

Peranakan vibe in Chinatown

Working with an old building always poses a challenge but the architect behind the striking pumpkin-coloured Naumi Liora Hotel in Keong Saik Road did not even have dimension drawings to start with.

Mr Gaurang Khemka, founder of design firm Urbnarc, says: "Everything was not accurate so we had to make decisions on the spot about the hotel's layout and how and where we could place different areas."

Given the nature of the property – the 79-room, two-month-old boutique hotel is spread across three townhouses and has different floor elevations – 40 rooms had to be designed individually. This is the second boutique hotel in Singapore for the Hind Group, which also owns Naumi Hotel in Seah Street.

Located in the hip Chinatown area, Naumi Liora's townhouses were built in 1925 as residences. Much of that old world charm has been retained in the new development. Carpeting was stripped to expose the original timber flooring, the French-styled windows were restored and the original "five-foot way" corridor outside preserved.

Playing on the project's Peranakan heritage, Mr Khemka created motifs from the lattice design of Peranakan tiles and original metal railing from the exterior of the hotel to make timber screens which cover the walls in the lobby and rooms.

Of the overall look of the hotel, he says: "We wanted to pay homage to the Peranakan culture and, at the same time, give it a modern, contemporary feel."

The hotel offers three categories of rooms, with the biggest being the 60 sq m Liora Porch room – guests get a garden porch which overlooks the small park, Duxton Plains.

Mr Khemka says that creating a porch area was to take advantage of the view: "I wanted to create an urban oasis where the guest could have a moment of tranquillity."

Daily room rates range from \$380 to \$580.

Every room has its own vibe, depending on where it faces, says Mr Khemka. "You could get an urban oasis if you look out to the park or you could be right in the hustle and bustle of Chinatown on the ground floor. That's the beauty of the property."



At Naumi Liora Hotel (above), its biggest room is the Liora Porch room (top). The hotel premises is decorated with, among other things, mini sculptures (left) by local artist K.Y. Huang and timber screens (below). PHOTOS: NAUMI LIORA

