

# Compendium



## Rock of Ages

Unlike its compelling glowing range, luxury stone supplier Antolini is less translucent about the costs associated with its products' use, but there's no getting away from the fact that agate can leave a strong impression, especially when it's used at scale. Discovered in Sicily by the philosopher Theophrastus around the 4thC BC, it's been used in jewellery and art pieces ever since - it even formed the main body of the 'Holy Grail of Valencia'; a 'fake news' chalice fashioned in the time of Christ. Whether this (real?) hotel was aware of that when it installed it isn't known; but there was certainly plenty of room at the inn for the agate.

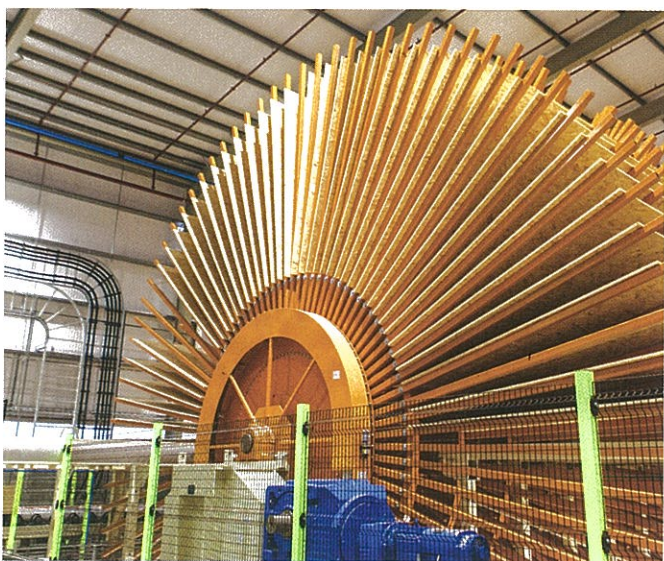
## Northern Lights

Not quite sure if financial services provider Morgan Stanley is pre-empting a Brexit break north of the border, but its handsome new offices in Glasgow might suggest it is hedging its bets to stay within the EU. While it's a ground scraper compared to Glasgow's Manhattan-style skyline, it uses a lot of glass to make the best of Scotland's low light levels. A Schueco curtain-walling system offsets heat losses from the glazed areas with a Pilkington Optitherm S1 Plus low emissivity coating, reflecting radiated heat back into the building during those cold Caledonian nights.



## Clay conundrums

I'd wouldn't have liked to have been the poor bod working out the algorithm for the packaging of Domus' new 'Piano' tile range, designed by French siblings Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec. The collection is made from coloured clays to which layers of glaze are added in different widths. Measuring 75 or 100mm by 300mm, the five base colours of white, grey, blue, green and pink are grouped by the lead colourway in each box to determine the overall effect generated on the wall or floor. The piecing together of the widths aside, how one proves the quality control of the colourways for consistency across batches sounds like one of those mathematical conundrums that will defy experts for centuries. A bit like proving that 1=2 or The Seven Bridges of Königsberg.



## Sterling efforts

Though our actual factory visit may have been eclipsed by a lovely dinner and an edge-of-the-seat two-hour pelt around Loch Ness, there's no doubting the scale of Norbord's £95 million investment in the expansion of its Inverness plant. Resembling some early Richard Rogers scheme, the Morayhill plant was looking resplendent on a rare sunny day. Norbord has turned the 25-year old factory into a state of the art facility that has increased production capacity by 60%, drawing 80% of its timber raw material from a 70-mile radius. Its fan panel dryer, looking like an Ulm School slide projector, now forms the main graphic logo of SterlingOSB's new Zero board - now formaldehyde-free.

