The folks at Delancey proved once again that the best real estate deals come from a vision and a missionary zeal that have nothing whatsoever to do with spread sheets and amortization schedules.

In June, the reddish four-story complex with its Italian style won the Special Judges Award from the Pacific Coast Builders Conference for innovative architecture. Designed by the San Francisco architecture firm of Backen, Arrigoni and Ross, "the project illustrated a special touch of excellence," according to the FCBC jury.

The project also includes 60,000 square feet of retail space.

Prospective renters seeking an apartment in one of several neighboring rental complexes in the South Beach redevelopment area often mistakenly come to the guarded gates of Delancey looking for a leasing office, said long-time Delancey resident Abe Irizarry.

"It's because we have the nicest development in the area," said Irizarry who served as a construction supervisor on the Triangle.

Until the Triangle project, Irizarry said his "only construction experience was filling cracks with cement in the handball court at San Quentin prison."

'Some sort of magic'

Founded in 1971 by Silbert and the late John Maher, Delancey is named after New York's Lower East Side where immigrants at the turn of the century banded together to support each other for survival.

The philosophy at Delancey centers around self-reliance and struggle. After visiting Embarcadero Triangle, I was left with two thoughts — either these values have unlimited capacity to overcome obstacles, or Delancey is blessed with some sort of magic that accounts for its success as a developer.

I have heard countless do-gooder groups and even well-qualified private developers talk about their plans to build real estate projects half the size of Delancey. Most of them never move off the drawing boards.
On the Embarcadero at the foot of Brannan and First streets, the Embarcadero Triangle is the home for 350 Delancey Street Foundation residents, who built the 3-acre development themselves.
When nearby property owners were first contacted about the plans, they objected because they thought it would hurt their ability to rent their new upscale apartments. But Silbert said, “We were the cleanest neighbors that they could have. We’re drug free, crime free and alcohol free, what more could they want.”

On My Livable and Sensible Scale:
Embarcadero Triangle added a spirit to South Beach that can’t be matched.

The Triangle project was built by ex-felons who had very little if any building experience, and it was started with no construction financing.

The complex with its Italian style won the Special Judges Award from the Pacific Coast Builders Conference.
EMBARCADERO TRIANGLE

- **EATS**: Owned and operated by the Delancey Street Foundation, the Delancey Street restaurant will open next month. The menu will be ethnic American.

- **LEASING**: Leasing up the retail space has been a challenge for the foundation. Silbert is currently working on a plan with "San Francisco firms that have succeeded nationally," such as the Gap and Williams-Sonoma, to open shops in the Triangle.

- **OWNERS**: Embarcadero Triangle is owned by the Delancey Street Foundation, which is organized as a 501-C3 non-profit and is controlled by the residents.

- **FEATURES**: The project includes courtyards with interior stores and services such as a cleaners, bookstore and sundry shop. They serve only the residents but don’t cost anything to use. There are expansive dining facilities, a state of the art film screening room and a town hall meeting center.