

ARIDO AWARDS

An advertising profile celebrating corporate ingenuity and success



MAKE
SPACE
FOR
GOOD
DESIGN.

ARIDO Awards of Excellence honour designers for their bold, innovative techniques and their ability to produce designs that please both the eye and the budget.

Olga Mihailovich and her four staffers at the Element Group have worked wonders. They took 900 square feet of space in an old industrial building in Toronto's Little Italy and turned it into a show place. The best part is they did it for about \$10,000, the same amount some companies spend on a single boardroom table.

A couple of kilometres south, Yvonne Campbell and her team at B/H Design Consultants turned a maze of offices on two floors of a renovated factory into stunning new headquarters for President's Choice Financial. The interiors, punctuated with bold reds and pristine whites, celebrate the financial institution's retail roots and its customer-friendly attitude. Design that reflects branding at its best.

Further west on King Street, Don Crichton and the workplace solutions unit at HOK Canada Inc. have turned the company's Toronto office into a marvel of environmentally friendly office space. The HOK office is one of the three projects to win the LEED gold certification. It is an office so energy efficient that when it first turned its heat, light and air conditioning system on, the savings were so great that the landlord thought there was something wrong with the meter.

What ties them together is not just their bold, innovative designs, leading-edge use of space and sharp eye for costs. The trio took top awards at this year's annual ARIDO Awards of Excellence. They were among the best of the best, according to Lynn McGregor, president of the Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario.

The awards ceremony was held yesterday. On that day, ARIDO's 1,200 members and 800 interns showcased the difference professional designers can make to almost any space.

"The 16 awards of merit and awards of excellence cover almost any form of space you can think of, from industrial and retail right through to residential," Ms. McGregor explains.

"Designers are increasingly being retained as organizations look at ways to cut overheads by doing more with smaller spaces. Occupancy costs are often an organization's second largest budget item after payroll. They bring our members in because they are the experts in workspace."

Workspace, however, covers a lot of territory. Projects may be to make space reflect corporate branding while providing a healthy, comfortable and productive environment for staff. They may be to reorganize work flow and make best use of smaller office premises in an effort to control costs. They may be to dazzle visitors, especially clients, while making employees proud to go to work each day.

"It is an extremely complicated, detail-rich process, says Ms. McGregor, who also heads her own company, the McGregor Design Group. "That is one of the reasons ARIDO was created. We have become a self-regulating profession, certifying members and maintaining extraordinarily high standards."

To qualify for ARIDO membership, designers must have a total of seven years of combined education and working internship and a North American qualifying exam. That can translate into either a three- or four-year program at institutions such as Ryerson University, Humber or Sheridan Colleges plus another three or four years of experience working with an ARIDO member.



Award-winning designs: Projects that received awards included (clockwise, from above) the Element Office by the Element Group, President's Choice Financial by B/H Design Consultants and HOK Toronto Studio by HOK.

"It is very different from interior decorating, although some members choose to pursue that field," Ms. McGregor says. "Our work covers an enormous range from the design of prisons to penthouses, from storefronts to luxury hotels."

That range is shown in this year's Award of Excellence winners.

When Olga Mihailovich bought out her partners, she decided The Element Group needed a new look; that new look would start with new offices. The company owned the three-storey building at 298 Markham Street and had, to date, occupied the first floor and rented out the rest. When the second floor came vacant, Ms. Mihailovich decided to move up one floor.

The challenge she faced was how to turn a long, narrow space — 18 by 60 feet — into an office that offered private space while maintaining an open plan and yet cost as little as possible. Small businesses, after all, just do not have the resources of larger enterprises.

She decided on an imaginative approach. She would use inexpensive, common building materials. Her goal was to spend no more than \$10,000, including furniture. Happily, she could use existing mechanical and electrical systems and the 2.5-inch plank hardwood floors. To add verve and eye appeal, she and her staff applied stencils of Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe silk screens.

For lighting, she used existing sockets but added coiled, low-energy bulbs. In the boardroom, she put two in a double socket creating a chandelier effect. That nouveau chandelier won an award in a separate category.

