



## Winner's Circle: Ottawa's home design golden boys 2005

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But it was Steve Barkhouse and Amsted Construction that carried home the most glass-and-marble trophies -- posting two wins, a tie with itself and two honourable mentions -- from the awards night presented by the Ottawa-Carleton Home Builders' Association at a gala dinner at the National Gallery.

"It's really gratifying to be honoured," Friedemann Weinhardt said about Design First's four awards honouring a fabulous penthouse apartment with double coffered ceilings, effective lighting and dynamic colour choices, the kitchen in the same penthouse, another kitchen with a reclaimed elm bar on a kitchen island, and a long, narrow bathroom with olive concrete floors and tub surround made to look like aged adobe highlighted with random splashes of 18-karat gold.

"I went for a walk in the dusk and it was early summer and the fireflies were out. The little flashes of light gave me an idea," Weinhardt said, explaining how a goldsmith friend contributed to the project. "For me, it's all part of what I want to do to explore craft and design."

Hobin picked up two awards for outstanding communities -- for the highrise Suites of Landmark by Tamarack and the lowrise Charles Ogilvy Estate by Uniform Developments.

The rangy redhead, who leads a strong 25-member team, left the National Gallery with top honours for an impeccably designed contemporary home with long vistas inside and a gorgeous pool area that's an extension of inside living spaces and lit by glowing lights at night.

The 6,000-square-foot home crafted by custom builder Guy French for Ron and Gail Zambonini also was named the People's Choice, presented by Citizen publisher Jim Orban.

"It is always gratifying and interesting when somebody else, this time the people, give you a vote of confidence," said a smiling Hobin, who is celebrating 26 years of designing award-winning homes that range from the affordable to custom status across the city, urban condo apartments and giving new life to a renovated Glebe Community Centre.

Led by owner Steve Barkhouse, Amsted representatives wore a path to the podium to receive their honours, including wins for an exterior renovation in Rockcliffe that added a pseudo-second storey to a modest bungalow and the barrier-free category for a home to accommodate a young boy in a wheelchair.

"It is truly custom-designed for handicap access, but it doesn't look remotely institutional," said awards judge Shawn Lawrence of Shawn Lawrence Architect. "There's still a nice residential feel."

Amsted also tied for first for adding a second storey to a bungalow to accommodate elderly parents moving in, and allowing views of the Ottawa River that could only be seen from the roof before. Coincidentally, Amsted tied with itself -- a co-submission with Chuck Mills Residential Design on a project that returned an old duplex overlooking the Rideau Canal to its original single-family Arts and Crafts-style glory.

"Tonight, honestly, was a real affirmation of our design," said Barkhouse, explaining that Amsted had moved in the past year into more design work, expanding on its reputation for quality construction.

"The only step up for us was to provide (clients) with a full service from start to finish and that includes design. We've always been recognized for our quality of work, but we really got acknowledged for our design."

He picked up two honourable mentions for the kitchen in the barrier-free house and another renovation to create two bedrooms and a family room for a growing family.

Guy Moffitt of GSM Construction won Renovator of the Year for his body of work, as well as winning for a bathroom renovation featuring an old-fashioned, freestanding soaker tub set on custom curved-block feet within an alcove of windows. The judges admired the simple yet effective details and clean lines.

Metric Homes, Shellstar Homes, Bryden Martel Architects and Phoenix Homes were new entrants to the annual awards and all won trophies honouring their superior design work.

Repeat winners included Urbandale, Cardel Homes, G. Weima Enterprises, Land Ark Homes, Domicile Developments, Monarch Homes, Deslaurier Custom Cabinets, Carleton Kitchen Creations and Tartan Homes.

The Colonel Boss trophy honouring the Person of the Year went to Gordon Keith of Multimedia Design. The Fred Nielsen Trophy for Company of the Year was presented to Kott Lumber, while S&S Electric received the Enbridge Hall of Fame Award for its contributions to the industry over the years.

Architect Christopher Simmonds -- no stranger to the experience of winning -- impressed the judges with a beautiful home in the Niagara Region, winning the Open category, as well as taking the Details category once again for a fun and funky basement bar with marmoleum flooring in four colours of playful, curving, curlicue lines.

"The job that he did in this basement, the way he incorporated four different floor finishes, the amazing floating bulkhead with hidden lighting, his architectural detailing, is so very clever," said judge Linda Nolan of Linda Nolan Interiors.

Both barrier-free and energy-efficient homes, which qualify for their own Specialized Housing category, were also entered into the mainstream categories and held their own. Judges admired a model home by Metric Homes before they even realized it was the first home to qualify for Energy Star standards in all of Canada -- and they sent builders Michel Charlebois and Pierre Bernier home with a trophy.

Bryden Martel Architects won an honourable mention for a renovation boasting details such as intricate stair balusters interwoven like tree branches and energy bills that were half what they had been despite almost doubling the living space.

John Donkin provided judges with a puzzle: Just how was a boxy second-floor room that overhung the side of a house to form a protected parking space actually supported? It was also clad in shiny Galvalume (a zinc and aluminum coating), cedar and untreated steel plate that will eventually weather to a rust colour.

"It was thought-provoking. When I first looked at it, I thought it shouldn't work," said judge David Egan. "That was very innovative and very risky design. It definitely caught all of our eyes. Someone who's willing to take a chance, to dig deep into their talents -- that one did it for me."

Even Donkin said he was scared by the project, which earned him a custom home award. "I've never seen a place like that either. It was a bit nerve wracking. She (the owner) allowed me to do anything I wanted."

Architect David Mailing earned two honourable mentions: for an Arts-and-Crafts cottage that replaced an aging family retreat on the same foundation, and for an enormous place with heavy wood detailing in posts and trusses that gave the effect of a Scottish castle.

Urban Keios Design always lightens the mood with their funky, curvy designs and they took home two trophies for their efforts.

"It's the details that always set these guys apart," said judge SJ Normand about a curved maple bench with cabinet attached on an angle. Judges also liked the playfulness of the roof; its profile somewhat resembled a U-shape.

Another award went to Urban Keios' complete renovation of a post-Second World War bungalow that ended up with an all-black exterior. Inside, pumpkin walls highlighted a fireplace with a curved top on the maple mantel and a charcoal stucco finish on the surround.

"You look at that wall and it's a piece of art," said Nolan. "It's slick and clean and modern and yet tactile."

Design First's concrete bathroom stood out in the judges' minds, not least because the space was such a challenging design problem -- long, narrow and on two levels.

"He's (Friedemann Weinhardt) made something look quite luxurious in seven-and-a-half feet," said Lawrence. "Kudos to him. It still looks light and airy."

And the dramatic penthouse, which won the custom tract home category, as well as small custom kitchen, prompted admiration from the judges as they examined the double coffered ceilings highlighted by potlights, an aquarium built into curly sycamore kitchen cabinets and a heavy granite countertop made to look 17 centimetres thick. The adjacent bistro table has an upside down pyramid-shaped, one-leg support.

"He's not just kitchens anymore," said Normand of Weinhardt's total home design.

Kathryn Young is a frequent contributor to Style Weekly Homes.

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