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Read it on page 30

IN EVERY ISSUE...

10 EDITOR'S NOTE
62 MARKETPLACE
96 MY SPACE



NEWS + VIEWS

13 IN THE NEWS

Bits and bobs of what's happening
in the world of architecture + ID

16 NEW OPENINGS

Luxury conscious retreats to
unwind at

80 STEEPED IN TRADITION

Tannin Hill Tea Gallery stands out
among Kuala Lumpur's multitude
of coffee-centric cafés

29



DESIGN

14 READING ROOM

Books to inspire your next design
project

18 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Light up your home this Deepavali
with gorgeous, scented candles

64 MAIN SQUEEZE

Elegant soap dispensers to jazz up
your bathroom and kitchen

76 TERANG BULAN

Make the Mooncake Festival more
vibrant with these chic accents

92 SCHOOL LUNCH

Containers to carry your food in
style, be it to school or the office

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CONTENTS

AUTUMN 2023

LIVING

20 HARMONISING TRADITION + MINIMALISM

A couple's transformative journey to reimagine their new home through the lens of Japandi

30 OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

The architect owner creates a garden within a garden and turns it into the favourite gathering spot in his home

40 CULTURE CLUB

Cantonment House in Penang is an expansive residence, comprising three main dwellings to form one cohesive home

WORKSPACE

56 TRUNK IN LOVE

Exploring the exquisite Louis Vuitton atelier and former family home in Asnières, France

ENTERTAINING + TRAVEL

66 HOME WITH A VIEW

A lovingly restored colonial residence atop Penang Hill is now a luxury hotel

72 THE HEART OF ITS ART

Türkiye's Istanbul Modern reopens in its new, Renzo Piano-designed avatar over the Bosphorus

82 TROPICAL THANKSGIVING

Franki Turner, co-founder of multi-concept retail store Bungalow18 by Frankitas, whips up her version of the Thanksgiving meal but with an Asian accent





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Q3 AND COUNTING...

Is it just us or is 2023 flying by too fast? Whatever the assessment, now serves as the perfect reminder to breathe and slow down, perhaps ever so slightly, lest we lose ourselves again amid the hurly-burly.

Quality time at home needs to be prioritised. Luckily, one of the more popular decor styles in recent years is Japandi, a portmanteau of Japanese and Scandinavian, which can best be explained as a convergence of *wabi-sabi* (the ability to see beauty in imperfection) and *hygge* (the Scandinavian practice that espouses comfort and cosiness to inspire well-being). It's not hard to see why Japandi has caught on. It is minimalism but without the brutalist touch. Sleek and functional, its predilection for neutral tones means it is also unlikely to look dated quickly. For a real-life example, turn to the lovely three-storey home of Stan Cheong and May Lim in Tamansari, Rawang, on Page 20 to see how little touches, such as sliding doors and Muji-inspired aesthetics, keep things stylish yet orderly.

It was gratifying yet shocking at the same time to learn that Lillian Tay, the Princeton-polished vice-president of Veritas Design Group, was conferred the PAM Gold Medal 2023 for design in July. The former part of the statement is obvious. The latter, however, comes from the realisation that she is the first woman in 35 years to be so honoured. Nevertheless, we are privileged to feature Cantonment House, her first residential project (which actually combines three distinct dwellings in one) in an equally long time, on Page 34.

The rest of the pages are filled with ideas on good (and quality) things to buy for the home. "Buy once but buy better" is a practice that should never go out of fashion. It makes sense now more than ever from both a financial and environmental perspective. After all, just as fast fashion doesn't cut it any more, neither should fast homeware.

Oh, and if your travels afford you a stopover in Türkiye, be sure to visit the latest iteration of its contemporary art museum, Istanbul Modern; this time, reimagined by the great Renzo Piano. Check it out on Page 86. Whatever your year has looked like, there is still, and always will be, time for improvement. We hope this issue feeds you with the ideas and inspiration to do so.

Diana Khoo
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GAZE INWARDS

No matter how frenetic life is, we can — and should — always look within. And where better than the home we call our own? Take, for example, this soothing series of archways that direct the point of vision to a Zen-like bonsai. Does this not make you want to be still a little?

Photographed on location
at Eythrope, Penang Hill.
Read about it on Page 66.

Be there

Get the design and décor wheels turning at these design fairs and exhibitions around the world

Text **Genie Leong**



WHAT: PAD London

WHERE: London, UK

WHEN: Oct 10 to 15

The sister fair to PAD Paris that is held annually in the Jardin de Tuileries, PAD London is an autumn staple for design fans in the British capital. Conducted in Berkeley Square, the fête cultivates eclecticism and connoisseurship through presenting pioneering design techniques and solutions, and, more importantly, illustrates how artistic genres from all eras funnel into modern interiors.



WHAT: Reka Interiors Exhibition

WHERE: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

WHEN: Oct 26 to 29

Malaysians hunting for hot interior design tips will be able to do just that at the Reka Interiors Exhibition in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. Part of Reka Design Week, the fourth instalment of the exhibition showcases interior designers, architects, homeowners and hospitality providers as they dish insights into the latest products and trends to be in the know of.



WHAT: Venice Design Week

WHERE: Venice, Italy

WHEN: Oct 7 to 15

Started by Lisa Balasso in 2010, Venice Design Week celebrates craftsmanship and creativity. Involving designers, retailers, educators and other key opinion leaders from across the globe, this year's week-long fair consists of multiple exhibitions, conferences and activities centred around the theme of "Synaesthesias" that encourage one to get lost in the poetic style of The Floating City.

WHAT: Find Design Fair Asia

WHERE: Singapore

WHEN: Sept 21 to 23

The second edition of the "Find Design Fair" returns to the Sands Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands, showcasing the latest and most innovative finds in contemporary design. A predominant force in the Asian interiors market, the event serves as the major platform for furniture, lighting, kitchen, bathroom and homeware in the Southeast Asian region with over 10,000 brands to peruse.



WHAT: Workspace Design Show Amsterdam

WHERE: Amsterdam, the Netherlands

WHEN: Oct 11 and 12

Held at the RAI Convention Centre in the bustling Dutch capital, this two-day

event delves into workplace design movements that have the modern employee at its core. With power-packed conferences and discussion panels, visitors will have the chance to hear the perspectives of large corporations like Microsoft, ING and Philips on how they are shaping the future working environment.



YOUR SPACE, MADE SIMPLE

BY ARIEL MAGIDSON

Creating a beautiful space is easier said than done. Luckily, with the help of Ariel Magidson, what was once difficult becomes effortless. Working through every room in the house, each section in this guide offers inspiration and breakdowns of the right items and sustainable methods to decorate your space the way you envision. So, if you have just moved to a new place or been dreaming of redoing your current home but have no idea where to begin, you now know where to look.

DINING OUT

BY WANG SHAOQIANG

If a restaurant's ambience is a "make-or-break" criterion when choosing where to spend your meal coins, then

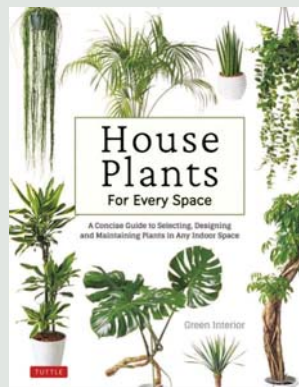
Dining Out by Wang Shaoqiang is sure to engross the aesthetic-conscious foodie in you. Diving into the interiors of 60 gastro spots worldwide, this book unpacks what goes into making the perfect blueprint that complements an eatery's menu and the type of clientele it attracts, as well as the mouth-watering design trends implemented in these locations that keep diners coming back for seconds.



Reading room

In need of design pointers to help express yourself? Look no further than these four in-depth reads. From what foliage is right for your space to the construction of popular dining spots around the world, these tomes promise inspiration galore.

Text **Genie Leong**



HOUSE PLANTS FOR EVERY SPACE

BY GREEN INTERIOR

Nothing ties a room together like a hint of greenery, but choosing the right plant to suit not just the look of your space, but also your lifestyle and green thumb (or lack thereof), can be a challenge.

Authors Etsuhiro Mashita and Momoko Sato, collectively known as Green Interior, offer an all-in-one guide on all things flora. From ferns to succulents, this book covers the care requirements of over 130 specimens and the best ways to arrange each one in your dwelling.

DESIGN DREAMS

BY CHARLOTTE TAYLOR

London-based designer

Charlotte Taylor presents a visual compendium featuring 3D renderings that imagine utopian landscapes straight out of a sci-fi movie. Originally used as a tool for designers to communicate their ideas with clients, 3D rendering now also allows artists and professionals to indulge in their wildest fantasies. Consisting of Taylor's own projects and collaborations as well as the works of influential Instagram artists @sixnfive, @paulmilinski, @teaaalexis and others, this book is for those who dream of futuristic designs.





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New openings

Plan a getaway at these luxurious, design-conscious retreats

Text **Aireena Azni**

JAPANESE HAVEN

If going to a Muji outlet makes you dream of redecorating, consider a vacation at the homeware brand's first guest house, situated in the Kamogawa countryside, Chiba. The 100-year-old family-sized house, surrounded by mountains and rice fields, is a 90-minute drive from Tokyo. Guests can experience the calming ambience of the space, which comes completely equipped with Muji products such as body care, furniture and accoutrements. On top of that, visitors are able to try their hand at local agricultural activities and enjoy fresh, seasonal produce. **Muji Base Kamogawa** can accommodate up to five people, making it the perfect retreat for small groups. More information on airbnb.com.



ULTRA-LUXURIOUS HOSPITALITY

In the heart of Rome, in the Campo Marzio district, is the new **Bulgari Hotel Roma**. The luxurious hotel occupies a beautifully restored historic building, erected between 1936 and 1938 and inaugurated in 1950 by former Italian prime minister Alcide De Gasperi. It boasts distinguished interior design and public spaces, which include a terrace with 360-degree views of the Eternal City. The seven-floor hotel comprises 114 rooms, most of which are suites. Amenities include a 1,000 sq m spa, gym, swimming pool, reading room with books on the history of jewellery and a library dedicated to Roman arts and architecture. Another distinctive feature of this property, the ninth by Bulgari, is the gastronomic offerings curated by three Michelin-starred chef Niko Romito.



COSY RETREAT

Luxury hospitality brand **Ember Locke** has launched its sixth property in London, in the affluent neighbourhood of Kensington. The aparthotel comprises 121 apartments across eight floors, ranging from studios and duplexes to one-bedroom units. Situated on historic Cromwell Road, the property is within walking distance of some of the city's famous museums, galleries and royal parks such as the Natural History Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and Kensington Gardens. Its facilities include a coffee shop, bar, restaurant, co-working space, meeting room, large garden, gym and laundry room. Visit lockeliving.com to book your stay.





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FROM LEFT: GREY CUSHION, 45cm X 45cm, RM79, MAJU HOME; SAGE & LAVENDER CANDLE 170g, RM75, AND OLIVE & LEMON THYME CANDLE 65g, RM30, BOTH FROM LILIN+CO; CRYSTAL GLASS LOTUS CANDLE HOLDER, RM59, MAJU HOME; BESPOKE SERIES #01 – OSMANTHUS, RM229, ANBO; PARISIAN CANDLE 190g, RM65, OH LILIN; HINOKI FRAGRANCE CANDLE, RM21.90, MUJI; BRONZE VASE, RM269, TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II; WHITE LANA CANDLE 400g, RM169, OH LILIN; GOLDEN ROUND TRAY WITH STAND, RM179, MAJU HOME; CIRE, RM469, TRUDON @ KENS APOTHECARY; GOLD LOTUS TEALIGHT HOLDER, 3cm, RM19, IKEA; SAVOY TEALIGHT PAIR WITH FLUTED COLLARS, RM450 EACH, ROYAL SELANGOR; CANDLE SNUFFER, RM50, LILIN+CO; THE OSMANTHUS CANDLE, 250G, RM410, DIOR; BAIES / BERRIES CANDLE, RM219, KENS APOTHECARY; PLATTER SERIES TRIO, RM258, ANBO; BUANG SUEY CANDLE, RM69, AND SIAPA KENTUT CANDLE, RM69, BOTH FROM APOM; PARLBAND TEALIGHT HOLDER, 10cm, RM35, IKEA; TRAY, RM179, TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II



LIVING

Harmonising Tradition + *Minimalism*





Wood forms the soul of Japandi spaces, a reminder of the beauty and serenity that can be found in the embrace of natural elements

A couple's journey of embracing Japandi style in their new three-storey home in Tamansari, Rawang

Text **Dian Pasquinal Kaur** Photography **SooPhye**

In the world of interior design, a captivating blend of cultures and aesthetics often leads to the creation of truly unique and stunning living spaces.

