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HOME SINGAPORE & DECOR

PROPERTY

How to max
out your
investment
returns

CLASSIC BLUE
MUST-HAVES
FOR THE HOME

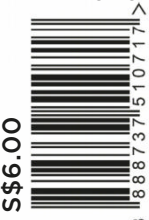
THE BTO SPECIAL

8 TIPS FOR RECONFIGURING
A STANDARD LAYOUT

10 WAYS TO HIDE
A HOME SHELTER

DESIGN GUIDE FOR AN
OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN

MAR 2020



S\$6.00

THINK OUT OF THE BOX

With more than 80 per cent of Singaporeans living in flats built by the Housing & Development Board (HDB), it's not uncommon to find apartment homes sporting the same floor plan around the island.

A standardised layout for all Built-To-Order (BTO) apartment units allows the HDB to build more homes in a shorter amount of time, which is good news for those who are waiting to get their keys to their new or first home. However, it can also make it more difficult for homeowners to design a home that looks and feels different from the rest.

In an age where homeowners are beginning to

appreciate the fact that the design of their home should be an apt representation of themselves, there is a growing interest in ways to make home interiors look unique and stylish.

The good news is there are plenty of design ideas available and you are currently holding onto one of the best resources for home decorating inspiration.

In this issue my team and I take on the task of uncovering new ways to make your home stand out, and optimise the space in an open-plan kitchen, something all new BTOs will come with. Have fun with your spatial planning and we will see you again in April.

YOUNG LIM
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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furniture store
with a wine bar.



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Where the
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THINGS TO BUY

INSPIRED BY A *dream*

NATUZZI
ITALIA



N

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Paris-based interior architect Tristan Auer embodies the elegance of high-end French design.

PEOPLE

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MADE FOR ELEGANCE
Paris-based interior architect Tristan Auer embodies the elegance of high-end French design like an ambassador of the French art of living throughout the world.

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Shermaine Ong, principal designer of MOW Interior Design, offers first-time homeowners advice on making their place stand out.

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CHIC SHACK
Claire Warren recounts her journey towards establishing a retail space dedicated to stylish homeowners in Singapore.

DESIGN

**IDEAS AND INSPIRATION FROM
THOSE IN THE KNOW**

SPACE

SINGAPORE 77 BENCOOLEN ST
KUALA LUMPUR LEVEL 3 INTERMARK MALL JALAN TUN RAZAK
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BUKIT BANDARAYA, BANGSAR END OF APRIL

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HOMES

THE NEW MODERN



on the
cover

76

A cohesive colour palette helps tie the look of various styles throughout this home together.

PHOTOGRAPHY
VERONICA TAY
ART DIRECTION
NONIE CHEN
KRISTY QUAH

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This Texas property is the weekend and holiday getaway of Sara Story and her family.

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This laidback home has been personalised with travel photos and ceramicware.

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The fusion of two concepts differentiates this home from other run-of-the-mill, industrial-themed interiors.

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A cohesive colour palette helps tie the look of various styles throughout the home together.

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This eclectic home is the result of three friends coming together to create something wholesome and cosy.

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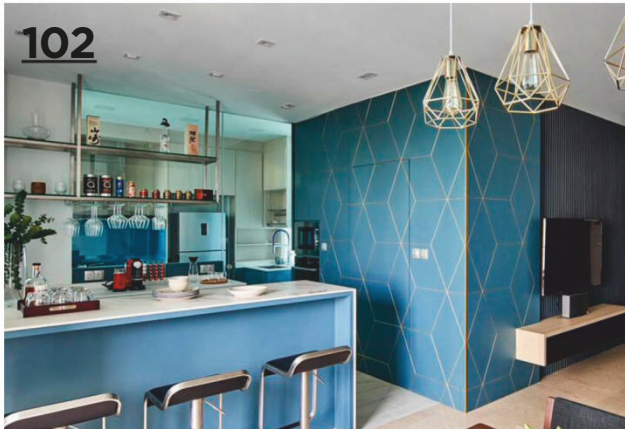
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The countertop is the centrepiece of a kitchen.



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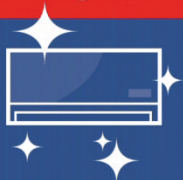


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Cleaning section



- ✦ Behind the cover (Indoor Unit)
- ✦ Coil (Indoor Unit)

- ✦ Filter (Indoor Unit)
- ✦ Coil's drain receptacle

- ✦ Drain pipe
- ✦ Ventilation duct

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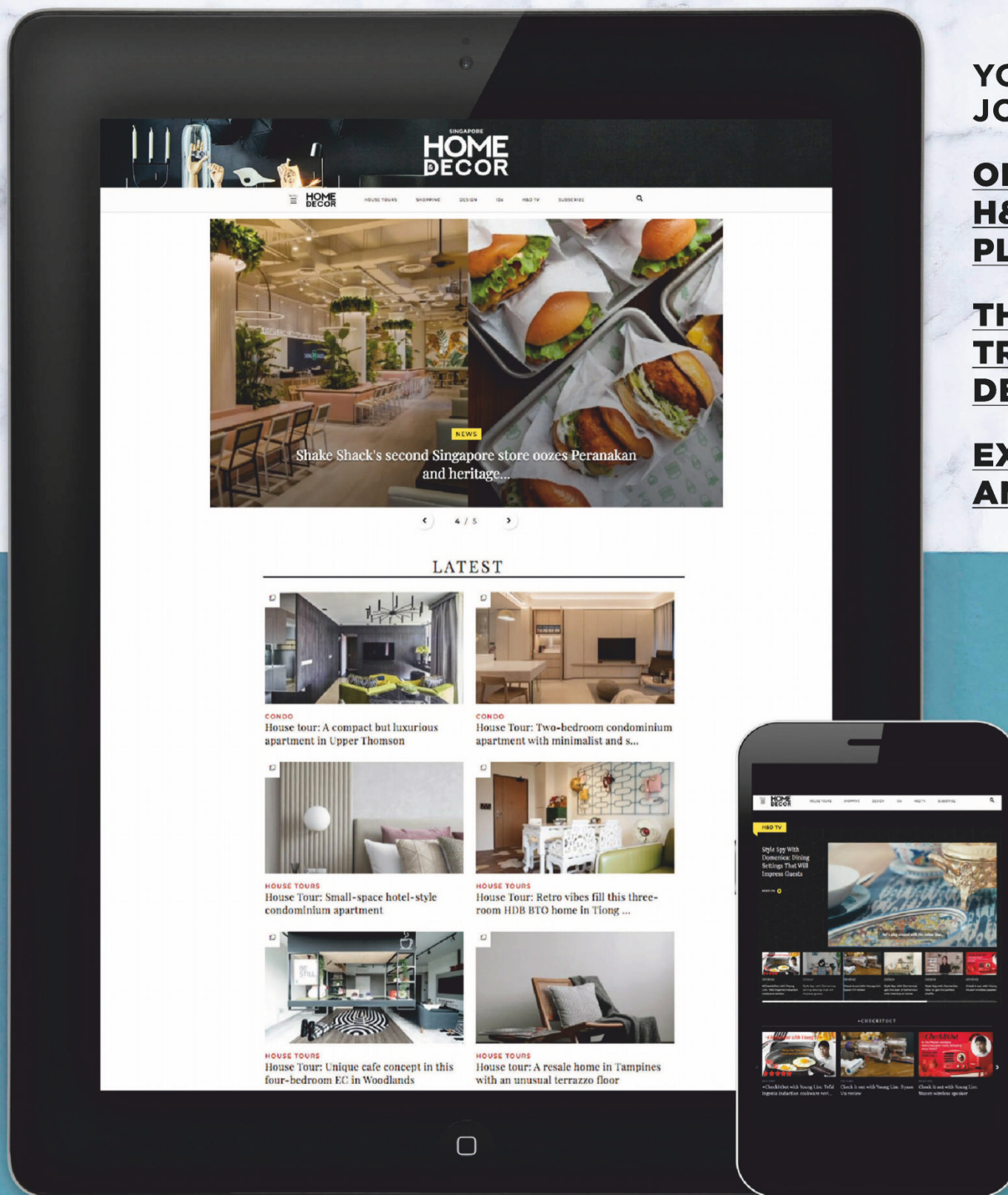
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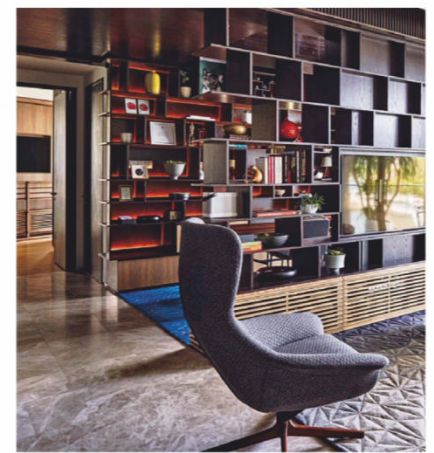


A luxurious Upper Thomson apartment
A two-bedroom condo apartment with geometric patterns, art, and kitty-friendly features.
tinyurl.com/upperthomsonapartment



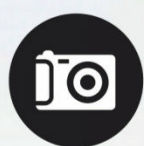
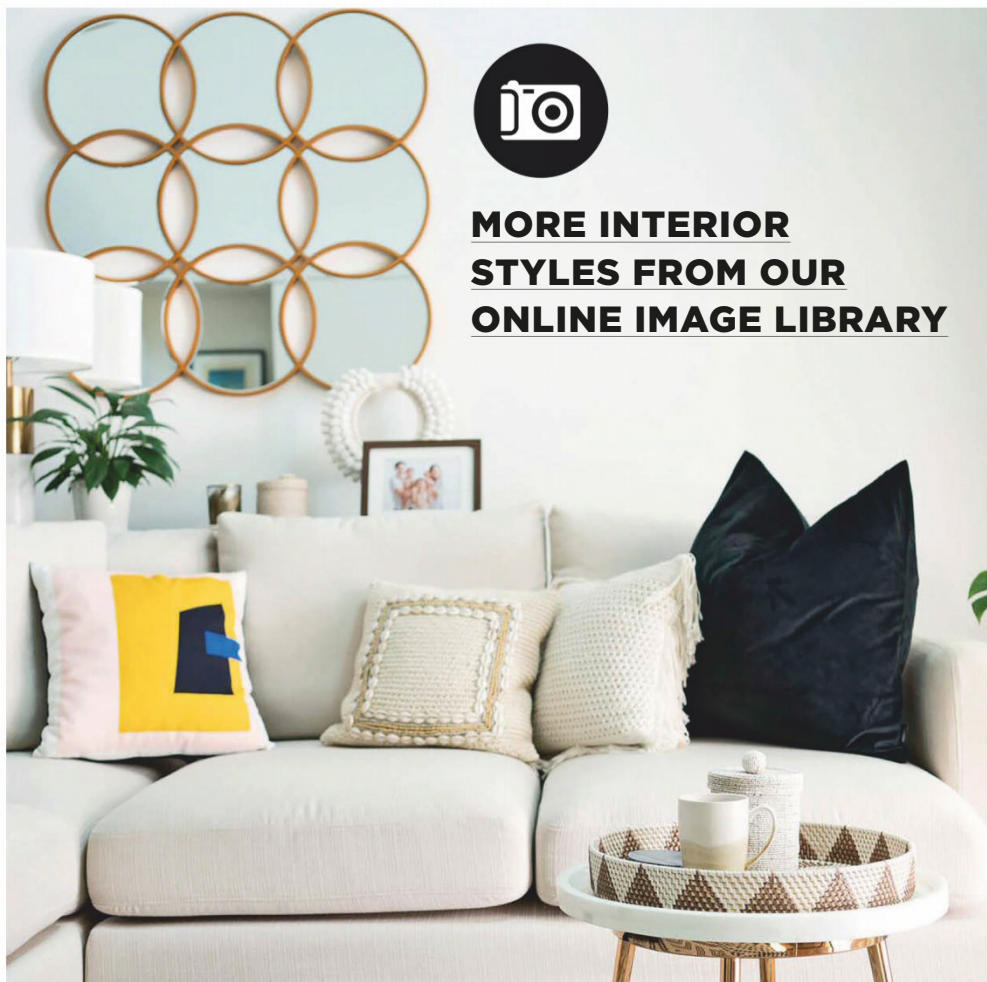
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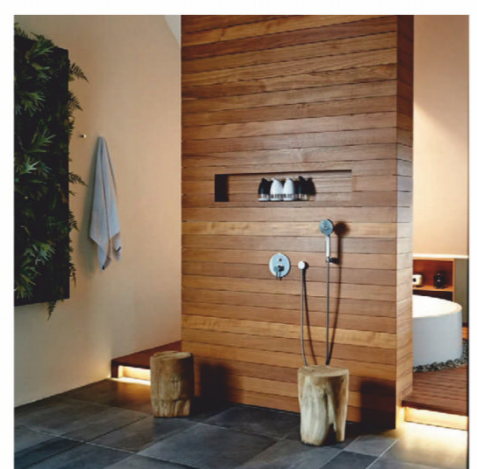
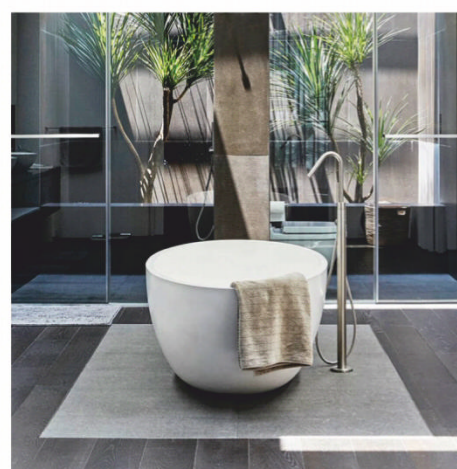


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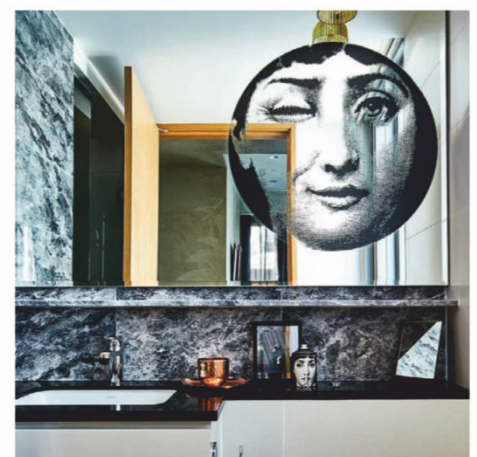


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IN THE MARCH DIGITAL ISSUE...



BONUS GALLERIES & VIDEOS

▼ **MAN WITH A VISION**

It seems there is no stopping
Tristan Auer from taking over the
world of luxury design.

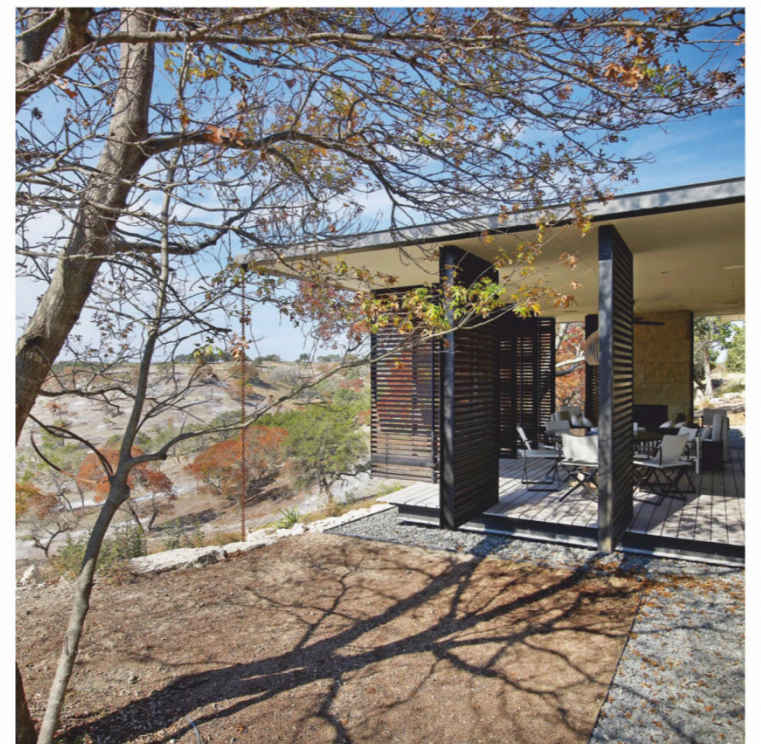


▲ **HOT SPOTS IN LOS ANGELES**

Take a closer look at the various cool
destinations to head for when trend-
spotting in the hip city of angels.

▼ **WESTWARD BOUND**

More stunning pictures from interior
designer Sara Story's home in Texas.





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NOW

DESIGN NEWS, PLACES TO VISIT, THINGS TO BUY

KENZO RETURNS

Having left his eponymous brand in the hands of luxury brand conglomerate LVMH in 1993 (before departing the company entirely six years later), fashion icon Kenzo Takada wants the world to know he's not done with design just yet. This time round, he is dressing the home instead.

Kenzo launched his new home and lifestyle brand K≡ in January, featuring a range of chairs, sofas, tables, rugs, bed linens, home textiles and accessories. The collection presents a trinity of themes: Sakura, Maiko and Shogun, each highlighting an aspect of nature in a series of geometric forms.

📍 The K≡ home collection is available at 242 Boulevard Saint-Germain, 75007, Paris.



COSY DINNERTIME COMFORT

It can be challenging trying to find the right colour for the walls of the dining area, because of the many functions the space is meant to perform. More than just a gathering spot for tucking into your meals, the dining area is also where family members can settle down to read, chat or catch up on some unfinished homework.

In order to make the dining room appear cosy and inviting, it helps to consider a slightly darker shade, such as this powdery Prussian blue. Contrasted with bold strokes of white and natural textures, this somewhat sombre shade appears mild and charming.

Perfect for an all-day dining space, this look is also great when applied to the living area. However, the combination may be too harsh and formal-looking for the bedroom or other private zones in the home. ■



COLOUR OF
THE MONTH



PANTONE
7545C



PANTONE
7534C



PANTONE
4685C

Homeowners
can elevate the
dramatic appeal
of a blue and white
colour combination
with classic
wainscoting details.



**WONG
LIANGYUAN**
Colour Specialist,
Haven Lifestyle

the expert says

“Prussian blue is not your typical shade of solid blue, so it can be tricky when combining it with other colours. For that reason, it is best to stick with white as an accent colour and complement it with neutral shades. When done right, this beautiful blue hue will appear even more mesmerising and captivating.”



RENT-A-FURNITURE IS IN!

Need an extra bed? Now you can rent designer furniture for the short term from Flexisnug, and you won't even have to worry about delivery or removal – it takes care of everything. By renting instead of buying, you'll be saving precious environmental resources, too.

📍 Find out more about Flexisnug's rental services at www.flexisnug.com.sg.



