

venue

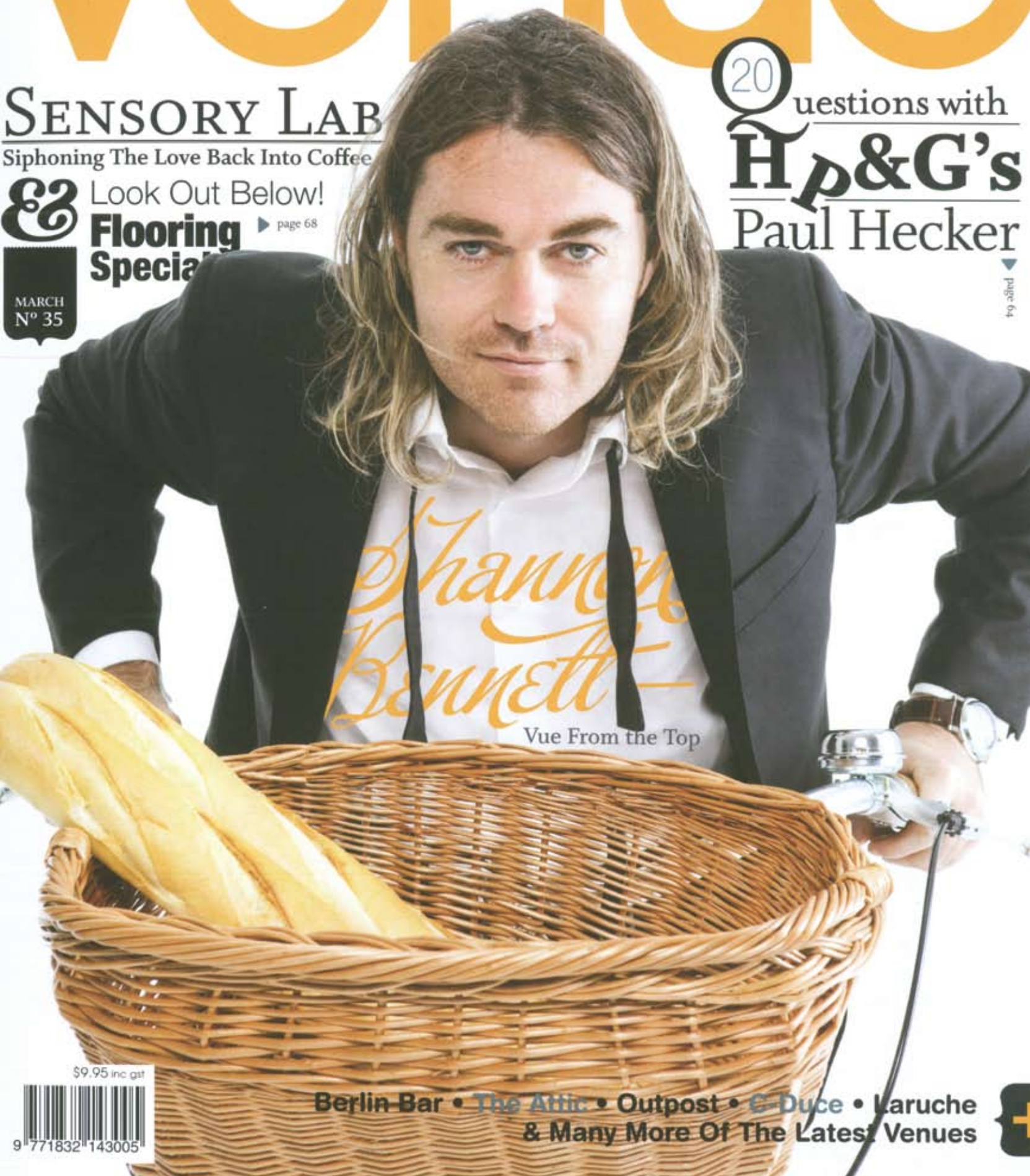
SENSORY LAB

Siphoning The Love Back Into Coffee

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MARCH
N° 35

20 Questions with
H&G's
Paul Hecker



Shannon Bennett
Vue From the Top

54 Feature



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Big flavours, rough edges

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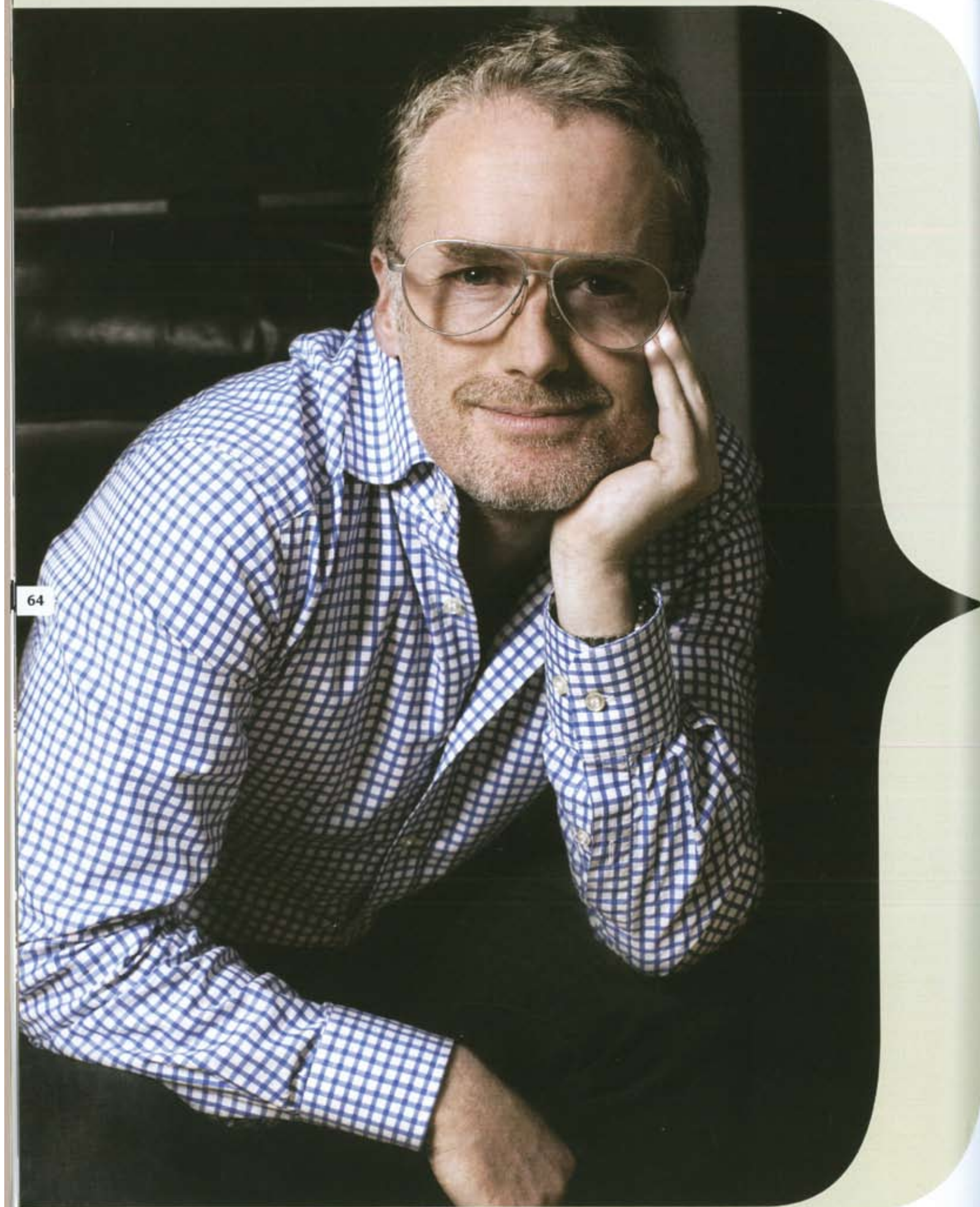
Paul Jewson wants to save the chefs, but first he's saving himself. The chef has spent the last 20 years in London confined to basement kitchens staring at fluoro-lit, white tile walls. Which, when you live in London, is a bum rub considering the weather you get outdoors. But there were upsides. The final London gig for he and partner Marco entailed running about in catering vans with the royal seal on the side dreaming up dinner parties for the Queen. But even working for the royal family, although rewarding, wasn't cutting it for Jewson. He found himself traipsing from office to office designing menus but not cooking them. So he decided on a complete change of scene and move to Australia where he found the perfect wedge of real estate and business partner, St Ali's Salvatore Malatesta, to resuscitate his love for the industry.

