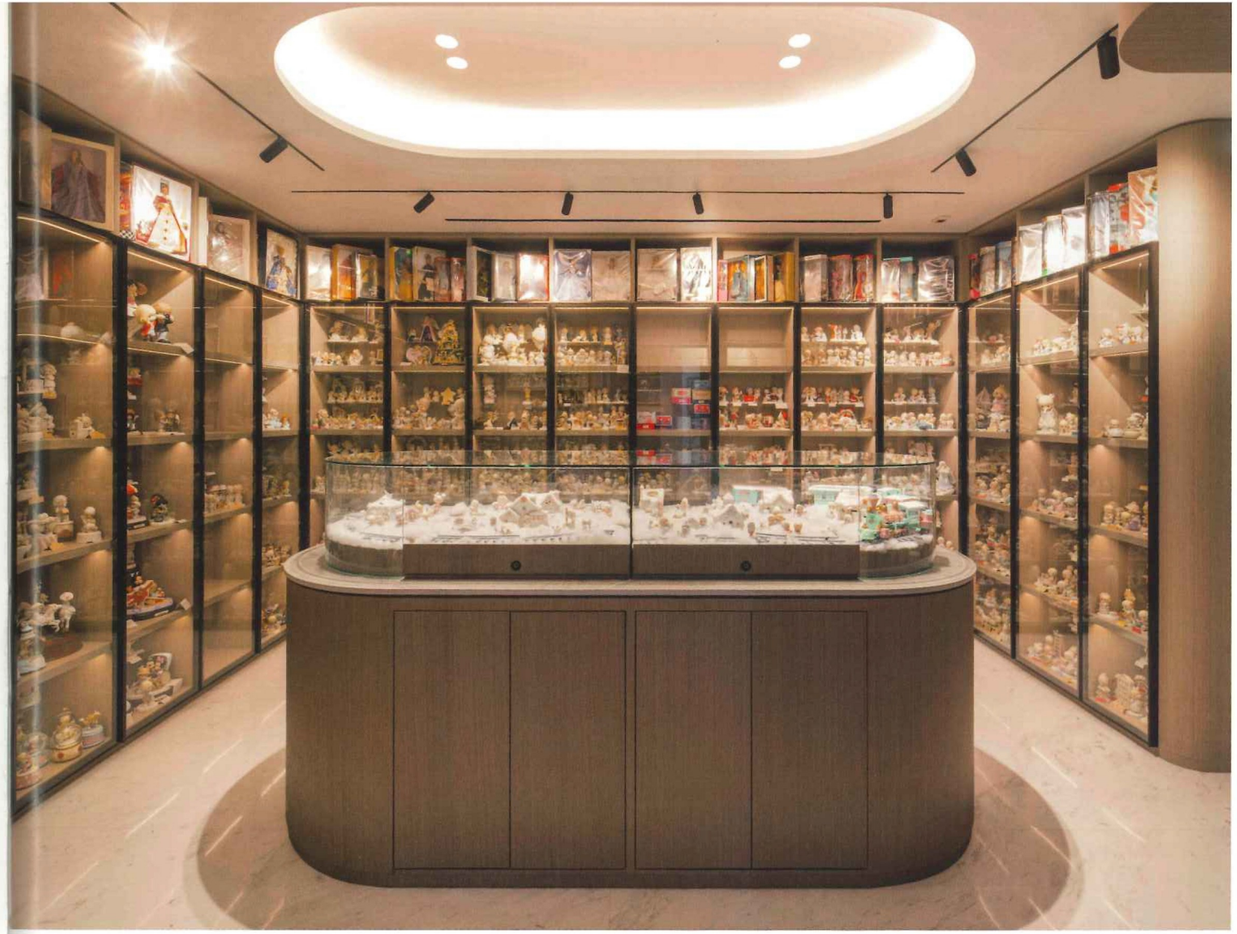
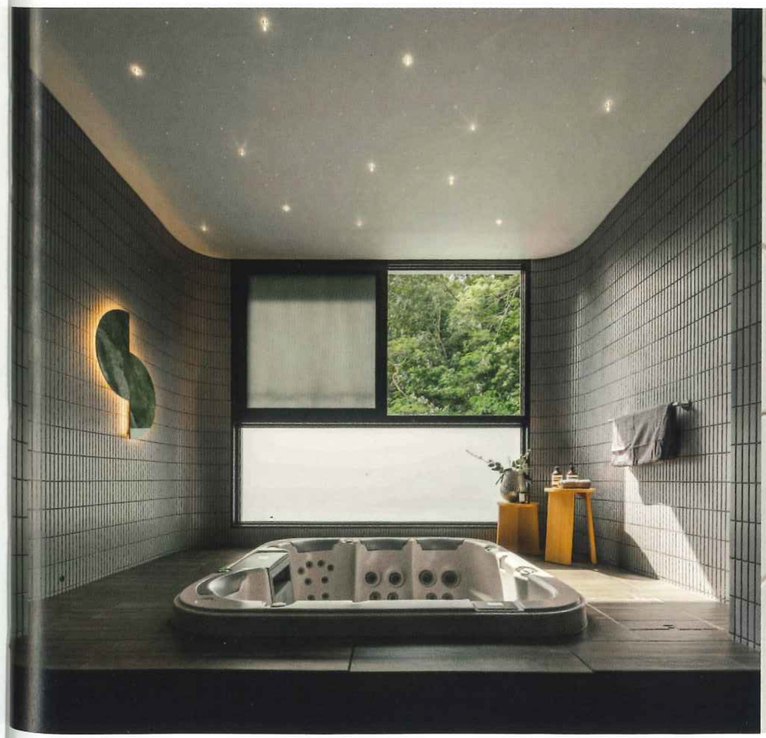
RHYTHM AND FLOW

