

COO SOCIATEL

COO, Singapore's first 'Sociatel', introduced a new-generation hospitality experience to locals and travellers. Developed and designed by the Ministry of Design, the brand synergises a design hostel and a casual bistro, and launched COO Connect—a digital interest-matching tool aimed at connecting like-minded hostel guests.

DESIGN BRIEF

The inspiration behind COO is the emergence of millennial travellers who are willing to take the road less travelled. Tiong Bahru was chosen as the location for COO's first property because it is a neighbourhood that embodies the quintessential local experience and known for its rich heritage and culture.

ENGAGING PEOPLE PHYSICALLY AND DIGITALLY

Millennials have changed the travel landscape in a massive way. Travelling is no longer about a passive vacation, but rather a meaningful getaway: where active experience trumps passive consumption. The millennial recognises value, craves authenticity, is digitally savvy and constantly connected.

COO is a digital and physical experience that captures this, and its brand DNA is built on three key touch points—Glocal, Social, Playful. These apply holistically across the entire COO experience from the design of the spaces, website, menu and graphics, down to the choice of neighbourhood.

Beyond the current unveiling of Stay, Eat, Connect, COO aims to continue building a distinctive

experience, and future expansion plans include single rooms alongside shared rooms, varying food and beverage (F&B) concepts, integrated retail and co-working environments.

STAY

The playful yet chic design concept of each COO property is inspired by the spirit and memories of the neighbourhood it is located in. For its first property in the culturally rich neighbourhood of Tiong Bahru, it was imperative that the design of COO pays homage to the strong essence of the local heritage of its location.

True to its design approach, the eye-catching entrance is framed by metal mesh, taking cues from the metal gates of the old housing estates around the area, while the pièce de résistance located at the COO Bistro is a suspended neon



Bistro – Guest Alcove



Façade



Bistro – bar counter

art piece shaped as an abstracted map of the neighbourhood.

Hints of the neighbourhood continue to be seen across the ground floor, including a ceiling that is artfully covered with punchy graphic prints of *kopitiam* (coffee shop) uncles, Bob the neighbourhood cat, modernist architecture and traditional *kueh* (sweet cakes). The longitude and latitude coordinates of COO's location also appear behind the reception area in cursive graphic neon.

Accessible to hostel guests only, the upper levels in the four-storey shophouse space features 11 newly furnished rooms with bunk beds, holding up to 68 guests at maximum capacity. Greeting guests across the hallways, house rules in bold prints are plastered on the walls while witty icons are punctuated across the common areas like the bathrooms.

The second floor features an open-air terrace with a pantry and washer/dryer facilities. Cushioned seats and chairs inspired by traditional naturally ventilated rattan chairs spread across the terrace, providing a sanctuary for guests seeking some fresh air.

EAT

In the heart of the property sits COO Bistro, an all-day casual dining outlet with a contemporary 'Glocal' menu that draws inspiration from an array of global and local cuisine. In keeping with the COO brand ethos of being 'locally rooted', the casual bistro showcases its whimsical interpretation of local dishes that resonate with the Tiong Bahru neighbourhood.

Designed as the main social space within the property, the 60-seater COO Bistro also includes a private corner where hostel guests get to enjoy their breakfast in the mornings and set up their

workstations, or gather around throughout the day. Using the same metal mesh seen on the exterior, the private and public areas in the bistro have been separated while retaining the flow of space. The design also allows for fluid arrangement, creating interaction between hostel and bistro guests by opening up the barrier between the two spaces.

COO CONNECT

True to its 'Sociatel' values, COO also debuts a world's first: COO Connect, an interest-matching tool available to hostel guests upon making a booking, allowing them to be linked up with a network of like-minded travellers staying with COO—an invaluable tool to explore or learn about a foreign city with newfound companions. Fulfilling the 'Social' aspect of COO, the platform rounds up the hospitality experience by actively creating engagement between guests, prior to or during their stay.



Hostel – beds



Hostel – guest terrace



Hostel – shared bathroom

PROJECT DATA

Project Name

COO Sociatel

Location

259 Outram Road, Singapore

Completion Date

December 2016

Site Area

188 square metres

Gross Floor Area (GFA)

Total GFA: 752 square metres

Built-in GFA for L1 (reception and bistro):

187 square metres

Built in GFA for L2–L4 (design hostel):

495 square metres

Built in GFA for L1 (bistro only):

146 square metres

Detailed breakdown:

L1: 187 square metres

L2: 151 square metres (Terrace: 42 square metres)

L3: 151 square metres

L4: 135 square metres (Terrace: 16 square metres)

Building Height

Four floors

Number of Rooms/Units

11 hostel rooms (68 beds), one casual bistro, reception, guest terrace

Client/Owner

Flying Potato Group Pte. Ltd.

Interior Design Firm

Ministry of Design

Design Team

Colin Seah; Patricia Segado; Richard Herman; Norberto Olegario; Rais Rahman; Sandra Goh; Angie Ng; Madeline Lim; Anna Langier

Main Contractor

Alric

Images

Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)