

"Stunning" Rothschild Foundation Takes Wood Awards 2011 Gold Award

Written by Karl

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The Rothschild Foundation in Buckinghamshire stole the show and the top award in this year's hotly contested Wood Awards 2011 competition. The ceremony was held on the 27th September, the first day of new exhibition Timber Expo at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. Stephen Marshall Architects saw off competition of an exceptionally high standard to win the Structural category, before being crowned the winner of winners in front of nearly 250 leading industry and architectural figures. As the UK's premier architecture and furniture awards programme for excellence in wood, the Wood Awards recognises innovative design and craftsmanship in the world's most natural material.

The Rothschild Foundation has this year already won a RIBA Award 2011 and was mid-listed for the 2011 Stirling Prize. Michael Morrison of Purcell Miller Tritton and chairman of the judges, praised the new archive and offices for charity investment organisation The Alice Trust, saying "The Rothschild Foundation is a wonderful piece of modernism married to a Victorian farm in the depths of the English countryside. The standard of work is a testament to the care and professionalism of everyone associated with the project. It is truly stunning." The construction of the buildings in timber was inspired by the former use of the site as a farm populated by timber barns with vertical boarding and roof trusses. The main space in the scheme, the archive reading room, was designed as a modern reinterpretation of a barn structure, with a consummately detailed European oak gridshell roof supported on triangular struts.

Other winners for 2011 included Brockholes Visitor Centre in Lancashire by Adam Khan Architects for the Commercial & Public Access Award, Strange House in London by Hugh Strange Architects for the Private / Best Small Project Award, and Diamond Hall at the University of Ulster in Co. Antrim by Samuel Stevenson & Sons won the Conservation/Restoration Award. 'Windsor Rocker' gave Katie Walker Furniture their second* Furniture Award win, and in acknowledgement of this year's impressive Furniture shortlist, furniture went on to take two of the Special Awards, with Outstanding Design going to Sebastian Cox's 'Suent Superlight Chair' using coppiced hazel, and Outstanding Craftsmanship being awarded to 'The Manolo Lounger' in American black walnut by John Galvin Design. The Innovation Award went to Atmos Studio for 081-23MR – Stairs, which the judges called "a beautifully designed piece of 3D joinery...fluid and dynamic. A tour de force."

The Wood Awards is made possible by its sponsors, led by the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), the Carpenters' Company, the Forestry Commission, Wood for Good and TRADA.

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The Wood Awards 2012 Call for Entries will open in March 2012. For further information, visit www.woodawards.com

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