

Weekend

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HOLIDAY

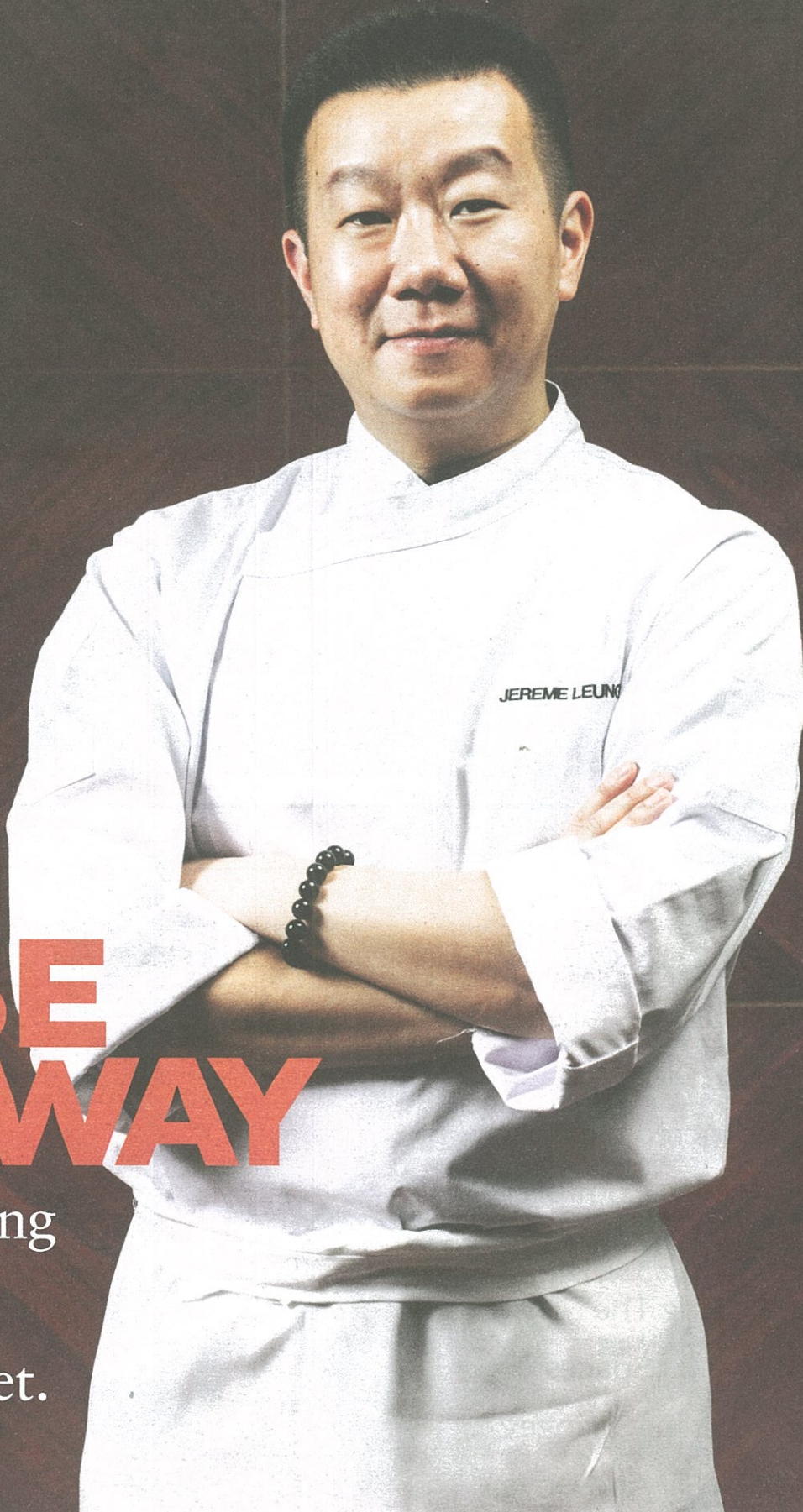
THE HIGH
LIFE IN
KAMIKOCHI

DRIVE

THE SUPER
LUXURY
BENTLEY
BENTAYGA
SUV

CHINESE TAKEAWAY

How chef Jereme Leung
and two fellow
Singaporeans cracked
the China F&B market.





ACES WITH SPACES

Designers challenge the common perception of space in these three workplaces.

BY TAY SUAN CHIANG

RACE

505 YISHUN INDUSTRIAL PARK A, PBA BUILDING, LEVEL 2

SAY ROBOTIC LAB and images of robots in stark white rooms with bare fluorescent lights come to mind. But not at the Robotics Application Centre for Excellence (RACE), set up to educate companies and the public on robotics and automation.

In fact, the 2,615 sq ft space with its black floor and walls lined with aluminium tubes could easily be mistaken for a club or an avant garde restaurant.

Colin Seah, founder and director of Ministry of Design (MOD) says that he wanted to inject a lifestyle design element into the lab. "How do we take an environment that is usually sterile and turn it into something more futuristic?" he asks.

MOD is better known for its cool hotel designs, such as COO Boutique Hostel at Outram Road and the Macalister Mansion in Penang. "We jumped at this opportunity to design RACE, since it is a new field for us,"

says Mr Seah, who had seen robotics labs and knew what he didn't want.

The space for RACE came with certain criteria, such as the flexibility to showcase a changing series of modular robots as well as a space for hands-on training and lectures.

Mr Seah came up with the solution of creating small alcoves, where the robots can be displayed, and a central space just for lectures.

The robots on display can do everything from serving coffee to picking up and placing items. RACE's marketing director Daniel Heath explains that they show companies how these robots can help them to be more productive and save on manpower needs.

Mr Seah initially wanted to clad the lab walls in metal sheets, but dropped it as it was too costly, and the structural walls might not be withstand the weight of the

sheets.

The solution was to create a second skin for the lab in the form of hollow aluminum tubes - over 6,000 pieces were cut to length and mounted on metal frames on site. "It is a lot of work, and the contractor spent months putting it all together," says Mr Seah.

The ceilings and walls are constructed from different facets, each with aluminium tubes on them. By rotating the direction of the tubes with every facet, a bold multi-directional effect can be created. The lightweight aluminium screen cladding serves to hide the necessary but unsightly mechanical and electrical services. The random sprinkle of LED strips highlights the multi-directional panels with a cutting-edge aesthetic.

"The space provides a future-forward backdrop to usher in an age of automation and robotics," says Mr Seah.