

INTERIOR DESIGN

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New Design in Asia



DMJM Rottet's executive headquarters for Pontiac Land Private in Singapore

Suite Dreams

MUCH OF THE massive development boom that Singapore has seen in the past decade is directly attributable to a single company. Pontiac Land Private Ltd., under the direction of the four brothers Kwee, is the country's preeminent commercial real estate/development concern. Business interests extend throughout Asia and the United States. The Kwees, whose family had emigrated from Indonesia originally to establish a textile operation before expanding to its current occupation, had long recognized the value of design—whether in the service of fabric sales or full-scale buildings completed by a roster of major architectural talents. Kevin Roche, John Burgee and Philip Johnson, for example, all had a hand in designing Pontiac's recently completed mixed-use complex, comprising two office towers, the Ritz Carlton (see page 154) and Conrad Hotels plus a shopping mall. Equally important to the Pontiac principals are interiors designed by specialists in the field. Commissioning the Los Angeles-based office of DMJM Rottet for their own Singapore headquarters illustrates the brothers' commitment to quality.

Pontiac Land Private occupies the 18,000-sq.-ft. penthouse of Kevin Roche's 41-story tower, which, with its companion structure,

looms over landfill in an area dominated by low-rise buildings. The square concrete building—faced with pale granite and detailed with a glass base plus punched fenestration—is distinguished by a cupola supported by four corner towers. The building plan thus provides enviable areas for executive suites and conference rooms. Beyond that, the scheme is basically traditional, with various zones for reception, executive, administrative and accounting functions.

In a business and culture where image is vital, DMJM Rottet's mandate, as explained →

Opposite: Liong Tek, involved primarily in hotel development, required a large table for presentations. His meeting area is located in the skylight-topped tower sector and distinguished by Dale Chihuly's commissioned artwork.

CHAIRS: CHARLES MCMURRAY; FABRIC: J. ROBERT SCOTT.

Below: A white fabric-covered ceiling plus crown moldings impart a residential quality, reinforced by furnishings, to Liong Seen's office. A large library is out of camera range.

LOUNGE CHAIRS: MARTIN/BRATTRUD; FABRIC: CARNEGIE. SOFAS: DEVON & CO; FABRIC: MANUEL CANOVAS. COFFEE TABLE: J. ROBERT SCOTT. SIDE TABLE: DESSIN FOURNIR. DESK: MELROSE HOUSE. DESK CHAIR: BRUNSCHWIG & FILS. FABRIC: DONGHIA.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL WARCHOL





by associate principal Richard Riveire, was to establish an environment simultaneously addressing an Asian sense of place plus international influences befitting this most western of Asian nations. Further, each executive suite was to make its own statement reflecting the particular predilections of its occupant.

Adapting a restrictive color/materials palette and a precise system of architectural detailing, the design team created a unified interior with a foot in both Occidental and Oriental camps. "The influence of the line, expressed as a mahogany datum, alludes to traditional Balinese/Thai structures," Riveire continues, "while the gridded panels in each office recall traditional screens." A consistent envelope of dark flooring (either stone or mahogany) with white walls is a typically Western approach accommodating of furnishings that, says Lauren Rottet, "range from traditional styles to classic Corbu."

It is classic Corbu that furnishes the office of the eldest brother, Liong Keng, who deals primarily with the Chinese community and oversees public relations. The second brother, Liong Tek, is the businessman, responsible primarily for high-caliber hotels, of which the Ritz Carlton is one. An art connoisseur and collector, Tek's hand can be seen in the Pontiac and Ritz Carlton collections, the former encompassing, in part, a series of superb Stellas, a Degas sculpture, some good Chinese antiques plus admirable Indonesian works. Liong Seen, the third brother, is described as a patron of architecture whose house was designed by Charles Moore. With his tastes leaning heavily to the residential, he has an office that could easily double as a salon. These three offices, with distinct designations for seating, meeting and work functions, occupy three of the corner towers. The fourth suite, instead, is located in the perimeter line. Here, the rectangular form meshes with the sensitivities of Liong Phing, a Berkeley-trained architect who worked for a time in Los Angeles with Moore Rubell Yudell.

The majority of furnishings was purchased in the U.S. for expediency and economic reasons. The exception was millwork, desks and credenzas, which came under the aegis of local manufacture, again for expediency and cost factors. As for process, the DMJM team made three trips to Singapore, with the clients repeating the same number of trips stateside during the project's nine-month

duration. Presentations were mixed-media events. Once the architectural parti was established, the DMJM team created a video cassette based on computer renderings plus an architectural model at 1:100 scale. Materials were shown in a large-scale collage format. The clients, with vast experience in design collaboration and quick decision-making, got it all—immediately.

