

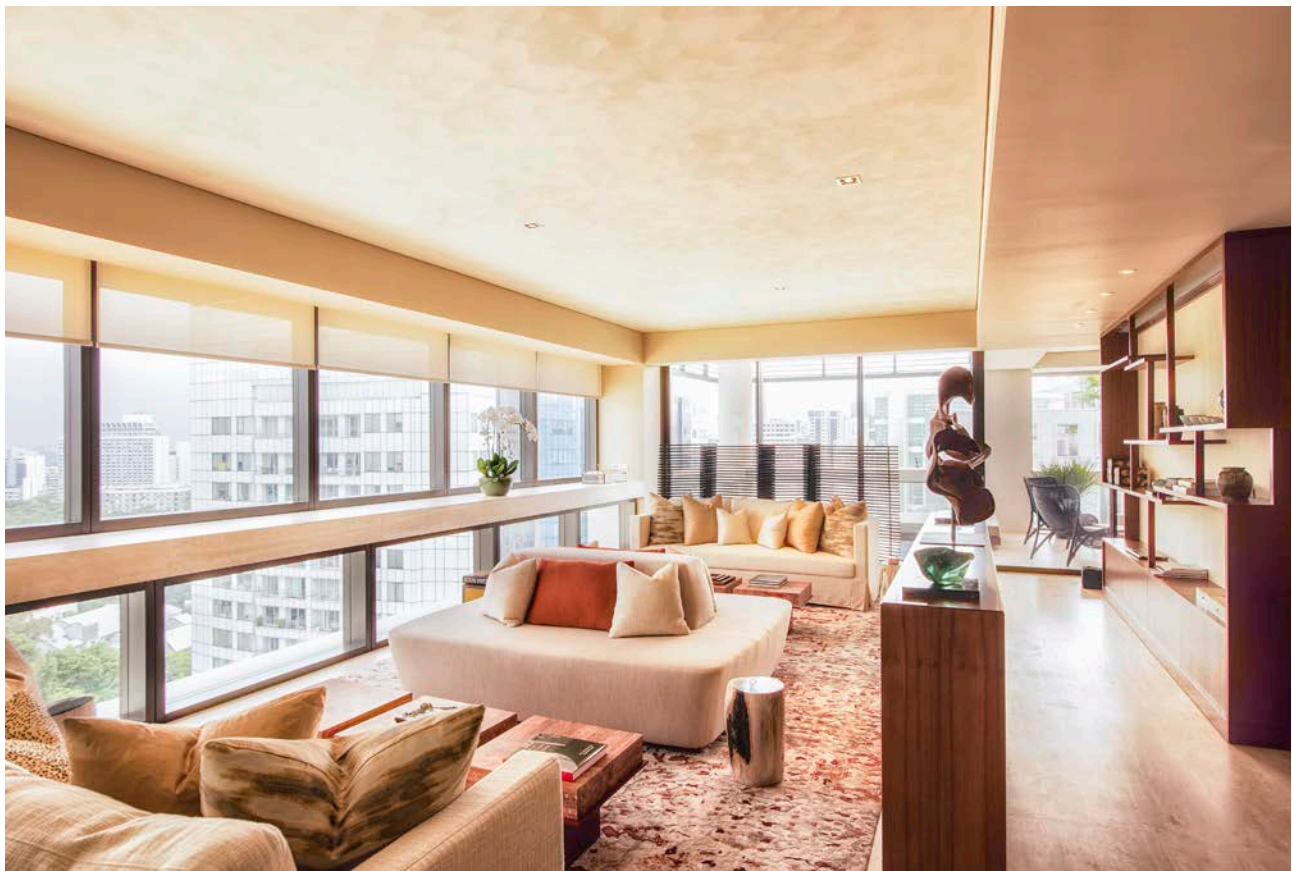
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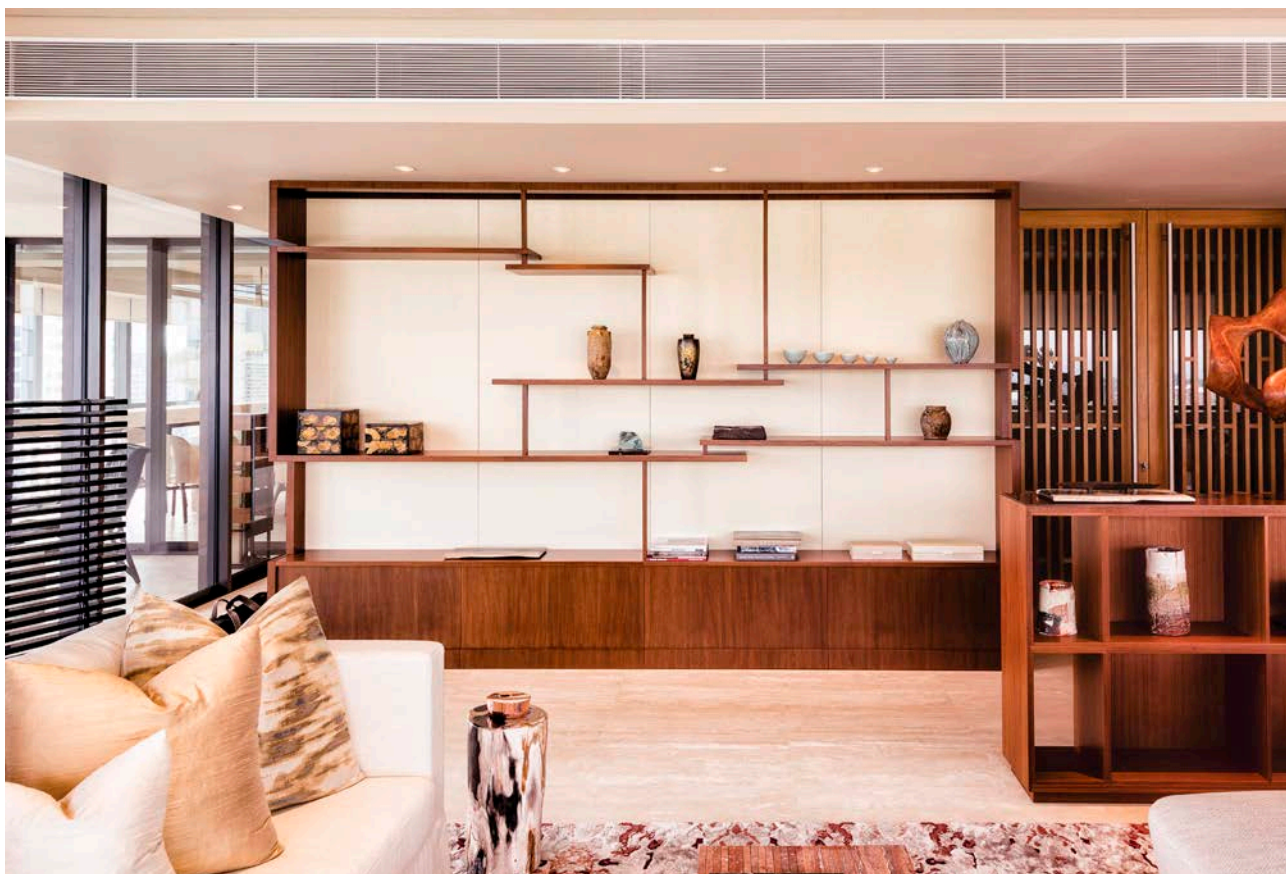
Arts and Craft

