

Extreme makeover

The key to transforming this Silverstrand house from shabby to chic was viewing its flaws as opportunities, not limitations, writes Andrea Jane Bush.



"The owner basically handed us a concrete shell," says architect Jonathan Pang of this 30-year-old Pik Sha Road house, which he renovated earlier this year. "All provisions were outdated and substandard. We discovered electrical wiring housed in metal piping, heavy rust in the tap water, spalling concrete ceilings and, yes, termites!"

The 2,600-square-foot, three-storey house needed an extreme makeover. Snug in a row of terraced townhouses, it has the red-tiled roof, whitewashed walls and semi-circular windows that place it firmly in Sai Kung's Spanish-villa era of the early 1980s. Situated on high ground,

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home sweet home

Its view of Silverstrand bay and the mountains beyond is simply poetic.

Recently returned from Britain, the young owners wanted a modern makeover - simple and elegant. Pang's approach was "less is more", which he combined with quality materials and fine workmanship. The result is light and airy.

"White walls, ceilings, doors and window frames, translucent and clear glass, and pale-wood flooring provoke a sense of modernity," Pang says. "Because

of its natural outdoor setting, we wanted to maximize the view with large windows and sliding doors, without much subdivision, to frame the view and to bring as much natural light into the house as possible."

In the entrance, the "tunnel effect" that blights so many Hong Kong homes is eliminated by a translucent glass partition, which doubles as the study wall. Windows and a skylight further down the corridor allow natural light to stream into the interior.



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property

The 380-square-foot first-floor living room opens to the back garden, and full-height sliding doors allow for maximum visual feasting of the panoramic sea view.

But the real eye candy is in the master bedroom on the second floor. "We replaced the original window with a large, clear-glass picture window," Pang says. Lending the space an extra dynamic is the sloping ceiling, which is four metres at its highest point. There are two other bedrooms and guest bathrooms on this floor; more than enough for the couple and their newborn baby.

"As architects, we are trained to create a space that works and looks good. With a new building that's easy, we start from scratch. But for an existing building, the challenge is to work within an existing framework which posts certain limitations," Pang says.

The secret is to see limitations as opportunities. If architecture is frozen music, Pang has created a simple, elegant melody.



For more details, contact Jonathan Pang, LP Architects Ltd., www.lp-architects.com, 2899 2298.



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