

MID-CENTURY MODERN DISNEY



Ruba Awad-Moran
Partner
AO



AO designed
Disney's Parkside
Market

PHOTO CREDIT: DUSTIN BAILEY PHOTOGRAPHY

AO Brings New Look to Downtown Disney

By PARIMAL M. ROHIT

ANAHEIM — A local architectural firm is in the middle of the ongoing changes to one of Orange County's most popular destinations—Downtown Disney. Orange-based AO has already completed two major

Special Report:
Architecture
[Page 11](#)

projects—Parkside Market and Sip & Sonder. Both places were designed and built to provide guests with a casual dining experience. AO is also working on other Disneyland Resort projects that haven't yet been disclosed.

► [AO 14](#)

MDxHealth Sees First Operating Profit

MEDTECH: Sales jump 20%; to buy Exosome Diagnostics

By YUIKA YOSHIDA

IRVINE — It was a milestone second quarter for precision diagnostics company MDxHealth SA.

The company achieved its first quarter of operating profitability; it reported positive adjusted EBITDA of \$1.4 million, up from a loss of \$4.9 million a year ago.

Revenue increased 20% to \$26.6 million, marking the 17th consecutive quarter of 20% or more quarterly revenue growth.



► [MDxHealth 52](#) MDxHealth offers non-invasive liquid and tissue-based tests for prostate cancer

Lowe's to Buy Santa Ana Distributor for \$8.8B

CONSTRUCTION: Says FBM adds 'Pro' customers

By PARIMAL M. ROHIT

SANTA ANA — Lowe's Companies Inc. is buying a Santa Ana-based distributor of ceiling systems, commercial doors, dry-wall and metal framing for \$8.8 billion.

The deal to acquire Foundation Building Materials Inc., also known as FBM, would help Lowe's create more opportunities for its "Pro" customers who are on the market for large residential and commercial products.

"With the acquisition of FBM, we are strategically expanding our Pro offering to serve the large Pro, especially their planned spend," Lowe's Chairman and



Ruben Mendoza
CEO
Foundation Building
Materials

► [Lowe's 52](#)



Newport Plaza, a five-floor office building at 895 Dove St. in Newport Beach, is under new ownership

First Citizens Bank Buys NB Office for \$32.7M

CRE: Goldman Sachs sells 5-floor, 108K-sq.-ft. building

By PARIMAL M. ROHIT

NEWPORT BEACH — A North Carolina bank with an existing presence in Newport Beach made a play on a new location in the affluent coastal town.

Raleigh, North Carolina-based First Citizens Bank paid \$32.7 million for the five-floor and

► [Newport Plaza 7](#)



P. 3

DEFENSE:
NASCAR race Anduril 250 slated next year at Naval Base Coronado

P. 8

HEALTHCARE:
Helio Genomics appoints Bharat Tewarie as new CEO

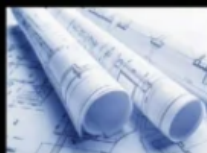
THE LIST

ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS
[See page 18](#)



CRISPIMAGING

SERVING CUSTOMERS BETTER THAN THEY HAVE EVER BEEN SERVED BEFORE!



CRISPIMAGING.COM
REPRO • COLOR • DIGITAL





The AO-designed Sip and Sonder sits astride Downtown Disney's first food hall, Parkside Market

Sip & Sonder, a coffee shop founded by **Amanda-Jane Thomas** and **Shanita Nicholas**, is located outside the dining hall.

Mid-Century California

AO was specifically instructed to design the structure with California's Mid-Century Modern architecture, a movement founded by developer **Joseph Eichler** and advanced by architects or designers such as **Frank Lloyd Wright**.

Home design group **Lumens** describes California Mid-Century as architecture that emerged shortly after World War II and combined "modern design, Scandinavian minimalism and the bohemian spirit."

"Rooted in California's cultural and creative ethos, the style emphasizes simplicity, functionality and a harmonious connection with nature," according to the Lumens website.

Awad-Moran, who gave the Business Journal a tour of Parkside Market earlier this year, said **Walt Disney Co.**'s engineering team instructed AO to embrace the mid-century modern architectural style when designing the new structures on the westside of Downtown Disney, where the former AMC Theaters existed before it was demolished.

