A HOME TO GROW INTO

A couple’s first home takes into account their future needs

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CREATING A FIRST home together can be a task for a couple. “Should we go with a Scandinavian theme or something more colourful and funky? Should we aim for something classic or contemporary?” they might ask.

One couple chose to think long-term. They wanted their new two-bedroom apartment in Bukit Batok to not only fit their current lifestyle, but also be flexible enough to accommodate future changes, such as babies.

“My wife and I are homebodies; we like to stay in a lot. So we wanted a comfortable place to lounge, read, and watch TV,” says the husband, a web developer. “But we also wanted to be able to use existing spaces for future needs, which we might not have the luxury of changing next time.”

His brief to Goy Zhenru, founder of Goy Architects, was to create “a place we can relax, feel at home, and, very importantly, have our house grow with us.”

He and his wife, a project manager in a creative digital agency, put together a mood board of spaces they liked. An image that stood out – a space with a curved archway – even became the inspiration for Ms Goy to create a vault-like space devoid of the straight lines and sharp corners of most homes.

“Apartments tend to have that boxy look. But the clients wanted a softer feel and soft geometrical shapes for a more comfortable space,” says Ms Goy.

In the living and dining areas, Ms Goy created curved ceilings using gypsum boards. And, rather than top-down lights, wall lights were chosen to bounce light upwards and downwards. “Throwing light in both directions creates a layering of shadows, and gives texture and volume to the space, especially since the ceiling is now a little lower than originally,” says Ms Goy.

She also created curved archways leading to the kitchen and two bedrooms – one of which is the master bedroom and the other, a study. “The archways help draw attention to the spaces behind it, creating a focal point,” says Ms Goy.

Most of the home is white, except for the kitchen cabinets, and the corridor leading to the bedrooms. An olive green shade was applied instead for a pop of colour, says Ms Goy. The use of sheer curtains also gives the home its soft, dreamy feel. More importantly, they serve to block out the neighbouring block that looms close by.

The couple took Ms Goy’s suggestion and went with customised loose furniture for a more holistic look. The sofa and armchair in the living room are a mix of teak wood and rattan. A terrazzo bar counter paired with rattan high stools becomes an intimate spot outside the kitchen. A jute rug on the living room floor helps to soften the ruggedness of the cement screed floor.

Standing tall in the living room is a customised timber shelf showcasing the couple’s collection of vases and potted plants. “We wanted to have some life around the house, and potted plants are a natural pairing with the pots and vases we love,” says the husband. Fortunately, he says neither of them have much experience taking care of plants. “But cultivating plants is a nice, casual hobby we can share.”

The couple, who have been married for two years, say they love the living area and bedroom where they spend much time together. “While we have a designated dining area and a study with a reading chair, they’re more suited to specific activities,” says the husband. “We just like being close to each other while doing our own thing.”

Asked what he likes most about his new home, the husband says, “It isn’t very tangible. But for me it is waking up, taking in the environment and feeling like whatever I set out to do that day is achievable.”

HOMEOWNER