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Esplanade, Newton condo win global award

By Joyce Teo

SINGAPORE'S famous 'durians', The Esplanade, have something in common with a high-end condominium in Newton, The Lincoln Modern: good architecture.

The Royal Institute of British Architects (Riba) has given the buildings the Riba Worldwide Award.

Singapore is the only country to get two awards. The other five winners are from Australia, Brazil, Japan, Switzerland and the United States.

The annual awards, introduced last year for buildings outside the European Union, were announced in London on Friday.

The international awards were given together with the longstanding Riba awards, which honoured 71 buildings in Europe.

The Esplanade's accolade is not its first. Last year, it won the Fiabci's (International Real Estate Federation) Prix d'Excellence award, which has been called the Oscars of the real estate world.

An Esplanade spokesman said: 'We are proud to win another award, but the important thing is we're not just known internationally for the architecture but also for being an arts centre and a living space.

'The building is not just nice to look at but one that is being used by the community.'

The Esplanade is designed by British firm Michael Wilford & Partners and DP Architects in Singapore.

The 56-unit Lincoln Modern, which features split-level apartments, is designed by local firm SCDA Architects.

'The overall structure, a layered and skilfully articulated sandwich of standard components, strikingly slender and vertical, is a fresh and authentic design,' Riba said.

The design was inspired by the late architect Le Corbusier's most influential work, the Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles, a 12-storey post-war apartment block for 1,600 people.

The Lincoln Modern, open to buyers at the end of 2000, is half sold, with average transactions at \$1,100 per sq ft. The other half is held by developer SC Global Developments as an investment.

Commenting on the award, its managing director (developments) Leong Weng Chee said: 'To create a premium product, we search for outstanding talent, look for solutions beyond the ordinary, and remain steadfast to these ideas even when we have to pay more.'