This striking house by Czarl Architects takes inspiration from the beautiful greenery that surrounds the site while providing the comforts of modern urban life

By Hong Xinying. Photography by Jiwen Bai









This spread, clockwise from above: The tiered facade is designed to be reminiscent of tree branches, and the outdoor mural by local artist ShareD's Art features flora and fauna inspired by the Genesis creation story; full-height shelves showcase the wife's treasured collection of dolls and figurines, with a central island serving as a stage for lively vignettes featuring these collectible pieces; the vibrant emerald tones of the large-format tiles in the shower area echo those of the greenery outdoors; the jacuzzi looks out to serene vistas, with materials and textures carefully selected to convey a sense of tranquillity

Previous spread: The house looks out to verdant views of the nearby nature reserve

With its array of eye-catching skyscrapers and beautiful gardens, Singapore is seen as a city geared towards the future, marrying urban density with greenery to create liveable environments. This particular house by Czarl Architects has a futuristic countenance that embodies the city's forward-looking attitude and its desire to balance the beauty of nature with the comforts of urban life, not unlike how Singapore's built landscape came to be.

This house is home to a Singaporean family of four and their pet Pomsky dog, Yuzu. Situated in Singapore's leafy District 20, the site enjoys proximity to the verdant local parks and the city's largest nature reserve. As captivating as the nearby greenery can be, it does come with some everyday challenges. Insects are commonplace, and the local wildlife is known to sometimes wander into residential areas foraging for food.

"While initially captivated by the potential to seamlessly integrate nature into the site, we quickly realised the clients' concerns about insects, and the wildlife added a twist to our creative process. Amid this paradox, the homeowners' genuine desire to appreciate nature remained a driving force [in this project]," says Carl Lim, the principal architect and founder of Czarl Architects.

Lim worked on this project with design partner Anditya Dwi Saputra and senior designer Khalis Sidek; the team prioritised the lush views while conceptualising fluid, well-ventilated spaces that bask in the daylight and encourage the occupants to enjoy their proximity to nature. Adds the architect: "Our task became finding inventive ways to bring the outdoors in without inviting unwanted guests to the party."

