ALDO ROSSI WINS 1990 PRITZKER PRIZE

The architectural heavyweight championship of the world has been won by Aldo Rossi, who takes the 1990 Pritzker Prize on points and a technical knockout.

An acclaimed artist and influential theorist, Rossi has for three decades developed a sophisticated austerity that springs from a vigorous belief in the dynamic potential of Classical architecture.

His seminal *The Architecture of the City*, first published in 1966, is now a standard reference work in seven languages. A cool elegance characterises a wide range of projects, from coffee pots to monumental housing projects in his native country of Italy.

Throughout his career, he has lost neither his nerve — he defends ‘the great architecture of the Stalinist period’ — nor his imitators: ‘There exist copies of things which once were very personal but these, if made by the best architects, are a token of affection and an authentic testimony. In any case, despite the critics, I judge affirmatively and lovingly every imitation of what I may call my own architecture.’

Born in 1931 in Milan, where his practice is still based, Rossi received his degree in 1959. His career continues from strength to strength: work has just started on a new school of architecture at Florida. He cites Loos and Mies as principal inspirations.

His *Scientific Autobiography* recalls an automobile accident in 1971 as a turning point. Recuperating in hospital, he began thinking of cities as great encampments of the living and cemeteries as cities of the dead. Rossi’s design for the cemetery at Modena won first prize in a competition the same year, and is currently being built in stages.

It will be interesting to see what Rossi thinks of our own London Docklands. He told the AJ last week that he has been approached by Canary Wharf developer Olympia & York to design two office buildings there.

Current projects include schemes in Japan and a whole range of civic and commercial schemes in Italy. One of his ambitions is to build the Museum of German History in Berlin for which he has already won a competition.

Asked how he intends to spend his $100 000 Pritzker prize-money, Rossi said: ‘It’s not so much money, it won’t change my life.’