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POCKET POWER

The small Japanese city of Kikuchi, in Kyushu's Kumamoto prefecture, is celebrated for its abundant springs, rivers and beautiful surrounding countryside. Architect Takao Shiotsuka incorporated these striking natural features into his plans when he was commissioned to construct pocket parks at three separate infill sites within the city.

The first miniature park, Kiriake, is symbolic of traditional Japanese rock gardens, with the white paving representing the sand, and the structures—restroom, shelter, bench—representing the stones. Three shallow, round pools are situated in the dipped enclaves where water would naturally collect. Yokomachi, meanwhile, has an industrial attitude, its steel-pipe fences creating a continuous flow of movement within the limited space. Piping supports the benches, encircles the lavatory building and borders the footpath.

Kamimachi is the last in the trio, although not yet complete. The site, in a conservation area, is positioned in front of a Shinto shrine. In deference to the locality, a 'sacred tree' structure will give shelter as it branches out across the plaza, which will be used for pre-bout dedication ceremonies for sumo wrestlers, as well as a requisite ablution sink.

Each of Shiotsuka's micro-parks has its own individual motif, but they are united in their contemporary aesthetic and in their function: all three parks feature a foot bath tapped from a hot spring, as well as a public lavatory and communal areas. AD



AN APARTMENT SHOWROOM IN SINGAPORE SETS THE BAR HIGH FOR THE COMING DEVELOPMENT.

The folks at Singapore's Ministry of Design decided to send a message to the scourge of unimaginative and clichéd condominium show galleries that they see sprouting up across the city. As demand for this type of residential property rises, MOD questioned whether the architecture and interior design had to be quite so predictable and uninspired. Commissioned by United Overseas Land to create a sales gallery and two apartment showrooms – the UOL Edge Gallery – for a 244-unit development, MOD got to work on an architectural and interior project that would really stand out. The exterior is made up of alternating panels of interconnected white wall and glass, commanding attention from passersby. MOD aimed to lure in potential buyers, not with advertising banners but with the strength of the architecture. Inside, visitors can preview the show flats, one designed for a young, modern family and the other for a single professional. MOD designed and furnished both to reflect the tastes of a more discerning class of well-heeled buyer. AD

