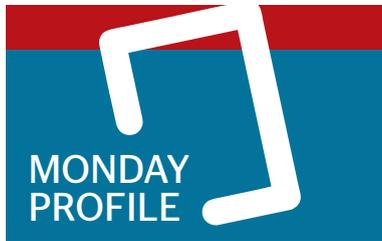




Guerin snaps up design awards



First time entering awards has produced pleasing results for a Waikato architectural designer. Stacey Oliver reports.

Waikato man Aaron Guerin almost didn't make it to the architectural design awards that saw him walk away with four gongs.

The LAD Architecture director was unwell with a chest infection and contemplated missing the ADNZ Architectural Design awards last month. But he rallied, and was rewarded with three regional awards and a commendation.

The experience was "surreal", he said.

"Because you're surrounded by some pretty neat people who have designed some pretty neat projects."

It was the first time Guerin and his team of ten in Cambridge had entered the awards.

"I made it a bit of a team experience and took my team along... which they really enjoyed and obviously, when you hear your name, you always hope but never think you would."

LAD Architecture won the

awards for its work on three different projects – the commercial and industrial category for Cambridge Medical Centre, a residential alterations and additions award for his work on restoring a run-down historical Cambridge villa, along with Resene colour in design award and commendation for a residential new home between 150 square metres and 300sqm, also in Cambridge.

The annual awards distinguish exceptional designs across several categories – new homes, interiors, alteration and additions and industrial design.

The recent wins had inspired Guerin and he was already planning what to enter in next year's competition.

"We're going to keep striving to compete with the best of the industry."

The former Cambridge High School head boy moved to the heritage town when he was four years old and it had been home ever since, aside from two years spent in Sydney, Australia.

Guerin and his wife Charlotte, also a director at the firm, returned to Cambridge in 2004 after the birth of their first child and LAD Architecture was established shortly after in 2007.

Now a father to three boys, Guerin said he had always had a passion for design and houses.

"When I was really young, mum always said to me that I was going to be a builder because I was always nailing things to the house.

"I used to disappear at primary school and they used to find me hammering things so I was always going to be involved in the construction business."

As he grew older, he found himself gravitating towards the design aspect of the industry. It was a "real buzz", he said.

"Just working with someone's brief and turning into reality, and going back with them at the end of the day and having a cup of tea and seeing how they are enjoying the place."

It was a humbling experience, he said.

One of the most interesting projects he had worked so far had been the Cambridge Medical Centre.

"It had multiple challenges in terms of they had to keep on practising, they couldn't relocate so we had to work around the public and do it in stages.

"That was a really interesting project because it obviously involved quite heavily with the

doctors to sure that were basically future proofing themselves.

"I think every job is interesting because every job is different and I love architecture as well. Every client is different. I'm excited to come to work each day so its got to be good."

Guerin was also a passionate about spending time with his family, including his three sons Ben, 11, Oliver, 8 and William, 5.

The firm was now eligible for national titles including the Supreme Design Award, which would be announced in October.



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Aaron Guerin



Cambridge architectural designer Aaron Guerin says always knew he would be involved in the construction business.

Photo: Bruce Mercer/Fairfax NZ