



★ S.C. CHEAH'S CHOICE OF BEST BUNGALOW DESIGN: LUM CHANG GROUP'S CUBIST AT TWIN PALMS KEMENSAH ★

Inner beauty of the Cubist

CITATION:

The Cubist bungalows' main winning theme is its triple-volume stairwell set right in the middle of the house. The concept looks simple but is mould-breaking. It is not so much looking outwards but looking inwards where the "centre of gravity" is the spacious stairwell that exudes vibrancy and family bonding.

It is amazing how Lum Chang Group has created the ultimate bungalow design – thanks to its fantastic design team and architect, Atelier 8. It goes to show that you don't need a famous foreign name to produce a masterpiece!

REASONS FOR MY CHOICE:

Of all the awards, this is probably the most difficult to pick because there are so many good and impressive bungalow designs in the country.

For the purpose of this award, I did not include bespoke bungalows or villas specially designed for individuals such as the ones you see in Damansara Heights or Kenny Hills. They are in a separate category.

I also did not consider the Cubist's facade as its forte does not lie in its external appearance but more in its internal beauty. That's what endeared me to it.

Take the four-plus-one-bedroom Series B design (priced from RM2.83 million) as an example. To me, this is the best of the three Cubist types where all the designs boast triple-volume stairwells.

You have to see the Series B to appreciate what I mean. It has sweeping 360° views of the entire interior of the house, including the spacious living and dry kitchen areas. One vantage point is the second floor bedroom which has a window looking into the stairwell and across to the living area, which is reminiscent of some pre-war houses in Penang with a large air well and rooms as well as living areas surrounding it. These days, they call it courtyard homes but the Cubist is quite different.

Its stairwell may have evolved from this but it is definitely more sophisticated because it is not easy to position all those windows and rooms to integrate so nicely.

The "looking inward" configuration not only enhances privacy, visual linkages and cross-ventilation but also fosters family bonding and interaction. Most of the spaces look inward with only appropriate openings to capture the green, panoramic views of the Klang Valley's Melawati Hills located just beyond Twin Palms Kemensah.

The minimal external openings also means the house receives

less solar radiation while the "openness" within the three-storey structure induces natural lighting and ventilation, thus fulfilling the basic requirement for "going green".

The moment you enter the Series B show unit, you will be greeted by a small hallway where you can sit on a bench to take off your shoes. You will then enter a large but cosy family room (with a hidden pantry) that flows seamlessly into a study and tastefully furnished master bedroom with its own private courtyard.

The layout includes three patios, two on the ground floor and another on the second floor, as well as two master bedrooms, one on the ground which is ideal for grandparents and the second on the top floor complete with a spacious balcony.

This balcony opens to the patio that is a link to another bedroom. As both these bedrooms share the patio, family bonding is further enhanced.

The top floor patio has a glass panel facing the stairwell, allowing you to see practically what's going on in and around the stairwell.

Another interesting feature is the 1.5m-wide gallery that partially wraps around the stairwell of each floor. It redefines the role of corridors and can also function as storage space with the addition of cabinets. Put some art pieces, decorative memorabilia or trophies here and it can be turned into an art gallery!

Atelier 8's principal Yeo Eng Ming said: "Perhaps the most challenging part is how to effectively link all the spaces stretching up three levels both physically and visually.

"Unlike the conventional approach of locating the staircase at one side to maximise space, we took a rather bold approach of putting it in the middle of the house.

"Initially, we were unsure how the market would react to this but we strongly believe that the family bonding will be enhanced with such a layout. We appreciate Lum Chang having the courage to allow us to create this triple-volume stairwell.

"We don't simply follow market trends or just provide what the market wants. We work very hard to pursue designs which are not just aesthetically exciting but also functional to provide practical benefits to end-users' daily living," he said.

Indeed, for a small firm offering architectural design consultancy and value engineering services, Atelier 8 has done very well to achieve a winning design. The firm is also responsible for design-



Homeowners can enjoy panoramic views of Melawati Hills.

The triple-volume stairwell of the Series B bungalow.

The master bedroom is linked to a patio.



ing the Palmyra Superlink in Lum Chang's other development in the Klang Valley, Twin Palms Sungai Long.

The 42 units of three-storey Cubist bungalows have standard plot sizes of 50ft by 90ft and 50ft by 100ft and built-up areas of 4,770sq ft to 5,981sq ft. At a starting price of RM2.7 million, buyers can also look forward to owning floor-to-ceiling windows, marble floor finishes in the living and dining areas (only for Series A and C), a Jacuzzi, quality sanitary wares and fittings, a solar heater, alarm system, auto gate and intercoms in all the rooms. The staircase will also be finished with solid timber flooring and glass railings.

Recreational facilities in Twin Palms Kemensah include a linear park for jogging, gazebo



The indoor area has been designed to blend seamlessly with the outdoors.

with barbecue pit, children's playground, exercise area and sporting venue for games such as basketball.

The freehold, low-density gated and guarded development in the much sought-after Kemensah Heights neighbourhood, which

is near the National Zoo, is set on the slopes of Bukit Tabur, or popularly known as Klang Gates crystal range.

It is accessible from Kuala Lumpur city via the Middle Ring Road II, Ampang-KL Elevated Highway and Duke highway.