

ANGLE POISE

LNL and S/LAB 10 have created a family home in Sungai Buloh, Malaysia, that plays on asymmetrical geometry *By Rohan Yung. Photography by Pixelaw Photography*





This page, from top: The porch makes a bold architectural statement with its soaring 3.8-meter entrance door; asymmetrical roof planes provide shelter and visual intrigue

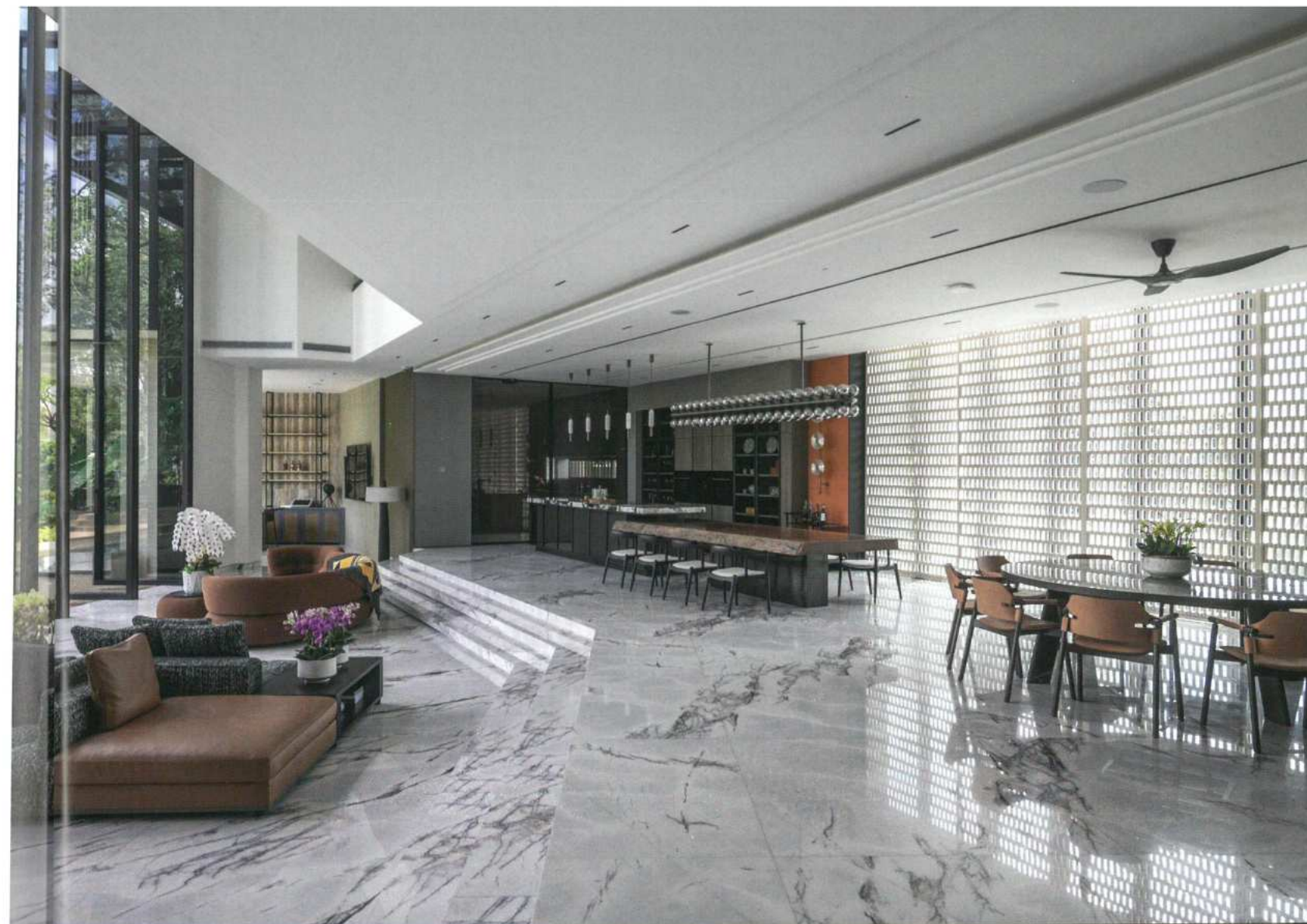
Opposite page: The 'defiantly open' living area serves as the heart of this 20,000 sq ft home; large-format patterned tiles from China bring kinetic energy to the interior spaces, complementing the eclectic furniture selection that range from Roche Bobois's curvy sofa to Stefano Giovannoni's refined dining table

