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SATURDAY IN DESIGN

All the highlights from the one-day creative event

ORION GLOBAL

Drama and humour define this offbeat office by Formwerkz Architects

MACALISTER MANSION

MOD breathes vision, narrative and design into a boutique hotel

SCDA ARCHITECTS

An insight into Chan Soo Khian's sleek and sophisticated world

Stereoscopic House

PENCIL OFFICE ORCHESTRATES THE VIEWS OF
A HOUSE LIKE A THREE-DIMENSIONAL LENS



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DEC/JAN 2012/13 | S\$8.00

BOUFIQUE MANSION

Text by Yvonne Xu
Photography by Edward Hendricks



Ministry of Design
creates a new lifestyle
destination with design,
but also vision and
narrative.





←
MANSION
WELCOME:
The colonnade-
inspired Macalister
Mansion logo floats
above hedges in front
of the historic mansion

↓
PLAY OUTSIDE:
A pool and pool bar,
as well as outdoor
dining lay out
across the generous
grounds fronting
the mansion

IT USED TO BE THAT BOUTIQUE HOTELS WERE NOT just fashionable addresses to roost at, but also a surprise to look forward to: the boutique hotel experience, often contributed by a distinctive design vision, would be one that is unique enough to impress even the most jaded of frequent travellers – if not especially this group. With the success and subsequent mushrooming of the concept, though, an original idea has become rather formulaic; hotels purporting to deliver “unique”, “designed” experiences are a dime a dozen. *Colin Seah*, design director of *Ministry of Design*, understands how few boutique concepts today truly exhilarate.

Referencing original boutique hoteliers such as *Ian Schrager*, Seah, who’s created some iconic design hotels (including *The Club* and the *New Majestic Hotel*) in his home country of Singapore himself, says: “Unlike the pioneering ones, the concepts behind the current crop are paper-thin. They think if they throw in an *Egg* chair, a rip-off from a China repro furniture store, or if they are small, they are boutique, but they’re conceptually not driven by any narrative or vision.”

There was not a chance his latest project, the *Macalister Mansion* in Penang, Malaysia, would fall into this unfortunate heap.

“THIS IS NOT A HOTEL
AS MUCH AS IT IS A
PRIVATE HOUSE; IT IS
MACALISTER’S OWN HOME,
AND IT WOULD BE AS
IF YOU WERE TRANSPORTED
BACK IN TIME”





MOD CHECK IN :
Flanked by original mansion brick walls, a stylish copper counter bar takes centerstage at the reception



“CONTEXT
PLAYED A
HUGE ROLE IN
GENERATING
THE DESIGN”



Macalister Mansion, located in a 100-year-old colonial building within Georgetown, is designed and branded as a lifestyle-oriented “residence” and Seah details this concept meticulously, looking into the entire experience through interior design, building conservation and landscaping, as well as art, fashion (he had a hand in the design of the staff uniform), and branding that specifies even the design of coasters and mineral water bottle label.

“Context played a huge role in generating the design,” shares Seah of his creative process. “Before even spatial design was considered we needed to understand what the identity of this new lifestyle establishment was going to be, what the demographic was going to be, where it will position itself in terms of all of Penang’s architecture and design.”

With the property being along Macalister Road, and having clear references to colonial architectural heritage, Seah thought it appropriate to contrast it to

INTERIOR LANDSCAPE:
Pastel sculptures and a fantastic centerpiece tree complete the whimsical setting of the formal Dining Room



→
BETTER THAN NEW:
Original filigree
window grilles and
decorative tiles were
retained in The
Living Room



**COLOUR
CODED:**
Bagan Bar is
intimate with a
touch of daring
with its bold
palette of red
and black ↓



RAISE THE BAR:
In The Den, a
whisky and cigar
bar, a striking
display of mosaic
floor tiling
leaves a strong
impression

all of Penang's other historic B&Bs and boutique hotels, which he observed were all "very Peranakan and in the Chinatown shophouses".

"The essential difference between this hotel and the others is that it is thought of as a small-scale home of this pseudo-fictitious historical character that is Colonel Norman Macalister, the former British Governor of Penang. This is not a hotel as much as it is a private house; it is Macalister's own home, and it would be as if you were transported back in time," Seah promises.

