

Czech CiJ Awards pay tribute to 2008 success

The eight annual CiJ Awards drew a capacity crowd of 450 to Slovanský dům in downtown Prague in which eight prizes were awarded for accomplishments during 2008. The evening came as a welcome relief to the difficulties now being experienced on all levels of the property industry, with guests treated to dinner, music and entertainment along with the prize-giving.

The high-powered jury this year was made up of Mike De Mug (Ballymore Properties), Olga Humlová (Salans), Charles Lewis (EC Harris), Robert Martin (Europa Capital), Udo Schlosser (Europhyo), and Angus Wade (King Sturge).

The first award was for the top residential development of the year. While true luxury residential projects are a rarity in Prague, Liliová 8 won over the jury for its total commitment to creating a top-of-life-the-line product, taking The Best Residential Development prize.

This was followed by the Best Warehouse/Logistics Development, claimed by developer VGP for its VGP Park Horní Počernice scheme located northeast of Prague. The jury appreciated not just the good access provided to the road network, its commercial Access and the high level of technical specification employed, but the colorful exterior design works as well.

While there were those who had hoped to beat out Arkády Pankrác by ECE and Rodamco, the size, sophistication and power of the mall proved too much. The jury praised the scheme's Access in bringing in power retailers, including some names new to Prague, said the center is easily navigable, provides ample and easy-to-use parking and enjoys excellent public transportation accessibility.

As it turned out, Best Office Development went to a project located right next door to the mall, making it an excellent night for Prague 4's Pankrác district. City Tower is a project that's been on the cards since before the modern era of Prague's property market, passing through many hands ECM picked it up. Now completed and boasting what's possibly the city's largest ever lease deal to Raiffeisen, the project impressed the jury not simply for its creation of a landmark building but because its successful completion removed a huge eyesore, to the benefit of the entire neighborhood.

The final Czech development award went to Crestyl for its project Central Most, a multifunctional center in the heart of Most. The jury praised the developer's daring and vision as well as the skill with which the project was planned and carried out. This project, too, raises the level of everything around it, bringing value to the city.

The Best CEE Hotel award was given to Red Group for its Park Inn Ostrava, officially awarded at the Polish awards earlier in November. As a Prague-based company, Red Group was recognized on front of its Czech colleagues as well.

Personality of the Year for 2008 went to long-term player on the Czech development scene: Dr. Robert Neurogröschel of developer Unibail-Rodamco. Developer of the Year went to AIG/Lincoln, which has enjoyed continuing success (in terms of developing and selling) with its Prague project The Park, also completing and opening a new retail scheme, Kampus, in Brno. The final award went to Jones Lang LaSalle, named Agency of the Year, a prize it hasn't won in Prague since 2004.

Roberts Publishing Media Group publishes CiJ (Construction & Investment Journal) magazine, the industry's primary source of information on the real estate sector in CEE.

The company also organizes the annual CiJ Awards, which rewards the best developers and professionals from across the region. Currently, the CiJ Awards are held in Prague, Warsaw, Bratislava, Budapest and this year, for the first time in Bucharest.