



AIA
Florida



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The Don CeSar is 2020 People’s Choice for Architecture

AIA Florida spotlights design of the Sunshine State’s historic hotels and inns

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Florida’s best-loved historic hotels and inns – from the tropical Southernmost House in Key West to the Pensacola Grand, dating to northwest Florida’s railroad heyday – garnered over 66,000 votes in the People’s Choice 2020 architectural design competition.

The palatial **Don Cesar**, popularly known as “the Pink Palace,” in St. Pete Beach took first prize. The renowned Jazz Age hotel, frequented by guests such as author F. Scott Fitzgerald, was designed by architect Henry H. Dupont and opened in 1928.

The People’s Choice contest is hosted by the [Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects](#) (AIA Florida) and the Florida Foundation for Architecture to spotlight great design and architecture in Florida. A panel of Florida architects identified significant designs among the state’s historic hotels and inns. These represent pivotal features of Florida’s history, including its Spanish and British colonial influences, its exuberant extravagance in the Roaring ’20s, and its development as a world-renowned tourist destination.

Along with the Don CeSar, the top vote-getters among the 28 contenders include:

-- **The Lodge at Wakulla Springs**, where tycoon Edward Ball built an artisanal lodge of heart cypress, Tennessee marble, and Art Deco masterpieces overlooking the “mysterious waters” of the cavernous north Florida springs.

-- **Disney’s Contemporary Resort Tower**, a soaring A-frame hotel designed by Welton Becket and built in 1971. The tower is adorned with a 90-foot-tall tile mural by Disney legend Mary Blair, depicting scenes from the American Southwest, and it allows monorail trains to breeze through its Grand Canyon Concourse en route to the Magic Kingdom.

-- **The Vinoy® Renaissance St. Petersburg Resort**, originally known as The Vinoy Park Hotel, opened on New Year’s Eve 1925. The Mediterranean Revival hotel built by Aymer Vinoyr Laughner boasted an opulent ballroom, decorative banding at the roofline, and ornately sculptural frames around the entry doors.

-- **Boca Raton Resort & Club**, designed by Addison Mizner and built in 1926. The hotel’s design was inspired by an 11th-century Spanish convent. Today, the resort spans 337 acres, has two golf courses, a 50,000-

square-foot spa modeled after the Alhambra in Granada, seven swimming pools, 30 tennis courts, a 32-slip marina and more.

[Click here to see all the nominees, or search by city.](#)

People's Choice winners from past years include **Diagon Alley** in the Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Studios (2019, designed by Universal Creative), the futuristic **Institute for Human & Machine Cognition** in Pensacola (2018, designed by Quina Grundhoefer Architects) and the restoration of the historic **Call-Collins House at The Grove Museum** in Tallahassee (2017, MLD Architects).

Leaders in the 2020 competition, in addition to the top five:

- ✓ **The Breakers**, by the architectural firm Schultze and Weaver, 1926
- ✓ **Casa Monica Resort & Spa**, by architect Franklin Smith, St. Augustine, 1887
- ✓ **Fontainebleau**, by architect Morris Lapidus, 1954
- ✓ **The Southernmost House**, Queen Anne Victorian style, 1897
- ✓ **Postcard Inn on the Beach**, 1957

MEDIA: Voting details and photos of all nominees are available upon request.

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The Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects, headquartered in Tallahassee, represents the interests of more than 3,900 members in Florida and the Caribbean. Members adhere to a code of ethics and professional conduct that assures the client, the public and colleagues of an AIA-member architect's dedication to the highest standards in professional practice.

The Florida Foundation for Architecture is a non-profit organization that exists to advocate the value of architecture to audiences beyond the profession. This is accomplished through Foundation events, publications and grants for programs that feature architecture and are open and available to the public and related professions, as well as architects.