

2024 ISSUE

# ART OF HOME

ALL YOU NEED TO  
KNOW TO DESIGN  
YOUR DREAM HOME





# Redbrick compares over 120 mortgage packages across 18 banks in Singapore.

We make your home financing a breeze

## WELCOME

YOUR HOME  
IS THE ART OF  
YOUR LIFE

What does a home mean to you? Factually, it's a residence, a place where you live permanently. It's made of walls, windows, and doors, which can keep people out, keep people in, or open freely so all may enter and leave as they wish. Emotionally, though, the definition of the word 'home' means different things to different people. But, at its heart, it means the same thing - that soft place to land that supports us, our shelter, our oasis of comfort.

It is a journey to get there though. A rollercoaster of highs and lows, of exhilaration and anxiety, of love and hate. At Redbrick Homes, we get that. We understand that renovating a home can be one of the most stressful and yet satisfying things a homeowner can do. It's not hard to understand why, because there is a seemingly endless list of decisions to be made. It doesn't matter whether you're a first-time owner or a seasoned pro, there's just something about embarking on a new renovation. It's like going on a date. Deny it all you want, but the butterflies in your stomach are there.

And that's why, we've combed the streets, spoken with the best in the field, spent hours in research to put together the Art of Home, a guide to all you need to know to design your dream home. From material finishes, to sanitaryware to colours, we've got it covered. We've even included a nifty planner to guide you through the renovation process!

So, enjoy our labour of love. And remember, have fun designing your dream home. Infuse your home with your personality and let it be the art of your life!

Love,  
the Redbrick Homes Team

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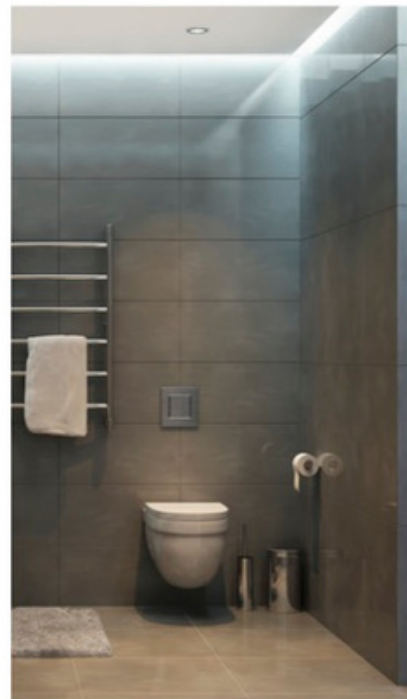
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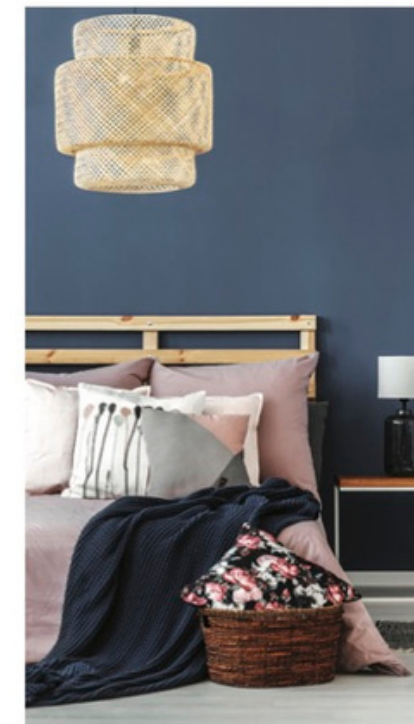
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145  
YEARS  
KOHLER



## A PROMISE TO DELIVER YOUR DREAM HOME

**P**romesa Artz is more than just a mere profession but rather a sincere dedication and fulfillment to our intrinsic passion. Each promise embraces countless human touch points that requires a devoted ear to devour.

We strive to incline into enchanter of space and transform your dream into reality.

We firmly believe each individual home speaks a story which we aim to beautify its content through communications and relation with our clientele.

No matter what kind of dream home you have in mind, it is our guaranteed promise to you to deliver it to the fullest.



Designed to make a statement, our faucet finishes integrate elegant colors with innovative technology to create long-lasting pieces that never go out of style.

