

# Design Awards – A Testament to High Performance



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This issue highlights winners from the 53rd annual PCI Design Awards, which is a long time for any program to run. But it barely scratches the surface of time relative to the durability and resiliency that high-performance precast concrete offers. Precast concrete is a high-performance material that inherently provides the versatility, efficiency, and resiliency that high-performance structures demand.


The benefits of using precast concrete are clearly showcased by this year's winners. Juries selected 20 buildings to be honored, representing the full gamut of markets and sizes. (Bridge and transportation awards, which are presented in *Aspire* magazine, can be viewed at [www.pcidesignawards.org](http://www.pcidesignawards.org).)

As these winners show, precast concrete offers great versatility in aesthetics, form, and structure. For example, look at the light and airy design of The Broad Museum. More than 2,500 unique precast GFRC pieces were used to create the

structure's enclosure that permits natural light to enter the building, but prevents direct sunlight from shining on the art inside.

Precast concrete's thermal mass and ability to incorporate continuous insulation, as well as serve as a continuous air barrier and a vapor retarder (at 3 inches thick or more), makes it a very efficient enclosure system. Designers are increasingly taking advantage of this. Nordstrom utilizes all these benefits and more—including four finishes in one panel—to create a striking new look for their upscale stores around the country.

Another great example is how the inherent resiliency of precast concrete can be used to create durable structures that resist storms, high winds, and even earthquakes. The Mercy hospital in Joplin, Mo., was designed to withstand the force of an EF 3 tornado, while the Comstock Graduate Housing facility at Stanford University in California features a precast concrete structural system that can resist seismic forces.

The examples of how designers are taking advantages of high-performance concrete are all around us. You can read about this year's winners in this issue of *Ascent*, as well as online at [www.pci.org](http://www.pci.org). You can also view more photos and learn about high-performance precast concrete on our website. We hope the projects in this issue will inspire you to greatness and to earning your own PCI Design Award. 

## ASCENT

On the cover: Close-ups of the 2015 PCI Design Award Winners (see page 23). Photo: Paul Grigonis.

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