

design

prepare for **impact**



By Holly Richmond
Photography by Cesar Rubio

Designed by Cary Bernstein Architect with the mission to make every element exceptional, San Francisco-based One & Co. is poised to shape the future of industrial design



There are few things in life that truly get better with age. But if you ask Claude Zellweger, principal and creative director of One & Co., he will tell you the company's redesigned office space located in a turn-of-the-century warehouse is just one such thing. "Often you move into a beautiful place that you are excited about but then start noticing its hidden flaws. It's the opposite here. The longer we use it, the more beautiful and brilliant it gets."

As one of three highly creative and successful minds behind One & Co., an award-winning industrial design firm based in San Francisco, Zellweger knows beauty and functional brilliance when he sees it. The firm's mission is driven by an informed intuition that combines business and creativity, art and science, and, of course, intelligence and beauty, as well as a commitment to making meaningful products that resonate with their clients and their clients' customers. From Microsoft to The North Face, TiVo to K2, the goal is to have every product make major impact. So too was the goal for Cary Bernstein, principal of San Francisco-based Cary Bernstein Architect, as One & Co. outgrew its 3,000-sq.-ft. space and merged into one more than twice the size at 6,500 sq. ft.

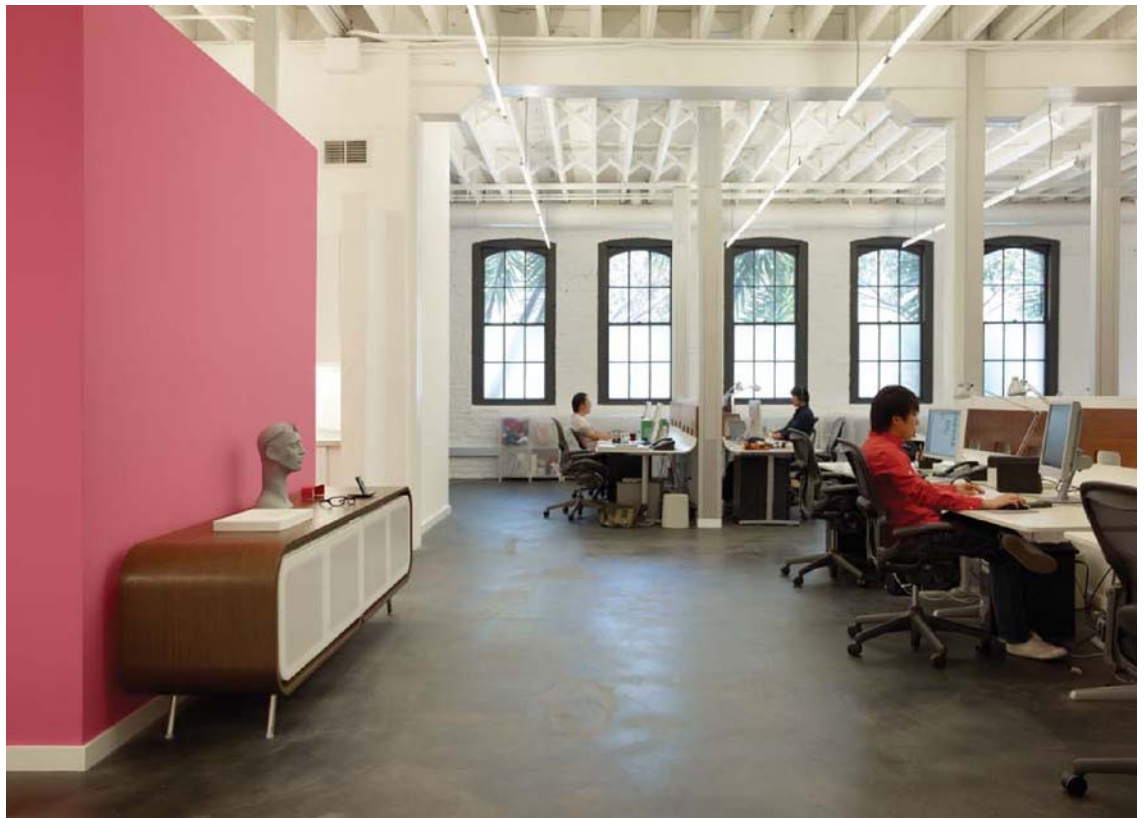
With a tight schedule, during which time the firm needed to remain operational, and an equally tight budget, Bernstein critically considered each design decision. "Every element of the space had to have multiple impact and do double duty. Every single move we made had a value system attached to it, which informed the entire aesthetic," Bernstein explains. Thus, the final design represents a judicious use of limited budget for maximum effect, where custom, highly-crafted details blend deftly with off-the-shelf materials. Not only were construction costs kept to less than \$100 per sq. ft. and the space considered a major success by all involved, but One & Co. also recently received the Honor Award from the IIDA-NC in the Small Workplace category. "We did not let budget affect our purpose. The client and I worked hand-in-hand to create a space that accurately and appealingly communicates who they are," Bernstein adds.



