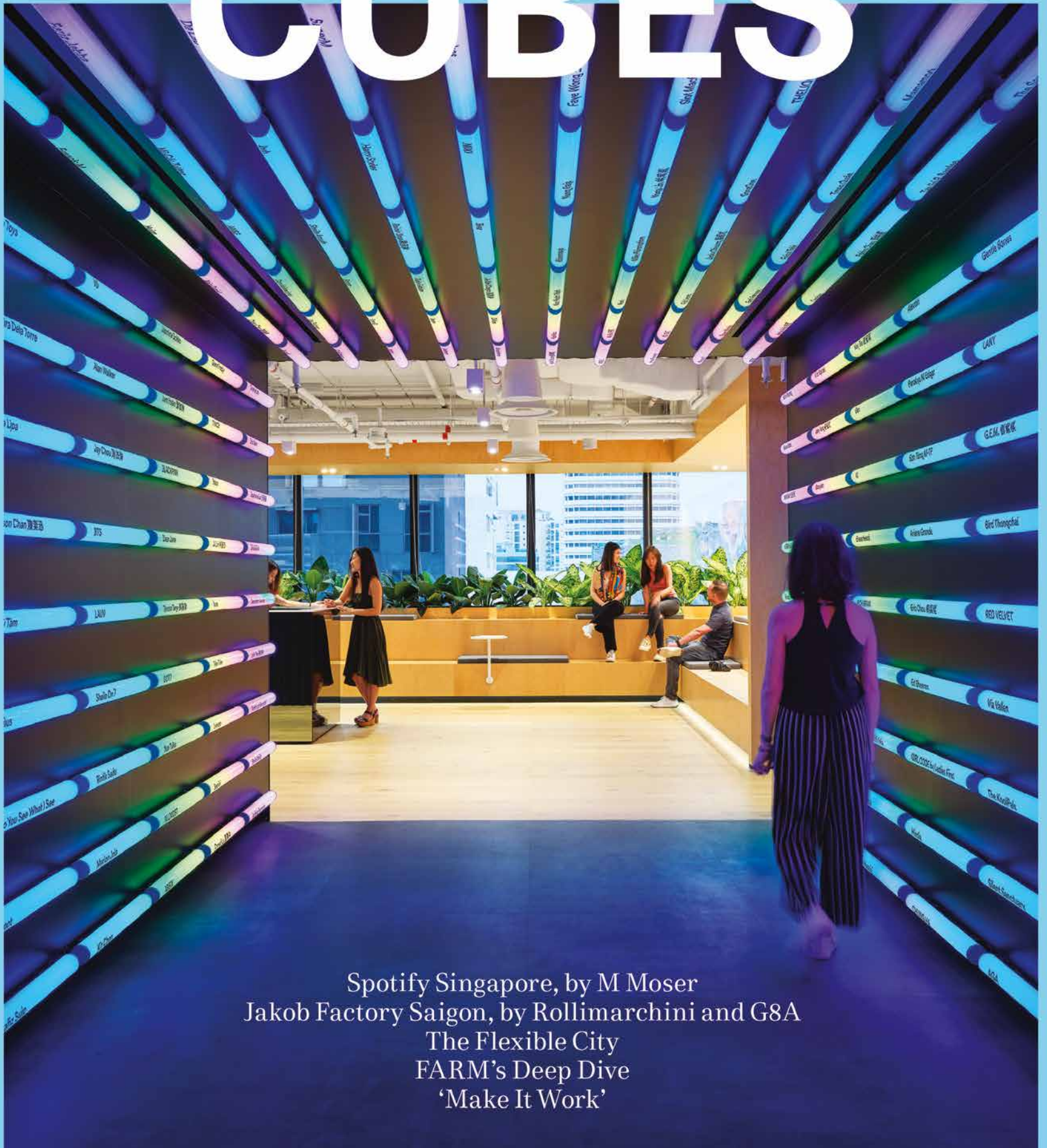


The voice of design in Singapore and Asia.

