• Farrelly oh-so-elegantly bemoans what would happen if Sydney undertook something like Sarkozy's Le Grand Paris plan: "It would be (badly) exhibited, provoke uproar...while some backroom smoocher grabbed the land, surgically excised all ideas...to build some depressing piece of shite."

• Parman calls for more place-specific proportionality and appropriateness when considering density and urbanity.

• Kennicott gives only lake-warm thumbs up to winning design of a new high school: "the design choice may be a near miss with greatness," but "the pure ghastliness of the current facility ensures that the new structure will be an improvement."

• The new Melbourne Recital Centre is a "triumph" and "a rich and exciting architectural spectacle" (lots of over-the-top accolades, too bad no pix).

• Chaban cheers a seaworthy Coney Island Aquarium - at last - but too bad the original winning "stunning design" was "fed to the sharks" (great slide show).

• In Kentucky, visions of "a Christian tourism corridor" with big plans for an Ark Encounter (Tower of Babel and baby giraffes included) just down the road a piece from the Creation Museum, it will be "a model of environmentally sensitive development" (even if the developers may not believe in global warming).

• Hawthorne sees the collapse of the Metrodome's dome in Minneapolis as the "latest sign of the dome's demise as a symbol of progress and expertise," and offers "one of the most dramatic videos of architectural failure you'll ever see."

• Litt minces no words re: Clevelanders' chance to vote on design details of a new bridge: "It's a depressing coda to a 10-year design process" that "raises serious questions about America's capacity to create memorable and well-designed infrastructure. This country ought to be able to do better."

• Schumacher on FLW's big ideas for small homes and efforts to save a small cluster of them in Milwaukee (who knew?!?): "At a time when architects are increasingly focused on smaller, more sober and green building...Wright has some things to say" (great pix, too).

• An in-depth (and often amusing) look at DS+W: the "enfants terribles of architecture have come a long way."

• LaBarre offers an in-depth (and often amusing) take on BIG's Ingeels, Denmark's own enfant terrible and "architecture's very own Lady Gaga" who doesn't want to get into a "high-rising pisses match" for his first NYC project.

• IDSA Design of the Decade awards: new, sometimes confusing, categories, but winners are very cool.

• Call for entries: 2011 Ceramic Tiles of Italy Competition.

• Feliz aniversario e parabéns to Oscar Niemeyer on his 103rd birthday (we can't wait to hear the samba this "last Stalinst" has composed!)

• We couldn't resist: in Tokyo, "an architect working for the United States Government" manages to buy $36,400 worth of drinks in one night (he promises it wasn't taxpayers' money and hopes his wife will understand).

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confusing... Nonetheless, the Gold winners in each category are some really worthy design objects... -- Bohlin Cywinski Jackson/Eight Inc./ISP Design [links to images/info] - Metropolis Magazine

Call for entries: 2011 Ceramic Tiles of Italy Competition: recognizes the exceptional work of North American architects and designers who feature Italian ceramic tiles in their institutional, residential or commercial/hospitality spaces; no entry fee; cash prizes; deadline: January 17, 2011 - Italian Trade Commission

103-year-old Brazilian architect composes samba music: Oscar Niemeyer... celebrates his birthday Dec 15... "Tranquilo con la Vida" (Feeling Good about Life),... "I wanted to do a tribute to the people of the favelas (shantytowns)," said Niemeyer, who describes himself as "the last Stalinist". - Sify (India)

Drinker buys record $36,400 round of shots: ... an architect working for the United States Government, achieved the unlikely feat in brazen defiance of a sour market mood... in a dismal quarter for the Japanese economy. - The Australian

Alfonso Architects: Tampa Covenant Church Addition & Renovation, Tampa, Florida