

LIVING BOLD

Dark interiors and a missing kitchen are the highlights of this apartment

TAY SUAN CHIANG



1

THE SHOW KITCHEN is the heart of every home, where friends gather to watch their food-loving host serve wine and canapes elegantly arranged on a shiny marble island.

But chances are that the real cooking is done outside, in a more functional, but not as pretty, wet kitchen.

The Ongs are a family who understand the real value of a wet kitchen, which is why they got rid of their dry one when they collected the keys to their new apartment near River Valley Road.

Mrs Ong, who works in a bank says, “The dry kitchen which was provided by the developer, was just impractical and we had no need for it. We decided from the start to get rid of it.”

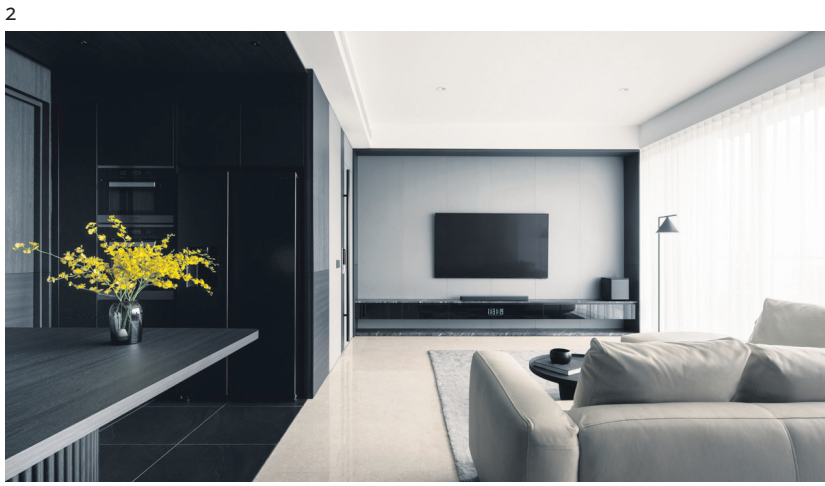
Her husband, a general practitioner, who does most of the cooking at home, agrees. “With the dry kitchen gone, we could also redesign the wet kitchen for better efficiency,” says Dr Ong.

The couple and their son, 21, moved in about six months ago. It’s a brand new project but even then, their designer Low Chee Kiang, a director at 0932 Design Consultants felt that improvements could be made to the 1,600 sq ft apartment.

For example, the original space designed for the living and dining areas was too small. “But when we got rid of the dry kitchen, we could turn that space into the dining area, and now the living area is more spacious,” says Mr Low.

Instead of a conventional dining table, Mr Low designed one, measuring 1.5m by 1.5m, with an L-shaped bench around it so there’s no need for dining chairs. Lights are hidden under the bench to create ambient lightning, and each family member lays claim to their favourite spot. The son sits closest to the living room, so that he can watch TV while eating. Dr Ong sits nearest the kitchen, so that he can get easy access to his cooking, while his wife sits

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2

between them. The Ongs found 0932 Design Consultants from the Internet. “Their projects have a consistent look and we like their minimalist designs,” says Mrs Ong.

But while simple in looks, the four-bedroom apartment does break with convention with its choice of dark interiors, starting with its private lift lobby.

A mirror here makes the space bigger, but no one would know unless the lights are turned on. Mr Low says he made the lift lobby intentionally dark so that “once you open the main door, you see how naturally bright the living room is, so we wanted to create that contrast”.

With an unblocked view of the neighbourhood, there is plenty of natural light coming in. “If we had gone with white for the interiors, it would have just been too bright,” he says.

The Ongs were initially unsure about a home with dark interiors, but they put their trust in Mr Low. “It is a bold move, not everyone would be comfortable with a dark home,” says Mr Low.

Mrs Ong says, “We went ahead with Chee Kiang’s suggestion, but I insisted we needed to have a sofa that isn’t black. I didn’t want everything to be dark.” Their choice of sofa is a beige L-shaped lounge with a low back, so that the view of the outside would not be blocked.

Rather than hang up artworks, a floor to ceiling piece of Grigio Carnico marble makes for a conversation piece.



6



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~ LOW CHEE KIANG



5



4

(1 & 2) The interiors of the apartment is a good balance of light and dark. (3) The study. (4) The master bedroom. (5) The Grigio Carnico marble wall is a conversation piece. (6) A bespoke dining table and bench seating in the dining area. (7) Branded toiletries create that hotel experience at home.

The cabinets and countertops in the wet kitchen also come in a black finish. The family says it did take getting used to, but now they can’t imagine it any other way. “We even got dark coloured tableware to match,” says Dr Ong.

For a touch of luxury, all the bedroom doors along the corridor are flushed. Mr Low designed it such that the rooms on the left are hidden behind a black trellis, while those on the right are behind grey laminates.

The dark theme continues into the bedrooms, and even the study, where Dr Ong’s collection of magnets are on display. But even then this is hidden behind a dark glass cabinet and the magnets are visible only when the light is switched on.

The collection of magnets, which number more than 100, were collected from Dr Ong’s travels around the world. He says he only buys those which are unique looking, and with a strong magnet attached to them. “I enjoy looking at them, they bring back holiday memories.”

Speaking of holidays, Mrs Ong says “the apartment feels like a big hotel suite, which is probably the best alternative now to getting that holiday experience, now that travelling isn’t permitted.”



7