



## AIA places emphasis on sustainability with annual design awards

By **MONICA UNHOLD**, The Daily Transcript  
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Local architects were recognized for their innovative designs of academic buildings, homes and restaurants Saturday night during the American Institute of Architects San Diego chapter's 49th Annual Design Awards held at the Neurosciences Institute.

Yazdani Studio of **Cannon Design** won highest honors for the design of Price Center East at the University of California, San Diego and **Joseph Wong Design Associates** was honored for its Jardin de Jade Restaurant in Shanghai.

The awards celebrate excellence and help shape the direction of local architecture, judges said. "I think the important thing about having awards is to push a certain agenda or celebrate change," said Hagy Belzberg, principal of Santa Monica-based **Belzberg Architects**, who served as a judge for the design awards.

The projects were selected by a panel of three internationally renowned architects, retained to select the best projects from a pool of 64 submissions. Belzberg; Curtis Fentress, president and principal of **Fentress Architects** in Denver; and Jinhee Park, principal of Cambridge, Mass.-based **SINGLE speed DESIGN** were responsible for sorting through photos of the projects and even visiting the sites of many of the local projects.

In order to be eligible, a project was required to be either located in the San Diego region or designed by an architect based in the region. AIA San Diego has 1,100 members, including licensed architects, students and allied members.

The winning Price Center project expanded UCSD's bookstore and provided additional room for retail, food service and student organizations. The project is integrated with the existing Price Center buildings and due to its sloped site, incorporates two ground floors, reinforcing the courtyard lined by the existing buildings. The project includes many sustainable design elements in pursuit of a LEED Silver rating.

Designed by San Diego-based Joseph Wong Design Associates, Jardin de Jade Restaurant boldly combined historical and modern designs. With its swanky appearance, the 12,000-square-foot space appears far from its former purpose as an abattoir. The restaurant is divided into loft-like spaces adorned with glowing back-lit onyx slabs, life-size horse sculptures, reflective vertical surfaces, glossy floors and painted wooden ceilings. A variety of natural materials also helps encapsulate Chinese culture and creates an atmosphere reminiscent of 1930s Shanghai.

AIA honored an additional four projects with merit awards.

**Architects Hanna Gabriel Wells** was honored for its design of Bacon Street Offices. Located at 1955 Bacon St. in Ocean Beach, the project involved the conversion of an existing auto repair garage into office space, achieving both LEED Gold and net zero building status.

Located in Chicago, the Coalesse Showroom designed by **Luce et Studio Architects Inc.** achieved LEED Gold status while incorporating a lot of natural light. The modern design space is ideal for showcasing furniture.

Designed by Lloyd Russell, the Rimrock Ranch home in Pioneertown, Calif., can be used as a permanent home or converted to a two-unit vacation rental. The innovative design of the home embraces the desert climate requiring little cooling with its location below a canopy shade structure.

A merit award also was granted to **TANNERHECT Architecture** for the design of LEED Platinum office space for The Energy Foundation, located in San Francisco. Architects renovated a building, which formerly served as the Federal Reserve Bank, providing an open work space allowing for urban views and natural light to 90 percent of the occupants.

Also recognized was the design of the Lemperle Residence by Jonathan Segal and South Oxnard Branch Library designed by **Roesling Nakamura Terada Architects Inc.**

The AIA also bestowed an Urban Solutions Award to chapter President Jean Zagrodnik's firm **Zagrodnik & Thomas Architects LLP** for its plan for Normal Heights Elementary School. **Gkkworks** received a design visionary award for the San Diego Community College Exercise Building Renovation. Each year the award is given to a project either not yet under construction or theoretical in nature, and not intended for physical realization.

While sustainability was a consideration with all the projects judged, two categories of award were bestowed solely based on sustainable design, said judge Belzberg. Architects Hanna Gabriel Wells received the SDG&E Energy Efficiency Integration award and the Committee on the Environment (COTE) award for Bacon Street Offices' sustainable elements. The other recipient of the COTE award is was TANNERHECT Architecture for the Energy Foundation project.

The AIA also honored Kevin deFreitas with the Young Architect of the Year Award (YAYA). Before establishing his own firm in 1999, deFrietas worked with San Diego-based firm **Studio E Architects**. Sponsored by local contractor, **T.B. Penick & Sons**, the award recognizes the work of an architect who has been licensed less than 10 years.

The judges hope the awards program will set the bar for future designs.

"I think overall what we saw here this year is something like a 'B' minus," Belzberg said. "But we're helping set the bar for the future."