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## 2010 Design Awards

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### Hotel Indigo Athens, GA

**The Team:** Rialto Property Partners (ownership); Surber Barber Choate and Hertlein (architects); Ellen Hanson Designs (interior design)

**The Brief:** Create an upscale hotel fusing the vibrancy of the local art and music scenes with the best in environmental responsibility.

**The Project:** The \$17-million five-story hotel opened in August with 130 guestrooms and earned a LEED Gold rating.



**The Finished Product:** The eco-chic property has an art gallery featuring local artists and a private 7,000-square-foot music venue for intimate performances from regionally and nationally acclaimed artists. The architectural inspiration comes from the hotel's setting in the American South, and the building was shaped to be reminiscent of the region's popular covered bridges. The interiors evoke a "Southern farmstead modern" feel as guestrooms maximize space and daylight with higher ceilings and larger windows as textiles and colors add to the farmstead feel. Polished concrete floors and soaring ceilings highlight the open lobby. Locally sourced materials help with sustainable design, but also by adding more local charms: Granite from 35 miles away was used for the foundation and lobby-level exterior walls and the lobby registration desk and bar were built from steel a few miles from the site. The gallery corridor and entry walls were crafted with reclaimed wood from a 100-year-old cotton gin in South Carolina.

**The Focal Points:** A partnership with local art gallery Mercury Art Works gives the hotel a mini museum featuring rotating exhibits and a plethora of local artwork permanently displayed throughout the hotel. Striking concert posters of southern bands and large photographic murals of native plant life are spread throughout guestrooms, corridors and the lobby level and custom installations were created on-site for all 12 suites. A large sculptured installation made from 15,6000 individually linked ball chains visually separates the lounge from the elevator lobby.

