

idealhomes

vol.16 2024

interiors — ideas — solutions by SquareRooms.

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Unexpected and inspiring design choices
we love from homeowners and creatives



holiday home

Inspired by the land of the rising sun, a globe-trotting couple created a “home base” to rejuvenate in between their adventures.

a holiday home is a distant dream for most Singaporeans. But one couple, who are abroad more often than they are home, has transformed their 4-room BTO flat in the East into something of a getaway.

“The clients requested something less traditional, compared to the standard BTO layouts in the neighbourhood. They wanted it to be a space they can look forward to returning to and which guests can anticipate visiting,” said Jay, their interior designer from Right Angle Studio.

Aptly, they named their flat Gēn, inspired by the concept of genesis and the Chinese word for “roots.”

The homeowners travel often for work and Japan, in particular, has captured their hearts. Having fallen in love with the country’s heritage, design, and nature, they hoped to bring these qualities into their new home.

Text JOYCE YANG *Design* RIGHT ANGLE STUDIO *Photography* STUDIO PERIPHERY



Space:
4-room BTO HDB

Size:
1,000 square feet

Location:
Ubi Grove

Occupants:
A young couple

Designer:
Alex Liu and Jay Liu

Reno duration:
4 months

Reno budget:
Undisclosed

These are expressed through clean lines, organic textures, and natural lighting, imbuing the space with both Japandi and Wabi-sabi sensibilities. In the living room, the latter is embodied by a statuario-planted feature and slab of marble, specifically sourced for its ragged edges.

To complement these features and the laminates throughout the home, the adjoining sofa set is customised with grey upholstery and an oakwood finish. The expansive seating area faces the dining table, making the living room a dream for hosting.

"The focus of the living room was mainly lounging and entertainment, so we created



a spatial ambiance where the homeowners and their guests can forget about work and feel at peace,” Jay shared.

“If I had to name my favourite part of this project, it would have to be the living room. We took an unconventional approach to space planning, compared to most BTO flats in Singapore.”

Indeed, such a sprawling living room isn’t the norm, and was made possible as the designers and the homeowners did away with a television set and reconfigured the floor plan. Plus, shrinking the study room also allowed for a more spacious dining area.

Here, leather-upholstered chairs gather around a sintered tabletop, against a backdrop of grey

marble and – you guessed it – more oakwood. These continue to feature in the mini-bar, kitchen, and even the box-ups for the air-conditioning units, which would have otherwise stuck out like a sore thumb.

“We used fluted louvres as a cover to conceal the air-conditioners so the design vocabulary would be consistent throughout the house,” Alex added.

In the master bedroom, the colours, textures, and materials remain decidedly on-brand. But the first thing you notice might be none of that. As it turned out, the living and study rooms weren’t the only spaces touched by what Alex calls “a complete remodelling of the traditional 4-room layout.” “Alex and I had a lot of creative freedom, and it



really helped that their preferences were aligned with ours. With that, we extended both the common and master bathrooms to make their entrances deeper and more spacious,” Jay said.

Their quest to make every square foot count doesn’t end there. In the bathrooms, the faucets have been planted at the sides of the sinks. It’s both an aesthetic and functional decision, apparently.

“This not only allows them to stand out, but it also frees up more usable space. It’s more evident in the master bedroom, which has an elongated marble counter that would have otherwise been quite restrictive,” Jay explained.

It’s not just their sleek silhouettes that give the bathrooms a spa-like quality. The designers’ choice of lighting also gave their beloved marble and wood combination the grand finale it deserves.

“There was a discussion with the clients on using decorative lighting in the bathrooms for gentle illumination, and we eventually worked with Made&Make to propose a selection of wall lamps that resemble beacons. They ended up fitting the space perfectly.”