

F/CA Profile

Pilarin Ferrer Viscasillas, AIA



Photo by Arch. Luis V. Badillo, AIA.

"I believe most of us live hectic, complicated lives, so the spaces we create have to be uncomplicated, easy to tend to and comfortable. 'Less is more' is definitely a big part of my design philosophy. Ideally, rich materials, good workmanship and the integration of vegetation are important parts of my designs, as well as the use of delicate accent lighting." Pilarin Ferrer Viscasillas

With a husband who is also an architect, two sons, a dog, a cat and a porch under renovation, it's no wonder that Pilarin Ferrer Viscasillas has little time for hobbies. She is also the 2006 President of the AIA Puerto Rico Chapter, having served as a Director for two years and then as President-elect. Since 1992, she has been a staff architect with Mendez, Brunner, Badillo Architects & Engineers in San Juan, a firm that was established in 1946. Since joining it, Pilarin has been involved with a number of interior architecture projects including the new headquarters for McCann Erikson Puerto Rico and McCann Erikson Panama and several projects for U.S. Government agen-

cies. One of the projects of which she is most proud is the 2,500-square-foot Arecibo Observatory Learning Center that is part of the Visitors Center Complex. The project received an award from AIA Puerto Rico in 2002.

Pilarin's degrees, a Bachelor's in Environmental Design and a Master's in Architecture are both from the University of Puerto Rico. She also studied the History of Art and Architecture for two years at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She is a member of the Colegio de Arquitectos de Puerto Rico and interestingly, the third consecutive female to serve as President of AIA Puerto Rico.

As Chapter President, her interests have expanded to include "The Other Caribbean," as she calls it, a goal that includes making contact with architects in the English, Dutch and

French-speaking islands. After attending a conference presented by the St. Lucia Institute of Architects, she was invited to participate in a meeting of the Federation of Caribbean Architecture Associations (FCAA) in Aruba. Her contact with this organization resulted in the FCAA scheduling its next meeting to coincide with AIA Puerto Rico's October 2007 convention. She has also planned an educational trip for architects to Martinique that is taking place this summer.

In her first few months as Chapter President, Pilarin has learned and expressed that "coming together as one [in the Caribbean] is not a simple matter. Language, customs, traditions and heritage are very strong and varied among the islands and the region in general." Nevertheless, it's a challenge that she welcomes by saying



La Rambla Plaza Tower Executive Office in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Note the wooden grid in front of the reception desk. Photo by Arch. Luis Perez Ramos, AIA.



The Arecibo Observatory Learning Center in Puerto Rico represents the second phase of the Visitor's Center project. The architecture is adapted to the topography, a very steep hill, and uses the shape of marine fossils as its reference. Cast-in-place concrete creates the contrast between the natural ruggedness of the site and the technological activities that occur inside. Photos by Dr. Jose Alonso.

