

VISI awards top design accolades

South African décor magazine *VISI* announced the winners of their annual Absolut VISI Design of the Year awards on Friday, 2 March. The awards, which aim to recognise and reward South Africa's top designs, were handed out at a jungle-themed ceremony and party held at Wembley Square Two in Cape Town.

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"The awards are one of the highlights on the *VISI* calendar," says *VISI* editor Jacquie Myburgh Chemaly. "It is an opportunity for us, along with our partner Absolut Vodka, to celebrate the remarkable design work that has been produced over the past year and to honour the people behind it."

This year, for the first time, *VISI* has introduced four different categories instead of an umbrella award covering all design disciplines. The categories are Design, Interiors, Architecture and Emerging Designer. The winner in each category receives a R10 000 voucher from Paul Smith in South Africa. Industry peers, along with members of the *VISI* editorial team, as well as internationally renowned trend forecaster Li Edelkoort, judged each category.

And the winners are...

In the Design category, Pierre Cronje beat out the finalists with his Simply Pierre range. The range has made Pierre's signature craftsmanship more accessible without compromising on quality. "It is honest and giving," said international judge Li Edelkoort.

Former magazine editor turned farmer and hotelier, Karen Roos, won the Interiors category with her Babylonstoren farm hotel.

Judge Shelley Street, stylist and creative consultant to Weylandts, remarked that Karen's work is timeless, considered, simple and sensual - always with an unexpected edge. "Unique references to nature and history permeate her interiors and I find the conservatory particularly special as it recaptures in a fresh way an era of elegance, beauty and nostalgia so lacking in many designs today."

The Architecture category went to Nina Cohen, Fiona Garson and William Martinson for the WITS Art Museum, recently opened in the burgeoning Braamfontein district in Johannesburg.

"The success of its resolution resides, not simply in the compelling spatial resolution of its architecture but also in its aesthetically pleasing, but more so in the creative design translation of a problem of considerable complexity," said Professor Iain Low of UCT, one of the judges in this category.

Michaella Janse van Vuuren of Nomili scooped the Emerging Designer category with her extraordinary three-dimensional printing designs.

Judge Cecile Froehling, head of buying at Woolworths Home Department, said that she was swayed by Michaella's originality in process, concept and the pure fantasy aspect of her work: "It made me look, and look again, and marvel at the objects as well as how she creates these fabulous creatures of her imagination."

Lighting designer Paul Pamboukian was also honoured as the recipient of a 2012 Special Award winner for his sustained contribution to South African design, not only through his own work but also with the Haute Lumiere Lighting Design competition that encourages an exploration of light as design medium.

The latest issue of *VISI* (*VISI* 59 that went on sale this week) that features the winning Babylonstoren conservatory on the cover, also features a special design section dedicated to the Absolut *VISI* Designer the Year awards as well as a Design Directory of top design shops.

For more about *VISI*, go to www.visi.co.za, www.facebook.com/VISImag and follow [@VISI_Mag](https://twitter.com/VISI_Mag) on Twitter

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