Outpost is a café about the size of a generous open plan kitchen and functions like one too. There's a subsidiary dining room adjacent, but the main action happens right in the kitchen, where customers mill about if they're not lucky enough to snag one of the few chairs and tables available. It's the new kid on a relatively new development block made of two high rises, one with a combination of strata and serviced apartments, and the other with 140 offices. The kitchen fits snugly in a glass triangle, which sounds anaemic, but the resulting fitout by Paul Hecker, along with some crafty touches from Liquid Lines, has given the glass box some heart.

COMFORT ZONE

The feeling inside Outpost is akin to a country kitchen, or at least what you might imagine one to be like if you're a born/bred city slicker. It's the kind of place you could visualise pulling up a stool as a child and watching your grandmother bustling about asking you questions about your day as extended family flitted in and out. And if you roughly take that image, replacing grandma with a spritely chef named Paul, and aunts and cousins with baristas and waiters, you'd go a long way to understanding Outpost.

"It's comfort food taken to the next level," explains Paul as he fries up some chorizo to add to my already tasty brunch of asparagus, poached egg, rocket and truffle mascarpone on crunchy toast. It takes the open kitchen idea to the next level — it's a 'communal' kitchen. There's no splashboard and counter between you and the white hats. There are no white hats. No waiters running correspondence between you and



- ▶ I'm never that abstract.
- ▶ My first leg up was Crown Casino.
- ▶ Jeff Copolov, a director at Bates Smart, is one of my greatest influences. He didn't make the distinction between graphic design, interior design and architecture, but just approached design with a designer's mind. He made me truly passionate about design.
- ▶ The first job where I was solely in charge was the rooms at the Prince of Wales. It still is beautiful, and that's the real test, to look back on something you did 11 or 12 years ago, and still think it's beautifully resolved. So it's also one of my proudest moments.
- ▶ So many moments are only your worst moments in retrospect. You think it's cool, but look back on it and think, "f**k, that's horrible."
- ▶ Lee Jeans offices, 1986, at Nexus Design, pink and grey palette. I think the question should be, "what was right about Lee Jeans in 1986?"
- ▶ We're probably our biggest critics. I would like to think we don't make many mistakes.
- ▶ The best clients come to us for the right reasons; they really love what we do, are willing to listen, but also want to be part of the process.
- ▶ The annoying clients don't listen. You don't go to the doctor and then question their advice. If you don't trust us, go to somebody else.
- ▶ The question we ask our clients is, "Don't tell me what you want it to look like, tell me how you want to feel in the space."

20 Questions with **Paul Hecker**

▶ All colour is good, it's only how you apply it that's bad. You can say peach and brown look terrible together, and then walk into a scheme where someone's got the balance absolutely right, and it makes you think, "f**k, peach and brown looks fantastic."

Founding Partner of Hecker, Phelan & Guthrie.
A Melbourne-based interior design firm with a strong architectural sensibility. Recently took on interior design for Justin Hemmes' massive multi-million dollar super-duper club and won a stack of awards in the process. Check out Outpost and Sensory Lab this issue for examples of their work.

- ▶ What colour am I usually drawn to? I would say green, because it works really well as a neutral.
- ▶ We're much more focused on the way things go together, so it's a piece of furniture, as opposed to a piece of joinery.
- ▶ We want to create things with a sense of authenticity. Craftsmanship. Now we're less about aesthetic and more about approach.
- ▶ Someone asked a designer in her 90s of a description of good and bad design. She said, "I don't look at it like that, I look at what's ugly and what's beautiful." I like to think of design that fundamentally.
- ▶ I watch telly to relax, Foxtel is fantastic. We just got the Discovery Turbo channel, which is all cars; Top Gear, Fifth gear, Dude Where's My Car? I go to sleep with it on, I wake up with it on.
- ▶ We worked on Ivy for five years and never had an argument with anyone, it was always fun. The relationships between the client, the architect, the landscaper... everyone was brilliant, we had a ball.
- ▶ The client would never question exciting ideas; he would always challenge us saying, "That's boring." He would never say, "Are you kidding? That's mad!"
- ▶ After Hecker, Phelan & Guthrie; Hecker & Guthrie sounds really abrupt.
- ▶ I think Kerry leaving is really sad, we've worked together since 1998, and it's sad to see a business partner and friend leave.
- ▶ For all of us, in a way, it's a whole new lease on life. We will follow Kerry's path with interest. There's no animosity. Did you get that? No animosity. **venue**