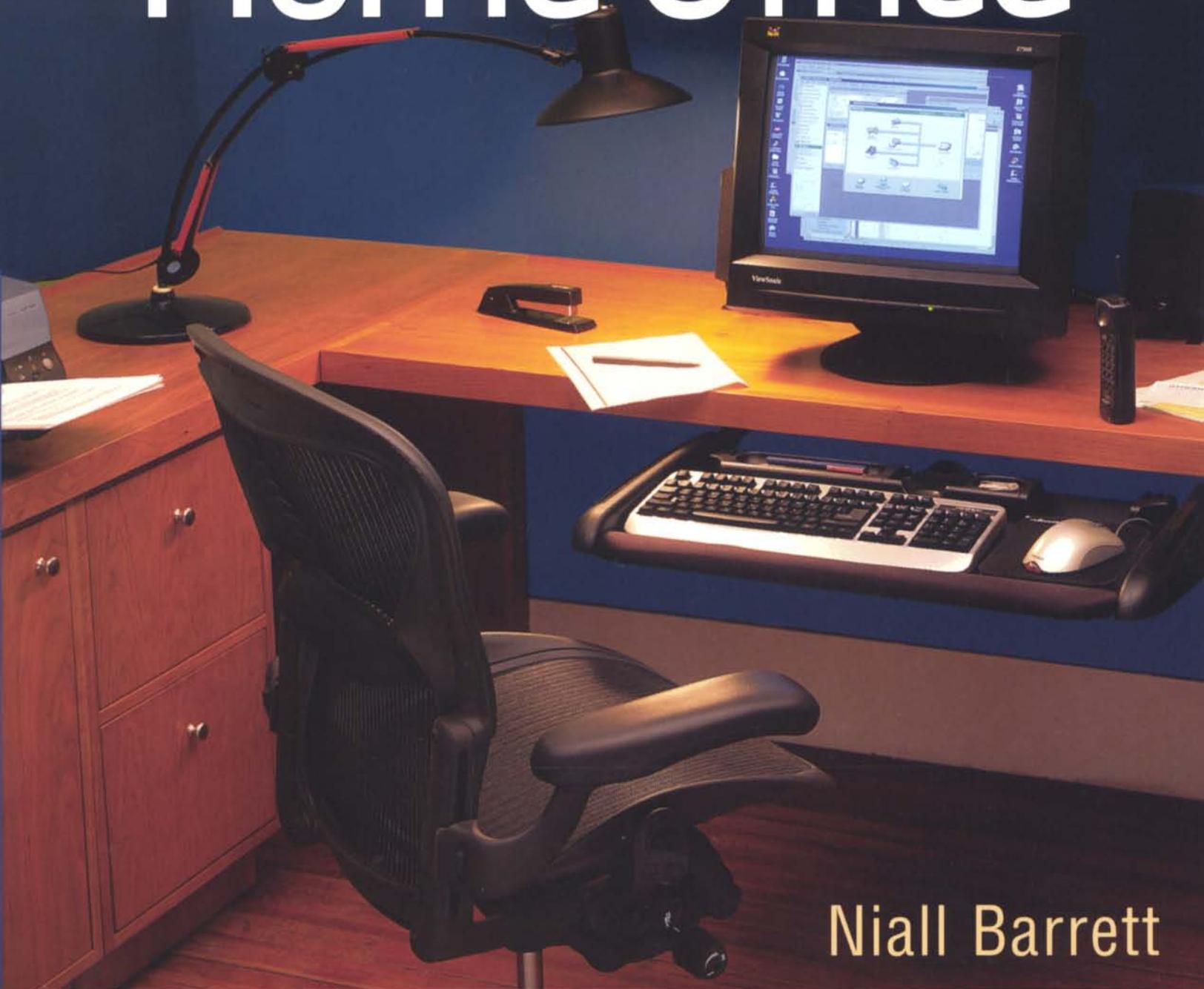


PROJECTS FOR THE COMPLETE WORK SPACE

BUILDING the CUSTOM Home Office



Niall Barrett

Building the CUSTOM
HOME OFFICE



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HOME OFFICE

Projects for the Complete
Work Space

NIALL BARRETT



The Taunton Press

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SAFETY NOTE: Working with wood is inherently dangerous. Using hand or power tools improperly or ignoring standard safety practices can lead to permanent injury or even death. Don't try to perform operations you learn about here (or elsewhere) unless you're certain they are safe for you. If something about an operation doesn't feel right, don't do it. Look for another way. We want you to enjoy the craft, so please keep safety foremost in your mind whenever you're working with wood.

*To Alice Barrett, for creating the adventure that is
my life, and to the memory of Cornelius Barrett—
so much has happened lately!*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I MUST FIRST ACKNOWLEDGE my family and friends for their unlimited enthusiasm and encouragement for whatever I choose to do in my life.