RISING ABOVE

The distinctive architectural design of this abode alludes to the botanical life nearby, says the architect. "We took a cue from the organic forms and textures of the surrounding foliage, allowing them to inform the architectural language of the house. This approach led to the creation of a distinctive geometry characterised by elegant arches and subtle curves, mirroring the fluidity and grace of nature," says Lim.

Ranging from 3.5 to 5.5m in height, the curved glass panels that adorn the main areas of the house were custom-made for this project, requiring both engineering expertise and precision to achieve a harmonious effect and seamless fit with the architectural design. "This design choice allows the inhabitants to enjoy uninterrupted panoramic views of the

This spread, clockwise from top right: Larger figurines decorate various nooks across the home; these collectibles also bring colour and character to areas such as the basement foyer; the entertainment room features all the facilities that are needed for family film nights

surrounding landscape, seamlessly integrating the indoors with the outdoors," adds Lim.

Two wings connect at the centre of the house, with a series of half arches defining the unique architectural design. "This tiered expression of the arches lends the facade a sense of rhythm and movement, reminiscent of the graceful branches of a tree stretching outwards and sheltering the space beneath. The repetition of arches not only adds architectural interest, but also enhances the overall balance of the design," explains Lim.

To access the living room, visitors traverse a narrow yet lofty semi-outdoor foyer located between the two wings of the house. "As one approaches the unassuming main door, anticipation builds. Upon entering, one is greeted by a stunning triple-volume foyer adorned with elegant spherical pendant lights, creating a grand and inviting ambience. This unexpected juxtaposition of narrowness outside and spaciousness inside leaves a lasting impression and sets the tone for the rest of the home's aesthetic," he shares.

A LIVELY TABLEAU

On the ground floor, the open-plan living room connects to a dining area, kitchen, and tea room. This social zone is fully equipped with smart-home technology that offers convenient access to the controls for the lighting, air-con and entertainment systems. A feature wall incorporates a console for the 83-inch TV while concealing a moveable door that leads to the guest room. "The living area serves as the heart of the home, blending comfort, style and functionality seamlessly," says the architect.







The dining zone is designed to "foster a sense of warmth and conviviality", as inspired by the family's passion for cooking. Natural light floods the space through large windows, which offer prime views of the nature reserve. A bespoke marble-top table with an automated lazy Susan allows dishes to be easily shared while conversations occur across the table.

A small pantry next to the dining area provides easy access to tableware, linens and other culinary essentials. The sizeable kitchen is tailored to the wife's love of cooking and baking. It incorporates sleek cabinetry from Blum, which houses the family's many culinary tools while creating a clean-lined, minimalist look. A cold room by Ventco was specially designed to provide additional storage and optimum temperature conditions for wines, beverages and fresh produce.

The first floor also incorporates an area for the wife's collection of Precious Thoughts figurines and Barbie dolls. This display room features a custom island with a retractable platform designed like a stage for her extensive assortment of collectible figurines.

STUFF OF DREAMS

The house's two primary staircases lead to the basement and the upper storeys, respectively. The curved wall that runs along the staircase landing reflects the organic architectural language of the abode, while enhancing its sense of fluidity and elegance. Timber wall panelling, backlit handrails and marble-clad steps complete their elegant look.

The entertainment and gym zones are housed in the basement, while the bedrooms and bathrooms are located on the upper floors to afford privacy and stellar views of the nearby greenery. The rooms and adjoining bathrooms were crafted to reflect their occupants' characters and colour preferences. For instance, the daughters' shared bathroom is designed with a youthful aesthetic to reflect their vivacious personalities. Salmon pink mosaic walls are playfully paired with pebble-washed walls to create a dynamic, textured backdrop. The curved ceiling of the shower area adds to its sense of whimsy and charm.

Overall, the home's design represents the family's way of life in a manner that effortlessly combines good looks and functionality.