

BAYFRONT

The designers for this apartment took inspiration from its waterfront location

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WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE. Well, not in the apartment but all around it, thanks to the unobstructed views of the Marina at Keppel Bay with their shiny white yachts, and the holiday island of Sentosa in the distance.

“We were immediately inspired by the water, and knew that we should keep the interiors simple so as not to distract the inhabitants from the view,” says designer Low Chee Kiang of his project to redesign an apartment in Keppel Bay. Mr Low is one of three directors at 0932 Design Consultants - the other two are Regina Chen and Roystern Goh. They were also impressed by the almost six metre high ceiling - a key highlight in this apartment which emphasises clean lines - just like the owners wanted.

The Beijing-based couple who own their own IT business also had different ideas, which the designers had to balance.

“The wife liked things simple, while the husband wanted luxury,” says Mr Low. “On our part, it was clear that we couldn’t go too wild with our designs, since we wanted to let the view be the main attraction.”

The couple - she in her 30s and he in his 40s - bought the apartment at Keppel Bay as a vacation home, and gave Mr Low’s team free rein with the design.

The first to go was the original timber door, which was more functional than exciting. It was replaced with automatic sliding doors, which not only let light into the private lift lobby, but give a sneak peek at the waterfront



(1) The panel of fins on the right were inspired by sails. (2) The designers kept the interiors simple so as not to distract from the water view. (3) The furniture in the living room have varying heights to mimic the undulating terrain of Sentosa. (4) A sliding door marks the entrance to the apartment, with lights clad around to give it a box-like feel.

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(5) Fabric rocks in the play area. (6) The family area with its coral-inspired bespoke rug. (7) Furniture pieces were selected to be kid-friendly. (8) Even the lights have a nautical feel about them. (9) Simple need not be boring with the use of contrasting colours.



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view even before entering the apartment.

An unusual feature in the living room is a curved wall. “The development’s architect, Daniel Libeskind, is known for creating buildings with curves, and hence I wanted to play up the internal architecture,” says Mr Low. Taking inspiration from the mainsail, Mr Low designed a series of 2.9m long laminate panels to clad the curved wall. From a distance, the panels - installed at specific angles - resemble fins.

While the missus left the design of the apartment to the designers, she had a few requests, including an island counter in the dry kitchen. Mr Low explains that she had a similar one in her Beijing home, and wanted the same for her vacation home too. It sits in a prime spot near the dining room, where she can enjoy the view of the water while making her morning coffee.

The apartment’s five bedrooms were given light modifications. For example, the master bedroom layout was changed so that from their bed, the couple wake up to a view of the water, not their neighbours’ space.

Near the back of the two-level apartment, a play area was created for the couple’s two

young sons. The boys have a ball of a time playing with what look like rocks, but are actually pillows.

Mr Low also made improvements to the staircase, by cladding it in wood over the original glass and stainless steel. Wood gives it a warmer touch, he says.

A space on the second floor has been converted into a family room and a small study. While the colour theme on the first floor is mostly pale wood and white, the family area takes on a darker and more cosy feel. A spacious outdoor deck on this floor is great for friends and family to view the nightly fireworks display from Universal Studios Singapore, the yachts berthing at the marina, or the ferries that make their way from Harbourfront Cruise Centre to and from Batam.

Since the apartment is near the water, Mr Low says they had to be more careful in their choice of materials. He picked those that are low-maintenance, and are resistant to mold. Mold, he says, is a common problem for places that are near bodies of water.

Special consideration was also given to the choice of furniture. In the living room, there are low pieces, “so as not to obstruct the view,” says Mr Low. “Even though they have short legs, the backs come in varying heights, to mimic the undulating terrain of Sentosa.”

He also selected pieces with soft curves, not only for the safety of the couple’s kids, but also because the curves remind him of waves. Mr Low also specially commissioned rugs with wavy and coral-like patterns.

The apartment was named Project of the Year and also took home the gold award for best residential design for apartments over 2,001 sq ft at the 2019 Design Excellence Award competition, organised by the Interior Design Confederation Singapore (IDCS).

Cameron Woo, IDCS president says that the apartment is a double winner, because, “the interior design is one that appeals locally due to its understated aesthetic.”

Mr Low says, “simple doesn’t have to be boring, it can be elegant. And luxury doesn’t have to involve bling and being over the top. You get a sense of luxury through the material selection and the overall ambience.”

PHOTOS BY TAI HENG.