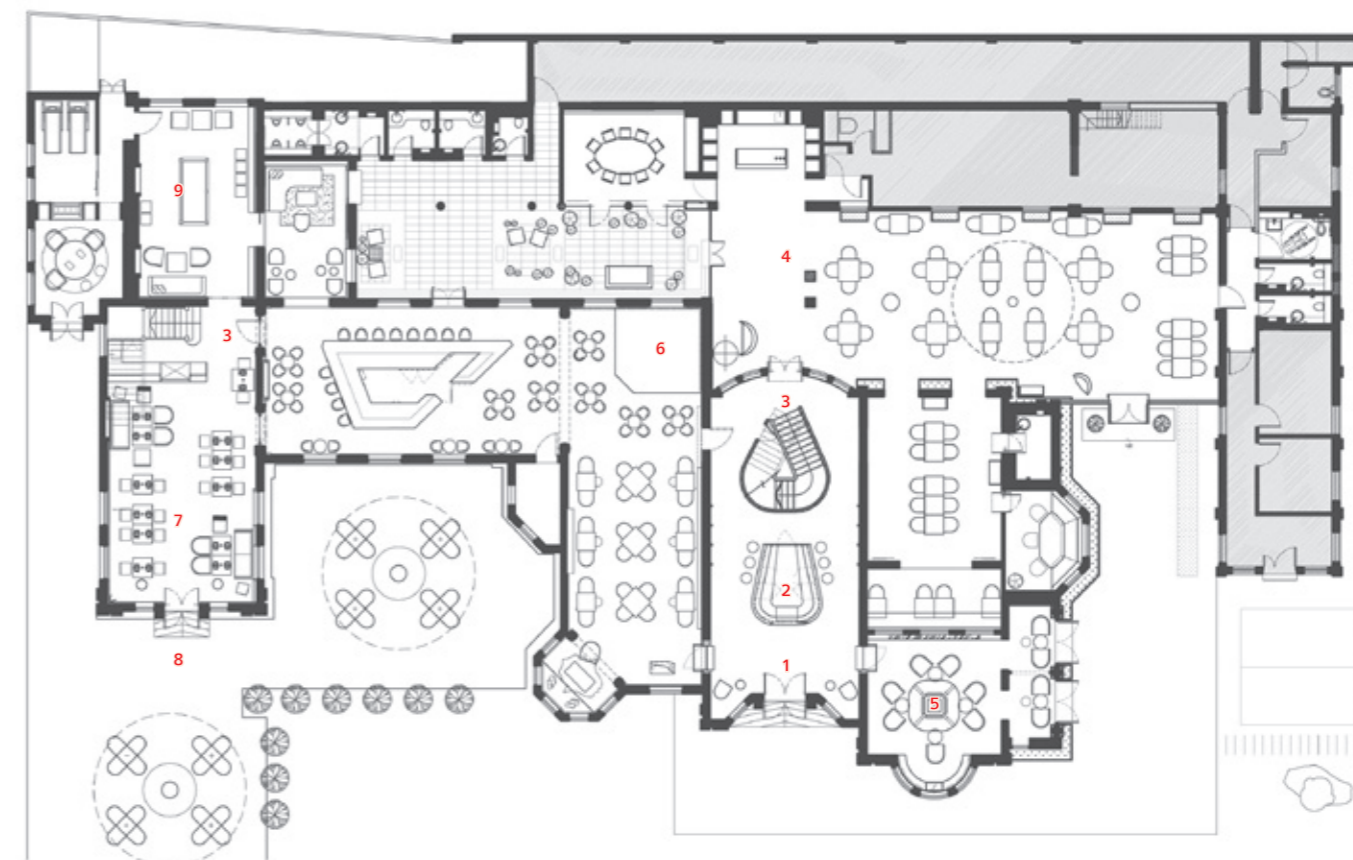
The experience starts with a dramatic arrival. From the road, the Macalister Mansion logo (a double M designed to resemble a series of architectural colonnades) is seen "floating above original wrought-iron gate and fence, with the elegant mansion in the distance," writes Seah in his design statement, penned more like a poetic narrative than a press statement. It follows that a long, hedge-lined driveway, with a 2.5m fractal bust of Macalister, transports and welcomes guests ceremonially to the mansion.

