

We've been incredibly fortunate, through this very magazine, to be wined and dined in a number of London's most prestigious and well-established restaurants. You know the ones - solid, sturdy, dark furnishings, solid, sturdy, dark menus and solid, sturdy, dark waiting staff who appear to know every patron other than ourselves by name.



Buzz Words

Case Study



▶▶▶▶worked extensively with Regus over the years, we ask Tony whether B.Hive presented different challenges from the business centre projects he and his firm have undertaken previously. 'Whether it's green, yellow or blue, our job is to manage the project here,' Tony tells us. 'It was different – as any new project is – and the people involved had some very strong ideas and passions for the project. I don't think that was a challenge, but it was something that we needed to develop. It was nice to do something so different in terms of the look and feel and we're very proud of the result.'

'It's been great for everyone,' Doloureas confirms. 'It really is like a club. I can sit here, work, connect with other people and bounce ideas around. The concept behind all this was to allow people to think outside the square circle, and I think this space almost makes you force yourself into thinking differently about your approach to your work. It certainly did for us!'

Speaking of thinking differently, we ask Elina how she had to think outside that

square circle when it came to the specification of furniture and furnishings here. 'I did to a certain degree,' she says. 'We adapted a lot of things – softened a number of designs. Things still have to function though, although we were really keen not to compromise the look. We still spoke to contract manufacturers, and things have to work and wear.'

'There were some trade-offs, there had to be – but essentially this is a working space and has to react as such.'

We are joined – and this feels very much like the B.Hive community way – by Lynne Franks herself. We ask Lynne about the origins of the B.Hive concept. 'A business centre for women is something that I've wanted to do for a very long time,' she explains. 'I was in the first stages of thinking about how to make it happen when I had the very good opportunity to meet Mark Dixon – the owner and founder of Regus. As the world's largest provider of workplaces it just seemed to be a natural collaboration. It was such a fluke that we met – it was meant to be!'

'Mark put me on to Celia Donne, who's a Regional Director at Regus, and she immediately got my concept. We looked around at a number of established Regus centres but as soon as I took one look at Southampton Street I thought 'That's it! It's a listed building, but it clearly had huge potential – it has a beautiful frontage and a fantastic situation here in Southampton Street.'

'Because it's a listed building, a lot of the planning permission took forever. It needed to be totally opened up to allow the space to flow.'

A spiral stairwell takes you from the street to a beautifully designed, exclusive business lounge where you can network with fellow B.Hive members in a stylish and feminine environment. Furthermore, the building also offers a relaxing courtyard for reflection.

The business lounge enables members to connect to high speed internet on B.Hive iMacs or their laptop, whilst also helping themselves to refreshments – perfect for

women who normally work from home, on the road or travel on business.

Without wishing to sound like a sales and marketing spiel, B.Hive membership means no more noisy coffee shops or busy hotel lobbies.

B.Hive also has inspirational meeting rooms with seating for four to 20 people, as well as the very latest in video-communication technology and, of course, it also offers its members more permanent, traditional office solutions.

Inspiration is, in fact, all around you, with pearls of wisdom adorning the walls, mixing perfectly with the soft tones and materials used throughout the facility. This really is a touch of serenity away from the buzz (excuse the pun!) of London's streets.

The Covent Garden flagship goes from strength-to-strength, and, we hear, B.Hive Lounges will be opening shortly in Manchester and Bristol.

That's two more busy, busy B's heading your way! ●



essential ingredients

Project • **B.Hive Women's Business Club** 020 7717 8502

Client • **The Regus Group & Lynne Franks of SEED Network** | Main Contractor & M&E • **First Choice Build Group**

Interior Design & Sustainability Consultant • **Grigoriou Interiors** 020 7580 0611 | Concept Style Design • **Shabby Chic Couture**

Carpets • **Desso** 020 7324 5500

Seating • **Morgan Furniture** 01243 371111

Wall Finishes • **Earthborn** 01928 734171 **Tektura** 020 7536 3300

Reception 'Ice Branch' Chandelier • **Swarovski** www.swarovski.com

Vintage Chandelier • **The Vintage Chandelier Company** 07931 303138

LED Lamps • **LSL Co** 01962 600136