SOOTHE YOUR SENSES

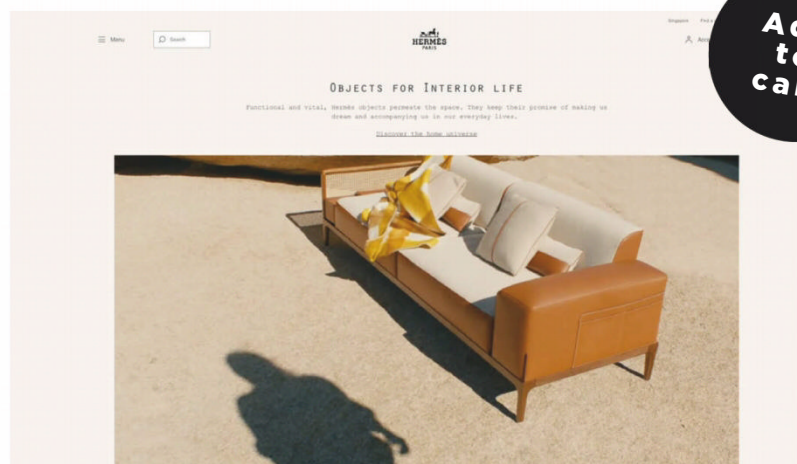
Thann's White Peony Aroma Diffuser, with an elegant porcelain exterior, is a treat for the eyes as well as nose. The device disperses fragrance through 2.5 million ultrasonic vibrations per second, has a built-in shut-off function for when the water runs out, and features two modes: continuously over three hours or intermittent cycling (one minute on and 30 seconds off) for up to seven hours.

📍 White Peony Aroma Diffuser retails for \$255 at Thann, #03-45 Paragon and www.thann.com.sg.

DARK BEAUTY

Fan specialist Efenz's sleek Kith ceiling fan now comes in a sophisticated limited-edition Black Dutch Cocoa hue. With a body moulded from an anti-rust ABS material, you can choose between the Original Downrod or Hugger Version, and from three sizes: 46, 52 and 60 inches. All come with a three-year on-site warranty.

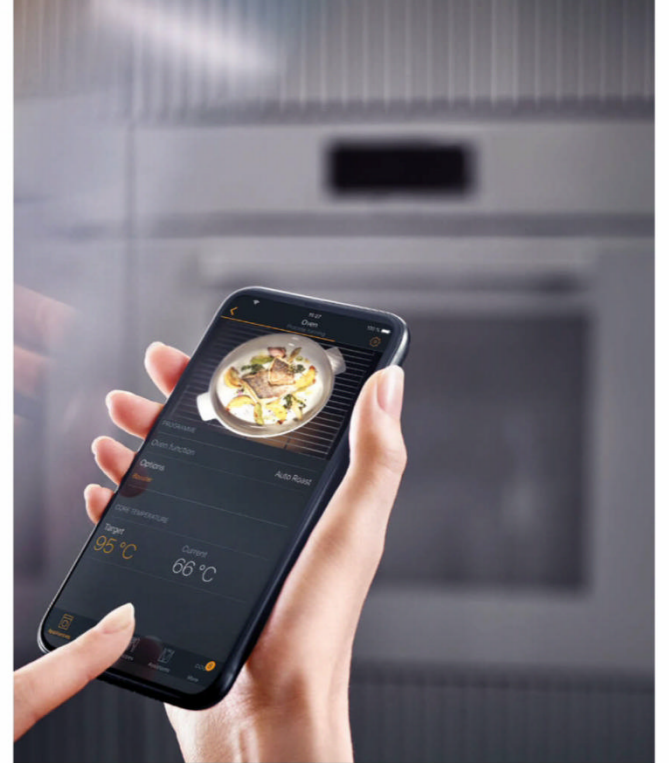
📍 The Black Dutch Cocoa collection currently retails at soft launch prices, while stocks last: from \$598 for a 46-inch Downrod fan (No Light) to \$738 for a 60-inch Hugger fan (with LED light). Visit www.efenz.com.sg.



Making a shift towards online retail, French luxury brand Hermes has introduced its digital flagship store in Singapore, combining e-commerce and content on a single platform. Shop for its latest offerings, from clothing, shoes and accessories to the house's 15 metiers and petit h collections. Plus, you'll get the latest updates on workshops and events as well as editorial content, with films, photographs and articles offering an insight to the house that Hermes built.

📍 Visit www.hermes.com/sg

TILE OF THE MONTH



KITCHEN AID

If you're in the market for appliances that make doing the laundry and cooking a breeze, give Miele's connectivity-enabled Generation 7000 built-in appliances a whirl. They include ovens, steam ovens, induction hobs, coffee machines and dishwashers, which you can manage remotely via the Miele@ mobile app for iOS and Android devices. Also think washing machines and dishwashers that can start automatically and in-oven cameras for keeping tabs on the food among other smart innovations.

📍 The Generation 7000 collection retails from \$2,800 for an induction hob to \$4,900 for an oven at Miele.

SPREAD THE CHEER

Designed with the essential aspects of the human character – humour, lightness and the ability not to take oneself too seriously – in mind, Confetti by

Ceramica Vogue is characterised by subtle but lively graphics in soothing hues. The collection of glazed porcelain tiles add a current, welcoming

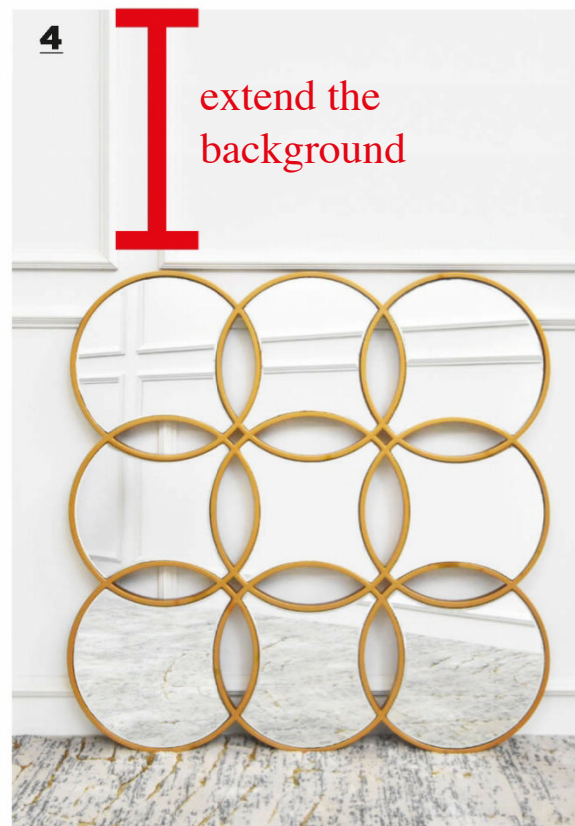
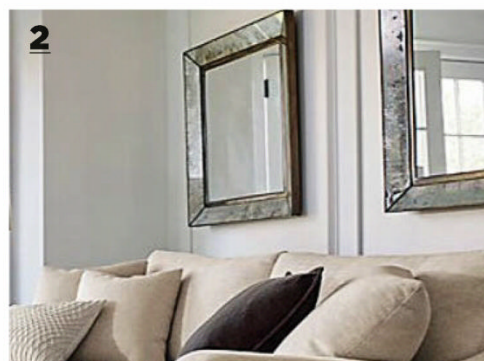
aesthetic to your overall design scheme.

📍 Confetti by Ceramica Vogue retails at Hafary, 105 Eunos Avenue 3, www.hafary.com.sg.

TRENDING

REFLECT ON THIS

Mirrors are an oft-forgotten accessory that can instantly elevate your space or amp up a bathroom, a console table or a plain wall.



extend the background

1. Circles of Life Hand-carved Mirror, \$492.20, from Finn Avenue; www.finnavenue.com
2. Dubois Large Square Wall Mirror in a distressed tin frame, \$449, from Crate & Barrel, www.crateandbarrel.com.sg
3. Round Sunburst Mirror with wooden frame, \$269, from Nook & Cranny, www.nookandcranny.com
4. Element Round Gunmetal Wall Mirror, \$549, from Crate & Barrel.

LIGHT ANYWHERE

Inspired by 19th Century street lamps, My Selection's Moon lamp is stylish, contemporary and versatile as it can be used both as an indoor or outdoor wireless lighting fixture. You can toggle between two light colour temperature — warm or cool white — to suit your different lifestyle needs, and even control the lamp wirelessly via Bluetooth on your smartphone or tablet.

📍 Available in five colours, the Moon lamp retails for \$610 at myselection.sg.



EDITOR'S
CHOICE



WINGS OF STYLE

German fashion icon and now product designer, Claudia Schiffer has partnered Portuguese manufacturer Bordallo Pinheiro to create charming butterfly-inspired homeware that combines the avid art collector and design enthusiast's love for the bucolic Rhine countryside together and Bordallo Pinheiro's distinctive style. The Cloudy Butterflies collection was showcased at Maison & Objet in Paris earlier this year.

📍 The collection retails from 95€ (\$\$ 145) for a vide poche (small bowl/container) to 690€ (\$\$1,051) for a vase at www.bordallopinheiro.com.



SIMPLY STYLISH

Whether used as a sideboard or a divider with the addition of an optional shelving unit, the Sage Credenza – by US architect David Rockwell in collaboration with UK-based furniture maker Benchmark – delivers on form, function and sustainability. Handcrafted from sustainable solid oak or walnut in a natural oil finish, it has adjustable internal shelving, and ventilation for media equipment.

📍 The Sage Credenza by David Rockwell for Benchmark, starting at £5,509 (\$\$9,906) inclusive of VAT. Available at www.benchmarkfurniture.com.



PICTURE PERFECT

We've all heard of 4K and 5K televisions, but an 8K TV is definitely something new! LG Electronics has launched the world's first OLED 8K TV, which offers sharp details and vibrant, lifelike colours. Available in an 88-inch size — the largest OLED TV LG has carried to date — there are 33 million self-emitting pixels on the screen.

📍 LG 88Z9 OLED 8K TV retails for \$59,999. Find out more at www.lg.com/sg.



A GOOD BALANCE

Contrast Collection is Bang & Olufsen's latest collaboration with Danish design studio Norm Architects. The limited eight-piece collection features tactility and textures combined with a palette of light grey and anthracite for products in the Beoplay and Beosound series. The understated design language is a balance of light and dark features.

📍 Bang & Olufsen Contrast collection is available at the Bang & Olufsen Grand Hyatt flagship store, Tangs at Tang Plaza, Takashimaya D.S. and selected B&O retailers.

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

EVA ARMISEN



Not just an artist, Barcelona-based Eva Armisen is also an author, product designer, philanthropist and avid advocate for the less fortunate as well as cultural and heritage preservation. She takes a light-hearted, childlike approach to her artworks, which capture the extraordinary in everyday scenarios, and touch on love and togetherness. Her first solo exhibition in Singapore, Love Stories, depicts multigenerational families having a meal together and doing daily activities with their family pets.

📍 Love Stories is on display at Ode To Art, #01-36E/F Raffles City Shopping Centre, till March 7, 2020.

SCREEN TIME

Take your Netflix binges to the next level with the Epson EH-TW7000, a compact, affordable home projector that delivers vivid, sharp images, thanks to 4K Pro-UHD technology. It's able to upscale full HD content, and includes Bluetooth wireless speaker support and aptX audio technology for that immersive home theatre experience.

📍 The Epson EH-TW7000 retails for \$2,099 at KEC Sound & Vision (#04-35 The Adelphi) and Arts of Entertainment (#B1-15 Capitol Piazza).



SLEEP TIGHT

You'll want to fall right into bed with Sunday Bedding's new duvet inserts, enveloped within the brand's best-selling bamboo sateen fabric covers. The lightweight inserts, made with sustainably sourced Tencel fibres that wick away moisture and a fill of 150gsm, are designed to keep you cool and comfortable.

📍 Sunday Bedding's duvet inserts retail from \$188 for a single size to \$298 for a super king size, available at www.sundaybedding.com.



FINDING SANCTUARY

Reminiscent of a bird's nest, the Nodo Suspension Chair with its curved frame and plush velvet upholstery cradles and comforts you. The pastel and gold palette is both whimsical and luxe, making the chair the focal point of any room.

📍 The Nodo Suspension Chair retails for €5,360 (S\$8,156) at www.circu.net.

NEWS



New on the block
If your decor tastes veer towards understated Scandi styles, you'll want to check out homegrown furniture brand Commune's new collections, Flint and Sander. The former showcases the beauty of solid oak wood with a mid-century modern design aesthetic, while the latter's pieces exude sophistication with their streamlined, functional designs and genuine leather upholstery. Homeowners will also appreciate their competitive pricing and quality workmanship.

📍 Visit the Commune store at #02-52 Millenia Walk.



Modern Marvel
Singapore Art Museum (SAM) is currently undergoing a \$90m makeover that is set to be completed in 2023. Led by architects from SCDA, key changes include a contemporary new facade in addition to its historical architecture, purpose-

built exhibition spaces such as the 'floating' Sky Gallery, a new entrance with an outdoor plaza, and a gallery-cum-bridge linking its two existing buildings.

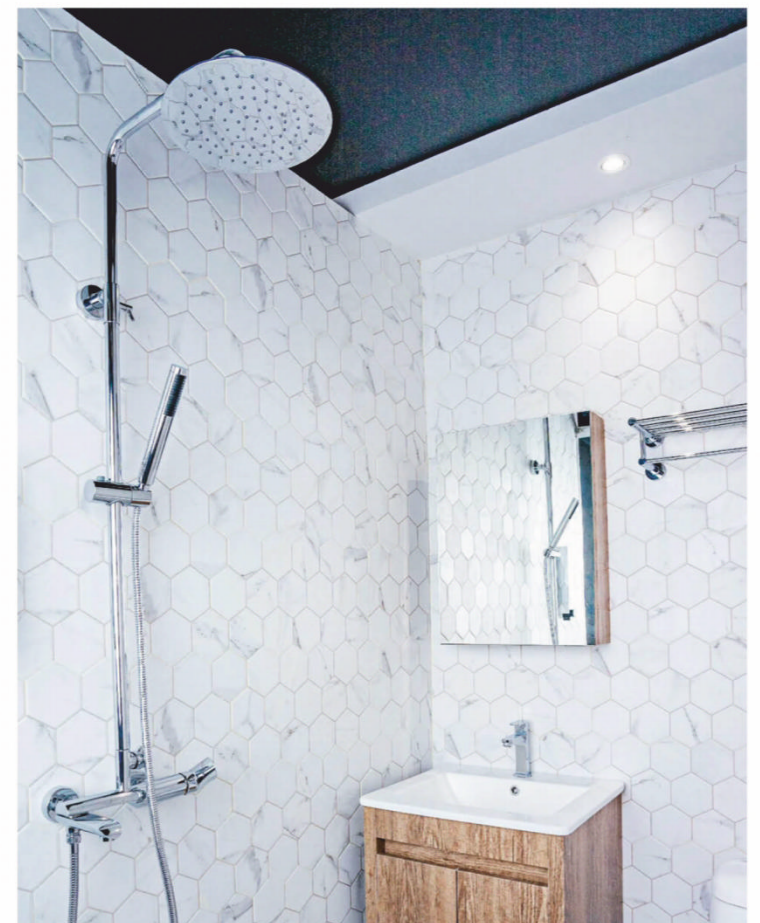
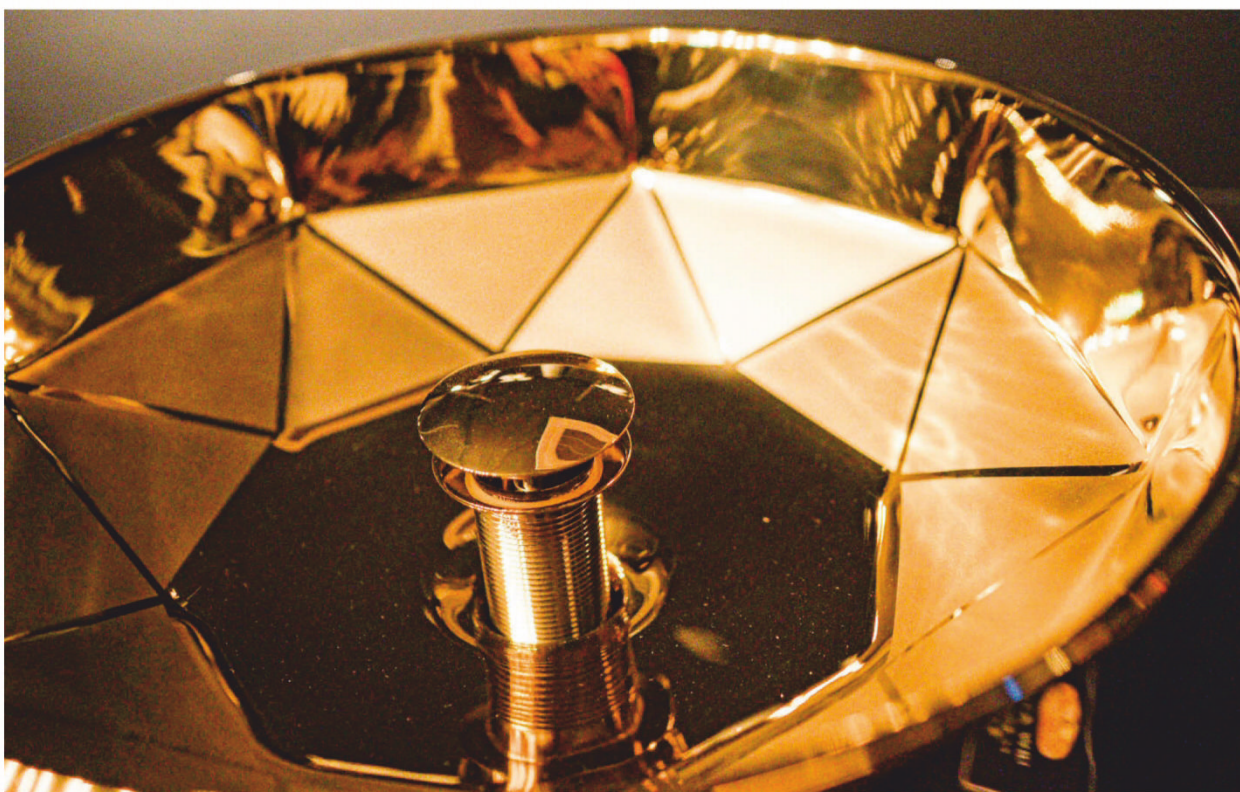
📍 Singapore Art Museum

Going Green
By 2022, hospitality conglomerate Accor's properties will be free of single-use plastics for guests, including individual plastic toiletry amenities and takeaway dishes. This move comes alongside the announcement of its commitment to the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.



BATH & CO. TUSCANI **CONCEPT STORE**

Where the best bathware, sanitaryware and kitchenware come together.



Complete your renovation with kitchen and bathroom fixtures that complement the interior design of your home while meeting all your functional needs. The recently opened Bath & Co. carries exclusive products, including over 200 designs for taps, basins, showerheads and bathroom accessories such as towel bars and vanity shelves, from Italian brand Tuscani.

With a background in interior design, founder Feroz Akbar strives to offer homeowners tips and design ideas as part of the shopping

experience in the 1,800 sq ft store. Explore the look and feel of fully decked out, stylish bathrooms while shopping for water-efficient handheld showerheads that do not compromise on water pressure.

You will also be intrigued by the many unique bathroom basin designs, including a chrome geometric option, an a marble-look countertop one. Pair them with faucets in a variety of shapes, styles, materials and colours.