One such trend that has gained immense popularity in recent years is “Japandi” — a seamless fusion of Japanese and Scandinavian design principles. In fact, a quick trawl of the internet shows that the design style has claimed the top spot on Google search for the last two years.

May Lim Hui Ying and husband Stan Cheong Tsu Hau embarked on a transformative journey to reimagine their new home through the lens of Japandi. With a delicate balance of minimalism,



warmth and cultural reverence, their renovated abode showcases how the marriage of two distinct design philosophies can birth a space that exudes both elegance and tranquillity.

“My brother, an interior designer based in Singapore, was responsible for the design of the entire house. He completely understood the brief and we didn’t have to change a single thing in the drawing,” says the lady of the house. All she wanted was a Muji-inspired house that was homey, cosy, minimalist and easy to manage.

From the tactile textures that evoke the rustic simplicity of Scandinavian design to the mindfulness-infused nuances borrowed from Japanese aesthetics, and not forgetting the principles of *feng shui*, every corner of their home tells a tale of intentionality and artful curation.

The Asia-Pacific regional lead for competence centre e-commerce, fleet solutions and data science at Continental Tires PJ Malaysia Sdn Bhd





**CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT**
The dining area on the ground floor emanates an aura of tranquillity; the kitchen's diverse textures create an intriguing visual display; Lim's favourite spot in the house; every piece of furniture is a nod to Japandi principles

strongly believes in harnessing the power of *feng shui*. This attention extends to aspects such as colour tones, lighting and additional elements to harmonise the environment and energy flow to promote balance and well-being.

On the ground floor, a low cabinet divides the living room and dining area, creating a spacious feel throughout the entire space. Sliding doors at both ends brighten things gently with filtered light. The maid's room was removed to make way for an L-shaped kitchen, which Lim says is her favourite place in the house because she loves baking and swears by cooking with her Thermomix.

Cupboards with slatted doors appear here and there around the house, noticeably in the living room, on the kitchen cabinets and in the entertainment area on the first floor. The marble tiles on the ground floor add a clean touch to the space while the wooden flooring on the top two floors makes them warm and snug.



“The walk-in wardrobe is where the master of the house’s enviable collection of sneakers and streetwear memorabilia is housed”

- Lim



The shoe room is everything a sneakerhead could ask for



The first floor accommodates three bedrooms and a study for their children while the master bedroom for the couple is on the topmost floor, complete with a walk-in wardrobe designed for both him and her plus a shoe room.

Why Rawang?

"I just love the peace and quiet here. It's a far change from where we lived — right behind Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong in Kepong, where every day, all you hear is the sound of traffic, from morning to night. Let's not even get to how dusty the house was. I am grateful for the change of scenery and I can't get enough of the greenery here," says Lim.

The house truly encapsulates the idea of "less is more" and it radiates a soothing sense of balance. With three children — aged eight, 15 and 18 — and the help who comes in only once a week, it is amazing how orderly and spotless everything is around the house. "My husband likes to maintain everything in its designated place, while I appreciate a tidy environment. However, his attention to detail and organisation definitely surpasses mine," she laughs.





Beyond the aesthetics, the Japandi home has allowed them to infuse their living space with cherished memories and a unique narrative. From selecting handcrafted furniture pieces that resonate with the spirit of both cultures to curating a colour palette that invokes tranquillity, their choices reflect a thoughtful journey of self-discovery and artistic expression.

Case in point: her husband's walk-in wardrobe on the topmost floor, where his most prized sneakers and memorabilia are housed. "That's one of the reasons we picked this three-storey house, just so he has enough room to store his collection," she smiles.

"It's my therapy room," Cheong interjects, glancing up from his laptop. The head of technical at Innovation Associates Consulting started collecting sneakers in 2007 and has amassed about 300 pairs and a sizeable collection of Bearbrick figures.

Some of the functional rooms in the house, walk-in wardrobe (left) and study



Cheong's prized possessions, some of which are displayed while others are carefully kept in storage

"We did everything for the house before we moved in but if there's one thing I would like to add on to, it would be the backyard. I want to add cabinets and some nice decoration for the washing area," says Lim, as Cheong nods in agreement.

"We enjoy hosting friends and organising dinner gatherings. I envision the backyard as an ideal barbecue area and I'm also considering setting up a screen for movie nights. The kids love it. They are growing up fast. I think it's important to throw in some elements of fun into their lives for them to remember by," he adds pointedly.

Indeed, a home is a sanctuary where cherished memories are woven into the very fabric of its walls, a place where laughter and tears mingle, and where milestones and everyday moments converge to create a tapestry of life experiences. **H**

EVERGREEN TOUCH

Achieve minimalist and timeless
Japandi style with these cool, clean buys

Text **Aireena Azni**



1 Add a fun accent to the space with this Tiger Box by **Louis Vuitton**. It boasts striking signature LV designs including the iconic trunk corners, a Monogram Flower eye and natural cowhide ears and tail. (RM11,000, ap.louisvuitton.com)

2 Create a comfy area to unwind in with this Bolzano sofa by **BoConcept**. Its curvy, sculptural silhouette makes for a warm and inviting cocoon to loaf on after a long day. (RM8,445, boconcept.com)

3 Crafted from corduroy and finished with a Scala linen piping, **Janine's** Corda Sienna pillows are soft to the touch, making the comfortable set perfect for your couch (RM479, janine.com.my)

4 The Bouclair Southwest Chic vase from **Spotlight** is characterised by an interesting circular shape and distinctive texture, injecting a touch of elegance to any tabletop (RM90, spotlightstores.com)

5 Keep things organised and tidy by storing the smaller items in **Loewe's** chest basket, constructed using wicker and leather by Spanish artisans (RM11,450, loewe.com)

6 Wood furniture will never go out of style. Whether used as a console or TV cabinet, this piece from **Crownlivin** is versatile and has ample storage for accessories. (RM3,500, crownlivin.com.my)

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

When renovating his own home, architect Tan Chun Hooi took the radical approach and found fresh uses for idle spaces

Text Tan Gim Ean Photography Bricksbegin





Bold, unique creations by Haafiz Shahimi (top left) and Suhaimi Fadzir arrest attention the moment one walks into the sitting room



The garden was the focal point when architect Tan Chun Hooi decided to renovate his single-storey semi-detached home in suburban Subang Jaya, Selangor, after living there for about six years. It was huge but practically lying idle.

“We had no connection with it except through a small window,” says Chun Hooi, the name he goes by. Guided by the philosophy that design should help people make full use of and enjoy their space, the founder of Core Design Workshop began looking at how to better utilise his in 2020.

The first thing he did was move the kitchen up from the back of his typical four-bedroom unit built in the 1970s to the garden. He then erected a full-height linear wall to create a garden within a garden that integrates the wet areas of the house, kitchen and bathrooms, with no physical barrier delineating them.

The inner garden with gravel flooring has become “the very best space for gathering. When we start cooking, everybody flocks around to help, talk and interact. You don’t just sit and wait for food; you can walk around and become part of its preparation”, Chun Hooi says. And the children can run freely around the trees. One that they kept as is, in the middle of the kitchen, was planted by his mother.

Once he and his art gallerist wife Scarlett Lee decided to put up the wall, everything else fell into place. Suspended on a steel structure that hovers above the ground and running 10ft from the perimeter fencing, it creates “an outdoor space where one can live without the constraints of security and privacy, like a Zen garden one can utilise and enjoy at the same time”.

ABOVE
A linear cross-ventilation tunnel in the outer garden separates their house from the adjacent neighbour's. Lee jokes that it also blocks out sound when she shouts at her son.

RIGHT
The large kitchen in the garden within a garden is the favourite place to gather when friends visit



Putting the kitchen outside while keeping the rooms indoors may seem at odds with conventional design, but Chun Hooi based his layout on kampung-style homes. "It's very much like going back to the kampung. When there's a *kenduri*, everyone gathers and does the cooking together," says Lee, founder and director of Core Design Gallery.

Ceiling blinds serve as sunshades that also filter out ultraviolet rays in the garden. There is morning sun to bask in, but after 4pm, it is shaded and comfortable. Stainless steel utensils and waterproof tables and chairs mean there is no worry about rain beating in and two islands double as storage compartments for the kitchen tools and gadgets.

The wall, made of cement boards painted white to deter mosquitoes, also blocks out sound — good when she is yelling at her five-year-old son, Buer Han, she adds. Perforated metal at its base allows ventilation, another factor Chun Hooi was mindful



of when remodelling their home, which they moved back into early last year.

A linear cross-ventilation tunnel in the outer garden separates their house from that next to it. The sitting area leads out to a courtyard that serves as the laundry corner and powder room, where adjustable louvres enable wind to blow in from the outside through to the back door. "Everything is open and well-ventilated," he says. It's the first step to healthy living, one might add.


A bright yellow perforated metal staircase leads up to a kampung-inspired tree house — so-called because of the tree beside it — on the mezzanine floor that serves as a play area or guest room. Friends they have hosted are more inclined to go for the sofas below, though. Chun Hooi, a specialist in spatial planning who explores its effects on humans, is against adding rooms that often end up unused, dead spaces he would suggest that clients hack up and turn into living areas.

Having open-concept wardrobes in both the bedrooms means they have had to declutter, not a bad thing because he thinks hoarding is an issue in Asian culture. "My parents have kept curtains and even my son's *lampin* (diapers)," Lee exclaims.

When people can see what they stash away, there may be a point when they "cannot *tahan*" any more and start to give things away or throw. "That's how you change the hoarding habit," Chun Hooi reasons.

Glass walls skirt a veranda that runs parallel to the master bedroom where one wall is left empty so they can project movies come dusk. Set out some snacks and it becomes a night-time family space. The son's bedroom, which his grandparents share when they





*“It was radical,
experimental.
But after one year,
I can say it works
very well for us.”
- Chun Hooi*



visit, is cheerful, with sunlight flooding in steps away. Curtains provide privacy in the washrooms, probably the only thing that discomfits guests used to doors and locks.

Continuing to place function over form, the pair have open shelves for “everything we cannot hide. It’s messy but this is our life”. Books and various knick-knacks fill a yellow bookshelf stretched across one wall and can easily be dusted down, after which a robot vacuum takes over. Solid wooden furniture placed off the polished concrete floor — the same material is used in the kitchen and toilets — makes cleaning easy, a boon because they have no helper.

Opening up the ceiling and modifying various spaces gives the house a sense of space, and HVLS (high-volume, low-speed) fans keep it cool, besides bringing down the electricity bill markedly. Chun Hooi calls it “luxury in the spatial experience”, an idea he tries to promote in architectural design. The younger generation is supportive, whereas older clients find it too radical, he says.

Paintings and installations by various artists that Lee’s gallery represents arrest attention with bold or



**CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP RIGHT**
Lee and Chun Hooi
with Buer Han

Bright, open, airy and bathed in sunshine, Introverse is the ideal place for the five-year-old to run in and out and play; Curtains provide privacy in this uncluttered home where Cornish concrete, glass and metal dominate



quirky content. "Since I'm into art, why not let it speak for the interior instead of thinking of what wallpaper, colours or designer furniture to use," she reckons.

Visitors may notice the absence of windows, grilles (except for the porch), granite, marble and tiles. Cornish concrete, glass and metal dominate, from the entrance to the garden and right up to the toilets. It is the first time Chun Hooi has ever done up a whole house without tiles.

Doing something different fell in with the flow of things when he and Lee were renovating their unusual abode, named Introverse for two particular reasons. Designing from the outside in reminds him of what he is at heart, an introvert.

At end-2019, months before starting this project, he was diagnosed with vocal cord cancer. "I went through treatment and lost my voice for six months. I couldn't work and stopped everything. Then I





realised I did not need to talk much and there's nothing wrong with being an introvert."

Society likes to judge those who are different or go against the grain, Chun Hooi adds. But introverts coped better during the subsequent pandemic compared to extroverts, who were at a loss over what to do.

It took a lot of self-reflection to realise "we need to do something to show what we believe". Introverse is the result of looking at things from the opposite side, to find ways of making life easier and more enjoyable for homeowners through design. They went through about six different designs before arriving at what works for them, throwing out various ideas in the process.

"It was radical, experimental. But after one year, I can say it works very well for us," says Chun Hooi.

