



WORK DESIGN MAGAZINE

WORKPLACE CULTURE, RESEARCH, AND DESIGN

*Surf culture, history, and a sense of place ooze from the **World Surf League**'s new Santa Monica HQ.*



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

Steps from the water in Santa Monica sits an old, 10,000 square foot warehouse. Designers at **Classical Progression, Inc.** recently gutted it to create a new HQ for the **World Surf League**, the global professional surf competition organizer and broadcaster, formerly located in Melbourne, Australia. There are

nearly 50 full time employees in the office, but the space also plays hosts to visiting professional surfers, many of whom show up straight from the water, and the designers worked with the company to create a space where both visitors and employees would feel comfortable working or just hanging out.

We reached out to the team at Classical Progression, Inc. to find out more.





Address:

147 Bay Street on the corner of Main Street in Santa Monica, California

Interior architect/designer:

Classical Progression, Inc.

Date of completion:

February 2015

Square footage:

10,000 square feet



Photo by Undine Pröhl.



What is the proximity to public transportation and other amenities?

The office is located on the corner of Main Street which hosts a steady flow of public buses. There are also bike lanes along the streets and a boardwalk steps away on the Santa Monica beach. Professional surfers can easily leave the waves to walk over to the office for a meeting or interview.

What is the square footage/person?

10,000 square feet and roughly 50 employees in this location

What were the construction/hard costs per square foot?

\$85.00 per square foot



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

Which furniture brands/dealers were used?

Classical Progression, Inc. searches far and wide for architectural antiques and materials to repurpose into its' modern designed spaces. They believe these antiques give a space soul and a timeless beauty. Aged mahogany wine-barrel staves Kevin [Cozen, the firm's founder] found form the divider wall while oversized vintage doors from one of **Bob Hope's** estates have been repurposed as the game room entrance. An authentic 1920s bar anchors the cafe area. Leather lounge chairs, light fixtures, and the conference room table are vintage. Other furniture was found in local Los Angeles stores including **Blueprint Furniture**, **HD Buttercup**, and **Restoration Hardware**. Office-specific furniture includes **TeamWorx** desking from **DeskMakers** and chairs from **Office Star**.



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

How many total employees do you have and what's the daily population?

The office comfortably accommodates 50 employees. When the World Surf League hosts and broadcasts surf competitions in other parts of the world, a majority of the office leaves Santa Monica to work on location.

Is there a mobile work or work-from-home policy or are most of the employees there all day every day?

If the employees are not traveling to surf competitions, they work in the office.



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

What percentage of the space is unassigned?

Since the World Surf League encourages surfers to visit and employees to enjoy their time in the office, half of the space is dedicated to open, social areas: a gym with locker rooms, enclosed living rooms with couches and televisions, a reading area, and large café complete with a vintage bar from the 1920s. These areas create a friendly vibe where both visitors and employees can mingle and think creatively.



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

How is the brand reflected in the space?

World Surf League is the global professional surf competition organizer and broadcaster and thus, every detail of the décor — even the floor plan — embraces surf culture. Collectors' surfboards, including one used by **Duke**, the father of modern surfing, lean unassumingly against white gallery walls. Sliding entrance doors roll on custom-designed skateboard wheels. The floor plan of the open bullpen reflects the contours of a surfboard and above this open workspace is a school of surfboards suspended from the bow and truss ceilings. Expansive steel and glass windows welcome sunlight to naturally illuminate the space. The atmosphere feels laid back yet refined and wholeheartedly surfer chic.



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

What is the most unique feature about the new space?

The most eye-catching element is the undulating divider wall, finished with aged mahogany wine-barrel staves, that meanders throughout the office. As you follow the wave-like form, you are gently nudged into dedicated environments for filming, editing, socializing, exercising, conducting meetings, along with the essential offices for creative and business departments.

What was the hardest aspect of change for people in moving from your former space?

Originally headquartered in Melbourne, Australia, the World Surf League moved to a small section of this office, which also hosted other businesses. After the World Surf League made arrangements to rent the entire building, Classical Progression, Inc. gutted the structure to create a space that both comfortably served all employees and reflected the company's identity. The employees find the space functional, comfortable, and beautiful. It sometimes is difficult for them to leave!



Photo by Undine Pröhl.

Please talk about any other notable aspects of the project that make it unique.

- Classical Progression, Inc. researched and designed a fully equipped professional sound stage with proper dimensions including wall thickness for proper in-house broadcasts.
- There is a café with a sponsored beer on tap flanked by rustic communal tables.
- 24-hour live surf video footage plays throughout the space.
- The preserved bow-and-truss ceiling and concrete floor give the space a raw, industrial feel.
- The designers re-used wood framing that was originally pulled out of place. Every door from the original space along with the hardware was recycled.

SOURCE: <http://workdesign.com/2015/05/an-office-where-surfers-work-when-theyre-not-in-the-waves/undine-pröhl-20/>