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PVD Vibrant® Finishes



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# LOOKING BENEATH THE SURFACE

The pluses (+) and minuses (-) of popular finishes for your home

## FLOORING FINISHES



### VINYL

Synthetic materials

- +
- Highly affordable and easy installation
- Available in a wide range of styles (tiles, sheets, planks)
- Low maintenance and water-resistant
- 
- Not dent-proof
- Not as eco-friendly as compared to other alternatives

### CEMENT SCREED

Mixture of sand and cement

- +
- Budget friendly as there is no need for finishing materials such as tiles
- Resilient to scratches and damage
- Seamless, joint-free look
- 
- Porous, might accumulate dirt/ be prone to water stains
- Needs to be completely sealed or hairline cracks might appear



### TILES

Ceramic or porcelain

- +
- Easy maintenance, non-porous and durable – suitable for high-traffic/wet areas such as bathrooms
- Long-lasting and versatile
- No discolouration/fading even if exposed to sunlight on a constant basis
- 
- Beware of grout lines; regular cleaning is needed or mould will grow



## FLOORING FINISHES



## ENGINEERED WOOD

Compressed plywood

- + • Durable and resistant to moisture; less prone to warping if damaged by water
- Uses tongue-and-groove locking system, requiring no glues or nails to install
- • Cannot be refinished if top veneer is thin

## HARDWOOD

Natural wood such as walnut, oak and mahogany

- + • Long-lasting as wood floors can be restored by sanding and refinishing
- Each piece of has its own distinctive grain, and the flooring will acquire a unique patina with age
- • Prone to scratches and discolouration in the face of sunlight
- Hard to maintain as it needs to be constantly resealed and polished

## LAMINATES

Composite materials

- + • Highly affordable and has a similar look to hardwood floors
- Low-maintenance and durable
- Easy installation – it even be installed directly over existing flooring, so no hacking is necessary
- • Prone to discolouration
- Might look synthetic in large spaces as the grains have a similar appearance



## KITCHEN COUNTERTOPS



## KOMPAKTOP

Wood composite

- + • Looks like real wood, down to its woodgrain-like finishes
- Non-porous, stain- and heat-resistant
- Very sturdy despite its slim profile
- Uses tongue-and-groove jointing technique to ensure it is water-sealed
- • Rather expensive although not as bad as natural stone



## NATURAL STONE

Granite, marble, limestone or travertine

- + • Being a natural material, every piece is unique, making for a one-of-a-kind design feature
- Heatproof, waterproof
- • Needs to be sealed properly or it may absorb food stains
- Hefty price tag

## WOOD

Natural wood such as walnut, oak and mahogany

- + • Heat resistant so hot pots and pans can be placed directly on its surface
- Can be refinished to remove stains
- • Possibility of warping due to humidity changes





## KITCHEN COUNTERTOPS



## ENGINEERED QUARTZ

Ground quartz, resin and pigments

- +
  - Stronger than natural stone and resists scratches, cracks and chips
  - Easy maintenance, does not require sealing and is non-porous
- - Not completely heat proof

## SOLID SURFACE

Blend of resins and pigments

- +
  - Totally customisable, can be moulded into any 3D shape
  - Hygienic as it is virtually free of joints for dirt to accumulate
  - Can be buffed and polished to look like new again
- - Sensitive to heat and vulnerable to scratches



## STAINLESS STEEL

Steel alloy

- +
  - Almost indestructible and therefore low maintenance
  - Heat-resistant, so you can place hot pans directly on its surface
  - Ideal for working directly on as it is bacteria resistant
- - Fingerprint and watermark prone
  - Susceptible to scratches and dents

## WALL FINISHES



## PAINT

Pigmented liquid

- +
  - Cost efficient and easy to touch up
- - Hard to create designs or textures



## WALLPAPER

Paper or fabric

- +
  - Long lasting and durable
  - Easy way of hiding damaged walls
- - Difficulty in installing and removing
  - Hard to patch holes / scratches in wallpaper
  - Can peel if used in moist areas

## WALL PANELS

Wood, fabric or faux stone

- +
  - Excellent tactic to hide flaws or unsightly marks, scratches on walls
  - Provides thermal and acoustic insulation
  - Easy maintenance
- - Possibility of warping due to humidity changes







BROUGHT TO YOU BY



# TILE IN STYLE

With a huge selection of tiles that suit every budget, theme and room in the house, your toughest challenge will be picking the right ones at Lian Seng Hin Trading Co Pte Ltd.