With his career down and him losing touch during the two years of lockdowns, working on the house was one way to "jump-start everything", Lee explains.

Seven years ago, Chun Hooi had turned a terraced unit in Puchong into a "dream home" with high ceilings and open spaces for seamless airflow and perforated metal screens to diffuse sunlight.

"It wasn't a typical extension but more of utilising the space creatively to create a comfortable living environment," he explained then. The house belonged to his brother and he was given a free hand to do as he pleased. Which he did — and the Kinrara Retreat project won gold (terraced category) at the *Haven / The Edge My Dream Home Awards 2016*.

"I didn't charge him and he had to trust me," shares Chun Hooi, who did his master's in computer-aided building design from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow and set up Core Design Workshop in 2009. **H**

Hanging lamps and a bedside table match the rattan floor mat in Buer Han's room, which looks out to the kitchen

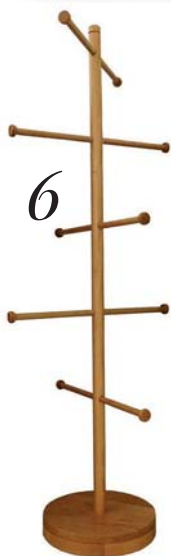
BELOW
Pops of bright yellow and art on the wall make the laundry area a cheery place to do the washing



MINIMALIST ABODE

Want to be like Marie Kondo but don't know where to start?
Get the look with these stylish yet simple picks.

Text **Sabita Mohanadas**



1 This elegant loveseat sofa from **Bed Bath & Beyond** features golden metal armrests and is padded with high-density foam to provide maximum comfort (**RM3,108, bedbathandbeyond.com**)

2 This framed canvas painting of gold palm leaves from **Ruma** symbolises bringing abundance and good luck to the home (**RM99, ruma-home.com**)

3 Crafted from pure oak, **Kare's** Sideboard Madrid is a contemporary take on a regular cabinet, featuring unique sloping doors (**RM15,800, kare.my**)

4 **Maju Home's** Niel Acacia has a solid and highly durable acacia wood top, making it perfect for outdoor or indoor dining (**RM3,198, majuhome.com**)

5 **Yamaha's** popular U1 upright piano is highly acclaimed for its warm, solid sound and consistently stable playability. This timeless piece will complete any home. (**RM50,990, yamaha.com**)

6 Add convenience to your life with the Tolak-Tarik hanger from **Gudang House** made from sturdy, solid timber. It is suitable for hanging hats, scarves and belts. (**RM1,980, gudanghome.com**)

CULTURE CLUB

How does one create a new home to house three distinct members of a single family while preserving a lifetime's worth of memories? Acclaimed arts practitioner, educator and director Chee Sek Thim shows us around Cantonment House, which he shares with his sister and brother-in-law in George Town, Penang.

Text **Diana Khoo** Photography **SooPhye**





Penang, with its long and colourful history as a trading port and colonial outpost, has its fair share of stories to tell, obviously. And a short way away from the traffic and hubbub of bustling Kelawai Road and Gurney Drive is a leafy, peaceful enclave ringed by Cantonment Road, named after the former army cantonment (derived from the French *cantonnement* or “to quarter”) in the area. The Burmese settled early in this part of George Town’s Pulau Tikus district and history buffs will point out the temples they established as well as an Anglo-Malay bungalow where Prince Wibulsawat, secretary to Rama VII of Thailand, lived out his exile after a failed coup d’etat.

Just off Cantonment Road in a cul-de-sac, built on what used to be a rambutan plantation, is where renowned arts practitioner and director Chee Sek Thim calls home. A stalwart of Malaysia’s performing arts for close to three decades now, Chee, 60, is a member of the arts

collective Five Arts Centre, along with Marion D’Cruz. He had established Reka Art Space in Petaling Jaya in 2002 before returning to the island in 2014 to create Sinkeh, a homegrown independent art space that just happened to have nine spare but design-conscious guest rooms, along Lebuhraya Melayu in George Town’s heritage heart. It sadly closed in 2020 as a result of the pandemic.

However, Chee’s most recent work, *Malam Takdir*, an operatic play composed by Johan Othman, was recently staged in both Penang and the Klang Valley to critical acclaim. Now, with some time to rest in between his next endeavour and in between teaching at Universiti Sains Malaysia, where he has been appointed Industrial Fellow for the School of the Arts’ Acting and Directing Department, he acknowledges he is more than happy to be able to enjoy some downtime.

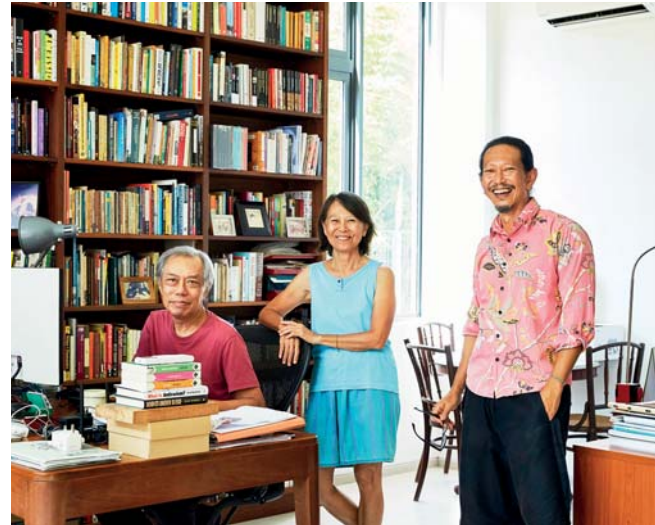
“Yes, it is still in the process of ‘becoming,’” Chee smiles, looking out towards the pond as

The old family home is joined with the villa and loft using a bold steel Vierendeel truss



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

A sculptural steel staircase forms a distinctive central feature in the villa's living room; BK Tan, Dr Chee Heng Leng and Chee Sek Thim; double-height slats, made using recycled local hardwood timber, shade the interiors while creating interesting shadows when the evening sun hits

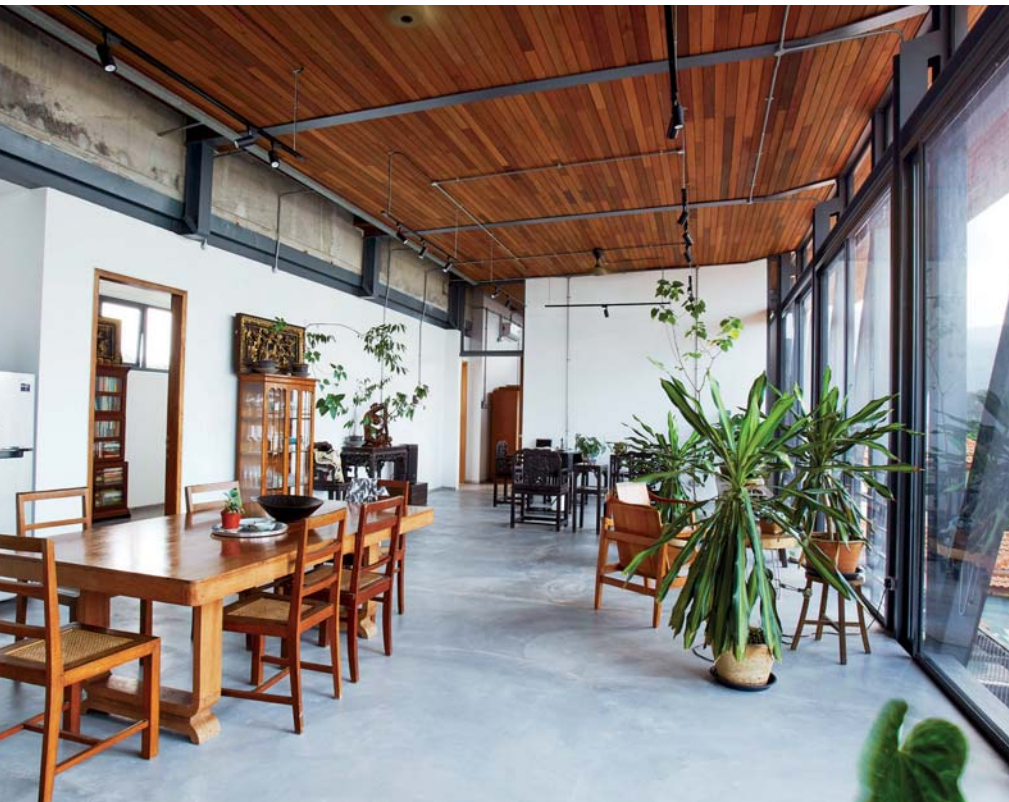


we stand around his as-yet-to-be-grown-in garden. "I love having this water feature as it instantly relaxes me upon coming home, as if it is greeting me." An unusual dwelling, the residence, which sits on 1,015 sq m of land, actually comprises three main structures: a 1950s bungalow which used to be the old family home, a new main house or villa where his sister (he is the fourth of five children), renowned Harvard-educated researcher, writer and advocate Dr Chee Heng Leng, lives with her husband, retired newsman and pioneering managing director of *The Edge*, BK Tan. Chee himself has a loft-like structure to call his own.

In order to transform the space, Chee turned to his longtime friend, the celebrated architect Lillian Tay, vice-president of Veritas Design Group, who was just conferred the PAM Gold Medal 2023 for design on July 29 — the first woman to receive this honour in 35 years. "We've been friends since meeting in New York in 1990," says the tall, tanned Tay. "Sek Thim had finished his Master in Fine Arts from Notre Dame and was working as a ceramics artist. As most people know, I almost never do private residences — the last one I did was probably way back in 1991 — but I said yes because he's my friend and truly the best client you could have. We have also collaborated on the Sinkeh project before. One thing you would know if you work with Sek Thim, in the arts or otherwise, is that he has this innate, incredible

LIVING

The central stairs create transparency, using light and space instead of walls to separate yet unify the three homes-in-one house concept



ABOVE

The loft-like living space is a nod to Chee's days as a young artist in New York City

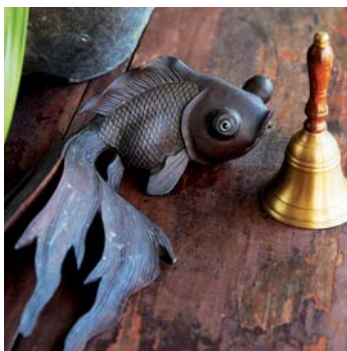
BELOW

Arranging flowers in the open-air dining area with the kitchen behind



ability to bring out the best in people. He lets you do what you want and is always there encouraging. He also puts so much trust in you to get the job done and does not ever impose, something for which I am most grateful."

Tay began her design process in 2018 and work started the following year, although the pandemic threw a few monkey wrenches in the process. Everything was completed in December 2022, with the family moving in early this year. The loft, a marvel of engineering, hovers over the old house in an L-shaped embrace, joined by the shared open-air kitchen, dining area and courtyard which conveniently extends to the garden, richly planted with *sayur raja*, *bunga telang*, radish, papaya and okra. Nearby, short bushy trees bear the promise of lime and pomelo harvests to come. Chee joyously points out a starfruit tree which mysteriously grew by itself during the construction period. "It wants



to live here so we just let it be," he smiles as his beloved dogs, Miss Wong Choy and Fatt Fook, bound over to him.

A bold steel Vierendeel truss was needed to create the communal space below it. In doing so, part of the old house had to go, although Tay preserved its main heart — along with the original terrazzo flooring, mosaic tiles, doors and grillwork — in tribute and loving memory of Chee's grandmother and aunts who had cared for him and all his siblings as they grew up. Today, it serves as sentimental storage for treasured mementoes and family bric-a-brac as well as extra room should their sister and family visit from the UK.

The villa is characterised by clean lines and spare, minimalist aesthetics, with the ground level dominated by the presence of a sculptural

steel spiral staircase. A cavernous study, hidden behind a heavy door, offers the academic and intellectual couple a perfect place to work while the airy loft is an ideal reflection of Chee's creative spirit and sprite-like nature. Part of the façade is also shaded by heavy-slatted double-height timber while filling the interiors with a changing play of light and shadows when the sun turns its face towards the villa in the late afternoon.

Tay acknowledges that their long friendship made her task of envisioning a space where three distinctly different individuals could live as a family and yet with their own private spaces easy. "I know him and understand how he lives and what he likes. The loft is reminiscent of New York's artists' studios and a nod to the city Sek Thim

The rooftop pool looks out onto a panoramic view of Gurney Drive and the hills beyond, a sight rarely enjoyed by those living in landed homes in Penang

“Cantonment House bridges the old and the new, past and present, for a family of three in Penang...”