CUBES



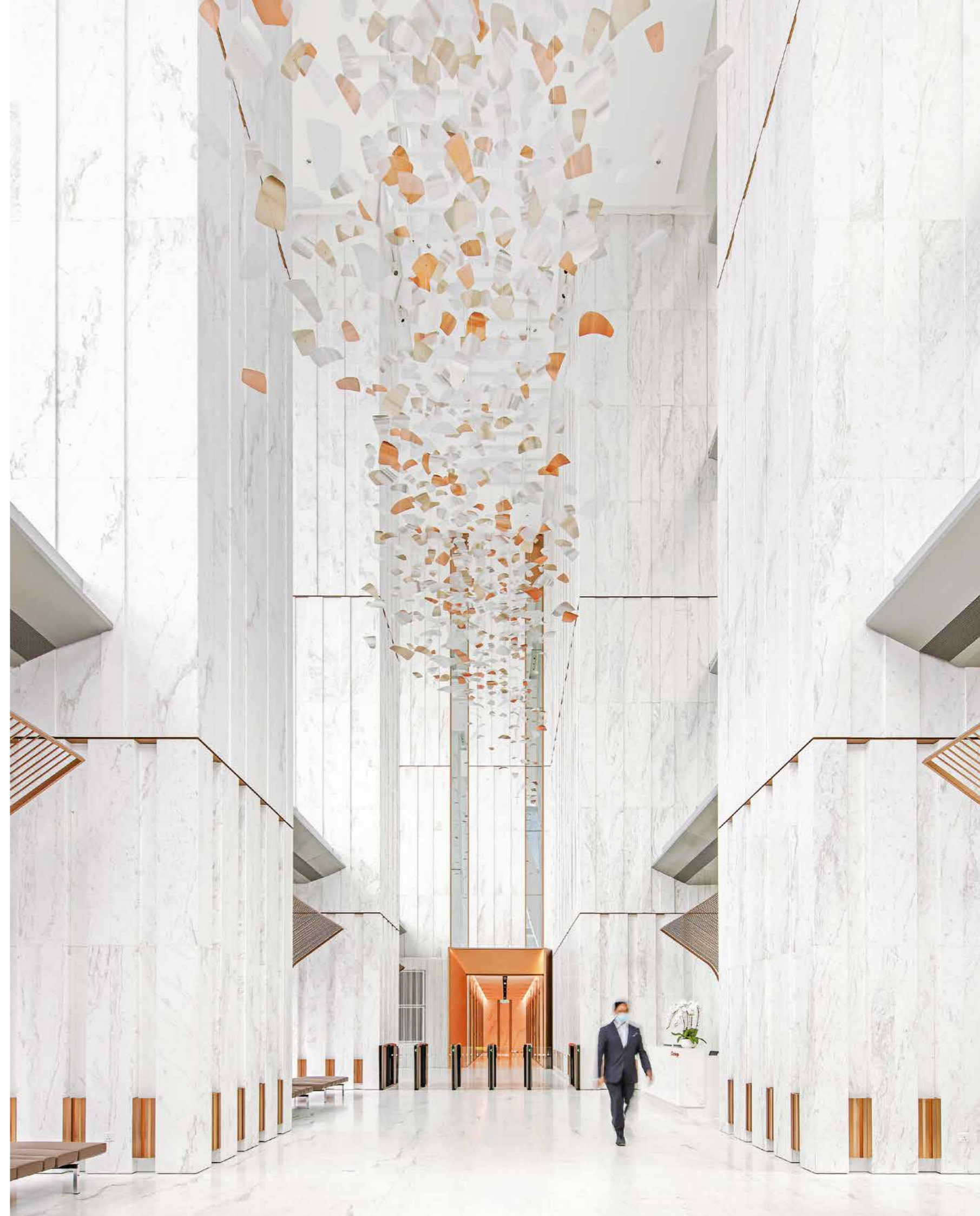
Spotify Singapore, by M Moser
Jakob Factory Saigon, by Rollimarchini and G8A
The Flexible City
FARM's Deep Dive
'Make It Work'

The public spaces of YTL Corporation's new Kuala Lumpur headquarters walk a fine line between celebrating legacy and embracing the future.

Anchored For The Future

YTL Corporation Headquarters, by Ministry of Design
Words Rachel Lee-Leong Photography David Yeow Photography

Opposite: The dramatic height of the lobby area is accentuated by a delicately floating art installation that was specially commissioned for the space.





Malaysian infrastructure conglomerate YTL Corporation (YTL) has just moved into its new headquarters: a pristine tower along Jalan Bukit Bintang, one of Kuala Lumpur city's most coveted plots.

YTL has come a long way from its humble beginnings as a small construction firm. Today, its vastly diversified portfolio ranges from property development and cement manufacturing to power and technology. The new address brings together more than a dozen departments that were previously spread out across different offices in the city. Beyond operational and economic efficiency, the freshly minted headquarters is a totem of the company's legacy and vision.

The importance of how the company presents itself to the public, indeed the world, through its new headquarters was not lost on YTL. The conglomerate engaged Singapore-based studio Ministry of Design (MOD) to design the building's public areas, namely the ground-floor lobby and three upper floors comprising event spaces, meeting zones and a café. Acknowledging the power of first impressions, there was a desire for these spaces to reflect all that the company stands for.

