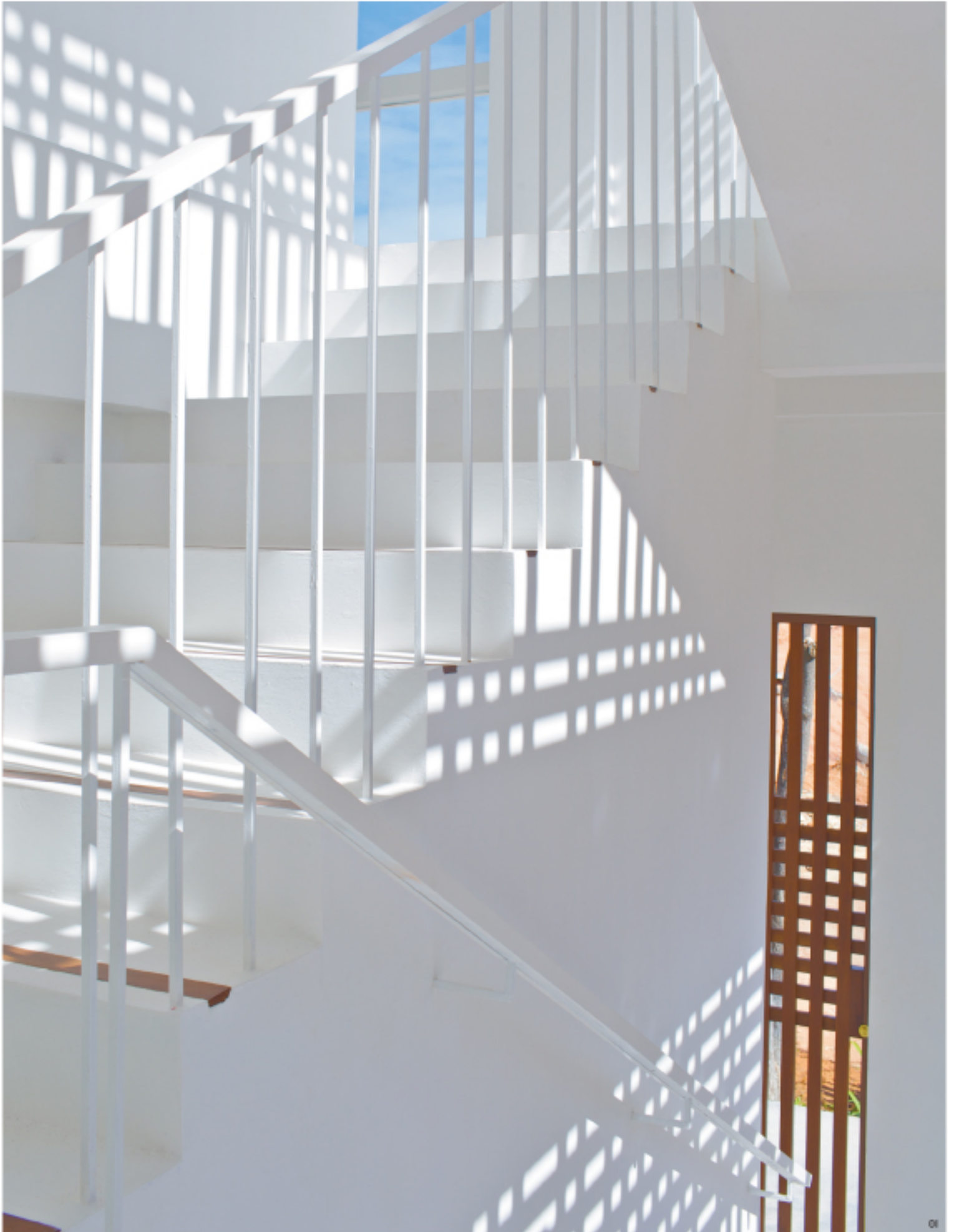


# *Design* *of the* *times*

From ground breaking to ribbon cutting, two award-winning projects in South East Asia prove that successful property development is all about learning to face new challenges





Property developers know that each new project brings with it its own challenges. To have any chance of survival in today's competitive market, developers have to be versatile and quick to tackle those challenges head on. Two very distinct properties, one an urban high-rise residence, the other a seaside resort, both built by the same developer, illustrate how one Singapore-based company is doing just that.

