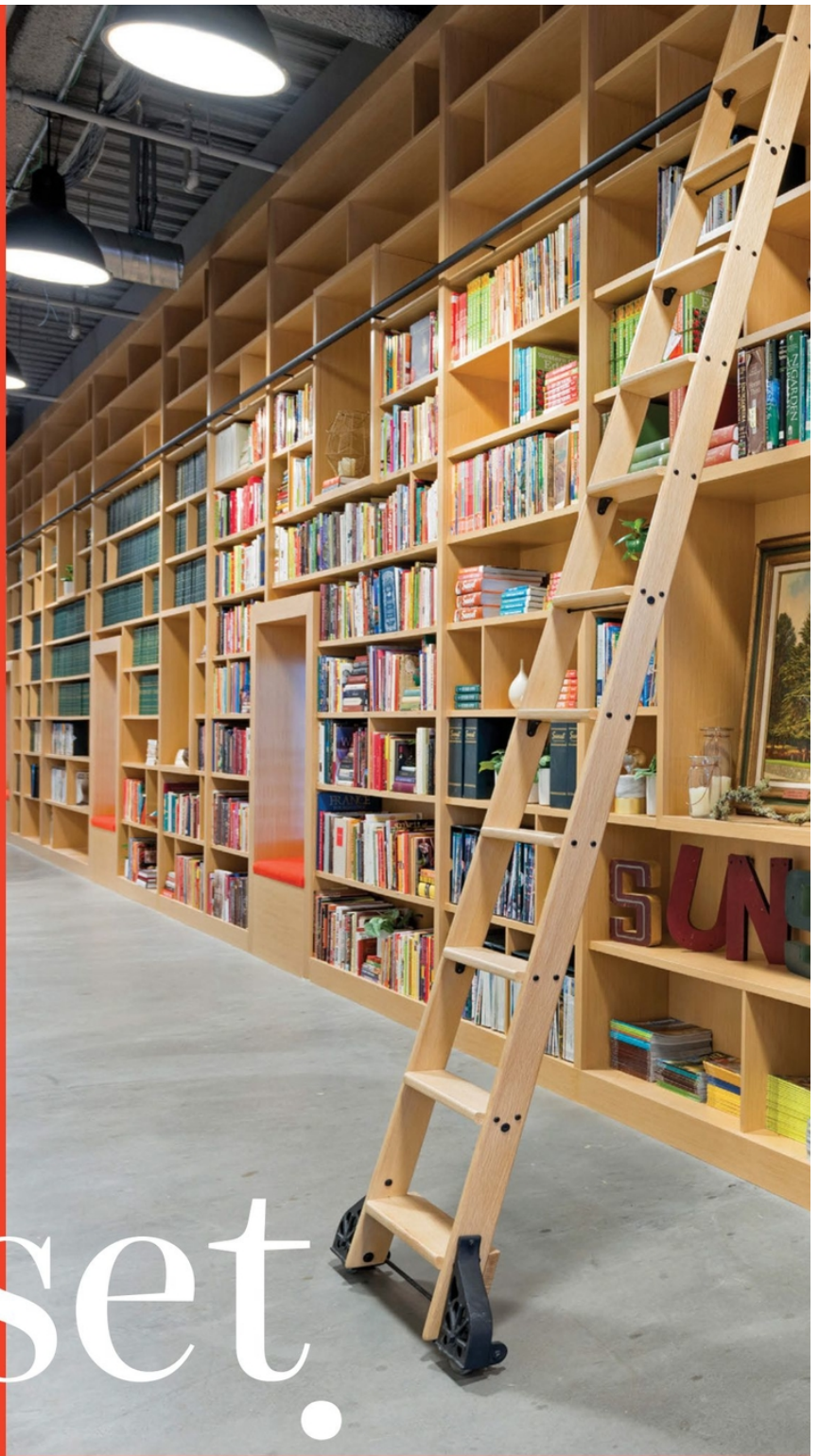


OFFICE

By Eva Hagberg Fisher  
Photography by  
Jasper Sanidad

**The West Coast lifestyle magazine embraces urbanity in a move to a new office in Oakland, California, designed by RMW**



