

Symrise's laboratory features two computerized Modula Sintes 1.7 chemical component storage units that provide easy access to 40,000 ingredient bottles

New York, N.Y. – Architect Montroy Andersen DeMarco (MADGI) has completed the construction of Symrise's New York Studio, a \$3.75 million, high-end office and laboratory space for the company's fragrances, flavorings, cosmetic active ingredients, raw materials, and functional ingredients as well as sensorial and nutritional solutions. Symrise is the world's third-largest supplier in the fragrance and flavorings market. The newly renovated space is located at 505 Park Avenue, at 59th Street in Manhattan.

MADGI took Symrise's existing underutilized and outdated space spread through two floors of 505 Park and consolidated it into a streamlined, attractive, non-hierarchical set of flexible offices on the 15th floor. The result is a more efficient, open-plan, aesthetically pleasing working environment for 37 employees, with high-quality furnishings and finishes.

"Symrise required a space that would align more with its dynamic corporate culture and bring together various departments formerly located on separate floors," said Steven Anderson, MADGI's principal. "To address this need, we created a large open space with only seven private offices – five for perfumers and two for executives. Clear glass walls visually integrate private offices into the overall space, while low partitions of the 30 workstations within the open-plan section encourage collaboration and accelerate decision making."

The previous space was inefficiently laid out, with low occupancy density and a high number of private offices and high partitions in the open workspace area. The new space is open and egalitarian, with a modern, energetic design typical of technology and media firms. It promotes social interaction. In addition, Symrise has reduced its real estate cost, as the new office is half the size of the previous one.

"Before the renovation, the sales force was on one floor and the perfumers were on another, preventing the easy flow of ideas," added Symrise Vice President Rhona Stokols. "MADGI gave us an optimized working space, helping us to flatten the hierarchy within the office while still providing for privacy needs in terms of meetings." Reflecting the office's New York City surroundings, one section, dubbed "the Speakeasy" is a meeting area where the sales force and evaluators (clients) meet with the perfumers. Another meeting area was nicknamed "Times Square" after its rectangular table.

The increase in person-to-person interaction is quantifiable; there are noticeable efficiencies with real-time interaction. For example, e-mail traffic within several departments has been cut down by a full 50%. In addition, there are new ideas due to the cut-down of internal barriers and improved personal contact. Employees can mingle and exchange ideas better. "Departmental silos have been broken down," says Stokols. "This has resulted in building stronger teams across specialties that include evaluators, sales and marketing personnel, and sales coordinators. Smells have to be communicated in person, not electronically. So there's a synergy that wasn't there before, all due to a very successful collaboration between our team and MADGI's designers."

In addition, despite having less space overall, the new offices are neater and more organized, in part due to the hidden shelving along the walls and workstations for the scents and other ingredients. The high-end space is comfortable and inviting with plenty of storage and functionality.

JRM Construction Management served as construction manager for the project. The M/E/P engineer was 2LS Consulting Engineers, and Severud Associates was the structural engineer.

Design

The new studio houses the central social space combined with a reception area, multiple conference and meeting rooms, an open office section, seven private offices, a fragrance laboratory, a pantry, a privacy phone room, an IT room, and an elevator lobby.

“The main design challenge was to help the client transition from a traditional corporate environment to an open collaborative plan, create maximum comfort, and find elements that will make it attractive. Another was separating the laboratory space from the administrative area, so that scents from one area do not impact the other,” recalled MADGI Project Manager and Designer Elizabeth Zagarello. “It was achieved by separating the lab, located on the west side of the floor, from the administrative areas on the east and south of the building core.” This configuration helps isolate the lab to prevent scents from getting out (or in, from the cafeteria area on the other side of the floor). In addition, a split HVAC system creates positive air pressure inside the lab space and other negative zones within the office that prevent pollutants, such as cafeteria smells, from traveling into the lab.

The main conference room is adjacent to the social space and located along the perimeter wall overlooking Park Avenue. It features two movable divider walls, one that opens into the social space and another partition that divides it into two smaller meeting spaces. These are Italian-made Anaunia folding partitions with a high acoustical rating by EuroOffice. The floating demountable internal wall inside the main conference room features an erasable white-board surface; it is the first installation of such a movable partition in New York City.