"BEFORE EVEN SPATIAL DESIGN WAS
CONSIDERED WE NEEDED TO
UNDERSTAND WHAT THE IDENTITY
OF THIS NEW LIFESTYLE ESTABLISHMENT
WAS GOING TO BE"



← **ONE OF A KIND:**
Each of the eight
guestrooms is appointed
according to room
proportion and layout

↓ **THE TILE PICTURE:**
Guests luxuriate in ensuite
bathrooms wrapped in
silver-white, filigree-
inspired mosaic tiling



Ground Floor Plan

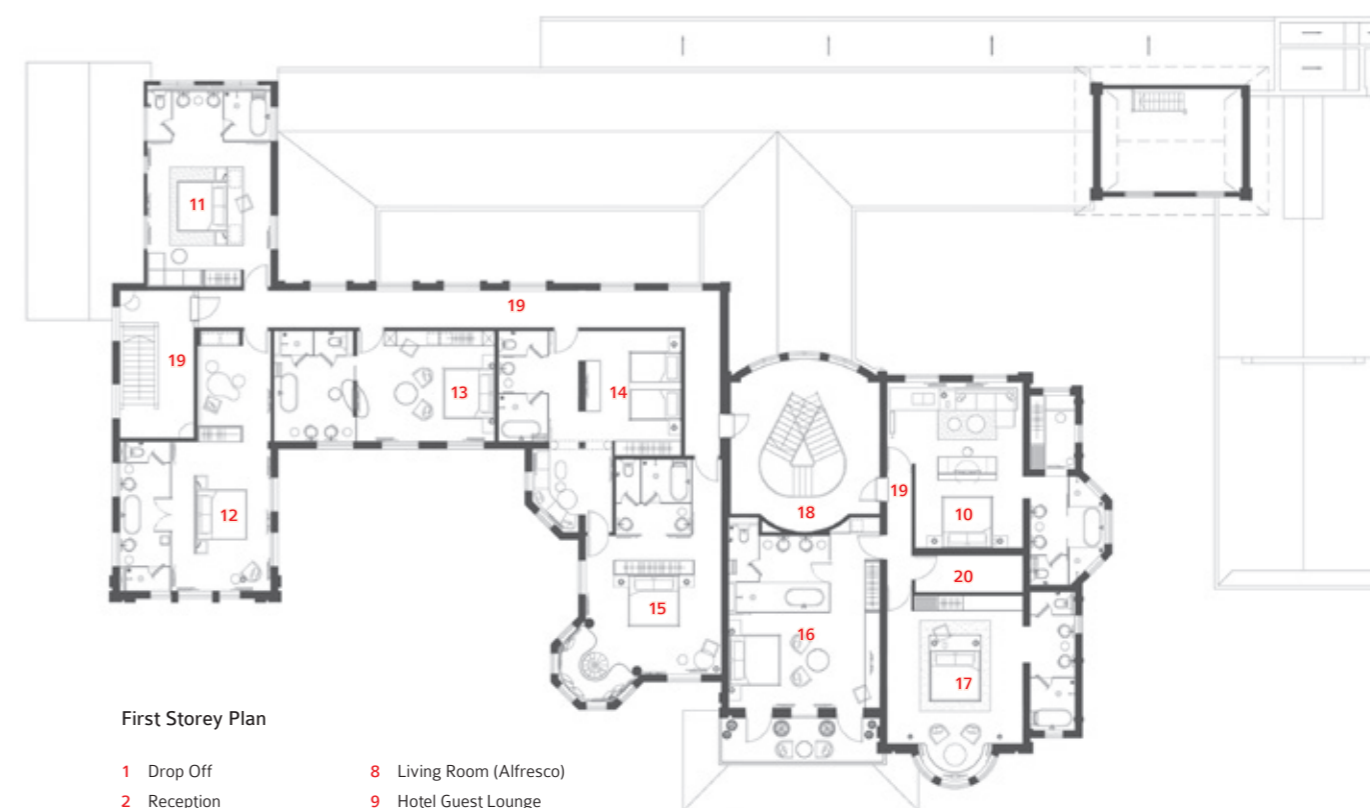


↑ **THE ART OF:**
Specially commissioned
artwork give each room its
own art and twist

preserving original architectural window grilles or tiles and fitting the rooms out to five-star standard (as was done) but also through creating memorable moments – whether by having site-specific in-room artwork that cleverly weave in stories or history, or by juxtaposing a modern check-in bar (complete with video art and indie electronic music in background) with a precedent experience of coming under a turquoise, scalloped canopy and through a pair of restored ornate wooden double-leaf doorway.