**LEFT**

Although presently shaded from the sun, the bedroom looks out onto spectacular views of the island

BELOW

The loft evokes the industrial warehouses-turned-creative housing and artists' studios of New York and yet offers flexibility for all manner of use and is easy to upkeep and maintain

within the loft structure, connected by an open-concept, industrial-inspired staircase, while Tay placed the pool, interestingly, on the flat roof, offering the lucky swimmer views of the Jalan Gurney skyline and the hills in between laps. "I suggested the pool and Sek Thim said yes," she adds. "What surprised us was the whole topography of Penang you get to experience from here.

"It's an unusual structure, three distinct buildings and all that, but it is also very much a home, a family home. And a contemporary one. All I can say is Sek Thim and his family have been such wonderful clients. He personally has an amazing way of connecting with people and totally participated in the making of the house," Tay muses with fondness. "He works with you and improvises, much like the way he approaches his stage work. I'd like to think this is our homage to New York, to creativity and to Sek Thim's time there as a young artist. And also, in a way, the culmination of our shared history from 30 years ago." Which reminds us of the truism on how home is really where the heart is. And there is heart here at Cantonment House. An overflowing abundance of it. **H**

once called home. Besides, the family is not showy in the least and just want a place where they can live and work happily and in relative peace and quiet. The only brief I got was that they wanted something of the old house to remain."

Chee's loft is done in an open concept which allows for impromptu entertaining or even rehearsals, should he so wish. "I'm not very neat and if things are too high maintenance or precious, it makes me uptight," he laughs. "I love feeling free and unrestricted, unconfined ... at liberty to use the space however I wish." A small study is where Chee indulges in the pleasure of a nap, albeit on the cool concrete floor, although he is on the lookout for a daybed.

The only treasures he acknowledges are his books and a few stacks of blue and white bowls inherited from his family. "It's generally very simple food up here," he says of his neat little pantry. "No deep-fried stuff or oily things. Heng Leng uses the big kitchen most of the time. Up here, I have a slow cooker and a hot plate but the most important thing is my De'Longhi coffee maker!"

Two guest rooms may also be found embedded



CHIC TRANQUILLITY

Good *feng shui* is essential in any interior layout. Bring harmony and balance into the abode with selections that radiate positive energy.

Text **Genie Leong**



1 Whether for dining or display, **SSF Home**'s ornate porcelain bowl catches the eye with its midnight blue and white lotus blossom pattern and gold rim (RM249, ssfhome.com)

2 Bring the outdoors in with a *monstera deliciosa* from **Plant & Pot Studio**. Easy to care for, this green beauty adds vibrancy to the home. (RM60, plantandpotstudio.com)

3 **Ambiance by Jim Moore** specialises in refurbished oriental furniture, and these dark wood armchairs are a guaranteed statement element in any living room (Price upon request, available in-store at **Ambiance Bangsar Shopping Centre**)

4 Created by interior designer Jake Arnold, this warm grey terracotta **Crate & Barrel** vase boasts an organic and earthy appearance that complements any decor style (US\$249, crateandbarrel.com)

5 A symbol of good luck, this pewter rabbit figurine by **Royal Selangor** is a trinket that offers a meaningful touch to a shelf or console (RM250, royalselangor.com)

6 Carved from British Pippy oak, the Calne dining table by **Soho Home** is a sturdy and rustic heirloom piece built to host meals and conversations through generations (£8,995, sohohome.com)

FUSING CREATIVITY + CONSCIOUSNESS

Six exclusive duplex penthouses form the heart of Muze Signature VI, a pioneering collaboration between multi-award-winning developer Hunza Properties and world-renowned residential and hotel design company Yoo



Datuk Lily Tan,
group CEO of sales and marketing

Serially breaking boundaries when it comes to setting new standards in living and lifestyle, Penang-based developer Hunza Properties ups the ante once more by collaborating with Yoo, an internationally acclaimed residential and hotel design company, for its new Muze Signature VI, part of the group's flagship Penang International Commercial City (PICC) development.

Situated in Bayan Lepas, Penang, Muze is PICC's first residential project. What makes Muze outstanding, though, would be Muze Signature VI – a special offering of just six exclusive duplexes that promise life, style and lifestyle in one beautifully conceptualised and curated space.

WORLD-CLASS VISION

Hunza is sparing no expense to make this ambitious plan, envisioned as a veritable castle in the sky, a beautiful reality and has engaged renowned place-makers Yoo as creative partner. For those unfamiliar with the Yoo brand, it was founded in 1999 by legendary property entrepreneur John Hitchcox and celebrated designer Philippe Starck. Some of its past projects include Mira Moon boutique hotel in Hong Kong with Marcel Wanders; The Baglioni by Jade Jagger for Yoo in Marrakech, Morocco; and Cape Yamu in Phuket, Thailand.

This pioneering collaboration between the multi-award-winning developer and Yoo is solely focused on creating an exceptional living experience that offers







Khor Tze Ming,

executive director
of Hunza Properties

a seamless blend of iconic themes, artistic styles and stunning design. “Muze Signature VI is also Yoo’s first project in Penang and it is our delight to provide the exclusivity of owning a home curated by the world-renowned design company,” says Khor Tze Ming, executive director of Hunza Properties.

As to why Yoo was chosen, Khor elaborates: “Yoo is a world-renowned, UK-based residential and hotel design company that specialises in crafting bespoke interiors that exude sophistication and elegance. There wasn’t a specific work [in their portfolio that made us decide on them] but rather a broad spectrum of their works all across the globe. Yoo’s ethos is about incorporating local culture within the context of global design. We decided to bring them in primarily because of their industry-leading reputation and their keen understanding of using design to elevate home living to new heights. Their team displays an ability to adapt their design philosophy to incorporate both global and local elements and create spaces that inspire the imagination. These spaces, in turn, also bring people together to share a lifestyle and initiate conversations within the community. This is in line with Muze’s concept, which revolves around the idea of nurturing reflections and sparking inspiration for the residents.”



"The engagement with Yoo actually started during one of our marketing stints in Hong Kong," says Datuk Lily Tan, group CEO of sales and marketing. "Yoo has a prominent presence in the Special Administrative Region and the People's Republic of China, and after we had met, we invited Yoo to visit PICC in Penang." A brief on the concept behind the entire PICC and Muze, including Hunza's intended target market, was duly provided during the initial discussion. "Based on those preliminary briefs and taking into consideration the context of Penang, Yoo then decided to take on the challenge of designing the interiors for the six exclusive units of penthouses — their very first project in Penang itself," Tan adds.

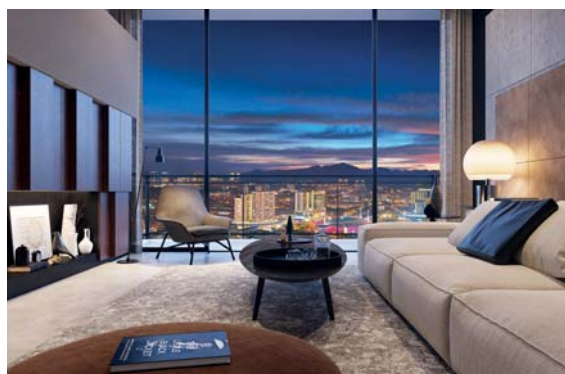
ASPIRATIONAL INSPIRATION

Designed to complement the expansive PICC project — hailed as Penang's new epicentre of commerce — the Muze development is all set to usher in a new age of global living for the island. "Muze @ PICC falls under Phase 1 of PICC," Khor continues. "It is the tallest smart residential building in Malaysia's northern region and it will kick-start the entire landmark development of PICC."

Interested parties will also be pleased to know that PICC has just obtained its Certificate of Completion and Compliance. Comprising two freehold residential towers of 52 and 58 storeys — boasting 846 units with layouts ranging from three to five bedrooms and spanning 1,087 to 5,264 sq ft — what caps the entire development in style will be an exclusive offering of just six duplex penthouses.

Infinitely more expansive, these penthouses will boast generous build-ups of between 3,746 and 5,242 sq ft. Three distinct themes are offered: Lux, Serene and Eclectic. "The idea behind Muze was to provide a vivacious environment and space where musings indulge the mind and aspirations are kindled," Tan explains. "The space is intended to inspire residents or dwellers to engage with their imagination through the unparalleled views of the surrounding vista from within the safety and comfort of their homes. As the penthouses will be located in Tower A L51 and L52 as well as Tower B L57 and L58, the owners will enjoy an undisrupted vista of the hilly terrain that runs along the spine of Penang, the Straits of Malacca that separates the Island from the peninsula and the vibrant cityscape of the Bayan Baru township that extends across southwest Penang. You can also see both the iconic Penang Bridges and Pulau Jerejak farther beyond."

Hunza was very clear that the privileged homeowners of Muze Signature VI will enjoy a quality of life in Penang like never before. "As a contemporary castle in the sky,





we want to afford them a lofty living experience,” Khor affirms. “These penthouses sit atop what will be the tallest, smartest residential buildings in the northern region of Malaysia. We want them to bask in awe at the unparalleled vistas of the surrounding cityscape – not found in any other residential building on the island, or the whole of Penang, for that matter.”

With Muze Signature VI's demographic identified as those above the 40-year-old age bracket; affluent and generally with a taste for the finer things in life; and with a specific wish to live in Penang's southwest, Tan says “they want to be at the top of their game. They want to be part of a circle that is unequalled. By owning such a home, they will be part of a niche group that enjoys the convenience of a fully furnished penthouse uniquely designed and curated by Yoo.”

Every conceivable mod-con has also been seen to. As it is the world-renowned design brand's first project in Penang, only the best names have been considered for Muze Signature VI. These include kitchen and laundry cabinets and built-in wardrobes by Bofi, luxury ironmongery by Olivari, electrical kitchen and laundry appliances by Bosch, sanitary ware by Duravit and taps and fittings by Gessi.





IN GOOD COMPANY

Penang's vibrant economy and booming manufacturing industries have also been steadily attracting a growing pool of talent who have chosen to relocate, calling the island their new home. "This will equate to higher demand for better quality housing in the vicinity of Southwest Penang (near Bayan Lepas FIZ, also known as Silicon Valley of the East)," says Khor. "So, Muze is undoubtedly the significant entry point into the larger integrated development of PICC, which will consist of a shopping mall, 5-star hotel, medical centre and various commercial establishments as well as a central park."



As PICC is touted to be the game changer for a state that is already on a steady, upward trajectory, Khor is hopeful that Hunza's creation of the first large-scale, metropolitan-inspired, mixed-use integrated development in Malaysia's northern region will serve as a catalyst for further growth. "We also want to elevate the quality of life and quality of housing in southwest Penang through PICC's various residential components, such as Muze, Senze and other upcoming projects. Commercial components such as the GBS (Global Business Services) hub and office towers will likewise support growing demand for such spaces in Penang, as the state is the second-largest services hub in the country with more than 50 GBS companies. The demand for such space already surpasses the supply available locally, so we hope PICC will help cater to the growing demand in line with our booming manufacturing state."

PICC's retail and hospitality component, which includes a shopping mall and five-star hotel, will also offer new tourism and lifestyle options in support of the developing social and economic landscape in the island's southwest. "PICC's close proximity to the gateways of Penang, namely the Penang International Airport and both Penang Bridges, will allow for a more integrated living approach — especially with the inclusion of an LRT station that is connected to PICC and which will connect Tanjung Bungah in the northeast all the way to Bayan Lepas in the southwest."





TRUNK IN LOVE

Exploring the inner sanctum of an exquisite atelier in Asnières, France, where craftsmanship and innovation merge seamlessly to form the heart of a luxury maison's creative prowess

Text **Dian Pasquinal Kaur** Photos **Louis Vuitton**





TOP

The Eiffel-style architecture of the atelier beautifully balances the interplay between glass and steel

MIDDLE

In the French Art Nouveau-style living room, you can leisurely pass the time marvelling at the décor and furnishings

BOTTOM

Great care was taken to maintain the house's original charm



Being extended an invitation to tour the Louis Vuitton family home and atelier in Asnières is a real privilege. It is a special access to a realm rich in history, fascinating evolution and unwavering determination but above everything else, it is a journey that embodies a storied past and an enduring legacy. Here, each corner whispers the tales of a timeless brand.

