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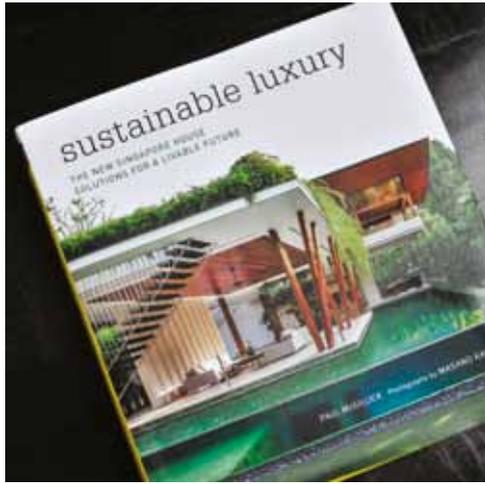
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INDESIGN®

INTERIORS ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

FORMWERKZ AND THE PERCEPTION OF SPACE

NERI&HU | LINGHAO ARCHITECTS | SINGAPORE SPORTS HUB BY ARUP, DP ARCHITECTS & AECOM
TWO GENERATIONS HOUSE BY KAY NGEEN TAN ARCHITECTS | SGX METROPOLIS BY SCA DESIGN



INSPIRATION AND ASPIRATION

SUSTAINABLE LUXURY IS AN EXPLORATION INTO LUXURIOUS SINGAPOREAN RESIDENCES THAT SEEK NEW ANSWERS TO THE PRESSING ISSUES OF SUSTAINABILITY.

TEXT » ADIB JALAL
IMAGES » LUO JINGMEI



Is the idea of ‘sustainable luxury’ a contradiction? That’s the discussion Sydney-based writer and editor Dr Paul McGillick hopes to generate with his latest book. The author of various books on South-East Asian architecture, McGillick is also the former Editorial Director at Indesign Media and founding Editor of regional architecture, art and design magazine *Habitus*. For *Sustainable Luxury*, he has once again teamed up with award-winning photographer Masano Kawana, and the pair focuses their gaze on homes in Singapore.

McGillick frames the idea of sustainability broadly to include economic and social sustainability alongside concern for the environment. This is positioned in today’s context where there exists “new professional categories, new kinds of clients with new kinds of expectations and lifestyles, new approaches to multi-generational living and changing family patterns” – all of which require a new architectural response.

He also attempts to address the seeming contradiction of the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘luxury’. He posits that ‘sustainable luxury’ is “not about spending huge sums of money” but is to do with “the application of some simple, imaginative and well thought out strategies”. However, make no mistake that the examples in the book are truly luxurious. Even as McGillick points out the problem of housing affordability and growing income disparity in Singapore, the book features 25 landed, cluster or condominium properties, and only one apartment unit. Most of the homes are clearly beyond the economic means of many. He suggests, however, that: “Over time, the lessons learned from these ‘luxurious’ projects are applied across the board, including to medium- and low-cost housing.”

Sustainable Luxury features a strong line up of residential projects that have refined and contextualised responses to their environment. It reads like a catalogue of inventive permutations and manipulations of natural ventilation and passive cooling techniques, often featuring a repertoire of screens,

courtyards, pools, overhangs and pavilions. Most projects share similar characteristics; embracing and harnessing the goodness of nature, large openings for light and air to penetrate, and spaces that seem to extend to the world beyond and also draw nature within.

Beyond well-publicised award-winning homes such as the Namly Drive House by Chang Architects and Sunset Place House by ip:li Architects, the book also presents a range of other residences such as the Sembawang Long Houses by Formwerkz and the Jalan Mat Jambol House by ZARCH Collaboratives – a home with a grungier design aesthetic, which sprang from the question: “Can there be a house with no windows?”

While the book features delightful examples of living in harmony with the environment, its strength is in the solid range of examples that advance discussions of social sustainability. Multi-generational homes such as the Holland Grove House by A D Lab and the Interlocking House by Lato Design present themselves as examples of how to balance the delicate need for inter-family privacy and openness to natural elements. Adding to the exploration of the topic are architectural responses that respect the memories of users and treasure a sense of place – such as the Neil Road Shophouse by Experience Design Studio O:XD (ONG&ONG), and the Chatsworth Park House by Eco-id Architects.

Kawana’s clean and modern images engage the reader in a visual journey into these homes. His photographs delightfully capture the play of light on materials, the intricate details, the sense of warmth in the homes, and the expansive, spatial richness of the projects, triggering you to imagine the luxurious lifestyles of the people who live within. This is indeed an inspirational and aspirational book to have on your designer desk.

Sustainable Luxury: The New Singapore House, Solutions for a Livable Future was launched in January at SPACE Furniture by Tuttle Publishing.

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