Built at the turn of the century and located on a corner in the Mission District of San Francisco, One & Co.'s renovated warehouse space has major street appeal. The firm's chosen accent color, pink, naturally surrounds the main entrance via abundant bougainvillea (opposite top). The receiving area serves dual functionality as an entryway and loading dock, but still communicates a modern yet residential sensibility (opposite bottom). The rippling surface of the reception desk wall is clad in Heath's Crease tile and framed by natural Claro walnut veneer. The ultra-smooth, Corian surround of the reception desk is a monolithic and geometric foil against which adjacent, irregular materials are expressed.

design

The “war rooms” (below) feature erasable, magnetized fabric whiteboard and can be temporarily occupied by design teams and concealed by curtains when needed to preserve confidentiality. The main studio (right) provides the One & Co. team with an open, airy, light-filled nonhierarchical place to create. Behind the pink accent wall is the “clean shop” for graphics work, and to the left is the “dirty shop” for wood working and printing. A dropped ceiling expressed through lighting provides scale and makes a “ceiling within a ceiling.”



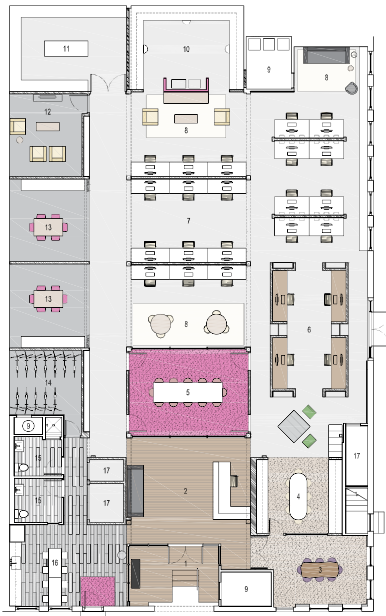
“We are an image-driven company. Our clients will judge us by the space we work in as much as they will judge the architect.” —*Claude Zellweger*

Bernstein and the One & Co. team decided to focus their resources on the communal areas and front of the house spaces where clients are hosted. “We are an image-driven company,” says Zellweger. “Our clients will judge us by the space we work in as much as they will judge the architect.” The receiving area, in particular, had to be dynamic and immediately offer a sense of the firm’s sensibility and aesthetic. That said, the back of the house and support details were not overlooked. “It was essential for the entire space to have an integrated, unified feel,” says Bernstein. “The use of natural light, an open floor plan, and cohesive design details convey inclusiveness both visually and functionally.”


Open, free-flowing communication and an unobstructed, non-hierarchical corporate structure are key to One & Co.’s business and design philosophy. Thus, individual workspaces are relatively small in size, which encourages staff to utilize numerous meeting areas. The open plan takes advantage of the space’s generous windows to the south and east, setting more discreet uses like the “war rooms” with erasable fabric boards, kitchen, and fabrication room along interior walls. With a comprehensive view, the space offers a sophisticated, minimalist vibe, but does so in a comfortable, almost residential way. Bernstein believes this is due, in part, to the firm’s bold, eye-catching choice of accent color—pink. “This is not the typical San Francisco eco color palette. It is exciting, fresh, and adds a distinctly memorable quality,” she remarks. Zellweger adds, “We do a lot of color trend research for our clients, and as a firm we tend to go through color phases. This was clearly our pink phase,” he chuckles.

Blending original elements of the warehouse, like white painted brick, with new elements including sleek lighting and glass curtainwalls, was critical, as was incorporating One & Co.’s products into the new space. Each piece, like the Periodic Table for Council placed in the receiving area, and the Crease tile, designed by One & Co. in collaboration with Heath Ceramics, used at the reception desk, have dramatic





presence. “The client enjoys minimalist details, but this takes a bit of finesse in an old funky warehouse space,” says Bernstein. “Yet there is a certain joy when you have to work around imperfect elements. It’s a challenge and takes rigor, but it’s very satisfying.”

Zellweger and his team are thrilled with how the firm successfully communicates its design sensibility through its clean, modern architecture, but does so in a playful way that does not take itself too seriously. “This is a productive, happy space for our team that also provides clients with a pleasant, forward-thinking shock of the unexpected,” he concludes. Where quality design, beautiful aesthetics, and creative brilliance are concerned, it seems it’s One (& Co.) for all. 

For a project source list, see page 118 or visit www.contractdesign.com.



The materials library (top) features Eames chairs and table and offers a view into the small conference room. Heavy casing on the original windows and painted white brick walls merge with the overall design and graphics. Glass curtainwalls (left) offer maximum light infiltration and views between the receiving area, reception, and kitchen. The open plan workspace takes advantage of the building’s generous windows (above).