The narrative unfolds five years after the inception of the maison, as Louis Vuitton found his Parisian headquarters no longer sufficient to contain his burgeoning ambitions. In 1859, he established his new workshop in Asnières, a quaint village nestled a few kilometres northwest of Paris.

Asnières' strategic location along the tranquil banks of the River Seine proved providential for the evolution of Louis Vuitton's atelier. It facilitated the arrival of raw materials via boat, including the prized wood used to fashion the iconic trunks that would soon achieve global acclaim.

Just across the river was the first Louis Vuitton store on Rue Neuve-des-Capucines, a symbol of luxury and craftsmanship. The village's accessibility was expanded, thanks to the network of trains, as it was among the pioneering beneficiaries of France's nascent railway lines, with a track passing through its midst.

Due to its confluence of expansion and proximity to Paris, Asnières was the ideal canvas for the workshop's growth. It provided the space to



The exceptional savoir-faire of the artisans in Asnières is evident in the special trunks rolled out now and then like this Vanity Mahjong

expand the workshop to the suburbs, yet was still close to Paris. The journey from the city to Asnières today is an effortless 30-minute drive and it transitions between metropolitan vibrancy and suburban retreat seamlessly.

The atelier's architecture echoes the renowned Eiffel style, a harmonious interplay of glass and steel reminiscent of the tower that would later grace the Parisian landscape in 1889. The bright and spacious workshop serves as the epicentre of Louis Vuitton's savoir-faire. To create

an optimal workspace, the artisans enjoy abundant natural light, along with state-of-the-art lighting.

Within its hallowed confines, the most distinguished creations of the heritage house are all made by hand, spanning rigid trunks, designs in rare or exotic leathers and special orders. It is here that bespoke orders, destined for destinations around the globe, come to life.

Elevating the importance of proximity to production, Louis retained the uppermost floor of the atelier as a family



abode. Over time, the family moved into a nearby structure, erected circa 1878.

Remarkably unchanged, the wood atelier on the first floor remains a testament to time-honoured traditions. For well over a century, artisans have honed their craft with three wood varieties: poplar, birch and the exotic *okoumé*, each prized for its supple yet resilient attributes. The wood is then covered with either canvas or leather. Every part of the trunk is constructed with utmost detail and care, using the finest materials like the Iozine leather trim knocked in firmly by tiny nails. It requires thousands of nails to make a single trunk, apparently.

The section dedicated to exotic leather offered a delightful visual spectacle, thanks to its diverse textures and captivating array of colours. Equally exciting was the area dedicated to its unpickable locks, a legacy that dates back to 1886 when Georges Vuitton revolutionised luggage security by introducing an ingenious, patented closure mechanism, effectively turning travel trunks into veritable treasure chests.

These locks can be personalised with unique serial numbers and come with the convenience of using a single key across all their trunks. In the event of key loss, acquiring a replacement is simple — the brand retains all the lock combination information in their safekeeping.

Louis Vuitton fulfils all types of customised trunks but it will not accept requests for coffins or ammunition boxes. Otherwise, there are plenty of options to choose from — Cabinet of Curiosities by Marc Newson, Malle Sneaker, Casino Trunk and the coveted Infinity Party Trunk which comes with a price tag of RM1,970,000.

Access to the atelier is completely restricted, except with prior special permission.

Enter the Art Nouveau family residence, though transformed through minor renovations and no longer inhabited, which stands as a sanctuary of memory. Transmuted into a gallery, it plays host to exclusive gatherings for VIP patrons, celebrities and the media. At its entrance, an evocative portrait of a youthful Louis, rendered by the skilled hand of China-based artist Yan Pei Ming for *The Art of*

Travel exhibition in 2018, welcomes you.

Within the dining room, trunks amassed by Louis' grandson Gaston form a reverent tapestry. Credited as the archivist of the maison, Gaston's insatiable passion for collecting yielded an eclectic array of curios. In this space, Louis' innate simplicity is reflected in the decor, a quiet counterpoint to the opulence that pervades the rest of the dwelling.

Conversely, the living room, an embodiment of French Art Nouveau style, resonates as a vibrant testament to Georges' vision. This segment of the abode, revamped by Louis' son in the late 19th century, dances with the hues of masterful paintings and carefully curated embellishments.

A rare, ornate fireplace, a relic even by contemporary Parisian standards, stands as a pinnacle of pride. But it is the trunks that steal the show. From a pink striped trunk converted into a coffee table to the Malle Fleurs holding the freshest blooms, Louis Vuitton's creations have woven their way into the hearts of many, capturing a profound adoration for the brand's exquisite blend of artistry and functionality.

Here's a good reason to venture into Asnières on your next trip to Paris. There is an exhibition celebrating the iconic Malle Courier until Feb 17, 2024. This renowned model, inspired by the 1858 flat trunk and patented in 1867, embodies Louis Vuitton's expertise with features like rivets, locks, leather elements and Trianon grey canvas.

As a symbol of travel, elegance and innovation, the Courier trunk has served explorers and modern society. The exhibition showcases its history and codes through historical trunks, anamorphic videos and curated installations that explore various aspects of the brand's heritage and craftsmanship. The journey concludes by delving into the essence of Louis Vuitton's soul, dedicated to the magic of travel. **H**

Book your slot for the exhibition at la-galerie-louisvuitton.seetickets.com/timeslot/malles-courrier

Visitors to the *Malle Courier* exhibition are invited to discover the secrets of the Courier trunk from every angle, through emblematic pieces from the maison's heritage collections



Suitable for a big family, this 19kg WA6000C washing machine by **Samsung** comes with Ecobubble technology that enables powerful washes and removal of stubborn stains (RM3,499, samsung.com)

Build your dream home cinema with the **LG OLED Evo G3 Gallery Edition**. Available in 65- and 77-inch models, it is equipped with Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos, making for a satisfying experience watching your favourite Netflix show. (From RM17,999, harveynorman.com)



Prepare your meals using the Airfryer 4.1L 5000 Series Connected by **Philips** for a healthier option. Bonus point: you are able to monitor the progress of your cooking by connecting the device to the NutriU app. (RM649, senheng.com.my)

Brewing your own coffee can be a good start to the day. This 1950s Retro Style Coffee Grinder from **Smeg** comes with 30 levels, allowing you to get the perfect grain for different tastes and needs. (RM2,615, kitchshop.my)



The new 1977 sofa by **King Living** showcases innovative craftsmanship and elegant silhouettes. Characterised by organic contours and curves, it features a long-lasting, strong and recyclable steel frame, and a steel suspension system. (From RM11,690, kingliving.my)

Text Aireena Azni

ECLECTIC ASSORTMENT



Classy yet practical, **Dyson's Purifier Big+Quiet Formaldehyde** captures allergens as well as gases and odours. It will not meddle with your aesthetically pleasing décor, thanks to its elegant build. (RM4,799, [dyson.my](https://www.dyson.my))

MAIN SQUEEZE

Utilitarian does not equate with dull design. Spruce up your bathroom with these timelessly classic soap dispensers.

PHOTOGRAPHY SOON LAU @ AWESOME STUDIO
STYLING SHOKELUI YAP





FROM LEFT: NORVIN SOAP DISPENSER, RM65.90, **HOOGA**; GLASS SOAP DISPENSER, RM6, **OBJET**; GOLD MARBLE SOAP DISPENSER, RM219, **TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II**; UMBRA EMPEROR SENSOR SOAP PUMP – WHITE NICKEL, RM88; AND UMBRA JOEY SOAP PUMPY WITH SCRUBBY – CHARCOAL, RM88, BOTH FROM **LIVEITUP! @ 1 UTAMA SHOPPING MALL**; KOO SPECKLE SOAP DISPENSER WHITE, RM33, **SPOTLIGHT**; UMBRA SENSOR RAIN SOAP DISPENSER, RM288, **LIVEITUP! @ 1 UTAMA SHOPPING MALL**; SILVTJÄRN SOAP DISPENSER, RM60, **IKEA**; ECO-FRIENDLY BODY SCRUB BRUSH, RM10, **OBJET**; SKISSEN 3-PIECE BATHROOM SET, RM42, **IKEA**; HARISSON SOAP DISPENSER, RM44.90, **HOOGA**; KOO CARINA SOAP DISPENSER BLUE, RM32, **SPOTLIGHT**

A HOME WITH A VIEW

A family has transformed their Penang Hill bungalow into a luxurious cocoon for guests looking to rejuvenate amid nature and heritage

Text **Tan Gim Ean** Photos **Eythrope**



When people gush over Eythrope's breathtaking views, Mark Saw always credits his grandfather and granduncle for purchasing the Penang Hill bungalow from Ida Margaret May Bulford, wife of the original owner, Edward Bulford. At the reception area, a copy of the sales and purchase agreement dated June 27, 1951, states that Saw Choo Theng and Saw Seng Kew paid \$70,000 for the Summit Road property.

As for why they made the purchase, Mark can only guess. "Probably because the British allowed people to buy. He was among the first to do so, together with Yeap Chor Ee [the Penang philanthropist]. Theirs is freehold and farther down the hill. Ours is leasehold, with another 90 years or so.

"My granddad was involved in plantations, banking and, eventually, property. He was very good at picking property and he picked it well."

That is one ability property consultant Mark, who manages the family business, well appreciates. Looking at the visitor log, he found the Saws spent just about one month a year in Eythrope. "We still had to maintain the place and it was rundown in

Whether you are dining with friends or alone, meals are a memorable affair at Eythrope, which looks pretty as a picture



some ways.” He decided everyone could still enjoy the place as a family but allow others to do so too.

Thus, Tan Bee Eu, founder of BETA Architects, was engaged to transform Eythrope into an elegant retreat where guests could have privacy and indulge in the rich biodiversity of its surroundings. Work began in 2021 and was completed last October, and the bungalow built in 1929 — among the first modern residences that sprouted at various altitudes on Penang Hill then — quietly opened its doors in November.

“The idea is all about making sure your assets work for themselves and not having one that is draining. Leaving it empty means you need to spend more to maintain it. This way, eventually, it will more than pay for itself. This a good long-term venture. We’re still in our infancy; we’ll get there eventually,” says Mark, also a partner at Knight Frank Malaysia.

Some cousins suggested following the same path taken by nearby hillside bungalows open to the public. “I said we should go high-end and be in a category of our own: luxury.” As for classic or contemporary, there was a compromise and the decision was classic modern.



The family is happy with the total makeover. Eythrope has retained most of the features on the outside and it stands like a picture postcard, grand and inviting. Broken wooden window frames and doors were refurbished and reinstated while new windows were put in to soundproof the building. Two family suites and three bedrooms look out to George Town and Butterworth, with views of nature set against the backdrop of busy Penang with its culture and heritage. Each room, curated to offer a unique experience, is equipped with comforts that indulge both mind and body.

The Punchinello and Lacewing suites, measuring 78.4 sq m and 74 sq m respectively, are named after butterflies and have original archways leading from the lounge to enclosed balconies that tempt visitors to sit and do nothing. Tiger, Wispy Umbrella and Purple Rain have stories to tell about when these orchids flower and how prominent features in the rooms, such as timber beams and wood flooring, reflect the strong characteristics of those species.

Food used to be a hassle when the family went up to the bungalow for a holiday. They had to bring everything needed for meals and clean up the whole



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Pick a sofa or an armchair to curl up in for a chat, or take the balcony seat and do nothing. Better yet, hit the sack and sink into restful slumber.



kitchen before even lighting the stoves. Then they had to wash and wipe again before heading home. Most times, they went up only for the day, not keen to stay the night worrying about mosquitoes buzzing in from the open windows. There was also the logistics: one jeep for family and food, and another for friends.

Meals at Eythrope are now a leisurely affair, with two chefs based downtown ready to prepare food that can be pre-booked and delivered vacuum-packed. Guests can heat up their choice of Western, local or Nyonya dishes, set them out on the viewing deck and enjoy dinner to the sounds of the night and the sight of lights winking in the distance.

As for transport, hop into a 4WD vehicle at the Botanical Gardens or take the faster and comfortable funicular train ride — about six minutes — from the lower station at Air Itam. This service, which will mark its centenary in October, runs from 6.30am to 10pm daily and those who dislike queuing can pay to take the express lane!

Eythrope is classic modern, with luxurious rooms that offer comfort and privacy

Today, Mark manages the property bought by his grandfather and granduncle in 1951





Eythrope's cool charm is tied to the history of Penang Hill, where the first bungalows — wood, bamboo and attap structures that sheltered those who wanted to get away from the tropical heat and experience the hill environment — were built at the beginning of the 19th century. Water was drawn from natural springs and wells, and oil lamps and candles lit up the night.

