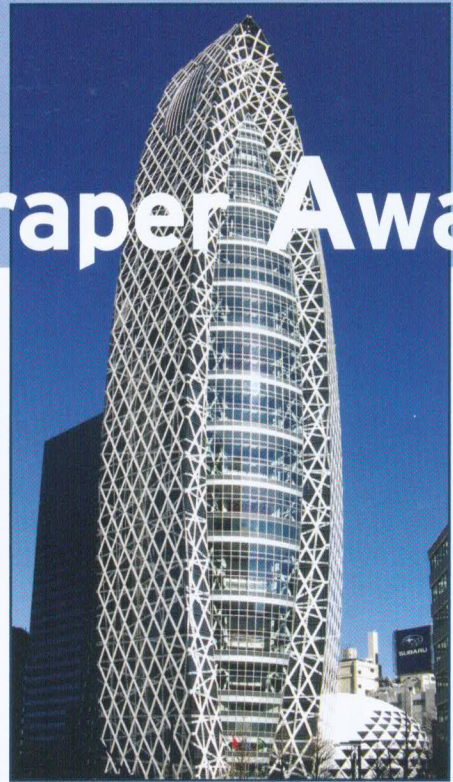


And the winner is...

the Emporis Skyscraper Awards



Stephan Boehm
Emporis



Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower, Japan
2008 Award Winner.

Each year hundreds of architectural awards are given out, but only a few of them stand out in the public imagination. The Pritzker Prize is often called the "Nobel Prize for Architecture", but it recognizes the lifetime achievement of a person, not a particular building. Various organizations (the American Institute of Architects, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the Royal Institute of British Architects) give well known awards to buildings or architects, but no international prize has yet emerged with a status comparable, for example, to the Academy Awards. There is no "Building of the Year" on the collective tip of the public's tongue.

Of course, it would be difficult to compare all the buildings completed in any year and to pick the best one. Not only are styles and design programs so varied, but the scale of buildings ranges from huts to mega projects.

Nevertheless, it is surprising how few awards for major categories of buildings have caught the world's attention. One likely exception, established at the beginning of this century, is trying to fill this void: the Emporis Skyscraper Award.

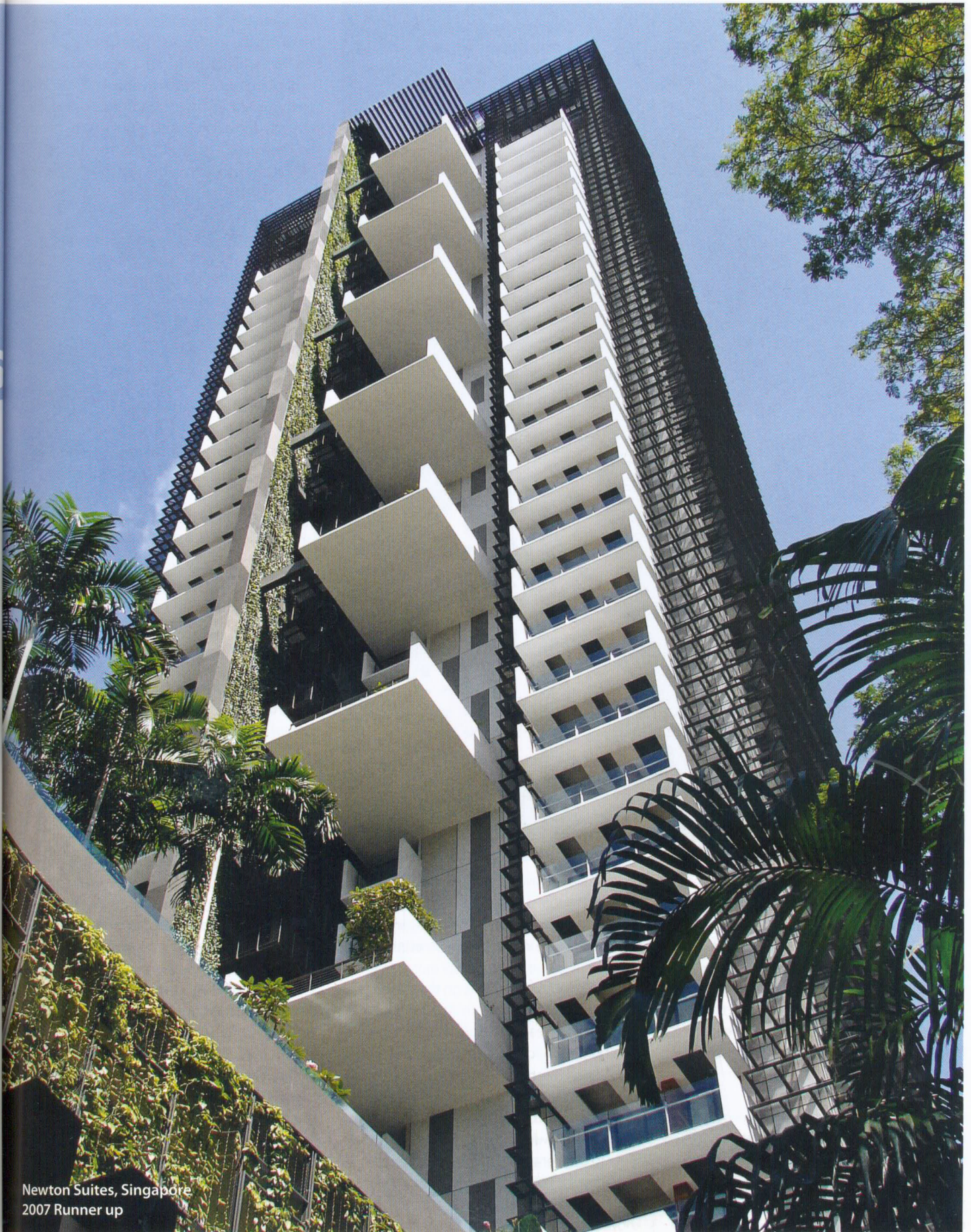
Emporis was conceived of as an international database of buildings, open to editors around the world. It began with a "top-down" approach, focusing first on tall buildings and over the years expanding its coverage including all sorts of buildings of architectural, public, or commercial interest.

