

DESIGN

The art of design

Graphic design vets try their hand at designing Singapore's newest boutique hotel

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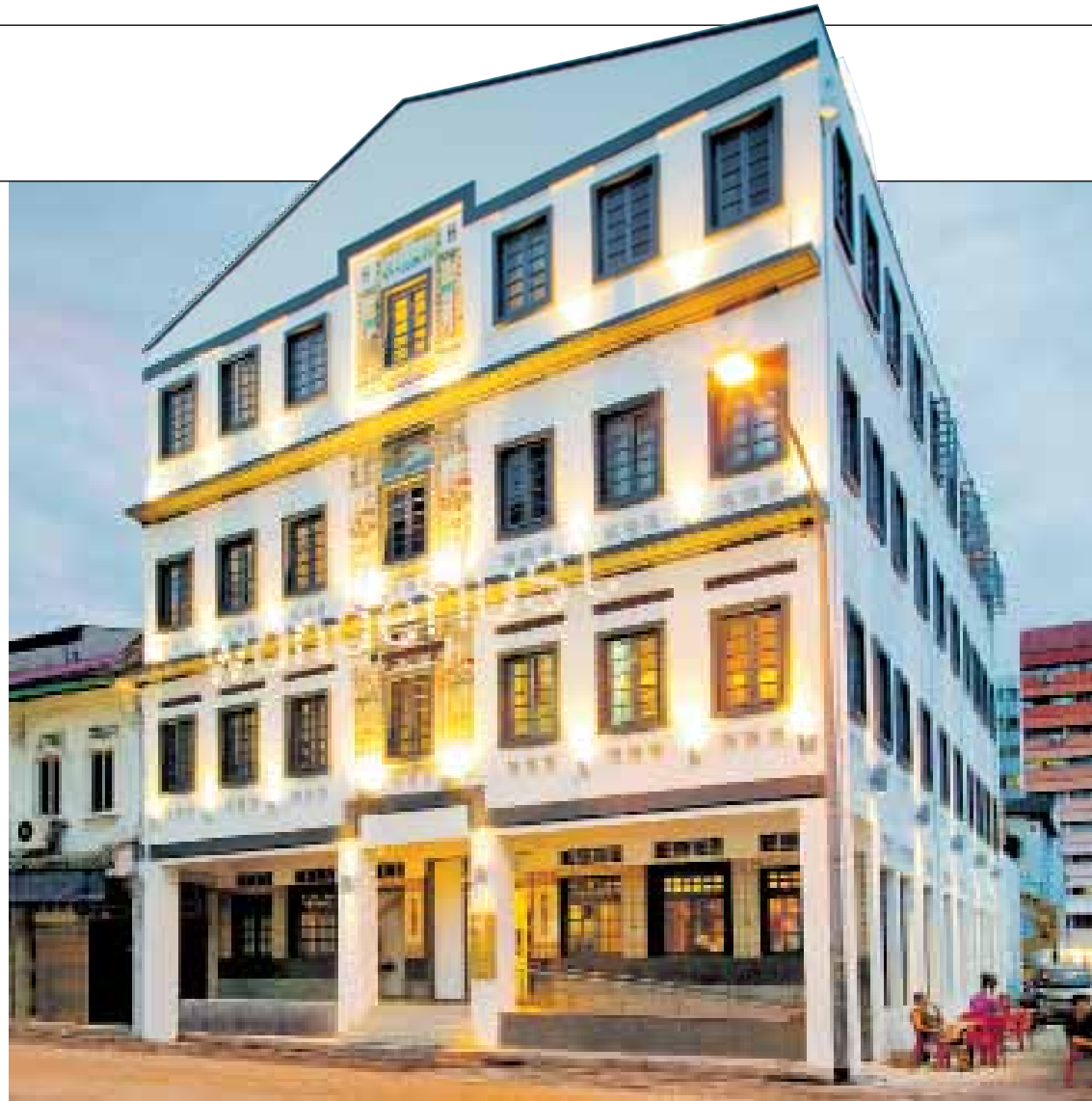
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FANCY bunking with a giant monster typewriter? How about spending your nights floating in outer space? Maybe find yourself waking up in The Beatles' *Yellow Submarine*? The people at Wanderlust thought these were stellar design ideas.

