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Sumit Singhal
 Sumit Singhal loves modern architecture. He comes from a family of builders who have built more than 20 projects in the last ten years near Delhi in India. He has recently started writing about the architectural projects that catch his imagination.

COO: Singapore's first Societal by Ministry of Design

October 23rd, 2016 by Sumit Singhal

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Article source: Ministry of Design

Client's Design Brief

"The inspiration behind COO is the emergence of millennial travellers who are willing to take the road less travelled. To them, travelling is no longer a leisure pursuit alone, but an opportunity to gain local insights and garner authentic experiences. We want COO to be a home-grown brand with a regional reach and grounded with Asian sensibilities...." says Silas Lee, Founder of COO.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

- **Architects:** Ministry of Design (Colin Seah, Patricia Segado, Richard Herman, Norberto Olegario, Rais Rahman, Sandra Goh, Angie Ng, Madeline Lim, Anna Langier)
- **Project:** COO: Singapore's first Societal
- **Location:** 259 Outram Rd, Singapore 169056
- **Photography:** Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)
- **Software used:** Sketches, Sketch up, Auto cad and Photoshop
- **Client / Owner:** Flying Potato Group Pte. Ltd.
- **Main Contractor:** Alric

GRAPHISOFT ARCHICAD
 A Fresh Look at BIM
 30-Day FREE BIM TRIAL

- Land area: 188 sqm
- Built in GFA: Total GFA: 752 sqm



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

"Choosing Tiong Bahru for COO's first property was an easy decision when we were considering neighbourhoods that embodied the quintessential local experience. It is after all one of the coolest neighbourhoods in Singapore while also simultaneously known for its rich heritage and culture," Silas adds.

The Design Question to ask

How can new-gen hospitality experience and engagement be enhanced through digital platforms and social spaces? Or in short: "Engaging people physically and digitally".

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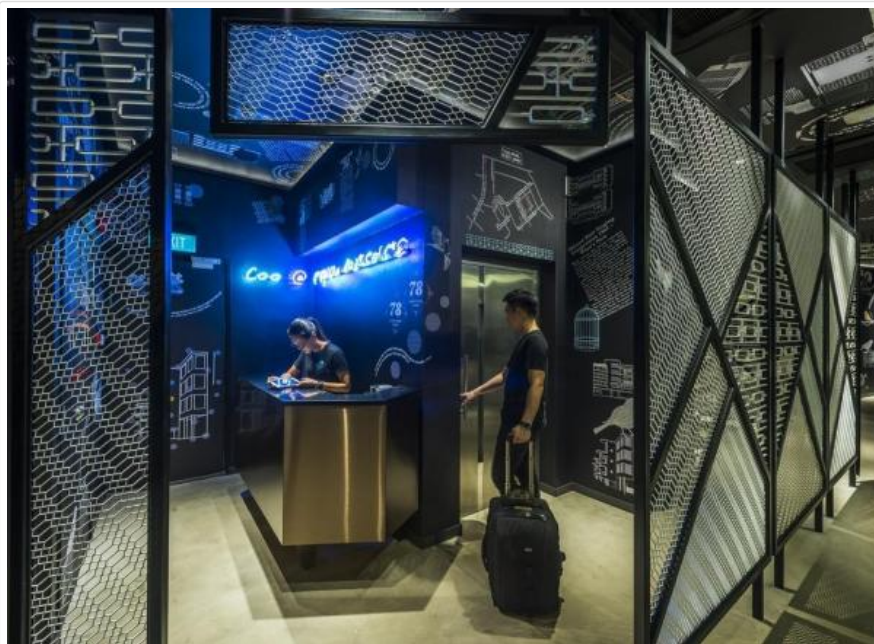


Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

Our Design Answer

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 recognizes 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 3 key touch points - Global, 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.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

Beyond the current unveiling of STAY, EAT, CONNECT, COO aims to continue building a distinctive brand experience, and future expansion plans include single rooms alongside shared rooms, varying F&B concepts, integrated retail and co-working environments.

STAY

The playful yet chic design concept of each COO property will be inspired by the spirit and memories of the neighbourhood its 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 local heritage of its location. We wanted every part of the experience to be able to tell a story of the neighbourhood we are in, but in a playful way that reflects COO's DNA," says Colin Seah, Founder Designer of Ministry of Design.





Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

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 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.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

Accessible to hostel guests only, the upper levels in the four-storey shop house 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.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



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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.

The locally inspired dishes include the Tiong Bahru Platter: a medley of Roasted Pork Belly, Grilled Chicken Satay, Salt & Pepper Barramundi, and Mackerel Keropok with a serve of house made sambal chilli, as well as the Tiong Bahru 'Chwee Kueh': a dessert of Panna Cotta with Candied Walnut and Balsamic Strawberries assembled to look like the traditional 'chwee kueh' dish complete with 'chai po' (preserved turnip) and chilli. More refined choice of mains include the Pork Cheek Cappelinni and COO Prawn Noodles of Fettuccine with Tiger Prawns and Chilli Sauce.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

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 complimentary breakfast in the mornings and set-up their workstations, or simply just gather around throughout the day.

Using the same metal mesh seen on the exterior, the private and public areas in the bistro have been cleverly 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.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



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COO CONNECT

True to its 'Societal' 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 likeminded travellers staying with COO - .an invaluable tool to explore or learn about a foreign city with newfound companions.