"All of the designs for the buildings try to showcase the origins of the mid-century style that started in California," she told the Business Journal.

Beyond Downtown Disney

Downtown Disney is just one portion of the portfolio of AO, founded in 1974 by Chief Executive and Managing Partner **Jack Selman**.

Other Orange County projects on AO's docket are **The Village at Laguna Hills** in Laguna Hills, **The Row at Red Hill** in Santa Ana, **Colonnade at The Market Place** in Irvine, **Kanyon at Brea** in Brea and **Porto's Bakery** in Anaheim.

AO is also the design team for **Legends Tower**, a 1,907-foot skyscraper proposed to be built in Oklahoma City. If completed, the building may become the country's tallest building. Construction has yet to begin on

the tower, which has faced an enormous amount of skepticism because of that city's relatively small population and location in "Tornado Alley." ■

AO

- **FOUNDED:** 1974
- **BUSINESS:** Architecture
- **HQ:** Orange
- **FOUNDER/CEO/MANAGING PARTNER:** Jack Selman
- **WEBSITE:** aoarchitects.com
- **NOTABLE:** Designed Parkside Market and Sip & Sonder at Downtown Disney





The Vista Parkside Market's bar has a mid-century modern look

AO

from page 1

"When we started the project, they told us, 'Our vision for this whole area is to be mid-century modern, and we want you guys to give us a design that embraces that style,'" **Ruba Awad-Moran**, a partner at AO, told the Business Journal.

Disneyland Resort, which includes two theme parks, Downtown Disney District and nearby hotels, is embarking on a multibillion redevelopment known as **DisneylandForward**. Over

the next few decades, the 500-acre Disney-owned property will see new attractions, hotels and parking added as part of the project.

AO, which stands for Architects Orange, is taking part in the redevelopment. It ranks No. 2 on the Business Journal's annual list of architectural firms, reporting \$74.6 million in OC billings for the year ended June 30 (see page 18).

The New Style

The retail district adjacent to Disneyland and **Disney California Adventure** is aiming for upscale dining by award-winning chefs,

shopping and entertainment.

Gone are brands such as **Rainforest Café**, **AMC Theaters** and the **ESPN Zone**. **Earl of Sandwich** has shuffled around a few times and is currently operating in the space once occupied by **La Brea Bakery**. Soon, that space will be razed to make room for **Porto's Bakery**. A permanent location for Earl of Sandwich is under construction near Parkside Market.

AO is on tap to design the long-anticipated Cuban bakery.

New concepts entering Downtown Disney over the past year include **Din Tai Fung**, a

Taiwanese restaurant chain known for its elevated soup dumplings and noodles.

Michelin-honored chef, **Carlos Gaytán**, last year introduced three Mexican dining concepts: **Paseo**, upscale dining with a focus on authentic Mexican cuisine, **Céntrico**, an outdoor bar and restaurant with high-end Mexican small plates and tequila-based cocktails, and **Tiendita**, a quick-service spot with kiosk ordering serving street-food staples.

Full-service steakhouse **Arthur & Sons Steak and Bourbon** and quick-service eatery **Pearl's Roadside BBQ**, both led by Michelin-honored chef **Joe Isidori**, will fill in the space left by **Tortilla Jo's**. Opening dates for these restaurants haven't yet been announced.

The Parkside

AO has previously worked at Downtown Disney, including designing the flagship **Starbucks** in 2014.

It is one of 1,700 Starbucks locations nationwide that AO has designed.

Parkside, a dining hall and bar, and **Sip & Sonder**, a walk-up coffee shop, opened earlier this year. They are both located near the Disneyland monorail stop, allowing visitors to access the dining hall and coffee shop from the flagship theme park.

The two-level building features **GG's Chicken Shop**, a sandwich restaurant founded by Michelin-honored chef **Lee Wolen**, and **Seoul Sister**, a Korean inspired eatery serving bibimbap, on the ground floor.

