

Show(flat) Stopping

Local interior design firm Creative Mind Design finds niche in decorating showflats and now wants to venture into hotel and resort design. BY JAMIE EE

IT WAS NOT BY DESIGN. FOR MS CONSTANCE TEW, AN INTERIOR DESIGNER, DISCOVERING HER NICHE IN DECORATING SHOWFLATS WAS SOMEWHAT BY CHANCE.

Five years ago in 2007, she started her own interior-architecture design firm Creative Mind Design (CMD), after working in the industry for close to 10 years. The firm's big break came quickly – it was tasked by Far East Organization to do up its showflat for Miro, a luxurious, freehold all-loft condominium development in Lincoln Road.

Drawing inspiration from the Bulgari Hotel in Milan, Italy, Ms Tew came up with a loft design that drew praises from both the developer and buyers.

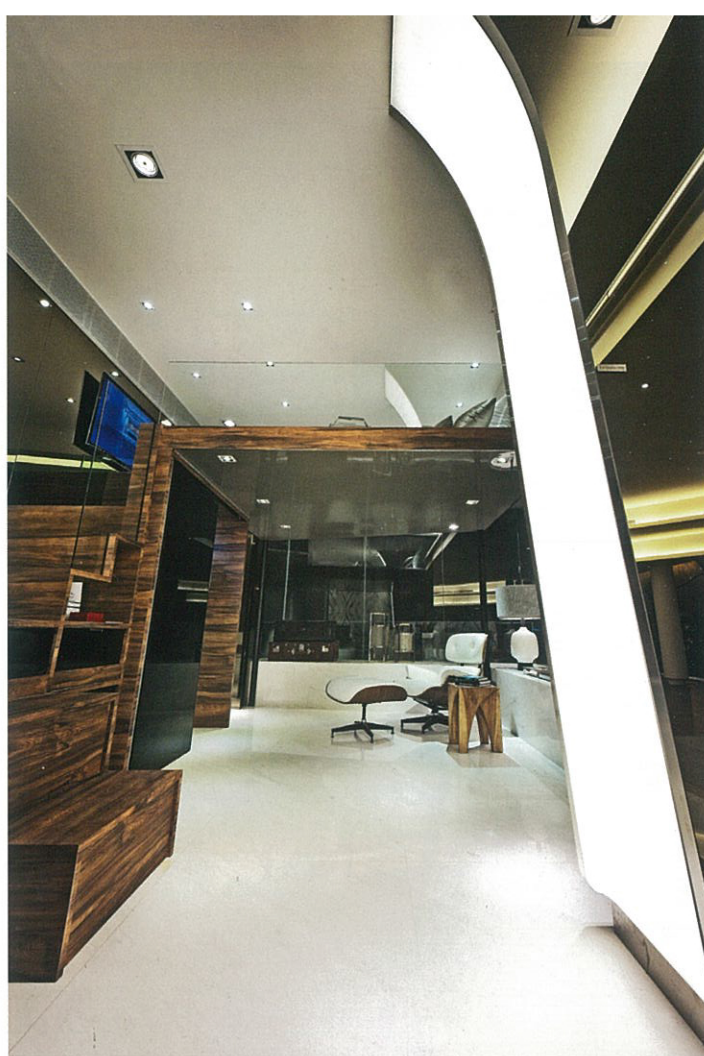
“By default, because we do projects for Far East, the assignments they pass to us are usually showflats. So it was not that we wanted to specialise in them. It just happened that these were the projects given to us and we started to do very well in them,” says Ms Tew, the design director of CMD. “Due to economies of scale, we became better and faster at completing them.”

To date, CMD has worked on more than 20 of Far East Organization's developments – on the planning and designing of showflats, as well as for works of the main developments.

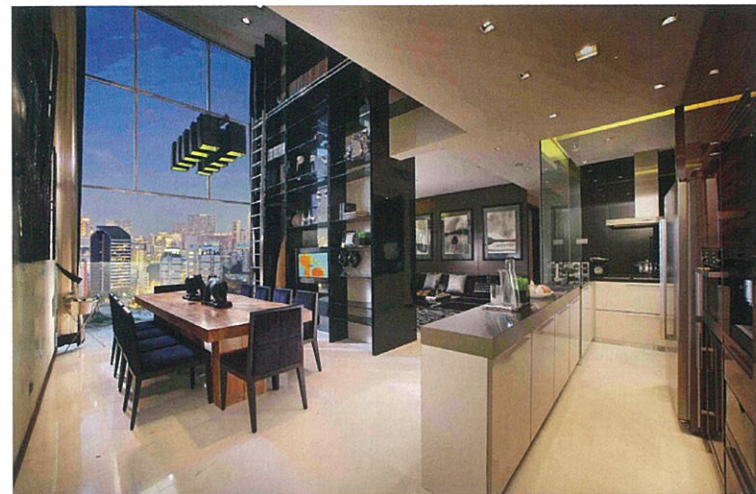
It now houses eight designers and four operations staff at its cosy Winstedt Road office. “It's quite amazing. That's why I always tell the team they are exceptionally good. I really believe they are among the top tier in Singapore,” says Ms Tew.

From drafting a design to putting the finishing touches to a show space, it takes about four months for Ms Tew and her team to complete each showflat.

Each design is tailor-made to bring out the unique qualities of the development and fit the aspirations of its target market.



Top: CMD's showflat design for The Scotts Tower.
Above: The Scotts Tower's showflat. Facing page, from top: Designing the showflat for Far East's Miro provided CMD its big break; CMD's showflat design for The Greenwich was published in the annual *Andrew Martin Interior Design Review*.



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There are big differences between designing showflats and private homes, according to Ms Tew.

“For private residences, the owners come to us with a set of requirements, such as the number of rooms they need, what their colour schemes are and what existing things they have. Showflat design, on the other hand, is more about creating and adding value to the space, then creating a visual impact so it can appeal to a bigger group of people,” she adds.

“Underlying all that we do, we have to make sure the spaces showcase design options and that these options wow the buyer.”

The veteran designer does not possess a fixed style or follow trends. What she and her team strive for, however, is mastery and flair in every style – be it modern, classic or industrial – that they attempt.

To stay ahead of the design curve, they make regular trips to Asia and Europe to hunt for design ideas provided by new hotels and resorts.

Ms Tew, however, is quick to add that showflats are not just for viewing. Homebuyers also want to learn how they can realistically – and creatively – utilise space, which is what her team strives to provide in its designs.

“From the start, we are conscious that showflats need to accurately depict the size of the actual built apartment. We endeavour to create a sense of spaciousness, while ensuring the design is functional yet inspiring.”

Already, the company is gaining international acclaim for its creative efforts in developments by Far East Organization. Recently, CMD won the Golden A'Design Award in the Interior Space and Exhibition Design

category for The Scotts Tower. Last year, it was recognised at the prestigious International Property Awards for its showflat design of The Tenny.

Ms Tew's designs for Miro and The Greenwich were published, too, in the annual *Andrew Martin Interior Design Review*, a highly regarded publication.

While Ms Tew says she hopes to venture into hotel and resort design, she still gains much satisfaction from designing showflats.

She says: “In our firm, we don't have a 3-D visualiser to create the space and see how everything looks beforehand. It is all based on our taste, imagination and what we think can work. So the satisfaction lies in putting all these elements together and seeing how everything blends together in the final product.” LM