One of Singapore's leading tile suppliers, Lian Seng Hin Trading Co Pte Ltd (LSH), has been established since 1971. Believing that creating a beautiful home does not have to come at a hefty price tag, they source their tiles from all over the world and pride themselves on their strict quality control and reasonable prices.

Before you head down to their stores, you may want to visit their handy website at <https://liansenghin.com.sg>, helpfully categorised according to Living/Bedroom, Kitchen/Bathroom, Feature Walls, Yards/Car Porch and even Eco tile. Feast your eyes on an extensive range of bathroom, toilet, kitchen and wall tiles. From simple splashback for your toilet, kitchen and bathroom, to trendy floor tiles, you'll definitely find something here that will make your guests go 'wow!'

VISIT LIAN SENG HIN'S WEBSITE AT [HTTPS://LIANSENGHIN.COM.SG/](https://liansenghin.com.sg) OR THEIR SHOWROOMS AT:  
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## Beams with Quality

A home reflects you – who you are and your idea of happiness. It is an everlasting witness of your precious moments with your loved ones and your life's turning points. Thus, engage our expertises to help you enhance your initial ideas into reality!

### TALK TO US



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# A HIGHER LIVING FOR ALL

I love staycations. Scratch that. Singaporeans love staycations. And really, what's there not to love, other than the fact that it always ends way before you want it to, and you're presented with a heart-attack inducing bill at the end?

So, let me present a long-term, sustainable solution. Why not renovate your home so that it looks straight out of a hotel suite? Imagine having a free, luxurious staycation with no end date in your very own home.

And don't just stop at imagining. Consider bringing your imagination

to life with Haire Living Pte Ltd, an award-winning interior design firm. Haire Living was conceptualised in 2005 based on the aspiration of a higher living for all, to transform ordinary spaces into contemporary, luxurious habitats. It seeks excellence in every detail of every component of a space to invoke the much desired elegant, cocoon-life feel of a 5-star hotel.

We got up close and personal with the team of interior design consultants at Haire Living to find out more about their company, their design philosophy and more.





## “Styling is to interior design what accessorising is to fashion design.”

**Your portfolio has a distinctive contemporary, luxury style. What does this style mean to homeowners?**

Contemporary simply means that something is current, up to date, and 'of the moment'. A contemporary design is ever evolving and easily relates to other styles no matter what they are. Typical contemporary design elements are a neutral, muted colour palette, layering plenty of lighting, and sleek, clean lines. Luxury is a word that is hard to define. Everybody has his own understanding of it. However, the first and most important characteristic that a luxurious space exuberates is comfort. But not the usual lazy version. Think of a plush duvet set, soft rugs or splendid curtains. In essence, a

luxury interior combines style and comfort with utility.

**What is your company's design philosophy?**

Our design philosophy starts with the most basic and fundamental aspect of interior design - space planning, an in-depth analysis of how the space can, will and should be used to its utmost effect. A good space in interior design is the equivalent of having a good body shape in fashion design. A woman with a good body shape can carry off any look, clothes or accessories. Likewise, a home with a good space can be designed and styled to suit any style, from minimalist to rustic.

Styling also plays a big part in our design philosophy. Styling is to

interior design what accessorising is to fashion design. Just like how a fashion designer uses accessories like jewellery or shoes to complete a look, we use customisation and bespoke loose furniture pieces to do so.

In line with our design philosophy, we have expanded our offerings to include the design and manufacture of soft furnishings, furniture and landscaping to offer our clients a complete spatial design and experience.

**What can I expect when working with your company on my home renovation?**

For starters, you can be assured of having a dedicated and experienced interior design consultant to start, manage and complete your entire home renovation. Unlike other interior designers, each of us only manage one project at any point in time.

To us, undertaking a home renovation project is like undergoing a major medical operation. You wouldn't want to have your doctor changed midway through your operation or have to liaise with the anaesthesiologist or nurse. You want to make sure that you are well taken care of.

As such, we are deliberately selective in accepting new clients and projects. While this means that we are limiting our capacity to take on more projects and earn







more money, we believe that this is the right thing to do so that we can invest our time and effort in building rapport and trust with our clients to give them their dream home.