When there are no meetings that require privacy, the partitions remain open, allowing for natural light in the social space and the reception area. One of the two smaller conference rooms is adjacent to the main conference room and the second is located in the southwest corner of the floor plate and features corner windows with expansive views of Park Avenue and the skyline.

The lab area features two Modula Sintes 1.7 computerized storage system for fragrance components, which streamline operations and research procedures. Construction of the unit created additional challenges for both the design and construction teams, as it required structural reinforcements including the installation of additional steel beams on the floor below. Durable, spill-resistant rubber flooring – Belem by All State Rubber – was used in the laboratory. Not only does it not absorb smells, it is also ergonomically better for the technicians in the lab.

The glass fronts in the private offices and at the entrance to the reception area feature a black Gemino integrated GX system hardware and frames, also by EuroOffice. A double-glazed system with higher acoustical properties was used in the permanent conference room. Due to the high density of the workstations being in an open area, adequate sound insulation was vital. It was achieved by the installation of Pyrok Star Silent finish on the slab of the ceiling.

The social area has a feature wall behind the reception desk with a company logo on it. This feature wall was installed by stacking decorative ceramic pieces in a pattern which looks like stylized perfume bottles. Tiles are produced by the Japanese company Kowa Collection; it is the only installation of this product in the United States.

Both the client and the designers focused on incorporating sustainable materials and systems into the design – all specified lighting is LED with controls to maximize efficient use of them, the majority of the specified elements of the design came from local sources (including lighting, furniture, and finishes) with few exceptions.

The reception desk was custom designed and includes an unfinished textured stone front that is accentuated with LED lights. It has a warm-tone glass top that is incorporated into a round column next to the desk. Both columns in the main social space feature product displays built into enclosures of those columns and they have a textured plaster finish. A “graphic wall” that begins next to the reception desk and separates the social space from the open-layout offices received a finish that allows custom presentations and temporary installations of graphic materials. The wall is a background for attachable promotional materials; it is made of glass and gypsum board. The furniture in this area is by Knoll.

The executive furniture, open workspace furniture, and furniture in the perfumers offices is produced by Knoll. The public social space and the main conference room features multifunctional and adjustable furniture by Resource Furniture and Spanish manufacturer Viccarbe, both designed in a residential style. “The tables, for example, can be converted based on the situation, with adjustable heights and expandable size,” says Zagarello. “So the tables in the large conference room can be folded and placed separately along the walls or combined into a large boardroom-type table.”

Wide planks dark-stained oak floor is installed in public areas and a vinyl woven carpet in a contrasting light sand color by Chilewich was installed in the offices and open plan area.

Symrise has its own elevator lobby, which MADGI also designed. A “digital wall” is a textured translucent glass wall. It is one’s first introduction to Symrise when getting into the elevators. Two projectors behind the glass and RGB LED lights give Symrise unlimited possibilities with colors and images presented on the glass. The glass wall is by Bendheim and the RGB lighting is by GVA Lighting.

Computerized storage system

Symrise New York Studio’s perfumers and chemists work with approximately 40,000 chemical and fragrance components stored in bottles. Storing, accessing, managing, tracking, and controlling climate and security for such extensive inventory is a challenge that called for an automated system. Faced with a limited available space within its new Park Avenue office, Symrise consulted with a material handling and storage consultant Innovative Material Handling (IMH), which recommended a system developed by Modula, one of the leading manufacturers of automated storage solutions, based in Lewiston, ME. The selected system included two Modula Sintes1.7 computerized storage units.

While selecting the optimal solution, Symrise, Modula and IMH had to take into consideration a typical office ceiling height, which is lower than that of usual industrial spaces where chemical storage systems are most often installed. They also considered the weight of the storage units, which exceeds standard weight-bearing rating for floors in office buildings. To address these challenges, architect Montroy Andersen DeMarco and structural engineer Severud Associates designed a floor reinforcement composed of additional steel beams installed in the space directly below the new storage system.

