



Local Firms Take Home State Building Awards
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DeCiantis, Wolman, Stolz, Shelter LLC, Chelsea Groton bring back some HOBIs

Five locally based businesses—Chelsea Groton Saving Bank, DeCiantis Construction, Shelter LLC, Stolz Home Builders and Wolman Construction—picked up awards this week in Southington as the Connecticut Home Builders Association presented its 1998 Home Building Industry Awards otherwise known as the HOBIs.

DeCiantis Construction of Stonington won three awards Wednesday; Best New Commercial under \$1 million, for a 3,500-square-foot dance studio; Best Residential under \$250,000, for renovation of a waterfront home originally built circa 1850; and Best Remodeled Kitchen, for a 120 foot by 15-foot sunroom added to a dark and outdated 15-foot by 16-foot kitchen at a 1750 house with an 1825 addition.

Wolman Construction of Waterford brought back two awards: Best Custom Home 5,000-6,000 square feet, for a Waterford residence with three sets of 8-foot French doors, a centerpiece bluestone fireplace and a custom kitchen with granite countertops; and Best New Commercial Entry over \$4 million, for the Fairfield Suites by Marriott in Waterford, an 80-suite hotel with 25 percent larger rooms than normal and featuring separate living/sleeping areas, refrigerators, microwaves and wet bars.

Shelter LLC of Willimantic took home a silver award for its commercial rehabilitation of the Eliza Clark Memorial Clinic in Pomfret, featuring a daylit solar addition with radiant heat flooring and clerestory windows.

Stoltz Home Builders of Griswold won in the category of Best Spec Home under \$250,000. The house, at Wolf Ridge Gap in Ledyard, includes a master bedroom suite with sitting room, walk-in closet, separate bath with Jacuzzi tub and a double-bowl sink, as well as a large family room, storage area in the garage, half bath with laundry area, pantry, eat-in kitchen, great room, gas fireplace, spacious closets and extra attic storage space, all for \$192,000.

Chelsea Groton Savings Bank, the No. 1 mortgage lender in the region, won the Best Custom/Permanent Home Loan for Southeastern Connecticut. Its residential mortgage mix includes money for construction, refinances and purchases.

The awards, presented each year since 1993, challenge members of the Connecticut Home Builders Association across the state to submit their best housing and commercial development efforts to recognize craftsmanship, construction ingenuity and value.

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Connecticut is the only state in which entries are judged by personally visiting homes and developments. This year's judges were Dan Hughes, a Fairfield County builder, Brad Hall, a residential market research expert; David Hart, an architect with Wayne Garrick Architects; and Joanne Carroll, publisher of Connecticut Builder Magazine.

Consumer trends important

Winners demonstrated the importance of following consumer trends, keeping up with construction technology and keeping in mind the importance of detailing. One popular trend, the retro or nostalgia look, translates into kitchens with hardwood floors, granite soapstone counters and custom wood cabinets that look a century old, yet the stainless steel appliances belie the appearance. New technology includes engineered wood trusses, flexible piping, hydro air system and electronic air cleaners; gas fired fireplaces and tilt-out window, as well as high-speed cable, whole-house audio and home theater systems.

All local winners are members of Builders Association of Eastern Connecticut, a professional trade association serving New London and Windham counties.

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