We will walk you through every step of our 3-stage home renovation journey:

**Design stage:** Includes space planning and conceptualisation. You will receive highly realistic 3D Renderings of your home, with the minutest of details such as the furniture, curtains and lightings illustrated. That way, you won't need to rely on your imagination. Based on our past experience, the final end product, that is your renovated home has a 95% similarity rate to our 3D Renderings.

**Build stage:** The actual, physical renovation. We will liaise and manage all aspects of your home renovation with the multiple contractors and parties involved with an eye to delivering quality work within the agreed timeframe. Your involvement can be as much or as little as you please.

**Style stage:** Involves shopping and sourcing for soft furnishings, furniture and other accent pieces to complete your home. Choose to have us design and manufacture bespoke pieces for you, or just get our opinion on your own purchases.

In the long run, our highly personalised approach has paid

off for us. More than 60% of our clients are return clients, with a significant number having engaged us three times in our 15-year existence!

**Do you have any notable clients or projects?**

Nothing really stands out. We have always been able to meet and exceed our clients' requirements, with many of them becoming our friends. However, there have been two clients who had an astonishing amount of trust in us. The first was a single, female client who engaged us to renovate her 3-room HDB flat. She approved our 3D Renderings, paid us the entire renovation of \$150,000 upfront, handed us her key and then went overseas to work.

The second was a married, family man who renovated his 4-bedroom condominium in Balmoral for \$400,000. All we did was to meet him once to obtain his requirements, and a second time to open the doors of his home for him to move in with his family.

We are glad that these clients were happy with their homes and we had earned their trust.

---

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# DON'T BE BLINDED BY BLINDS

Do you prefer blinds to curtains but are blinded by the staggering array of materials and types that blinds come in? Let us bring clarity to you with this quick guide.

**Venetian blinds:** Most popular style of blinds. Feature horizontal slats which attach with string or strips of cloth known as tapes. As Venetian Blinds are raised, the bottom slat is pushed into the slat above it.

**Vertical blinds:** Feature individual slats that run along a track at the top of the blind. Popular choice for patio doors or floor to ceiling windows.



ROLLER SHADES



PLEATED SHADES



CELLULAR SHADES



ROMAN BLINDS



VENETIAN BLINDS



VERTICAL BLINDS

**Panel Blinds:** Great for very large windows for patio doors. Come in sections which move along a track when you open or close them.

**Pleated Shades:** Similar look to Venetian Blinds but with a softer look. Feature a piece of material (usually fabric or paper) that is pleated so that the shade forms an accordion-like pattern which can be raised or lowered.

**Cellular Shades:** Look similar to Pleated Shades but made of two different pieces of material glued together to form an open middle pocket. This not only provides sound insulation but helps your home stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

**Roman Shades:** A much-loved, traditional style. Made of fabric of various weights and thickness from faux silk to damask. Available with blackout or thermal linings.

**Roller Shades:** Made from synthetic or natural fabric, Roller Shades are very easy to use as you just have to roll them up and down. Also come with blackout and thermal linings.

**Tie-Up Shades:** A hybrid of blinds and curtains, these are made from one piece of fabric and come with ties at the bottom of the shade. To raise the shade, you roll it up and then tie it in place. This pretty style offers a casual or country look.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



# BESPOKE BEAUTY

When MOW Interior Pte Ltd designs you a bespoke home, you can be sure you can truly call it your own.

In this age of mass produced furniture and furnishings, true luxury shines through the gild of bespoke design. For TS Wong and Shermaine Ong, the founders of MOW Interior Pte Ltd, customising every home is not a task they take lightly.

Both proud graduates of the Nanyang Academy of Fine Art (NAFA) in 1999, they went their separate ways and developed a lifelong passion for the art of interior design over the last two decades. As serendipity would have it, their paths crossed when they attended an event organised by their alumni. TS and Shermaine discovered that they possess different strengths and skills which complement each other's, and have amassed a wealth of experience in architectural and interior design projects, ranging from residential to commercial

design. MOW Interior was borne out of that shared desire to contribute to the local interior design industry.

"MOW interior Pte Ltd focuses on residential interior design in particular design and build, landed property and condo solutions," explains Principal Designer, Shermaine. Their slew of services include bespoke design & build, design consultation, Addition & Alteration works (A&A), home styling and Project Management.