Within one week of its launch in 2000, the prototype Emporis website had attracted more than 30 editors on 6 continents who subsequently filled the site with tens of thousands of high-rise buildings - not only completed buildings but tall buildings in the

planning and construction phases.

By the fall of 2000, the website's coverage was so extensive that it could claim to be the first entity keeping effective track of all skyscraper constructions in the world. Many of its editors were professional architects, engineers, and urban planning experts working on a freelance basis, thus forming the makings of an independent, diverse, and expert jury. The website itself offered a means of publicity, and so the ingredients of an opportunity came together just as a worldwide boom in skyscraper construction was taking off.

The Emporis Skyscraper Award is always given to a building at least 100 meters tall - a clear metric cut-off suitable for an international award. Eligible buildings must also be completed within the previous year. Therefore, when the first award went to the Sofitel Hotel



Newton Suites, Singapore
2007 Runner up



Het Strijkijzer in The Hague, Netherlands. Emporis Skyscraper 2007 Award Winner

in New York City in 2001, it was referred to as the 2000 Award.

The next year the prize went to One Wall Centre in Vancouver, and Silver and Bronze categories were introduced. In addition to the 3 buildings ranked highest by the jury, the top 10 are published on the awards website (awards.emporis.com). This pattern has been maintained ever since.

Giving recognition to ten skyscrapers per year might appear to spread the honor thin, but even this number represents only the top 2 or 3 percent of buildings constructed within any year, because the average number of eligible nominees is over 400.

An international award, however, takes time to build its success. The prize becomes more meaningful with time, as its winners join a longer and more impressive list of recipients.

The quality of an award rests on the quality of its beneficiaries, and Emporis' jury has taken steps over the years to ensure the development of a strong tradition and a solid reputation.

The jury is selected carefully from the most detail-oriented, conscientious members of Emporis' worldwide community of editors. In order to be promoted to senior editor level and sit on the jury, contributors must pass an examination to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of buildings and architecture.

Common biases are addressed and controlled, including the tendency to vote for local or familiar buildings, which has been reduced to a negligible level. In fact, with about 30 members on the award jury, its great advantages include diversity and a democratic process. Very little or no ideology enters into the jury's discussions: they are not academics but rather people with extensive experience in building trades and building research.

As a result of its system, the Emporis Skyscraper Award has become a kind of advance barometer for worldwide recognition. A number of the award's winners are much more famous now than they were when their selection was announced: Kingdom Centre in Riyadh, 30 St Mary Axe in London, and Turning Torso in Malmö, for instance.

The eventual fame of these towers is surely a function of time, but whether or not the Emporis Award is partly responsible, its judgement and early recognition are validated by the wider public recognition in later years.

The Emporis Skyscraper Award is the first of its kind, and a look at its 9 consecutive winners is a fascinating survey of recent skyscraper architecture.

About the Emporis Skyscraper Awards

The Emporis Skyscraper Award is the only prize for high-rise architecture awarded annually on a global basis. Nominees and winners are chosen from Emporis' database by Emporis editors, who are building and architecture experts from 67 nations.

Essential information on the buildings, as well as images, are available to the public on Emporis.com. The jury, composed of Emporis senior editors, selects the "skyscraper of the year" every December and announces it after the beginning of the new year.

About Emporis

Emporis is a global provider of building-related information, collecting data on buildings of high public and economic value, connects them with involved companies, and sets standards for this information.

Offered product lines include building intelligence, online advertising, and image licensing, and are used by customers from building industries and other sectors.