



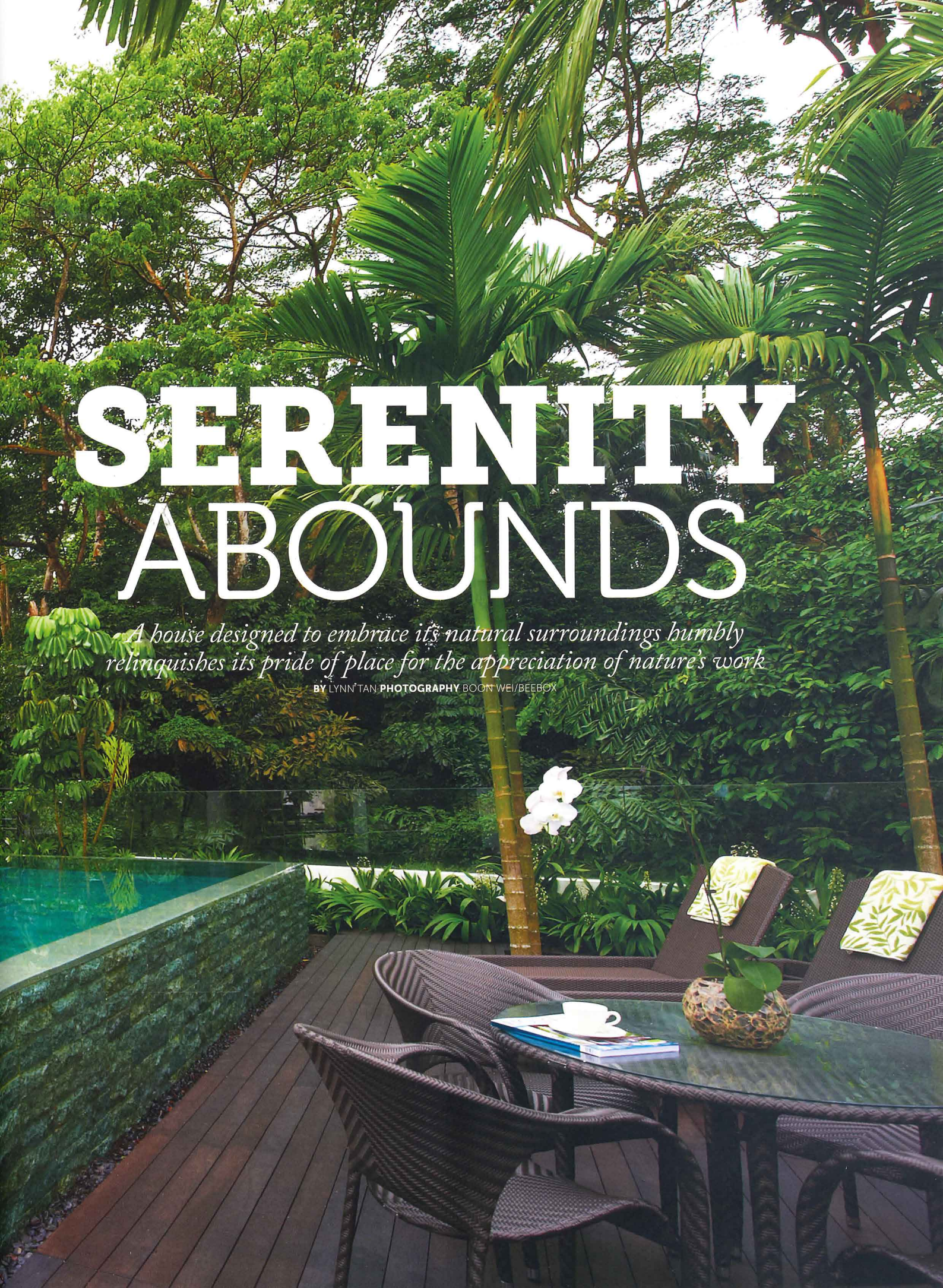
The homeowner designed the layout of the home to incorporate impressive views of the green corridor next door



# SERENITY ABOUNDS

*A house designed to embrace its natural surroundings humbly  
relinquishes its pride of place for the appreciation of nature's work*