Portraying a company's ideals in a physical space is a tall order

for any firm. For MOD, known for its incisive work in branding through space, a clear objective was the launchpad into a rich spatial narrative. "I was interested in the notion of its people coming together as a corporate whole," shares MOD's Founder and Design Director, Colin Seah. Equally important was a desire to "balance YTL's legacy of corporate professionalism with a future-forward attitude that embraces change".

"There's a symbolism that I wanted to try to impart. How can you do that just through space without obvious iconography? That was the desire," says Seah.

The journey starts with an encounter of a soaring 25-metre-high lobby area – a double-edged space that inspires awe as easily as it can alienate. Wielding light, materials and a keen sense of proportion, MOD at once highlighted the grandeur of the architecture and took care of one's experience at a human scale. Seah shares, "The legacy of the company is founded on very strong underpinnings – they have a very good reputation and they're respected. So there needs to be gravitas; a jaw-drop moment that fills you with awe."

Marble-clad columns are detailed to create a denser rhythm closer

Above: The soaring volume of the lobby is mitigated by pavilions arched over benches that introduce a human scale to the space.
Opposite: Visitors coming in from the lift lobby encounter a striking spiral staircase that connects the first two floors of the public meeting area.





Opposite above: A mixture of collaboration spaces on the upper levels such as banquette seating provides meeting spaces on a variety of scales. Opposite below: A café area was designed as the functional heart and hearth of the public-facing floors. Above: Warm timber tones are used extensively on the upper floors and mark a transition from the grand lobby into a more intimate zone.



to the ground but become visually lighter towards the top. The sense of ascending lightness is echoed in an ethereal art installation that floats overhead.

A strategy to humanise the space was also prioritised. Bronze accents break up the visual expanse of marble while pavilions that arch elegantly over couches help to introduce a more relatable scale within the cavernous lobby space. At the far end, a bronze entryway leads to the lift lobby – a literal and figurative departure point from the grandeur of the lobby into a different realm.

The public zone on the upper floors is confined to levels eight, nine and 10 and “is conceived to be an extension of the lobby area”. And yet, the tone of the space changes on these floors – intentionally so.

“What you realise immediately is that there’s a change of scale and an atmospheric embrace,” Seah describes. In these spaces, there is a sense of casualness and intimacy that was not evident in the lobby.

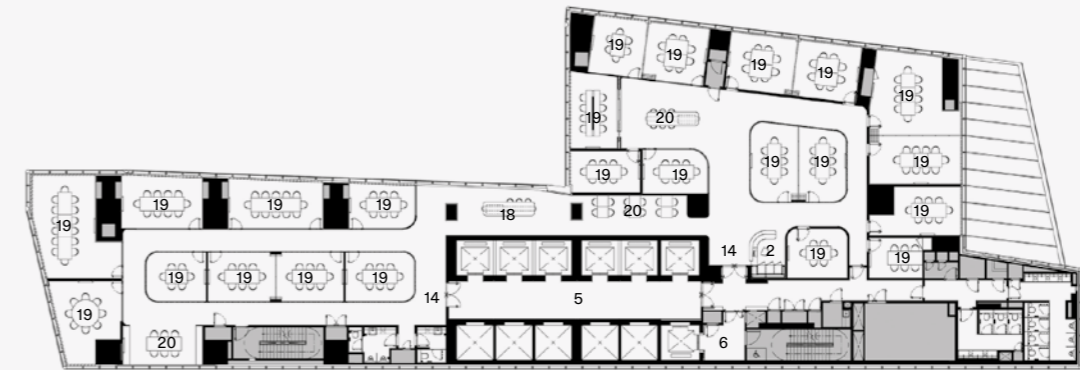
A warmer palette of materials such as oak timber and dark stone effectively mark these floors as spaces for conversation and community – key ingredients in creating a dynamic working environment. The three floors function as the point of interface

between staff and external visitors and consultants, and offer spaces ranging from casual communal tables, open discussion areas, booth areas to semi-enclosed and fully private meeting rooms. It is a clear nod towards a more modern, collaborative approach to work. At the heart of it all is a hefty granite café counter that serves up warm hospitality in the form of freshly baked confectionary and coffee.

