

Tokyo's Cocoon Tower selected as 2008 Skyscraper of the Year

Thursday 22 January 2009

The jury of the Emporis Skyscraper Award has announced Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower as its choice for the 2008 Skyscraper of the Year. This is the ninth year of the award, which is given annually to a building at least 100 meters tall and completed within the award year. The second place winner is Boutique Monaco in Seoul, and Shanghai World Financial Center came in third. These buildings were selected from 380 eligible buildings completed worldwide in 2008.



The 203.65-m Cocoon Tower is the second-tallest educational building in the world.

Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower was recognized by the award jury for its expressive design and the remarkable environment it provides its users. Located among the giant corporate headquarters of Tokyo's Shinjuku business district, the building houses three vocational schools including its namesake Mode Gakuen, a fashion design school. Its stylish architecture sets a spirit of daring imagination, stimulating the students and faculty. The white aluminum and dark blue glass exterior forms a curved shell, criss-crossed by an intricate web of diagonal lines earning it the name "Cocoon Tower". Designed by Tange Associates, the 203.65-meter skyscraper is the second-tallest educational building in the world (surpassed only by Moscow State University), and the tallest constructed since 1953.

Cocoon Tower is built on prime real estate in Tokyo's most important business district, and its graceful shape makes the most of its site, incorporating the traditional motif of "mukuri" (convex curves) to create open space at the base of the tower. Located right next to Shinjuku Station, it provides an easily recognizable gateway to the office district and welcomes thousands of commuters every day with a pleasing and elegant image. The interior is full of dynamic auditoriums, study spaces, and atria where students can gather and exchange ideas in a futuristic setting.

The building's futuristic interior holds a variety of dramatic spaces, providing comfortable gathering places for students and an invigorating, forward-looking learning environment. The interwoven diagonal lines of the facade reflect contemporary technological potential, allow soft light into the classrooms, and represent the poetic metaphor of a cocoon, which one jury member described as "an incubation chamber of ideas and talent that will burst out into dazzling butterflies of creativity".

The Silver Award goes to Boutique Monaco in Seoul, a 27-story tower also known as "Missing Matrix" because of the garden-filled voids carved out of its mass. Designed by Minsuk Cho and Kisu Park of the South Korean firm Mass Studies, Boutique Monaco demonstrates a novel way to humanize an extraordinarily dense urban center with architectural spaces that provide the flexibility, variety, and benefits of rural or suburban buildings.

The Bronze Award was given to Shanghai World Financial Center, currently the second-tallest completed building in the world. Often referred to by its initials, the SWFC features a rectangular hole in its top with a public observatory.

Source: Emporis

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