

Nanyang Technological University's Gaia wins top UNESCO prize for architecture and design



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SINGAPORE: In a remarkable achievement, Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Gaia, the largest wooden building in Asia, was awarded the top UNESCO prize for architecture and design under the world's most beautiful campuses category on December 2.

According to a *Straits Times* report, the prestigious accolade was presented at the Prix Versailles World Architecture and Design Awards 2024, a series of competitions celebrating contemporary architectural projects worldwide.

Gaia: Cutting-edge design

The Prix Versailles, one of the top three world titles in architecture, recognizes innovation, creativity, local heritage, sustainability, and design. This year, [NTU's Gaia](#) stood out among its competitors,

showcasing its commitment to environmental sustainability and cutting-edge design.

Constructed using mass-engineered timber sourced from sustainably managed forests, Gaia is proof of NTU's dedication to pioneering sustainable building solutions.

The building produces 2,500 fewer tons of carbon dioxide annually than typical concrete structures, equivalent to over 7,000 round-trip flights between Singapore and Hong Kong.

[See also Elderly cleaner found dead with belt around his neck at Changi Airport T1](#)

Completed in 2022, Gaia houses NTU's business school and employs energy-efficient systems and renewable technologies, making it one of the greenest buildings on campus.

NTU's senior vice president for administration, Tan Aik Na, accepted the award at a ceremony held at the Unesco headquarters in Paris. She expressed her pride in the university's commitment to creating an inspiring and environmentally responsible campus.

Changi Airport

In another significant win, [Changi Airport](#) Terminal 2 received a special prize for its interior. After a major 3½-year renovation, the terminal now boasts over 21,000 sq m of additional floor space, equivalent to about three football fields.

The revamped terminal features a four-story-tall multimedia waterfall and a garden with a digital "sky" ceiling that emulates real-time weather conditions.

More than 20,000 plants and several ponds adorn the departure transit area, creating a serene and immersive environment for travellers.

Ms Ong Sim Lian, group senior vice-president for design management at Changi Airport Group, expressed her gratitude to passengers and partners for inspiring the creation of such a remarkable travel experience.

[See also Elderly baggage handler gets jail for swapping hundreds of tags at Changi Airport](#)

Pan Pacific Orchard – nature and sustainability

Additionally, [Pan Pacific Orchard](#) was recognized with a world selection prize in the world's most beautiful hotels category.

This award comes just two months after the hotel was named the world's best new skyscraper by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat.

Mr Choe Peng Sum, chief executive of Pan Pacific Hotels Group, highlighted the hotel's biophilic design approach, which integrates nature with the built environment to promote sustainability and well-being.

These accolades underscore Singapore's growing reputation as a hub for innovative and [sustainable](#) architecture, setting new standards in design excellence and environmental responsibility.