The new boutique hotel in Little India is the latest development from hotelier Loh Lik Peng, the man behind the hip Chinatown digs Hotel 1929 and New Majestic Hotel.

Having previously housed the Hong Wen School in the '20s, and later on the Buddhist Welfare Association, the four-storey, 29-room hotel along Dickson Road aims to attract a clientele looking for something out of the ordinary in the already vibrant enclaves of Little India.

"It's meant to be a fun hotel in an area that's really ripe for someone to come along and do something fun and cute," said Loh.

To achieve this, he roped in architect firm DP Architects as well as three top local design agencies — Asylum, :phunk Studio and fFurious — to design one entire floor level each. It also marks the first time the three design agencies have taken on the task of designing for hotels.

"I've worked with some of them before but not necessarily specifically for hotels. They all come from the graphic design field and it's a way to leverage other talents as well as to pull them out of their comfort zones," said Loh.

It's not the first time Loh has commissioned artists — he had 30 artists designing 30 rooms for New Majestic Hotel. "I realised it was almost unmanageable,



Lobby designed by Asylum

which was why for Wanderlust, we did it floor by floor. It's easier to coordinate."

It has made for some interesting results, which each themed floor having a sense of consistency even as it provides a contrast from the other floors.

The lobby's "Industrial Glam" look, designed by Asylum, juxtaposes the area's distinct characteristics with contemporary design. The wallpaper incorporates vintage print ad packaging designs found in Little India. Trent Jansen handmade seats made from recycled road signs are shown off side-by-side with a Frank Gehry sofa.

The industrial feel extends all the way to the hotel's French restaurant Cocotte, which features restored timbre flooring and wine crates propped on the walls.

On the second floor, :phunk Studio dipped into the history of nearby Thieves Market to create "Eccentricity", a series of 11 capsule rooms each rendered in a single colour taken from pantone charts, sporting neon signs that take off from appropriate song titles by artistes such as The Beatles, U2, New Order and Velvet Underground. The distinct colours converge on the floor's al-fresco Jacuzzi.

DP Architects took on a whimsical tack on the third floor. "Is it Just Black And White" features a black corridor leading into all-white rooms inspired by origami paper folds and stenciled art installations.

Finally, fFurious presents "Creature Comforts", a series of nine loft rooms, each with a central design component in the form of a "friendly monster", such as one where a bench is reimagined as a big typewriter. Two of the rooms, dimly lit with LED light installations, have been designed to evoke floating in space.

The project has been a fun experience for the first-time hotel designers.

"We've never done interior design projects before," said fFurious creative director Little Ong. "We've done print design, illustration, motion graphics, animation. The closest we've done were murals for restaurants like Brotzeit.

"When Peng Loh called me, I told him this straight up, and he said that was precisely the point — to have a fresh perspective. But it was a steep learning process."

All in all, it was an interesting process for the graphic design collective.

Said colleague Jackson Tan: "It was our first time designing something that had a toilet booth. And for once, people would come up or call us about bedsheets."

For details, visit www.wanderlusthotel.com.



(From top)
The facade of new boutique hotel Wanderlust; the Blue Order Pantone Room designed by :phunk Studio; the Mono Deluxe Pop Up Room designed by DP Architects; and the Rusty Typewriter Room designed by fFurious.



ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

THIS MONTH: HOME PAINTING

The colour of your home helps to set its mood, and walls are the biggest canvas you can work on. Last week, the experts talked about colour selection. This week, they give tips on how to prepare surfaces for the painting process.

Cover it up

Put pieces of painter's tape over switches and other items to prevent them from being painted over.

While it is possible to paint over wallpaper, it is better to remove it for longer lasting paint. The wall should be washed with an abrasive cleanser after the wallpaper has been removed.

Sanding is an important process before painting a wall. This helps to smooth the surface and also rough up glossy surfaces so that paint will adhere better.

— Karen Ng, colour consultant, Nippon Paint Singapore

Scrub it down

Inspect the surfaces under strong light, checking for nail holes, flaking paint, or cracks. Scrub away dirt or mould with household detergent. Scrape away flaking paint with a putty knife and sand down edges of the scraped section with the surrounding surface. Patch holes and cracks with spackling or other wall filler or joint compound.

— Wendeline Goh, senior brand manager from Akzonobel Paints (Singapore)

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