Aside from bathware and sanitaryware, Bath & Co. also offers kitchen appliances,

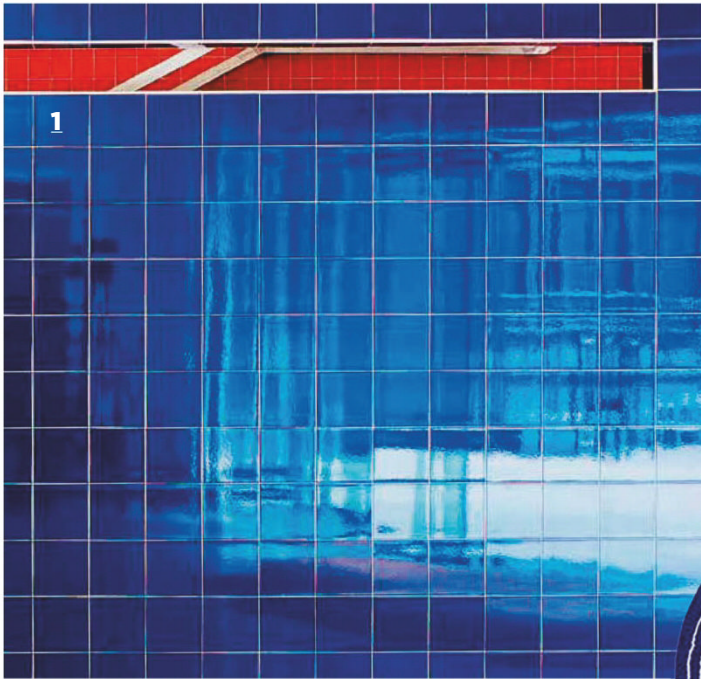
including ovens, microwaves, and induction as well as gas hobs and hoods from brands such as Bosch, Smeg, Turbo and Brandt. And expect to be spoilt for choice with the range of kitchen basins and mixers for homes of all size. Also available: Purion's eco-friendly paints and a good selection of Korean-made vinyl flooring to complete the look of your home. ■

ABOVE, LEFT
Choose from a wide range of bathroom basin designs.

ABOVE
Be inspired by stylish bathroom settings.

BELOW
Shop for everything from kitchen appliances to bathroom accessories.

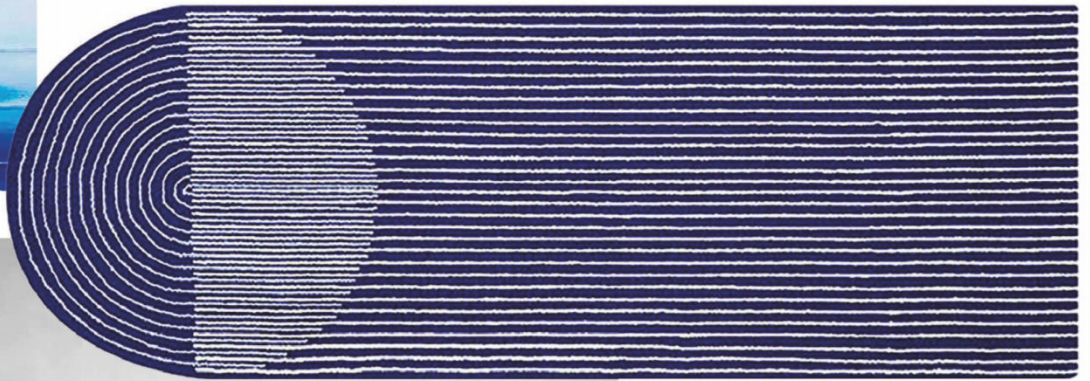
📍 Visit Bath & Co. Tuscani Concept Store at #04-15, 11 Woodlands Close; www.facebook.com/tuscani.concept.store; @bathncotuscani



1

INTO THE BLUE

One of the key primary colours, this timeless hue is as alluring as it is easy to love. Check out these cool picks in the 2020 Pantone Color of the Year.



3

1. Frostproof Ceramica Vogue glazed porcelain tiles from GF+A Global.

2. Velvet Lake sofa with North American oak wood legs, \$2,020, from Mountain Living.

3. Muuto Ply Rug, \$1,960, from Grafunkt.

4. Ceramic vase (18cm), \$12.90, from IKEA

5. Ligne Roset Stack Cabinet, \$4,408, from Grafunkt.

6. Stoneware plate (27cm), \$4.90, from IKEA.

7. Perfect Instance Tempo Mobile, \$240 from Grafunkt.

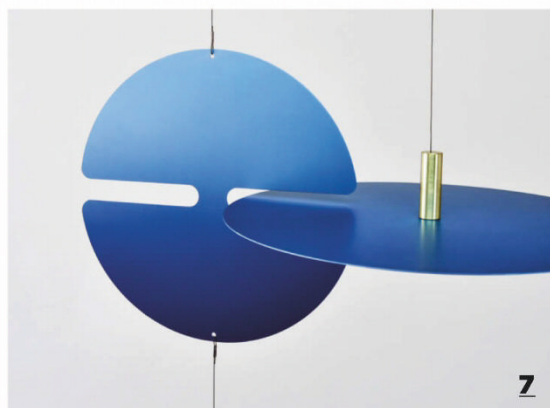
8. Ligne Roset Ploum Sofa, \$9,271, from Grafunkt.



2



4



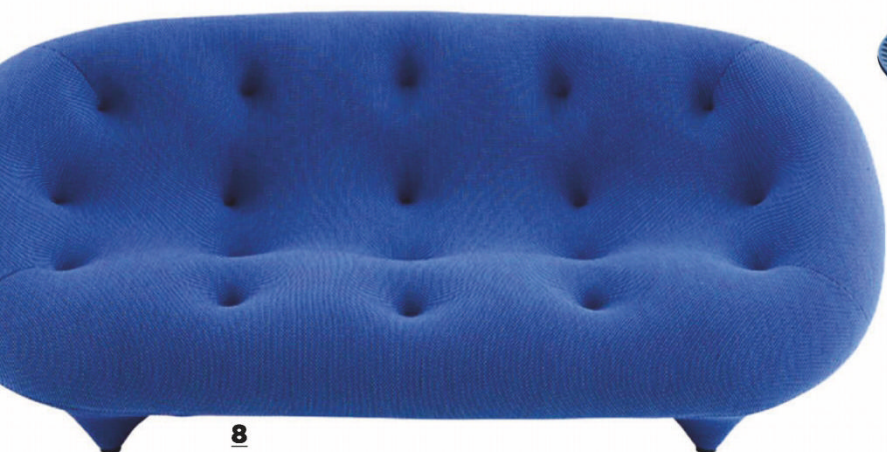
7



5



6



8



LEFT
In Melbourne,
the James
Said flagship
store spans
15,069 sq ft.



JAMES SAID **MELBOURNE**

**Australian luxury furniture brand
James Said's new flagship store
with a wine bar sits in a historic property
restored by Sydney-based
interior designer Greg Natale.**

The James Said flagship store, which opened last year in Melbourne, Australia, spans 15,069 sq ft and has two levels. It occupies all of the 107-year-old Armadale building, which started out as the 1,200-seat Armadale Picture Theatre in 1912 and then went through several transitions – from a vaudevillian playhouse to a toy factory, and then an auction ►



FAR LEFT
The grand staircase leads to the main showroom and more.

LEFT
The heritage property features original architectural elements and contemporary settings.

BELOW
The space includes 20 rooms, each with a different furniture style, and a wine bar that serves food.



good to know

James Said, which also has stores in Perth and Sydney, is an Australian brand famed for its high-end Hollywood Regency-style furniture designs as well as its interior design services.



**ABOVE, RIGHT
& OPPOSITE**

The private dining room in Le Plonc, its incredible wine selection and luxurious lounge seating.

BELOW

Greg Natale is a master of the art of creating glamorous and chic spaces.



house and an indoor ski school with a ski slope.

Elegant and spacious, James Said Melbourne features original architectural elements and contemporary settings, thanks to the vision of interior designer Greg Natale, who created a delicate interplay between different periods. The remaining grand columns and arches dialogue with lustrous chandeliers and mirrored decor in an airy, light-filled atmosphere.

Divided into 20 rooms, each with a different variety of furniture styles, black stained timber floors throughout tie the areas together. A grand staircase

**A PATTERNED SOFA, METALLIC ELEMENTS,
AND OPULENT CHANDELIERS AND MIRRORS
ADD BOLDNESS TO THE WINE BAR.**

leads from the accessories and wine bar up to the main showroom, an open plan interactive design studio with sample and fabric libraries, as well as meeting rooms.

Thanks to this full-scale experience, shoppers can visualise how each piece can be used in their interiors before they purchase the items at touch-screen sales bars in the store.

Within the main showroom is Le Plonc, a boutique wine bar that originated in California. Comprising a mix of lounge areas, bar seating, banquettes, chairs and tables, it also serves lunch, high tea and dinner, and has an arched private dining room for special events.

Its walls, furniture upholstery, including the velvet chairs, and fluted wall treatments are all a deep blue ombre. A patterned sofa, metallic elements and opulent chandeliers as well as mirrors add boldness to the space.

Known for his audacious use of pattern and colour, and his love of geometric and organic designs, Natale is a master of the art of creating glamorous and chic spaces, whether for the commercial or residential world. ■

📍 To learn more about the James Said Melbourne store, visit www.jamessaid.com.au/stores-melbourne.html.





YOOYUUMI KIDS CLUB

Created for children and their parents, this whimsical Beijing space comprises a sophisticated restaurant and play areas.

For this 10,764 sq ft project, the X+Living design team analysed the psychological differences and needs between parents and children. For parents, comfort is key, and for children, play is key. Located in Beijing, YooYuumi Kids Club is unlike a traditional playground in many ways, and that includes its bold aesthetic.

The L-shaped layout comprises a reception area dressed with blue and white as well as touches of black and gold, a sales section, and a shoe exchange area. Also not to be missed are a restaurant, a party room with leaves and green, soft pink, black and white geometric patterns, the children's recreation area and a classroom.

The innovative furniture customised by XiangCASA — a brand established by Li Xiang, founder of X+Living —





children feeling at ease.

Bridging the gap between art and life, Xiang approached this project with a “design creates value” philosophy. Always looking to inject positive energy into her surroundings, Xiang — who graduated as an architect from Birmingham City University in the UK before returning to China — has an ambitious definition of design and vision for what it can achieve. YooYuumi Kids Club uniquely exemplifies just that. ■

📍 Visit www.xl-muse.com for more on the design team.

and sculptural installations are some of the space’s many surprising visual elements.

In the theatre-inspired restaurant, tables and chairs are positioned in the style of a banquet hall, maximising views for all guests, regardless of where they sit. The organisation allows parents to enjoy an elegant dining environment while children play in the castle-like entertainment area, and other kid-friendly corners.

Marrying two cultures, the soft curves of the delicate art of traditional Chinese paper cutting are combined with Western visual elements such as European-style door arches. The backdrop is mostly white, with splashes of bright colours throughout, fusing harmony and contrast. Every detail stimulates the senses and sparks the imagination, leaving both parents and



ABOVE
The furniture is by XiangCASA.

LEFT
Chinese and Western influences meet in this project.

RIGHT
Colours were added to punch up the white areas.

OPPOSITE, LEFT
The 10,764 sq ft YooYuumi Kids Club caters to both parents and children.

OPPOSITE, RIGHT
X+Living did the interior design.



good to know

This unique parent-and-child restaurant and play zone concept was conceived by Chinese actress and singer Dong Xuan.

ROMAN AND WILLIAMS GUILD

The founders of design studio Roman and Williams in New York City have opened a cabinet of curiosities dedicated to sharing their passion for design, food and flowers.

Since 2002, Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch, the duo behind Roman and Williams, have designed restaurants, hotels, shops and furniture all over the US. At the end of 2017, they took a bold step with the launch of their flagship store. Located in Soho, Roman and Williams Guild is spread over 7,000 sq ft and is home to a furniture store, a flower boutique, a cafe and a library. “We view

the Guild as part of our home, and we made it the way we like things to be,” say Standefer and Alesch. “It is a democratic sanctuary celebrating quality and the creative daring of craftspeople and artists.”

Glassware, ceramics, sculptures, lighting fixtures, home accessories and furniture pieces – comprising the original collection designed by Roman and Williams and fabricated with craftspeople





good to know

The firm received the Smithsonian's National Design Award for Excellence in Interior Design in 2014.

– plus objects collected from around the world are on display. For the textiles, Standefer and Alesch collaborated with two legendary companies: Fortuny in Venice, Italy, and de Le Cuona in England.

The charming space also hosts La Mercerie, a 44-seat French cafe helmed by chef Marie-Aude Rose with pale grey floors, an indigo enamelled kitchen, marble counters and touches of blue. The plates, napkins, candlesticks and tables can all be purchased from the Guild. Botanical expert Emily Thompson manages the flower boutique, which features stunning compositions and a library. “Gardening and cooking

are passions we practise daily at home. In fact, they are what make our home feel like a home and our aim has always been to make the Guild feel similarly welcoming. You will want to pull a book out of the library that’s filled with thoughtfully curated titles and stay,” say Standefer and Alesch.

In this eclectic place, the atmosphere gives the feeling of being at home while every detail awakens the imagination and senses. “We built the Guild because we had a dream we wanted to share and a place where we wanted to be,” Standefer and Alesch confess. ■

📍 Visit www.rwguild.com to find out more about the Roman And Williams Guild.



FAR TOP
Roman and Williams Guild is located in Soho, New York City.

TOP LEFT
The store has glassware, ceramics and objects from different parts of the world.

LEFT & OPPOSITE
La Mercerie, a charming 44-seat French cafe, is helmed by chef Marie-Aude Rose.

ABOVE
The space gives the feeling of being at home.



VOGUE LOUNGE **KUALA LUMPUR**

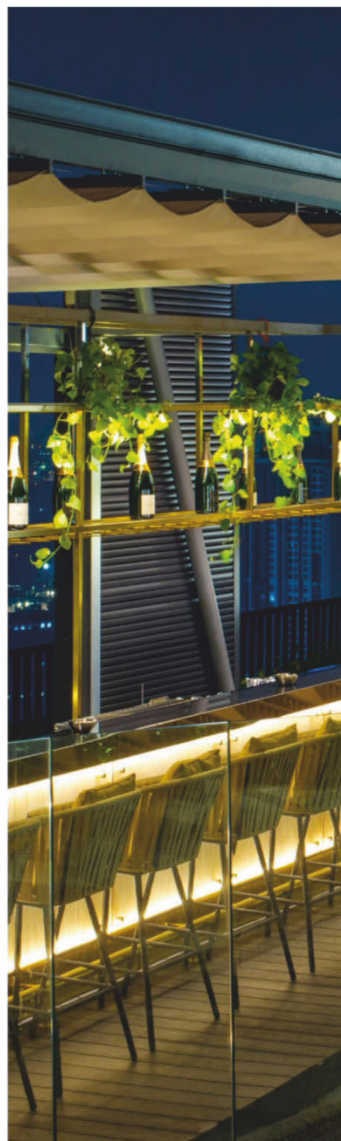
Vogue's inaugural restaurant in Southeast Asia launches in the capital of Malaysia.

Mention the iconic Vogue magazine, and the name evokes glamour, style and all things trendy – attributes that perfectly describe the newly-opened Vogue Lounge in Menara Suezcap complex in Kuala Lumpur. Despite the label in its name, the sprawling 18,500 sq ft space – situated on the 38th floor – also houses a main dining area, cocktail bar, wine cave, rooftop garden, and two private rooms.

The only Conde Nast restaurant in the region, Vogue Lounge offers fine fusion dining within its sleek, contemporary interior featuring soaring double-height ceilings.

The focal point of the decor is the array of iconic covers from Vogue archives lining the walls, displaying some of the best work ever created by Luminary photographers and models such as Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell.

The visual feast doesn't end there. Up on the roof, the garden offers breathtaking panoramic views of the Kuala Lumpur skyline, where guests can see the Petronas Twin Towers and





FAR LEFT

The plush interior of the dining area is punctuated by gold accents.

FAR BOTTOM

A panoramic view of Kuala Lumpur's skyline greets guests up on the rooftop bar.

TOP

Dark cosy nooks provide a space for guests to enjoy an intimate conversation over drinks.

LEFT

The menu features fusion fine dining, such as the Saikyo Miso Marinated Black European Cod.

OPPOSITE

At the lounge bar, guests can enjoy a curated drinks selection featuring signature cocktails Painting Grey and La Paloma.

KL Tower while enjoying a curated selection of tapas and drinks. The outdoor space also features two stunning wall murals created by Penang-based multidisciplinary artist Thomas Powell, whose works are internationally renowned across Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Gourmands can look forward to food with a fusion twist. Created by Chef Kazuhiko Kojima, the 'food for the fashionable' dining menu is an exotic blend of French and Japanese flavours – think dishes like Saikyo Miso Marinated Black European

Cod and Hokkaido Sea Urchin with Ossetra Caviar. Guests who prefer light bites can enjoy tapas from a menu that includes classic Malaysian cuisine such as Organic Sous Vide Chicken Satay, alongside an extensive drinks selection featuring signature cocktails Painting Grey and La Paloma.

A feast for the eyes and tastebuds, Vogue Lounge is poised to take Kuala Lumpur's social scene by storm. ■

📍 Vogue Lounge KL is located at Level 38, Menara SUEZCAP 1, Kuala Lumpur. Visit www.voguelounge.my.

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DESIGN

IDEAS AND INSPIRATION FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW

MADE FOR ELEGANCE

Paris-based interior architect Tristan Auer embodies the elegance of high-end French design like an ambassador of the French art of living throughout the world.

According to the biography on his website, “His style is eclectic; near the approach of designers of the 20th century. He navigates between periods, from baroque to contemporary.”

He also explains that he “likes to get carried away in adventures and be close to his clients. The ideal is to ensure that the design and decoration soften their lives.” ▶



His name is on everyone's lips. From a mythical-looking hotel to a beachside villa or a bourgeois apartment, Tristan Auer ventures into all terrains. His most recent achievement involved developing the Art Deco styling for the world's first Orient Express Hotel in the King Power Mahanakhon skyscraper that's set to open in Bangkok in mid-2020.

He cannot reveal all the details, but he will say, "Be surprised by a project you've never seen before that's very luxurious and with strong experimentation, in phase with Thai culture and the Orient Express DNA." So expect mysterious interiors that evoke the legendary train's carriages and dreams of travel to foreign lands.

Rise to stardom

The French interior architect and designer gained attention with the success of his hotel projects – Hotel Les Bains, Paris, Cotton House on the private Caribbean island of Mustique, and La Sivoliere in Courchevel, France – and the decoration of ultra high-end private villas and apartments in London, Paris, Hollywood and New York. He is also known for his bespoke and series-produced furniture and lighting designs for brands such as Poltrona Frau, Pouenat, Contardi and Veronese.

His most monumental and time-consuming project yet has been reimagining all the ground-floor public spaces of the majestic 18th century Hotel de Crillon in Paris. Under the



1. The Orient Express Hotel's rooms resemble cabins in the train.

2. The plush, intimate setting of the Wagon Bar.

3. Auer went the extra mile by ensuring every little detail within the hotel was attended to, including the finishing of the furniture and selection of the tableware and lighting.

4. The Orient Express stands out amidst Bangkok's towering skyline.



photo: Romain Laprade



**TAP FOR
GALLERY**

direction of architect Aline Asmar d'Amman, he worked alongside Chahan Minassian, Cyril Vergniol and Karl Lagerfeld, who designed two of the hotel's finest suites.

True understanding of luxury
Auer's ascent may be attributed to a precise understanding of the requirements and constraints of luxury, always within a logic of the promotion of French savoir-faire.

For each project, he strives to surround himself with the best French artisans so all can display the excellence of their work. There are no rules, biases or predetermined notions. He conceives singular spaces rich in emotions, in the image of their occupants and far from any idea of duplication.

What counts is being receptive to clients' needs, paying attention to their lifestyles, and immersing himself in the spaces, volumes and light to weave a unique story. For him, harmony comes from mixing. He combines styles and eras, boldly bringing together classical references and avant-garde designs, creations by great names and more confidential pieces, as well as intense colours and softer shades.

He describes his creative process: "The first step is to listen and understand my clients' personality, wishes and background. I am designing for them. I need to understand what they need before anything else, to penetrate their intimacy, to know everything about them, and to spend time with them. This is a very important stage. Then I create a bespoke environment based on this analysis. I sketch quickly the project with all the details. It is always very



clear in my head. I just need to translate it into sketches. I always incorporate their comments for the development. Generally, there are very few. The furniture is sourced from galleries and at auctions or are custom made."

