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The new conference room at the Sophia Hotel.

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**ASID Recognizes Local "Design Excellence" for 2008**

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A grand prize and 17 first place awards for residential and commercial designs were presented to local interior designers recently at the gala 2008 Design Excellence Awards presented by the ASID (American Society of Interior Designers) CA San Diego Chapter at the Museum of Photographic Awards in BalboaPark.

**LOCAL DESIGNERS HONORED** Two design firms located along the I-15 Corridor were among the winners. Charlotte S. Jensen, FASID, Linda Kaysen, Allied Member ASID, and Stephanie Sikkema of Charlotte Jensen and Associates of Rancho Bernardo won first place in the "Single Space/Special Function" category for their design at the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research facility at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). The designers were honored for their renovation of the restrooms, making them more private, user-friendly and visually pleasing.

Anjum Razvi, ASID, owner of Razvi Design Studio of Rancho Penasquitos, won first place in the "Hospitality over 10,000 Square Feet" category for her renovation of the Sofia Hotel in Downtown San Diego. The SofiaHotel is the latest incarnation of the Pickwick Hotel, a Gothic Revival-style hotel that opened in 1927 and hailed as one of the most luxurious hotels in the city.

"This is the best example of 'Green Design,'" said Razvi, "preserving an old structure rather than tearing it down. The budget for this seven-story, 90,000+ square-foot hotel was \$16.5 million and took a year to complete construction."

The renovation involved replacing all existing utilities and changing a dilapidated one star downtown hotel into an affordable boutique hotel targeting single young adults and couples and the business traveler.

"The Gothic exterior was maintained while the interior -- which lacked much historical detail -- was given a fresh, urban, organic theme with a color palette inspired by nature," said Razvi. "This theme was adopted to invoke a sense of harmony and balance and to compensate for the hustle and bustle that exists directly outside. Existing spaces in the original structure were adapted to create public areas in the hotel to accommodate the operational and guest needs of a modern day hotel."

Space planning was very challenging since most guest rooms were about 120 square feet and almost every room was just a little different. There were many technical challenges with walls of hollow clay brick, making it impossible to disturb the structure with any perforations. For this reason the electrical in the rooms was run through a wire mold at the base with cleverly disguised surface run wiring. Built-in furniture was used to allow for a more efficient use of space.

The hotel's 211 modern guest rooms are designed to reflect a comfortable, chic feel with natural influences. All finishes, materials and furniture were specified by Razvi Design Studio and the installation was personally supervised by the design team.

Dramatic paint colors were used generously in many areas in order to keep within the budget and yet give design interest. Some interesting design features include grass-embedded resin panels used over existing old windows in the meeting rooms to allow in natural light but block unattractive views, the custom light sconces decorated with historical photos of the old hotel throughout the guest corridors that do double duty as art as well as a light source, and the use of many natural fossils from Morocco throughout the property to emphasize the nature theme.

Razvi added, "This "new" three and a half star hotel, which was completed on time and on budget, has been very enthusiastically received by the owners and guests alike and has run full occupancy for most weeks. It has also been honored by being inducted into the National Trust Historical Hotels of America."

Situated at the corner of *Front Street* and Broadway near the historic, trendy Gaslamp Quarter, the SofiaHotel is just minutes away from San Diego's fine dining, shopping, cruise terminal and outdoor activities.

**ROBIN WILSON INTERIOR DESIGN WINS GRAND PRIZE** Robin Wilson Carrier, ASID, of Robin Wilson Interior Design of San Diego was presented with the first-ever grand prize for the extensive renovation of a century-old home in Point Loma that originated as an octagonal bungalow commissioned as a group home by Point Loma's TheosophicalSchool (now the site of PointLomaNazareneUniversity). In the 1930s the home was moved to its current location and small living spaces were built to radiate out from the original central octagon.

"Robin entered this home in the 'Renovation' category and the judges thought it was so spectacular that it deserved a grand prize," said Bertha Hernandez, Allied Member ASID, chair of the awards program.

Bast/Wright Interiors of San Diego was honored with three first place awards in the Residential Division, the most collected by any firm. Kellie McCormick, ASID, and Robert Wright, FASID, won top honors in the Private Residence over 3,500 Square Feet category. Wright and Christie Hoffman, Allied Member ASID, won first place in the Private Residence under 3,500 Square Feet category. Additionally, Hoffman won the Furniture/Product Design category for a table.

Jean Young, ASID, president of Young + Co., Inc. of San Diego won two first place awards for her commercial designs. She received top honors in the Adaptive Reuse/Renovation category for the Balboa Naval Medical Center Casualty Care facility and a first place in the Healthcare -- 10,000 to 50,000 Square Feet category.

Lisa Wilson-Wirth, Industry Partner ASID, of Arclinea San Diego, also won two first-place awards, including the Retail award for the Arclinea San Diego showroom and the Kitchen Design award.

**Additional first place winners in the Commercial Division included:**

Corporate 10,000 – 50,000 sq. ft.  
Andrew Gerhard, ASID and John Winans, ASID, of Design Group La Costa  
PalomarAirportCenter

Healthcare under 10,000 sq ft.  
Evelyn Avinante, ASID, CID – Avinante & Assoc., Inc Interior Design/Architectural Color

Rolling HillsPetHospital  
Hospitality under 10,000 sq. ft.

Judith Starr-Hixson, Allied Member ASID – Starr Design  
Father Joe's Villages, ToussaintAcademy of the Arts and Sciences – Pierre's Place

Retail  
Sheryll Jackman, ASID - The Jackman Group  
Seaside Home, La Jolla

**Additional first place winners in the Residential Division included:**

Model Home Design  
Lorena Gaxiola, Allied Member ASID – Kuartro Design

Bath Design  
Leslie Cohen, ASID – Leslie Cohen Design

Urban Residence Design  
Bitu Zamiri, Allied Member ASID – Bitu Interior Design

Single Space /Special Function  
Traci Taylor, Allied Member ASID – Design Studio West

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