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Elliott + Associates Architects

Designer of futuristic skyscraper intended to harness the wind

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St. Louis Community College

Boasting the largest LEED-certified community college facility

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Davis Brody Bond Aedas

Renowned for innovative design solutions in complex laboratory projects

GREEN BUSINESS QUARTERLY

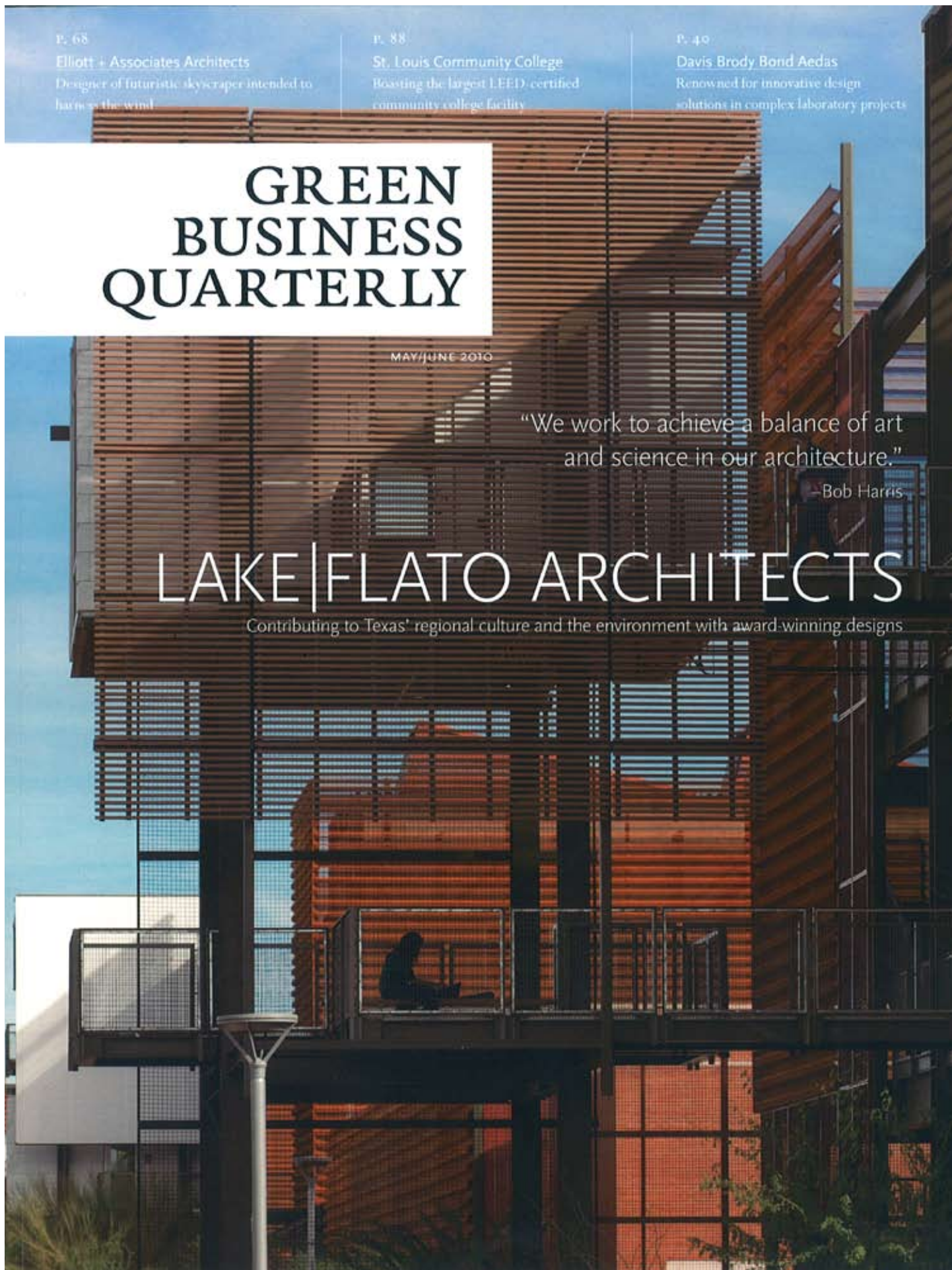
MAY/JUNE 2010

"We work to achieve a balance of art and science in our architecture."

