

Garden State

K2LD Architects designs an elegant home in Indonesia that is beautifully attuned to its tropical setting *By Luo Jingmei. Photography by Melanie Tanusetiawan / Studio Melt*





This page: Andesite stone, an indigenous volcanic rock, is used for the cladding on the water feature and the boundary wall at the entrance; locally sourced teak is utilised for the cladding, operable screens and car porch ceiling

Opposite page: Aluminium panels applied to the facade improve air flow and ventilation, and reduce the thermal impact on the walls

Previous spread: The living room features Piedra Paloma limestone flooring and Ocean Blue travertine walls, and a polished plaster ceiling from UK brand Armourcoat



When the Indonesian owner of the Anthracite House was younger, he went to school in Singapore and encountered many beautiful homes here. With their openness to the environment and strong relationship with the landscaping, these abodes made a strong impression on him. So, when he returned to Indonesia and acquired a piece of land near his parents' house, he desired to have his own tropical home; one that would rival the stunning abodes he had seen in the city-state. He thus engaged Singapore-based K2LD Architects to design a house for his family.

"The house needed to be easy to maintain, but should also be timeless," says K2LD Architects senior associate Leong Lai Ping, on the brief given to her. The client, who has two young children, wanted the first storey to be used for communal gatherings with family and friends, and the second storey as a private zone for the bedrooms. The basement was to contain spaces for personal leisure, such as a massage room and gym, as well as a large entertainment area for hosting guests.

The 14,477 sq ft property is located on a quiet residential street. While it was uncommon for houses in the area to be offset from the boundary walls, being built close to the neighbours with high walls between them, Leong set the building three metres from each side and the rear. This accentuates the monolithic design that Leong conceived,





This spread: The rhythmic banding of the Ocean Blue travertine, applied to the walls in most of the interior spaces, adds layers and texture while unifying the home's overall colour palette

inspired by a chunk of anthracite the house is named after. "From the street, it looks like a singular metallic-grey volume floating over the land," describes Leong. Aluminium composite panel cladding in a dark hue gives the structure its sombre personality.

The setbacks take advantage of the north-south-facing breeze corridors to cross ventilate the house. "These open spaces between buildings are fundamental design guidelines to ensure the house thrives in our tropical climate," says Leong. They also help to illuminate the interiors. Two longitudinal blocks are positioned across the site—they are connected by a linkway and a spiral staircase that look into a landscaped courtyard between the blocks.

The first-storey walls are set in from the cantilevered second-storey volume, resulting in deep overhangs that provide shade. Timber screens and panels employed throughout the interior and facade soften the use of the aluminium composite panels, as well as provide privacy and climate regulation. These fixtures ensure the home is tropically attuned.

As the occupants move through the house, they enjoy glimpses of gardens through slim-profiled aluminium windows and large panels of glazing. Internal courtyards, a water court in the basement and vertical green walls ensure plentiful green views while reducing the ambient temperature. Patches of greenery positioned alongside circulation corridors mean the occupants have a constant connection to the outdoors as they traverse the

Clockwise from top left:
The staircase is designed as a ribbon-like sculptural centrepiece with a backlit underside that glows at night; the treads and risers of the staircase utilise the same limestone as the flooring, with the balustrade walls finished in a smooth polished plaster in a waxed finish; the dining room features a carved Carrara marble island and cabinetry clad in smoked oak timber veneer panels

