

The refreshing and the innovative

The first ever Geoffrey Bawa Trust Award for Excellence in Architecture was shared by Shyamika Silva for “Nalin Indrasena’s house” and Lalyn Collure for “The Boulder Garden Resort”

By Tahnee Hopman

Over the past nine weeks we had glimpses of their creations, and insights into their different ways of thinking, their vision. They were nine different architects with nine very different creations.

We have seen them all- from central bus stations and houses to resorts, car sales centres and gardens. The Bedsitter by Prasanna Jayalath, Nalin Indrasena’s House by Shyamika Silva, the Dambulla Central Bus Stand cum Retail Centre by Tommy Wijeyasekera, The Boulder Garden Resort by Lalyn Collure, The Saffron Beach Villa by PWA Associates, The AMW Complex by Nela De Zoysa, the Estate Bungalow in Ginigathhena by Palinda Kannangara, The Minneriya Park Visitor Centre by Sunil Gunawardene and the Thicket, Gampaha by M.M.G Samuel.



The winners: Shyamika Silva and Lalyn Collure

Finally, it was the moment they had all been waiting for- the awarding of the first ever Geoffrey Bawa Trust Award for Excellence in Architecture and the coveted prize was shared by Shyamika Silva and Lalyn Collure, while Palinda Kannangara and Nela De Zoysa, were commended for their work.

“What matters to us most in the end, more than the final result, is the journey we have made in evaluating the work of each nominee,” commented Prof. David Robson, the Head of the Technical Committee and judge of the award. “We are quite confident in saying that each of these nine architects has achieved excellence.”

In his critique of each design on the shortlist, Prof. Robson stated that Shyamika Silva’s work (Nalin Indrasena’s house) “stood out as one of the most refreshing experiences of architecture, and also the most daring.”

“The Boulder Garden Resort,” he said, “relates perfectly to a long Sri Lankan tradition of building amongst boulders, while offering something which is totally innovative.”

Begun with 53 entries, 42 of which were declined, the search for the winner was narrowed down to nine hopefuls. The Geoffrey Bawa Trust will present to the winners, a prize of Rs. 1 million. “It is heartening to see that most of the architects nominated are young; between the ages of 30 and 40,” said Architect C. Anjalendran, a close friend of Geoffrey Bawa, and one of the judges,

enthusiastic that Sri Lanka has great potential for quality architecture, with lots of young talent.

The initial applications were shortlisted by the judges upon which a technical review of these projects took place. The final judging took place after this, the whole process culminating in a gala event held at the Galle Face Hotel on July 23, Geoffrey Bawa's birth anniversary.

The Geoffrey Bawa Trust was established in 1982, with the aim of promoting, encouraging and developing architecture in Sri Lanka and boosting young architects.



Commended: Nela De Zoysa and Palinda Kannangara receiving their awards from Sunethra Bandaranaike, judge and trustee of the Bawa Trust

The award scheme has been consciously modelled on the scheme run by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva, generally acknowledged to have had a marked effect on architecture in developing countries since it was inaugurated by the Aga Khan in 1977. Geoffrey Bawa received the Aga Khan's Special Award for a Lifetime's Achievement in Architecture in 2001.

The inspiration for the Award's trophy came from an obelisk placed on top of a gatepost at Bawa's Lunuganga Estate. The design emulated similar elements found in the great gardens of Europe for which Bawa had a particular fondness. Made from solid Paramara wood and ebony, the classical lines of the trophy embody the timelessness of great architecture.