

Master
DESIGN
Awards 2016



STELLAR PRESENTATION

The 38th annual Master Design Awards showcase thoughtful solutions that resulted in beautiful and functional spaces

By Laurie Banyay

The past months have been filled with talk of gold, silver and bronze medals — thanks to the recently completed 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Exciting as the once-every-four-years Summer games are, here at *Qualified Remodeler* we're excited about our version of Gold, Silver and Bronze — those honorees in our 38th annual Master Design Awards.

We saw a record amount of entries this year, thanks in part to our partnership with NARI's CotY Awards and the Chrysalis Awards. We invited six judges into our Evanston, Ill., office for two jam-packed days of reviewing entries and ultimately selecting the projects you see on the following pages and online at QualifiedRemodeler.com. (See page 24 to meet the judges and read about some of the trends they saw this year.)

We hope you enjoy and find inspiration from the innovative designs of the Master Design Award winners.

2016 Gold & Judges' Vision Award winner
Webber + Studio, Architects, Austin, Texas

Photo: Andrea Calo



Selection Committee

**Meet the judges and read their own words
about this year's design competition**

By Laurie Banyay

Met the judges of the 38th annual Master Design Awards. It was no small feat to sort and rank approximately 400 entries, but it was a challenge they met head-on. This year's panel comprised *(as shown above from left to right)*:

- Jamie Hsu, Lakeville Homes, Bellevue, Wash.
- Michael Menn, Michael Menn Ltd., Northbrook, Ill.
- Michael Ansel, Otogawa-Ansel Design+Build, Minneapolis
- Dale Contant, Atlanta Design & Build, Marietta, Ga.
- Tim Shigley, Shigley Construction Co., Wichita, Kan.
- Tatiana Machado-Rosas, Jackson Design & Remodeling, San Diego*

After the judging was complete, we caught up with the judges to ask them what they considered to be the top trends and defining elements of the competition. Here's what they had to say.

WHAT WERE THE TOP TRENDS IN WINNING DESIGNS?

Although some judges had differing ideas of what trended this year, they all agreed that craftsmanship and quality shines through no matter what the specific design features are.

Contant: There was an excellent mix of clean, contemporary, with a mix of mid-century design that was very popular. Also, there were many with throwback high carpentry styles and craftsmanship that showed as well.

Hsu: Lots of white kitchens. It was nice to see multiple projects NOT afraid of the unconventional. Attention to details was consistent among the winners. I was impressed with the use of technology to achieve impressive results that otherwise I'm not sure that craftsmanship would be available for anymore.

Menn: In kitchens it was boring white! I did see more texture in design, a harmony in the materials used, as well as an overall theme used in many of the design presentations.

Anschel: A long-awaited departure from the white kitchen is finally here! The use of mixed materials, reclaimed barn wood and especially color! Blue and white. Orange and white. Brown and white. The time of the two-tone is upon us.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GREAT WINNING PRESENTATION?

Sometimes the fine line between winning and nonwinning entries comes down to how they are presented. A top-notch project needs to be represented and shown in a top-notch way. Here are some tips for what made a presentation particularly great:

Contant: Short, to-the-point descriptions, as-built plans with good proposed drawings, before angle pictures with matching after angle pictures and the final "ah-ha" money shots.

Hsu: Clear representation of the work that was completed. Clear identification of obstacles and how they were overcome in the project narrative. Before and after photos from similar angles help, too.

Menn: In my opinion, you start with the money shot (the after shot that shows us WOW!). The descriptions need to be concise and limited to a maximum of one page. If they can be done in bullet points, even better. Before and after plans, even if they are simple to show the judges the spaces before and after. Lastly, before and after photos preferable in a sequence so the judge can tell this was the bathroom before and now this is the bathroom after.

Anschel: I love a short and concise narrative — 50 to 100 words. Three or four short paragraphs to bring me into the project, give some direction as I review the images and great photography is a huge part of the entry. Having the right number of photos is key. Too many photos are

irritating. Easy-to-read floor plans and elevations that clearly show what was done (a full set of construction drawings is always welcome!). Finally, before photos that accurately show the space, make for a dramatic experience.

WHAT DID THE NON-WINNING ENTRIES LACK?

The old saying "a picture says a thousand words" rings particularly true in design competitions, and often what the nonwinning entries lacked. Keep photography at the forefront of your mind when submitting design projects for presentations — and start thinking about it early. Before and after photos from the same angle have a big impact.

Contant: Less is better. More description. More thorough before and after pictures. Easy to follow original layout design issues and how they best solved the issue.

Hsu: Often the difference could have been good photography. Also, while many of the projects were beautifully done, they just lacked a WOW factor ... something to set it apart from the projects that did win.

Machado-Rosas: Take time to stage projects and have a professional photographer take the photos. It makes a huge difference in the presentation of their project for a competition. Without staging and professional photographs, they may lose an opportunity to win or be considered for magazine publication.

Menn: Good presentations. There are some basic fundamentals in preparing a good presentation, including professional photography, providing even basic before and after plans, and before and after photos of the same area.

Anschel: Poor photography is the No. 1 entry killer. Rambling narrative, questionable pricing, poorly organized entries came next. A general lack of creativity, consistency in finishes and ability to understand design in context is what did the vast majority of projects in. There simply isn't room in a design competition for mediocrity.

Hsu, Machado-Rosas and Anschel sum up the overall program this year. Hsu says: "There were a lot of high-caliber submissions, even among those that did not win. Amazing work came in from all over the country."

"Overall the projects were great and some were fantastic," Machado-Rosas remembers. "It is great to see amazing talent from all over the country and different design challenges they had to overcome."

Anschel summarizes: "There were some incredible projects this year. At least five or six times I found myself smiling at the incredible talent I was viewing. Deciding between some of the top tier projects was really tough."

**Machado-Rosas recused herself from judging for the categories in which Jackson Design & Remodeling was entered to avoid any conflict of interest or bias.*

Continue to see this year's award-winning projects ►