BY LYNN TAN PHOTOGRAPHY BOON WEI/BEEBOX

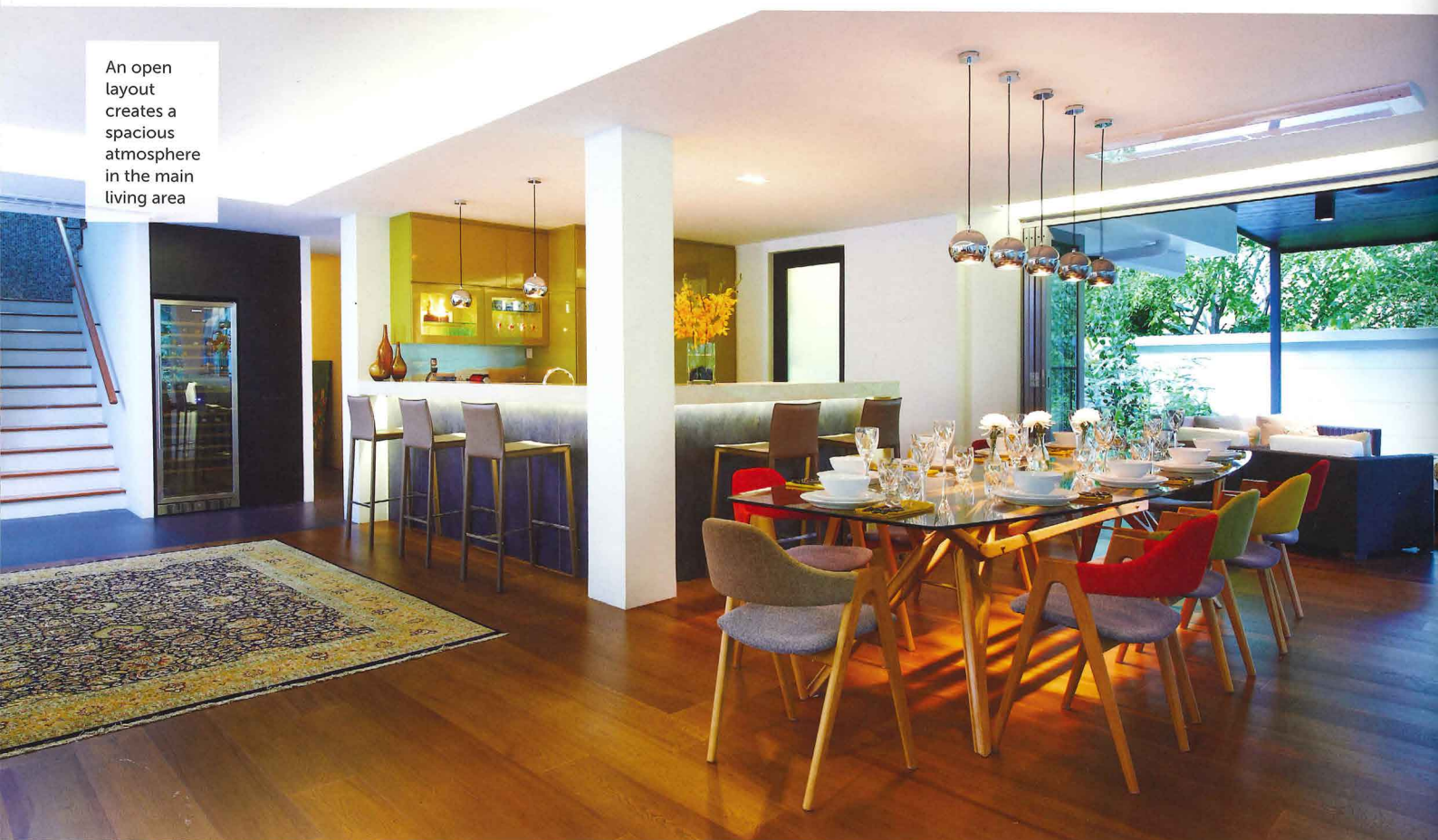




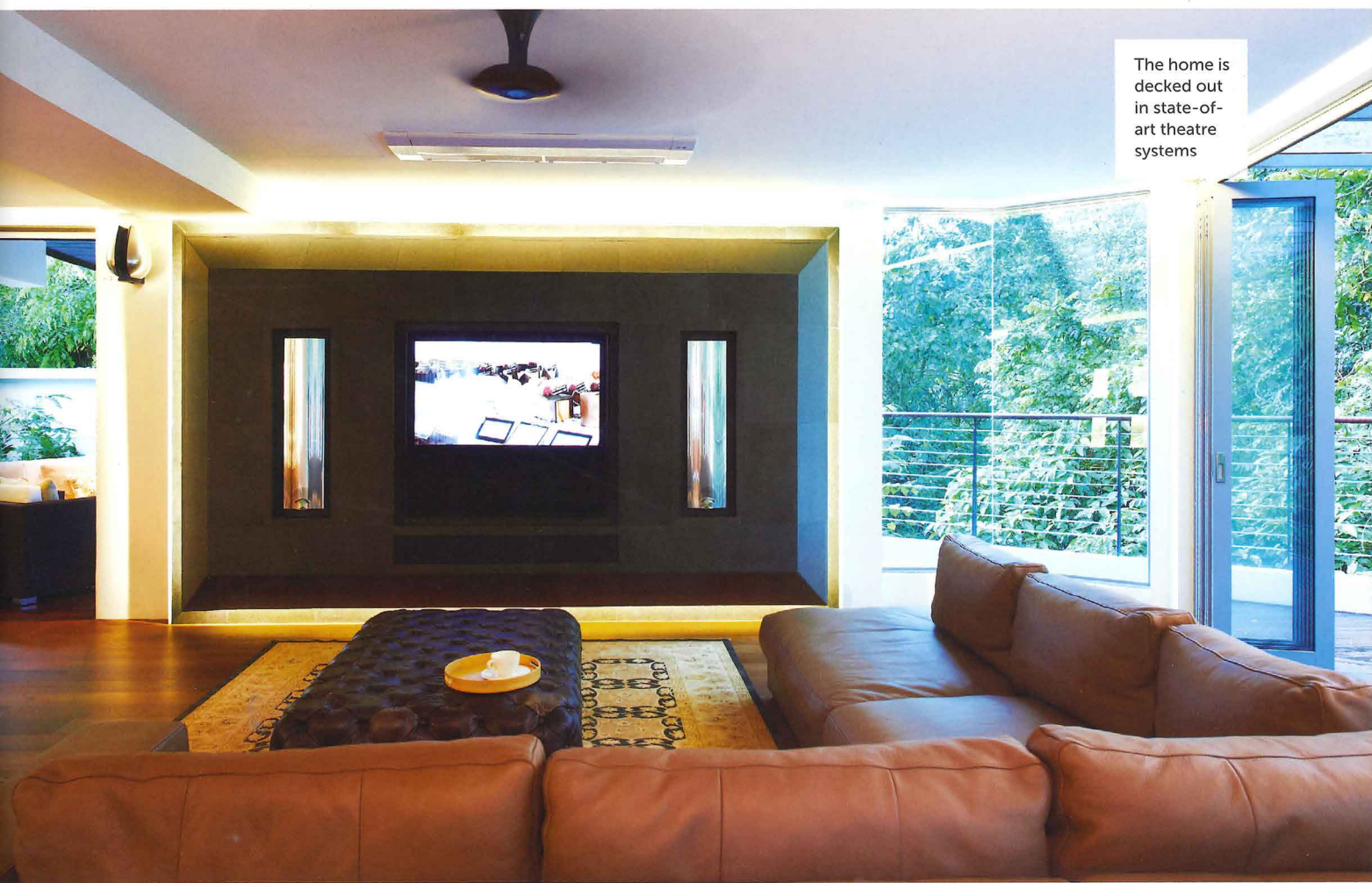
Soft textures and neutral tones complement the sights and sounds of nature filling the spaces in the home



An open layout creates a spacious atmosphere in the main living area







The home is decked out in state-of-art theatre systems

**T**he homeowner, the president of a cable network in Asia, first arrived in Singapore in 2001 and lived here for two years, before moving to Miami. Having returned to Singapore in 2005, he and his family decided to make Singapore their home. The first residence they owned was an apartment along Grange road, but with two growing boys who love rugby and wakeboarding, the move to a landed property was only a matter of time.