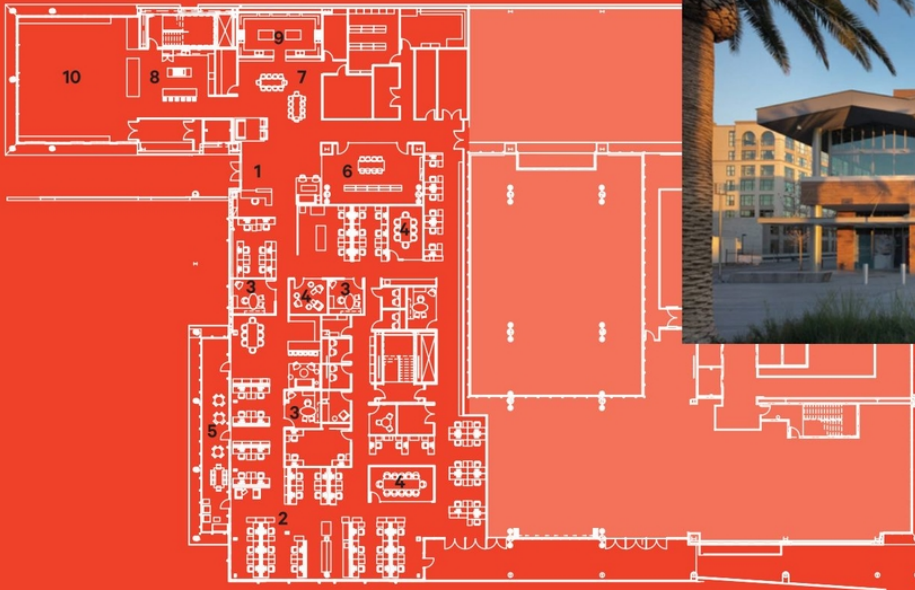
# Sunset. Magazine





Bookcases line the back wall of the office, and strategic window nooks provide places of respite.





#### Floor Plan

- 1 Reception
- 2 Open office area
- 3 Office
- 4 Conference room
- 5 Balcony
- 6 Wine cellar
- 7 Wine tasting area
- 8 Show kitchen
- 9 Test kitchen
- 10 Photo studio





Set in a recently redeveloped waterfront property (opposite, bottom), *Sunset*'s new office features interiors that reflect a laid-back California vibe with hints of midcentury modernism (left) and furnishings grouped for casual conversations and meetings (below two).

In 1952, California architect Cliff May and landscape architect Thomas Church collaborated on a series of independent pavilions and gardens in Menlo Park, California, near San Francisco. The client was *Sunset*, a magazine focused on life in the West, which was founded in 1898 and based in San Francisco for its first half-century. At that time, *Sunset* was following its readers and relocating to the newly developed suburbs. Sixty-four years later, the magazine has made another move to be connected with its demographic and the lifestyle that it portrays. This time, *Sunset* chose Oakland.

"Urban life has become very much what we are covering in the magazine," says Mailie Holiman, art director of *Sunset*. "It makes perfect sense for us to move to the city as well, and to have restaurants and bars and all of the urban life right around us." The magazine's new office is located in Oakland's Jack London Square, a recently redeveloped swath of waterfront property that boasts multiple new restaurants near residential high-rises, as well as the headquarters of the popular Blue Bottle Coffee Company.

For the Oakland interior of the magazine's editorial and business operations, *Sunset* hired RMW, which has offices in San Francisco, Sacramento, and San Jose. RMW also designed the mixed-use structure that now houses *Sunset* along with retail and other businesses.

While the cost of real estate may have prevented *Sunset* from returning to San Francisco, the burgeoning scene in Oakland provided the ideal setting. "Oakland offered the perfect opportunity to reach out to the transforming food culture here. It was a no brainer," says Jenna Szczech, RMW project designer.

The 16,800-square-foot *Sunset* interior reflects the aspects of California and Western culture that the magazine focuses on, namely nature, dining, small homes, and camping. *Sunset* also has a strong emphasis on cooking (the test kitchen and test garden in Menlo Park were famous), home design, and more recently, wine.

