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SPECIAL SECTION 22

MASTER DESIGN AWARD WINNERS 2015

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Cream of the Crop

The 37th annual Master Design Awards winners exhibit sophisticated designs and creative solutions

By Laurie Banyay, Kacey Larsen and Patrick O'Toole

Excellent design takes many forms. In this, the 37th annual Master Design Awards, judges sifted through upwards of 300 entries to reach conclusions about what they deem makes for award-winning design. Concise plans, clean lines, exquisite workmanship, appropriate material choices and timelessness are just a few examples of what made a project truly stand out.

ONE OF the hallmarks of the Master Design Awards is its peer judging. This year's judges offer some thoughts about overall trends and what made an impression on them.

Paul Winans says clean, simple lines continue to look good. He also notices the abundance of white kitchens, but that doesn't mean they're all bad, he notes. Judicious use of strong colors can add a lot to a space. Materially speaking, Winans cautions that using more than three kinds of tile in a bathroom can be too much and using more than two kinds/color of countertops and cabinetry in the kitchen is dangerous to the eye.

Returning judge Michael Menn was surprised by the abundant use of white in bathrooms and kitchens. "Color and/or texture

could have been added," he notes. Conversely, "some good trends were the use of color and texture within the design and done tastefully."

Judge Anthony Wilder echoes the white trend. "One surprise is that we saw a lot of similar kitchens," he says. "They tended to be either white or over-styled and, while beautiful, it blurred the lines between those kitchen submissions."

Patty McDaniel notes the drama of some of the entries. "We are seeing cleaner, more contemporary styling, with a sparing use of natural materials to create drama," she says. "For example, in kitchens we see white cabinets paired with dramatic stone countertops."

Geno Benvenuti found the high caliber of design and execution in the top projects made it more challenging to choose clear-cut winners. "White kitchens will always be in vogue. Appliances can easily be hidden; the choices for lighting, countertops, backsplashes and their creative application keeps the look evolving. The trend continues to incorporate the kitchen and all the living spaces into an open floor plan, and this was evident in many of the submissions — removing walls, adding creative window designs, and accessing and incorporating outdoor areas with folding and pocketing glass door systems."



Wilder continues: "The projects and photography ranged from mundane to surreal. Some projects captured my attention by challenging the predictable in many different ways, taking objects out of context and presenting them in unexpected surroundings, causing me to stop mentally in my tracks — one custom home captured this phenomenon with a window surrounded by glass.

"BY EXPLOITING the gullibility of the eye, you can make a modest façade seem larger or more important by incorporating water. The use of water in one particular submission made a spectacular impact on the structure with a wrap-around pool off of an addition. A popular Japanese saying is that "water is the life and blood of the garden." I believe it



can be the life and blood of a structure when used as a reflective element of the architecture. Another stand-out was a detached structure with understated lines and materials that created warmth and texture. Rough-sawn wood, steel cable rails and stairs, and an abundant use of glass gave a transparency to this large structure. I loved the juxtaposition of the contemporary glass and steel with the coarse-sawn woods. It felt like a sanctuary.”

All of the judges agreed that organized, efficient presentation packets and, above all, professional photography, made an entry truly shine.

“The winners were clearly winners and set the bar high for everyone in our industry,” Benvenuti says. Read on to see what peer-to-peer judging has chosen as the best projects. | **QR**



MEET THE JUDGES

Six remodelers took the time out of their schedules to spend two days in Chicago sorting through more than 300 binders to narrow down and select the winners you see on these pages. Thank you to the six judges in this year’s Master Design Awards program.

From left to right: Patty McDaniel, Boardwalk Builders Inc., Rehoboth Beach, Del.; Michael Menn, AIA, CGR, CAPS, Michael Menn Ltd., Northbrook, Ill.; Paul Winans, CR, Winans Consulting, Ashland, Ore.; Anthony Wilder, Anthony Wilder Design/Build Inc., Cabin John, Md.; Geno Benvenuti, Benvenuti & Stein, Winnetka, Ill.; and Michael O’Brien, Change Design Inc., Wilmette, Ill.

Light Commercial Less Than 5,000 Square Feet

GOLD & **JUDGES' VISION**

ALLEN CONSTRUCTION
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF.
buildallen.com

Project name: Wine Tasting Room Tenant Improvement
Location: Buellton, Calif.
Square footage: 1,740
Project cost: \$682,988

The 1,740-sq.-ft. Alma Rose Tasting Room is a former warehouse space transformed into an upscale wine tasting room filled with natural light to create a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere. Instead of a large bar in the main tasting area, wine guides pour at small tasting tables with 30- by 40-in. reclaimed Douglas fir slabs. Metal bases with diatomite rocks serve as foot rests, and a 19-ft. reclaimed Douglas fir bench provides additional seating. The original concrete floor was repolished and left exposed. To help with noise, a sound engineer recommended 45 10-ft.-long perforated steel panels hung 17 ft. above the finished floor to absorb, rather than reflect, sound so customers could enjoy quiet conversation. Gauze material above the panels further absorbs sound. A 1,600-lb. sliding entry door with four retractable wood-framed glass panels needed a special team of laborers and lifts to properly hang. Another challenge was safely installing Olivia — a live, three-ton olive tree — which was brought in through the finished entry door,

over the finished floor, and required a special reach fork lift and 12 people to coordinate the proper placement. The owner also requested a substantial chimney to match the grandeur of a Rumford fireplace. After the Rumford was in place, a 10-ft.-tall, 700-lb. steel industrial pipe was carefully installed to house the three-wall chimney required by code. | **QR**

