



Extra Strong Mint

As we've said before, we do have a link or two with the City of London. In fact, our Editor's father was, for many years, the Director of a money brokers. Things have changed since then, of course. Much of the City itself is virtually unrecognisable, the markets and the economy are hardly 'same old' themselves and we're pretty sure that Pete Jordan and his colleagues never worked in a space like this!

The space in question is the new Ropemaker Place home of money broking firm MINT. MINT is built on a refreshingly different approach. MINT offers an integrated voice and electronic service that spans the globe. The firm offers a range of services covering equities, fixed income, rates, foreign exchange, equity derivatives, credit derivatives, futures and structured products as well as CFDs and spread trading. Highly energised, the team has an enviable reputation for dynamic solutions across an impressive client base.

Founded in 2004 with a purely equities capability, MINT now covers a wide range of markets for a list that includes over 500 leading institutional clients.

The majority of the 150-strong MINT team has seen the markets in all climates and has a highly professional grasp of the risks as well as the rewards. And that, of course, also means that the majority of this team has seen the inside of many a City office and broking floor. MINT, we very quickly realise, has taken this wholly into account and has – with the not inconsiderable help of Base Interiors – developed a genuinely unique, stand-out working space. Indeed, in a market where so many firms are vying for a limited talent pool, a space which might just be the differentiator for clients and employees alike.

As we said a little earlier, this is a firm with a refreshingly different approach.

The reception of the 13th floor space immediately widens our eyes. There is none of the pristine white, Barcelona chairs and backlit reception we've come to know and >>>>>>



of a ‘traditional’ run-of-the-mill ceiling tile solution – due in no small part to the fact that such amazing detailing and attention was paid to this element. In fact, Richard chuckles as he tells us how the client loved the idea of the industrial look – and how it was bound to save MINT, well, a mint! They did say they wanted to be scared!

The dark grey corporate colour that Richard spoke of is used extensively throughout the sleek, contemporary reception space. What could be a fiercely masculine space is tempered with the addition of fantastic, muted lighting, oversized light shades and subtle detailing – not least the metallic MINT logo. The grey scheme follows onto the floor and into the aforementioned ceiling voids, where further metallics catch the eye.

The centrepiece here, however, has to be the angular, mirrored reception desk.

Moving through, we find a smart, professional meeting suite – at the heart of which is another fantastic MINT/Base facility. ‘This is the MINT boardroom,’ Richard announces. ‘It has a bespoke boardroom table – all the bespoke items in here are made by either Silver Sovereign or Opus Magnum. The tables fold up and roll out, and the reason they roll out is that, behind the full length automated curtains we have a full MINT bar facility and, behind that, a fully stocked kitchen. Further along the wall, also hidden by the curtains, they are going to have a virtual golf driving range. The projector and all the equipment here is protected, they can then open the curtains, start swinging golf clubs and hitting balls, and then have nice drinks gatherings afterwards!’



▶▶▶▶love from so many of the City’s new interior schemes. Not that we don’t love this.

To say this is different is like saying the financial sector has had a bit of blip over the past three years. As we are slightly lost for words, it’s just as well we have Base Interiors’ Richard Bray on hand to talk us through this remarkable scheme. ‘It’s 22,500 sq ft,’ he begins nonchalantly. ‘It took us 20 weeks in total – we basically got the building with a concrete floor, a sheet metal soffitt and structural beams. The project went out to three or four companies, everyone put forward a design and after the initial design concepts they said to us ‘We like what you’ve done, we like your ideas above the others we’ve seen – but we want something that’s going to scare us!’ These guys are money brokers, they are used to pressure and they wanted something that was completely off the wall. They wanted something that was very different from every other broking business. They employ individuals and teams almost on a self-employed basis and they wanted this office to be a key differentiator.

‘We fitted out their offices five years ago – they were in Cannon Street, in much smaller premises – so I think we did have a real understanding of what they are about. They have trebled in size and this space reflects that. They are doing some amazing work.

‘What we first did here is we took their corporate branding – which is a dark grey – then looked at the building and thought ‘Wouldn’t it be amazing to do something completely different in a traditional office space and traditional sector. With most

clients, you try to push and they push you right back. With these guys, they just wanted to push things further and further.

‘Everything that’s in here is brand new and, as you can see, absolutely everything above is completely exposed – we even had the branding taken off the insulation, the sprinklers we’ve had put in are red, the fire detection elements are also in red – for fire – we just really had a bit of fun here. When you leave out the ceiling you have to think differently and technical detail is fundamental.

