

The Benchmark Magazine Feature

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THE ENGLISH FEEL

From formal classic to informal country chic, this double-storey courtyard house features modern concepts and appealing colours

Mention "English style" and most people think of extensive floral patterns, dark reds and browns, wood furniture with brass accents, and lots of ornaments everywhere. But that's just one interpretation of English-inspired design.

This show unit at Lamas Gamelan 2, an OBU development in Kuching, Sarawak portrays a different picture of the English feel. Although the 1,950 sq ft unit is an intermediate lot, it feels like a corner because of the courtyard that lets in extra sunlight and ventilation.

According to Kelvin Eng of Benchmark Design, the modern tropical mixed classic exterior and the passion for English classic chic inspired the design. Space planning was done based on a family comprising a middle-aged couple in their 40s with two children and an elderly family member staying together.

"The concept intends to be timeless and functional with modern elements and vibrant colours blended in the English styling that ranges from formal classic chic to informal country chic," explains Kelvin. "Not overly showy or flashy, but most importantly it has soul with a cozy, comfortable ambience, and of course it meets the budget."

One finds modern interpretations of traditional elements. For the English classic chic living room, Kelvin reinterpreted the fireplace with a TV instead of burning firewood. "In today's modern world, the fireplace in Western countries is rapidly and inevitably giving way to the TV," says Kelvin. "The TV, a crucial part of our daily lives is moving into the domestic space, our personal space as the window to popular culture worldwide."

As Kelvin puts it, combining the old (fireplace) and new (TV) into one is a clever idea enabling us to enjoy the best of both worlds. "We have the TV at our viewing pleasure while maintaining the timeless beauty of the fireplace." The window seating area lets more people enjoy the socialising and chatting when guests come-calling.

In terms of colour scheme, there is a reason behind each section's different colours. "Brown is a neutral colour anyone can easily relate to, so brown hues were chosen for the common areas namely the living and dining areas," clarifies Kelvin. "Brown also provides a certain degree of communication from the exterior colour of the house."

For the family lounge and dry kitchen area considered the heart of the house, Kelvin gave the walls the freshest light blue to reflect the character of the occupants. Furniture such as the kitchen cabinet, breakfast counter, and two-seater sofa come in white with brown wood tone accents. In fact the kitchen worktop is made of solid timber. This colour scheme enhances the edge and character of the English concept.

Since the master bedroom displays a refreshingly natural theme, Kelvin chose a green-toned paint with grey hues, specifically Garden Bench by Marabon Paints. In fact, the entire

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Fresh light blue walls reflect the character of the occupants in the family lounge and dry kitchen. Brown hues in the dining area maintain a continuity with the exterior colour of the house



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BELOW LEFT
The distinctive salmon red has gone well with white furnishing and furniture.

BELOW RIGHT
White makes the children's bedroom look neat and tidy.

TOP RIGHT
Picture frames in the master bedroom have pictures of flowers with matching cover.



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TOP LEFT
Vertical storage system with some books and functions on a partition.

RIGHT
Country garden.

TOP RIGHT
Profile view of the main door.

house interior is painted with Marebond Pure Acrylic paint. "Garden Bench is a chic green tone, neutral, neither masculine nor feminine so it's perfect for both husband and wife," Kevina explains. "Green is Mother Nature's primary colour."

"The children's room is small and meant for two children, they could be a boy or a girl or any combination thereof. So we opted for immaculate white colour to enhance brightness," says Kevina. "White enhances the room's clean appearance while allowing the red and blue coloured decorations to stand out hence creating the maudlin concept."

Moving into the study room, one will either love or hate the red hue of the salmon coloured wall, a unique colour that goes well with white furnishing. It gives a very country feel yet not too old-looking because of the simple-shaped white furniture.

Furnishing items for the residence came from stores and decor centres like of Folia Design, IKEA, Nice Decor and Fred's Framing. A noteworthy detail is the Tenggori Range main door made of Balau hardwood. Designed and built originally by Benchmark Design and used on all the units at Laman Gamelan 2, its unique zero-hinge design makes installation very straightforward. It is fastened at the top and bottom solely with grooves.

Benchmark Design is an interior design firm jointly managed by the brother-sister team of Kevina and Elaine Eng, backed by a strong and talented team. Providing interior design, architectural design and build, and garden design services to residential and commercial clients, their philosophy is to design with "love of heart". Contact information: Tel: 032-414335 or e-mail kelvin@benchmarkdesign.com.my

