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**Lauren Rottet crosses continents and oceans to design outposts for Paul Hastings**

*text: edie cohen photography: eric laignel*



**What goes around comes around.** In Lauren Rottet's world, that means eight years of staggered commissions from Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker and 14 years operating as DMJM Rottet—followed by five more international projects for the global law firm now that she's newly on her own as Rottet Studio with a Houston headquarters, a handful of other U.S. offices, and a final one, inevitably, in Shanghai. "We did our first Paul Hastings renovation in California, for their Orange County office in 2000," Rottet recalls. "Now the lease is up, and they're looking for new space."

Good luck finding one as glamorous as the Paris office, which occupies most of a 1920 limestone building on Boulevard Haussmann in the Eighth Arrondissement. Catalysts for the project were the cachet of a prime street address, a Paul Hastings constant, and exponential growth. It's easy to see here how effortlessly Rottet's work translates between centuries, largely because her overall Paul Hastings mission is branding, not through materials or furnishings but via intangibles of light and space.

Rottet's work was primarily insertion—of furniture, cabinetry, carpet, and lighting into 47,000 square feet. On all eight levels, including two underground, she worked with the existing floor plans to accommodate multiple functions and the 134 personnel count. Extensive reconfiguration was out, as most walls were load-bearing. "It was a puzzle rather than creating from scratch," she explains. (At the same time that she was piecing this puzzle together, the building was being restored.) ➤

**Previous spread:** DMJM Rottet's Lauren Rottet, now principal of Rottet Studio, renovated most of a 1920 Paris building to house Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker. The name of the law firm appears in letters of stainless steel on the backlit frosted-glass face of the custom reception desk in the lobby.

**Left:** A custom wool runner accompanies the original wrought-iron balustrade of the staircase connecting the lobby to the second floor. **Right, from top:** Incandescents up-light the dome above the reception desk. The recently restored limestone exterior faces Boulevard Haussmann.

**Opposite:** In the lobby, Rottet outfitted a built-in limestone bench with wool-covered cushions, then added Antonio Citterio chairs and a custom limed-oak table with a bronze-framed glass top.









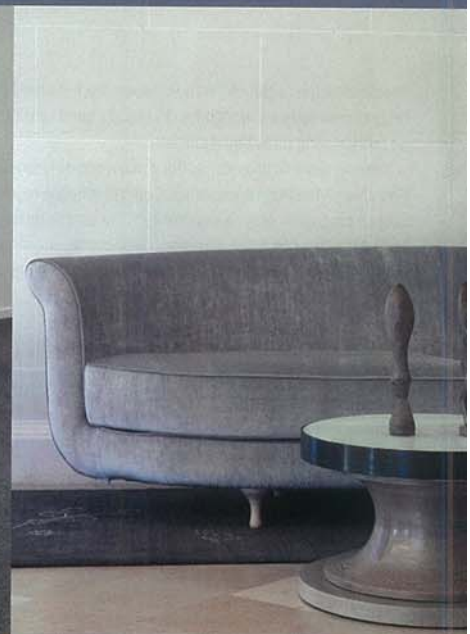




**Opposite:** The largest of seven conference rooms features two original chandeliers in bronze and crystal. Beneath them, leather-covered chairs line a custom table topped in steel-framed back-painted glass and fabricated in three pieces to accommodate the 30-foot length.  
**Top, from left:** The secretarial workstations are by Kai Stania, the lamp by Paolo Rizzato. Massimo Iosa Ghini designed the lobby's sofa.  
**Bottom, from left:** An iron lantern nearby has been restored. This carnival-inspired wooden sculpture belongs to a managing partner.

Undoubtedly, the interiors are a bit more decorative than the look Rottet is known to embrace. And she's the first to acknowledge it. Starting in the street-front lobby, she transformed a built-in stone bench into a cushioned banquette and flanked it with Antonio Citterio's barrel chairs, covered in a silvery acrylic-cotton. She then completed the tableau with limed-oak drum tables in the art deco mode and Massimo Iosa Ghini's crescent of a sofa, chosen, she notes, for its "sweep and softness." Those two qualities also apply to the two limestone stairways, now fitted with runners in a dancing floral pattern that gets denser as it climbs. Far more industrial is the reception desk, a stainless-steel rectangle with a glowing front of frosted glass. Across the glass, stainless letters prominently spell out the Paul Hastings name, a boldface treatment further accentuated by the desk's location in a domed recess up-lit by incandescents.

Rottet designated the third floor as the conference center, clustering seven meeting rooms there. The largest is a remembrance of things past, complete with a gilded and gold-painted wall and a pair of inherited bronze chandeliers with crystal drops. When was the last time—or even the first—that you saw tieback curtains in a Rottet project? They debut here in dove gray. She did eventually revert to ➤



character in the center of the room, where back-painted glass tops a table that stretches a monolithic 30 feet. To get it upstairs, it had to be fabricated in three equal pieces.

When it came to process, Rottet discovered differences between French and American approaches. Could that be the much-maligned French *hauteur* at play? Au contraire. "The people on the project aimed to please us," Rottet remarks. But communication had uncertainties, particularly in translating the U.S. drawings for local woodworkers and other artisans. In the end, it took just a bit of extra effort to get designs crafted with an attention to detail matching her own.