Previous spread: Dense, mature greenery serves as a natural barrier in this gateless community, allowing the home to maintain its open character while shielding the family from the main road



This distinctive residence in Sungai Buloh started with a very clear brief. The clients (a family consisting of two parents and their three adult children) were envisaging a home that would foster close family ties while also prioritising both functionality and comfort. Architecture firm LNL's director, Adrian Liew, explains that it was all about balancing connection with moments of peace and privacy. That emphasis on openness would have a big influence on the architecture, as did the unique shape of the plot of land itself.

Design studio S/LAB 10 was brought on board after the building was already under construction. The basic structural framework may have already been in place, but there was still some room to adjust the layout. Hao Wang, co-founder of S/LAB 10, shares that ideas were also allowed to emerge gradually. Rather than imposing a rigid concept at the outset, the team prioritised in-depth interviews with the various family members. In Wang's words, "this process was more organic and ultimately enriched the whole design".





Opposite page: The mesmerising marble staircase appears as one uninterrupted block of material when viewed from above

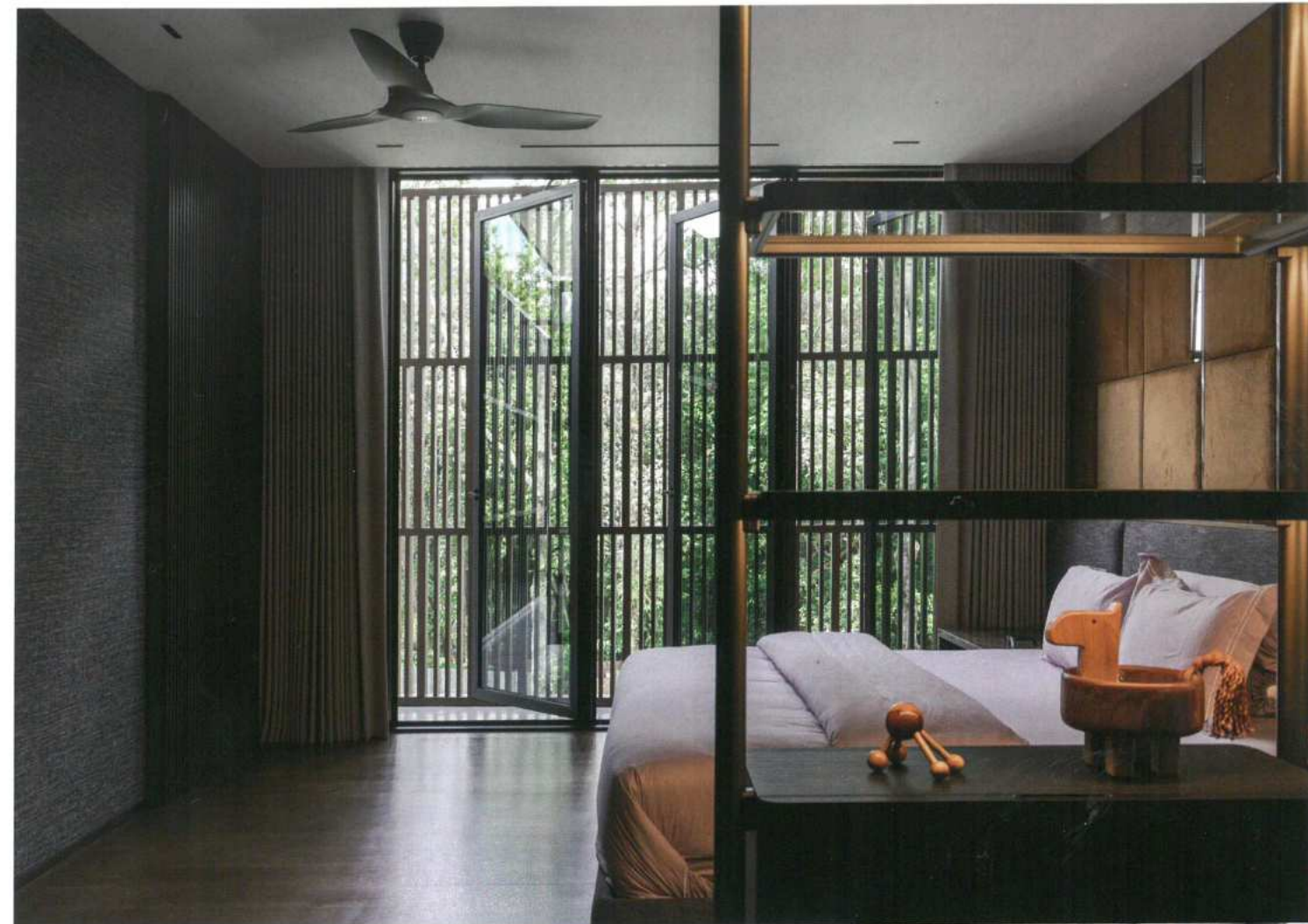
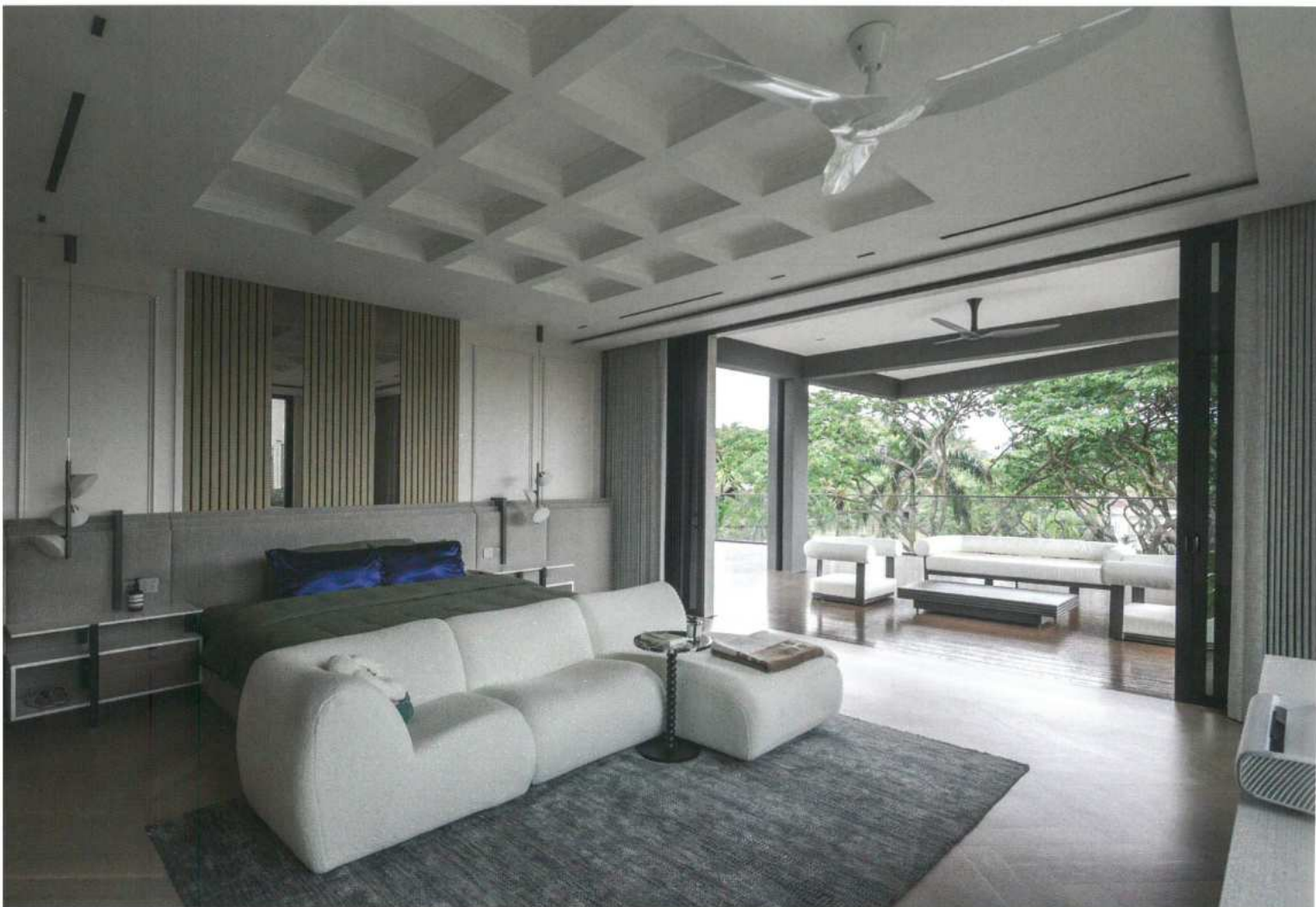
This page: The combination of materials make for dramatic and attractive contrasts; bold red and strategic lighting were chosen for this memorable AV room