Having lived in London and Miami prior to settling in Singapore, the homeowner loves about living in this part of the world. "It is wonderful that there are no seasons and it is summer all year round," says the homeowner. This tropicity lies at the heart of the design of his new home- a bungalow plot nestled right up against a nature reserve, as well as the brief that was conveyed to Edwin Foo and Djohan Arifin Chen of The Design Ministry, who also worked on the homeowner's previous home.

When the homeowner bought the property two years ago, there

was an existing two storey house with a basement. The homeowner recognised from the onset that there was tremendous potential to create a home that better engages its lush surroundings and that the basement can be put to much better use. While most of the building structure was retained, some major changes included the addition of an elevated pool deck in front of the house and a verandah behind. The basement was converted into a state-of-the-art home theatre and a fully-equipped gym.

The homeowner decided on an open plan, which is a very logical choice as it does not just allow views of the surrounding greenery but also facilitates natural ventilation throughout the house. "We knew that we did not want an air-conditioned box; we already have enough of that at work and in school. We wanted a house where there is no distinct segregation between inside and outside," the homeowner emphasised. The entire first floor is surrounded by floor-to-ceiling sliding-folding glass doors that can be fully-opened to embrace the verdant landscape that is all around.





A wide outdoor terrace provides additional space for the family to entertain



The interior design theme is based on a mixture of natural textures and simple forms

