

SEVEN WONDERS | FINALIST NO. 3 | THE CITY MUSEUM

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This brainstorm of artists Robert and Gail Cassilly opened in 1997 and keeps getting more eccentric -- and popular -- every year. Located in an old International Shoe Co. building at 701 North 15th Street, the child-friendly site is a repository for numerous beautiful and unusual items.

Angela Pancella found it challenging to describe the place when she nominated it.

"There's no place like it in the world," Pancella said. "It's the first place I take out-of-town guests and, invariably, their eyes pop out of their heads."

The building's facade is from an 1897 Venetian Gothic building. A decorative front entrance is from the 1927 Beaumont Medical building, and a massive granite staircase was salvaged from the old City Hospital.

Other attractions include the Museum of Mirth, Mystery & Mayhem, a circus area, a model train collection and miniature train rides, a serpentine fence around the parking lot, a winding dinosaur staircase and dark indoor caves that twist and turn.

The museum also offers a restaurant, a tavern and musical concerts.

Based on reader recommendations, the Post-Dispatch is featuring one of 15 finalists for the "Seven Wonders of St. Louis" daily through Feb. 18.

- Caption: PHOTOPHOTO - (Bob Cassilly poses for his portrait on the leg of a giant praying mantis which once adorned a building at the Missouri Botanical Garden and now resides on the top floor of the City Museum.)

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