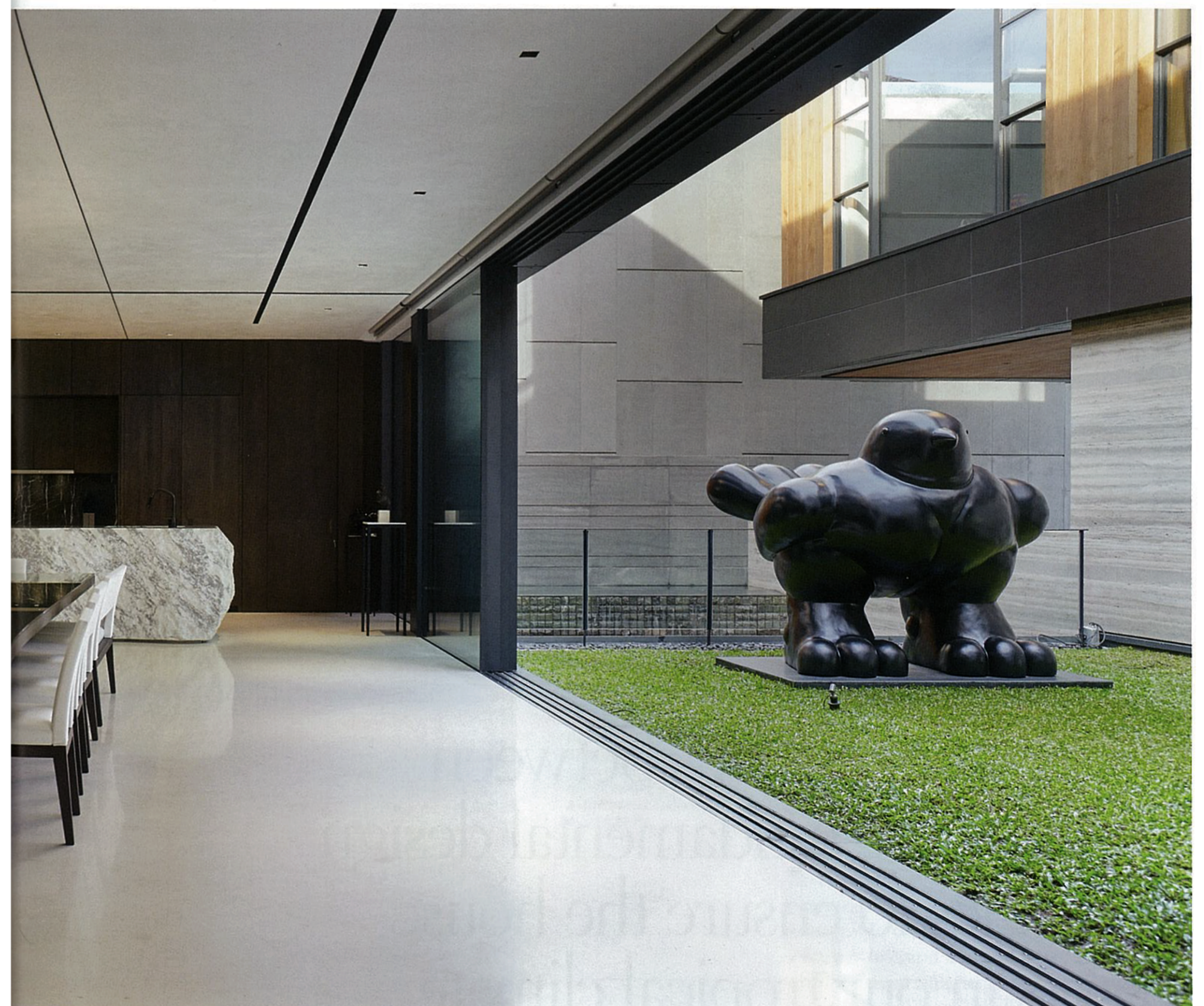


house. An eight-metre-tall external green wall allows for the foliage to be enjoyed not only on the first level, but also from the second storey and the basement's spa room.

As the facade is southeast oriented, ensuring the materials used could cope with the heat was paramount. The aluminium-composite panels cladding the exterior walls are not only durable and easy to maintain; they also help to prevent extreme heat gain. Says Leong: "The aluminium ventilated facade acts as a screen in which the cavity between the cladding and the walls allows the air to flow naturally to reduce thermal impact on the walls."

At the front of the house, andesite stone, an indigenous volcanic rock, clads the boundary walls and a water feature. "We wanted to celebrate the beauty of the material at strategic areas to showcase the stone's natural characteristics. Using locally sourced materials reduces the carbon footprint and makes it easy for clients to access the materials should they need to replace them," says Leong.

There are many ways in which Leong has achieved a sense of harmony in the home, such as cladding the structural walls that continue from indoors to outdoors with the same Italian





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Left to right: The spa room features an aluminium window system from Panoramah and opens up to a view of the lush vertical garden; the angled mirror makes a statement at the vanity table in the master suite

Ocean Blue travertine. Another way is the design of the spiral staircase. The same Piedra Paloma limestone used for the interior flooring clads the threads and riser.

Light-coloured smooth polished plaster for the balustrade walls and ash veneer for the handrails complements the Piedra Paloma limestone. This seamless palette accentuates the staircase’s ribbon-like design, Leong says. “The staircase was conceived as a standalone sculpture that doubles as a lighting feature. At night, the underside glows, set against the green wall at the exterior [through tall windows],” she adds.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Leong was not able to be on site at the end of the construction process. But looking at pictures sent by the owner on how the occupants happily use the space gives her much satisfaction. One of the architect’s favourite photographs is of visiting nephews and nieces having fun playing in the water feature in the basement while the adults relax in the family lounge. “To us, the built architecture is merely a framework, and it would never be successful until the users experience the spaces and suit them to their lifestyles,” she says.