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DAVID & GOLIATH BAR

Seeking a clublike atmosphere, David & Goliath has a backlit bar showing off brands of Bacardi

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COLE & WEBER UNITED

A sunken living room and GPS-controlled shades make space more homey

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BARKLEY
A replica of the TWA Moonliner proves to be a great conversation starter with Barkley recruits



ALISTAIR TUTTON

Office space: Think outside the cubicle

COMFORT ZONE: Unique design 'helps recruiting, and clients like the vibe'

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BEER TAPS.

Extreme concierges. Rocket ships? Think about these office perks and accouterments the next time you're slaving away into the wee hours at your spartan workstation. And then print out your résumé.

Agencies from coast to coast and in between are thinking outside the box—and cubicle—to improve the working environment.

After all, "you spend 75% of your life here; you better enjoy it," says David Angelo, CEO-chairman-chief creative officer of David & Goliath, El Segundo, Calif.

OK, you say, that's Southern California, where Jay Chiat in the 1980s commissioned Frank Gehry to design Chiat/Day's Venice, Calif., binocular headquarters. But that's no excuse—just go to Missouri.

There, agency Barkley has made a pricey move from downtown Kansas City to the historic Trans World Airlines headquarters building in an up-and-coming art district. The space includes lots of spots for spontaneous

get-togethers, dient rooms furniture styles unique to each floor, a grass-lined roof and, of course, the ultimate conversation-starter—a 32-foot reproduction of a TWA rocket on the landmark's roof. The original TWA Moonliner rocket was built for a futuristic exhibit at Disneyland by entrepreneur Howard Hughes when he owned the airline. The rocket has been incorporated into the agency's logo.

"An inspired space can produce inspired work," said Brian Brooker, CEO-chief creative officer at Barkley, which handles Build-A-Bear Workshop and Sonic Drive-In. "It pays off in so many different ways. Great space makes our employees happy. It helps with recruiting, and clients like the vibe."

HELPS SHORTEN MEETINGS

But wait, there's more: Other tweaks to the TWA building include conference rooms with tables at various heights, some requiring attendees to stand. "That does make meetings shorter," Mr. Brooker said.

And for agency get-togethers after the meetings, there's a beer tap on its roof deck.

Other shops are building hip, clublike atmospheres. At David & Goliath, Mr. Angelo views his new digs as part agency, part restaurant, part lounge. For instance, an elegant, backlit bar helps showcase the brands of

Just make sure the windows open

EVEN THOUGH A ROCKET on the roof can inspire an agency logo change, some say at the end of the workday, a space's design translates little into the creative product.

"Comfortable people—not people who are wowed or driven by exotic spaces—are creative people," said Jeff Goodby, co-chairman of Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, which, with the exception of the occasional cable car clanging its bell outside, has standard-fare offices. "The biggest correlation I've

found in my life is between great ideas and windows that open. But that's just me."

Gerald Mount, a management professor at Hope College, finds it's not the habitat but "the organizational climate the work takes place in." Take Google, he said. It's not the bidets in the rest-rooms, stacks of food within a football field of any desk and meeting yurts for collaboration. "It's the values that enable the creativity to happen."

—ALICE Z. CUNEO

client Bacardi. "You can stop what you're doing, crack open a beer and get back to work," he said, noting the bar is open after 5 p.m.

At TBWA/Chiat/Day—or Chiat Day and Night, as it was once called—fingerprinting and other security measures are required at its new Media Arts Lab, where the agency works on Apple. The workspace is in a building shared with Mr. Gehry and has a sleek look, with a giant, white conference table and barstool-height chairs, allowing participants to stand or sit.

Crispin Porter & Bogusky's new office in Boulder, Colo., provides an extreme concierge who stores, fixes

and fine-tunes mountain bikes, snowboards, skis and other sporting equipment. The service seems natural in a city known for its idyllic mountain setting and outdoor-extremist residents. Otherwise, the space "feels pretty industrial—we see ourselves as a factory that produces ideas," Chairman Chuck Porter said.

Luckily for Mr. Porter, it translates into relatively inexpensive accouterments—unfinished ceilings and prefabricated corrugated metal buildings.

Brad Harrington, co-president of Cole & Weber United, imbued his new Seattle headquarters with touches such as GPS-controlled sun shades and a floor plan with a sunken

living room.

Mr. Harrington had wanted more. He was miffed when corporate parent WPP Group declined to spring for a cozy, '70s ski lodge-style fire pit, calling it "an excessive expense," Mr. Harrington recalled. "And they wanted nothing to do with an open flame" for liability reasons.

TABLES, NOT DESKS

At C&W, creatives work at long tables that allow them to see each other eye to eye and chime in on brainstorming sessions. Jacob Baas, senior copywriter, said he was sitting across from an art director trying to come up with graphic artists for a Colt 45 campaign when a colleague threw in the name of Jim Mahfood, a comic-book artist the group hadn't considered.

"Beyond choosing an artist, an idea gains momentum" in the family-like setting where groups often share meals, Mr. Baas said. "A nice chaos is created."

But when that chaos becomes overwhelming, Mr. Baas said he either puts on a headset or takes his laptop to a coffee shop.

That's just the point, other agency managers noted. "We're here to work," said Joe Da Silva, general manager of BBH, New York, whose lower Manhattan offices include sweeping views and a coffee bar inside the office. "It's an office."