

In 2004 Maestri was honored with one (of only six) international placemaking awards for this project. As a part of the master planning team, Maestri was responsible for creating the story and original vision of the place now called Santana Row. We helped identify uses through demographic research, then developed concepts which were carried out in the thousands of placemaking details that delight and communicate with the visitor. Our efforts, along with the client's vision and determined follow-through, have created a "must see" urban district for those interested in studying new density — especially on the West Coast.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, Santana Row covers over 42 acres and demonstrates a density of residential living above the amenities of shopping streets in a very unique way. The rental housing was successfully leased up only months after opening with rents that started 30% above market rate. Retail leasing was complete at opening with an exciting combination of high-end shopping unlike anywhere else. Restaurants have done an outrageous, land mine business since day one. Truly remarkable considering this all occurred during a down turn in the market with Silicon Valley's dot.com bust and the events of 9/11.

Maestri's design work happened over the course of five years. We were with the developer two years prior to the selection of architects. As suggested, the developer hired various architectural firms and landscape designers to help create a more authentic urban place . . . not the easiest thing to do. After planning and city approvals, the placemaking task meant coordination of hundreds of designers, artisans and fabrication members. "Found objects" were an important part of our philosophy of establishing some history. The client enthusiastically participated in acquiring some of the objects that we used in our design palette. It was a terrific collaboration. Objects included things such as: a French chapel facade, antique metalwork, pottery and fountains which were imported from Europe and reconstructed on-site to add a sense of history and patina. Maestri's custom designed and fabricated items included: metal work, custom tiles, architectural detailing (such as building textures, column bases, window span-drels, cornice details, railings) custom lanterns, chandeliers, sculptural features, fountains, landscape features, street plaques, lighting, corner guards and portals, to name a few. We named the streets, created building and residential names with supporting identities, signs, addresses and entry details.

In our design of the signs — which were not only to help with wayfinding but are as important in creating the sense of place — we challenged ourselves to think of every nuance, helping make this feel like the texture of an urban streetscape where the layering of information has the advantage of time.

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