To create separate spaces for reception, her office and the boardroom, she went to Rona and bought 7.5-foot long, opaque

fiberglass panels more commonly used as roofing on sheds. To fix them in position she used metal electrical conduit tubing. They cost \$67 each and she needed 10.

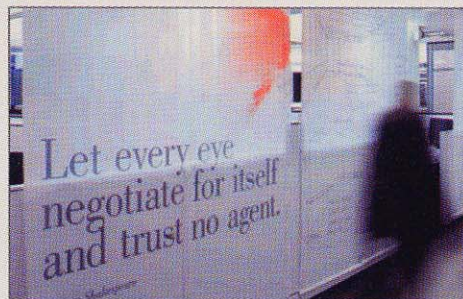
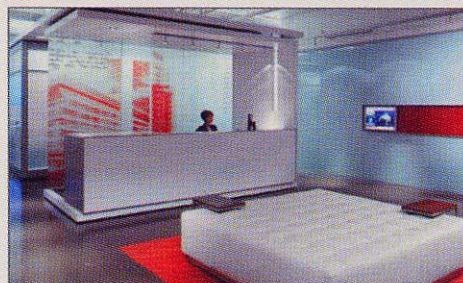
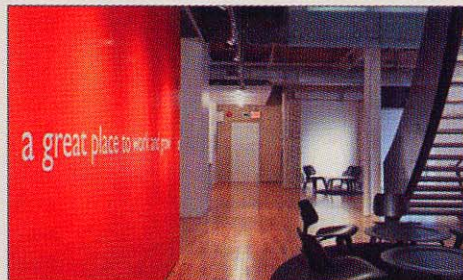
Shelving and work stations were crafted from medium-density fibreboard supported by the conduit tubing. The boardroom glass table and chairs were picked up from exhibitors at that year's IDEX show. To her mind, the piece de resistance is an eight-foot long work of art by street artist Mike Parsons.

"The point we wanted to make was that great spaces don't have to be expensive," she says. "All you need is a professional with imagination and the contacts to get things done within strict limits."

For Chantal Frenette, director of design, and Yvonne Campbell, the challenge was on a much larger scale. President's Choice Financial, the banking and insurance offshoot of Loblaw's, wanted to turn 27,500 sq. ft. on two floors of the King Street West brick and beam building it occupies into new head office space. Not just ordinary office space, either, but space that strongly reflected the spirit of its brand.

The challenges were considerable. The two floors had been used as hoteling space for small technology companies and were a maze of small cubicles. Connecting the floors was a staircase with a large opening surrounded by a gallery. The cost of closing the staircase would have been prohibitive so it and its gallery had to be incorporated into the plans.

What they decided on was an open plan with myriad meeting rooms. The work stations would be against the large windows and bright light of outer walls while the meeting rooms would be clustered around the central well, which led to an outdoor courtyard.



Every work station would be the same size, no matter the rank and title of its occupant.

"The design had to reflect the egalitarian approach taken by President's Choice," Ms. Frenette says. "The space also had to be people-friendly, warm and welcoming. This isn't a company like other financial institutions. Its roots are in retail, in the grocery business. It is a customer-focused institution."

To maintain the corporate brand, the PC shade of red was used as highlights throughout, even down to the lily pad shaped rugs in each work station and the oval name plates that give the occupant's name. The exterior walls were left in their natural condition as were the high beamed ceilings.

To accommodate town hall-type meetings, the rooms adjacent to the staff lunch room were equipped with garage type doors. When large spaces are required the doors go up to make one very large hall; attendees can even sit on the staircase like bleacher seats.

"The clients love it," Ms. Campbell says. "The space expresses a statement about who they are and what they do."

For the HOK Group, great design means practising what you preach. The international company has a policy of upgrading to LEED standards whenever an office is relocated or substantially renovated. HOK had done that in its St. Louis head office and in San Francisco and is now thinking about it in Tampa. When it came time a year ago for the Toronto operation to move to 25,000 sq. ft. of new space on King Street West, going green became a mandate, says Mr. Crichton.

