

# ADAC

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## ADAC & VERANDA ANNOUNCE WINNERS OF THE 2025 SOUTHEAST DESIGNERS AND ARCHITECT OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**ATLANTA:** Presented by ADAC (Atlanta Decorative Arts Center) in collaboration with VERANDA, the 2025 Southeast Designers and Architect of the Year Awards were unveiled last night during a celebratory gala at Flourish. This annual event honors standout firms and individuals from across the Southeast who represent the pinnacle of excellence and push the boundaries of design across the region. A distinguished panel of judges selected winners in architecture, contract design, and residential design from a talented pool of 27 finalists representing the region. Leading up to the gala, finalists were recognized on Wednesday evening at Logan Gardens during ADAC's signature spring event, DESIGN ADAC.

The 2025 Southeast Designers and Architect of the Year winners are:

CATEGORY	FIRM
Architect	<a href="#">Joel Kelly Design</a>   Atlanta, GA
Contract Design	Jillian Rooker & Amanda Dashwood of <a href="#">Rook and Dash</a>   Atlanta, GA
Residential Design	Matt Donahoe of <a href="#">bureau interior architecture   design</a>   Nashville, TN

"It's truly inspiring to see the remarkable vision and craftsmanship of this year's winners," said Katie Miner, ADAC General Manager. "What's especially exciting is that all three firms are first-time winners. Rook and Dash and bureau interior architecture | design made their first appearances as finalists this year, and Joel Kelly Design, previously recognized in the residential category, received his first time win in architecture. Just like last year, we're seeing an impressive body of work submitted from both new and seasoned design professionals in the Southeast – a reflection of the region's abundance of talent and expanding reach. Because the awards are blind-coded, each year offers a new opportunity to spotlight fresh voices and perspectives. That's what makes these honors so meaningful – they celebrate pure design excellence without bias, and that authenticity continues to elevate our industry."



*(Left to Right: Joel Kelly Design, Jillian Rooker & Amanda Dashwood of Rook and Dash, and Matt Donahoe of bureau interior architecture | design)*

With more than 120 entries, this year's distinguished finalists and winners were selected by a team of top industry professionals, including VERANDA Executive Editor, **Ellen McGauley**, Young Huh Interior Design Founder, **Young Huh**, and Tim Barber Architects Founder, **Tim Barber**. Remarks from the judges regarding the finalists are below:

"The interior design of this residence is so perfectly in step with the architecture. Each room is like a symphony – I could tell the designer furnished them with such reverence for the materials, the forms, the textures of the house itself," expresses Ellen McGauley about Matt Donahoe of bureau interior architecture | design.

Young Huh describes the space Jillian Rooker and Amanda Dashwood of Rook and Dash created as "warm and inviting, sexy yet restrained."

Tim Barber notes, “No detail has been neglected, with aged brass details, pegged shelf supports, antique mirrors, walnut tabletops, and molded plywood seat backs. Even the bar ladder, a leather bar top, and the considerate restrooms say, “be our guest,” of Rook and Dash’s space.

“The modest, somber exterior of this lakeside home does not prepare a visitor for the sun-drenched grand interior. Counterpoint abounds, contrasting rigorous symmetry with weathered lap siding and vertical planks, wood shingled roofs next to standing seam metal roofs, and inside, pairing rough stone and reclaimed beams with smooth plaster and tall steel windows and doors,” reflects Tim Barber of Joel Kelly Design.

**Additional photos of project submissions and interviews with the 2025 winners are available upon request.**

**ABOUT JOEL KELLY DESIGN:** Joel Kelly is the founder and creative director of Joel Kelly Design, a distinguished residential design firm based in Atlanta, Georgia. Since its founding in 1998, the firm has embraced an interdisciplinary approach, seamlessly integrating architecture and interior design across projects throughout the southeastern United States. Kelly’s work has garnered widespread acclaim and has been featured in both regional and national publications, including Architectural Digest, Veranda, Traditional Home, Southern Home Magazine, Atlanta Magazine HOME, Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles, and Modern Luxury Interiors. His firm’s diverse portfolio is a testament to a deep belief in design as a personal essay – each project a carefully crafted blend of insight, artistry, and the client’s ambition.

**ABOUT ROOK AND DASH:** Rook and Dash is a full-service interior design studio specializing in ground-up build and renovation projects. With more than 25 years of collective design experience, Rook and Dash projects range from high-end hotels and award-winning restaurants to large-scale offices and unique residences.

**ABOUT BUREAU INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN:** Founded by acclaimed designer Matt Donahoe, bureau interior architecture | design is a Nashville-based studio celebrated for its architectural approach to interior design. At the firm’s core, they create spaces merging comfort and elegance while reflecting the individuality and purpose of each client. Their work focuses on crafting environments that evoke a lasting sense of home and connection, making projects feel uniquely personal. Through Donahoe’s expertise, bureau interior architecture | design has earned recognition for their distinctive style and dedication to creating unforgettable spaces that enrich the lives of those who inhabit them. The firm continues to set the standard for excellence, offering a comprehensive, thoughtful approach to design that leaves a lasting impression.

**ABOUT ADAC:** Built more than 60 years ago by renowned architect and developer John Portman in the prestigious Buckhead community of Atlanta, ADAC (Atlanta Decorative Arts Center) is a community-focused, nationally recognized leader in the world of interior design and home fashion, serving as the essential one-stop shopping resource for interior designers, architects, and builders. In November 2018, ADAC was acquired by ANDMORE<sup>SM</sup> and parent company Blackstone, the world’s largest operator of premier showroom space for the furnishings, home décor, and gift industries. The ADAC campus consists of ADAC and ADAC WEST, two restaurants The Hungry Peach and KR Steakbar, and more than 550,000 square feet featuring over 40 design studios and more than 65 showrooms offering over 1,500 of the industry’s finest product lines, including furniture, fabric, rugs, lighting, accessories, floor and wall coverings, antiques, fine art and framing, kitchens, bath, tile, and stone, and home theater products. Likewise, ADAC’s extensive services include custom designs such as framing, electronic systems, and kitchen cabinetry. To learn more about ADAC + ADAC West, visit [adacatlanta.com](http://adacatlanta.com).

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