Eye for detail

Auer customises spaces to fit his clients, much like a tailor-made suit. He defines the essence of good design: "Made to measure. This is what I call luxury – the real and essential" ▶

5. The double-volume ceiling within Paris' Hotel Les Bains.

6. Cotton House on Mustique Island in the Caribbean is another outstanding project.

7. & 8. The interior and entrance of the Hotel de Crillon in Paris.



5



6



8

9. Auer launched a business offering bespoke designs for the interiors of luxury cars, such as the Ferrari Dino.

10. A private apartment he designed.

11. He also worked on this private home in Paris.

one. I am not specialised in anything. I start every project with a fresh vision, forgetting what I have done before. I am always open to every creative stimulation coming from different unpredictable ways. I like to explore and use all the tools available to carry out a project. I never limit myself and like to push boundaries. I am passionate about *l'art de vivre*.”

He refuses a project if there isn't a relationship of trust and mutual respect established from the outset. Echoing his passion for vintage cars and road trips, he has also launched a car “tailoring” business involving customising the interiors of beautiful automobiles with cashmere console storage compartments, nubuck ceilings, leather dashboards and matching travel bags, all with the aim of creating authentic emotions at every instant. Fond of embarking on new adventures, he wishes to make people's lives better through design and decoration.

Formula for success

For Auer, whether it's a famous hotel or an art collector's apartment, everything is

a question of framing. His approach to each project is very cinematographic, like a succession of tracking shots, and the cinema is one of his sources of inspiration. In fact, he conceives his interiors in the same way a director conceives a film: with a narrative arc that takes the audience from the opening scene through to the development and right up to the climax. His interiors are designed to create an emotion-filled atmosphere or universe and allow people to forget the outside world for a time, in the same way a great movie does.

While his aesthetic is not immediately definable, the care given to materials and the detail of the composition constitute his signature, which reflects a tension between restraint and theatricality tinged with luxury.

Always thinking about spaces according to the stories and inhabitants that once occupied them, he more than met the expectations of French filmmaker and producer Jean-Pierre Marois in reviving the soul of the famous Les Bains club, while incorporating hotel rooms and a restaurant, and conceived the ideal villa for singer Bryan Adams on Mustique, which put him on the design map. Auer notes: “He was so kind to introduce me to his famous friends. I owe him a lot. He became somebody important for me and a good friend.”

In the family vein

Born in 1970 in Metz and raised in Aix-en-Provence, Auer graduated from the renowned Penninghen school of art direction and interior architecture in Paris. “My

grandfather was a landscape designer, who lived in a beautiful 1920s mansion,” he reminisces. “Certainly that was the start of my sensitivity towards nice interiors and beautiful proportions. I was raised in Aix-en-Provence, which is a great place for inspiration, and when I had to decide what to study, I thought that working full time is better when you enjoy it.”

He earned his stripes under Christian Liaigre and then Philippe Starck for whom he worked on numerous projects worldwide – from a hotel-club for the Trigano family (co-founders of Club Med) to his first large-scale international project: The Mercer Hotel in New York City. “I learnt a lot in different aspects,” he recalls. “It was the best school ever, with two different styles ▶

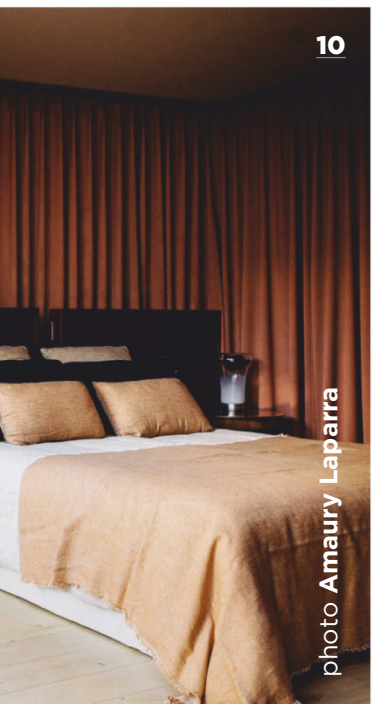


photo Amaury Laparra





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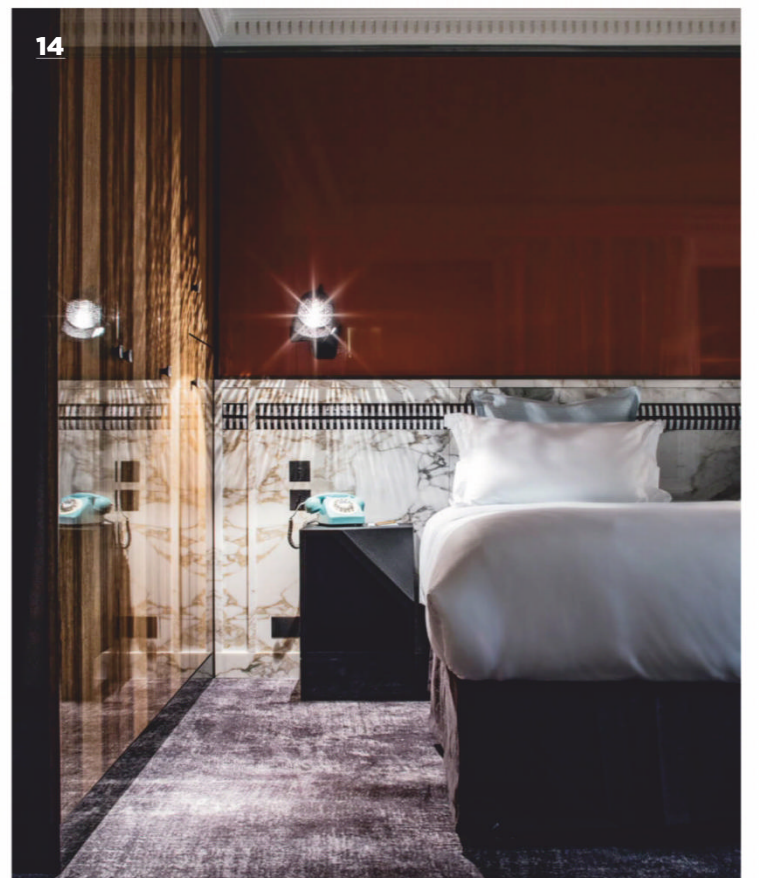
photo Amaury Laparra

12., 13. & 14.
While delivering an intimate setting for the pool area in Hotel Les Bains, Auer also concentrated on creating cosy yet sophisticated interiors by including details such as the use of ambient lighting in the rooms.



13

photo Guillaume Grasset



14



15., 16. & 17.
Auer broke the
rules of what
a luxury hotel
should be when
hedesigned the
interiors of
The Sinner Paris.

and scales. Liaigre is more on a millimetric scale, with attention to detail, while Starck is more scenographic and what people describe today as the wow effect.”

After founding his own studio in 2002, Karl Lagerfeld contacted him directly for private residential commissions, the creation of a Chanel haute couture salon in Paris and the renovation of Coco Chanel’s historic apartment on Rue Cambon. He also crafted the interiors of the flagship boutique of French couture house Nina Ricci in Paris and silverware brand Puiforcat’s showroom on Avenue Matignon.

Auer is currently working on 14 hotel projects (including the Shangri-La in Hong Kong and Bright Start Hotel in Dubai), 12 residences, two restaurants, two jets, three yachts, six vintage cars and his countryside house.

“Being an interior designer is a very important mission,” he states, “We can change people’s lives. This is what I put my energy into. In fact, I am a tailor who designs bespoke interiors, and as my clients are different, my projects logically are different. I design not for myself, but for somebody else, and I never forget it. This is what I call ‘haute couture design’. We are only a few in the world to do it. I never know what will be my next 30 minutes, so the future is pretty abstract to me. I am pleased to follow my destiny.” ■

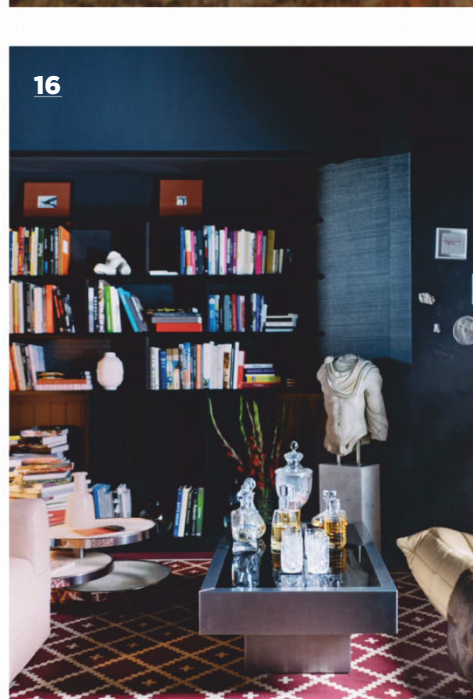




photo Amaury Laparra



KEY DESIGNS



Hotel de Crillon, Paris

Auer's most impressive, refined and bespoke development (above) that took four years was designed with a residential philosophy. Using custom-made materials exclusively developed for him, 95 per cent of his design was bespoke, with a rich selection of 120 pieces of furniture he designed and 330 different materials used in 28 areas. Some finishes were 500 years old, and he found the craftsmen who could recreate them.

Sinner Paris Hotel

Breaking the rules of what a luxury hotel should be, he mixed the sacred and the prohibited by drawing from the history of the Marais district, once home to religious orders and the aristocracy, and throwing in memories of his '70s childhood to create the Sinner Paris. Rich with contemporary sensuality, the 43 rooms and suites are inspired by ecclesiastical quarters and the dark hallways are

illuminated by stained-glass windows.

Hotel Les Bains, Paris

In tune with different eras, Auer immediately connected with the legendary Parisian nightclub Les Bains-Douches, feeling its soul and essence. His reinterpretation infused a very rock attitude to which he added a luxury hotel and restaurant. The Chinese living room contains furniture made up entirely of collector's items: bamboo decor and original restored Chinese stained-glass windows, a 17th century Chinese carpet and Mario Bellini's Amanta leather fireside chairs.

Car Tailoring

A passionate driver and classic car collector, he has 10 automobiles, dating from 1933 to 1982, in his collection that come from brands such as Alvis, Aston Martin, Autobianchi, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lancia, Lotus and Porsche. Auer's bespoke haute couture car "tailoring"

business personalises vehicles, such as the interiors and accessories for a 1978 Ferrari Dino 308 GT4, a Lamborghini



photo Amaury Laparra

Urraco, a Porsche 964 Special and a 1939 Delage. His favourite is a 1975 Citroen CX.

Cartier booth at the 2015 SIHH in Geneva

Cartier called on Auer to rethink its 21,528 sq ft exhibition space at the prestigious watch fair. With a very modern approach respectful of the brand's DNA, he delivered a generous space where power and serenity converged to convey the brand's excellence and savoir-faire.



A DIFFERENT LOOK

Shermaine Ong, principal designer of MOW Interior Design, offers first-time homeowners advice on making their place stand out.



Backed by 18 years of industry experience, Shermaine Ong now runs MOW Interior Design with her business partner and former schoolmate Wong Teck Soon. Having previously founded and run individual firms, they decided to merge their complementary skill sets and form the current firm in 2018.

To this day, Shermaine continues to be one of the leading interior designers in Singapore. Inspired by Marie Kondo in recent years, she believes in thinking inside the box – that is, planning for clients' lifestyle needs by optimising workflow and storage, and making design highly functional on top of being aesthetically pleasing.

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

To create a good interior experience, where you can sense that the atmosphere is different, but can't quite tell why. We also try to align the experience with the lifestyle and behaviour of clients, such as their habits upon arriving home. For example, homeowners who prefer to hang their outfits for a second use before washing will

appreciate our cupboard with ventilation and a dehumidifier strip, so everything is properly aired being they're put away.

WHAT ARE SOME DESIGN ELEMENTS BTO HOMEOWNERS CAN CONSIDER?

A walk-in wardrobe is very popular among young couples. Most will also ask to connect one of the common rooms with the master bedroom for a bigger space.

Homeowners also tend to request for an open-concept kitchen. However, unless you're a neatness freak, this doesn't really work in everyday life, especially when you have things like appliances and condiments scattered on the counter. It's important to consider how a design element will factor into everyday living and how often you will use something.

IF A HOMEOWNER HAS A LIMITED BUDGET, WHICH RENOVATION ASPECT/S SHOULD THEY PRIORITISE?

A big no-no is to try to split the money equally between all aspects of the home because this will leave it look very ordinary. It's better to spend a little more on an outstanding design in one or several areas, like the kitchen, living room or master bedroom.

You should prioritise needs according to your lifestyle and must-haves. For instance, if a walk-in wardrobe is important, that should be higher up on your list of must-haves. I would advise putting a larger portion of the budget aside for an area like the living room as it's the first thing guests see when they enter the home.

WITH MOST BTO FLATS SHARING SIMILAR FLOOR PLANS, HOW CAN HOMEOWNERS MAKE THEIR INTERIORS UNIQUE?

I love reconfiguring layouts, so when you enter the house you won't even notice that it's a HDB flat. Hacking away the walls, creating a new entrance to a room... these are ways that make a layout unique.

For those ready to make a big change, we can move the master bedroom to where one of the common rooms is or create an open-concept study room adjoining the living area. Another thing we do is double doors. When you have an unusually big doorway, it no longer looks like a HDB flat.

WHAT DESIGN TRENDS DO YOU THINK ARE HERE TO STAY?

Although it's been around for years, the Scandinavian trend will stay on in Singapore because of its timeless appeal. However, I think its designs are evolving; some have adopted a colonial slant. A rising trend involves the use of pastels and dark shades to create a pop art feel. Also, arched doorways are becoming very popular. ■



VICTORIA TANG-OWEN

The creative director of Shanghai Tang and daughter of founder David Tang offers a glimpse into her daily life, design style and a cause worth fighting for.



cause that has been important to my family for a long time, and I am deeply motivated to shine a spotlight on the amazing work HKDSA does to support people living with Down syndrome as well as their families and carers in Hong Kong. It's my mission to change perceptions and do my bit to make Hong Kong a more inclusive society for those living in difficult circumstances.

What gets you out of bed in the mornings?

It's usually my son. It might be early but it's a joy to have him bother me out of bed.

What gets you to sleep?

I listen to meditation music and zone out.

What is one music track you like to listen to while you work?

Since watching *Rocketman*, I've been in an Elton John phase. *I'm Still Standing*'s positive vibe gets me through my to-do list.

Your favourite pet?

Roger, a miniature schnauzer I bought for my mother as a birthday present. He was a real sweetheart and a gentle soul.

Of these four elements – the sky, ocean, mountains and animals – which inspires you the most?

The sky. I travel a lot with my job. I find flight time productive because I don't get distracted. I also love to explore new cities or revisit places where I have happy memories.

What is your fondest childhood memory?

Having birthday parties with my family and friends. I'm a big fan of receiving presents.

What is one cause you will fight for and why?

I am the President of the Hong Kong Down Syndrome Association (HKDSA). It is a

What's one style you hate and never want to see again?

I hope I never have to set eyes on another pair of Crocs.

What is your personal style?

Dress up, dress down. Accessorise.

What would your last meal be?

Dim sum and hot and sour soup.

Which room in the house do you spend the most time in?

Probably my closet. I spend quite some time in there trying to find items that have been lurking out of sight!

Is there one movie you have watched more than once?

Elf – a must-watch every Christmas. ■

CHIC SHACK

Claire Warren recounts her journey towards establishing a retail space dedicated to stylish homeowners in Singapore.

When former fashion PR and editor Claire Warren moved to Adam Drive in 2015, she was stumped by how impossible it was to find rugs for her new home. “I didn’t want IKEA anymore but the only other option seemed to be really expensive, really elaborate carpets and with small children that just wasn’t going to work for us”, she explains. After almost a decade at Chanel and *InStyle* magazine in London, Claire was used to deploying her creative cunning and so she travelled to India and then Indonesia to find the solution, coming home with a small selection of wool dhurries and a handful of teak dining chairs. Unwittingly, her company The Grey House was born.

Having some experience with owning a business, Claire was aware of the challenges of a start-up and initially adamant that she wouldn’t do it again. “Working on my own, with no colleagues to bounce ideas off is probably the thing I find hardest about what I do,” she admits. But her financier husband spotted the demand for affordable yet high quality homeware that, crucially, could be customised and the orders just kept coming. Barely a month after launching The Grey House, an offer came through from Charlotte Cain to take a stand at Boutique Fairs and there was really no going back.

Key to Claire’s success has



been her refusal to expand too quickly. She's kept her business lean, her costs down and her offering simple – a sleek e-commerce site proposes just a few key pieces of furniture in a limited number of styles and colours and it's a formula that works. As almost everything that she sells is bespoke there is a lead time but customers are happy to wait a couple of months for the perfect piece.

Seven years working for Chanel has clearly left its mark on Claire, who favours a pared back style in varying tones of beige, black and grey. Black

woven leather banquettes and matching lounge chairs are more than a little reminiscent of the brand's iconic quilted 2.55 bag, but Claire is quick to laugh off any parallels between the Parisian powerhouse and her diminutive showroom in the middle of the jungle. "It's just what I love and what I'm naturally drawn to. I think it's timeless really, simple, clean. Don't get me wrong, I love Anna Spiro and Beata Heuman and I really appreciate their design aesthetic, but I could never live with that much colour in my house. It just isn't me".

In 2017, Claire teamed up with interior designer Marie Pauline Mongon and the two of them began tackling residential projects, which is an exciting new direction for the business and one which Claire is growing. But for now, rugs, furniture and an ever-revolving selection of curated home accessories from the likes of Madam Stoltz, Mungo and Maison Balzac take up most of her time. It's the age-old belief that less is more, a distinctly Parisian approach that has somehow found a home in a steamy Singapore enclave. ■



**“WORKING ON MY OWN,
WITH NO COLLEAGUES
TO BOUNCE IDEAS OFF, IS
PROBABLY THE THING I FIND
HARDEST ABOUT WHAT I DO.”**



1. Claire decided to set up a stall selling rugs after encountering difficulty finding some for her new home here.

2. Expect to find sleek offerings curated by the store's founder.

3. Claire Warren

4. Aside from rugs and fabrics, the store also carries uniquely designed homeware and porcelain.



SOPHISTICATED COUNTRY LIVING

This Texas property is the weekend and holiday getaway of Sara Story and her family. KARINE MONIE chats with the interior designer about why she built this home to escape the hustle and bustle of New York City.



This Texas property spreads over four hectares.

OPPOSITE
Architectural firm Lake Flato was in charge of this project.



Based in the Big Apple, where she has been at the helm of her eponymous studio since 2003, Sara Story finds inspiration in travel, fashion and contemporary art. According to the interior designer, her style is “eclectic and constantly evolving. It is actual, but it always references the past.”