The stories of those early residents or travellers would enthral guests huddled around the lounge, with hot beverage in hand. Mike Gibby, author of *The Bungalows of Penang Hill*, traced descendants of the Bulfords to Australia. They do not know how the name Eythrope — which they pronounce as Ee-thrope — originated. “They think the family must have come from Buckinghamshire, in southern England, where there is a village called Eythrope. After the mother [Ida Bulford] sold the property to us, they went back to Dorset and gave the same name to their house there,” Mark relates.

“What I find amazing is that there have been only two families holding the bungalow. They built it in 1929. In six years, Eythrope will be 100. That it's still here after so long is something to be proud of.” For him, the fact that the Saws have owned it longer than the original family is also nice to know. **H**



Dusk adds an enchanting sheen to this old home in the hills, where one can sit and dream the hours away

THE HEART OF ITS ART

The stunning new Istanbul Modern, recently reimagined by the great Renzo Piano, is a definite destination for any worldly traveller to Türkiye's capital

Text & Photos **Diana Khoo**





art. And you have to love art. It's like when you make a concert hall. You must love music. This is the reason why you make the space, to enjoy music — making a space for art is the same thing.”

Inspired greatly by the Bosphorus, by its water and reflections of light that change with the passing of the hours, Piano based his design on an 8.4m by 8.4m grid using steel-brace concrete columns designed to resist significant seismic activity — a practical and very real prospect in the country. Positioned on the western bank of the Bosphorus, between Tophane Park and the waterfront, visitors will enter via a transparent ground level that connects the park to the promenade, and be greeted by a specially commissioned suspended Olafur Eliasson piece titled *Your unexpected journey*, which comprises three geometric pieces — based on the division of a circle into four, eight and 12 sides — hovering in the air.

It was a meeting at his Genoa office with Oya Eczacıbaşı, chair of the board of Istanbul Modern, in 2014 that convinced the Turkish curator that Piano was the right man to design a world-class structure to house art by emerging Turkish artists in a city best known for being the meeting point of cultures since ancient times. “Renzo Piano, a prominent figure in museum architecture today, is the partner in our dream of designing a museum building that would attract the attention of international art circles and reflect the architectural values of our unique city. Our responsibility to both the art world and our visitors has increased with this milestone.”

It was the author and philosopher Alain de Botton who mused, “The modern world thinks of art as very important: something close to the meaning of life”. And if one has enjoyed the privilege of visiting the new Istanbul Modern, set in the historic Karaköy district and facing the blue waters where the Bosphorus and Golden Horn meet, the words never seemed truer.

Originally established in an old customs warehouse in 2004 as the country's first museum of contemporary art, Istanbul Modern recently underwent a complete and total transformation from July 2019, reopening to the public only on May 2 this year. The museum had been temporarily relocated to the former Union Francaise building in Beyoğlu, designed by Alexander Vallaury in 1896, during the four-year renovation period. What made the global headlines, of course, was the fact that Renzo Piano was the appointed architect for the transformation, with the new Istanbul Modern being his first project on Turkish soil.

The Genoese-born Piano and Pritzker Prize laureate who honed his skills under the renowned Louis Kahn as well as Polish engineer Zygmunt Stanislaw Makowski once quipped: “As an architect, you have to provide a shelter to enjoy

ABOVE
Renzo Piano gives Istanbul Modern his Starchitect treatment

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Olafur Eliasson's *Your unexpected journey* (2021), composed of three geometric globes suspended in the central airwell

Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin's sequinned work was created to reference the fear of earthquakes after a particularly terrible one in 1999

Move from temporary to permanent exhibitions with ease in the sprawling 10,000 sq ft space



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Refik Anadol's
Infinity Room:
Bosphorus

False Ceiling
by Richard
Wentworth is
composed of
books and steel
cables

The rooftop
reflection pool
offers a panoramic
view of Istanbul
and its waterways

*Against the
Current*, a
2013 work by
Güneş Terkol



The ground floor also houses the library, café, museum shop and educational workshops. The other floors are dedicated to the museum's extraordinary collection of art. Be sure to look out for the works by Turkish women artists such as Mehtap Baydu, Inci Eviner and Sibel Horada as well as Refik Anadol's *Infinity Room: Bosphorus*, which uses real-time environmental data provided by the General Directorate of Meteorology, such as wind, temperature and sea and air humidity levels, to be visually dramatised using digital technology and, thus, artistically revealing the colours — both visible and invisible — of the Bosphorus, the beating aquatic heart for all Istanbul. Also, do not miss going up to the stunning rooftop viewing terrace that hovers over a shallow plane of water covering the museum's entire roof. Its creation is, of course, to draw attention to the reflections cast by the city but, more often than not, is

used as a splashy playground for the city's famously rambunctious seagulls.

"The museum is like a creature of the sea that has just jumped out from the water of the Bosphorus," Piano muses. "We wanted to make a building to defy gravity and levitate above the ground, creating transparency with views towards the sea on one side and the park and medieval district of Galata on the other. If you build a suspended space, where there is nothing obstructing the gaze, you get one of the strong elements of the project: the multiple planes. On the ground floor, the pillars give you a sense of depth, like tree trunks in a forest. Then going up to the first, second, third and fourth floors, you have the plane of infinity and light to the south while to the north, you find the park and city. The gaze never ceases to superimpose one plane on another. This is what a city is composed of: complexity, the sequence of buildings, streets and spaces that follow one another, creating a panorama of multiple planes." **H**



PIANO FORTE

Seven other astounding artistic projects in the Renzo Piano Building Workshop portfolio to check out the next time you travel

WHAT: Centre Georges Pompidou

WHERE: Paris, France

WHY: Conceptualised together with another architectural great, Sir Richard Rogers, the Pompidou is an edifice to modernity in one of Paris' oldest districts, the Beaubourg plateau. Although both architects were relatively unknown then, their groundbreaking and radical design has immortalised their structure as a modern-day classic. The Pompidou's style is best described as "structural expressionism" or "late modernism" and exposes all of its infrastructure which, in turn, allows the building's interiors to be fully and seamlessly maximised.



DIANA KHOO

WHAT: Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

WHERE: Athens, Greece

WHY: Named after the late billionaire shipping tycoon whose generous donation remains one of the largest ever for a cultural building project, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation is aptly situated in Kallithea, which used to be one of Athens' earliest seaports. Piano and his team had the task of transforming what was a former parking lot left over from the 2004 Olympic Games into the stunning structure it is today. An artificial hill was also built in order to ensure visitors to the centre could enjoy views of the bay, which was once an ancient port referred to as Falirou or Phaleron and the legendary place from where Theseus, Themistocles and Menestheus had once set sail. The centre, bequeathed to the Greek state after its completion, is home to the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera.



DIANA KHOO

WHAT: The Menil Collection

WHERE: Houston, Texas, the US

WHY: The Menil Collection marks Piano's debut on American soil. Completed and opened in 1986, the unassuming but very clean and linear structure takes its name from John and Dominique de Menil, the latter

heiress to the Schlumberger oil company fortune, and both of whom were great movers and shakers of the art collecting scene. An intimate project compared with the Pompidou, design-conscious visitors also know never to leave the grounds without paying a visit to the Rothko Chapel, originally designed by Philip Johnson but completed by two local architects, next door.

WHAT: Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum

WHERE: Boston, Massachusetts, the US

WHY: Originally built in 1902, Piano was chosen to design a newly constructed auxiliary wing spanning 70,000 sq ft in 2012, for the celebrated museum named after the American philanthropist and patron of the arts and styled after a Venetian *palazzo*. The space is designed for artistic interaction, be it through performances, exhibitions or events that will all complement the museum's programming. There is a 300-seat performance hall and a special exhibition gallery with adjustable ceiling height, alongside expanded outdoor garden spaces, artist's apartments and conservation labs.

REUTERS

WHAT: Whitney Museum of American Art

WHERE: New York City, New York, the US

WHY: Located by the Hudson River and next to the High Line in the city's cool Meatpacking district, the new Whitney, which opened along Gansevoort Street in 2015, deserves a full day of your attention for a lengthy tour of its unrivalled collection of modern and contemporary art as well as to admire its structure and design. The cantilevered entrance is, of course, a thing of dramatic beauty while the strong and asymmetrical form stunningly blends in yet stands out from the neighbourhood's industrial origins and character. The Whitney is also the first purpose-built museum to actively pursue Leed Gold Status, which it was accorded in 2016.



WHAT: Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé

WHERE: Paris, France

WHY: Bulbous but beautiful best describes the organic structure (some wags call it a "creature") that serves as the official headquarters of the Fondation Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé whose raison d'être is to preserve the French film company Pathé's history and heritage while promoting the magic of cinematography. Standing on the site of one of Paris' first cinemas in its XIII arrondissement, the main structure resembles the body of an armadillo — albeit made from glass — while remaining connected to the other historic Haussmann-era buildings at four main points. The building houses Pathé's archives as well as exhibition spaces for temporary and permanent collections, the foundation's offices and a 70-seat screening room.

WHAT: Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre

WHERE: Nouméa, New Caledonia, the Pacific Islands

WHY: Much the same way Frank Gehry's Guggenheim put the Spanish city of Bilbao on the architectural map, the same could be said of Piano's Tjibaou Cultural Centre for the Pacific Island of New Caledonia. Built to celebrate the Kanak culture native to the island and named for the slain pro-independence leader, the centre's design visually recalls the traditional "Great Huts" of Kanak chieftains, but in a thoroughly modern way, while the formal curved axial layout evokes seashells — a nod to the nearby Pacific Ocean as well as the traditional huts of a Caledonian village.

Terang Bulan

Mark the Mooncake Festival on Sept 29 with these elegant accents

PHOTOGRAPHY SOON LAU @ AWESOME STUDIO STYLING SHOKELUI YAP



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TOPPIG LANTERN FOR BLOCK CANDLE, BLACK, 36CM, RM65, **IKEA**; FIRST LOVE PORCELAIN PORTABLE TEAWARE GIFT SET 130ML, RM168, **PURPLE CANE @ 1 UTAMA SHOPPING MALL**; ZENITH CUSHION, RM79, **MAJU HOME**; REPLICA WISHBONE CHAIR BROWN, RM459, **RUMA**; SATIN FINISH PEWTER, PORCELAIN AND BAMBOO CLOUD TEA SET WITH TRAY, RM3,300, AND GIFT-BOXED FOUR SEASONS TEA SET EMBELLISHED WITH THE FLOWERS OF THE FOUR SEASONS, RM3,300, BOTH FROM **ROYAL SELANGOR**; GLASS TEA CUP WITH LID, RM79, **TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II**; GOLD FLINT TABLE KNIFE AND FORK, RM9.90 EACH, AND GIENNA ACACIA 3-TIER CAKE STAND, BOTH FROM **HOOGA**



FROM TOP: MULTI-COLOURS
RUBBER REST CHAIR, RM899,
TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II;
POKOKS SUNSHINE ORANGE
CUSHION WITH INSERT,
45cm X 45cm, RM19, OBJET;
FLORAL PRINT ENAMEL TEA
SET, PRICES RANGE FROM
RM15.80 - RM88, LEGEND OF
TEA @ SUNWAY PYRAMID
SHOPPING MALL; PINK SAUCER
PLATES, RM6 EACH, OBJET;
CHINESE DESIGN EMBROIDERY
COASTERS, RM12.90 EACH,
TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II;
UMBRA BELLWOOD STORAGE
TABLE - WHITE, RM498,
LIVEITUP! @
1 UTAMA SHOPPING
MALL



FROM TOP: PORCELAIN LIDDED CUP TEAWARE GIFT SET 150ml± (7PCS), RM186, **PURPLE CANE @ 1 UTAMA SHOPPING MALL**; WHITE PORCELAIN TEA POT – SMALL, RM75.90; AND WHITE PORCELAIN ROUND TEA CUP, RM17.90 EACH, BOTH FROM **MUJI**; GLADOM TRAY TABLE, DARK GREY, 45cm X 53cm, RM69, **IKEA**; CROSS BACK CAFE CHAIR, RM369, **NOAH** PINK SMALL BOWL, RM13.90, **GLAM ROSEY** GREY DINNER FORK, RM15.90, AND **NOAH** PINK SIDE PLATE, RM15.90, ALL FROM **RUMA**





STEEPED IN TRADITION

Quaint and minimalistic, Tannin Hill Tea Gallery stands out among Kuala Lumpur's multitude of coffee-centric cafés

Text **Genie Leong** Photos **Tannin Hill**

AIREENA AZNI



For aeons, it has been customary across Asia to serve tea to houseguests. A symbol of hospitality and respect, the steaming beverage helps visitors feel more at home. Perhaps that is one of the reasons those who set foot into the newly opened Tannin Hill Tea Gallery feel so sincerely received.

