



Text  
Paul McGillick  
Photography  
Alex Nikulin

# Japanese Style

Subtle Japanese references help to harmonise the contemporary aesthetic with a more conservative clientele

Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) is Japan's second largest bank, offering a wide range of financial services. This posed two key challenges for interior designers, idpm, when they came to design Sumitomo's Sydney headquarters. The first was a not uncommon challenge: how to project a stylish and up-to-date image for a financial services company without also appearing to spend too much money. The second was more culturally specific: how to design a hi-tech, contemporary work environment for Japanese businessmen who are traditionally very conservative.

Both challenges were partially met by the location – Sumitomo occupies the entire floor of Level 35 of Sydney's Chifley Tower with sensational views to the south, east and north over Macquarie Street, the Botanic Gardens and the Harbour. Reception and the client areas with their full-height windows make full use of this, with through views from the limestone-floored and glass-clad lift lobby. Glazed walls to the visitors' and meeting rooms ensure that the reception enjoys ample natural light and access to the views, while the adjacent boardroom also enjoys sweeping views.

In fact, the palette of soft greys and off-white (accented by the orange 'Zip' chairs and the circular custom-designed rug from Designer Rugs) plays a role in modulating the light which pours in. This palette also supports the subtle Japanese references which help to harmonise the contemporary aesthetic with a more conservative clientele – other elements include extensive use of Japanese Sen veneer, the Noguchi coffee table in the small visitors' room, 'Golden Spider' marble for the reception desk, the circular motif of the reception rug and the bright orange of the reception chairs.

Back-of-house, the 1300m<sup>2</sup> fit-out is largely open plan and hi-tech with a raised floor for cabling. There are just a few enclosed offices on the perimeter, along with the enclosed dealing room and training room, while the strong room, break-out area and services are on the core. Bevisco have provided a variety of workstations to accommodate varying needs and to break down the open plan into different functional areas.

The overall effect is to combine a sense of style with hi-tech awareness within a general sense of calm and tasteful restraint.

Design Practice idpm Pty Ltd  
Design Director Chris Rumble  
Interior Design Cynthia Kwan  
Services Engineer TCG Austwide  
Structural Engineers D'Ambrosio Consulting  
Timeframe Design and document 3 months,  
construction 3 months  
Completed December 2005

idpm  
(61 2) 9238 4271  
idpm.com.au

## Furniture

In reception, lounge chairs are 'Zip' from Emanate, upholstered in Instyle 'Insuede', colour 'Buzz', Schamburg + Alvisse 'Smooth' side table finished in Japanese Sen and 'Aeron' receptionist's chair from Living Edge. In the visitors' room, the Noguchi coffee table is from Living Edge, and the single and double-seater armless chairs are from Schamburg + Alvisse. In the meeting room, the oval 'Carma' table finished in Japanese Sen is from Stylecraft, with 'Luxy Italia Light' chairs from Chairbiz.com. In the boardroom, the conference table finished in Japanese Sen is from Stylecraft, with 'Aeron' meeting chairs from Living Edge. Training room chairs are 'Boxta' from Chairbiz.com, upholstered in Woven Image 'Concord'. The breakout area has 'Athena' stools and table from Stylecraft. Work areas include the 'Contessa' executive chair from Interlink Iken, the 'Xantos' sled base chair from Emanate, 'Boxta' task chairs from Chairbiz.com and workstation tables from Bevisco.

Emanate (61 2) 9698 5011  
Instyle (61 2) 9317 0222  
Schamburg + Alvisse (61 2) 9212 7644  
Living Edge 1300 132 154  
Stylecraft (61 2) 9355 0000  
Chairbiz.com (61 2) 8399 1300 Woven Image (61 2) 9326 0433

Iken Commercial Interiors (61 2) 9660 4888  
Bevisco (61 2) 9279 224

## Fabrics

Workstation screens are Instyle 'Liquid' and 'Ice'. Laminates from Laminex, Japanese Sen from Briggs Veneers, 'Golden Spider' marble from Euromarble and all paints from Dulux.  
Instyle (61 2) 9317 0222  
Laminex Industries 13 21 36  
Briggs Veneers (61 2) 9732 7888  
Euromarble and Granite (61 2) 9542 7166  
Dulux 13 25 25

## Flooring

'Minerva' limestone from Stone Arc. Reception custom-designed rug from Designer Rugs. Custom-made carpet from Ontera, and Trojan Twist 'Lotus' carpet from Cavalier Bremworth. Vinyl from Amtico.  
Stone Arc (61 2) 9666 7966  
Designer Rugs (61 2) 9328 4111  
Ontera Modular Carpets (61 2) 8838 2500  
Cavalier Bremworth 1800 251 172  
Amtico International (61 2) 9415 0200