The idea for COO Connect stemmed from the millennial generation's love for digital connectivity. We saw an opportunity to leverage off technology to facilitate connectivity which doesn't just stop in digital space but goes beyond that. Commissioned by COO, the platform was

created in collaboration between BBH Labs, Blacksheep Live and Ministry of Design.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

"The idea of COO Connect was conceived as we wanted COO to embody the convivial spirit of an old-fashioned backpackers community whilst harnessing the power of today's digital landscape," says Silas. 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.

From the time a guest books his/her stay, he/she will be able to create a personalised profile based on key interests and log in to the COO Connect platform. This allows them way ahead of their actual travel to chat with other guests who will be staying at the property during the same time period. Some may choose to make travel plans together or simply trade travel tips.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)



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The platform also offers two programmes, the Breakfast Club and Supper Club, creating the opportunities for guests to connect over a meal at the bistro without having physically met one another prior.

Bio of Silas Lee (Founder, COO)

Silas Lee is a 25-year veteran banker, who has spent his career with various foreign banks (Citibank, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Schroders, ANZ, Barclays). His last held position was Managing Director, Head of Corporate Banking Asia Pacific, Barclays Bank PLC.



Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

While Silas has no prior experience in hospitality or F&B, his passion for the business is driven by his desire to create something that is truly unique and relevant for the younger generation. He admires the millennials for their “can-do” attitude and openness. In return, he hopes to share his experience and knowledge accumulated over years of working in a complex banking environment. He is also hoping to share COO’s beliefs, like human centricity and progressiveness.



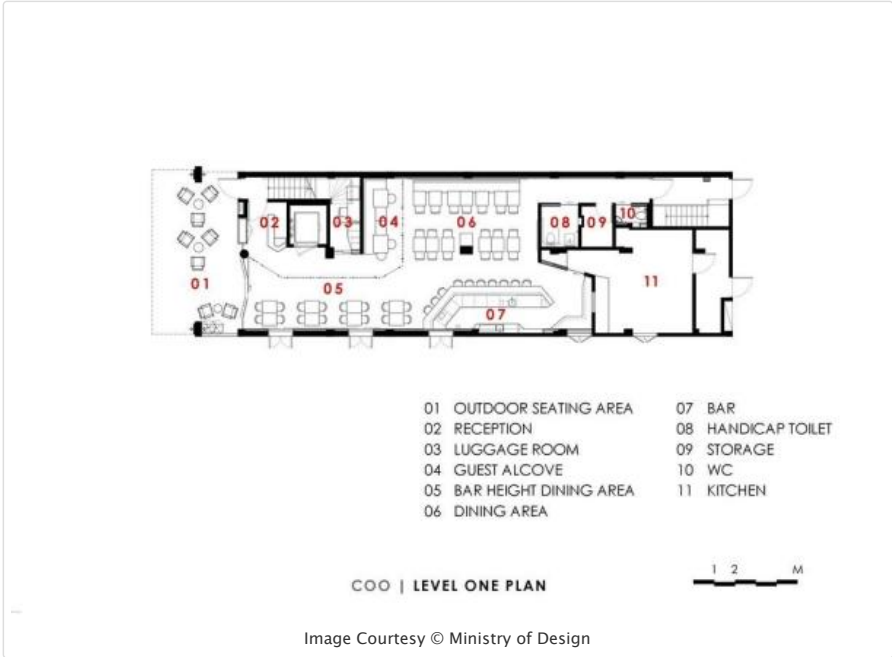
Image Courtesy © Edward Hendricks (CI&A Photography)

Bio of Colin Seah (Founder-Director, Ministry of Design)

Colin Seah is an internationally acclaimed lifestyle design thought leader with multi award-winning projects such as W Phuket Retreat, Macalister Mansion, New Majestic Hotel. As MOD’s Founder and Director of Design, Colin has been named Designer of the Year by International Design

Awards USA 2010, and is a twotime recipient of Singapore's highest design accolade, the President's Design Award.

Colin is also a two-time Grand Prize Winner of the Gold Key Award, the highest international hospitality accolade, named Hong Kong Perspective's '40 under 40 architects' and Marcus Corporation Foundation Prize 2007 'emerging architect with potential for greatness'. Recognized as "Rising Star in Architecture" by Monocle, Colin Seah has been invited by the Singapore Tourism Board to redefine Singapore as a destination for 2020 and beyond.





- 01 6-BED ROOM
- 02 EN SUITE BATHROOM
- 03 8-BED ROOM
- 04 SHARED BATHROOM

COO | LEVEL THREE PLAN



Image Courtesy © Ministry of Design



- 01 BALCONY
- 02 4-BED ROOM
- 03 6-BED ROOM
- 04 STORE ROOM
- 05 EN SUITE BATHROOM
- 06 SHARED BATHROOM
- 07 HANDICAP TOILET

COO | LEVEL FOUR PLAN



Image Courtesy © Ministry of Design



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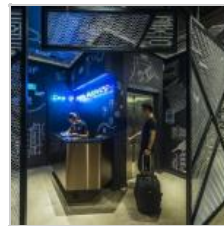


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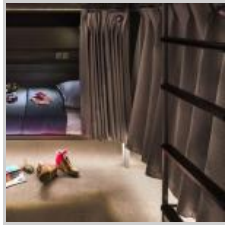


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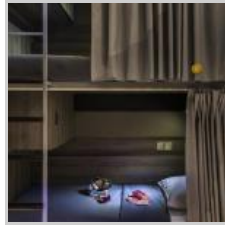


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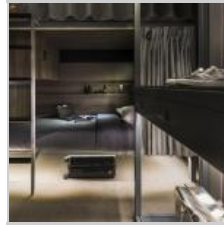


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