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ACGMEDIA



A photograph of a modern architectural complex. The building features a prominent zigzag structure with white walls and a green roof. A swimming pool is visible on the left side of the building. The complex is surrounded by lush greenery, including trees and a well-maintained lawn. The sky is blue with some clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

ARCHITECTURAL GENIUS

Home to one of Singapore's billionaires, this zigzag structure is sure to grasp anyone's attention.

TEXT VANITHA PAVAPATHI | IMAGES COURTESY OF MINISTRY OF DESIGN



While many would be contented with an average-sized residential property, one particular family in Singapore thought it would be better to capitalise on the family's sprawling estate in the suburban Holland Park by building five modern villas in addition to its original 1930's family mansion which was also given a facelift. The initial idea of this large-scale and unprecedented development was to bring the famous Lien family (Singapore's 40 Richest on Forbes List) closer in a common turf while providing enough privacy to the residents of each home. Thus, residences are open and only separated by exotic vegetation.

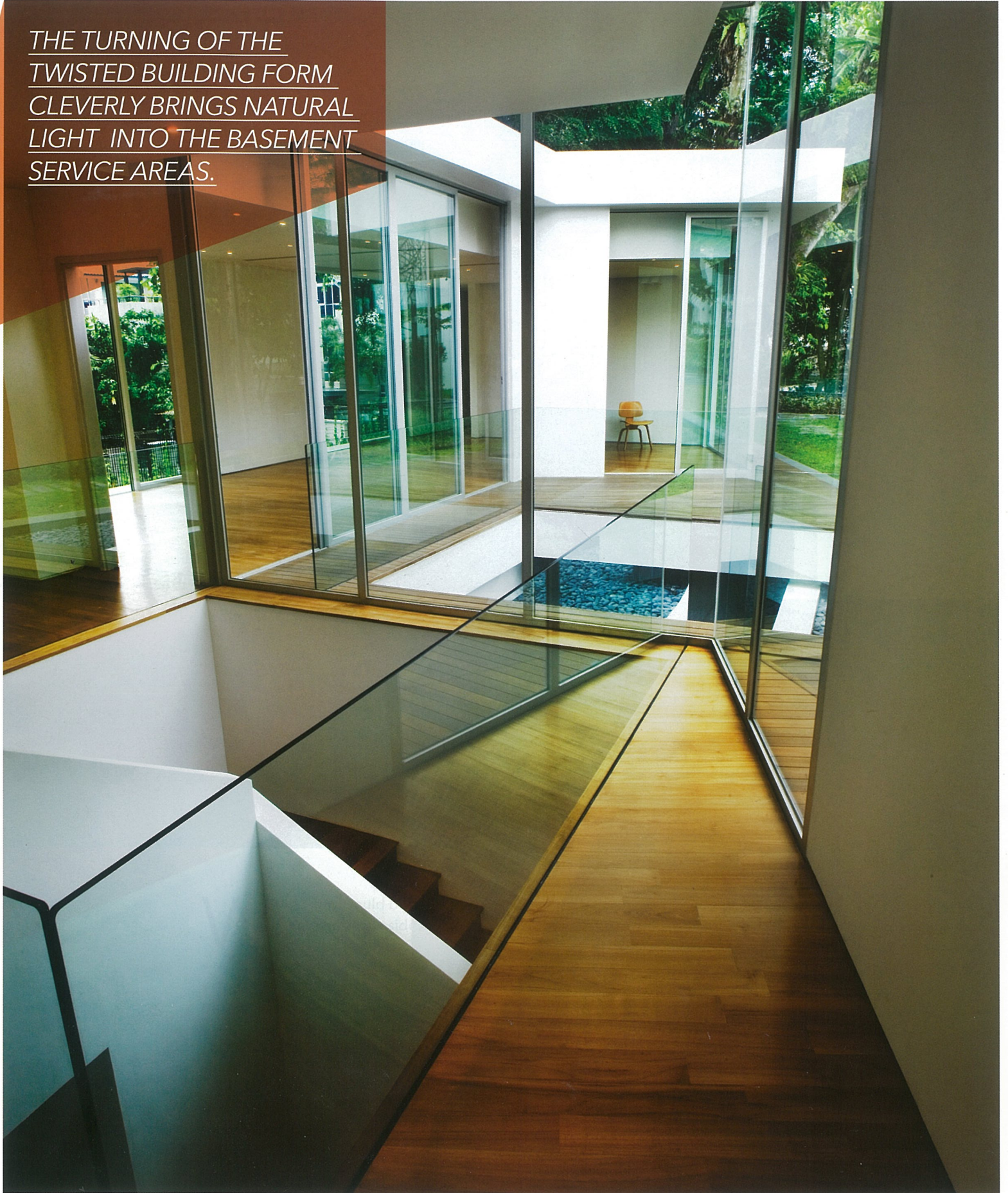
Commissioned to build one of the six dwelling spots that make up the Lien Villa Collective, the two-time recipient of Singapore's highest design accolade, the President's Design Award, Colin Seah of Ministry of Design had to manoeuvre his architectural designs around a mature tree located on the long and triangular sliver of land. As the tree was not allowed to be chopped down because it was marked for conservation by National Parks Board, Colin had to figure out a solution that would not cause space wastage.



*SEEN AS A SEAMLESS
SINGULAR FORM, THE
EXPANSIVE VILLA READS
AS BOTH SHELTERING
STRUCTURE AS WELL AS
ABSTRACTED SCULPTURE.*



THE TURNING OF THE
TWISTED BUILDING FORM
CLEVERLY BRINGS NATURAL
LIGHT INTO THE BASEMENT
SERVICE AREAS.





An architectural wonder, the building's twisting form creates "in-between" spaces which provide shelter from the harsh sunlight and simultaneously allow for cross ventilation and filtered light. The empty pockets of land are converted into beautiful courtyards which bring much-needed light into the basement service areas through expansive glass walls that practically surround the entire villa. The internal corridors by the lap pool, on the other hand, serve as breezeways between air-conditioned and naturally cooled areas. Furthermore, the corridors can easily pass as sun decks if the Lien family ever decide to get some tan on.

Where other villas in the humongous plot of land are two to three storeys high, this 600-square metre villa returns to the romance of the traditional single-storey bungalow as space allows. The founder and director of Ministry of Design cleverly housed the entertainment,

family and private master zone in each of the villa's three Miesian inspired wings. However the final design touch which is rather unnecessary yet crucial to tie the overall aesthetic together is the diagonally arranged planting strips that lend the villa its lovely roofscape when viewed from the vicinity's taller structures.

In a land-scarce country like that of Singapore, many Singaporeans can only dream of owning a landed property; what more this noteworthy villa built on a private estate just several kilometres west of Singapore's Central Business District. Taking into account the geographic environment, tropical climate and the client's lifestyle, this zigzag villa is truly one unique architectural creation. ❖

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