

1. Michael Taylor, partner at Taylor Smyth Architects.

2. Decoustics Solo 16 cherry-veneered acoustic ceiling panels just off the reception area. 800-387-3809; decoustics.com.

3. Stone samples culled from the client's mining explorations, split in half, lacquered to preserve characteristic chalk marks, and used to line a wall.



The first 10 minutes of *There Will Be Blood* provide a primer in the hardships of mining for precious metal, as a 19th-century prospector played by Daniel Day-Lewis struggles with his rocky parcel—to the detriment of his own safety. Eventually, he conquers the ground, forcing it to yield its bounty. Although contemporary mining practice is a far cry from the industry's early days, the notions of exploration and an intimate relationship with the earth remain intact, and these were the ideas that Taylor Smyth Architects brought to a headquarters for Agnico-Eagle Mines, which specializes in gold extraction.

An allusion to a mine shaft, the central stairwell connecting the top two floors of a Toronto office building is now clad in smooth slabs of horizontally grained travertine. Furthering the idea are the strips of gold-anodized aluminum embedded in the stone. Downstairs near reception, the main point of interest is a wall built, stockade-style, with cylindrical stone samples extracted by Agnico-Eagle and split in half lengthwise. "The company chairman pulled them out and asked what we could do with them," architect Michael Taylor says. The answer was: Affix them with epoxy to a steel-framed plywood surface. "We spent hours choosing each piece to get the composition just right," he adds. In mining—and design—it's often the unforeseen element that produces the sparkle. —Deborah Wilk >

a gold mine of ideas



1. The plaster wall finish applied by **Lining Arts** in the corridor by the cherry-paneled boardroom. 416-927-0353; liningarts.com.
2. Travertine supplied by **Marble Trend** to wrap the stairwell. 416-783-9911; marbletrend.com.
3. A stainless-steel handrail bracket custom-made by **Hollingworth Services**. 905-790-7636.
4. **Milliken & Company's** Oxygen nylon carpet wrapping the boardroom. 800-528-8453; millikencarpet.com.
5. Edge Grain Amber Bamboo flooring manufactured by **Smith & Fong Company** and installed in the reception area and the stairwell. 866-835-9859; plyboo.com.



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