A reclaimed wood-lined space just inside the entry makes a strong first impression with a custom wine rack covering an entire wall. Arranged like a vineyard's cellar, with a long table for meetings or wine tastings, the room is furnished with standing candelabras from the old

#### Sunset Magazine

Architect **RMW Architecture & Interiors**

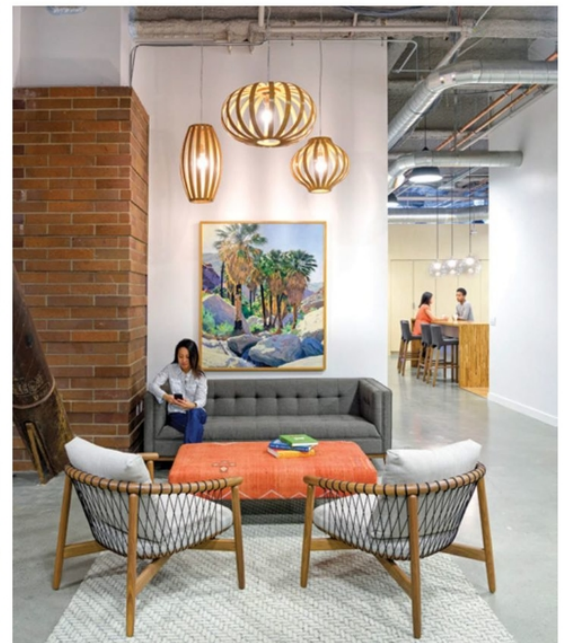
Client **Timeline, Inc.**

Where **Oakland, California**

What **16,800 square feet on one floor**

Cost/sf **\$253**

For a full project source list, see page 132 or visit [contractdesign.com](http://contractdesign.com).



contract





#### Key Design Highlights

The design of the interior reflects the magazine's focus on aspects of the West Coast lifestyle, including nature, dining, small homes, and camping.

Reclaimed wood, glass, and steel are the primary finishes in the space.

References to the Bay Area landscape include carpet that transitions from a dusty sand to a verdant green.

The office includes specialized spaces for cooking, filming, photo shoots, and wine tasting.





In the wine cellar (left), which doubles as a meeting room near the entrance, a custom rack lines an entire wall and Moooi Random pendants hang from the ceiling. The office includes two kitchens: a test kitchen (opposite, bottom) and a show kitchen (bottom) for video shoots. Reclaimed wood elements define meeting areas (below and opposite, top left).



offices, Moooi Random light pendants, and other bespoke details. "We wanted glass, steel, and wood," Szczec says. "And [*Sunset* employees] brought a lot of their history with them."

*Sunset's* history and context comes through in these salvaged trinkets and furniture pieces, as well as in more subtle design moves. For example, the color of the carpet transitions from a dusty sand to a verdant green—a nod to how the Bay Area landscape itself changes from desert to grass. "A lot of [the design] was about taking *Sunset* from a suburban area and bringing it more into the urban lifestyle," Szczec says, echoing Holiman.

#### Interiors reflect magazine content

Anchoring elements that connect with the magazine's content set the tone for this interior, which is unlike that of most magazine editorial offices. *Sunset* now enjoys two kitchens: a fully operational test kitchen for the magazine's long-respected recipe development team and a show kitchen (a feature that was lacking in the previous office) for video shoots, including those hosting guest chefs. The editorial workspace is open plan. Bookcases line the back wall, with strategic window nooks for views and respite. Floor-to-ceiling windows cover the north- and west-facing walls of the photo studios, allowing for great views of the area. And fully sealed blackout shades turn this light-filled aerie pitch dark when necessary. "I do think that RMW got all of our pillars," Holiman says of the identity integration.

It is fair to say that the majority of *Sunset's* staffers were sad to leave the remarkable office in Menlo Park, which had been so integral to the identity of the magazine for the professional lifetime of its longtime employees. The garden editor, for example, has been on staff for more than 50 years. "People spent more time there than they did at their own houses," Holiman says. "It was a home."

And yet, as *Sunset* employees have started settling into the new Oakland office, Holiman adds, "we've got a new home." **c**



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