A staircase leads visitors to a second-level bar called **Vista**, where diners can order food from the ground level restaurants or specialized drinks from the bar.

A balcony on one side of Parkside Market overlooks an open space that features the Downtown Disney Live Stage. Guests can take in any of the live shows taking place on the stage.

Outdated Spaces Cost You More Than You Think.

An antiquated workspace can drive away clients, employees, and opportunities. Don't let your space hold your business back. A functional redesign ensures your space works for you—not against you.

**REVAMP.
REFRESH.
REINVENT.**

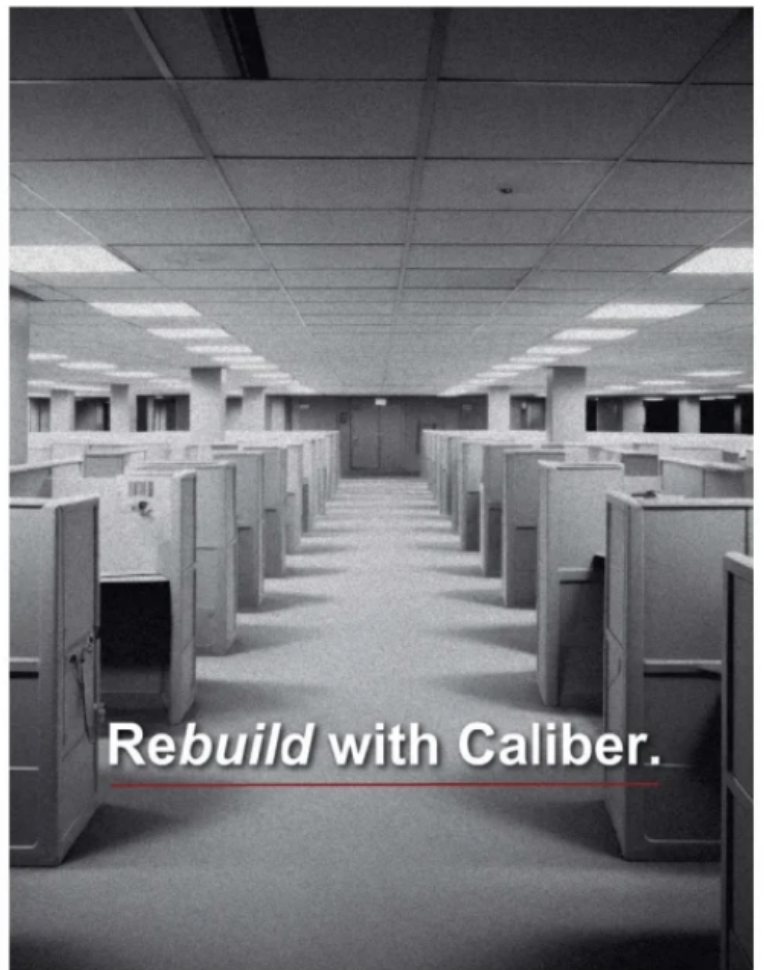
Ranked
Top 20
in Orange
County!

(714) 255.2700

WWW.CALIBERCONSTRUCTIONINC.COM



Caliber
CONSTRUCTION, INC.
License # B-635842



Rebuild with Caliber.

AO BRINGS NEW LOOK TO DOWNTOWN DISNEY

By Parimal Rohit

August 25, 2025



The AO-designed Sip and Sonder sits astride the Downtown Disney's first food hall Parkside Market

A local architectural firm is in the middle of the ongoing changes to one of Orange County's most popular destinations—Downtown Disney.

Orange-based [AO](#) has already completed two major projects—Parkside Market and Sip & Sonder. Both places were designed and built to provide guests with a casual dining experience. AO is also working on other Disneyland Resort projects that haven't yet been disclosed.

"When we started the project, they told us, 'Our vision for this whole area is to be mid-century modern, and we want you guys to give us a design that embraces that style,'" Ruba Awad-Moran, a partner at AO, told the Business Journal.

Disneyland Resort, which includes two theme parks, Downtown Disney District and nearby hotels, is embarking on a multibillion redevelopment known as DisneylandForward. Over the next few decades, the 500-acre Disney-owned property will see new attractions, hotels and parking added as part of the project.