SHAPING UP

As previously mentioned, one fundamental driver behind the building's form was the site itself. This plot of land was potentially awkward since it was tapered at one end. However, the unique dimensions actually proved to be a stimulus for creativity. "Instead of seeing the irregular site as a limitation," says Liew, "it was embraced as a design opportunity, shaping the home's dynamic architecture and spatial flow." The resulting 20,000 sq ft of built-up space thus stands as a bold reinterpretation of tropical architecture.

Throughout the house, the most distinctive design idea would have to be the play on asymmetrical polygons. Plain, foursquare volumes are eschewed in favour of dynamic angles and unexpected shapes. This is particularly evident for the exterior. The precisely-calibrated corners of the roof thrust out into the sky, carving out striking





From top: Screens allow ventilation as well as providing privacy in the bedroom; strategic placement of openings and screens allow for an almost outdoor bathroom experience

Opposite page, clockwise from top: The master bedroom opens up the greenery; a skylight allows natural light in; screens deployed throughout the home in various scales

negative spaces. The roof's sloping planes also contribute to the overall sense of movement.

LNL did not miss the opportunity to introduce some dramatic verticality. The exterior's multiple columns draw the eye upwards, while the staggered heights of the overhangs and balconies add a syncopated feel to the visual rhythm. Liew also draws our attention to the main entrance. The entrance door stands at 3.8 metres, but the illusion of a height of 8.1 metres is created by maintaining consistent material application.

OPENING OUT

The spatial layout of the interior was a direct response to the clients' request for a balance between openness and privacy. There is no better exemplification of this approach than the living area. In Hao's words, this area is "defiantly open". The unobstructed flow of space has allowed the living area to adapt to different activities and made it a natural gathering spot for the family. One added bonus of the layout is the cross ventilation, which has made this a particularly comfortable space.

Liew points out that the living room demonstrates "a seamless interaction" between indoor and outdoor spaces. Impressive full-length 7.3-metre pivot doors allow for natural light to flood in and provide expansive views of