Seah's signature whimsy and wit, a treatment he gave The Club in the form of Sir Stamford Raffles statue with his head in the clouds, also found expression throughout the otherwise solemn building. Apart from the strong interior design direction of each room, design decisions that reference Penang's postcolonial condition pepper the property.

One interesting instance is seen in introduction of a white canon and cannonballs at the pool lounge area – a tongue-in-cheek reference to the story of how Norman Macalister once incentivised local islands to aid in the clearing of a forested land by firing gold coins into the forest. "It's a legend and it's history," Seah relates of this tale without making so much as a distinction between fact and fiction – perhaps partly because, as in a boutique hotel experience, what matters is an indulgent narrative, or an impression that sticks. ♦



First Storey Plan

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Drop Off | 8 Living Room (Alfresco) |
| 2 Reception | 9 Hotel Guest Lounge |
| 3 To Guestroom | 10 Bridal Suite |
| 4 Dining Room | 11-17 Standard Guestroom |
| 5 The Den | 18 L1 Lobby |
| 6 Bagan Bar | 19 Corridor |
| 7 Living Room | 20 Housekeeping Store |



↓ MACALISTER MANSION

Architect Ministry of Design

Project Team Colin Seah, Kevin Leong, Angie Ng, Charissa Ho, Ron Sim, Anita Shewchuk, Tulsu Grover, Aliza Suarez, Joshua Chong, Joanne Pang, Joyce Low

Main Contractor LDE Aluminium Industries Sdn Bhd

Civil and Structural Engineering Firm

JNK Consultant Sdn Bhd

Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Firm

A.G. Konsult Sdn Bhd

Submissions Architect East Design Architect Sdn Bhd

Time to Complete 12 Months

Total Floor Area 1700 sqm (Built in GFA), 4,700 sqm (Land Area)

Ministry Of Design

(65) 6222 5780 modonline.com

Furniture At Reception, Matiazzi 'She Said' Barstool and SCP 'Calvo' Table from Pomelo Home. Carl Hansen 'CH25' Easy Chair from Space Furniture. In Living Room, Matiazzi 'Osso' Chair from Pomelo Home, Artek 'Mademoiselle' Lounge Chair from Style:Nordic, Ziru 'Vik' Low Armchair from Foundry Store. Customized made 2-seater sofa and armchair from Danovel. Pool Table from Centrum. Antique Mirrors from Paris Home. In The Den, Swedese 'Cartoon' Easy Chair and Artek 'Domus' Chair from Style:Nordic, Piet Boon 'Sam' Chair from Dream Interiors. In Bagan Bar, OFFECCT 'PAL' Easy Chair from Style:Nordic, 'Onda' Barstool from Stylecraft (Singapore), Ziru 'Nord' Lounge and Ziru 'Fila' Stool

from Foundry Store. In Dining Room, Antique Mirrors from Paris Home. At Hotel Guest Lounge, Established & Sons 'Torch' Lights from Pomelo Home. At The Lawn, EMU 'VERA' Sun Lounger, EMU 'SHADE' Parasol, EMU 'HEAVEN' Chair, EMU 'HEAVEN D.80' Round Table, EMU 'IVY 586' Sofa, EMU 'IVY 585' Armchair, EMU 'IVY 595' Pouffe/Luminescent Table, all from Marquis Furniture Gallery. In Guestrooms, Maxalto 'Febo' Armchair, B&B Italia 'Awa' Coffee Table; B&B Italia 'Fat Fat' Small Table, all from Space Furniture. Ziru 'Nord P' Chair, Ziru 'Nord L' Chair, all from Foundry Store. Artek 'Mademoiselle' Lounge Chair, Swedese 'Cruiser' Easy Chair, Swedese 'Cruiser' Stool, all from Style:Nordic. Stacked Bowls/Plates and 'Versailles Fluò' accessories 'Trash Chic' from Seletti.

Lighting In Living Room, Ceiling Lamp A3305 'Golden Bell' from Style:Nordic. In Dining Room, Niche Modern Pendant Lights from Niche Modern. In Bagan Bar, Northern Lighting 'Moo' Wall light from Style:Nordic. At Pool Bar, &Tradition 'Bulb SR1' and 'Mega Bulb SR2' Pendent light from Foundry Store. In Guestrooms, Flos 'Ktribe T2' Table lamp, Kartell 'Cindy' Table lamp, Moooi 'Light Shade', Moooi 'Heracleum' Hanging Light, Flos 'Miss K' Table Lamp, Flos 'Ktribe T1' Table Lamp, Louis Poulsen 'OJ' Table Lamp, all from Space Furniture. At Guestroom Lobby and In Guestrooms, 'Therese' Chandeliers from Sander Mulder.