— Bob Harris

LAKE|FLATO ARCHITECTS

Contributing to Texas' regional culture and the environment with award-winning designs





Spaces 2525, an Antenora-designed mixed-use complex, incorporates locally produced materials, such as D'hanis clay brick used on the buildings exterior.

ANTENORA ARCHITECTS, LLP

Designing healthier and more sustainable buildings while mitigating costs for clients

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

AUSTIN-BASED ANTENORA ARCHITECTS, LLP WAS founded in 1997 on the belief that architecture should be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people who use the building, rather than a rigid expression of architectural dogma.

AT A GLANCE

LOCATION:
AUSTIN, TX

FOUNDED:
1997

2008 SALES:
\$800,000

Founder Michael Antenora believes a well-conceived building is one that's responsive to the needs of people; mindful of the forces of nature, local environment, and site; architecturally respectful to its community and context; and can be built within reasonable and predictable budget and schedule expectations. "We're always thinking about ways to work with what's given to us," Antenora says. "That means if there's a hill or trees or view on the site, or a predominate local building material, we try to incorporate that into the design. We

keep that context in mind and don't try to come in and wipe off the slate and put this new foreign object on the landscape. We try to be more organic and holistic in the way we consider things and make decisions."

In terms of green and sustainability, Antenora Architects wants to give clients a healthier and greener building in a far less costly way than, perhaps, they had imagined. "As a profession, we have more resources than ever before to build healthy buildings and utilize sustainable practices," Antenora says. "We believe we add value to our services by using our knowledge and experience to not only help our clients create a handsome, healthy, and environmentally sound building, but also to further their business objectives or fulfill their personal aspirations for their home."

Antenora Architects has been consistently recognized for its excellence in design, construction, and business integrity, as well as its contributions to the community at large. "One of the fundamental, environmentally conscious practices that we've utilized since the very beginning is to encourage renovation and reuse whenever appropriate, rather than tearing down and building new," Antenora says, adding that around ten years ago it was cheaper to tear down a construction and start over. "However," he continues, "cheaper and easier can be rather subjective, depending on your point of view. Fortunately, with some recent successful reuse

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—Michael Antenora, Founder

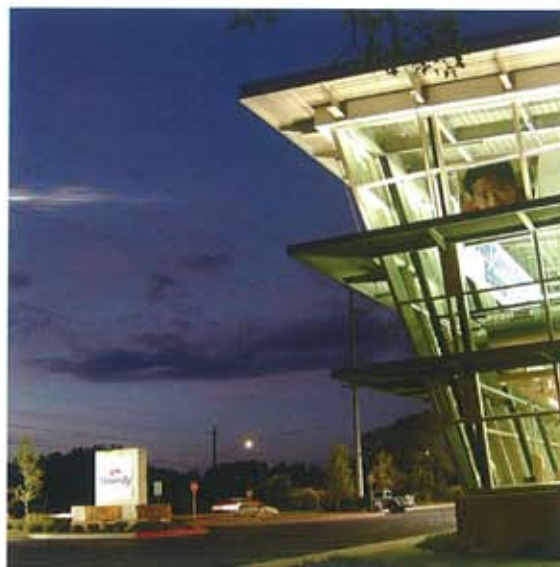
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projects around the country, it's not as radical a notion to consider that you may save some cost and get a better building by reusing what you have rather than starting from scratch.”

While Antenora is encouraged and excited about green building practices becoming more mainstream, he's also a little disappointed and dismayed at the same time. “As it's coming to the fore,” he says, “people are much more aware of it, and it's much more a conventional part of practice than it was 10–20 years ago.”

But Antenora is also seeing some firms in his industry greenwashing their clients. These companies, he says, use the green movement as a marketing tool rather than valuing sustainable ideals and incorporating it into the design. “As architects, we have an amazing opportunity and responsibility to increase awareness about issues like sustainability, and even to educate to a degree,” he says. “But if we're only using those opportunities as a means to get the next job, and we're not really practicing relative to those core values once we get that job, that's really disappointing.”

However, Antenora adds that the more engaged and thoughtful professionals are using this as a legitimate tool and are very sincere in the practice of it. “We're going to have buildings that operate more efficiently, use less resources to be built, and the air and interior environments will be healthier for their occupants,” he says. “It's of no surprise that this often leads to an overall increase in not only productivity but also in employee morale. Further, with continued focus, the manufacturing and construction processes, both from the cradle and grave sides, are going to be much cleaner and will be less invasive and destructive to the environment. There's just very little downside to any of this.” □BQ



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