

BusinessWeek and IDSA Announce Best Product Designs of 2007

IDEA '07 Winners Selected

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DULLES, Va., July 20 /PRNewswire/ -- Some of the world's hottest designs, innovative problem-solvers and coolest concepts are among the winners of the 2007 International Design Excellence Awards (IDEASM). One of two award programs co-sponsored by BusinessWeek magazine and the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), IDEA celebrates design excellence.

Here is a small sample of this year's 81 winners:

-- The Tesla Roadster -- an electric-powered sports car that combines high

performance and timeless beauty while eliminating emissions.

-- A light operated mouse and keyboard to enable people with physical impairments to operate a computer.

-- An outdoor grilling system that allows users to choose between gas, charcoal, and infrared fuel.

-- The world's first cordless hands-free can opener.

-- The first very light jet approved by the FAA.

Since its inception in 1980, the IDEA awards program has generated worldwide attention from designers, business leaders and consumers as a powerful endorsement of the aesthetics, engineering and usability of winning designs. Participation has grown steadily, reaching 1,691 entries this year. IDEA's influence has expanded geographically as well, with 595 entries this year from 29 countries other than the United States. In 2007, the IDEA jury -- a carefully selected group of 18 leading thinkers in the design world -- selected 20 entries to receive the coveted Gold award, 19 entries for the Silver award and 42 for the Bronze award in categories as diverse as consumer electronics, housewares, transportation, sporting goods, furniture, and medical and scientific equipment and ecodesign.

IDEA jurors noted several exciting trends among entries and winners of the competition, including greater attention to ecological impact. "There is markedly greater consideration to how a design's function, materials and fabrication impact the environment as a whole," said Hillary Blumberg, IDSA, vice president and design director of home furnishings for Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. "The Tesla car is just the beginning of an entirely new way of rethinking existing product types in not just the canonical dimensions of form and function, but also a third, green dimension."

Jurors also noted the high number and quality of student entries as well as attention to universal design in this year's competition. J. Ryan Eder, IDSA, a student at the University of Cincinnati, won Best in Show with The Access -- a sleek, advanced exercise machine concept that embodies the principles of universal design, accommodating users with or without a variety of disabilities. More than 240 student designs were entered into the competition this year and 10 earned an award -- up from 101 entries and 8 awards in 2006. "We can look forward to an influx of well-trained 'fresh brains,'" said juror Sigi Moeslinger, IDSA, a partner and co-founder of

Antenna Design New York Inc. "This will stimulate the profession."

Winners incorporated universal design principles into a wide range of products and concepts, such as the OXO Good Grips Hardware Hand Tools Line, the MAGICWHEELS(TM) 2-gear wheelchair drive and the Universal Toilet. "This made for a great jury session and an intensive discussion about the state of design," said Jury Chair Ruth Soenius, IDSA, director of user experience at Siemens Corporate Research, Inc. "Long gone are the days when design was judged exclusively on appearance."

IDEO led all design firms with four Golds IDEAs and seven total awards. Formation Design Group and Smart Design each won three awards and five other firms won two. Among corporations, Eclipse Aviation led the field with three IDEA awards, while Belkin, The Stanley Works and The Timberland Company each won two.

A "People's Choice" award (voted on by the public) will also be presented this year when the winners are honored at a formal ceremony at the Masonic Center in San Francisco, CA on Saturday, October 20 -- the final day of the CONNECTING '07 World Design Congress.

This year, several past and current IDEA winners also received the Design & Business Catalyst Award, also co-sponsored by BusinessWeek and IDSA. The Catalyst Awards (announced under separate cover) demonstrate the essential connection between design excellence and business, socioeconomic and ecological impact.

BusinessWeek's announcement and in-depth analysis of both IDEA and Catalyst winners will be featured in the July 30 issue, which hits newsstands July 20. IDSA's quarterly magazine, Innovation, will publish information on the winners in its annual Yearbook this fall. Full coverage of the winners will also be available on <http://www.idsa.org> and <http://www.businessweek.com>.

About Industrial Designers and IDSA Industrial Designers create satisfied customers by designing products, interfaces and services that are desirable, accessible, comfortable, ecologically responsible, innovative, safe and easy to use. In this way, industrial designers have a quiet but profound presence in almost everything people encounter during the day.

IDSA is the voice of industrial design, committed to advancing the profession through education, information, community and advocacy.

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SOURCE Industrial Designers Society of America

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Ecodesign

The Tesla Roadster

Design Credit:

Lotus Design Studio (United Kingdom), Tesla Motors, and Bill Moggridge, FIDSA

Client:

Tesla Motors

The Tesla Roadster is a high-performance, electric-powered sports car that hopes to radically change public perception about what an electric vehicle could be. It produces zero emissions and has a 250 mile range on a single charge as well as 0 to 60 mph in 4.0 seconds. While styling was of paramount importance, with an emphasis on performance and timeless beauty, avoiding any association with the legacy of odd-looking electric vehicles was an imperative. Designers eschewed a futuristic look in favor of a familiar, accessible aesthetic that would help put drivers at ease with the technology. Response so far has been tremendous. More than 320 people have reserved a car without having even driven it (and, in some cases, without having physically seen it), proving that electric vehicles do not have to be slow, boring or ugly.