The process starts with site selection, he says. LEED buildings have to be near public transit. They must have large windows that can open

and close as weather dictates to save on heating and air conditioning. The construction process has to use environmentally sound materials and must make as much use as possible of recycled materials.

While construction costs may be higher, energy savings are impressive and more than make up for the initial cost. HOK started by installing daylight sensors around the perimeter of the office space. If there is enough natural light coming in, the lights stay off. There are also motion sensors. If no one is working in an area, the lights stay off; when someone enters, they go on. The same applies to heating and air conditioning. That eight-foot perimeter operates separately from the rest of the space. If it is too warm, open a window is the watchword.

To protect against fumes and pollutants, office equipment like copiers and printers are in a separate close room with negative air pressure to ensure the fumes do not escape. All paint and carpeting and other materials are free of noxious fumes. Carpeting was not laid until paint had cured and dried.

The company even made use of ductwork left by the previous tenant and recycled 18,000 pounds of old materials removed during the demolition phase instead of having it trucked to a landfill.

For the first three months after completion, HOK operated under the old system. When it switched to its new green system, the landlord came knocking.

"What he found was that we had cut energy consumption by 50%," Mr. Crichton says. "He came to see us because he thought there was something wrong with the meter."

To contact an ARIDO member, call 1-800-334-1180 or 416-921-2127, or visit www.arido.ca.

ARIDO AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE AND MERIT WINNERS, 2006

RESIDENTIAL

Award of Merit Fenwick Bonnell, Powell & Bonnell, Toronto
Project Davenport Suite A

RETAIL SPACES

Award of Merit Diego Burdi, burdifik, Toronto
Project Josef
Award of Merit Andrew Gallici, Watt International, Toronto
Project The Design Studio by Remington Homes

WORKPLACES

Award of Merit Tania Bortolotto, Bortolotto Design Architect Inc., Toronto
Project Universis Corp.
Award of Excellence Yvonne Campbell, B/H Design Consultants, Toronto
Project President's Choice Financial
Award of Merit Maria Schwisberg, NORR Ltd., Toronto
Project Architects & Engineers Office
Award of Merit Doug Bullock, Bullock Associates Design Consultants Inc., Toronto
Project Roots Canada
Award of Merit Beth Shantz, Mayhew, Kitchener
Project World Access Canada
Award of Excellence Olga Mihailovich, Element Group, Toronto
Project Element Office

HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Award of Merit Tania Bortolotto, Bortolotto Design Architect Inc., Toronto
Project Dental Office
Award of Merit Montgomery Sissam/Stantec Architecture — Architects in Joint Venture & Carlyle Design Associates, Toronto
Project Bloorview Kids Rehab

PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL SPACES

Award of Merit Lene Otbo-Rozel, Shore Tilbe Irwin & Partners, Toronto
Project Whitby Central Public Library and Civic Square

RESTAURANTS, BARS AND CLUBS

Award of Merit Martin Hirschberg, Hirschberg Design Group Ltd., Toronto
Project Empire Restaurant & Lounge

RESTORATION AND ADAPTIVE RE-USE

Award of Excellence, Project of the Year Fenwick Bonnell, Powell & Bonnell, Toronto
Project 1857 Historic Mill

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Award of Merit Olga Mihailovich, Element Group, Toronto
Project Light Fixture

SUSTAINABLE

Commitment to the Environment Award Don Crichton, HOK, Toronto
Project HOK Toronto Studio



"I see good design winning ARIDO members the recognition they deserve."

ARIDO represents over 1,800 registered and intern interior designers practicing corporate, residential, retail, hospitality and healthcare design. Their eye-catching work increases efficiency, productivity,

value, safety and well-being. Good design creates beautiful spaces in which people want to live, work and do business. Find out more or find a professional by visiting our Web site today.

Lynn McGregor is the President of ARIDO and Principal of McGregor Design Group in Toronto



MAKE SPACE FOR GOOD DESIGN.
www.arido.ca