

# INTERIOR DESIGN

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# Robert D. Henry

It's a measure of just how far ecological sensitivities have pervaded our culture when ultra-chic hair salons, long bastions of the hardest edge of contemporary design, embrace the thinking. For his latest salon in Manhattan, John Sahag, a favored stylist with the high fashion crowd, brought together architect Robert D. Henry and sculptor Kardash Onnig to create a setting that nods to the natural elements.

Developed during brainstorming sessions, the project's concept responds to the client's interests in mysticism and Oriental modes of thinking, according to both Henry and Onnig. Broadly, their scheme is one that transforms the 3,200-sq.-ft. site into a bamboo forest—albeit a contemporized version where the bamboo stalks actually are steel rods; the stepping-stone entry is a poured terrazzo composition of organic forms, and the rest of the flooring is tinted concrete. But there are also true aspects of nature within this urban-situated jungle. A waterfall-cum-fountain graces the entry, while a series of water and earth “eco systems” contained in ceramic cradles brings the message to each pair of styling stations.

The project's raw materials may be humble indeed, but the workmanship required to transform substance to site-specific items was anything but. Every piece is custom; the majority is handmade. Stylists' stations (seven pairs of them) have counter tops formed by an unusual technique; concrete is poured into burlap bags, allowed to dry, and then the bag is peeled away from the form. Shampoo sinks are extraordinary creations of stainless steel (see following **process**). The gently curving bamboo rods, clustered in groups of four, extend through the ceiling to function as conduits for wiring.

Lighting is achieved with a variety of sources. For indirect illumination, there are color-corrected fluorescent tubes within soffits, while



incandescent lamps in both recessed fixtures and custom metal sconces add to the light level.

Credit is shared by David Currie. The John Sahag Workshop was completed in one year for \$375,000.

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An  
environmental  
oasis  
is created  
for the  
John Sahag  
Workshop.

*Above and opposite: Earth, water and greenery in custom ceramic cradles suggest an oasis of nature in mid-Manhattan. Steel rods simulating bamboo stalks further the allusion.*

**Custom metal work:** Arrowsmith Forge.  
**Chairs:** Kasparians (seat); Takara-Belmont (base). **Upholstery vinyl:** Veteran Company.  
**Lighting:** Halo; Capri.

**Photography:** Seiji Kakizaki

