



residential architect

design awards

architects from around the globe submitted their best work from the past five years to the 2012 *residential architect* Design Awards. Our six judges spent two hectic days in a conference room in *ra*'s Washington, D.C., office poring over the nearly 800 entries we drew this year. Ultimately, they culled the crop to just 36 winning projects, or fewer than 5 percent of the entry pool. The jurors were tough customers, indeed. So tough, in fact, that when it came time to bestow levels of awards to the selected projects, they elevated just four to Grand status. They gave Merits to 31 others and singled out one Project of the Year.

Our 2012 jury members were **John Brown**, FRAIC, house-brand; **Michelle Kaufmann**, AIA, LEED AP, Michelle Kaufmann Studio; **Alan Organschi**, Gray Organschi Architecture; **Robert Sponseller**, AIA, Shalom Baranes Associates; **Max Strang**, AIA, Max Strang Architecture; and **Wayne Troyer**, AIA, Wayne Troyer Architects. They are no strangers to awards themselves. They understand the heavy lifting required to usher a project from conception through construction while keeping its high-minded goals unscathed. We can rest assured that what made it through their scrutiny is the best work in the country to date. We're eager to see even more great work next year, as our most talented designers see their dance cards fill once more. Crossing fingers.

by meghan drueding, cheryl weber,
leed ap, nigel f. maynard,
and bruce d. snider



Matthew Millman Photography



Robert Benson Photography

the charmer, san diego
jonathan segal faia
san diego

project of the year

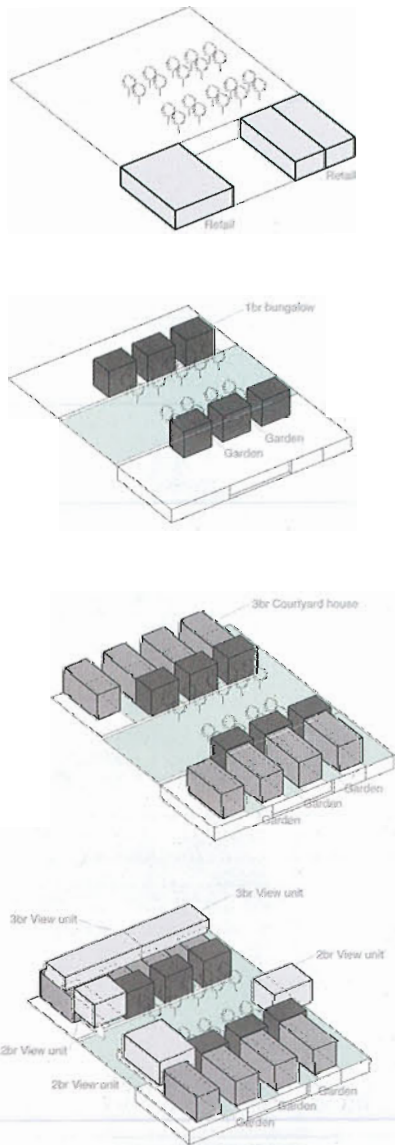
architect, builder, and developer Jonathan Segal, FAIA, has always admired the California courtyard housing communities of the 1920s. "There's a wonderful feeling about them," he says. "Their proportion and scale, their landscaping." He used them as a model for The Charmer, a 19-unit multifamily project in San Diego's Little Italy neighborhood. The Charmer takes the pedestrian-friendly planning of historic courtyard apartments and combines it with restrained modern design, creating such an appealing place to live that the 2012 *residential architect* Design Awards judges selected it as Project of the Year. "It resonates completely," said a juror. "It has a lovely sense of scale that relates to the neighborhood. There's a

real sense of humanity and livability."

Segal has been working in Little Italy since the 1990s, boldly designing, building, and developing innovative housing and mixed-use projects. With The Charmer, he and his co-designer and son, Matthew Segal, followed their typical strategy of staying fairly small-scale and avoiding standard multifamily features such as underground parking, elevators, and indoor hallways. "We're trying to keep it very urban, yet keep it to two to three stories," Jonathan Segal says. "That's what we like best. At that height we don't have underground parking requirements, and we can do the building materials ourselves."

Residents can choose from six one-bedroom
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Plaster fins (top) deflect sounds coming from the nearby freeway. Asphalt shingles used as siding create a soft, unexpected texture, as does permeable paving.

bungalows grouped around a central courtyard; 10 three-bedroom units placed outside the bungalows, toward the perimeter of the site; or three two-bedroom units overlooking the courtyard. Five thousand square feet of commercial space occupies the ground level on the complex's east end. All of the parking is at grade, and while some spaces are covered to comply with local requirements, most residents park in the landscaped, permeably paved courtyard.

The Charmer's simple materials palette of stucco, glass, metal, and asphalt shingles pleased the jury—particularly the shingles, which serve as siding in some parts of the project. Plaster fins on the east side funnel light indoors while blocking sight lines and noise from the freeway below the buildings. And in another quality-of-life maneuver, generous patios—some with built-in fireplaces—grace each non-courtyard-facing unit.

The outdoor spaces at The Charmer carry just as much weight with Segal as the buildings themselves, for he believes that beauty and livability are crucial—and often overlooked—components of environmental design. "It's the notion of having a place where you want to stay home and not hop in the car," he says. "There's a social aspect to green that people need to focus on." The project's design emphasizes the idea of a multifamily dwelling as a place of well-being. Said a judge: "It's not extravagant, but because of the forms, it's very rich. You get the feeling that all the people who live there have got to be good neighbors to each other."—*m.d.*



Jonathan Segal (above), FAIA, made sure some of the units overlooked the courtyard to provide a natural form of built-in security.



In addition to the main courtyard, patios, balconies, and outdoor fireplaces help residents spend as much time as they please enjoying San Diego's balmy climate.

principal in charge/general contractor/developer/land planner/landscape designer/interior designer: Jonathan Segal, FAIA, Jonathan Segal FAIA; **project designer:** Matthew Segal, Jonathan Segal FAIA; **stucco consultant:** Andrew Duncan, dub, San Diego; **project size:** 360 square feet to 11,200 square feet per unit; **site size:** 0.7 acre; **construction cost:** \$105 per square foot; **rental price:** \$900 to \$2,400 per month; **units in project:** 19 (not including commercial space); **photography:** Matthew Segal, except where noted. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for products and additional images.