According to Modula US CEO, Miguel Fabra, “The two Modula Sintes1.7 units store all 40,000 component bottles, thus freeing storage space throughout the entire lab and office. The system includes 15 licenses for warehouse management software, which provides item traceability so all lab personnel can query inventory from their desks.” The Sintes units are equipped with laser pointers that indicate the specific bottles ordered, when the bottle trays arrive at each storage unit’s retrieval position. These solutions eliminate waste of time as well as excessive bending and stooping, because all required materials are swiftly, automatically located and delivered to a comfortable, ergonomic retrieval position.

Modula Sintes 1.7 specifications:

Unit 1: 22 trays, Unit 2: 27 trays

Capacity: 441 lbs.

Tray dimensions: 25.75" deep by 66.93" wide

Height: 106" and 118"

Application: small perfume and fragrance vials

Software: warehouse management software (WMS)

Options included: internal sprinklers, laser pointer vial identification, automatic safety door and tray inserts.

Montroy Andersen DeMarco (www.madgi.com)

Founded in 1990 and based in New York City, Montroy Andersen DeMarco (MADGI) is a prominent, cutting-edge architectural and interior design firm predominantly serving the Greater New York area. MADGI is led by three principals: Daniel Montroy, Steven Andersen, and Richard DeMarco. The firm employs 40 architects, interior designers, LEED professionals, project managers, and support staff. *Building Design & Construction* magazine ranks MADGI as the 90th largest architectural firm in the United States.

MADGI's markets include office and corporate interiors, fragrance and flavor research facilities, residential and mixed-use new buildings (both market-rate and affordable housing), retail, entertainment and hospitality, commercial building conversions, landlord services, and sustainable/LEED design. Headed by principals, the specialized studios have served as either lead designer or architect of record for some of the most innovative – and challenging – projects in the city. The firm is known for its design quality and expertise in cost control, technical issues, and addressing complex zoning regulations.

MADGI's recent laboratory and corporate interior work includes the 150,000-sq.-ft. East Hanover, N.J., U.S. headquarters and laboratories and the 75,000-sq.-ft. Manhattan offices and testing labs of Givaudan Fragrance; as well as the 25,000-sq.-ft. Firmenich office and fragrance laboratory; the 7,500-sq.-ft. Robertet laboratory and sales office; the 14,000-sq.-ft. Lavazza U.S. headquarters; the 35,000-sq.-ft. U.S. headquarters of Dentsu USA at 32 Avenue of the Americas; and the 60,000-sq.-ft. East Coast headquarters of ICM Partners, all in New York, N.Y.

The firm's architectural, executive design, and design collaborations portfolio includes the 230-room citizenM New York hotel in Times Square; The Dillon Townhouses and Condominiums, a 205,000-sq.-ft residential complex at 425 West 53rd Street; the 135,000-sq.-ft. mixed-use residential/retail 37-14 36th Street in Long Island City, N.Y.; the 11-story 560 West 24th Street luxury condominium; the 100,000-sq.-ft. Soori Highline luxury condominium on West 29th Street; and the market repositioning of the 100,000-sq.-ft. 160 Fifth Avenue office tower in Manhattan.

MADGI recently served as the architect for two of the most prominent restaurant and tourist attraction projects in Manhattan: One World Observatory – the 90,000-sq.-ft. observation deck and retail space atop the new World Trade Center, and the renovation of the landmark Rainbow Room on top of 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

Symrise

Symrise is a global supplier of fragrances, flavors, cosmetic active ingredients and raw materials as well as functional ingredients. Its clients include manufacturers of perfumes, cosmetics, food and beverages, the pharmaceutical industry and producers of nutritional supplements and pet food. Its sales of more than €2.6 billion in 2015 place Symrise as one of the global leading companies in the flavors and fragrances market.

Headquartered in Holzminden, Germany, the Group is represented in over 40 countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Asia, the United States and Latin America. Symrise works with its clients to develop new ideas and market-ready concepts for products that form an indispensable part of everyday life. Economic success and corporate responsibility are inextricably linked as part of this process. Symrise thus takes sustainability into account in every part of its corporate strategy. The company was awarded the German Sustainability Award in 2012. In 2013, Symrise was certified as a “Green Company” by DQS. www.symrise.com

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