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[Advanced Search](#)

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- Qatar
- Gulf/Arab World
- Americas
- Britain/Ireland
- Europe/World
- India
- Pakistan/Afghanistan
- SriLanka/Bangladesh
- Philippines/East Asia
- Opinion
- Islam
- Finance & Business
- Sport
- Features
- Classifieds
- Anniversary Special
- Back Issues
- Feedback
- Contact Us
- Site Map
- About Us

Chicago’s Aqua tower wins 2009 Emporis Award AFP/Frankfurt



Chicago’s 81-storey Aqua hotel and residence, which has won the 10th Emporis Award for best skyscraper of 2009

Chicago’s 81-storey Aqua hotel and residence has won the prominent Emporis Award for best skyscraper of 2009, the global building data base said here yesterday.

Emporis’s jury hailed the 249.7-m (819.33-ft) Aqua tower “for its advances in sustainable design and for the imaginative and fascinating architectural effects

it achieves.”

The building is expected to earn a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver rating and “set a higher standard for the next generation of large-scale residential and hotel construction.”

Despite the building’s height it does not stick out in Chicago’s celebrated skyline, Emporis data standards chairman Daniel Kieckhefer said.

“Architect Jeanne Gang was aware of this, and turned it to dramatic effect - while the building looks ordinary enough from a distance, its fluid shape can deliver a breathtaking surprise to people who pass nearby and look up.”

Emporis (www.emporis.com) gave a silver prize to the 23-storey O-14 tower in Dubai, and its bronze award to The Met, a 69-storey residential building in Bangkok.

Built near Lake Michigan, Aqua uses undulating balconies and glass planes to create a wave facade that has also been compared to a rippled curtain, a statement said.

The windows have also been given a blue-green tint.

Gang, of Studio Gang Architects, has said she was also inspired by striated limestone formations common to the US Great Lakes region.

The 10th Emporis Award, which Kieckhefer called the “Oscars” of skyscraper prizes, was chosen from among 305 towers completed around the world last year.

“The jury was very enthusiastic about Aqua, with a few members stating that they had been looking forward to its completion for years,” Kieckhefer added.

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