

FLOATING ENCLAVE

LIGHT AND LINEAR FORMS CREATE AN OPEN SPACE IN A GLASS HOUSE

By Juliana Foo | Photography by Rory Daniel

Floating in a canopy of trees, this house on Holland Road is designed to embrace a natural landscape with the green in mind, allowing the magnificent view to be seen from anywhere in the house through its double volume glass window. An impressive sight to behold, it is a marriage of water and greenery and open space reverberating in the interior.

When designing the new 10,000 sq ft house, IMT Architects had in mind its organic architecture, balancing the building and integrating the surrounding world. The partners and the owner went to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan to seek inspirations and what clearly transpired is a residential building that enhances the entire landscape by fuse with the interior.



"Glass is used abundantly so that ones feels part of nature and the water from the inside. The waterfall can be seen from anywhere in the house. The owner wanted natural light and to feel the environment, so to blend it all, we made it a glass house. Normally in the tropics it is too hot, but the existing mature trees here provide the shade."

This cube, larger than most at built-up floor area of 1580sqm, maintained an industrial modern look with use of glass, concrete, aluminum and timber to create an oasis filled with abundance of water. The waterfall featuring imported boulders from China enraptures one in its rhythmic flow and cleverly made use of a retaining wall to give the illusion of immense height – its grandiose breathtaking in magnitude and sheer presence. And the 25m infinity pool is raised slightly higher than the house to achieve an airiness that feels as though it merges into the landscape beyond.

In a rectilinear fashion, white columns support the structure with sheets of glass blurring the transition of the interior and exterior. Composed with stark clarity, ingenuity of lines and silhouettes, the space speaks volumes of balance and respect for nature. "It is of the most simple form. I believe that simplicity is beauty and by adopting a modern concept, we have achieved that," said JC.





Pockets of private spaces were also created so that the owner and his family can enjoy the privacy of the indoors, activity outdoors and relax on the roof garden or take in the view from the living room in an uninterrupted sequence of space that opens up to patios through tall axis glass doors.

Seemingly on level ground, the pool and house are actually raised from its elongated plot of land. JC pointed out that "it was a sloping contour land and we wanted it flat. So the rooms in the basement that are connected by a flight of steps leading to the landscape garden was created from the footing of the building." A spiral stairway that connects the first floor to the second provides a bird's eye view of the living room and contiguous landscape.

Designing the house was just a part of it, as JC also introduced interesting material indoors to complement the view. Large black honed granite slabs from India were cut to size and used on all the floors so that "the furniture stands out." Timber blinds in the bedrooms are opted for a cozy feel. Maintaining a minimalist look, the great hall is adorned with two bronze sculptures – a bull in front of the pool and a solar





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system perched on an index finger greeting every guest at the door — from a French artist that captivates the discerning eye. Void of distractions, the expanse of space and height becomes more apparent to draw in the elements from the exterior.

This “smart” four-level bungalow is equipped with intelligent control accessible by internet or Bluetooth. It makes sense as the owner entertains frequently at home and with just one touch, is able to change the ambience from ‘home’ to ‘party’ mode complete with pre-selected music, colour effects and light.

This house is a hybrid of well thought out spaces, clean lines coupled with unpretentious material and an illusion of infinite space that permeates within. As pioneer of modern architecture, Mies van der Rohe says, “less is more” and this tropical glass house is a clear example. ●



Main picture: The pool runs alongside double volume glass windows creating infinite outdoor space. 1. View from the roof garden. 2. Lightness describes the floating glass house and clear cut forms. 3. The garden leads up to the house or down to the entertainment room. 4. A sculpture of a bull. 5. The great hall with a view of the outside. 6. One of the owner's collectibles. 7. Stark contrast of shapes and texture in the grand hall. 8. Ample greenery around the house. 9. A cutting edge design amidst quiet suburbia. 10. A reflection of balance and simplicity.