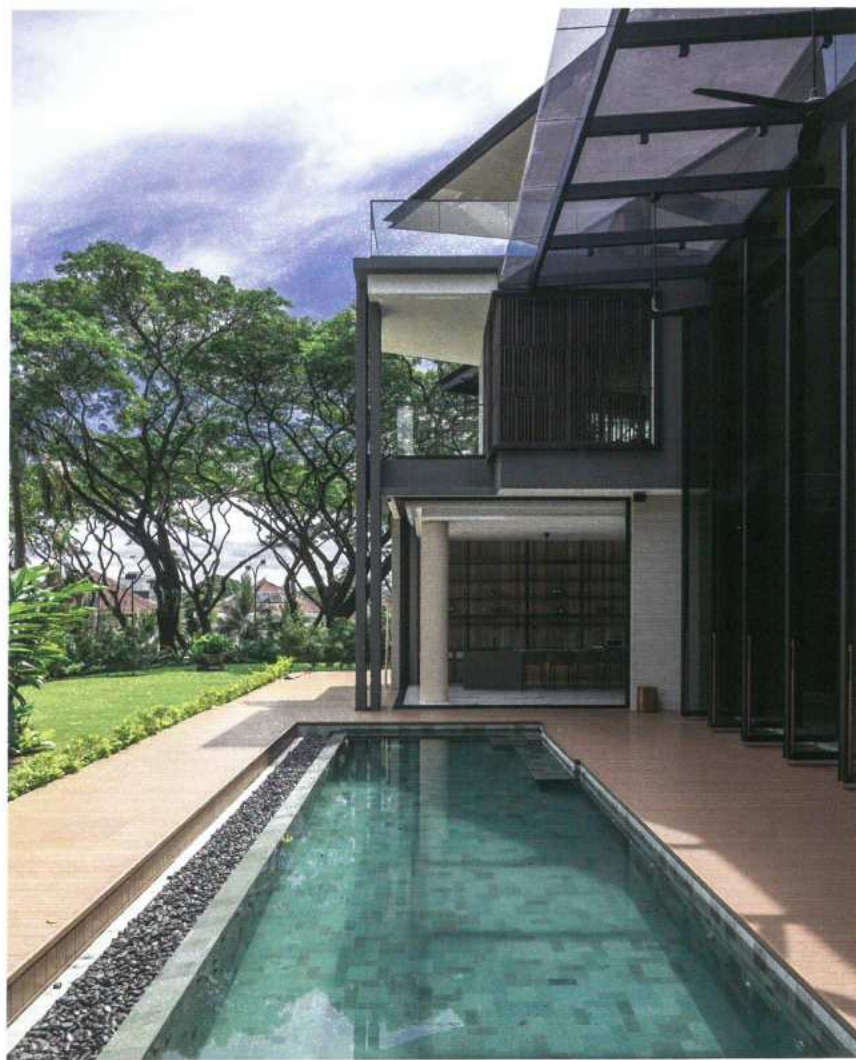
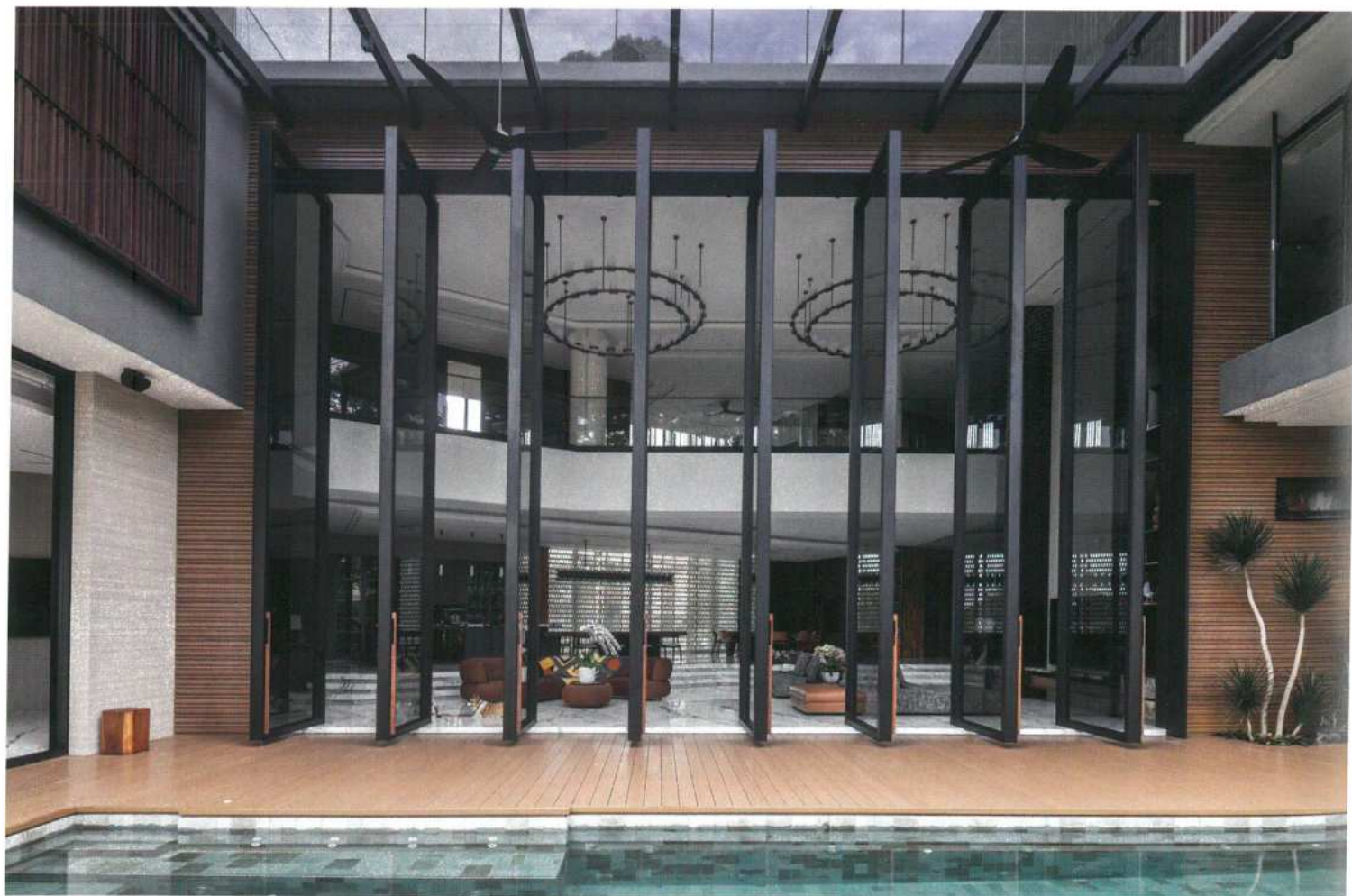
the sky and the tree-lined pool.