Despite the fact that Richard and the team here were given a rare degree of design freedom, there were, of course, budgetary limitations. Despite this, and despite the exposed look and feel of the ceilings here, the costs far outweighed those



Case Study



We finally move through to the main trading floor. The huge open floorplate has plenty of space for future MINT expansion – in fact, Richard tells us, the floor can take up to 330 traders. ‘We had to do a lot of work with the power,’ he continues. ‘The air conditioning, the lighting and the heating here are all designed specifically to individual traders’ requirements. Again, we’ve used the corporate grey throughout – even on the drop-down beams. The walls are in the corporate colour, the partitions are in the corporate colour and then everything else is silver or red.

‘If it’s lighting or infrastructure its silver, if it’s to do with fire then it’s red and everything else is grey.

‘The systems furniture here is by DAS and all the other furniture, including the Contessa seating, is by The Furniture Practice. It’s like walking into the Pompidou Centre with a monochrome palette!’

To the far end of the space stands a series of smart fully glazed Director’s offices, whilst the rest of the floor offers clear sightlines across, broken only partially by the incredible number of screens required by the traders here.

And with that, we head back out to reception so as not to disturb the traders – after all, they’ve got work to do. As Wall Street’s Gordon Gekko says: ‘It’s all about bucks, kid. The rest is conversation.’ ●

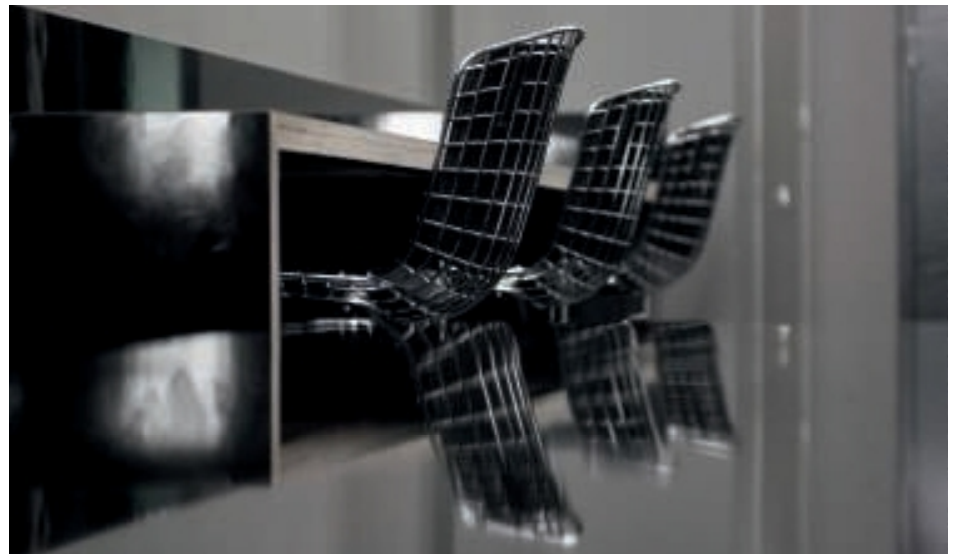
▶▶▶▶▶ Being on the 13th Floor, the entire suite is, of course, swathed in an amazing backdrop of views across London, whilst the finishes and subtle yet intricate detailing here follow those we have already come across in reception. ‘The doors here are cross-banded and stained black – they wanted it to be masculine throughout,’ Richard reveals. ‘The fully glazed partitioning system was designed by Base and then produced and installed by a British Company – Laser Industries. Again, everything is exposed here and we have put so much effort into the detailing. The lighting, for example, is completely programmable so that every single light, individually, can be turned up and down. Some of the traders want bright light, some want no light, so we had a system developed where individuals can set their own level.’

Opposite the meeting suite, there is another unique MINT facility – and if what we’ve seen up until now wasn’t masculine enough, this certainly is. The once again sleek and once again dark breakout/tea and coffee area is unlike any we’ve seen. This really is the stealth fighter plane of teapoints!

‘Again, the units are finished in the corporate colour,’ Richard points out. ‘The

splashbacks are also in the corporate grey, we’ve used black marble, inset vending and added these amazing suspended stick lights. This is not your normal office! It’s almost like an ad agency – without the colour!’

‘When we were designing the space we just kept asking ourselves ‘Will this work?’ We laughed every time we did something because we thought it would just look bonkers. As the final elements started to go in we were holding a breath – but it all came together. They love it.’



essential ingredients

Client • **MINT** | Design • **Base Interiors** 020 7487 3222

Furniture Supply • **The Furniture Practice** 020 7549 5454

Dealer Desks • **DAS** 020 7247 3612

Task Seating • **Teknion** 020 7490 2101

Bespoke Furniture • **Opus Magnum** 020 8870 1202

Partitioning • **Laser Industries** 01752 841700