

SINGAPORE

# home concepts

LIVE IN INSPIRATION

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SINGAPORE DESIGN FESTIVAL

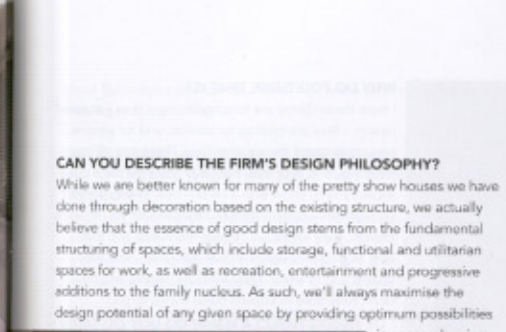
SPOTLIGHT ON THE PRESIDENT'S DESIGN AWARD  
WINNERS & LIST OF STELLAR EVENTS



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## The Perfect Fit

LIKE A FINELY TAILORED SUIT, INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM SU MISURA, HEADED BY ANGELA LIM, SEEKS TO CREATE HOMES THAT LOOK AND FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE BEEN SPECIALLY MADE TO MEASURE

TEXT: JANICE SEOW PICTURES COURTESY OF SU MISURA

**THE ALLURE OF** something that's been specially designed to fit you like a glove is undeniable, and it's something Su Misura, an upmarket interior design division of the Numero Uno Creative Group, has been doing since day one. The firm may have only been set up early this year, but already it's being sought after by well-heeled clients around the world to take on projects in both Singapore and around the region.

Its team of experienced designers is headed by Angela Lim, whose signature style of timeless elegance and subtle glamour, and love for neutral palettes is clearly seen in each and every Su Misura project that the firm has taken on. The fashion-loving designer, who takes inspiration from the streets of Milan, tell us why her clients keep coming back.

### WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME SU MISURA?

Su Misura is actually Italian for 'made to measure'. It was chosen for

its Italian origins. After all, our counterparts in Italy have been the forerunners when it comes to design. More importantly, we get our inspiration from the fashion city of the world, Milan, which has fabulous boutiques. When you walk down its streets you see how the fashion boutique designers dress up their store windows. It's always so glitzy and it never fails to impress.

There are also very very good tailors there, and they will always put up a sign that says su misura. So when you go there you'll be reminded of our company – that's what my clients always tell me. They say "You know Angela, we were in Milan the other day and we kept seeing your company's name. And I'd say "Yeah, you see a lot of Su Misura don't you", because that's what you see over there – shops that make to measure. And I think it's such a nice name because it sounds so perfect... When you make something to measure, it really fits.

### CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE FIRM'S DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

While we are better known for many of the pretty show houses we have done through decoration based on the existing structure, we actually believe that the essence of good design stems from the fundamental structuring of spaces, which include storage, functional and utilitarian spaces for work, as well as recreation, entertainment and progressive additions to the family nucleus. As such, we'll always maximise the design potential of any given space by providing optimum possibilities

in space planning prior to doing any interior designing or decorating works.

### WHAT'S YOUR OWN PERSONAL STYLE LIKE?

This is going to sound cliché, but I truly believe in designing something quite timeless, which is why I always start off with a very neutral palette. It's the contrast between the neutral colours that add punchiness. I like to mix beige with chocolate, or black against white, and put in a little

bling with gold or silver. I also like to combine plain surfaces with rough texture or a highly polished finish. That's pretty much it. I feel that even if your taste were to change over time, you can always add colours to a neutral palette: it'll never go wrong.

### YOU ACTUALLY MOVED FROM BANKING INTO INTERIOR DESIGN. WHAT SPARKED THAT MOVE?

I always liked arts and crafts, but parents always tell us to go into the science stream and then you can better explore what you want to do in the future. They are not wrong... but they do it with a cane in their hand.

So I majored in economics and maths, and like most of my peers, I ended up in a bank. The switch came very early on in my career. I've enjoyed making things look pretty since I was young, and you know being an accountant or banker doesn't give you much time to do that.

### BUT WHY DID YOU CHOOSE INTERIOR DESIGN?

You can talk about being a painter, a fashion designer, or a jewellery designer, but I would say interior design is a bigger challenge because in interior design I'm able to incorporate all these things that I like. I can design a sofa, I can design a console, I can design a cushion, I can design jewellery, I can design clothes, and I can put them all in my showflat. So it's all encompassing, and that's why I'm here. It's a bigger challenge.

### YOU SPEAK ABOUT BEING INSPIRED BY ITALY'S FASHION CITY, MILAN. WHAT FASHION TRENDS HAVE YOU OBSERVED THIS YEAR THAT YOU HAVE INCORPORATED INTO YOUR DESIGNS?

I think I would say that the fashion houses are going a little more bling. They are incorporating more polished materials into their designs. You never fail to see how they mix very simple or textured materials with some gold and silver – it's all about subtle elegance, subtle luxury.

### WHAT WOULD YOU SAY SETS SU MISURA APART FROM OTHER INTERIOR DESIGN FIRMS?

I would say the designs and the people. Earlier I was telling you that we work with a very neutral palette and then somewhere somehow we will throw in something that has bling to it. That's really what makes Su Misura stand out. A lot of people can do fantastic designs, but there's never really a signature about it. I've gotten so many enquiries ever since my first project was featured, and everyone would call up asking about the same thing.

### TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT PROJECT.

When The Ester was featured, everyone called up asking about the French doors. Those doors weren't even there to begin with; it's something we put in when we remodelled the place. We also designed and custom-made the handles.

### CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE INTERIOR TRENDS THAT WE ARE SEEING IN THE HOME TODAY?

Nowadays, it seems that everyone who comes to me is going crazy over





THE TIER

#### WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

I think these clients are looking for more than just good design – they are looking for service, and for people who understand the way they live. These people are travellers, and they have very sophisticated taste. They expect you to know who a certain designer is, where you can get a certain leather... they expect you to know brands. They might say "I have this watch and that belt, from this designer or that designer", and they expect you to know. They are busy people and they don't have time to explain these things to you.

#### WHAT'S THE MOST CHALLENGING THING ABOUT BEING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER TODAY? AND WHAT MOTIVATES YOU THEN?

The most challenging thing is always the timeframe. The client always wants things yesterday. Designing a highly efficient living space within the ever shrinking pigeon holes we live in is another challenge. And what motivates us is the last project. You are only as good as your last project. Also grateful clients. It's these things that propel us forward.

#### DO MANY CLIENTS THEN BECOME YOUR FRIENDS AND LONG-TERM CLIENTS?

Certainly. So much so that they don't call anyone else anymore. They'll just say "Angela, here's the key, call me when it's done". It gets to that stage where there's absolute trust. In fact, after a while they don't even bother to find out what you are going to do. They just know that you know them so well, or they just go and see one of my house projects and go "Okay, this is

storage spaces. We deal with very affluent clients. They come to me and say things like "Angela, you know I've 100 pairs of shoes, I need a walk-in wardrobe" or "I need to turn a room into a walk-in wardrobe". And it's really like that Heineken ad, where people go in and go "ahh!".

#### WHAT HAS BEEN THE CRAZIEST BRIEF SO FAR?

I've got this client from Hong Kong who wanted us to hack two rooms and turn it into one walk-in wardrobe. But that's not the best part. That came after we had designed the walk-in wardrobe, with three tiers of hangers – the last one using the hydraulic system – and we still couldn't fit in all her clothes. It's also amazing how this client colour codes and coordinates all her clothes and winter wear.

#### DO YOU HAVE MORE LOCAL OR FOREIGN CLIENTS?

We seem to attract a lot of foreigners.



ESTRIVILLAS