While much of the ground floor does open out to the exterior, privacy is still maintained. This was an important consideration since there are no gates in this residential community. So, the living area not only faces away from the main road but also benefits from dense, mature greenery, which was deliberately maintained to act as a natural barrier to block sightlines.



This page, from top: The dedicated tea room creates a serene bridge between indoor refinement and nature's embrace; the meticulously designed pool area forms a centerpiece of outdoor living in this home

Opposite page, from top: The distinctive roof planes create dramatic silhouettes against the sky; full-length 7.3-metre pivot doors seamlessly connect the open-plan living area with the lush pool landscape



FINISHING TOUCHES

S/LAB 10's eclectic detailing brings a real sense of personality to the whole space. Especially effective are the large format tiles which were sourced from China. Their highly patterned, polished surfaces contribute a kinetic energy while also helping to add visual interest to areas which might otherwise feel a bit empty. Furniture covers a range of styles: from the living room's quirky, curvy sofa (Roche Bobois), to the refined simplicity of the dining table (by Stefano Giovannoni for Ghidini) and the dining chairs (by Atelier Nanni for MIDJ). Meanwhile, the abstract shapes and arrangements of the lighting fixtures play off against the angularity of the structure itself.

The staircase deserves a special mention. Viewed from above, this marble installation appears as one uninterrupted block of material. The seamlessness adds a sense of elegance and fluidity to the space. The wall next to the stairs was commissioned from a local art studio and was designed to mimic natural stone. Its swirling pattern has a dramatic impact all of its own.

In the end, the clients were very pleased with the result. Their feedback to Liew was that the house managed to strike a perfect balance between maximising space and enabling a luxurious yet harmonious home environment. Wang shares with a laugh: "the client's daughter even asked whether this house would be featured in *Tatler Homes*!"