

SKY'S THE LIMIT





SHEBARA RESORT IN THE RED SEA, SAUDI ARABIA BY STUDIO PAOLO FERRARI

By Matt Dougherty

The 2025 Gold Key Awards for Excellence in Hospitality Design spotlight the bold ideas and standout projects redefining today's hospitality landscape. Celebrated during a ceremony at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York, held in conjunction with BDNY, this year's winners and finalists reflect the creativity, rigor, and vision propelling the industry forward. Selected from more than 430 submissions across 26 categories, the honored projects rose to the top for their innovation, originality, and lasting impression. The Judges' So Cool Award also made its return, singling out one exceptional project that defied convention and demanded special recognition. Explore the winning work—and join us in honoring the designers and teams shaping the future of design.

THANK YOU TO THE 2025 GOLD KEY JUDGES



VEDI ASLANYAN
ENNISMORE



NADIA BISKI
EQUINOX



KRISTEN FREELAND HINES
IHG HOTELS & RESORTS



MICHAEL HAVENER
RYMAN
HOSPITALITY
PROPERTIES



SARA KIM
LDV HOSPITALITY



ROB BLOOD
ELDER & ASH |
LARK HOTELS



AMY MICHAELSON
KELLY
HATTERAS SKY



STACI PATTON
HILTON



SARAH WALSH
MARRIOTT
INTERNATIONAL

PHOTOS: AYABLU



“Four Seasons Hangzhou Centre reflects Hangzhou’s poetic connection to its waterways, weaving the city’s lifestyle into the interiors and allowing guests to feel the city’s rhythm naturally and intuitively. What we call the Hangzhou moment.” —Cedric Jaccard, Avalon Collective

WINNER
FOUR SEASONS HOTEL HANGZHOU
CHINA

The Highlights: Located near Hangzhou City’s Grand Canal and West Lake, the hotel was conceived as a journey through the water, creating a reflective and meditative state for guests through its soft and peaceful setting. Much like the nearby canal junction, the arrival experience acts as an interconnected hub where multiple pathways intersect. Guests are greeted by lamp art depicting the leaves of a willow tree. Further into the soaring double-height lobby, an overhead art installation reminiscent of Wu Guanzhong’s Jiangnan architectural eaves resembles misty waves gently swaying amidst an azure sky.

SOURCES:
DESIGN FIRMS: AVALON COLLECTIVE, SINGAPORE (PUBLIC AREAS AND GUESTROOMS); AND AB CONCEPT, HONG KONG AND KOKAISTUDIOS, SHANGHAI (F&B) **ARCHITECTURE FIRMS:** GOETTSCHE PARTNERS, SHANGHAI, AND GAD ARCHITECTURE, CHINA **PURCHASING AND CLIENT:** HANGZHOU METRO WULIN PROPERTIES CO. LTD. **PHOTO:** SETH POWERS



FINALIST
FAIRMONT BREAKERS
LONG BEACH
CALIFORNIA

SOURCES:
DESIGN FIRMS: RVD, LOS ANGELES; HBA SAN FRANCISCO; AND EDEN FOR YOUR WORLD, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA **ARCHITECTURE FIRM:** GMA ARCHITECTS, ST. LOUIS **PURCHASING:** PMI **CLIENT:** PACIFIC6 ENTERPRISES **PHOTO:** NOAH WEBB

The Highlights: The restoration of the 1926 Southern California landmark reintroduces classic glamour through a contemporary lens. A newly restored entrance showcases Renaissance Revival architecture, while historic storefront windows—preserved and replicated across the city block—revive the building’s interwar character. Inside, the lobby channels the spirit of the Roaring Twenties with bronze-mirrored screens wrapping the reception desk for a note of understated drama.

FINALIST
NEKAJUI, A RITZ-CARLTON
RESERVE
COSTA RICA

SOURCES:
DESIGN FIRMS: GENSLER, SAN FRANCISCO (INTERIOR DESIGN); BAMO, SAN FRANCISCO (INTERIOR DESIGN); LUXURY FRONTIERS (TENTED VILLAS) **ARCHITECTURE FIRMS:** GENSLER, SAN FRANCISCO (EXECUTIVE ARCHITECT); 10 DESIGN, MIAMI (DESIGN ARCHITECT) **PURCHASING:** THE PARKER COMPANY, MIAMI **CLIENT:** GENCOM, THE ATHENS DEVELOPMENT GROUP, AND MOHARI HOSPITALITY **PHOTO:** ANDRÉS GARCÍA LACHNER

The Highlights: Set across 42 lush acres overlooking Costa Rica’s Pochote Bay, the property celebrates the country’s ecological richness through natural materials, architectural restraint, and fluid indoor-outdoor transitions. Wood, stone, handcrafted tile, and woven textiles anchor the design, while a neutral palette allows the landscape to take centerstage. Emphasizing craftsmanship and authenticity, more than 75 percent of the furnishings and fixtures were locally sourced, including over 2,000 pieces made by regional artisans.

