

# perspective

October 2016

INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE &amp; DESIGN

www.perspectiveglobal.com

## FOCUS: Taiwan

Taiwan is fast becoming one of the major design centres in Asia, and amba Hotels & Resorts reflects this through design-led properties such as the amba Songshan, with its eclectic mix of natural materials, bold graphics and stunning views



**+ SPECIAL FOCUS:**  
 Hong Kong Institute of  
 Architects 60th Anniversary  
 REVEAL 2 • Cui Kai •  
 HKIA @ Venice Biennale

**Skywalk Kolkata**  
 —p.30

**Temple Mall, Hong Kong**  
 —p.33

**Olympia 66, Dalian**  
 —p.36

**Cinamaxx Junior,  
 Jakarta**  
 —p.42

**The Reverie, Saigon**  
 —p.47

**Ebury Square  
 Pied-à-Terre, London**  
 —p.50

**World Design Capital  
 Taipei 2016**  
 —p.58

**Ben Chiu,  
 Taiwan Designers Week**  
 —p.62

**amba Songshan**  
 —p.66



HK\$48  
 US\$18  
 €15

# Concrete appeal

*Taipei-based Maraisdesign has a unique and sometimes abstract aesthetic in how to create space, but its design for a residential project in Xindian, Taipei, offers a grounded approach*

**TEXT:**

Leona Liu

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Courtesy of Maraisdesign | maraisdesign.com



A standalone villa in Xindian, Taipei, Yu's House surrounded by uninterrupted views and vibrant greenery



*Clockwise from above*

The staircases linking the ground floor and the second floor passageway create a centrepiece. The living and dining rooms are designed with an open plan to create a dialogue between the indoor and outdoor environment. A showcased bicycle in the bedroom adds an unexpected outdoorsy touch to the décor. A five-metre-high ceiling extends across the inclined roof, understating the airy space and creating an uplifting feeling of stillness.

**Located on the mountains in Xindian District,** Taipei, Yu's House is a standalone villa surrounded by uninterrupted views and verdant greenery. Here, designer Yann Chu from Maraisdesign wanted to capitalise on the property's clear advantages, setting out to create a dialogue between the indoor space and outdoor environment.

To start with, all spaces including kitchen and bathroom, as well as the hearth room, have been fitted with floor-to-ceiling windows. The living and dining rooms are open plan in design, not just linking each space to the other, but also to the outdoors. The earth-toned colour palette, working elegantly with the design's minimalist silhouettes, ensures the scheme feels clean and tidy. Seamless Pandomo wall cladding and flooring, painted galvanised steel, real walnut wood panelling and marble are used for different surfaces, while high-end brands such as Ligne Roset (furniture) and Gaggenau (kitchen appliances) pay testament to the occupant's taste for contemporary design. Meanwhile, in a touch of quirky humour, a bicycle is showcased in the bedroom to add a some unexpected sporty touch.

A five-metre-high ceiling extends across the inclined roof, understating the airy space and creating an uplifting feeling of stillness. Lamps are suspended above the living room, while an adjacent passage leads to an open staircase with a spiral handrail up to the master bedroom on the second floor. Positioned on the left side of the living room is a black coffee table, creating an architectural focal point and a contrast with a sofa upholstered in grey linen.

In arranging the space, Chu has put together familiar and strange objects to create a scenic style with a clear flow of consciousness, while multiple overlapping elements combine to form a simple yet dynamic space. That being said, each of these elements is displayed through continuous refinement, being hidden or prominent until it is in just the right position to establish a lasting dialogue between the space and the environment.

To wit: the staircases linking the ground floor and the second floor passageway – an undoubted highlight in the design – are subtly shaped, forming a centrepiece without disrupting the tidy space. In addition to being a linkage, the stairs elevate beyond playing a purely functional role, becoming

a sculpture in themselves. At the same time, they play double-duty in terms of function, also acting as a shelf ready to showcase decorative objects.

"To me, the aspiration is – after scrutinising the elements through rational analysis – one can feel the texture, light and shadow of a designed lifestyle," Chu says. This is his definition of three-dimensional design; one which is imbued with the creator's emotional attention.

Having studied and worked in Paris, Chu came back to Taipei and established Maraisdesign in 1998, joining what was already becoming an increasingly diversified design community in Taiwan. Noting that there is also a return to traditional history and culture to seek ways for creative ideas to meet contemporary Asian demands, the designer says that by being open-minded and having an awareness and esteem for local culture, Taiwan is becoming a powerhouse in the field of creative design.

"The strength of designers in Taiwan is they combine eastern thinking with an international perspective, a wealth of life experience and academic knowledge," he says. ●

