

HONG KONG TATLER

HOMIES

The insider's guide to luxurious living



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INSIDE OUT

Gerry Jue of interior design firm Bamo talks to **Richard Lord** about creating spaces that connect with their surroundings



hotel in the middle, where you immediately see a panoramic window wall facing the river. Our design takes advantage of this sweeping view of the river through the use of Thai-inspired wood screens, placed along the windows and columns. These frame the views through each window bay and provide comfortable seating areas near the light and view. We chose rich wood panelling for the walls and a satiny, black-brown marble with bronze accent strips for the floor and ceiling, to reflect the daylight and sunset. The white ceiling will be dappled with light reflected off the pools of water directly outside the lobby windows.

You've designed several projects for Sun City, a developer of upscale accommodation for seniors in Japan. Can you share some details about the complex in Tachikawa?

The Sun City in Tachikawa, on the north side of Tokyo, is a composition of stepped blocks set on a meandering ground floor that creates a series of garden spaces. It's nestled up to the the Showa Kinen Koen national park and so we've borrowed it to give the impression that the development is one with the park itself.

When the client approached me to design the interior of their very first senior living community in 1993, I took it on more out of curiosity than anything else. Sun City really is unique; we're doing it in a way that it's not a cliché—we spend a lot of time concealing the fact it's a residential complex for seniors. We've been with the client for nearly 25 years, with nine projects built, and over that time we've allowed Japan to soak into our consciousness. We've developed an innate idea of what will appeal there. It's culturally very accepting of abstract art, so there's a lot of freedom to design really interesting spaces with really interesting materials. ❶

For San Francisco-based interior design firm Bamo, location and culture drive everything. And it shows in its hospitality and residential projects that include Asian developments such as the ultra-luxurious The Capella Bangkok hotel which is currently being built, and stylish Japanese retirement communities for Sun City.

Your work is known for its continuity between indoor and outdoor spaces. How do you achieve that?

It's about establishing a conscious relationship between the inside and outside, driven by the nature of the space and project. We take many factors into account, including orientation to the sun, daylight exposure, landscape, lighting, view, wind and rain. If we're involved in the early planning stages, we can influence the placement of rooms and their outlook, and whether they have a panoramic or a framed view of the outdoors.

The Capella Bangkok is located next to the Chao Phraya river. How does the decor take advantage of the views?

The river is the cultural and historical lifeblood of Bangkok, and we wanted to capture the tension between this slow-motion dreamscape and the chaotic, frenetic atmosphere elsewhere in the city. A lot of the seating is located adjacent to windows and laid out to take in the view. Carved woods, rich stones and solid metals are combined with reflective surfaces so that the river views reverberate throughout the interior and the magnificent sunsets are allowed to permeate the entire hotel.

We worked closely with the architects to refine the development of the window walls oriented towards the river. Whether in the lobby, the guest-only Capella Living Room, the function spaces or the restaurant, guests get a sense of the river through the wide windows. One is always able to walk right up to the glass and take in the active river life.

The Capella Living Room is situated in the centre of the

U-shaped hotel, a separate pavilion protruding out towards the river's edge. Here, guests are surrounded on three sides by windows with spectacular views up, down and across the Chao Phraya. Sliding shutters frame the views and filter the light. In contrast to the lobby, the furnishings are very residential in scale and feeling and offer a more intimate relationship with the river below.

What's unusual with the Capella is the quality of view from every guest room. There are only 104 rooms and the typical room is 635sqft, with a lot of window exposure. We provided each room with a contemporary version of a Thai sala on its private balcony. Guests can recline and watch the world float by from above the Chao Phraya.

Can you elaborate more on the design of the Capella's lobby?

The lobby is intended to be an upscale "room for the city," a social hub for Capella guests and the public alike. It stretches in a long L-shape across nearly the entire facade of the hotel that faces the river. One enters the



GO WITH THE FLOW
Clockwise from top: Gerry Jue, principal at Bamo; a sketch of the Capella Living Room for The Capella Bangkok; a rendering of the hotel's lobby