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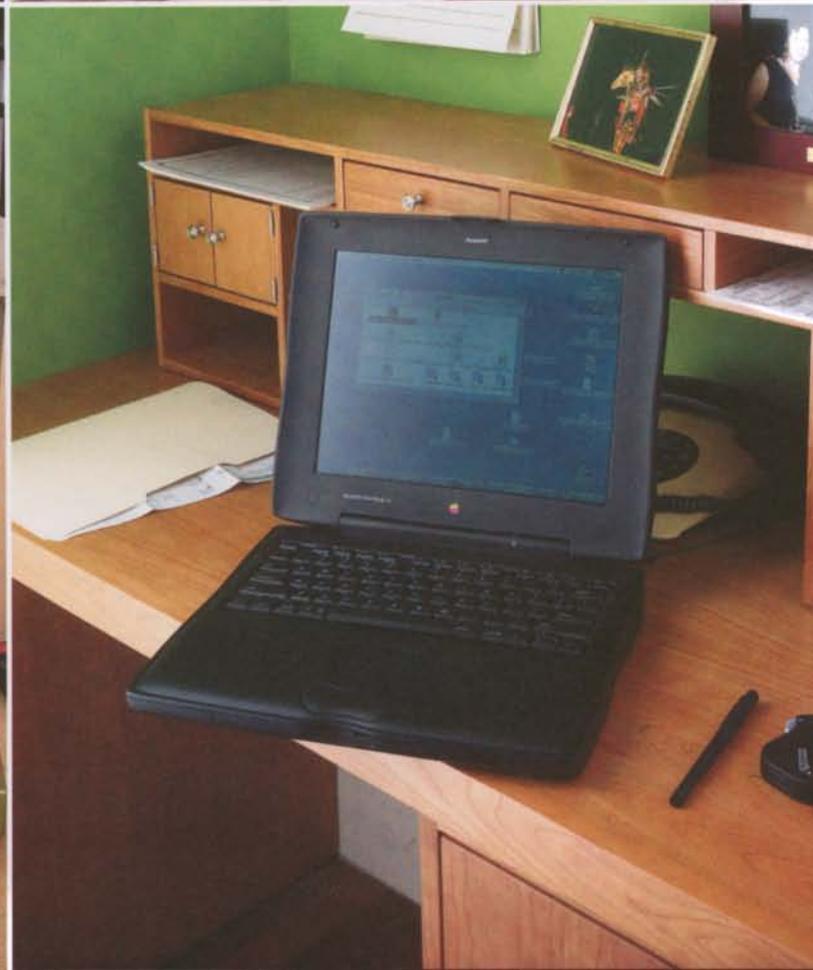
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Introduction

ARTISTS, SCHOLARS, SCIENTISTS, and writers all traditionally worked at home, so the home office has existed in our society for a long time. It could be called the first professional work environment. The studio, library, study, and den, now thought of as living spaces, all evolved from work spaces.

Almost all of us have some kind of work space in our homes. Often it's nothing more than a corner of the kitchen where bills pile up and phone calls are answered, but just as often a small room or portion of a room is devoted to the normal paperwork generated from running a household. For the self-employed, this space does double duty as a location for home and business paperwork.

There is also a growing trend toward telecommuting, or working in traditional office jobs from home. What used to be a utopian ideal realized only by a talented few has now become commonplace. New technology, systematization of working practices, and demands for a better quality of life have pushed many people into home offices. Today some 20 million people in the United States work from home, and it is estimated that worldwide the figure is around 40 million and growing.

Working in the home is practical primarily because of the technology that makes communication so easy and inexpensive. Telephone and data transmission between the home and almost any place in the world is common and easy to arrange.

Many companies now consider the traditional nine-to-five approach to working in commercial offices to be outdated. Increasingly sophisticated computer and communication systems have made it possible for them to allow staff to work either full time or part time at home.

Working at home is as much a lifestyle choice as a business decision. Your own home office is the ultimate expression of personal choice, embodying personal autonomy and the power to create an environment specially designed to meet your individual requirements, peculiarities, and tastes. It can radically alter how you view your work and leisure time. Working at home gives you the flexibility and freedom to work from 11 A.M. to 8 P.M. or to work in your bathrobe if that is how and when you are most creative and productive.

Manufacturers are flooding the market with home-office equipment such as computers, printers, copiers, modems, fax machines, and telephones that can do things I never knew needed doing. Even furniture manufacturers see an opportunity to market desks and cabinets that are uniquely designed to fit efficiently into the home.

Part of the fun of working at home is deciding how you want your office to look, especially because there is no need to re-create the look of a commercial office. Magazines and books provide plenty of information on how to organize and start up a business and there are books on various aspects of the home office, but there is precious little material on the nuts and bolts of building your own home office.

In this book, I deal with the practical issues you need to consider when you're setting up a home office. I've included guidelines for design, layout, and ergonomics as well as information on wiring, lighting, computer equipment, and more. The guidelines are followed by step-by-step instructions on how to build a modular suite of office furniture. The project chapters show you how to create a pleasing, integrated, coordinated office that can be adapted to almost any space and style. Enjoy building your office, but be careful that you don't end up with such a wonderful space you won't want to leave it.