



Tego Bathroom Solutions took advantage of a cathedral ceiling and arched window to create visual balance and a luxurious look. Carrera marble floor and wall tiles are paired with crisp white cabinets and quartz counters in the double vanities for seamlessness, then given a pop with dark grey upper walls.

HOUSING DESIGN AWARDS

KICKING IT UP A NOTCH

Finalists in annual awards show how savvy Ottawa has become

ANITA MURRAY
OTTAWA CITIZEN

As Ottawa builders and designers get set to celebrate big wins at Saturday's 32nd annual Housing Design Awards, the overall quality and creativity of this year's entries have already won accolades from judges across the country.

"There's some beautiful, beautiful stuff out there," says Chris Hewett, an architecture professor at Algonquin College and the only local judge among the 10 recruited by the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association (GOHBA). "Overall, I was very impressed with what was coming out both in tract and custom homes."

That view was echoed by judge Taran Williams, owner of TS Williams Construction, an award-winning luxury custom builder on Vancouver Island.

"You've got everything from your modern architecture to your classic designs to back to your typical eastern brick-type finishes, so quite diverse. That was impressive to see," Williams says.

Sleek kitchens, inviting bathrooms and basements with a slant to the contemporary suggest a solidifying sophistication and flexing of design muscles among the record number of entries (269) and finalists (167) vying for a win in one of 54 categories.

Showing more creative approaches to familiar spaces, designs are crisp and boast an efficient use of space, features and finishes that capitalize on natural light and emphasize a connection between inside and out.

"For the economy where it is, the fact that there were a plethora of different entries and from a variety of different home builders just shows that the marketplace is increasing; there's a lot more choices for people," says judge Shannon Lenstra, owner of Calgary-based Kon-strux Developments and a graduate of Algonquin's interior designer program.

And at Saturday's gala at the Shaw Centre, there are a lot of fresh faces vying for trophies: Almost one-quarter of entrants this year are new to the awards program, something awards committee chair Linda Oliveri says is "definitely a sign of maturity in the design scene."

"Consumers today are far more educated and they know what they want. Our GOHBA member companies have proven that they are adaptable to their clients' needs and lifestyles, all while building some of the most innovative and well-designed homes in the market," she says.

Newcomers HN Homes and Ha2 Architecture Design showed enthusiasm, each offering up eight entries in a smattering of categories that display an enlightened approach to production and custom homes.

Architect Christopher Simmonds and company, who have won 17 of these awards in the past two years alone, blanketed this year's event with 11 entries, including four from his partnership with HN. The modern master is also vying for top billing with



Architect Houry Avedissian of Ha2 Architecture Design gutted and redesigned a choppy semi-detached to make room for an attractive 'island table' framed by a dropped ceiling that carried down onto the wall.



Reminiscent of stacked but tumbling sliced cubes, this infill project by RND Construction and Hamel Design combines masonry, steel and cement.



Urbandale's Harmony unit from the Horizon Series of Jazz Condos.

a trio of custom homes in several categories. All bear his minimalist style that's heavy on glazing to connect interiors with nature.

Close behind, architect Barry Hobin has nine entries, including a trio with Springcress Properties for Ravenhill Common, a thoughtful collection of townhomes in Westboro built around Westboro United Church.

As it has been the last few years, custom bathrooms are again the most popular, with 14 entries in one category alone, although only five can make it through as finalists in any category.

They include a pair of contemporary beauties that won at this spring's local awards for the National Kitchen and Bath Association, and a glamorous ensuite by



Architect Barry Hobin and Spin-cress Properties' Ravenhill Common

Tego that pairs grey with white and a cathedral ceiling with an arched window.

And many of the ever-popular kitchen categories drew double-digit entries, from crisp all-white offerings to multi-tone and even a few rich, dark examples.

"There's definitely a lot of white kitchens right now," says Lenstra. "It's a world trend that's kind of followed through."

However, she notes a growing use of wood accents and natural materials, something seen not just in kitchens but throughout the home.

"It takes away the starkness of

the white ... it just brings a little bit of a natural touch into it or even a pop of colour; just kind of warms everything up."

Veteran renovators Amsted Design-Build and RND Construction, who have also submitted double-digit entries, are duking it out with fellow veterans Lagois Design Build Renovate, OakWood Renovation Experts and Sandy Hill Construction for bragging rights as renovator of the year.

Meanwhile, the production builder of the year award, which was introduced last year, is being fought by Glenview Homes, Lepine, Uniform Urban Developments, Urbandale Construction and inaugural winner Cardel Homes.

Williams gave kudos to all the production builders for their ability to offer finishes that "were quite impressive for the price categories. My hat to your designers."

He also singled out the renovation entries, particularly in older homes with a limited footprint.

"They're coming up with some pretty clever uses of spaces."

TONIGHT: Homes editor Anita Murray tweets live from the gala. Find out the winners at ottawacitizen.com
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twitter.com/anita_murray

ON SITE

Green condos ready

Looking for a new condo that's move-in ready? Windmill Developments has finished two of its industry-leading green projects, which have now been declared condos: Cathedral Hill on Sparks Street and The Eddy in Hintonburg. Both buildings are aiming for LEED platinum certification, the highest level under the stringent Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. And both buildings have a few units remaining.

CATHEDRAL HILL

This 21-storey curvy tower perched above the Garden of the Provinces and beside Christ Church Cathedral has great views of Parliament Hill and the Ottawa River.

Chock full of green technology and finishes, the project also includes a collection of townhomes that have given Sparks Street its first residential addresses. Remaining units range from a 639-square-foot one-bedroom starting at \$311,962 to a penthouse suite with 1,875 square feet topping \$1.4 million. Some of the towns are also available. cathedralhill.ca

THE EDDY

On a smaller scale, the six-storey Eddy offers contemporary living with pared down amenities to keep costs in check.

The Christopher Simmonds Architect-designed building features geothermal heating and an unusual "sliding puzzle" parking system that replaces traditional ramps and parking stalls with automated platforms that bring your car to you and slide it into an available space.

Remaining units range from a one-bedroom with 675 square feet starting at \$339,000 to a two-bedroom with 1,060 square feet starting at \$499,560. theeddy.ca

BLACKSTONECARDEL

New towns at BlackstoneCardel Homes has released a new lineup of modern townhomes in its third phase at Blackstone in Kanata South that live like singles.

Four new floor plans ranging from 2,137 to 2,253 square feet include open-concept layouts with nine-foot main-floor ceilings, hardwood and ceramic tile, finished basement and large windows.

See two fully decorated models (sales centre: 139 Westphalian Ave.). cardelhomes.com

SINGLES MODELS

Exclusive singles at BlackstoneCardel has also released four limited-edition single models on 14 exclusive lots in Blackstone.

Offering new elevations to help bring down the price and located on prime lots across from a large park, they range from 1,844 to 2,023 square feet with three or four bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, and they start from \$406,900.

Check out Cardel's singles models at 102 Westphalian Ave., Kanata. cardelhomes.com

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