

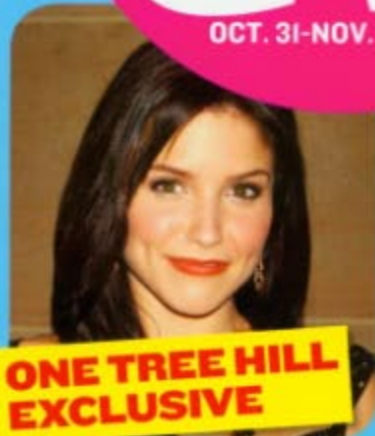
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# Boston uncommon

The set of *Boston Legal* isn't just another lawyer's office—it's as quirky as its stars



Alan Shore (James Spader) and Denny Crane (William Shatner) share a classic bonding moment on the *Boston Legal* set.

"According to his diplomas [not shown], which we got from a prop company, Denny went to Harvard undergrad, where he got both a Bachelor of Arts and a Juris Doctor degree—and then he went to Harvard Law School. I don't know why that is—that's wrong."



"This award came from a prop catalog that provided the inscription: 'City of Boston Award of Merit.'"

**W**ith a glass of brandy in one hand and a fine cigar in the other, legendary litigator Denny Crane celebrates courtroom victories on his gargantuan terrace overlooking the twinkling Boston skyline. But if you visit 500 Boylston Street, site of the landmark 1989 Philip Johnson-designed building used in *Boston Legal*'s establishing shots, don't expect those same spectacular views. The vista from Denny's terrace is actually one of a kind, created by the show's production designer, Peter Politanoff, as befitting a character who fashions himself a true Prince of the City.

In fact, explains Peter, the entire massive

BOSTON LEGAL: PHOTOS: CAMP/BLAKE/ABC





"This is a Freedom chair, made by Humanscale. There are about a dozen in the office, and they have hefty price tags. Denny's is the only one in leather; everyone else got fabric."

"We put files full of fake legal documents on Denny's desk and give them funny names like 'Dominick's Steak House v. Mayor Bestwick.' They're a great place to hide script pages."

"This is a real plasma TV and it works, but we don't use it. It's one of the few models we tested that wouldn't distort for our cameras."

"I wanted something with a curve because soft lines tend to be friendlier. Even though he's a hard-assed lawyer, he's still got a soft side."



"Denny used to have law books on his shelves, but then we realized that the firm would have a law library, so we turned the shelves into a bar where Denny could entertain in his office."



"Denny Crane has had a long, distinguished career, so we figure he's won lots of awards. We picked this one for its shape."

"A big cigar for a big man, and a big lighter for a big cigar. I liked this faux-alligator one's traditional quality."



office suite for the law firm of Crane, Poole & Schmidt was designed with founding partner Denny's equally massive ego in mind. As his first order of business, Peter ensured that Denny's office—the only one with a terrace—would be substantially larger than the others. "And more significant," he adds. "Because it's at the head of the hallway, Denny can be at his desk and see down the hall and watch what's going on in the conference room. It gives him the overall dominant position in the firm."

Since Peter was already familiar with the character—thanks to William Shatner's guest spots on *Legal* creator David E. Kelley's previous lawyer series, *The Practice*—he knew from the start how he'd make the larger-than-life lawyer's office reflect his complex personality.

"Denny is all-American, so we thought of the eagle imagery," Peter says. "He's a conservative, a self-avowed Republican, and he's into guns and gun memorabilia." But luckily for the designer, since Denny can be quirky too, his office space didn't have to be stuffy-looking or filled with dark-colored wood. "I wanted a lofty, modern feel, with a contemporary color palette," says Peter, "and I wanted a lot of glass and windows—to create openness, so there would be background action to make scenes more interesting. The design may be contrary to what legal offices are usually like, because there's usually a lot of privacy for the client. Whereas here, everyone can see who's sitting in whose office. But then again," he quips, "Denny has never done things exactly as everyone else would." ●

"These plants probably wouldn't survive the Boston winter, but we took some license to keep it interesting."



"The checkerboard pattern is inspired by the Philip Johnson-designed building in Boston. We tried not to copy it, but to give the set the same vibe."

"None of the marble on the terrace is real. The wall is wood, and the moldings and ball finials are carved out of foam. The carpenters build it all, then the painters come in and make it all look like real marble, even from inches away."

"The backdrop is really Boston, shot from across the harbor, but then we manipulated it digitally to boost the colors and even to move buildings closer together. Flip it over, and the nighttime version's on the other side."

"Since Denny especially enjoys a fine cigar on the terrace, we needed the paraphernalia out there too."

"Denny and Alan like to sit like lords of the city, looking out at their domain. So I gave them these Philippe Starck chairs and table from Design Within Reach."





# Get the *Boston Legal* look

It doesn't take a Denny Crane salary to create a cool-looking workspace, says Carter Oosterhouse of TLC's *Trading Spaces*



Albatross ashtray: \$125, [prometheuskkp.com](http://prometheuskkp.com)



Eagle trophy: \$199, [trophycentral.com](http://trophycentral.com)



Swivel office chair: \$694, [topdeq.com](http://topdeq.com)



Tolomeo light: \$424, [topdeq.com](http://topdeq.com)

**TUNEIN!**  
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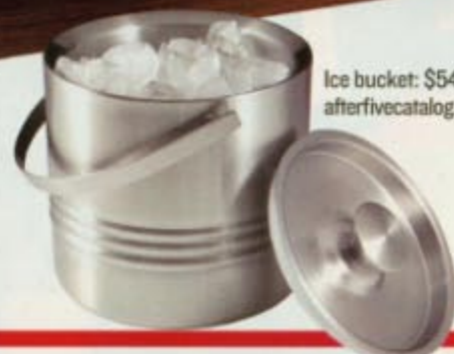


Humidor: \$850, [prometheuskkp.com](http://prometheuskkp.com)

Cigar cutter: \$69.95, [prometheuskkp.com](http://prometheuskkp.com)



Macassar desk: \$806, [gautierusa.com](http://gautierusa.com)



Ice bucket: \$54.99, [afterfivecatalog.com](http://afterfivecatalog.com)

## Making rooms

**Lights!** In color terms, whites or creams on walls and furniture can brighten up would-be dark corners. And if you've got a dark floor, light-hued carpeting will double the look of the natural light coming in. Recessed lighting draws the eye upward, helping to open your space, while strategically positioned mirrors reflect window light and lengthen a room.

Though it's doubtful your home office is as spacious as the ones on *'Boston Legal,'* you can still create the illusion, says Carter

**Cabinets!** Save floor space by using rolling file cabinets and drawer units that can be pulled out only when needed. Make use of the wall space above your desk by adding shelves to hold your fax machine, printer, speakers, books and supplies. And if you're really strapped for flat workspace, replace your printer, fax, scanner and copier with a multifunction machine.

**Action!** Keeping your office looking TV-chic means learning to conquer everyday, real-world clutter. There are adages like "touch each piece of mail only once"—and they have real merit. Pay that bill, and file it away the moment you pluck it from your in box. If cleaning up seems overwhelming, schedule regular sessions, and eliminate your mess gradually.