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Winners of the 2014
Business
Excellence Awards



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KELOWNA

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Oliver building captures top 2014 Commercial Building Award

Southern Okanagan Secondary School earns Judges' Choice winner at 6th annual SICA Awards in Kelowna

BY MARK MACDONALD
PUBLISHER

KELOWNA – Southern Okanagan Secondary School of Oliver was named the Judges' Choice winner for best overall entry in the 6th annual Southern Interior Construction Association Commercial Building Awards October 23 at the Coast Capri Hotel.

SOSS also won the Excellence Award in the Community Facilities category at the gala celebration, which highlights the best commercial and industrial properties built between Jan. 1, 2013 and July 31, 2014 in the Thompson, Okanagan and Kootenay regions.

Re/MAX Commercial and Fortis BC were gold sponsors of the event, with category sponsors including Coldwell Banker Horizon Realty, Canadian Western Bank, Meyers Norris Penny accounting, consulting and tax advisors, the Wildstone Group of Companies

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From left, Bill Everitt, Chief Operating Officer of the Southern Interior Construction Association, Michael Symonds - Project Manager for Greyback Construction Ltd., Mitch Van Aller representing Judges' Choice best overall winner Southern Okanagan Secondary School, and Andrew MacPhail from CEI Architecture. Photo by Ethan Delichte.

KELOWNA

Award-winning firm focuses on commercial design

Hatch Interior Design is making its mark in the Okanagan and beyond

BY GOODY NIOSI

Recently Kelowna-based Hatch Interior Design Inc. was recognized by the Interior Designers Institute of British Columbia (IDIBC) with a prestigious SHINE Award of Merit for its

work on Grouse River, a 17,000 sq. ft. retail store. Company principal and registered interior designer Leigh Blackburn said the award was a high point for the firm.

"The award means that we're being recognized at a very high provincial level against other registered interior designers. There were only

10 firms that were given an award in the entire province, so it's really exciting for us. It really does set us apart in the industry and lets us know that we're doing good work."

Company principal and registered interior designer Rachel Clarida said that Grouse River was an exceptional project.

"We had an amazing client who really allowed us to explore our creativity and who really believed in our vision. We were able to design every detail, and you can see the client's brand everywhere you look. It's rare that you have such

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AWARD-WINNING FIRM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a large retail space with so many design elements.” She added that besides being esthetically pleasing, the space is also shopper-friendly, which, most importantly, adds to the store’s bottom line.

Hatch Interior Design was founded by Blackburn in early 2010 and became a partnership between Blackburn and Clarida in 2011. Blackburn had been working for another interior design firm when she took a leave in order to help her husband set up his own business. It was then that she realized she would prefer to start her own company. It wasn’t an easy time to do that, she said, citing an economic downturn, but she took the leap of faith regardless.

Clarida had also recently left her position at an architectural firm to start her own company. The two met at an IDIBC function and found they had a great deal in common.

“We started meeting as a sort of support group of two,” Clarida said. “And then we realized that we had very similar goals and work ethic – and we realized that it made a lot more sense to be doing this together and becoming a team.”

She said it was the best decision either of them could have made.

“Hatch is really a pioneer in specialty commercial interior design and that was a very conscious decision on our part. We made a decision to stick to what we love and focus on our commercial interior design, which meant not taking on any residential projects, which, at the time, seemed to be all that was coming towards us. But we stuck to our guns and followed our passion.” She added that they knew there was a niche market for them and they were determined to fill it. In fact, Hatch is the only firm with registered interior designers focusing exclusively on commercial interior design in the area.

Blackburn said that coming together as a team made all the difference to the firm. As a team that could offer support, the partners gained the confidence to grow the business and to go after the projects they love. Hatch Interior Design has completed a number of prestigious projects including **Nuvue Optometry** and **Il Tavolino**, a local Italian bistro.

“We’ve been really lucky,” Blackburn said. “In the last couple of years, our client base has changed. The people seeking us out now really want something different. They really want their business to stand out in the marketplace and they understand that good design is good business.” Clarida added that the partners and employee Tanya Wassen, also a registered interior designer, focus on enhancing the quality of life for the client’s



Leigh Blackburn, Tanya Wassen and Rachel Clarida form an award winning team

Grant Robinson Photography

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LEIGH BLACKBURN

PRINCIPAL AND REGISTERED INTERIOR DESIGNER

employees as well as esthetics. She said that good design encourages productivity and therefore, the bottom line. Good design also increases frequency of visits of customers in any retail and professional space.

Blackburn said that clients notice that the firm is friendly with a down-to-earth approach to projects. The team is also passionate about the projects that they take on – and that makes a difference.

Clarida said the company has plans to expand and hire more staff, but never wants to grow too big.

“We’d like to maintain our boutique brand. We enjoy the small to medium size projects that we take on and the wide variety of project types.” From its base in Kelowna, Blackburn said that the firm does want to get known outside the Okanagan, doing work across Canada as its reputation grows.

Hatch Interior Design Inc. is at 107 – 1289 Ellis Street in Kelowna.

www.hatchdesign.ca



Hatch Interior Design works exclusively with commercial clients

Grant Robinson Photography



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The Grouse River Project recently won a prestigious SHINE award

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