Born in Japan, Story grew up in both Singapore and Houston. Texas means a lot to the designer, who has good memories in the Lone Star State. Now that she has three

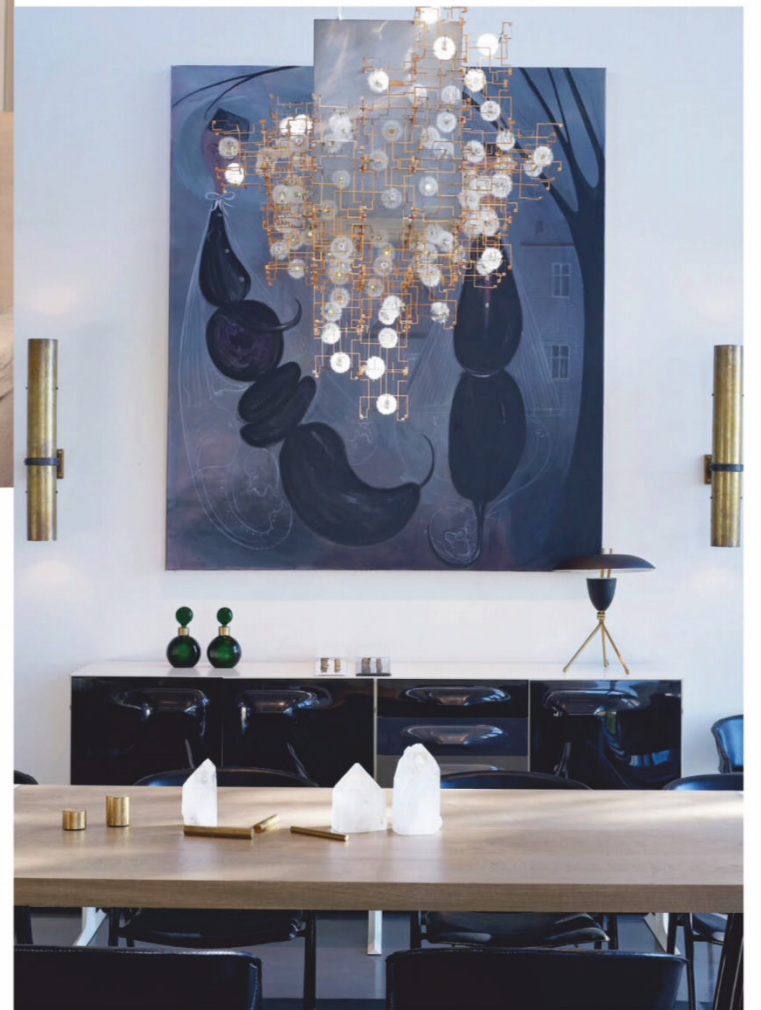
children—one girl and two boys—it has become even more important for Story to share this experience with her family.

To create her dream home, the interior designer placed her trust in Lake Flato, the architectural firm Story’s father had hired 20 years ago. Among some of Story’s main requests was to create a nonconventional project, a departure from the style of traditional ranches.

Located atop a 200-hectare plot, the property spreads over 4 hectares and comprises the main two-storey home, a

guesthouse, a pool house and a tennis pavilion. Using pure lines, the architecture is clearly contemporary, built from massive blocks of Texas Lueders limestone, along with glass, wood and steel. Large outdoor verandas were made possible by the broad overhanging roof.

Story is fascinated by the work of Austrian architect Adolf Loos (1870–1933), Finnish designer Paavo Tynell (1890–1973) and typical French houses in Provence, and wanted to include some of these references in the project. The natural



TOP
Interior designer
Sara Story.

LEFT
This family home
features pure
lines.

ABOVE
Contemporary
artworks adorn
the interior
spaces.

OPPOSITE
The great room
of the main
house is airy and
filled with natural
light.



environment was another source of inspiration; one of the objectives was to design a family retreat where Story's children could experience what it means to be surrounded by nature and be in contact with animals—a very different experience from the family's daily urban life in New York City.

The main house—which hosts six bedrooms and one master suite—comprises the airy and bright great room where a steel fireplace framed in eggshell veneer panels by Chapeau Design is the focal point. The double-height ceiling and floor-to-ceiling windows highlight the main protagonist in this project: the peaceful view.

Story furnished all the rooms with vintage and modern pieces, which mingle with a large collection of contemporary art and sophisticated finishes. She chose some furniture from the 20th century including a Raymond Loewy credenza and leather chairs by Jacques Adnet in the dining room. A pair of Rene Gabriel chairs covered in white cowhide adds a modern touch of Texas chic. Every space is adorned by art, including a pink painting by Andro Wekua and a contemporary surrealist painting by Tomasz Kowalski that overlooks the living-dining room, complemented by the Fragile Future chandelier by artists Lonneke Gordijn and

Ralph Nauta, made of dandelion seed heads, concrete and phosphorus bronze.

In the kitchen furnished with custom-made stools by Wyeth, the glamorous breakfast area features a marble table, a Paavo Tynell ceiling lamp from Craig Van Den Brulle Gallery, a white banquette in Moore & Giles leather and vintage Thonet chairs.

The mostly beige master suite is adorned with a painting by Kati Heck, a black, 1970s-era Eileen Gray Transat chair, wall panels covered in perforated suede and a carpet by Marc Phillips Decorative Rugs.

More playful than the rest of the house, the kids' rooms were decorated with a higher dose



Every nook features a mix of vintage and modern pieces of furniture.

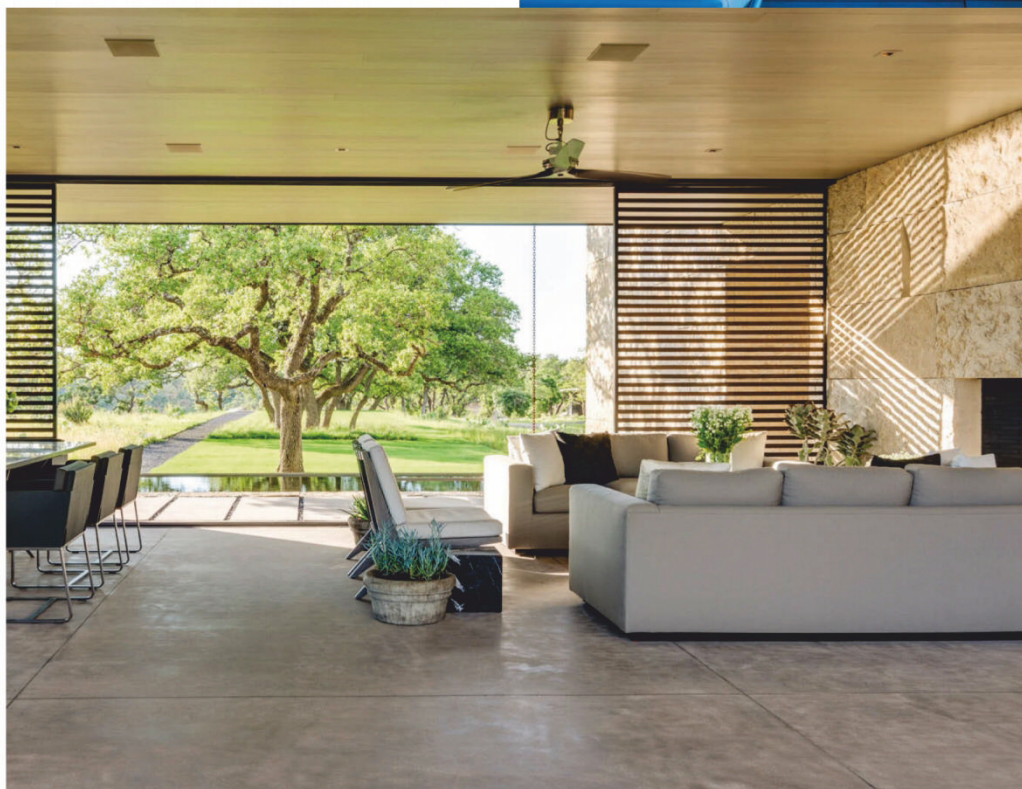
OPPOSITE, LEFT
The peaceful view is the main protagonist.

OPPOSITE, RIGHT
In some of the rooms, pops of colour were introduced to create a playful atmosphere.





Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Collections



ABOVE
The pool house evokes the Barcelona pavilion by Mies van der Rohe.

FAR LEFT
Nature was one of the main sources of inspiration.

RIGHT
In this house, the atmosphere is elegant and intimate.

OPPOSITE
Different materials, including glass, wood, steel and limestone, were used in this project.

of colour through decorative accessories such as de Gournay wallpaper and curtains with Claremont fabric (both yellow), a green Karkula chair and a multi-coloured and floral-patterned chair covered in a Josef Frank linen from Svenskt Tenn.

In addition to the main home, where Story and her family typically spend holidays and weekends, a guesthouse—decorated with contemporary art by Ellen Berkenblit—includes two bedrooms, an indoor and outdoor living room and a wine cellar.

All exterior areas were also carefully designed with the help of landscape firm Studio Outside. The pool house is a tribute to the Barcelona pavilion designed by Mies van der Rohe in 1929.

Despite its large scale, this house features an intimate and warm atmosphere where comfort and art have become part of the same creative concept. ■



Almost all built-ins, including the bedroom doors, have been clad in a wood veneer.

BIG ON NATURE

ELIZA HAMIZAH chats with the homeowners of this laidback home, which has been personalised with travel photos and ceramicware.





WHO LIVES HERE

A couple in their early 30s
HOME Five-room BTO home
in Punggol
SIZE 1,100sq ft

LEFT

The homeowners purchased the slim wooden lamp from Taobao, and the round green lamp from Taiwanese brand Kimu.

RIGHT

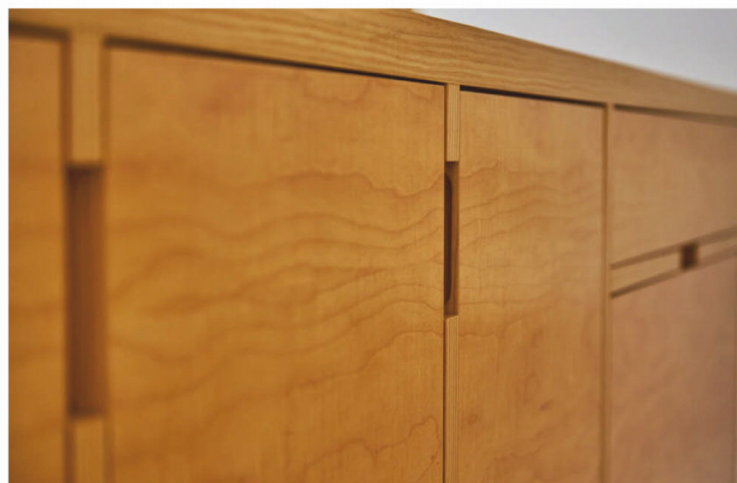
The half-height terrazzo wall is a nice, unexpected touch.

FAR RIGHT

The homeowners commissioned Kaela Woods to design their round dining table.

BOTTOM

While some door handles were from Taobao, the intricate handles on the wooden island were designed by interior designer Sujono.



Natural materials and muted hues give this home a down-to-earth and outdoorsy atmosphere. This mirrors the lifestyle of the homeowners, too — a couple who enjoys wakeboarding, holidaying at places-less-travelled, and most recently, gardening.

Their only prerequisites were that the house be clad in terrazzo and wood. A simple request on paper, but not many interior designers could understand the “feel-good” look they wanted. However, with Sujono Lim of interior design firm Parenthesis, it took only the

first meeting, and an out-of-the-ordinary floorplan, for the couple to be convinced.

Sujono had proposed an open plan with two-toned floor; the living room and bedrooms would feature a light wood flooring, and the rest a speckled terrazzo floor. The area comprising the study room and kitchen were also configured in a symmetrical setting. Both spaces feature a set of ribbed glass sliding doors, while a long wooden island — customised as a loose piece of furniture — sits between them. The renovation cost totalled to \$65,000. ►



“We like the raw texture of plywood, but Sujono proposed a veneer that could achieve the look we wanted while being more durable. Everything else he proposed, such as the bathroom tiles and open kitchen shelving where we can display our Japanese ceramic goods, [met our criteria],” say the couple.

The homeowners had a knack for decorating, too. They used photographs from their trip to Ethiopia and

India, souvenirs such as a weave basket from Morocco, and plants to add texture and vibrancy to the home.

“Sujono did a great job with the space planning. The home is spacious for our friends to hang out in, we can easily refer to recipes on the wooden island as we cook in the kitchen and, when we work in the study room, the ridged glass provides us privacy without blocking out too much light,” shares the couple. ■



OPPOSITE
The couple opted for all-white walls, preferring that colours come from accessories such as rugs, pots, and photographs.

from the drier area. Sujono also suggested purchasing a compact bathroom sink from Ikea, to which he later added a quartz top.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM
A wall was erected in the common bathroom, to separate wet

BELOW
The study table, which is actually an Ikea kitchen top, was has been with the couple for years.



“WE WANTED A SPACIOUS HOME IDEAL FOR FAMILY GATHERINGS AND WHEN FRIENDS COME OVER FOR DRINKS AND BOARDGAME NIGHTS.”



ABOVE
For a consistent look, the cabinetry in the master bedroom also features a wood-look cladding.



LEFT
The couple has a collection of rocks from Iceland, Ladakh and New Zealand, as well as wooden sticks from Hokkaido. They love nature- and mountain-filled places.



BOTTOM, LEFT
The study room, where the couple has recently been spending time to practise kintsugi (the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with powdered gold inlay), is where a lot of interesting knick knacks can be found.

BOTTOM, RIGHT
A full-height mirror incorporated in the master wardrobe visually expands the space further.

STYLE SYNTHESIS

The fusion of two concepts differentiates this home from other run-of-the-mill, industrial-themed interiors.

LYNN TAN finds out how this was achieved.



TAP FOR
GALLERY

This five-room flat in Sumang Walk is the matrimonial home of engineer Louis Chen and Sophie Ang, an assistant customer service manager. As it was procured under the HDB Sale of Balance Flats exercise, they were able to collect the keys within a year and a half. An online search for an interior design firm brought them to Fuse Concept. “We looked through the portfolio, liked what we saw and decided to engage them,” says Louis.

With interior designer Andrew Poh on board, the renovation process went full steam ahead. “We were able to make prompt decisions because we knew what we wanted, so the whole scheme came together very quickly,” says Sophie. Andrew adds: “Louis and Sophie shared lots of images with me, including mood boards and other details, so I had a very clear direction.”

The brief was to create a home with a blend of industrial and rustic elements, which is apparent the moment you enter the home. The shoe cabinet at the entrance is actually part of a movable door that conceals the entrance to the household shelter. The fusion of rustic

LEFT
The interior is a perfect complement of industrial and rustic elements.

OPPOSITE
The couple managed to find some interesting pieces from Taobao such as this red sideboard that matches the CGI panels.





WHO LIVES HERE

A couple in their 20s

HOME A five-room HDB in Punggol

SIZE 1,200 sq ft



ABOVE

Louis and Sophie got the idea for using neon light tubes to form a character from Instagram.

ABOVE, LEFT

The aeroplane fuselage armchair reflects Louis' engineering background.

LEFT

Combining store-bought pieces such as the TV console from Commune with DIY pieces such as the coffee table, the living room showcases the owners' design flair and hands-on approach.

wood laminate with dark grey wire mesh sets the stylistic tone for the rest of the interior.

The cement screed floor, a feature characteristic of the industrial theme, continues past the foyer and into the living and kitchen-cum-dining areas. One's attention is invariably drawn towards the right, where an open-concept kitchen with an island takes centre stage against a backdrop combining red corrugated galvanised iron (CGI) sheets and neon light tubes that form the Chinese character for 'home'.

"These CGI sheets are used in the fabrication of shipping containers and were sourced by the homeowners. The customisation took meticulous planning and impeccable workmanship, cutting them to size and installing them with wall plugs," Andrew explains. The red CGI cladding extends to the ceiling above the island and continues along the corridor leading to the bedrooms, demarcating zones within the home without the use of walls.

The living room was deliberately kept sparsely-furnished. The couple hosts frequent gatherings, so this frees up space for guests to move around in. The CGI sheets make their appearance here as well, taking the form of a feature wall painted grey to achieve a raw, unfinished effect. Another eye-catching element in the living room is the coffee table. Comprising stacked wooden pallets with a glass top, it was lovingly and ingeniously hand-built by the owners.

Partitions were erected in one corner of the master bedroom to carve out a walk-in wardrobe. The sleeping area is defined by an elevated 

The homeowners opted for a green study wall because they love plants and greenery.





**THE OPEN-CONCEPT KITCHEN WITH AN ISLAND
TAKES CENTRE STAGE AGAINST A BACKDROP COMBINING
RED CORRUGATED GALVANISED IRON SHEETS AND
NEON LIGHT TUBES THAT FORM THE CHINESE
CHARACTER FOR 'HOME'.**



TOP
By completely hacking away the kitchen wall and converting the study room wall into a parapet with glass on top, the apartment feels more open and spacious.

BOTTOM
The kitchen island doubles as a dining table with drawers built into the sides.



platform, above which is the bed with storage space. The difference in levels establishes a very private realm within the master bedroom and adds to the cosiness befitting a resting space.

When Louis and Sophie first got married, they were living with his parents so, naturally, they were thrilled to finally have a place of their own. “We love hanging out in the living room,” says Louis. “I also spend a lot of time at the kitchen-cum-dining island area because it makes a great space for my embroidery group,” shares Sophie. ■





LEFT
The master bedroom illustrates simplicity at its best.

OPPOSITE
The original master bedroom and guest room doors were replaced with barn doors for that rustic look.



WHO LIVES HERE

A couple in their 20s
HOME Five-room HDB BTO in Ang Mo Kio
SIZE 1,195 sq ft





A FINE BALANCE

A cohesive colour palette helps tie the look of various styles throughout the home together. DOMENICA TAN finds out how these homeowners designed and styled the interiors of their new abode.

With a budget of just \$28,000 for renovation and \$25,000 for furniture, appliances and decor accessories, homeowners Justin Koh and Monica Anne Lie designed their five-room apartment to exude a warm, cosy look, complete with lots of white and wood tones. Justin works in the sales industry, while Monica, who works mostly out of her home office, is the owner of demi-fine jewellery brand The Ordinary Co., and often shares behind-the-scenes images through her Instagram page (@luxmondi).

Instead of relying on extensive built-ins for storage, the couple chose to mostly furnish the place with loose furniture, so they'd have the flexibility of styling and refreshing it as and when they liked. ►

Justin and Monica wanted an open-plan kitchen to keep the apartment looking spacious.

We speak to Monica about the renovation and styling journey of the home she shares with her husband.

HOW DID YOU CONCEPTUALISE YOUR HOME'S DESIGN?

My husband had no preference but helped a lot with the renovation costing and specifications. I was very inspired by the Instagram images of cream-toned homes that are popular in Korea. I also like European design elements often found in magazines like *Kinfolk* and *Cereal*. The hardest part was locking in a specific look as I love all kinds of interior design styles — including the Japanese zen-inspired and Balinese resort look.

I think it is possible to meld many concepts and have a cohesive outcome. Once we selected colours like cream, white and grey, it was very easy to pull the look together.

YOUR APARTMENT IS MOSTLY WHITE. HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN THAT?

I think having just two adults — no children or pets — definitely helps maintain the whiteness! We bought a second-hand white sofa for just \$350 and did some dry cleaning and refurbishing, so we won't feel the pain of stains here and there.

As for the walls, we walk around the apartment with a cup of paint every few months to touch up small dirt streaks. It seems minor but it really helps refresh the look.



Different textures — from subway tiles laid in a vertical fashion to the terrazzo countertop and concrete-look laminate on the cabinetry — make the kitchen unique.



LEFT
Instead of splurging on new furniture, they bought many second-hand pieces off Carousell, including the Ethnicraft dining table, and white sofa filled with goose down.