In addition to Rottet and Riveire, the project team consisted of Chuck Crawford and Elizabeth Guthrie. —Edie Cohen

Opposite, above: The rectangular format of Liong Phing's office lent itself to a seating and conference area separated by a gridded partition. Custom desk and coffee table are of sapele mahogany and stainless steel. The rug is also a DMJM design.

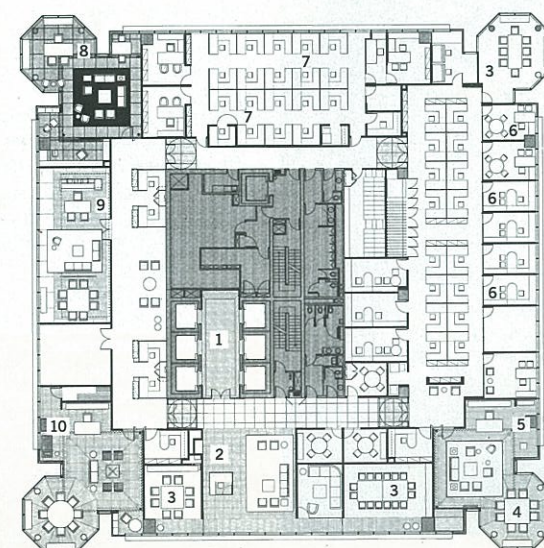
WALL COVERING: J. ROBERT SCOTT. SOFAS: BRAYTON. UPHOLSTERY LEATHER: SPINNEYBECK. UPHOLSTERY FABRIC (BACK): DONGHIA. LOUNGE CHAIR: TOTAH STUDIO. CUSHION UPHOLSTERY FABRIC: GRETCHEN BELLINGER. BRNO CHAIR: KNOLL. CUSTOM RUG: SEWELSON'S.

Opposite, below: One of four transition points that emphasize the formal quadrant quality of the floor plan. Ceiling fixture is a custom design.

WALL COVERING: JIM THOMPSON; J. ROBERT SCOTT. CUSTOM CARPET: BENTLEY.

Right: Classic furnishings are combined with a strong sense of structure in the office of the eldest brother, Liong Keng. The custom conference table has base and top of white marble.

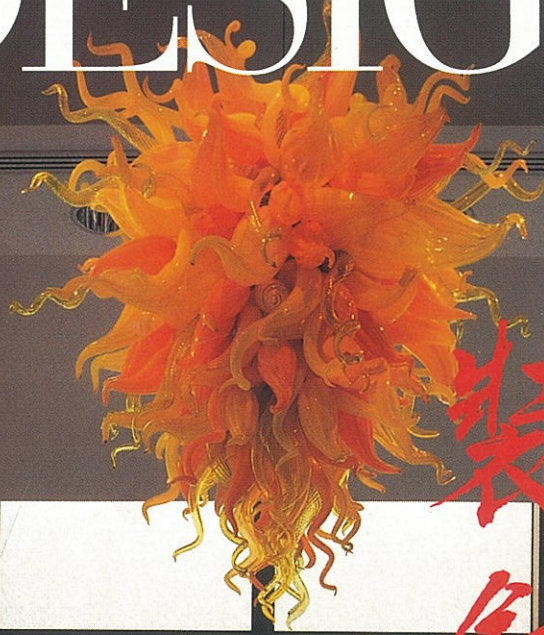
CORBUSIER LOUNGE CHAIRS: CASSINA. BRNO CHAIRS, BLACK MARBLE OCCASIONAL TABLE: KNOLL. UPHOLSTERY LEATHERS: CORTINA.



- 0 10 20 40
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- 2 RECEPTION
- 3 CONFERENCE
- 4 CONFERENCE WITH CHIHULY
- 5 LIONG TEK'S OFFICE
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- 8 LIONG SEEN'S OFFICE
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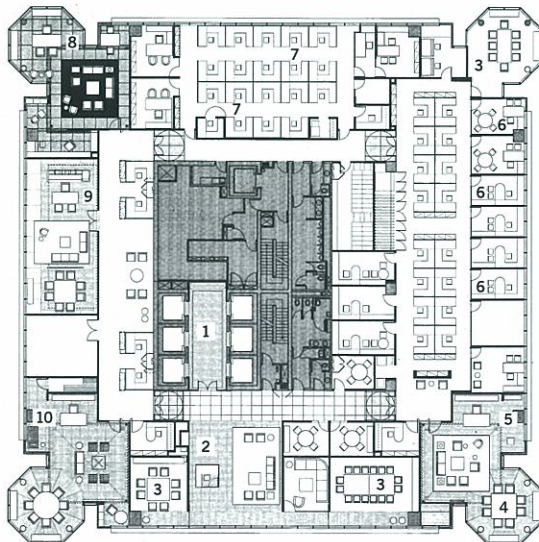
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