Space allocations differed, too. The library is a showpiece—in the U.S., libraries are often nonexistent or tiny at best. On the other hand, French secretarial workstations tend to be more compact, without enclosures. "And they don't mind if wires and cables are exposed," Rottet notes. Finally, the associates at Paul Hastings, Paris, always share offices. In the U.S., *non merci*. ➤

**PROJECT TEAM**

NADMI ASAI, MICHAEL AU; LAURENCE CARTLEDGE, TAMMY CHAN; JEFFERSON CHOI; ALICE HRICAK; DONGSIK KIM; GRZEGORZ KOSMAL; CHARLES LEE; MICHELLE MANUEL; TODD RUNKLE; MASAHIKO TANAKA; DMJM ROTTET, SOEL CONTROLE COMMANDE; ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT. LA MENUISERIE; WOODWORK. ADS GROUP; GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

**PRODUCT SOURCES**

**FROM FRONT** MOROSO: ARMCHAIRS, SOFA (LOBBY). ROBERT ALLEN GROUP: ARMCHAIR FABRIC, SOFA FABRIC. GRETCHEN BELLINGER: BANQUETTE FABRIC. ODEGARD: CUSTOM RUNNER (STAIRWELL). CUSTOM RUGS (LOBBY, CONFERENCE ROOM). MAHARAM: CURTAIN FABRIC (CONFERENCE ROOM). BEACON HILL: WALL COVERING. CADSANA: CHAIRS (CONFERENCE, MEETING ROOMS). BENE: WORKSTATIONS (OFFICE AREA). LUCEPLAN: LAMP. KNOLL: TASK CHAIRS (OFFICE AREA, RECEPTION). **THROUGHOUT** CONSTANTINE: CARPET TILE.



*Left: Behind the building lobby is a typical French courtyard. Right, from top: A managing partner's office features a 1930's desk and a Gae Aulenti 1970's lamp. Custom shelving in the library is limed oak. In the corner of a meeting room are original limestone bas-reliefs. Opposite: The main stairway spirals from the second floor to the top.*







## New York State of Mind

photography: *michael moran*

There's an awe-inspiring feel to Paul Hastings's ground-level lobby in New York. That's because Lauren Rottet commissioned a monumental sculpture for the space, part of the latest phase in a renovation that began in 2002. Fittingly, the sculpture bridges art and architecture—a row of five 13-foot-high columns, made of shimmering crystal beads strung on strands of wire, are lit from above by low-voltage halogens and below by LEDs. Both the columns' plinth and the reception desk are gray-veined white Calacatta marble, and behind the latter glows a backlit wall meticulously constructed from angled onyx panels. What could be a better introduction to a heavy-hitting office in a 1986 building by Murphy/Jahn? ➤



**Top, from left:** Calacatta marble is used for the lobby's flooring and the plinth supporting a sculpture by Claudia Matzko. Stainless-steel rings hold the sculpture's strands of glass bugle beads in place. **Bottom, from left:** A cappuccino bar overlooks a secondary reception area upstairs. In ground-level reception, a backlit onyx wall rises behind a marble desk detailed with a slit edged in stainless steel. **Opposite:** Wool felt covers the custom seating in the upstairs reception area.













## Washington Insider

photography:  
nick merrick/  
hedrich blessing

In Washington, D.C., Lauren Rottet found herself in a 1920's building with a preserved facade but new interiors—that's a standard situation in the capital, she says. In this case, Paul Hastings occupies seven levels totaling 125,000 square feet. The ground level, bifurcated by the entry, is the conference center, comprising 11 meeting rooms and two reception spaces. With its off-white limestone flooring and 22-foot ceiling, part of it angled for additional visual lift, the area exudes a restrained grandeur, and Rottet augmented it with opulent materials. One long wall is a study in texture, with panels of wheat-colored silk abutting creamy lacquer. Opposite, deep lounge chairs are upholstered in a chocolate-brown mohair-cotton, except for seat cushions covered in jewel-toned stripes. Upstairs, ceilings are only 8 1/2 feet, so Rottet lightened her palette. Cabinetry is pale Japanese ash. And carpet is café au lait. ➤

**Opposite:** On the ground level, silk-wrapped panels punctuate a lacquered wall. Chairs upholstered in a mohair-cotton have cushions covered in cotton-royon.

**Top, from left:** Instead of cutting a second internal stairway into the tight floor plates, she modified a fire stair. A wall sculpture by Yuriko Yamaguchi enlivens the reception area. **Bottom, from left:** Custom cabinets and workstations incorporate Japanese ash. Alberto Meda's chairs gather in a glass-fronted conference room.







photography: *eric laignel*

## London Calling

Paul Hastings, London, snagged enviable real estate on the top floor of an eight-story Foster and Partners building not far from the firm's more famous Gherkin. Lauren Rottet's brief was for front-of-house showcase design: reception and eight conference rooms totaling 21,000 square feet. "We brought the ambiguity of the English sky inside," associate principal Charles Lee says. Ergo the layers of glass and the gray and white finishes, the most stunning of which is the striated Turkish marble that constitutes most of the flooring in reception. Its custom desk is a blocky composition of lacquered and leather-wrapped volumes detailed with stainless steel. The seating area—combining Christian Liaigre's gray mohair-covered sofas and leather-upholstered armchairs, a quartet of Marcel Wanders's oversize floor lamps, and Rodolfo Dordoni's drum tables—would look right at home in a hip hotel's lobby. Meanwhile, in the adjoining glass-fronted conference rooms, Alberto Meda's black leather-covered chairs say, "We mean business." —



**Left, from top:** The office occupies the top floor of Foster and Partners's Bishop's Square building. Christian Liaigre designed the seating in reception, Marcel Wanders the lamps. **Right, from top:** Aluminum frames the eight conference rooms' double-glazed fronts. Tables in reception are by Rodolfo Dordoni.

**Opposite:** The custom reception desk of lacquered and leather-wrapped MDF stands on flooring of Turkish marble.