The tea house is a surprise find on old Jalan Ipoh, KL, and one of several indicators of the area's ongoing revitalisation. While it may seem like an odd place for a tea house, it is the perfect place for founder Tan Dan Leong, his son Tan Guan An and members of their family, who all call the neighbourhood home.

Named after the astringent compound and the idyllic peaks at which tea bushes are traditionally cultivated, Tannin Hill pays homage to tea in its most simplistic form. Its eight offerings all hail from China. Guests are welcome to sit at the bar and sample the variations, supplemented with information from explanatory cards and friendly staff members. From the subtle floral notes of the pale golden Shou Mei to the earthiness of the full-bodied Liu Bao that leaves a hint of sweetness on the tongue, the menu has something to entice every palate.

In a unique twist, the high fare matches teas with Western-style bites like scones topped with cream and jam, sliced baguette with savoury dips and saccharine confectionery. While not the most traditional interpretation of afternoon tea, these provisions speak for Dan Leong's passion for tea and all its aspects and possibilities, as well as his desire to innovate and experiment in order to create a rendition that attracts young blood.

"I want to make tea appealing to the younger generation," he says. "Nowadays, youth only drink

bubble tea. To me, that is not tea — not real tea. I want to make the real thing cool for them.”

In Dan Leong’s own words, Tannin Hill is “not about educating” but rather about making experiences. And this becomes apparent from the moment one steps through the door into its chic interior.

The design of the space is strikingly modern. Cool stone tiles pave the floor in a stretcher bond pattern; plush upholstery in neutral tones extends comfort; and the copper shelving behind the marble-topped tea bar reflects the mellow glow of amber backlights, basking the area in a balmy luminescence.

Sequestered away towards the end of the café is the teapot room — a private space that harks back to the days of traditional tea houses. There is cushioned floor seating and mantels that display potted blooms and an assortment of earthen teapots propped on wooden trays. Guan An, who manages daily operations, will tell you that the pottery originates from another avid tea aficionado in the family — his grandmother — alluding to the deep significance of tea in the Tan family.

As contemporary as the store appears to the bare eye, there is more to ponder if you peel away the top layer. The botanical decor evokes the earthy nature of tea; the warm wooden finishes and lighting give the shop a cosiness, not unlike how it feels to nurse a hot cup between cold hands; and the families and friends who visit the café are reminders of times spent bonding with loved ones over pot after pot of tea.

Semi-legendary philosopher Lao Tzu is credited with the saying, “Tea is the elixir of life”. This tonic,

PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE



CLOCKWISE, FROM RIGHT
Dan Leong with son Guan An; the main bar; tea leaf samples on display by the cashier

though allegedly discovered by accident when tea leaves fell into Emperor Shen Nung’s boiling water, has been purposefully used to treat all sorts of ailments, many of which have been justified by modern science.

Through years of globalisation, tea may have lost its footing with the younger generations who may feel stifled by the formal and sometimes filial associations with tea ceremonies. That said, with the likes of Tannin Hill, where ancestral traditions and stylish appearances entwine, there is hope yet for the future its founder dreams of, who, for now, is content with “settling into the business” and taking things one step at a time. **H**

Tannin Hill is open Tuesday-Sunday from 9am-5pm. For more information, visit @tanninhill.co on Instagram or contact (016) 617 8379.

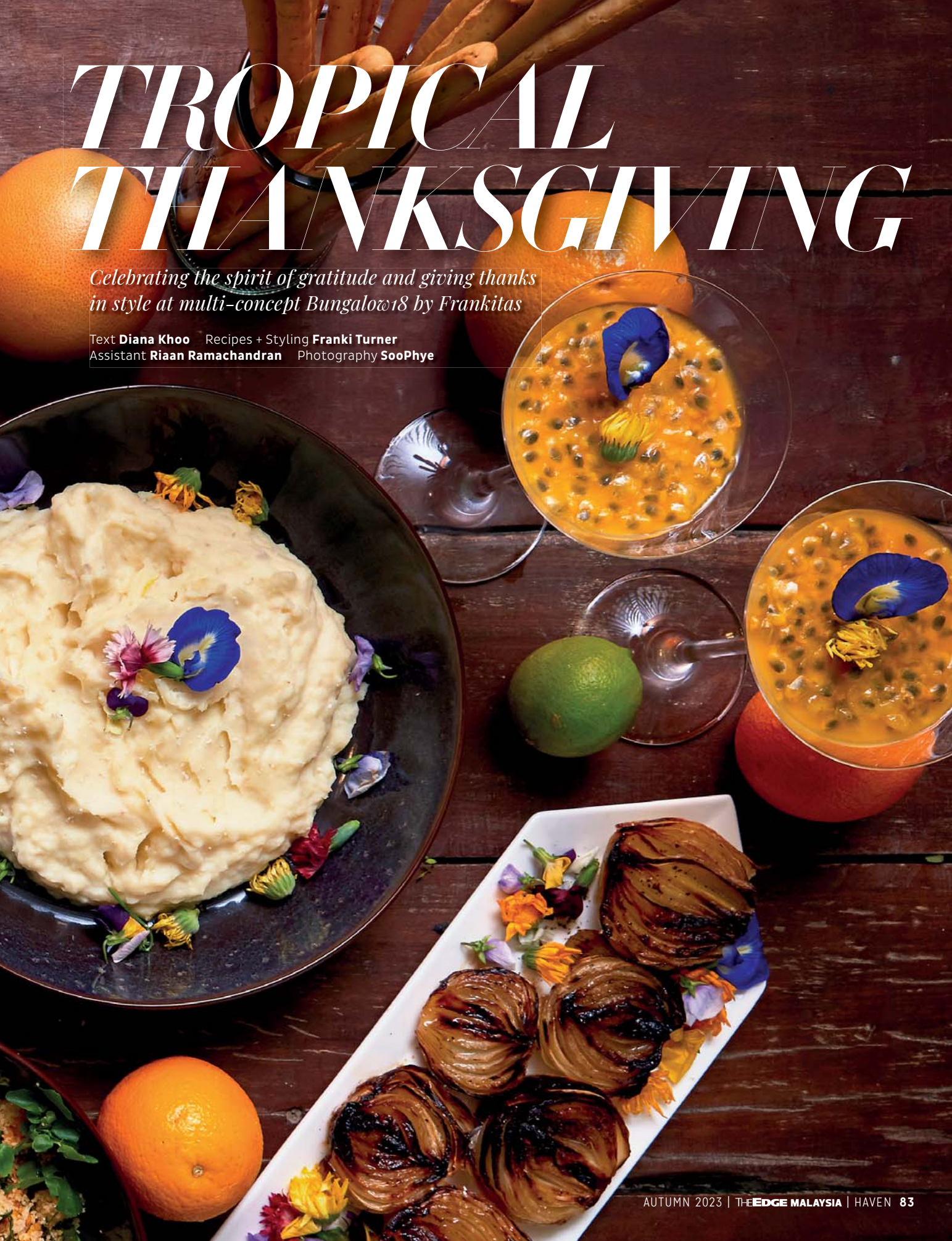




TROPICAL THANKSGIVING

*Celebrating the spirit of gratitude and giving thanks
in style at multi-concept Bungalow 18 by Frankitas*

Text **Diana Khoo** Recipes + Styling **Franki Turner**
Assistant **Riaan Ramachandran** Photography **SooPhye**





It is quite possibly the most charming cultural pivot as Franki Turner, co-founder of multi-concept retail store Bungalow18 by Frankitas, reconfigures the traditional American national holiday of Thanksgiving into a full-blown feast dedicated to the universal idea of giving thanks and practising the art of gratitude.

"Yes, Thanksgiving isn't big in Malaysia but I like the overall idea of it," she nods. "Who says we can't and shouldn't set aside a day of thanks and positive encouragement?"

This embracing and inclusive spirit is already more than palpable at Bungalow18, the one-stop haven of beautiful things and uplifting activity she co-founded with childhood best friend and neighbour, Gaya Subramaniam. Together, the girls use the spacious retro bungalow in Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur, as a boutique, fitness centre, pop-up café and events space. It is a place where anyone is welcome to pop in, enjoy a coffee and browse the extensive selection of pretties. There are the flagship Frankitas handbags of course, as well as lipsticks by new local label Bluemolly, vintage rugs from the collection of the late artist and collector Dr Askandar Unglehart, all manner of Malaysian-made treasure, including baskets, *ikat* fabric cushions, jewellery whose proceeds go to support the education of refugee children, and more.

But what many do not know is that Turner, a wizard in the kitchen, is game to host more culinary events at the beautiful space she created. At present, only Fridays are allotted for feasting, which in Bungalow18-speak means authentic Indonesian food — a nod to Turner's heritage

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Bungalow18 by Frankitas is both treasure trove and safe space; owners Franki Turner and Gaya Subramaniam envision Bungalow18 as boutique, fitness centre, pop-up café and event space; the table is set for a tropical Thanksgiving feast



It is hard not to feel happy and grateful when you, Kantana in hand, are beckoned to take your seat at a white linen-draped table that is overflowing with vases of leaves and flowers, citrus fruits and, to evoke the teensiest bit of Thanksgiving, the odd pumpkin or two.

“Oh, Franki can really cook up a storm and is just so creative when it comes to conceptualising a menu and dressing up the table,” says Gaya.

Private dining at Bungalow18 can accommodate 12 to 25 pax for seated meals while cocktails and canapés can go all the way up to 70 pax.

“I love this, especially as it means we are part of the process of people creating special memories with and for their loved ones. I love finding out what they want or enjoy eating so I can adjust the menu according to their palate, and I enjoy getting to know who they are as people so I can dress up the space and create an unforgettable time for them,” enthuses Turner. “Bungalow18 has been the venue for an intimate garden wedding, a white-themed party, a birthday party with outdoor cinema, a hen’s night and even a hen’s morning, which we tweaked with a Zumba session and fun activities on the lawn. We can do a Hawaiian or Tulum-inspired event and are also currently in talks to host a Scandinavian crayfish party.”

And what if guests ask for a traditional turkey dinner this Thanksgiving with all the trimmings? “We’ll do it,” says Turner without missing a beat. “After all, Bungalow18 was designed to be a place where people can be themselves ... A place where it feels safe — to laugh, scream out loud ... whatever. And, besides, we never say no.”

For private catering and events, visit frankitas.co or contact (016) 964 2570



— in the likes of *gado-gado* and her signature Soto Ayam Bogor, fuelled by the Kantana — “the official Bungalow18 welcome drink”, as regulars like to say: a refreshing blend of torch ginger, fresh lime, gin and lychee liqueur.

“We sell it by the bottle, too,” says Turner with a wink.

This Thanksgiving, however, Turner is experimenting with a lighter approach.

“The standard American menu of turkey and pumpkin pie is just too heavy for our climate. So, I am lightening things up with an Ottolenghi accent,” she says, referencing Yotam Ottolenghi, the celebrated London-based chef and author of a slew of hit cookbooks based on Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cooking traditions.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT Turner putting the finishing touches to her panna cotta; Bungalow18 by Frankitas is a shopper’s haven of carefully-curated treasures; items crafted from *ikat* fabric are particularly sought-after





OXTAIL OSSO BUCO

2½kg oxtail (4 to 6 pieces, 2 to 3 inches thick)
2 carrots (diced)
2 stalks of celery (diced)
4 medium onions (roughly diced)
4 cloves of chopped garlic
4 sprigs of fresh thyme
3 sprigs of fresh rosemary
4 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp maple syrup
1 cup of dry white wine
Flour for dusting the meat before browning
Salt and pepper
2 tsp olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C.
2. Coat the oxtail in flour, brown in pan (make sure you drain excess water from the oxtail before you coat it with flour to ensure you get that nice brown caramelisation — this adds a lot of flavour). Drizzle two tablespoons of olive oil in a hot pan. Fry the oxtail and put aside.
3. Increase the heat to medium high and cook on each side until well browned (about five minutes per side). Remove the oxtail to a bowl and set aside.
4. In the same pan, sauté the onions, carrots and celery then add in the oxtail. Cook the onion mixture, stirring frequently until the onions are translucent (about five minutes), and toss in the garlic, thyme and rosemary. Continue cooking until the vegetables just begin to brown (eight to 12 minutes).
5. Add the oxtail back to the pan. Pour in the wine and then add plenty of water to cover contents. Bring to a simmer. Cover the pan and put it in the oven to cook until the meat is tender — 2½ to 3 hours in low heat (170° to 175° C).
6. Serve in a warmed dish or pot and sprinkle some thyme on top for presentation.