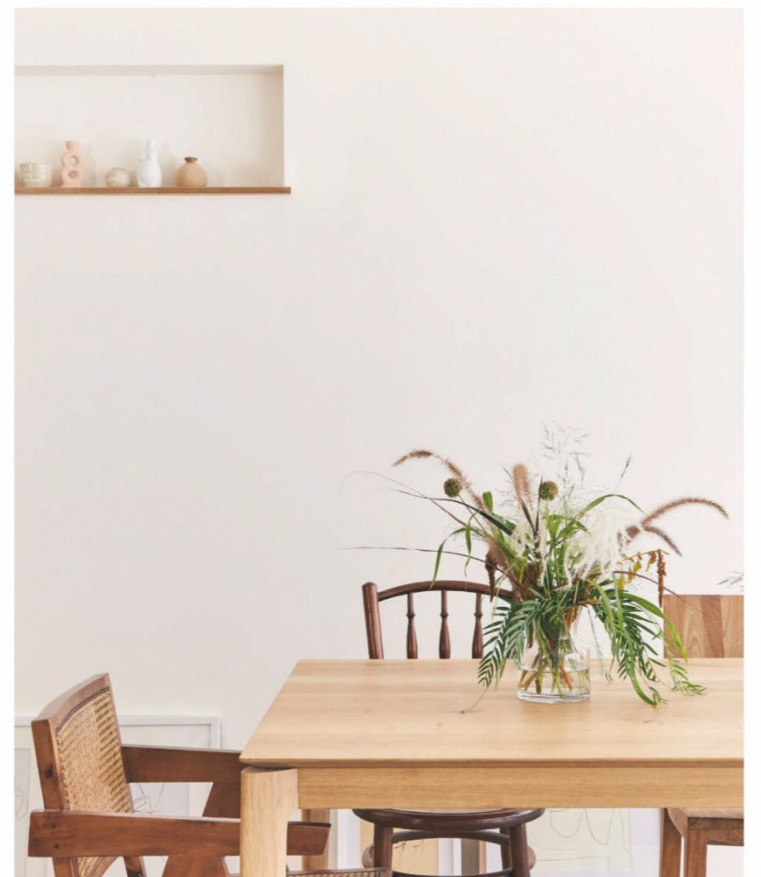
BELOW, LEFT
Skipping a cabinet for footwear, the kitchen peninsula was specially designed with under-counter shelves for the couple's shoes.

BELOW, RIGHT
Monica sources many of her decor accessories, like ceramic vases, during her travels or from Taobao. She has been collecting such items since she was 21.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR SPACE-PLANNING AND STORAGE STRATEGIES?

Our philosophy was to avoid having too many carpentry and built-in elements. This saved on renovation costs and lets us to move things around, add more storage or change the entire purpose of a room. Only the kitchen and toilets are completely built-in.

We're particularly proud of our vintage 1950s wardrobe in the master bedroom that we bought from a lady who lives in Tiong Bahru. It belonged to her family for years and fits all





my husband's clothes now. We also put our bed frame against the window instead of the wall to create more visual space.

WHILE CONCEPTUALISING YOUR HOME OFFICE, WHAT WERE KEY CONSIDERATIONS?

Lots of storage options. Not necessarily built-in shelves but items such as baskets, boxes and dividers within the cupboards to help keep everything tidy.

WHICH PART OF THE HOME DO YOU LOVE THE MOST?

Our living and kitchen areas. I drew the design for the kitchen cupboards and selected the wood- and concrete-look laminates, as I like the aesthetic of more colour tones and textures.

My husband sourced the terrazzo countertops and our carpenter helped make everything come together with little fuss!

Plus, I've always wanted an island and the one we have now is freestanding, which looks great and is more cost-efficient than fabricating a built-in one. It also creates additional storage in the kitchen. I also love our sliding glass cupboard where we keep dishes we have amassed from our travels. Our friends often ask if we actually use the dishes because they look so pretty.

The living room is where we spend lots of time lazing about, relaxing and watching our favourite shows. Thanks to our comfy goose down sofa, we often snooze there, too. ■





LEFT
Monica spends a lot of time working in the home office, where she showcases some of her favourite knick-knacks.

OPPOSITE, ABOVE
Given a fresh new coat of varnish, this 1950s vintage cupboard is now Justin's wardrobe.

OPPOSITE, BELOW
Marbleish quartz surface adds a touch of luxury to the bathroom.



RIGHT
Jo and Merlyn describes this as their “happy wall”, and an ode to their dogs (past and present) who likes hanging out with them at the dining table.

OPPOSITE
The couple bought shaker-style kitchen cabinetry doors from Ikea.

LABOUR OF LOVE

This eclectic home is the result of three friends coming together to create something wholesome and cosy. ELIZA HAMIZAH finds out how the homeowners' hobbies are incorporated into the design.



“I’m a notorious feeder!” exclaims Jo Henson, the homeowner of this three-bedroom home in Tampines. Jo, who lives here with her partner Merlyn Hor and their two dogs, loves to entertain and wanted a home that could accommodate their

many interests. This includes having a balcony and guest room where friends can hang out, a design that incorporates the couple’s sports equipments seamlessly and — most importantly — a kitchen that fits all of Jo’s cooking requirements. To do this, they approached ►

BELOW
The couple
described their
home style as
“mismatched”.

OPPOSITE
Jo is a
headhunter,
while Merlyn is
in media sales.





their interior designer and friend Gayle Leong from 3PSI.

“There is no hard and fast rule to this home. It is an Instagram-worthy and *chapalang* (colloquial word for “a mixture of various elements”) design, made up of Jo’s many online purchases and affordable furniture from Ikea and Castlery. She is, however, a very organised person and requires lots of storage; this, and her love for entertaining, informed the layout of the apartment,” shares Gayle.

We chat with Jo to find out more.

YOU DESCRIBED THE HOUSE AS AN UPDATE OF YOUR PREVIOUS HOME. HOW SO?

We stuck to the grey-black palette we like, and brought over some items such as the study room ladder and the plantation doors that now sit in our balcony. We even added more plantation doors throughout the home; we love the look, they keep the sun out, and are easier to maintain than curtains. We did play more with steel and our tile selection, though. I’d say this home is a collaboration of things we love and Gayle’s eye for space-planning. Her team of contractors is also great to work with.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE STYLE OF THE HOME?

There is a retro touch to it, with the bamboo blinds, shaker- ▶



WHO LIVES HERE

A couple in their 40s
HOME Three-bedroom resale apartment in Tampines
SIZE 1,500 sq ft

style cabinetry, wainscoted bedroom wall and the vintage-look tiles. However, the colour scheme veers toward a more masculine ambience. There are also quirkier elements, such as the locker-style doors in the gym/guest room, skateboard-turned-shelf in the study, and various unique decoration.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN RENOVATIONS DONE?

We gutted the whole apartment as it was almost 24 years old! The work, which totalled to \$130,000, includes converting one bedroom into a walk-in-wardrobe with plenty of storage space, as well as taking some space from the store room to create a more spacious master bathroom. ►



LEFT
The jerry can bar was gifted to Jo by her brother.

BELOW
As Jo works from home, she kept the study room which the previous homeowner had created.

OPPOSITE
Accordion windows and a second door help close off the study and living room from foyer.







RIGHT
The couple
cooks a lot,
and needed a
spacious kitchen
to accommodate
their 90cm
freestanding
cooker and
dishwashers.

**YOU HAD QUITE A MEMORABLE
EXPERIENCE WHEN DESIGNING
THE KITCHEN.**

Oh, it was a character-building experience (laughs). To save some money, Gayle suggested we purchase — instead of building from scratch — shaker-style kitchen cabinetry doors from Ikea. Unfortunately, Ikea Singapore only had 11 pieces, so we had our friends bring over the remaining 10 pieces we needed from both Ikea in Johor Bahru as well as Kuala Lumpur. Then we realised the measurements were a bit off — luckily, our contractor made adjustments so they could fit his kitchen carcass and hinges. Our handmade brass handles, as well as US-bought kitchen mixer, also had trouble fitting in. It really took a lot of effort, and a number of kind and helpful people, to pull off this kitchen. ■



FAR LEFT
The guest room doubles as a gym.

LEFT
The home features many of Jo and Merlyn's boards, from wakeboards and wakesurfs to carverboards and skateboards.

BELOW
The wall panelling — which matches the shaker style kitchen — was a last minute addition.





photo WEE STUDIO



ANYTHING BUT THE NORM

Check out what these homeowners and their interior designers did to turn standard BTO layouts into one-of-a-kind spaces.

GRAND ENTRANCE

WHERE Four-room BTO in Buangkok

Home to a chef, who wanted an open-concept kitchen, his wife and their young daughter, Wee Studio reconfigured the original BTO layout to seamlessly combine the living room and kitchen, leaving half of the dining area visible through wooden slats that divide the latter and the entrance walkway with seating and shoe storage. Having such an open environment is the easiest way to make the most of natural light. ➤





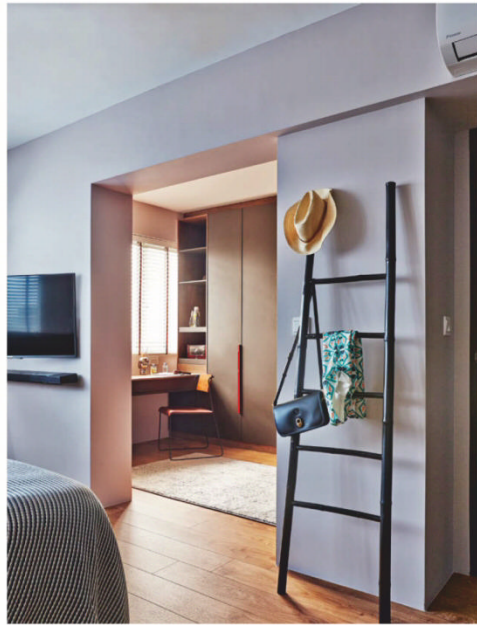
photo JOEY KHU INTERIOR DESIGN

USING SOME OF THE SPACE ALLOTTED FOR AN ADJACENT ROOM GAVE THIS HOMEOWNER-ARCHITECT HER MUCH DESIRED WARDROBE-CUM-DRESSING AREA.

LUXURY OF SPACE

WHERE Four-room BTO in McNair Road

In order to enlarge the master bedroom of her matrimonial home, homeowner and architect Vanessa Ong of April Atelier used some of the floor area of an adjacent bedroom to fulfil her dream of a wardrobe-cum-dressing area.



DESIGNATED DISPLAY

WHERE Four-room BTO in Jalan Tenteram

Not only did interior designer Joey Khu of Joey Khu Interior Design create sufficient space for a walk-in wardrobe by merging the master bedroom and an adjacent bedroom, he also left pockets of space in the wardrobe to allow the homeowner to neatly showcase her handbag collection.





MORE STORAGE ROOM

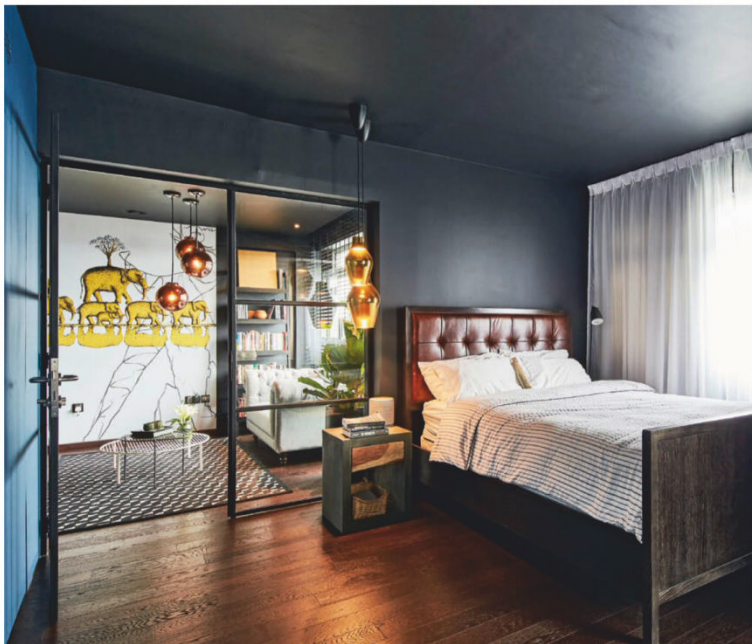
WHERE Three-room
BTO in Punggol

As the homeowners did not need an additional bedroom, Kelvin Teo of Space Sense Studio converted half of it into an industrial garage-style storeroom that has become a standout feature in the home. ▶

BATHROOM BEAUTY

WHERE Three-room BTO in Chai Chee Road

Tasked with creating a spacious open-concept en suite bathroom for the master bedroom, Ivan Lin of Aart Boxx Interior converted the two original bathrooms into one.



THE RIGHT ANGLE

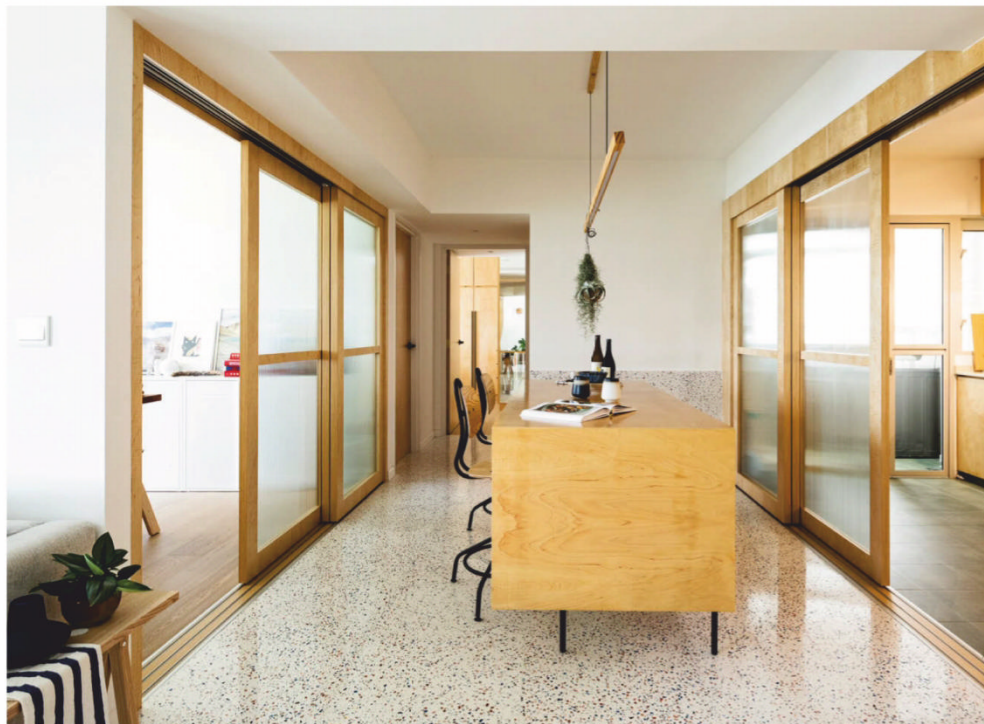
WHERE Four-room BTO in Ghim Moh

The original layout of this apartment positioned the dining room in an area lacking daylight and ventilation. Architect Liew Kok Fong of Studio Super Safari hacked away part of the kitchen wall to produce a dining counter that sits at an angle facing the living room, and allows guests to chat with whoever's doing the cooking.

GATHER AROUND

WHERE Five-room BTO in Punggol

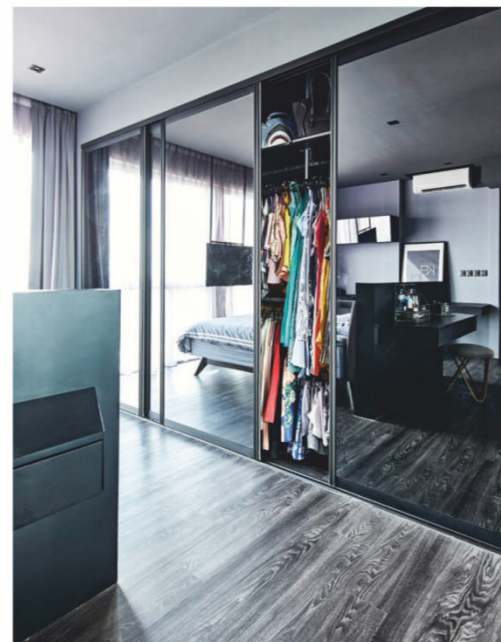
The homeowners wanted a space where they could accommodate gatherings with family and friends. Sujono Lim of Parenthesis reconfigured the layout to ensure the kitchen and study had symmetrical settings. Then he put a wooden island between them that can be used as a station for food preparation, studying and working. It's also perfect as a buffet table.



NEW PERSPECTIVE

WHERE Five-room BTO in Bukit Batok

Designer Sherlynn Low of Millimeters Studio created a bold look with all-black interiors for her home. She also adopted an unconventional layout in her master bedroom by incorporating a headboard-cum-dresser design more often seen in hospitality projects. ■



DESIGNING AN OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN

Here's our guide to creating one that suits your lifestyle and blends harmoniously with the rest of your home.

No longer strictly functional, kitchens have become great-looking spots for entertaining guests or children while you cook. Follow our tips for a kitchen that seamlessly integrates with your living and dining spaces.

PLANNING YOUR KITCHEN LAYOUT

A smart space with good flow will help make whipping up your daily meals a cinch.

1. L-SHAPED, U-SHAPED OR GALLEY KITCHEN?

A galley kitchen is practical for small spaces. This narrow layout is usually complemented by a kitchen island, which physically divides the area from the other living spaces. An L-shaped kitchen maximises space by utilising the corner of the kitchen and opening up plenty of potential for storage. A U-shaped layout places units on three sides of the kitchen, with the top of the ‘U’ left accessible, and increases the storage capacity along the wall.

2. WORKTOP HEIGHT & ELBOW ROOM

Note the dimensions required for counters, built-in appliances and aisle spaces. The standard height for countertops is between 85cm and 90 cm. Consider going higher if you are tall to avoid backache from bending over to chop veggies or wash the dishes. To avoid squeezing between counters, the ideal aisle width would be 1m for one cook and 1.2m for two cooks.



3. UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS

There’s no one size fits all when it comes to kitchens. Its design depends largely on its size and primary uses. For instance, do you bake often, do heavy cooking or use it for entertainment? Evaluate your appliances, too. “Busy families may prefer ovens with multiple heating modes to save time on defrosting and heating food,” says Adrian Kok, Head of Marketing ASEAN, BSH Home Appliances.

Available at Bosch.



4. STORAGE SPACE

Don’t underestimate the amount of storage you’ll need. Make an inventory of all the items you already have and potentially need, including appliances such as a sleek and stylish fridge, a combination microwave oven and an air fryer.

5. LIGHTING

Well-planned lighting can elevate the look of your kitchen and improve your food preparations. The three main types are basic light for the area; task lighting, which highlights a specific work area such as the cooker top or countertop; and accent lighting, which can create a focal point.

Available at Sol Luminaire.

TIP

WELL LIT

“When it comes to open kitchen concepts, having a consistent Correlated Colour Temperature (CCT) of 3,000K throughout the home allows homeowners to create a soft ambience within the kitchen and the rest of the home,” says Joseph Ho, Co-founder of Sol Luminaire.



SURFACE APPEAL

The countertop is the centrepiece of a kitchen and determines how its design will be perceived in terms of function, weight, durability, proportion and cost.

1. MARBLE

Its distinctive veining makes this natural stone luxurious and grand. However, marble is not as durable as other materials. One mistake with a knife and you'll have a permanent scratch on your beautiful countertop. It's soft, porous and stains easily as well, so it must be sealed often to protect it from damages.

2. GRANITE

Just like marble, no two pieces are alike, so your counter will be unique. One of the most preferred materials, because it's solid, durable, and long-lasting, this igneous stone is resistant to scratches and heat, but that doesn't mean you should place hot pans on it without a trivet. To ensure longevity, it needs sealant, but not as often as marble does.

📍 Available at Cosentino.

3. LAMINATES

This cost-effective alternative offers lots of design options. It's also pretty durable and non-porous. However, to avoid scorching, you should avoid placing hot pans directly onto it. A sharp knife can easily nick its surface.

📍 Available at EDL.

