

schiaavello

CASE STUDY



Become a local ping pong champ at RFA Architects' office
Sydney, Australia

Focus on expanding with a work/life balance –

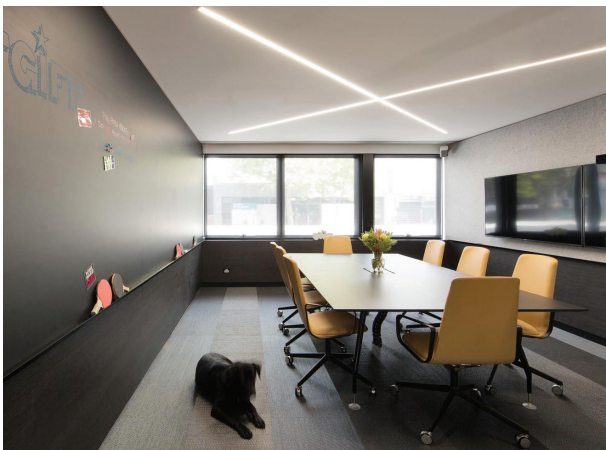
Located on Sydney's North Shore, RFA Architects is a boutique interior design and architectural practice with over 40 years' combined experience between its directors, Brian Hollis and Andrew Ip. With so much knowledge and a steadily growing team, Hollis and Ip spent considerable time making plans to customise their own dream office space. "We had been planning this for a few years, so when we saw three offices on the same floor become available in Crows Nest, we jumped on it," Hollis says.

"We wanted an office that was comfortable for the staff; flexible and fun with some breakout areas," Hollis says. "We have a strong sense of work/life balance at RFA. A lot of our employees have kids, so we want it to be an enjoyable space to be in and to bring them into. Because of that, we chose a resi-mercial feel with a big focus on a healthy work/life balance."

Meet a ping pong table in disguise –

Perhaps one of the most fun elements of the new office is the dual-purpose ping pong meeting room. Enter the space and you are met with an inconspicuous Schiavello custom-made Marina table, black and sleek with elegant, sculpted legs. Nothing unusual. Clip on a couple of pieces, however, and you've turned your regular meeting room into a place for exercise, mental stimulation, team building, a bit of friendly competition and a cure to that all-too-common 3:30itis.

"When we were designing the space, we were having a laugh about whether we should have a ping pong table or a pool table... Then we said, well, bugger it! Let's do both!" Hollis remarks.



A custom-built Marina meeting table effortlessly converts into a ping pong table. Just add a net and voilà!



Marina Workstations were brought from RFA's old office and reinstalled in the new space by Schiavello.

"And Schiavello stylised the ping pong table so it's black on black and is a lot more sleek than the traditional green and white style tabletop. It's customised to be the same size as a ping pong table, so you just have to clip the net in and the competition is on."

Bomba breaks the ice between the home and office –

Enter the office's breakout space and you would be forgiven for thinking you have stepped into a high-end designer apartment. A geometric sculpture of a face by VONDOM looks over the lounge setting, which features Schiavello's Bomba Sofa and Goodwood Table – both with an inviting aesthetic that softens the space and blurs the line between the office and the home.

The residential-esque furniture elements play together in juxtaposition between straight lines and curves, with both round and square Karo Ottomans in earthy terracotta tones offering more flexible seating. Meanwhile, the curves of the Goodwood Table – inspired by the Goodwood Motorsport Circuit in the UK – sit in opposition to the angular legs and arms of the Bomba Sofa. Structured and supportive, Bomba provides a place for staff and visitors to relax in, however its ergonomic design encourages an upright posture to enable employees to not slip out of work mode too far.

"We chose these Schiavello pieces for the breakout space because not only are they nice designs with clean lines, but they also soften the space, and we felt that they simply suited the persona of the office," Hollis says.

Finding furniture that lasts a lifetime for an office that is well and truly 'RFA' –

Having worked with Schiavello prior to moving, RFA found that the Marina Workstations from its previous fitout were still in almost-new condition and so reused them in the new space. Schiavello deployed a team to dismantle the desks promptly and organise their reinstalment in their new home. "Honestly, that was fantastic," says Hollis. "The team was awesome. When you're moving office, you're dealing with so much stress as it is, so having Schiavello help with the desking... We couldn't speak more highly of their service." Following installation of the existing workstations, additional new desks were also installed to accommodate the new, larger space.

After working on the look and feel of the new office for two or three years, it's safe to say that Hollis and Ip

have managed to create a space that is well and truly 'RFA'. "I'd say that it definitely does represent us. It's a casual office; its flexible. It promotes collaboration and interaction. And the bottom line is that it's a fun place to be," Hollis says. And it's evident in how happy the staff are. They're happy to be at work; they're happy to knuckle down when it's needed because they get some relaxation when it's finished.

"This office really showcases us as a company and what we stand for. When clients come in, they can see lots of people enjoying their time, collaborating, and having a game of pool or ping pong for a while. We have had so many clients who visit and just say, 'Wow, this is awesome'."



RFA's breakout space blurs the lines between home and office – assisted by residential-style furniture.

Interior design by RFA Architects
Photography by Simon Whitbread