In Singapore, developer KOP Properties and eco-id architects worked together on the cutting edge, high-rise residence, The Ritz-Carlton Residences and later teamed up again on a Montigo Resort, a seaside project in Nongsa, Indonesia. They were very different projects but according to KOP Properties Chairman, Chih Ching, no matter what she is working on, it always begins the same way. "When I visit a piece of land for the first time, I examine the environment, the neighbourhood, the terrain and the fundamentals of the location – geographically and topographically. I also listen to my heart. If various concepts and design ideas come to me naturally, I get excited about working on it. I call this my chemistry with the land. If I draw a blank walking on the site, I will most likely walk away from it," she says.

According to Calvin Sim, Founding Partner and Director of eco-id architects, "Both Chih Ching and KOP's Leny Suparman are visionaries. They are both very observant developers, they recognize gaps in the property market and strive to fulfil them. They don't follow trends, they set them. Working with them makes for a very vigorous design process but in the end we inspire each other."

One site Chih Ching didn't walk away from was a piece of land on Cairnhill Road in Singapore. This she envisioned for the home of Ritz-Carlton Residences. It was a huge undertaking but now looking back, has been tremendously rewarding. Completed, it comprises 56 luxurious residences and two penthouses along with swimming pools, tennis courts, manicured maze garden, barbecue areas, a library and a wine cellar. The property is managed by The Ritz-Carlton Company and the residents expect nothing short of the best, so the building itself has to live up to and reflect their legendary level of service.

It was a difficult challenge. "With Ritz-Carlton we needed to differentiate ourselves amongst the steep competition. The building had to be of the very highest quality so that it stood out amongst the very best. The design had to be timeless, simple and yet it had to make a statement." Timeless is a word Sim also uses when describing the project "The Ritz-Carlton Residences is located at 65 Cairnhill, one of the most prestigious addresses in Singapore and it is managed by The Ritz-Carlton so the building itself has to be both timeless and sophisticated."

With Ritz-Carlton underway the two moved onto their second project together, Montigo Resorts in Nongsa, Indonesia. "Montigo was a different challenge. It's built on an idyllic beach in Batam. At the time it was a relatively unknown location. The challenge here was to create a unique concept that would turn the area into a destination. Also, there are certain expectations of how a resort villa in



Indonesia should look. We built off of that and gave it our own modern interpretation," says Chih Ching. Sim adds, "It couldn't be more different from Ritz-Carlton. It is designed for urbanites who want a suburban home 45 minutes from Singapore. It has clean contemporary lines that appeal to this audience yet the houses cascade down the slopes to the sea, blending in with the natural beauty the site offers."

Now that they are complete, what impression would Chih Ching like the buildings to leave on a person seeing them for the first time? "It's difficult for me to imagine seeing either for the first time, since I was part of their development from day one. I believe in function over form. To me, the greatest challenge is to find a compromise between the two. For Ritz-Carlton I would like one to feel that it has a quiet grandeur and that it exudes warmth from the little details in the building and its gardens. As for Montigo, I think it's very unique and pleasing to the eye. It provides a wonderful contrast that blends in with the blue sea and sky. It is very picturesque and I hope it inspires a sense of peace and well-being."

The efforts have already paid off. Each of these projects has already won numerous design and other awards. Ritz-Carlton Residences was just named the Best Condo Development in Singapore at the 2012 South East Asia Property Awards and Montigo Resorts has won two international awards for best development in Indonesia. "It is nice to win these awards yet I am more proud of the praise we have received from our residents and guests. We build these projects for them. They are our true inspiration and the reason we work so hard and what keeps us motivated to move onto our next project. We look forward to the next challenge," says Chih Ching. Indeed and it will be interesting to see what the future brings.

01. Montigo Resorts is built on an idyllic beach in Nongsa, Indonesia

02. The developer incorporated the natural beauty of the area into Montigo's design

03. The resort's low impact design blends in with its surroundings

04. The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Singapore

05. The design of the Ritz is bold yet simple, timeless and elegant