4. KOMPACPLUS

This is made from layers of kraft paper and resin. Although just 6mm thick, the panels are hardy, non-porous and resistant to heat, water and steam. Choose from designs that mimic natural wood and even stone.

📍 Available at KompacPlus.

5. SOLID SURFACING

A mix of polymer resins, minerals and colourants makes this manufactured material non-porous and resistant to stains but it is susceptible to scratches. On the flip side, it can be sanded down to make it appear new. Great for L- and U-shaped kitchens, the solid surface sheets can be glued and sanded to erase the seams.

📍 Available at Evershine.

6. ENGINEERED QUARTZ

Made of at least 90 per cent ground quartz with resins and pigments, it comes in an array of styles. It is also tough and non-porous so no worries about stains. However, although resistant to heat, too high a temperature could damage it. It may also cost more but you could save on its upkeep in the long run.

📍 Available at Caesarstone.

TIP

"In most cases, a mild detergent is enough to keep a Caesarstone surface looking like new. If necessary, use a non-abrasive soft soap along with a non-scratch or delicate scrub pad. Afterwards, thoroughly rinse with clean water to remove residue."
- Vivian Feng, Head of Marketing, Caesarstone South East Asia

SET YOUR STYLE

Consider these design ideas while conceptualising your space and its key elements.



1. A CLEAR VIEW

Avid cooks may find that an open kitchen exposes the rest of the home to cooking fumes, other odours and grease. Nip these issues in the bud with glass windows or sliding doors that don't take away from the sense of spaciousness. Frameless glass panels are ideal for minimalist homes.

2. GO BOLD

An open kitchen design complements your home's overall feel. Introducing elements that pop such as coloured appliances, like Smeg's FAB28 fridge (Ruby Red), invites attention. The "soft touch" rubberised effect adds character to a kitchen, especially when cabinetry is kept simple.

📍 Available at Smeg.

3. ZONING

Define distinct sections with different floor finishes, pony walls or an island. A common plan involves the wet and dry zones. The wet usually comprises the sink, hood and hob, and is often closed off with glass windows or doors. Think of the dry kitchen as a pantry of sorts for preparing light meals and the location of your fridge.

4. AN ISLAND OR A PENINSULA?

Nothing makes a statement like a free-standing island you can move to the centre or to one side. Aside from serving as a countertop for prepping food, it's handy for dining and storage, too. The peninsula serves the same purpose, but is an extension of the kitchen as it attached to a wall on one side and separates the kitchen from the rest of your living space.



5. KEEP IT FUSS-FREE

Handle-free, flat-front cabinets help reduce visual bulk when there's the absence of a wall. Hide appliances behind panelled shelf designs or go for built-in ones so they don't take up space on your countertop. Aesthetically speaking, an induction hob with a glossy finish makes for a sleeker-looking kitchen. ▶

📍 Available at Miele.



STRETCH YOUR SPACE

Make the most of a small kitchen's dimensions with these tips for a streamlined, ergonomic space.



1. MULTIFUNCTIONAL AND COLLAPSIBLE FURNITURE

Furnishings that pull double and even triple duty can save you money and space. For instance, the island can be used as a workstation, dining table and storage unit. It can also house the sink or stove. Drop-leaf or gateleg tables and extendable counters can be easily folded away to free up the space.

2. NIFTY STORAGE SYSTEMS

Pre-built kitchen systems save you the hassle of designing your own. A customisable and modular system like Hafele's Meister collection is designed with an advanced modular technology and pre-drilled fixtures for fuss-free assembly, so there's less hacking and construction work.

3. THINK VERTICALLY

Save precious floor space with cupboards and tall cabinets that extend to the ceiling, and utilise walls with floating shelves and racks. Often-used items go on the lower



4. SWOP SOME BASE CUPBOARDS FOR DRAWERS

It's way easier to pull out a drawer and see all its contents than it is to reach for crockery or condiments at the back of a cabinet. Increase storage space with wider pull-out drawers instead of multiple smaller ones.

5. DON'T CUT CORNERS

Don't let details like drawer dividers and storage compartments be an afterthought. Pull-out larders, carousel cupboards and lazy susans help maximise hard-to-reach areas and dead space.

📍 Available at Hafele.

6. INTEGRATED KITCHEN-CUM-DINING AREAS

If you don't have the luxury of space for a large standalone island as well as a dining table, combine them. Similar hues and textures give a more cohesive look. Alternatively, separate the two with different colours, materials and heights. ■

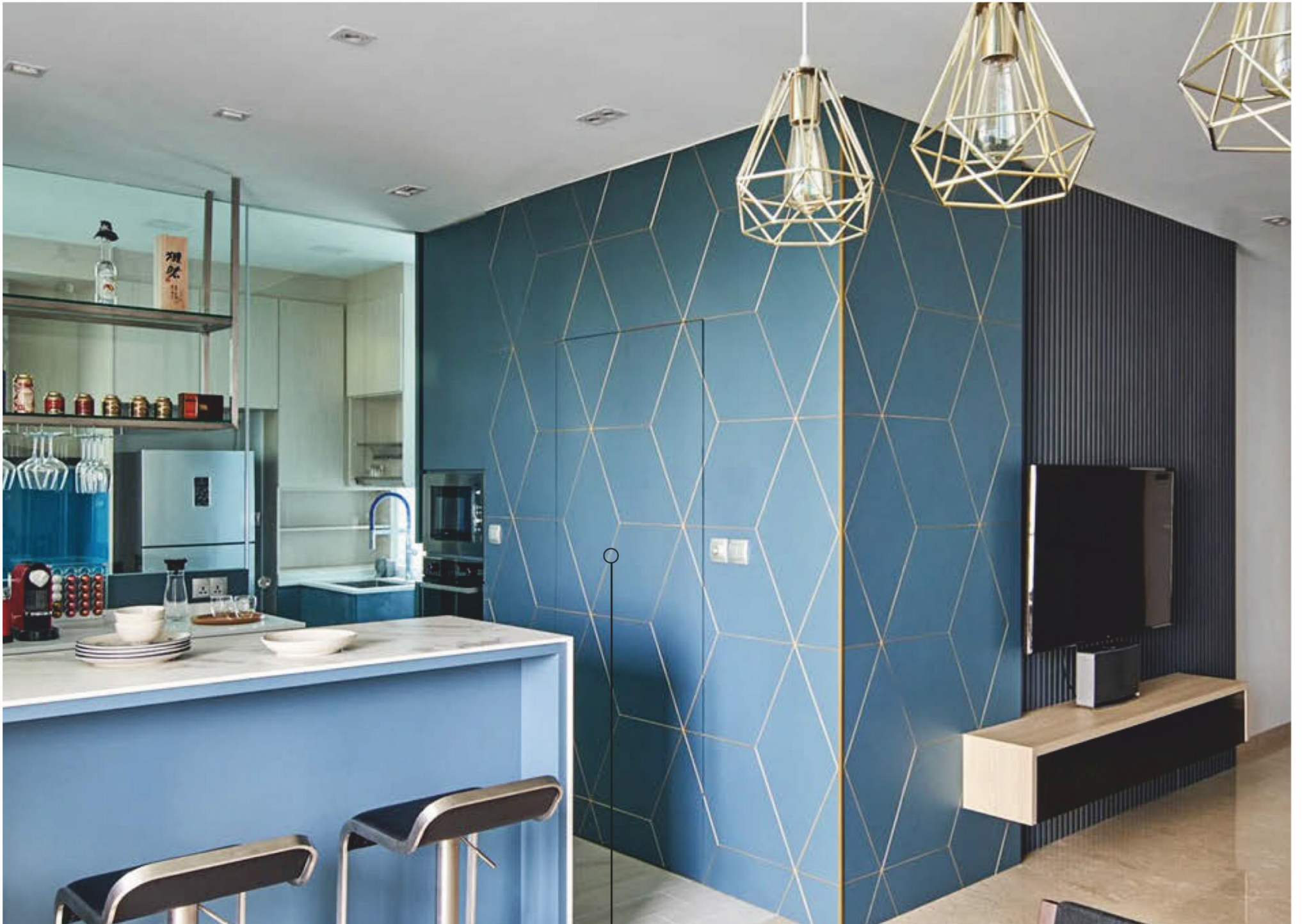
COOL WITH SUB-ZERO

Sub-Zero's Built-in French Door Refrigerator is ideal for galley kitchens as only half of its double doors swing out.

📍 Available at The House of Sub-Zero and Wolf.







DOORS IN DISGUISE

All it takes to conceal your household shelter is a bit of creativity.

Often an undesirable but necessary feature, household shelters – more commonly known as bomb shelters – are the bane of every new homeowner’s existence. With their utilitarian white blast door and metal ventilation plate, they can disrupt a home’s aesthetics – unless you happen to love the industrial look. With the right design techniques, though, you can effectively conceal these features, integrate them into your home and even make use of them. Our interior design (ID) experts share 10 creative ways to disguise your shelter in style.



ID Studio
Ideasxchange
Interior

An eye-catching geometric pattern, echoing the pendant lamps, helps disguise the door’s lines.

ID Studio
WYKN

Bold colour blocking distracts from the outline of the blast door.

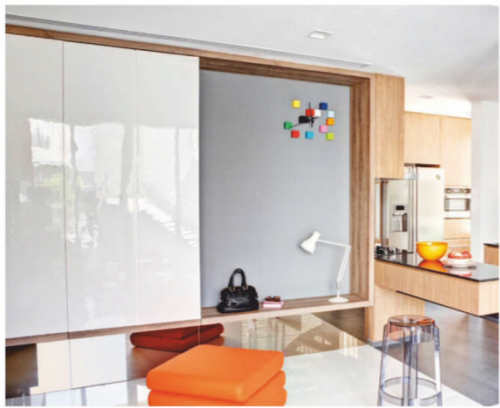
COVER UP THE BLAST DOOR WITH PAINT OR WALLPAPER

Two of the easiest solutions, both help merge the door with the wall. A darker paint shade or boldly patterned wallpaper hides the lines of the door more effectively. If you’re going the paint route, you’ll need to remove the existing layer of paint first. According to HDB regulations, the layer of paint cannot be too thick as it could affect the ease of opening or closing the door.



ID Studio
Prozfile

The blast door is hidden behind a full-length cabinet in white and oak.



**CUSTOMISE
A CUPBOARD**

If your blast door sits along a wall of its own, consider getting your ID or carpenter to build a custom cupboard or cabinet for you that creates extra storage space while concealing the blast door. Opt for handleless doors with a push to open latch mechanism or a moulded finger for a sleeker profile. ►

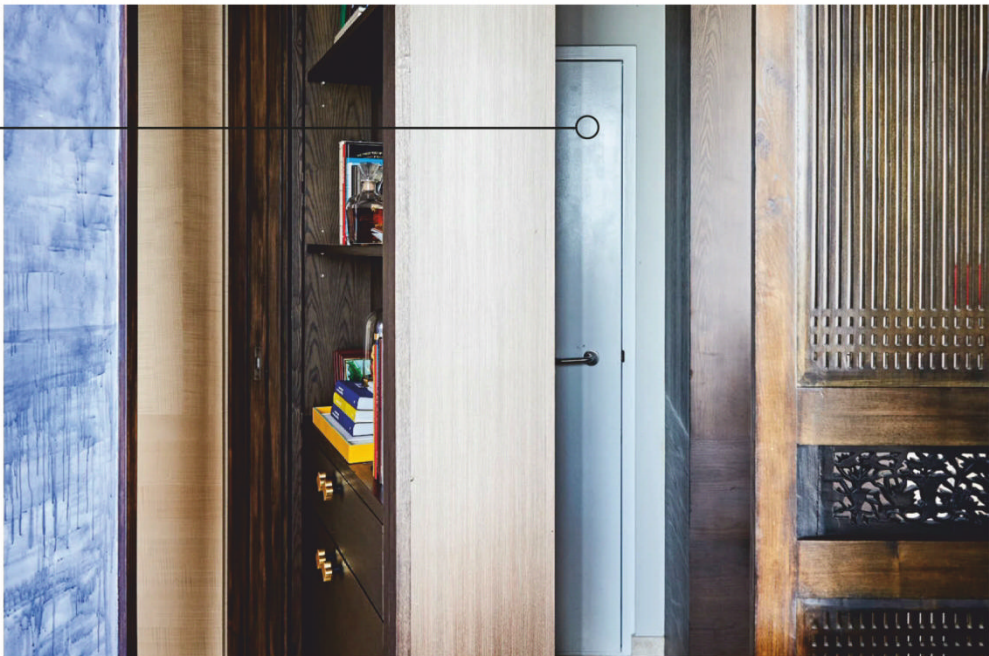


ID Studio
Sirius Art

A section of this bookshelf pops open to reveal the household shelter.

Designer
Oz Titus Hong

What looks like a display shelf actually swings open to reveal the household shelter – a cool secret door concept that's sure to wow your guests.



**CREATE A FAUX
VERTICAL GARDEN**

Looking to inject some greenery into your home? Creating a green wall of artificial plants is an aesthetically pleasing way to disguise the blast door and ventilation plate. You can also paint the handle dark green so it doesn't stick out too much, but be sure to leave it easily accessible in case of an emergency.



ID Studio
Distinctidentity

A wall of cabinets clad in blackboard paint was built along this wall to provide storage as well as conceal the household shelter and utility cabinet.



ID Studio
Vertical Green

An ordinary blast door gets a makeover with faux greenery, turning it into a feature in its own right.



**TURN THE DOOR INTO
A FULL-LENGTH
MIRROR**

You'll be surprised by the transformation a simple change can make. In this case, an ordinary blast door doubles as a full-length mirror for checking out appearances. Most suppliers can do it in a variety of tints to match your home.

ID Studio
Space Sense

The mirror opens up to reveal the shelter's entrance.

ADD A MURAL

This is a great opportunity for budding or inner artists to showcase their skills while drawing the eye away from the outline of the door. If you'd rather hire someone to customise a mural, check out Stephanie of Muffinsaurus, whose adorable animal medleys are very popular. She can even incorporate your favourite characters.

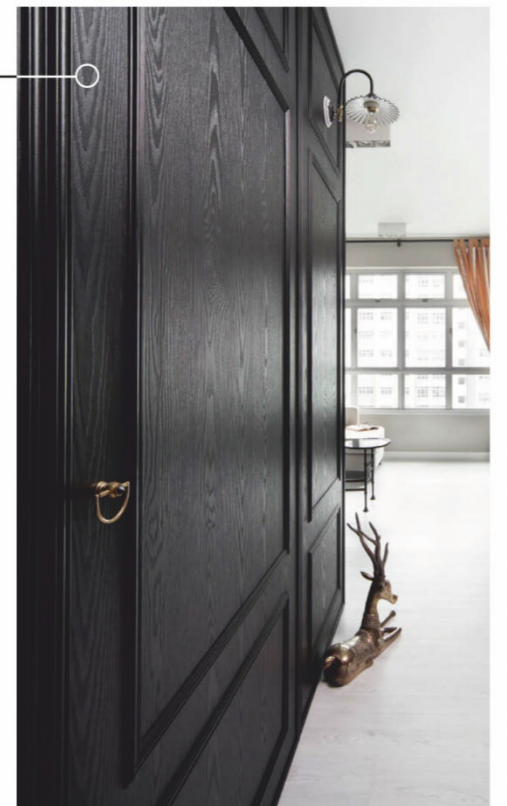


ID Studio
Muffinsaurus

A mural adds a playful touch to the home.

ID Studio The Scientist

The blast door is hidden behind wall panels with moulding.



ID Studio
Hue D

The red panels conceal not only the shelter, but the guest bathroom, too.



ID Studio
Prozfile

Vertical planks give the shelter the look of a shipping container.

**COVER IT UP WITH
A WALL PANEL**

Slimmer than a cabinet and sturdier than wallpaper, a panel could be the answer if you want to conceal the shelter behind a solid structure but lack space. Panelling has the added advantage of concealing wires and cables, too. ►

BLEND IT WITH THE REST OF THE DOORS

While you can't actually swop out the metal door for something else, you can disguise so that it looks like any other door in your home.

This can be easily done with trim or laminate.

ID Studio

Renaissance
Planners &
Designers

The wooden doors of this home match the panelling used to conceal the blast door.



PROJECT Wolf Woof

A visually arresting custom decal distracts from the lines.

USE A GIANT DECAL

If painting an entire mural isn't up your alley or if you'd prefer a look that you can change after a while, a large decal can make the door a highlight instead of drawing attention away from it. ■



ID Studio

Space Sense

This decal redefines the lines of the blast door and features the homeowner's favourite quote.

HDB REGULATIONS ON HOUSEHOLD SHELTERS

Household shelters are designed to be civil defence shelters in case of an emergency. They are fitted with reinforced floors, walls and ceilings, as well as steel doors.

Since they are a structural component of HDB flats, hacking or tampering with them is not allowed. If you do use fixtures to disguise the shelter's entrance or ventilation plate cover, they must be easily removable in case of an emergency.

Your Must-Have Preschool Guide!



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Learn how to choose the right preschool.

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HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR INVESTMENT

**What size to buy? New or resale?
Most importantly, what's your exit plan
when you invest in a property?
Three experienced property agents
shares tips and more.**

A STUDIO OR A BIGGER UNIT?

After you have decided on the district and type of property you're interested in (say, a condominium), do your homework to find out the demand in the area. "In certain areas, there is a high demand yet low supply of smaller units with one or two bedrooms.

In this case, it is more worthwhile to consider getting

a smaller unit instead of a three-bedroom just because you can afford it," says Daniel Wong, associate group director at PropNex Realty. "For a property to make money, its rental has to be strong, so it is equally important to understand the supply and demand of the area to determine competition."

CONSIDER THE RENTAL YIELD - NOT JUST THE PRICE POINT

Rental yield is the by-product of capital gain. Buying a cheap larger unit that does not offer an attractive rental yield can become a financial headache down the road. Property investment is a long-term thing; it cannot be immediately liquidated if you cannot afford to upkeep it.

And don't forget that you have to pay the Seller's Stamp Duty of 12% if you sell it within the first year of purchase; 8% within the second year; and 4% within the third.

Also, while it may seem pricier at first, a sound investment will work hard to make you more money. Wong shares a case study of a client who bought a one-bedroom unit in Tanjong Rhu for \$998,000 in September 2017. Initially sceptical about paying such a high price in the prime location, the client felt she could easily get a two-bedroom place somewhere else.

He explained why he believed the unit was undervalued and thus a good buy. "It was freehold and just next to a new MRT station being built. Compared to the

**THE GOOD THING ABOUT BUYING
COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES? INVESTORS
DON'T NEED TO PAY THE ADDITIONAL BUYER'S
STAMP DUTY. FOR A SINGAPOREAN BUYING
A SECOND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY,
THE ABSD IS 12% AND THE THIRD, 15%.**

neighbouring projects, and despite being freehold, the unit was priced pretty low. I was convinced it would appreciate once the station was ready.” True to his prediction, that unit is worth \$1.13m today. “My client made a paper profit of \$132,000 in just 18 months, which is rare for a one-bedroom apartment.”

**NEW CONDOS STILL
BEING BUILT: ARE
THEY GOOD BUYS?**

It's no secret that new condominiums are priced higher than resale units in the same area. Their designs are often more compact, too. “They also offer terrific per square foot growth if you're one of the lucky buyers in the early launch phase,” says David Ng, senior associate marketing director at PropNex Realty.

Seasoned investors are often invited to VVIP launches ahead of everyone else. That is when the discounts are the steepest. To get on that coveted list, it helps to keep in regular touch with one or a few trusted property agents who know your requirements and budget well. You may want to get on the mailing lists of developers or look out for advertisements on social media as well.

Or ask your agent if a developer has any “Star Buys”.

Some can be very attractive.

