

# Time-Tested Institution Wins AIA Twenty-Five Year Award

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM



“A benchmark and role model for aquariums everywhere.”

AIA Twenty-Five Year Award  
(jury comment)

In what became a blueprint for many other aquariums around the world, Monterey Bay Aquarium was designed by San Francisco-based architectural firm EHDD “to focus on the unique marine ecology of one habitat: the Monterey Bay and its shoreline.”

Since 1984, the Aquarium has enjoyed an intimate relationship with the land and water over which it was built – literally participating in the natural ecosystem it showcases – pumping in unfiltered seawater that fills some of its exhibit tanks, as one example.

In 2016, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) bestowed its coveted Twenty-Five Year Award to the Aquarium. Each year, the award recognizes a precedent-setting “project that has stood the test of time for 25–35 years and continues to set standards of excellence for its architectural design and significance.”

Comments from the awards jury included, “a brilliant, gritty adaptive reuse and still at the forefront of interactive museum space” and “a benchmark and role model for aquariums everywhere.”

In 2002 (Ellison job #9554), the Aquarium installed two pairs of Ellison Bronze custom balanced doors made of extruded aluminum, painted black, with stainless steel tie rod construction and panic exit devices.

In 2004 (Ellison job #9748), the Aquarium subsequently installed an additional three pairs and three single Ellison Bronze custom balanced doors, also made of aluminum and painted black, with stainless steel tie rod construction and panic exit devices.

The Aquarium first purchased Ellison Bronze doors to replace previous doors with swing components made of aluminum and steel – materials that at the Aquarium would wear out after only three to four months.

“The original four Ellison doors are still in place and working, in good condition but with some ongoing maintenance,” says Master Crafts Worker Jurek Zawadzki of Monterey Bay Aquarium. “Those doors are dual egress configuration – with one door in-swinging and one door out-swinging in each pair – and two of them are outfitted to serve visitors with disabilities, with Senior Swing LCN power operators.”



The Ellison doors installed in 2002 are large size: 48" wide x 129" high each. These doors have durable balanced hardware with most of the components made of solid bronze material to withstand the corrosive surroundings of an oceanfront location fronting. The Aquarium subsequently installed nine balanced doors, 44" wide x 107" high each. Those doors work on the same principles.

"Two pairs of doors lead from the main Aquarium to ocean-view decks and the Great Tide Pool," says Facilities Maintenance Manager Donald Malsbary of Monterey Bay Aquarium. "Another set of doors is located at the main entrance on Cannery Row – they also serve as the primary exit doors for the Aquarium. Many of the Aquarium's 2 million visitors a year exit through Ellison Bronze doors onto Cannery Row and a significant number of its visitors get to the outdoor ocean-view decks through the Great Tide Pool doors."

As with countless other prestigious projects in its 100+ year history – including the San Francisco Exploratorium, another waterfront project – Ellison Bronze, based in Falconer, NY, creates doors that achieve the highest standards for aesthetics, functionality and durability. This includes the ability to withstand heavy traffic. During its peak season, Monterey Bay Aquarium receives as many as 12,000 visitors a day!

Unlike conventional entry doors, an Ellison aluminum door is constructed from heavy wall extrusions that are made solely for Ellison and specifically designed to work in conjunction with their balanced hardware system. The door leaf's horizontal top and bottom rails are attached to the vertical stiles using both welded and bolted connections with additional stainless steel tie rods at horizontal rails, yielding an extremely durable and long lasting entrance.

While Ellison balanced doors consist of heavy and robust components, they can still be opened with ease. A balanced door features an inset pivot point at two-thirds the width of the door, creating a balance that distributes the weight so the door



requires little force to open. The inset balancing point allows for an easier open force, even against external wind and internal building pressures.

Ellison provides detailed record keeping and full warranties – important when considering the extensive lifespan of an Ellison door. Every door made is imprinted with an individual project number (similar to that of a car's VIN number) to facilitate easy tracking and maintenance. Furthermore, all Ellison balanced hardware components are machined in-house, which means that replacement components are always readily available.

The architectural firm, EHDD, is proud of the Monterey Bay Aquarium project and recently posted this comment on its website:

*The Aquarium was built on the site of a former sardine cannery on the famed Cannery Row, from which one of John Steinbeck's novels takes its name. The initial funding for the project came from David and Lucile Packard. David Packard was the co-founder of Hewlett-Packard.*

Roughly 100 miles up the coast, there is another oceanfront science project involving Ellison Bronze extruded aluminum custom balanced doors and EHDD: the San Francisco Exploratorium. Here's what Rick Feldman, AIA, LEED BD+C, project manager and associate principal at EHDD had to say about the Exploratorium: "With the museum located directly on the waterfront, we needed a door system that could stand up to heavy traffic in a corrosive marine environment."

"It's quite the technical achievement when a building can accommodate multiple changes the way that Monterey Bay Aquarium has," said EHDD Principal and Aquarium Expert Marc L'Italien. "It has been a great privilege for our firm to continue to be called upon to upgrade, expand and evolve our original concept throughout the last 30 years," L'Italien said.



# Ellison

CUSTOM CRAFTED BALANCED DOORS

www.ellisonbronze.com 125 West Main Street Falconer, NY 14733 800.665.6445

Download Ellison's interactive brochure available on the App Store and Google Play.