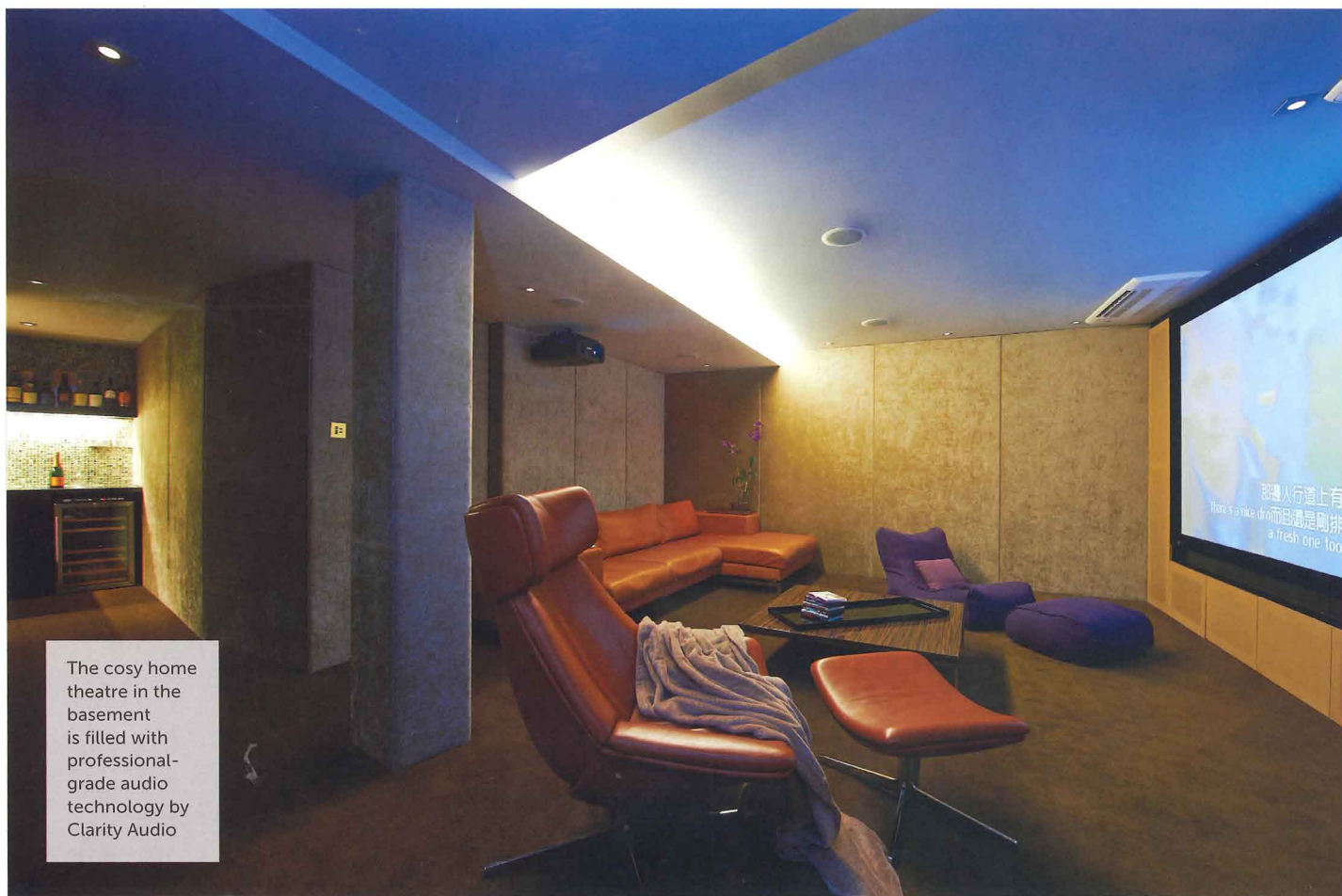


A corner in the main corridor on the second floor converted into a cosy reading corner



The children's bedrooms are filled with their favourite accessories and memorabilia





The cosy home theatre in the basement is filled with professional-grade audio technology by Clarity Audio

## **"The verandah overlooks the forest and its amazing wildlife and we love to spend time here as a family, reading and listening to music."**

Visitors are greeted by a solitary blue antique desk and mirror accompanied by a lone Giorgetti armchair. Set within a confined entrance foyer, the deliberately contained space is in stark contrast to the openness in the rest of the house and this serves to heighten the surprise that lies in stored. Stepping into the vestibule leading off the foyer, the transition from cool tiles to timber flooring sends a subliminal message that evokes the warmth of home. A Poltrona Frau sofa runs the length of the vestibule, echoed by a vaulted ceiling, allowing you to soak in the expansive view of the pool deck which is almost as enjoyable as actually soaking in the pool itself.

The skilful use of furniture, structural columns and even ceiling profile to define the various spaces without the use of partitions and remains true to the design intent of the open plan.

A freestanding column that

notionally demarcates the vestibule from the dining and living areas is turned into a feature by carving out curved niches with concealed lighting. An L-shaped sofa centred around a Chesterfield ottoman and a rug defines the living area.

The dining space and open-concept kitchen are rightful features in themselves but your attention is inevitably diverted to the surroundings and you find yourself drawn to the verandah adjoining the dining area. The use of timber in both the deck and the ceiling, and the choice of outdoor furniture lend a rustic quality that complements the natural environment perfectly. "The verandah overlooks the forest and its amazing wildlife and we love to spend time here as a family, reading and listening to music," shares the homeowner.

