) "It's great because the guys can't mess it up," Shay says. "I'm a little more protective of the marble." The fully functioning kitchen has two Sub-Zeros, two dishwashers, and an industrial oven. "We wanted to be able to actually cook in it," she explains. "It's definitely not for show."

Brick by Brick »

The commercial brokerage firm added red brick to the exterior and entryway. Cool factor: The material was salvaged from an old tear-down in the Midwest. The owners chose brick because "we wanted it to feel historic and timeless."

The company purchased the building on the corner of Front and Beech for \$1.8 million. Contractors estimated the \$3.5 million renovation would take 15 months. It was completed in six



» Glowing Reviews

This custom fixture is by Gibson & Gibson in Chula Vista. "I've worked with them for years," says Shay, who was inspired by a photo of a hotel lobby she saw online. The entryway design, which is visible from the street, features hand-blown glass balls and LED lights, one of the details that put the office in the running for LEED certification.

» Conference Couture

A striking 16-foot marble table serves as the focal point in the main conference room, one of three meeting rooms in the 12,500-square-foot building. Shay and her husband, Jason, the company's president, spent their 22nd anniversary in Anaheim, picking out the more than 50 slabs needed for the project. "We're about as hands-on as it gets," she says. (Sotto office chairs by Geiger)



« **Stuck-o in the '80s**

An in-house construction management team completely gutted the interior, except for the perimeter walls and ceiling. Shay says the former building, which (ahem) used to house the offices of *San Diego Magazine*, was "very unattractive. Outside there was '80s stucco; inside it was like *Miami Vice*." But, "it had great bones," she adds. "It was filled with light, even on a gray day." Original remnants include the skylights and trusses, which used to be white. During the renovation, workers painted all the metal dark bronze to highlight the architectural features and add contrast.

» **Working Out the Kinks**

The team turned this dark and once undesirable office space on the lower level into a gym. Every employee has a locker with his or her name on it and a monogrammed towel. Men's and women's bathrooms, with an adjoining shower facility, are located right across the hall.



» **Billiard Bliss**

Employees can blow off steam at the pool table or perfect their short games on the mini putting green. "It's always in use at lunchtime," Shay says. The exposed ducting and concrete walls play off the European white oak flooring and grand chaises. The contrast creates an industrial yet cozy feel.



Florist Shirley Mulloy, whom Shay calls "a dear friend," delivers fresh arrangements every Monday.

See the "before" pictures at sandiegomagazine.com