

hospitality design

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people platinum circle

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More than 400 people, including many past honorees, gathered at the Conrad New York Downtown in November for the 31st annual Hospitality Design Platinum Circle Awards Gala to honor this year's inductees: Anouska Hempel, Anouska Hempel Design; Grupo Habita; Roman and Williams; and Andrew Zobler, Sydel Group. The Parker Company was also recognized for 50 years of contribution to the industry. Thank you to our sponsors: Gold—Preciosa, Samuelson Furniture, and Tarkett; Benefactor—Fabric Innovations; Silver—Bryan Ashley, Daltile, Durkan, Fiandre, West Elm Contract, and Viso Lighting; Bronze—American Leather, Carnegie, Fil Doux, Markor Hospitality Division, and Tiger Leather; and Supporting Sponsor—Kravet Contract.

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Linda Laucirica Holtzer, Marriott International, and Dan Mazzarini, BHDM Design



Chris Stulpin and Kim Drautz, Tarkett; Anita Khullar, Fabric Innovations; and Sam Burger, Tarkett



Neil Jacobs, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, accepts the Platinum Circle award on Anouska Hempel's behalf



Cynthia Guthrie, NEWH, with the Clifford R. Tuttle scholarship recipient Antara Naik, Savannah College of Art and Design



Michael Chalfin and Florencia Pergament, Samuelson Furniture; and Tara Locke, Neil Locke & Associates



Nilou Motamed, magazine editor and TV personality, introduces Platinum Circle honoree Grupo Habita



Michaela Trkalova, Preciosa; Gulla Jónsdóttir, Gulla Jónsdóttir Architecture + Design; Jon Kastl, Champalimaud; Gary Inman, Baskerville; and Michael Holy, Preciosa



Past and present Platinum Circle honorees: Back row: Kemper Hyers, Auberge Resorts Collection; Michael Adams, HD; Stephen Alesch, Roman and Williams; Helen Jorgensen, Host Hotels & Resorts; Philip Parker, the Parker Company; Kay Lang, Kay Lang + Associates; Roger Hill, the Gettys Group; Neil Locke, Neil Locke & Associates; Jim Looney, Looney & Associates; Mitch Parker, the Parker Company; Margaret McMahon, Wimberly Interiors; Doug Parker, the Parker Company; Jeffrey Beers, Jeffrey Beers International; Lauren Rottet, Rottet Studio; Gray Davis, Meyer Davis; Stephen Perkins, HotelStudio; Alexandra Champalimaud, Champalimaud Design; Stacy Shoemaker Rauhen, HD; and Rafael Micha, Grupo Habita; Front Row: Gerry Jue, BAMO; Robin Standefer, Roman and Williams; Barbara Lazaroff; Julia Monk and David Beer, HOK; Deborah Forrest, ForrestPerkins; and Joan Cardy, the Cardy Group

SAMUELSON FURNITURE

Lawrence Chalfin came into the family business in 1974, nearly four decades after his grandfather and father founded the Paterson, New Jersey-based Invincible Parlor Frame Company (now Samuelson Furniture) in 1935, where they manufactured and imported handcarved reproduction furniture.

Lawrence would often spend Saturdays with his father in the factory, and though he studied music in college, he gravitated toward the business. Surrounded by creative people, “I had the same feeling [here] that I did when studying music,” he says. Like his father, Michael Chalfin also found himself at the factory on weekends during his childhood, assisting with the furniture—and persuading employees to help him build skate ramps. After stints working in sales and construction, he eventually landed at Samuelson in the early 2000s.

Though family dinners are often consumed by business, “the fact that we can connect on that level is enjoyable,” says Michael, who now serves as executive vice president. “We love what we do,” adds Lawrence. “It’s not work; it’s an extension of us.” Whether they’re crafting custom products for the likes of the TWA Hotel at JFK Airport in New York or boutique properties such as the Hotel Julian in Chicago, it helps that the design- and quality-driven products exemplify Samuelson’s nearly 85-year-old mission of cultivating an “environment where everyone here is family,” Michael says.

Lawrence and Michael live a mile apart and spend most days together, and yet they are always learning from each other. “I was very fortunate,” says Lawrence. “My father encouraged me and needed me as I need Michael. He allowed me to explore and learn, and I try to do the same with [my own son].”

“Our goal is not to be the biggest, but to be the best,” he continues. “We’re nice, we’re kind, and we hope to continue those values going forward.”



Custom headboards and bar carts add to the midcentury charm of the guestrooms at the TWA Hotel



Photos by DAVID MITCHELL and courtesy of SAMUELSON FURNITURE