

Up Front Awards

Symone Strong

Going for the Gold

The Gold Nugget Awards recognized not one but two Multifamily Communities of the Year in 2021.



NOW IN ITS 58TH YEAR, THE GOLD NUGGET AWARDS HAVE RAISED THE BAR for innovative architecture, planning, and construction concepts that solve fundamental building industry needs for over 50 years.

Typically presented at the conclusion of PCBC, the Pacific Coast's regional conference and trade show for real estate development, the top projects were honored during a virtual ceremony June 16, ahead of the in-person event that will take place Oct. 4 to 7 at the Omni La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, California.

Jurors selected merit winners and one grand winner in over 50 categories, including single-family production, multifamily, affordable, mixed-use, custom homes, commercial, office, renovations, and site planning, out of roughly 600 U.S. and international entries.

This year's Gold Nugget jury was made up of the industry's top designers, planners, and builders: Ike Balmaseda, partner at IDEArc Architecture & Planning; Mollie Carmichael, principal at Zonda; Debra Falese, president at Woodley Architecture Group; Laurie Ford, principal at Lomonaco Investments; John McManus, founder of The Builder's Daily; Anne Postle, president at Osmosis



Architecture; Chelsea Richardson, principal, vice president at Jeffrey DeMure + Associates; and Symone Strong, assistant editor at Multifamily Executive and Builder magazines.

“For everyone, Gold Nugget is the place to take inspiration from design, planning, and development achievements that range from a jewel box custom home to lavish destination environments to affordable housing to intricate infill neighborhoods and leading-edge prototypes,” says Lisa Parrish, judging chairman and Gold Nugget ceremonies administrator. “It’s the place to see today’s trends and predict tomorrow’s, with categories that stay in tune with the times.”

In response to emerging trends from the pandemic, “Best Home-Work Space,” “Best Health/Wellness Design Solution,” and “Best Community Amenity” were a few of the specialty categories added this year. Plus, the coveted Multifamily Community of the Year was split into two categories based on the project’s size, with the first awarded for under four stories and the second for four stories and above.

Market-rate development Alexan Kendry in Montclair, California, was awarded Multifamily Community of the Year: Up to Four Stories. The three- and four-story tuck-under building development sits on a 7-acre, L-shaped site and consists of five residential buildings with 211 units and an 8,500-square-foot amenity building.

Builder Trammell Crow Residential and designer Architecture Design Collaborative took inspiration from the area’s rich history of citrus farming. As a result, the buildings have a “modern agrarian aesthetic” and are situated on the site to create a series of courtyards with vegetable gardens and a pocket park.



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"Of all the four-story and under multifamily projects, the judging panel admired this one the most because of the façade and its use of color and the project's L-shaped site plan that considers the pedestrian experience," noted one judge during the deliberations.

Jackson in Seattle's historic Central District was recognized for Multifamily Community of the Year: Four Stories and Above. The property by developer Vulcan Real Estate, architect Runberg Architecture Group, and builder Exxel Pacific includes 532 apartments, with 107 units reserved for households earning 65% to 90% of the area median income.

With a goal to cultivate community, the site is organized to provide significant landscaped open space, including a large public plaza and a mid-block area aligned with a previously vacated street right of way. The façade incorporates a palette of colors and different fractal patterns and textures, while the interior spaces pay homage to the neighborhood's artistic contributions to the city.

"Judges unanimously voted the 532-unit Seattle Jackson project as Multifamily Community of the Year for its cohesive, purpose- and mission-driven solution to downtown density's connective, community-centered answer to urban sanctuary," stated one juror. "We were taken in by the design's intentionality, its cadence of small zones, and its expansive sweep of inclusiveness and intimacy, throughout the circulatory exterior and in interior spaces."

In addition to the two communities of the year, the jurors were drawn to multifamily projects and concepts that provided high density on small lots, were thoughtful with their exterior spaces, utilized existing structures, and ultimately established a sense of community for residents.

"For architects, planners, builders, designers, and developers, Gold Nuggets shine as the repository of the best work in our business—as judged and appreciated by the best eyes in our business," adds Parrish. "While entering is easy, winning is hard, so whether it's the first time or 58th in the Gold Nugget spotlight, taking a merit or grand is undeniably sweet."