

# officeinsight™ 10.15.07

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## Cited

*"One new feature or fresh take can change everything."*

Neil Young

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### dTank: Redefining Contract

Los Angeles has the worst traffic on the best of days. However, our time in it was made easier within the comfort of **dTank** founder **Reto Eberle's** deluxe BMW, and it didn't seem long at all before we were standing in front of the dTank facility on a sunny, soon-to-be-hot morning.



*Full Story, page 3*

### Turning Green into Gold

#### Is Green Fatigue Setting In?

The Shelton Group of Knoxville, TN, has surveyed American consumers about energy since 2005 and its findings in Energy Pulse 2007 are alarming on several fronts.

Why is this important in the commercial marketplace? The simple answer has to do with personal perceptions, fears and biases among consumers. Their attitudes color the decision making process. Business decisions will be made in coming months based on how companies believe people think now.



*Full Story, page 12*

### The Case for Kasian's Corporate Culture

Any description of **Kasian** is likely to be obsolete as soon as it's printed. *Interior Design* magazine's list of "Design Giants" pegged them at number 138 in 2006 and 110 in 2007. At last count, the firm had offices in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto and Dubai, Mumbai and Shanghai.



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### Inbox

#### Canada Designs

Logic tells me that there is a difference between Canadians and Americans, but if asked to pinpoint these differences, I am at a bit of a loss besides the obvious geographical facts and widely held stereotypes. Maybe Canadians and Americans are fundamentally the same, divided only by an invisible line littered with border patrol booths checking for fruit and terrorists.



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Material of the Week  
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## Business/Tech

Raymond James Brief: HNI  
Financial Affairs  
Industry Stock Prices

A special birthday greeting to Mr. Cary Johnson of Gensler Chicago from all of his friends.  
"Cary, just how deep is the Grand Canal?"

## Inbox

## Canada Designs

by Jean Lin

I'll be honest. Logic tells me that there is a difference between Canadians and Americans, but if asked to pinpoint these differences, I am at a bit of a loss besides the obvious geographical facts and widely held stereotypes. After the pronunciation of "sorry" and "about" my list dwindles to nothing, and I resign to the conclusion that maybe Canadians and Americans are fundamentally the same, divided only by an invisible line littered with border patrol booths checking for fruit and terrorists.

Canada Designs, the program that invited officeinsight to Toronto last month for **IIDEX/NeoCon Canada**, seemed determined to sort it out for its non-Canadian guests. An itinerary packed with booth tours of Canadian manufacturers, complimentary tickets to the ARIDO awards celebrating exemplary Canadian interior design, and lunch seminars discussing Canadian design, served the purpose of separating Canada from the pack. The program that runs in cooperation with IIDEX was created to increase awareness among international speci-



fiers of Canadian-made products, and answered the burning question of "Who is Canadian?" Particularly in the world of IIDEX and interior design.

**Teknion** is the Neil Young of Canadian manufacturers. Americans know the name. We know that it's Canadian, and we really like it. Its award-winning booth at IIDEX was the centerpiece of the show floor and boasted Marketplace, District and a bevy of other familiar Teknion 2007 introductions. An expansion of Complements, Teknion's line of ergonomic and workplace accessories, included lighting, technology support, desk mats and more. The company partnered with **Artemide, Luceplan, Colebrook Bosson Saunders** and **Koncept Technologies** for emphasis on quality design.

If Teknion is Neil, **Global** is William Shatner. Also a huge Canadian celebrity with a resounding presence on the floor, Global tested out a prototype of an attractive upholstered task chair called Kate. Kate is comfortable and cute (in a good way). I liked it as much as those ridiculous Priceline commercials.

Peter Jennings is Canadian, so is **Nienkamper**. This came as a bit of a surprise because Nienkamper's Vox conference tables and Six Collection – a collection of six-sided seating and tables – have that touch of refinement often associated with European furniture. The name Nienkamper sounds as European as Peter Jennings sounds American.

A lunch-time presentation by Canadian design curator **Rachel Gottlieb** yielded more Canadians out of the woodwork. **Frank Gehry** (born in Toronto, grown in California) and **Karim Rashid** are a bit "Pamela Anderson," grotesquely famous and surprisingly Canadian. **Molo** – the company known best for its soft seating and walls made of accordion-like structured paper – is

the Jack Kerouac of Canadian design, rooted in innovation, creativity and quality. And there were more: **Doug Ball** (**Herman Miller's** My Studio designer) and **Sittris Siliform** designer **Helen Kerr** as well as newcomer **Matthew Kroeker**. Mr. Kroeker designed the Splinter Chair that has made quite a splash this year, winning a Best of NeoCon silver in Chicago. The Splinter Chair was first recognized a year ago with **Metropolis** magazine's True North best-prototype award at Toronto's **Interior Design Show**, juried by Metropolis editorial director (and Canadian) **Paul Makovsky**. The chair was quickly picked up by **Jane Hamley Wells** for production.

**Contract** magazine was a sponsor of the Canada Design program, and senior editor **Katie Weeks** (Canadian) was in attendance acting very American, resurfacing my initial reservations about the difference between Canadians and Americans.

**Figure 3**, the Canadian design firm behind the ARIDO Project of the Year **Umbr**a (Canadian) concept store, also designed the brand new and truly exceptional **Allsteel** Toronto showroom. Allsteel is American, but if the energy expended on the new showroom is any indication, Allsteel loves Canada and has adopted it as a second home, further blurring the invisible line.

So what is the difference between Alek Trebek and Pat Sajak? Jeopardy and Wheel of Fortune? Canadian and American? Canada Designs and IIDEX certainly showcased some heavy hitters in Canadian design, and reminded the group that some of our favorites are from north of the border. It proved that Canadian design is relevant in the international contemporary market, but to me, the difference between Canadian and American is still quite hazy.

"Soory."

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