Finishes Generally Throughout, Paint from Nippon Paint. In all F&B, Stone Flooring from LDE Aluminium Industries. At All Outdoor Areas, Plants from ESH Landscaping. At Reception Counter, Bagan Bar counter, Entrance portal, Metal from LDE Aluminium

industries. In The Den, Mosaic Flooring by LDE Aluminium Industries. In Dining Room, Solid Surface from Gentle Built. Outdoor Flooring from Shanghai Sing MeeCo.(M). In Guestrooms, Timber Flooring from Timber Wolf (M), Carpet from Classic Decoration. At Guestroom Corridors, Carpet from Classic Decoration.

Fixed & Fitted In Dining Room, Marquee from Valeshade. Sculpture Tree and Hanging plants from Supershine Floral & Garden Supplies. In all F&Bs, Wooden Handles from Linshen Enterprise. In all toilets, WC, Basin and Toilet Accessories from Bina Warehouse. Zucchetti taps are from Wan Tai & Co (Pte) Ltd. In Guestroom Lobby and Guestrooms, Continue Time Clock from Sander Mulder.

Artwork At Driveway, Macalister Faceted Head by Ministry of Design, fabricated by Sculptureatwork. At Reception, 'Fragment' by Mansor Ramli, via Taksu Gallery Malaysia. In Dining Room and Courtyard, Animal Sculptures by Ministry of Design, fabricated by Sculptureatwork. 'Penang Scenes' by Thomas Powell. 'Leaf' Photography by Howard Tan, Studio Howard. In Living Room, Illustrations by Low Chee Peng, Renny Cheng, and Tan Kai Sheuan. In Room 1, 'Sonnet' by Aaron Lee. In Room 2, 'The Eagle' by Howard Tan, Studio Howard. In Room 3, 'Macalister's Charm' by Lee Meiling. In Room 4, 'Wire Illustration' by Low Chee Peng. In Room 5, 'Mixed Media' by Ashley Yeo, via Fost Gallery, Singapore. In Room 6, 'Sailing the Celestial Sea' by Albert Yonathan, via Valentine Willie Gallery Singapore. In Room 7, 'Tartan Cube' by Grace Tan, Kwodrent. In Room 8, Painting by Thomas Powell.

Bina Warehouse binawarehouse.com Centrum (65) 6224 5888 centrumbilliard.com Classic Decoration (60) 4 2294 718 classicdecoration.com Danovel (65) 6235 5020 danovel.com Dream Interiors (65) 6235 0220 dream-int.com ESH Landscaping 60 (4) 227 8268 Fost Gallery (65) 6694 3080 fostgallery.com Foundry Store (65) 6339 6381 foundry-store.com Gentle Built (60) 3 6141 4808 LDE Aluminium Industries (60) 4656 6299 lde.com.my Linshen Enterprise 60 (1) 2408 2020 Marquis Furniture Gallery (65) 6383 0119 marquis.com.sg Niche Modern nichemodern.com Nippon Paint nipponpaint.com Paris Home (65) 6440 3140 couturefurniture.sg Pomelo Home (65) 6226 4663 pomelo.com.sg Sander Mulder (31) (0)40 21 22 900 sandermulder.com Sculptureatwork (60) 3 2283 6936 sculptureatwork.com Seletti seletti.it Shanghai Sing MeeCo.(M) (60) 4 537 1711 Space Furniture (65) 6415 0000 spacefurniture.com.sg Style:Nordic (65) 6423 1373 stylenordic.com Stylecraft (Singapore) (65) 6511 9328 stylecraft.asia Supershine Floral & Garden Supplies (65) 6757 5828 Taksu Gallery (60) 3 4251 4396 taksu.com Timber Wolf (M)(60) 3 7831 3972 Timeless Design (60) 3 4045 2211 timelessdesign.com.my Valentine Willie Gallery Singapore (65) 8133 1760 vwfa.net Valeshade (60) 4 262 0855 Wan Tai & Co (Pte) Ltd (65) 6546 5900 wantai.com