Alternatively, units with addresses deemed less lucky, like #04-04, which the Chinese associate with “death” can usually be picked up at a bargain price. An added bonus of buying brand new: “Developers may offer manageable progressive payments that could be spread out over many years,” according to Ng. So, yes, you can find great deals for new condos if all the stars align!

**GO WHERE OTHERS HAVE
NOT VENTURED**

Low Po-Yu, senior marketing director at ERA Realty Network, says a brave investor with the courage to venture where others have not been often stands a better chance of making a tidy profit.

Always looking for ways to make her clients' money work harder, she enjoys sourcing for properties off the radar and spotting opportunities that others have missed.

Low shares the case of a client with a freehold three-bedroom condo that brought her a steady rental yield until its value plateaued. As she was making just a little over 2%, Low advised her to sell it.

“The sell one, buy two concept is very popular now. With my client's profits, I helped her to buy two properties: a \$1m condo apartment and an industrial B2 property.”

B2 properties are zoned to be used for industry, warehouse, utilities and telecommunication uses, whereby the business uses will impose nuisance buffer more than 50m, and within health and safety buffers. Special industries such as the manufacture of industrial machinery and shipbuilding and repair may be allowed in selected areas and are subject to evaluation by a competent authority.

Examples of B2 properties are the ramp-up factories of West Park Biz Central in Pioneer Crescent. Although Low's client is a business

owner, she'd never thought of getting a B2 property.

“Many investors think of residential first, office next, and then retail. They don't think of investing in noisy workshops.” Low shares some benefits of venturing into this market. Firstly, investors don't need to pay the Additional Buyer's Stamp Duty (ABSD) when purchasing commercial properties. For a Singaporean buying a second residential property, the ABSD is 12%, and the third is 15%.

“Secondly, businesses that require a B2 space, like carpentry workshops, cannot rent B1 spaces. This means you have a captive tenant pool that's likely to sign very long-term leases. Also, the government tends to develop more B1 spaces, which creates a demand for B2 spaces.”

Based on Low's advice not to put all her eggs in one basket, her client paid for her B2 property in full and took a loan for the new apartment. “Her rental yield has since jumped four-fold to 8%.” More importantly, the long-term stability means she enjoys peace of mind during her retirement.

If you are looking to invest in a property, it pays to think out of the box! ■



ART & DESIGN CENTRAL

More than the heart of the entertainment industry, the city of Los Angeles is also a hot spot for design lovers to check out the latest in interior styles and architecture.



photo MIKE KELLY

Seventy-one kilometres from north to south and 47 from east to west, Los Angeles or LA is such a huge metropolis that it is almost impossible to know every nook. This makes asking the locals for a list of must-see places all the more essential, especially if you are only going to be in town for a few days.

Admittedly, LA is not the type of city you fall in love with at first sight. That

distinction belongs to the likes of Paris, Rome or Sydney. For the past years, however, LA has experienced a cultural boom, resulting in its current fascinating energy. The film and entertainment industry continues to burgeon, while artists, galleries and museums regularly move from the East Coast to the West Coast, where the sunny, warm weather welcomes beach goers all year round.

What's more, all Angelenos (the natives of the city) appear to have an ultra-cool attitude that is reflected everywhere in the city. The beach vibes in Santa Monica and Malibu, the glamour of Beverly Hills and Hollywood, and the cultural richness of Downtown LA are some examples of what you can expect. Keen to check out the new spots? Here's a round-up of eight destinations worth visiting when you are in the LA area.

ABOVE
The Broad is a contemporary art museum.

THE BROAD

In the booming district of Downtown Los Angeles, the Walt Disney Concert Hall designed by Frank Gehry is no longer the only eye-catching building on Grand Avenue.

The Broad, a contemporary art museum named for philanthropists Eli and Edythe Broad, with its airy honeycombish white exterior, known as the veil, and vault-like interiors, has everybody's curiosity piqued.

Designed by New York-based studio Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R), and built with 16 million kilos of concrete, a 32m escalator takes you to the top floor where a column-free gallery space of more than 48,438 sq ft with 7m high ceilings is bathed in natural light.

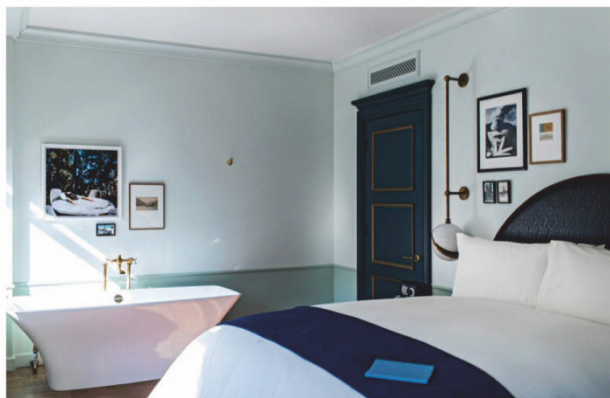
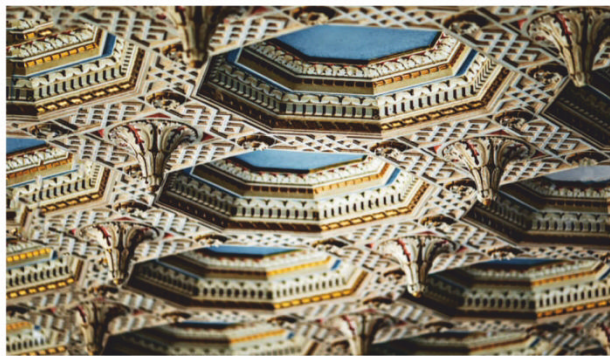
Supported at three points, the veil has five 58m steel girders and 318 skylight monitors with glazed openings that create an airy, bright area. On display inside are some 2,000 pieces of art owned by Eli and Edythe Broad that come from around the world.



LEFT
Brightly printed upholstery adds a little California dreaming to The Nomad Hotel Los Angeles interiors.

CENTRE
The coffered ceilings were meticulously preserved.

BELOW, LEFT
Every room is appointed with custom furnishings, original artwork curated by Paris-based design studio Be-poles, and Bellino linens. Many also feature freestanding bathtubs.



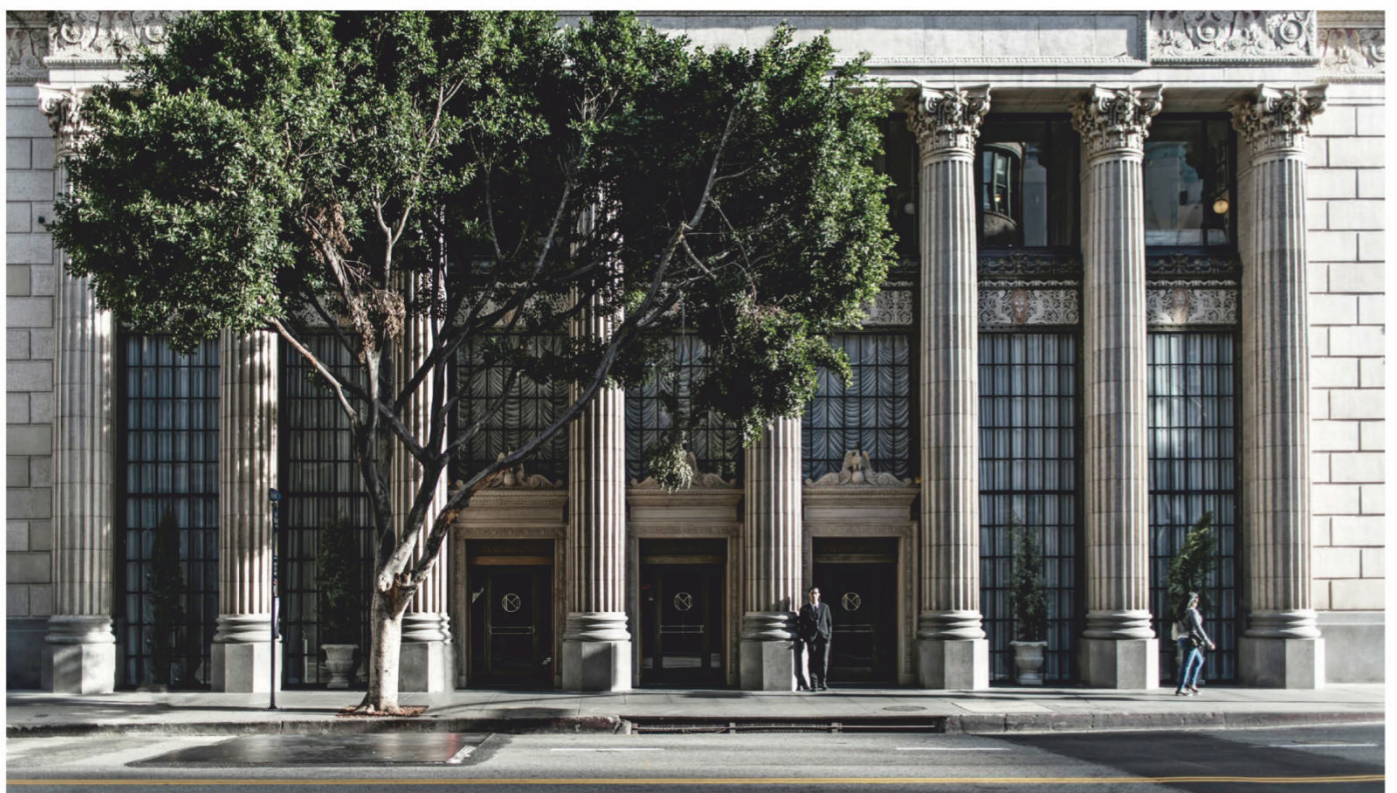
BELOW
The hotel's location, Giannini Place, was built in the 1920s as the headquarters of The Bank of Italy.

THE NOMAD HOTEL LOS ANGELES

For his first project in the city, The Nomad Hotel Los Angeles, French designer Jacques Garcia blended European elegance with California style while honouring the neoclassical history of its location – the landmark 12-storey Giannini Place that was built in the 1920s as the headquarters of The Bank of Italy.

Garcia chose the fully restored Italianate lobby ceiling with gold and blue accents as the starting point for all of the establishment's decor. In the public areas, the original marble floor, coffered ceilings and square pilaster columns topped with Corinthian capitals give a sense of opulence.

In the 241 rooms – many with freestanding pedestal bathtubs – the colour scheme, custom furnishings and rich materials pay tribute to Italy. ►



photos BENOIT LINERO



photos PIA RIVEROLA

THE FUTURE PERFECT

Founded in 2003 by David Alhadeff, The Future Perfect, has become one of the world's foremost contemporary design galleries with locations in New York City, Manhattan and San Francisco as well.

Its Casa Perfect home in Beverly Hills is a modernist villa designed by architect David Hyun, built in 1957 and purchased by Elvis Presley in 1967. Rather unconventional for a gallery, it features floor-to-ceiling windows with panoramic city views and restored elements such as marble fireplaces and coffered ceilings.

Viewing is by appointment only. In its free-flowing, chic spaces, visitors will discover pieces of contemporary design by the likes of Lindsey Adelman, Eric Roinestad, Chris Wolston, Dimorestudio and Piet Hein Eek.



ABOVE

The building exudes a nomadic feel with its unpretentious layout.

CENTRE

Thanks to full-length glass panels, natural light floods the gallery.

LEFT

Many of the artworks and exhibits at The Future Perfect are rather extraordinary.

RIGHT

Industrial meets modernity in the Graye showroom.

GRAYE

Filled with furniture, lighting and art, this 6,997 sq ft warehouse-style showroom's industrial feel comes from its concrete floor and exposed brick walls painted black.

Among the brands exclusively distributed by the design and lifestyle atelier founded by creative director Maria Cicione and fuelled by her passion for modern European design are MDF Italia, Porada, de Castelli, Linteloo, Gratz Archive and Porro, of which Graye maintains the largest collection in the US. Atelier de Troupe, Glas Italia and Bosa are some of the other manufacturers with products available at Graye.

Supporting Graye's objective of contributing to the flourishing design culture of Los Angeles, it also offers project management of interior design and architecture projects, custom services for space planning and layout, as well as post-purchase support for care and maintenance.



photo MINH T

GARDE

Founded in 2012 by Scotti Sitz and John Davidson, Garde has become the mecca for avant-garde designs in Los Angeles. Its many clients include Ellen DeGeneres, Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch, Rumi Neely, Ellen Pompeo and Cliff Fong.

After nearly seven years, it recently relocated to a larger building just a few doors east of the former store on Beverly Boulevard. The products available include design pieces by Nika Zupanc, Vincent Van Duysen, Tom Dixon, Piet Boon, and Faye Toogood, as well as jewellery by Rebecca Mir Grady, Sarah Perlis and Armed With Ardor. ▶

RIGHT
Garde's new space, spread over 2,400 sq ft, allows for exhibitions and events.

FAR RIGHT
Its vintagey facade contrasts with the modern exhibits.

BELOW
The store stocks a collection of contemporary pottery and ceramics, too.



photos SAM FROST



photos SHADE DEGGES

ABOVE

The curated designs vary from the mid-contemporary to modern hip-hop.

RIGHT

Wander through a mesmerising setting accented by neutral tones.

FAR RIGHT

Everywhere, the styling and positioning are meticulous.



GALERIE HALF

On Melrose Avenue, Galerie Half – founded by Cameron Smith and Cliff Fong – is a paradise for design aficionados.

Pieces by 20th century European masters such as Poul Henningsen, Le Corbusier, Borge Mogensen, Jean Royere, Greta Grossman, Poul Kjaerholm, Serge Mouille, and Arne Jacobsen are surprisingly and harmoniously combined with Western antiquities, architectural relics, African sculptures, and primitive benches or tables.

The flow and limited number of objects and furnishings evoke the feeling of being in a home. Everything is placed in carefully considered spots to receive the perfect amount of light (whether natural or artificial). Artworks (paintings and black and white photographs) are also an important part of the backdrop, helping to personalise every corner.

The patina and original finishes shape a timeless and peaceful environment, inviting visitors to linger among exquisite objects.

OSTRICH FARM

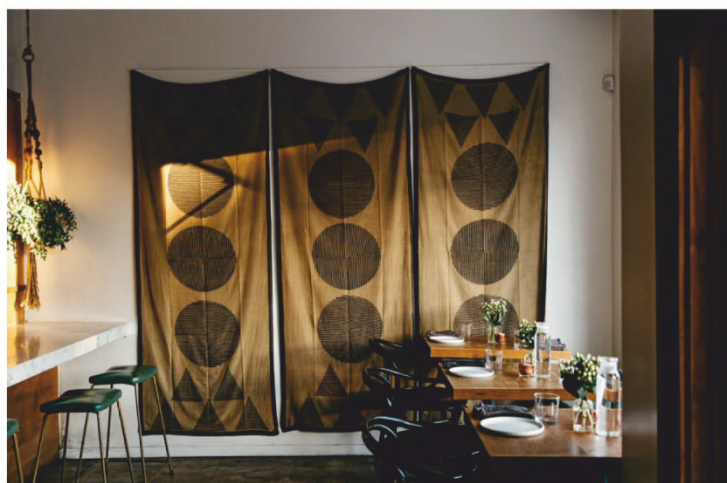
On Sunset Boulevard, a modern white facade stands out among the colourful buildings of Echo Park. This 50-seat restaurant is a family affair and vision-come-true for husband and wife Jaime Turrey and Brooke Fruchtman.

The pair transformed a former pupuseria, serving El Salvadoran thick corn tortilla filled with anything from meats to cheeses, into a casual-chic restaurant with tufted green banquettes and wood-topped tables on one side, and stools and a marble bar on the other, all by Style de Vie.

Black Era armchairs by Thonet of Design Within Reach, brass sconces by Doug Newton for Nightwood and handmade textiles add to the laid-back vibe. “My inspiration for the design was the neighbourhood itself,” says Fruchtman. “We wanted a space that didn’t feel too contemporary nor referential of a bygone era. Ostrich Farm is just California cool and casual.” ►



photos SKANDIA SHAFER



ABOVE
Spend a leisurely afternoon with a refreshing cooler.

CENTRE
The interiors were totally transformed.



ABOVE & BELOW, LEFT
Casual dining is the main offer of the restaurant, where the owners use produce from an on-site garden.

CENTRE & BELOW
The laid-back vibe is unmistakable.

LEFT
The high ceiling adds a sense of formalism.

RIGHT
Bronze accents on the rooftop terrace turn up the sophisticated vibe.

RIGHT, CENTRE
Wainscoting warms up the cosy feel.

BELOW
The long bar gets super busy every evening.



CAFE BIRDIE

“Cuban expat Birdie moves to Miami and meets Clyde, her future husband. They return to his native New Orleans to open this restaurant. Dressed in a different suit every day of the week, he is infectiously charming and adores Birdie. She’s passionate about food and the power it has to bring people together.”

This simple narrative, as retold by interior designer Sally Breer, who co-founded LA-based ETC.etera with stylist and creative director Jake Rodehuth-

Harrison, inspired Cafe Birdie’s whole concept that includes a backyard patio. Located in a 1920s building in Highland Park, one of LA’s historic neighborhoods, the restaurant-bar is open daily for dinner and on the weekends for brunch.

Shaped to please the eye and the soul, CafeBirdie features marble countertops, high ceilings, copper tables with banquettes and hanging pendant lighting. The combination makes it a lively space, both casual and energetic. ■



photos TESSA NEUSTADT

text KARINE MONIE

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WHAT'S
TRENDING
& WHAT
WE THINK

AN ONLINE AFFAIR

IT'S FROM TAOBAO!" Sounds familiar? You've probably heard this gleeful declaration a dozen times, or said it yourself, when friends admire something in a new home.

But this is not really the case for my place. Even though I have no qualms about buying makeup or clothes online, when it comes to something as permanent as furniture, I hesitate to buy without first seeing the product in real life.

What if the shade turns out to be a garishly bright pink instead of the dusty rose in the pictures? What if I misread the measurements and it turns out to be doll-sized? Stuff like that can't be sold off quickly or sent back easily if it's from overseas, and often represents a considerable potential loss.

A lot of my friends have no such misgivings, and will proudly tell me that their house is outfitted from top to bottom in Taobao steals. "You save a lot of money," shares Lisha Raghani, my neighbour. "The dining table lights I was eyeing in a local shop were going for \$300. On Taobao, the same lights were \$80." She also bought custom blinds online, with a mandala design created by a local artist. Her total cost: \$120, including shipping – less than half of the \$300 she would have paid if she had bought them from a store.

When it comes to buying online, reading reviews and transparent communication are a must. For those of us with little faith in our second language

abilities (like yours truly), Lisha strongly recommends getting third-party help, like an Ezbuy Prime membership. "I don't speak Chinese, so this service is extremely useful. When I was furnishing my house, I spoke to the Ezbuy agents more frequently than I spoke to my husband," she laughs.

Of course, I had to ask if she'd ever received a wrong or damaged order. She has but tells me their after-sales service is fairly comprehensive. "They've been able to resolve most of the issues."

Given such reassurances, buying a piece online for my home is starting to look more enticing. A quick search of "Nordic pendant lamp" reveals page after page of beautiful professional pictures with plenty of information to assuage the apprehension of even the most cautious buyers.

There's even an image search function, where one can upload a photo of a coveted product and be instantly shown similar items available at a fraction of the price. No wonder more and more discount-savvy Singaporean homeowners are buying online.

Perhaps it's not such a scary venture after all. Armed with the right tools – a gung-ho attitude, careful research and clear communication (thank you, Google Translate) – navigating the perilous world of online furniture shopping no longer seems such an impossible feat.

I've just taken a deep breath and clicked "buy" on a table lamp online. Wish me luck. ■



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