A perfect balance of contemporary chic and references to ancient Japan, Brewin Design Office's Hana Residence is a class act.

text by **JENNIFER CHOO** photography courtesy of **BREWIN DESIGN OFFICE**

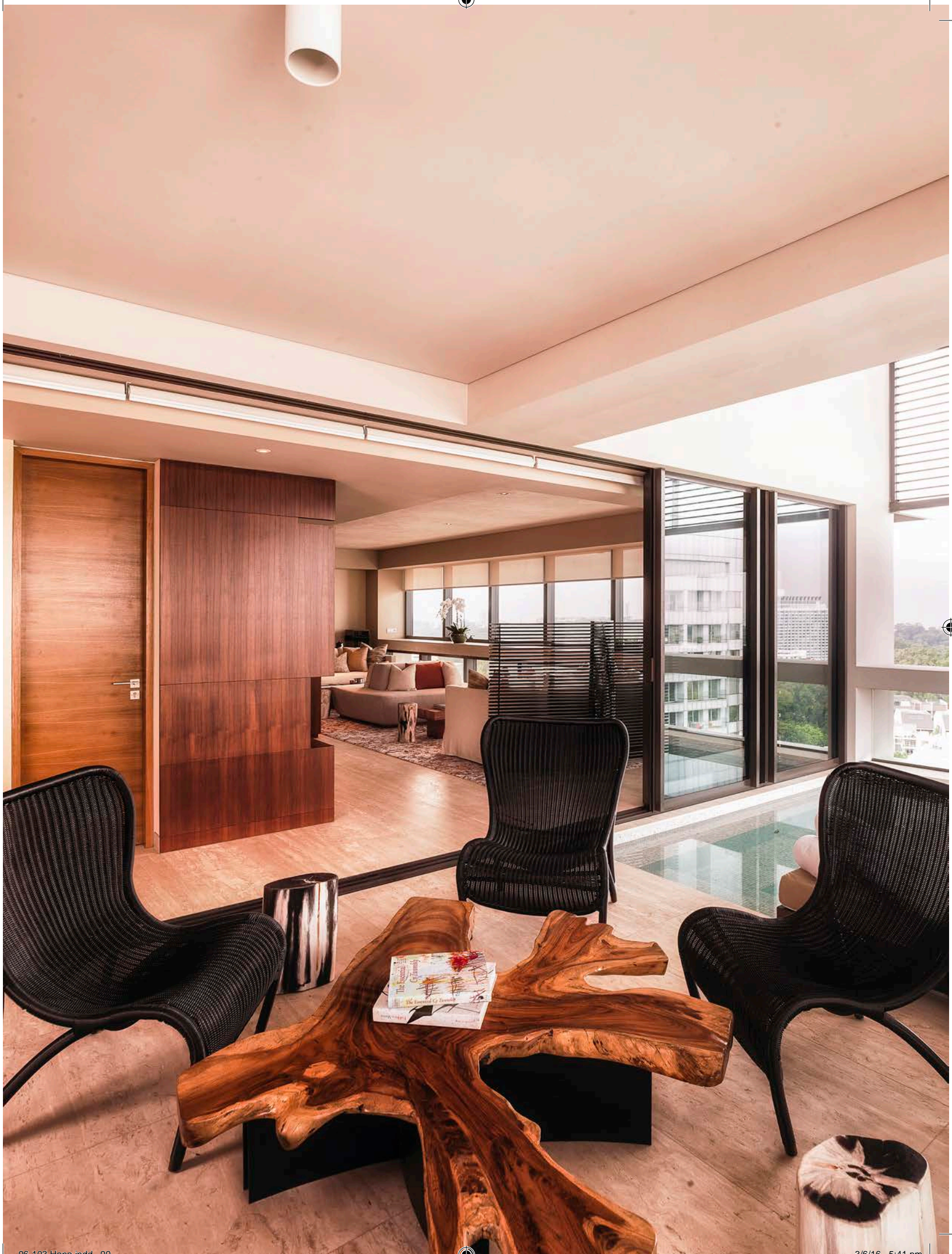
The philosophy of genius loci in architecture has been written and debated about extensively but its literal meaning, the spirit of a place, gives us the best indication of its essence. Any built environment needs to respect the spirit of its surroundings and the best architecture makes its inhabitants feel comfortable and uplifted - a master of this is Kerry Hill, whose tranquil, elegant yet bold work has garnered him numerous awards. Though Australian born, Hill's first office was established in Singapore where his influence on tropical modernism spread across the region's best luxury resorts. His latest residential project in the island state, Hana, is a master class in subtlety and Robert Cheng of Brewin Design Office's graceful interiors in one of its exclusive apartments does it justice.





