

IN HIS LINE of work, Gabriel Wong’s job is to “improve” faces. But the aesthetic doctor prefers a less-is-more approach – one that is not dramatic but subtle, enhancing rather than overhauling.

He extends that same restrained approach and eye for detail to his own home, a two-and-a-half storey terrace house in Upper Thomson.

He bought it over a year ago, describing it as “one of those homes that you would look at once and never want to see it again”. It was a functional space, but with pillars in odd places. As with most terrace houses, the interiors were dark, but he was attracted to its size, layout and location.

Of course, it’s now a far cry from what it was before, with an aesthetic that is simple and fuss-free and yet comfortable.

It’s no surprise, then, that when Dr Wong tasked designer Roystern Goh of 0932 Consultants to redesign the house, the top priorities were to make it look more spacious and brighter.

The first thing Mr Goh did was to get rid of unnecessary pillars, including one in the dining room. The first floor is now a linear space, where the living, dining areas and dry kitchen flow seamlessly. The wet kitchen and the laundry area have been moved to the backyard, freeing up some internal space.

“The narrow home instantly feels bigger when you can see all the way to the back of the house from the main door,” says Mr Goh.

Everything is kept fuss-free. There is an island counter with an adjoining dining table, and loose furniture in the living room is kept to a minimum so as not to clutter up the space.

A long built-in bench runs along the length of the living room, and provides enough seating for when Dr Wong has friends over. The TV and the doors to a bathroom and storeroom all flush against the wall, giving the first floor a clean look.

Mr Goh also considered colours to make the home appear bigger. He used light

A SIMPLE HOUSE

TAY SUAN CHIANG YEN MENG JIIN

Minimalism dictates the style of this aesthetic doctor’s home



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“THE OVERALL FEEL IS TIMELESS, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO COMING HOME.”

~ DR GABRIEL WONG



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wood for the living and dining areas, and black for the main door and foyer. The dark colour makes the foyer look small, while the light shade does the opposite.

To brighten up Dr Wong’s bedroom on the second floor, Mr Goh added more windows to the original three. The new full-height windows let in more natural light into the room, as well as give Dr Wong a clearer view of the neighbourhood.

In place of solid doors, a pair of glass sliding doors separate the sleeping area from the bathroom and walk-in wardrobe. Mr Goh explains that when the blinds are drawn up in the bathroom, additional light can come in. Again a light wood palette has been used in the bedroom to give it an airy feel. And in the attic, a cosy entertainment room-cum-study is a perfect place to lounge.

While the design of the home is not unconventional, Mr Goh says that not every client would go for it. For example, not many people may like the idea of a see-through bathroom that can be seen from the stairs, or the idea of having to go through the bedroom to get to the upper floor. “But the design suits Dr Wong’s bachelor lifestyle,” says Mr Goh.

Despite moving in six months ago, the home still looks hardly lived in. Dr Wong explains that he likes everything clutter-free and he is not a hoarder. “I only managed to watch half an episode of *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*, as her concept didn’t apply to me,” he says with a laugh.

What has surprised Dr Wong since moving in however, is his love for plants. “I never knew I had green fingers,” he says. They are everywhere – such as cacti,

figus and sansevieria in his backyard, attic, bedroom, bathroom and even at the foot of the stairs. He says the plants have not been randomly chosen nor placed, but rather, he picked them according to how much light each spot gets. “The plants help to soothe the mind and the eyes,” he says.

Dr Wong likens his home to a work of art. “The overall feel is timeless, and I look forward to coming home, regardless of whether it is after a day’s work or an overseas trip.”