

Rizzoli & Isles's Tess Gerritsen

PORTLAND

Celebrating 25 Years

Maine for Sale

YOUR
AD
HERE!

OCTOBER 2010 VOL. 25 NO. 7 \$5.95



WWW.PORTLANDMAGAZINE.COM

Presenting The Maine 100™

7 Mad Zen

These ultimate work spaces add verve to the daily grind.



“Brick is a *real* wall!”

C'est la VIA

Now that they're moving to their new digs in the Baxter Building on Congress Street, VIA advertising agency is leaving behind a high-energy, modern space—perfect for their industry—at their former Danforth Street location. “Red is an energizing color, but you don't want too much, because it is so intense,” says Brandmaier. “This space is well-defined with the area rugs. It's spacious. The glass on the offices is frosted. The curved staircase slows the flow of energy out the door. The brick walls are real walls that add texture and block the harmful electromagnetic fields so prevalent in technology-packed offices.” This posh, positive-energy space, zoned both commercial and residential, is available for lease.

BY KAREN E. HOFREITER

Abysmal gray cubicle walls got you feeling the 3 p.m. slump by 10 a.m.? They could be interrupting your energy flow. What's it take to get the brain juices pumping again? We asked feng shui expert Werner Brandmaier for tips on what makes the ultimate work space an ultimate upper.

“Feng shui requires us to view a space from an energy perspective,” Brandmaier says. “Qi, or energy, runs in the landscape everywhere, and just as there's an energy exchange between particles on a nuclear level, there's also an exchange between a person and his surroundings. Energies resonate, or they don't.” Both water and

TALKING WALLS



While the "floating mezzanine" lends an airy feel and allows for additional natural light, "consider the person who must sit at the cubicle with his or her back to the railing," says Brandmaier. "It's very destabilizing not to have support on your back side."

light hold energy, but don't go replacing walls with giant picture windows just yet. "Balance is important. You can overdo it."

It's also important to pay attention to how the energy moves through space. Straight hallways and staircases speed positive energy out the door. Desks situated so that occupants have their backs to a door, clear glass



GLASS OFFICES As for light energy, you'd think the transparent-walled offices at 10 Dana Street would actually score high. "You want to get energy from the outside, but you want to also keep it inside. With floor-to-ceiling windows, the energy is coming in *and* going out." Hence, natural light is good but stay away from the fishbowl effect.

Left and below: Innovative adaptive reuse transformed the former Portland Public Market building into PowerPay's world headquarters. "I was working at [my hand-carved cherry] desk for over year before I realized it looked like a [row] boat. Now I always brag how lucky I am to be working at beautiful desk in a beautiful building," says receptionist Kimberly Michaud. "There is a skylight wa up in the rafters above my desk and when it's late afternoon I get a perfect sun beam on my desk; it's a great working environment." But according to Brandmaier...

"The glass conference room placed right in the center is both distracting to the glass-doored offices surrounding it and to those in the conference room, as there's no support from behind and traffic is flowing around freely." To improve energy flow without sacrificing the contemporary style and natural light, Brandmaier suggests frosting the glass doors halfway.



JESSE GROENING

TALKING WALLS

wall, or traffic pattern don't give the support needed to feel safe and comfortable (opaque or frosted glass walls and traffic-free open spaces are supportive). Windows should be off to one side—not straight ahead—to prevent distraction. And what's going on overhead is important, too. "Low beams split up a room. Pipes should be rounded and painted an unobtrusive color," adds Brandmaier.

"Imagine a house on the bank of a beautiful lake, overlooking the water. In contrast, picture an apartment in the city, facing the back of a factory. Most people will be able to feel the difference. But how to change a less obvious—yet uncomfortable—situation is what makes feng shui so fascinating." ■

Werner Brandmaier, Dipl. Ing., is a native of Austria and the Director of the Institute of Feng Shui & Geopathology in Portland.

Right: These four cubes at the Aurora Photos office are examples of positive and negative energy set-ups. "The cube in the upper right is the most balanced, with frosted glass walls and desk facing the entrance. The upper left cube has the desk situated such that the occupant's back is to the entrance and thus unsupported. The lower right cube has back wall support, but the guillotine-like structure directly above both separates the space and gives a sense of unease," says Brandmaier.



This office (formerly a Leno call center) is a good example of feng shui principles in practice. Adds Brandmaier, "Work spaces are supported by the bookcase and are not window-facing, although there is plenty of natural light. There's no traffic flowing behind any desk seat. The white, round ceiling pipes are subtle."



