

BUSINESS

SMALL BUSINESS

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Commercial Real Estate

Entertaining New Ideas

Rhino's Open Areas Are Orchestrated for Creativity

FORM AND FUNCTION

Innovative Uses of Southland Work Spaces

One step into the lobby at Rhino Entertainment Co. in Century City and visitors immediately see what the company is all about.

The front of the reception desk is a stack of music cassettes. Fragments of old tapes and compact disks are embedded in the floor. Music videos play on a wall monitor.

Music and recycling are recurring themes at Rhino, which has made a name for itself by reissuing music from the past.

The new offices were designed to reflect the company's corporate values and to replace makeshift space in Santa Monica that Rhino had outgrown, said company spokesman Brian Schuman.

First, the space had to be comfortable, Schuman said. Second, it had to be designed with lots of common areas where employees could meet and exchange ideas, a process Rhino considers crucial to its success. Third, it had to use recycled and environmentally safe materials as much as possible.

Beckson Design Associates Inc. of Los Angeles started with what was ordinary office space and gave it a colorful, playful warehouse-loft look. The design combines imaginative dry-wall sculptures, open ceilings, large common areas, dramatic lighting and a host of unusual touches, such as an open room with beanbag chairs.

To meet Rhino's need for places where people can work comfortably on their own or mix and mingle for fun as well as business,



Photos by CAROLYN COLE / Los Angeles Times

Rhino Entertainment's lobby has a reception desk made of music cassettes and a jukebox that plays popular tunes the company has reissued, above. Vincent De Stefano and Julie Temkin sit on beanbag chairs for a lunchtime presentation, left.



the floor plan includes numerous common areas, such as a large lunchroom, conference rooms and an open forum area where musical groups perform and employees attend quarterly meetings and other gatherings.

One of Rhino's goals was to maintain the quality of the design throughout the space, said Beckson's Steven Heisler, co-manager of the design project along with Ed Gabor.

"They very much wanted the

design to continue throughout the entire space, not just something for visitors to admire in the lobby," Heisler said.

As a result, elements that might appear to be simply colorful or imaginative also serve practical purposes. Examples include canvas-wrapped fins, which add a dramatic design touch but also help to control lighting and improve acoustics, and Pegboard walls at workstations, he said.

"We noticed that people there like to put things all over the walls, so the Pegboard makes it easier for them," Heisler said.

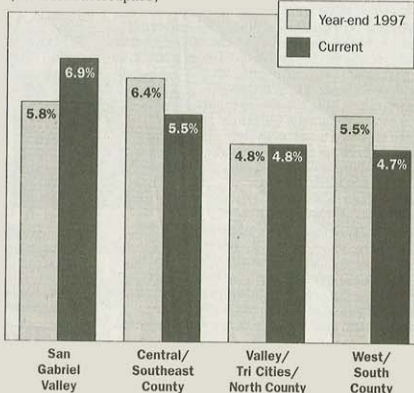
—BOB HOWARD



Real Estate Trends

Los Angeles County Industrial Vacancy Rates

(includes sublet space)



Note: Vacancy rate is the total vacant square footage divided by total rentable square footage in all existing buildings. Sublet space is space rented by primary tenants that is vacant and available for sublease.

Source: CoStar

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