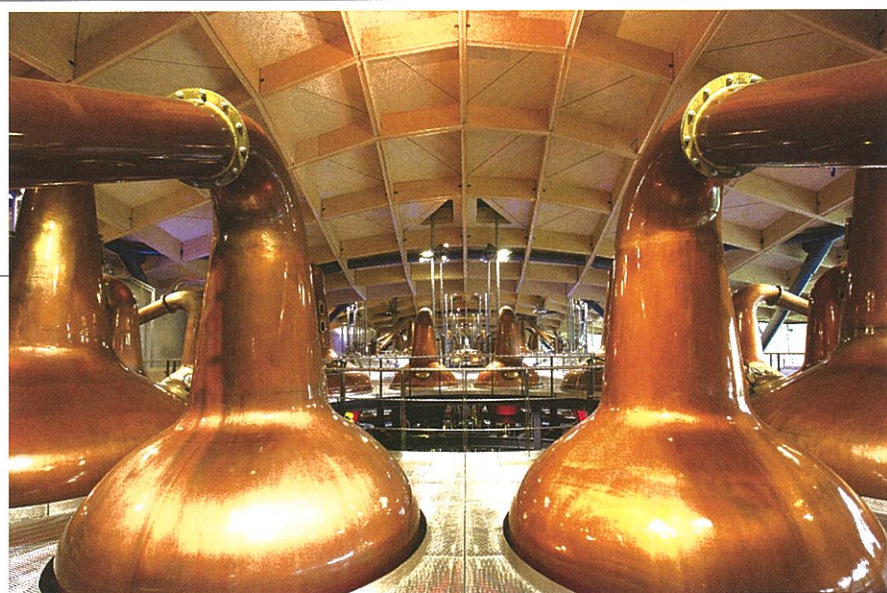


GARETH GARDNER



### Warp and weft

Warwick Street in central London's is now home to Squire & Partners latest project for London Mutual Insurance Society. Its re-modelling of an existing 1980s building picks up on the character of the Soho Conservation Area while rebelling against it at the same time. The brick face of stone spandrels has strong vertical columns of Ibstock's 'woven' Umbra bricks. Specified in green to pick up on the glazed tiles seen in the area, it's a contextual nod that perhaps allowed the firm to go off piste with its wilful asymmetrical mansard, which, asserted the design and access statement, was influenced by the paintings of notorious Soho artist and bon vivant, Francis Bacon.



SIMON PRICE

### Whisky priest

As the whisky of late architect and academic Isi Metzstein's infamous 'Macallan Club' – a bottle presented to architects whose designs were demolished in their own lifetimes – The Macallan is now making other architectural waves. RSHP has been busy Speyside with its new £140 million HQ and visitor centre for client Edrington in the Easter Elchies estate where it's been brewed since 1824. The roof over its stills is, says the PR, 'one of the most complex timber roof structures in the world, with 1800 single beams, 2500 different roof elements and 380,000 individual components.' Architects generally need to demolish to get things built; so with Beaubourg in Paris and London's Lloyds and Leadenhall buildings – Rogers has reverse claim to a bottle. Meanwhile London's Coin Street residents, having resisted his 1983 office masterplan for the prime South Bank site where its housing eventually went, might well have been quaffing it ever since.

GARY BRITTON



### Red and sticky

Given the hammer horror stories fed by Britain's murky, 200-year old relationship with medical institutions and the grave robbing trade, the Royal College of pathologists, ahem... cuts a youthful figure, having received its Royal Charter only in 1970. In keeping with its age, Bennetts Associates is designing it a £15 million HQ in Whitechapel. Contractor Windell went 'full bleed' on the facade, using A Proctor's Wraprite system as an external air barrier and alternative to a traditional breather membrane. Stickier than a depilation strip, it attaches to external envelopes without mechanical fixing, saving time and arguably improving performance. More than just a sticking plaster...

### In the kitchen at parties

Cooker hoods – the bane of most architects' lives. You spend all that time perfecting the kitchen design and then you have to stick an extractor above the hob. Most of these seem to stem from the overactive, thyroidic imaginations of bachelors, so it's a relief to see Italian firm Falmec enter the fray with its very discreet Alba hood from its Design collection. Designers Valerio Sommella (even the name induces a subtle sense of repose) and Alberto Saggia have reduced the extractor intake to a simple slot around a glass frame – which incidentally, lights up along its downstand edge to illuminate your culinary pièce de résistance. There are even motor and air recirculation options if your attempts at 'Celebrity Masterchef' end up smelling more like the burning rubber of 'Star in a Reasonably Priced Car'.