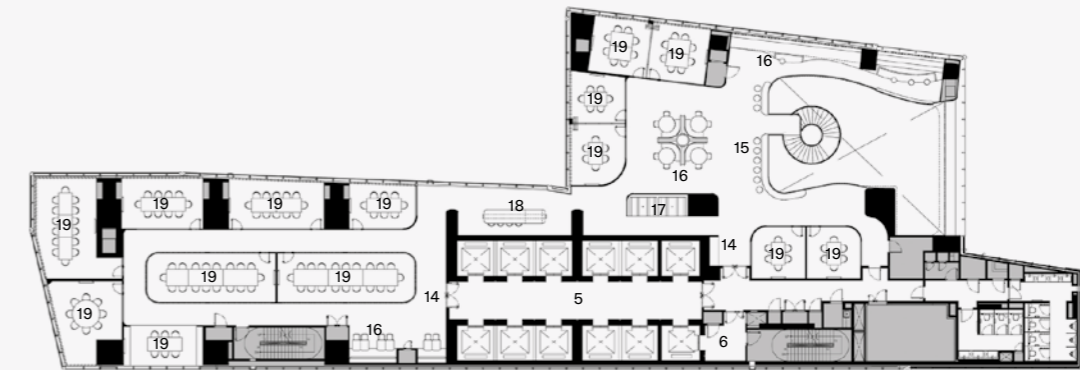
A spiral stair also takes pride of place on a bed of black gravel in the middle of the eighth floor and connects to the ninth floor through a void that was created in the floor plate. “When you’re on level eight looking up, or upstairs looking down, there’s always this notion of connectivity and continuity,” says Seah. “It is a symbolic gesture of uniting and unifying the different parts of the company.”

Experientially, the two faces of the headquarters’ public zones are “bookends” to YTL’s story: the pioneering values that form the foundation of its legacy and a dynamic new way forward that esteems dialogue and openness.

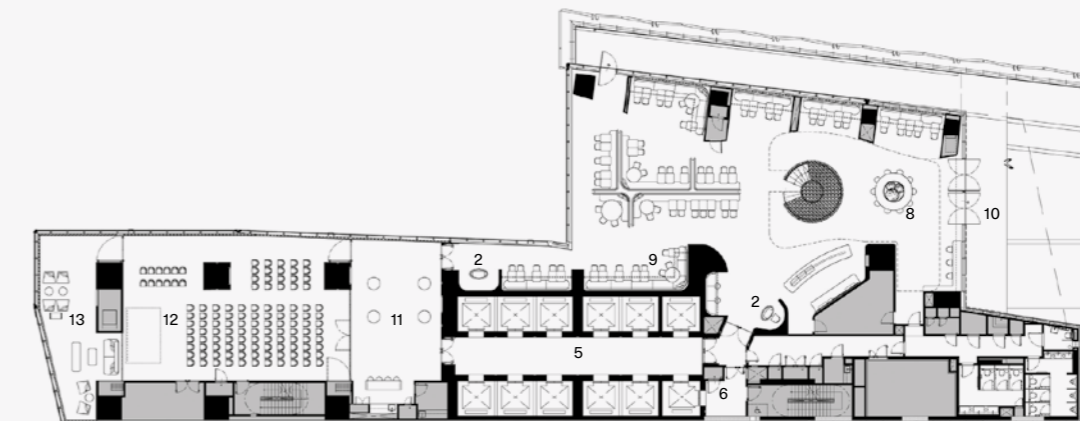
modonline.com



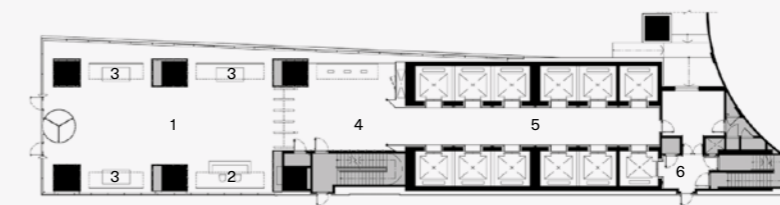
10th Floor Plan



Level Nine Floor Plan



Level Eight Floor Plan



Ground Level Floor Plan

Legend: 1 Lobby | 2 Reception | 3 Pavilion Niche Seating Area | 4 Lift Lobby Portal | 5 Lift Lobby | 6 VIP Lift Lobby | 7 Café Counter | 8 Communal Table | 9 Café Seating Area | 10 Outdoor Terrace | 11 Pre-Function | 12 Function Room | 13 VIP Room | 14 Entrance | 15 Hot Desk Area | 16 Banquette Seating | 17 Booth Seating | 18 Pantry | 19 Meeting Rooms | 20 Open Discussion Area

Opposite: Meeting rooms are generously provided for on the ninth and tenth floors and are shared among employees across the entire building.