COUSCOUS SALAD

Box of couscous

4 stalks of spring onion

15 to 20 olives

Handful of parsley

Handful of dill

Half handful of thyme

100g of water crest

(you can opt for rocket or arugula leaves)

800g of pumpkin (cut into small cubes and roast in oven until slightly brown and soft)

800g zucchini

2 tbsp olive oil

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

8 tbsp salt (for roasting pumpkin, zucchini and dressing)

1 tsp of brown sugar

1. Pour couscous into a big bowl, add olive oil and salt.
2. Boil water in a kettle, pour hot water over couscous and let couscous stand for 2 minutes before using a fork to fluff it up and break up the clumps for light and fluffy couscous.

SALAD

1. Cut zucchini (with skin) into square cubes, put in a bowl, add salt and leave for about 15 minutes; then drain out water and wipe with paper towels to remove excess water/moisture.
2. In a pan, drizzle some olive oil, pour in zucchini cubes and lightly fry for five to seven minutes until you get a little browning, but make sure they are not overcooked and do not become too soft. You still want a good texture and some crunch to it.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine roasted pumpkin, spring onion, olives, parsley, dill, thyme and watercress, then pour in cooled couscous and mix together by hand or using a spoon.

DRESSING

1. Whisk together balsamic vinegar, salt, brown sugar and pepper in a small bowl. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil and whisk until a thickened dressing forms.
2. Pour dressing over the couscous salad and mix evenly with your hands.



GRILLED ZUCCHINI

4 small, pale green or regular zucchini, tops trimmed slightly and halved lengthwise (1lb 5oz/600g)

3½ tbsp olive oil

3 tsp salt

300g Greek yoghurt

150g of almonds

Handful of dill

Half handful of Italian parsley

Garlic (roasted)

Onion (roasted)

1. Cut zucchini in half and put ⅓ teaspoon of salt. Let it sit for 15 to 20 minutes before draining excess water; wipe with paper towel.
2. Preheat the oven to high — 200° to 220°C.
3. On a hot flat pan, pan-fry the zucchini with olive oil — one minute on each side. Be sure to get some colour (golden brown), especially on the flat side of zucchini. Set aside.
4. Place the zucchini on a baking sheet cut-side up and broil for about 10 minutes, until nicely charred and softened.



PANNA COTTA

¼ cup (60 ml) milk

1¼ tsp (4g) unflavoured powdered gelatine

2 cups (480ml) heavy French (preferred but not necessary) cream

¼ cup (50g) granulated sugar (you can reduce this so it is less sweet; texture of panna cotta will not be affected)

1 tsp pure vanilla extract or 1 vanilla bean (if you have them)

1. Pour milk in a bowl and pour gelatin into the bowl — mix them together so they can soften, for five to eight minutes. Set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan, heat cream and sugar on medium heat and bring just to a pre-boil until sugar dissolves. Then add gelatin and milk mix to pan — stir in gelatine and immediately whisk until smooth and completely dissolved (make sure it does not boil). Remove from heat, then add vanilla extract straight and gently whisk.
3. Pour cream into four individual serving dishes. You may use martini glasses for better presentation. Refrigerate for at least four to six hours, but best to leave it overnight.
4. Cut passion fruit into half and scoop the juices and seeds into a bowl. (Optional: Add ½ tbsp maple syrup, especially if passion fruit is on the sour side. If you prefer it sour, then skip the maple syrup.) Put in fridge and pour on top of panna cotta before serving.
5. When serving panna cotta, be sure to remove from the fridge 15 to 20 minutes (depending on room temperature on the day) before serving to get a better wobbly-like texture.

Note: The panna cotta can be kept in the fridge for three to four days

YOGHURT DRESSING DIP

1. Roast whole onions with olive oil and salt (200°C) for about 25 minutes until brown and soft.
2. Roast garlic (200°C) for about 15 minutes until soft.
3. Roast some almonds in the oven for about five minutes.
4. In a blender, place roast almonds, roast garlic, roast onion, dill, parsley, the remaining ½ tablespoon of oil, and ½ teaspoon of salt and five tablespoons of garlic. Blend until you make a smooth dip/paste, leaving no clumps.
5. Transfer the smooth dip/paste with the rest of yoghurt onto serving platter, placing the roasted zucchini on top of the dip. Then lightly drizzle olive oil and chopped dill for presentation.





CARAMELISED ONIONS

2 pounds small onions, peeled and sliced in half
4 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp salt
3 tbsp maple syrup
1½ tbsp balsamic vinegar

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C.
2. Cut onions in half. In a bowl, whisk maple syrup, balsamic vinegar and salt together. Pour mix and rub all over onions until all mixture is evenly distributed.
3. In a pan, warm the oil on medium-high heat. Add the onions on flat side first and cook for about eight minutes, tossing occasionally, until they start to brown.
4. Then roast onions for 20 to 25 minutes, until they become tender. Remove from oven and add black pepper.
5. Place on a flat platter before serving.

MASHED POTATOES

1kg of potatoes
100g of butter
¾ cup of cream
1½ tsp salt
Wild garlic (to shave)

1. Cut potato into four squares of equal pieces.
2. Boil water in salt to season the potatoes all the way through until potatoes become really soft.
3. Drain all water, return to pot and mash with butter and cream for a creamier-textured mash (you can use milk if you don't have cream).
4. Mash with a fork or potato ricer until soft and creamy.
5. Transfer to serving bowl and shave some wild garlic on top to add a layer of beautiful subtle flavour. **H**

AL FRESCO ACCENTS

Classic floral picnic essentials to add a touch of elegance to your outdoor dining experience

Text **Sabita Mohanadas**



1 These wine glasses by **Marks & Spencer** have a timeless crystal design with slender stems and rounded bowls, perfect for elegant swirling (RM54.90, marksandspencer.com)

2 **Versace's** intricately detailed porcelain service plate features a central Barocco letter V, encircled by brand heritage prints in pastel purple, soft mint and classic gold tones (RM2,385, versace.com)

3 Made from stainless steel, **Artelia's** Aladdin Gold-Plated Ring cutlery features unique detailing with acrylic handles and a refined braided gold-plated ring (RM1,900 per set, artelia.com)

4 Welcome guests with allergen-free bouquets. These beautiful three-ply napkins by **Ikea** are fit for both festivities and everyday meals. (RM9, ikea.com)

5 The Danish Rose from **Bloomspace** is a native of Eurasia and produces large pink flowers and dark green leaves. It thrives in bright indirect sunlight and with regular fertilisation. (RM69, bloomspace.co)

6 Part of the **Next Direct** white pleat range, this elegant candle holder is perfect for showcasing your favourite pillar candles (RM127, nextdirect.com)

SCHOOL LUNCH

For recess or break time in the office pantry, a packed snack saves you some cash without scrimping on style

PHOTOGRAPHY SOON LAU @ AWESOME STUDIO
STYLING SHOKELUI YAP



TRANSPARENT COVER LUNCHBOX WITH SPOON

& CHOPSTICKS, OBJET (RM15)



ALUMINIUM LUNCHBOX, MUJI (RM94.90)



CLICK TO GO (SET OF 4) 900ml, TUPPERWARE BRANDS @ DATARAN GLOMAC, KELANA JAYA (RM113.20)



SQUARE AWAY (SET OF 4) 620ml, TUPPERWARE BRANDS
@ DATARAN GLOMAC, KELANA JAYA (RM95.20)



SISTEMA TO GO BENTO BOX, 1.76L, **SPOTLIGHT** (RM45)



THERMOS FLASK, **OBJET** (RM29)



STAINLESS STEEL HALVVARM FOOD CONTAINER WITH LID AND DIVIDER, 0.7L, **IKEA** (RM35)



3-TIER TIFFIN, **TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II** (RM159)



UTBJUDA STACKABLE LUNCHBOX, 0.3L, **IKEA** (RM20)



REHEATABLE DIVIDED LUNCH BOX 1L, TUPPERWARE BRANDS @ DATARAN GLOMAC, KELANA JAYA (RM53.60)



3-TIER PRINTED TIFFIN, TRIBECA @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II (RM159)



POP-UP SILICONE LUNCHBOX DUO, SMIGGLE (RM129.90)



2-TIER LUNCHBOX WITH CHOPSTICKS & SPOON, OBJET (RM20)





SISTEMA S/LINE QUADDIE LUNCHBOX, ASSORTED, 1.5L, **SPOTLIGHT** (RM33)



2-TIER TIFFIN, **TRIBECA** @ BANGSAR VILLAGE II (RM129)



DÉCOR DELUXE CLIPS GLASS OBLONG, 630ml, **LIVEITUP!** @ 1UTAMA SHOPPING MALL (RM26.90)



CrystalWave Divided Dish 825ml, **TUPPERWARE BRANDS** @ DATARAN GLOMAC, KELANA JAYA (RM48.30)

MY SPACE: CHONG LEE SIONG

Founder, LSA Architects Sdn Bhd

Text **Tan Gim Ean**

HAVEN: You recently gave a talk at the PAM (Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia) Centre on fire safety and building codes for external cladding systems. What have we learnt from the 2017 Grenfell Tower tragedy in which 72 people perished?

The fire in West London was an unfortunate incident but looking at it from the other side of the coin, it drew attention to fire regulations and building safety. It was pivotal in the immediate adoption of new standards on the fire behavioural characteristics of cladding Malaysia was among the first to do so. The drive for greater cost control and aesthetics — making buildings appear new without spending the necessary money to evaluate the materials used — can contribute to disasters like Grenfell.

Please tell us more about fire safety from an architectural perspective.

When designing buildings according to the necessary standards and Malaysian codes, in addition to the usual intentions of providing a good and healthy environment, and a structure that is aesthetically pleasing, safety is very important. Two-thirds of building codes relate to fire safety, directly or indirectly.

If you compare road and building safety, talking in terms of injury and fatality, there is a greater risk of mortality when driving on the road. But when architects design buildings, they are dealing with the general population and the public — everyone lives or works in some kind of building — and it is our responsibility to design them such that they are safe to occupy. Based on statistics, most fires in buildings are caused by electrical short circuits,



which can result from the improper use of electrical devices by the occupants.

Relentless rainfall recently has triggered landslides in India. We have been having frequent heavy rain too. How can we be extra careful?

Landslides are not a new phenomenon here. We have almost mapped out the whole of the country and know where the potential geographical problems might be. But when commercialism comes in and people want to build in landslide-prone areas, they must do the necessary engineering and take the necessary precautions. But why build in such high-risk localities in the first place? Malaysia is not lacking in land.

What attracted you to architecture in the first place?

If I had been born 15 years later, I would have been an industrial designer, not an architect. But those days, when I was looking at what to study, the closest thing I knew to engineering and design was

architecture. I am keen on design, things we use every day in the environment we live and play in. You need someone to design, engineer and produce them and make them suitable for that purpose, and look good too.

What is your personal space like?

A bed, four walls and a room. In the office, there is a space to meet clients, do my designs and get the team to work together. I take enjoyment in having a nice breakfast before starting the day and a bit of supper before knocking off. No fancy indulgence. Outside physical work, it's a lot of self-discovery — I would read, think of the next good thing to design, and how to adopt, adapt and improve for the next project. I don't see architecture as work. It's something I do and to be paid to do what I love is my biggest privilege.

What makes a house a home for you?

Essentially, a house is a private space for the person to live in and go to sleep. Everything else, to many, is a showcase of their own story: They have a big flashy property to show how successful they are, and many rooms to show a big family and filial piety, with the children living together. Ultimately, a home is where any individual would find his place of solace. When we go to bed, that is the time we are most vulnerable and home is where you can sleep most comfortably. Some people need to ensure their room is in the middle of their house, or upstairs, or be in a fully gated unit. A small room and bed are okay for me, with simple comforts and enough ventilation. I would prefer a fan to air conditioning, with the windows open. I'm a very private person and don't need too much. **H**

S M E G



DISCOVER MORE



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