

Architectural marvel in D'sara

WAKING up to chirping birds and fresh breeze is not impossible for KLites. Known as 'a little forest in Kuala Lumpur', Country Heights Damansara is one of the last remaining freehold residential properties in the capital city. Over 200 acres of land is available and a two-units-per-acre policy is strictly imposed to ensure exclusivity.

It comes as no surprise that the winner of the 2008 CNBC Asia Pacific Property Awards is still one of the most talked about property developments in Malaysia. Perched atop Damansara Hill, the posh development is easily accessed from both Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya.

Star Property spends a day at one of the most outstanding bungalows at the ritzy housing estate. Designed by architect MK Looi, the four-and-a-half-storey bungalow is a fusion of nature, architectural marvel and urban sensibilities.

House on a hill

The house is basically made up of a series of connecting boxes in different sizes with hanging gardens for its compound. With the lush Damansara Hill as a backdrop, the six-bedroom bungalow showcases harmony in design.

Sitting on 10,300sq ft of land, the bungalow has a built-up area of 15,000 sq ft that stretches four floors up.

According to Looi, the brief given was to build a house that is modern, airy



The living room is one of the homeowner's favourite spots.

and soothing. The architect aimed for perfection and the homeowner, who prefers to remain anonymous, was pleasantly surprised at the draft sent in by Looi.

"We knew that we wanted to create volume matrix – a series of glass-encased boxes – for the house. Each box, which is a room, has a different function. But the design was a little plain at this stage. So my partner and I came up with the idea to connect these boxes with bridges, which essentially function as gardens," said Looi.

The architectural challenge, however, was not the innovative hanging garden. Instead, it was the construction of the house on a 90 degree slope.

"We knew it wasn't going to be easy. But since day one, my partner and I were determined to turn what would have been a headache for us into something innovative. Of course, having a client who is a builder himself helped a lot," added Looi with a chuckle.

Vertically spacious

When asked about the curious choice of land, the homeowner said that he knew that his dream house could only be built on a slope as he has always wanted a house that is vertically spacious. However, he was quick to add that such a foundation would make

construction very challenging.

Nonetheless, what seemed to be a bad location for a house turned out to be the best thing about the project. Looi pointed out that the unusual landscape made it possible for him and his team to build a four-and-a-half-storey bungalow with a swimming pool on the second floor.

Garden, not terrace

The outdoor space of each level has been turned into gardens of various shapes and sizes, and is seamlessly connected by big window panels.

The hanging gardens truly accentuate the "open" philosophy of the house while the steel and glass enclosures in the gardens stress on its urban sensibilities. With such gardens, the house undeniably enjoys a Zen-like atmosphere.

"It is the variations in those inside-outside patterns that produce the different views within the house," Looi explained.

North of the bungalow offers stunning mountain views while the south faces the KL skyline. There is nothing better than to enjoy both views with a bottle of wine from the beautiful gardens.

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The bungalow sits on the hill, surrounded by lush greenery.



The family spend their time together at the bar counter to enjoy their drink.



The homeowner claims that she enjoys sitting on this red chair while admiring the KL skyline with a glass of wine after a rainy day.