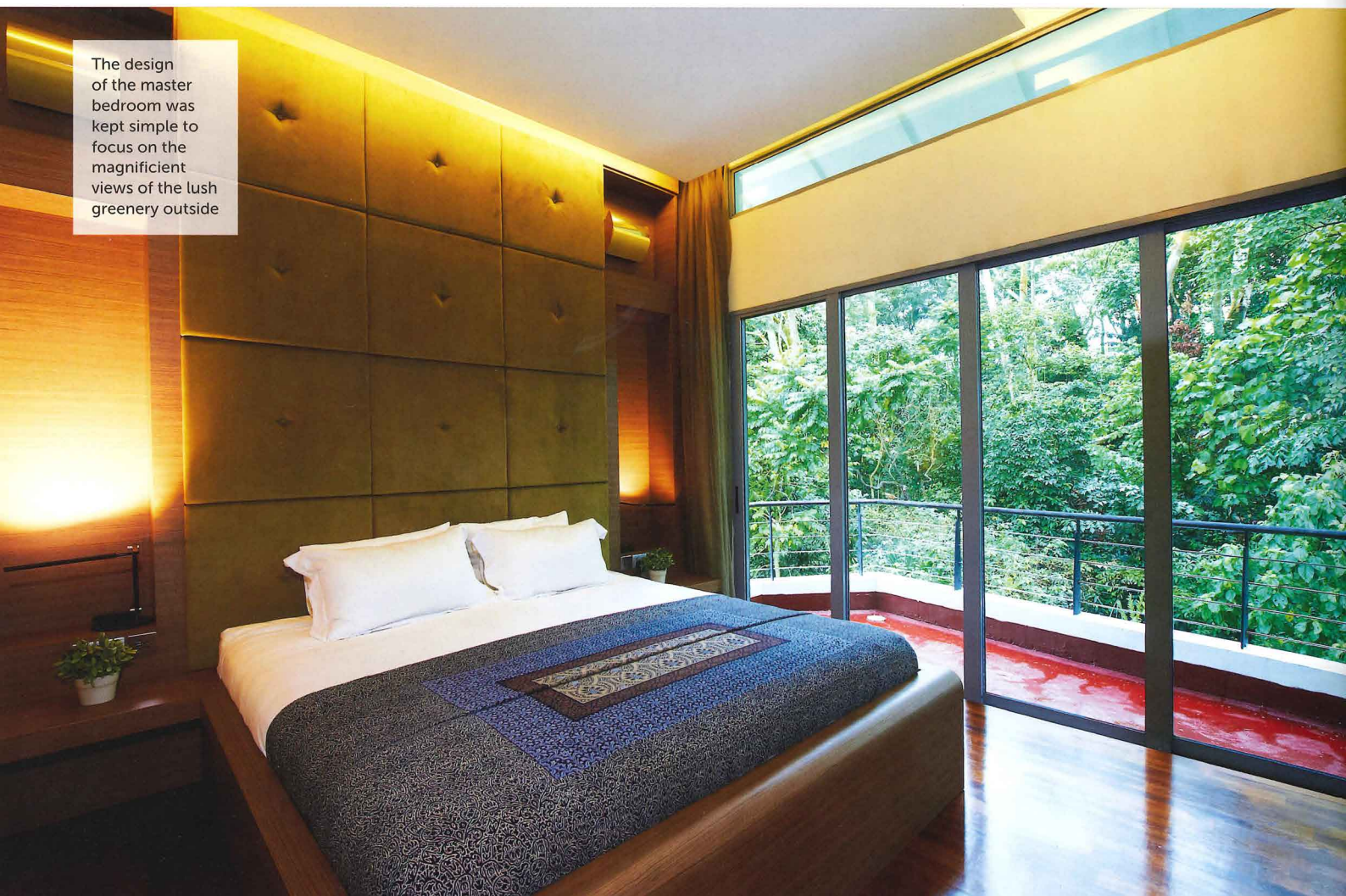
Another family indulgence lies hidden in the basement. This is where you will



Windows in the master bedroom offer plenty of spaces for the homeowners to sit back and relax while enjoying the sights of the rainforest



The design of the master bedroom was kept simple to focus on the magnificent views of the lush greenery outside







Frosted windows in the master bathroom allows lots of natural light to fill the space

## The second storey uses a combination of windows at different heights to capitalise on views and bring in natural light.

find a professional-grade home theatre designed and installed by Clarity Audio, which is hardly surprising considering the homeowner's profession. The soundproofed and carpeted interior, state-of-the-art equipment, Walter Knoll reclining armchair and Ambient Lounge bean bags create the ideal spot for the family to enjoy their favourite movies and follow major sporting leagues. Access to the gym is through a hidden door beside the home theatre. Windows running the entire length of the gym ensure that you can still catch a glimpse of greenery despite being subterranean.

Full-height book shelves built into the walls around the second storey staircase landing, together with a simple Giorgetti armchair and rug, transform it into a cosy reading area. The boys' bedrooms are located on either side of the reading area and their understated designs are created using predominantly teak furniture set against a neutral

colour scheme. The master bedroom uses a similar warm, earthy palette comprising brown and green hues. A sitting cum study area overlooking the pool deck and adjacent forest provides yet another opportunity to appreciate the work of nature. A free-standing television partition visually screens off the sleeping area without unnecessarily compartmentalising the room.

Whilst full-height, sliding-folding glass doors feature prominently on the first storey, the second storey uses a combination of windows at different heights to capitalise on views and bring in natural light. The homeowner's work entails frequent travels across the Asia Pacific region so for him, home is "a place to relax, spend time and be comfortable with my family." In this case, the home that they have created is a habitat that celebrates being in the tropics, not through grand, flamboyant gestures but in small, sensitive ways. **H**

### THE BRIEF

**Type of Home:**

Landed

**Size of Property:**

7,100 sq ft

**Size of Built-up**

**Area:** 10,500 sq ft

**Residents:** 4

**Name of Interior**

**Designer:** Edwin

Foo and Djohan

Arifin Chen, The

Design Ministry

Pte Ltd

**Time Taken:**

9 months