Housing just one unit on each floor, the apartment is a generous 350m² in size and the first renovated unit in the recently completed Hana condominium by the Pontiac Land Group in the heart of central Singapore. Working with the developer for this project, Cheng looked to Kerry Hill's architecture for inspiration. "To me, it evokes contemporised Japanese influences of screening and symmetry. This is a concept which I drew from and adapted for the apartment interiors, in the materials and colour palette selected, and eventually the styling and decorative aesthetics," explains Cheng. "Inspiration was also drawn from the name of the condominium, 'Hana', which translates to 'beautiful flower' from Japanese. The result is a home that evokes traditional Japanese principles of interior design, construction, and aesthetics."









Melding contemporary sleekness with references to the past, Cheng worked with specialist fabricators to design a feature wall reminiscent of the Kyoto Imperial Palace, and a partition screen with interlocking lacquered timber slats, with delicate proportions and lines that mirror the patterned screen façade of the palace. The geometries and proportions are also reflected in furnishes across the home; in the selection of traditional Japanese patterns, tapestry, and handpicked antique pieces, the slabs of solid red travertine that stack to form cubic tables, and the solid silver travertine dining table. Apart from taking references from Japan directly, the aesthetics were also strongly influenced by architectural heavyweights who have spent time honing their craft in Japan. For instance, customised pieces like a lamp inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin series, and a biomorphic wood coffee table in the style of George Nakashima. While the original structure remained largely untouched, adjustments were made to the ceiling heights, and ceiling and wall finishes. Amongst other finishes, a textured stucco paint was used for some of the ceilings, and walls were clad with different wallpaper with an assortment of textures.

Exacting attention to detail was taken in every aspect of the project and as befitting this singular development, every care was taken to ensure the pieces were unique and exclusive on to this project. "This project involved heavy customisations, with many of the prototype furniture pieces tailored for, and created specially for the apartment. The development and fabrication processes were immensely gratifying, and we now use these designs as precedence for new pieces," reminisces Cheng. "Solid

Iranian Travertine stacks of 20mm were stacked both vertically and horizontally, with seamless joints connecting the very porous stone slabs. Experiments with the fabrication process resulted in a perfected rectilinear table top. Another collaboration that we thoroughly enjoyed was working with the absolutely talented Omar Khan to create six bespoke rugs, which were all customised in colour, pattern, and size, tailored for the apartment. This included a 9-metre-long rug for the living room, that has 15 different colours and varying heights that result in a piece with many different textures and weaves.”

Distinguished by clean lines and high quality manufacturing and construction, Cheng discloses that ultimately the project was geared to meet a certain result in build quality rather than to follow a particular aesthetic. More than half of the apartment was custom-designed, and the remaining accessories and loose pieces were sourced from international vendors with some art pieces belonging to the client. This flair for the eclectic and exceptional has served the firm in good stead: “In the past four years, we have mostly been focused on luxury residential projects. Because of the specific briefs from our clients, we have developed a passion for styling our interiors in an eclectic manner that ensures every design is unique and exquisite. These experiences, and the processes, have equipped us to be able to shift our focus this year, into public hospitality programs like restaurants, spas, hotel suites, and boutique hotels.” **hc.residences**