AO, which stands for Architects Orange, is taking part in the redevelopment. It ranks No. 2 on the Business Journal's annual list of architectural firms, reporting \$74.6 million in OC billings for the year ended June 30 (see page 18).

The New Style

The retail district adjacent to Disneyland and Disney California Adventure is aiming for upscale dining by award-winning chefs, shopping and entertainment.

Gone are brands such as Rainforest Café, AMC Theaters and the ESPN Zone. Earl of Sandwich has shuffled around a few times and is currently operating in the space once occupied by La Brea Bakery. Soon, that space will be razed to make room for Porto's Bakery. A permanent location for Earl of Sandwich is under construction near Parkside Market.

AO is on tap to design the long-anticipated Cuban bakery.

New concepts entering Downtown Disney over the past year include Din Tai Fung, a Taiwanese restaurant chain known for its elevated soup dumplings and noodles.

Michelin-honored chef, Carlos Gaytán, last year introduced three Mexican dining concepts: Paseo, upscale dining with a focus on authentic Mexican cuisine, Céntrico, an outdoor bar and restaurant with high-end Mexican small plates and tequila-based cocktails, and Tiendita, a quick-service spot with kiosk ordering serving street-food staples.

Full-service steakhouse Arthur & Sons Steak and Bourbon and quick-service eatery Pearl's Roadside BBQ, both led by Michelin-honored chef Joe Isidori, will fill in the space left by Tortilla Jo's. Opening dates for these restaurants haven't yet been announced.

The Parkside

AO has previously worked at Downtown Disney, including designing the flagship Starbucks in 2014.

It is one of 1,700 Starbucks locations nationwide that AO has designed.

Parkside, a dining hall and bar, and Sip & Sonder, a walk-up coffee shop, opened earlier this year. They are both located near the Disneyland monorail stop, allowing visitors to access the dining hall and coffee shop from the flagship theme park.

The two-level building features GG's Chicken Shop, a sandwich restaurant founded by Michelin-honored chef Lee Wolen, and Seoul Sister, a Korean inspired eatery serving bibimbap, on the ground floor.

A staircase leads visitors to a second-level bar called Vista, where diners can order food from the ground level restaurants or specialized drinks from the bar.

A balcony on one side of Parkside Market overlooks an open space that features the Downtown Disney Live Stage. Guests can take in any of the live shows taking place on the stage.

Sip & Sonder, a coffee shop founded by Amanda-Jane Thomas and Shanita Nicholas, is located outside the dining hall.

Mid-Century California

AO was specifically instructed to design the structure with California's Mid-Century Modern architecture, a movement founded by developer Joseph Eichler and advanced by architects or designers such as Frank Lloyd Wright.

Home design group Lumens describes California Mid-Century as architecture that emerged shortly after World War II and combined "modern design, Scandinavian minimalism and the bohemian spirit."

"Rooted in California's cultural and creative ethos, the style emphasizes simplicity, functionality and a harmonious connection with nature," according to the Lumens website.

Awad-Moran, who gave the Business Journal a tour of Parkside Market earlier this year, said Walt Disney Co.'s engineering team instructed AO to embrace the mid-center modern architectural style when designing the new structures on the westside of Downtown Disney, where the former AMC Theaters existed before it was demolished.

"All of the designs for the buildings try to showcase the origins of the mid-century style that started in California," she told the Business Journal.

Beyond Downtown Disney

Downtown Disney is just one portion of the portfolio of AO, founded in 1974 by Chief Executive and Managing Partner Jack Selman.

Other Orange County projects on AO's docket are The Village at Laguna Hills in Laguna Hills, The Row at Red Hill in Santa Ana, Colonnade at The Market Place in Irvine, Canyon at Brea in Brea and Porto's Bakery in Anaheim.

AO is also the design team for Legends Tower, a 1,907-foot skyscraper proposed to be built in Oklahoma City. If completed, the building may become the country's tallest building.

Construction has yet to begin on the tower, which has faced an enormous amount of skepticism because of that city's relatively small population and location in "Tornado Alley."