## THE MOW TOUCH

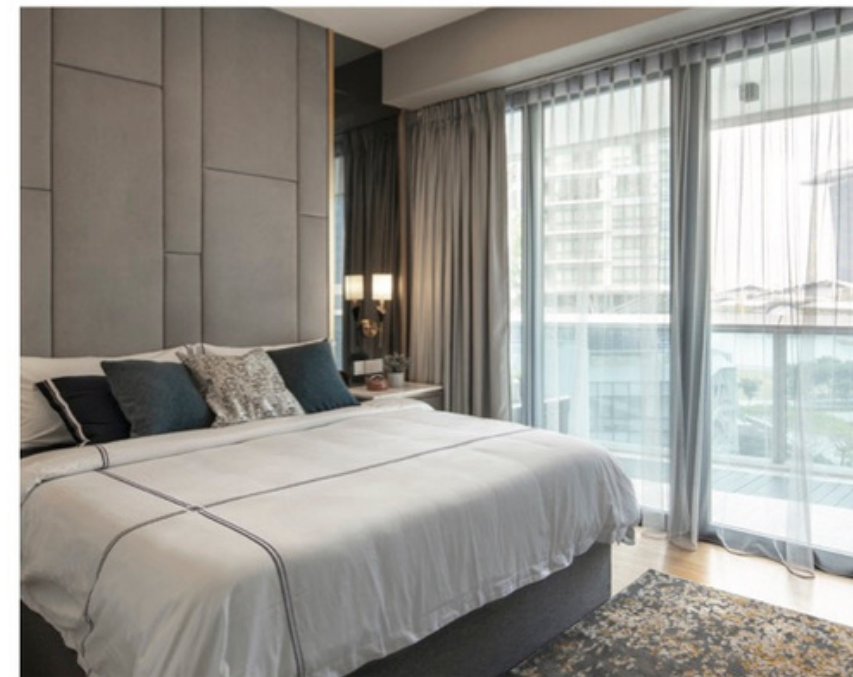
What does an MOW Interior home look like? Think opulent interiors with beautiful feature walls and exquisite details such as gold lattice. The result is a one-of-a-kind, niche look that is clearly customized for every client.

Noting that residential interior design is an ever-changing



landscape, MOW Interior constantly evolves to stay relevant and keep abreast of trends. "Our priority is to fully understand our client's vision and craft a customized solution that aligns with our principles of design," adds Shermaine. "We believe that excellent design stems from a keen analysis of the client's branding, business culture and budget, and we endeavor to create inspiring design that demonstrates sensitivity."

MEETING CLIENTS' EXPECTATIONS, AND MORE



This careful attention to their client's needs is evident in a memorable home they designed for a home in Marina Bay Suites. The owners, a couple with a two-year-old son, were expecting their second child on the way. The missus requested for the house – a spacious 4 bedder around 1600 sqft – to be ready in less than three months, as she wanted to recuperate at her new home post birth. "The journey with them was hectic but we are able to complete on time. The overall result is fulfilling and worth it, given the short time for a big area," recalls Shermaine with satisfaction.

Indeed, another satisfied customer, Ho Soo Lim, also gave them this glowing review. "The whole renovation process was made a lot simpler thanks to the team comprising of Shermaine, Chien I and Victor. The end result exceeded expectation and the finishing is of high quality. Even when changes were required along the way, the job was done promptly without a question asked. Although the price may seem slightly steeper comparatively, but looking back now, it is definitely worth it!"

Looks like MOW Interior's brand of bespoke design and excellent service is a perfect fit for their clients!

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# DOOR TO DOOR

Doors provide protection and privacy against the elements (and busy-bodies!) but they are more than just functional. Step this way into the world of doors.



SLIDING DOORS



FRENCH DOORS



SWING DOORS

### Sliding doors

Gliding smoothly on tracks (either top-hung only, or both top and bottom-hung), sliding doors don't need any clearance swing radius unlike hinged doors, so they work great in tight spaces. On the minus side, some cheaper models go off-rail easily if you tug them too hard.

### Swing doors

The most commonly seen type of door, it is sometimes called a Hinged door as one side is mounted on hinges, securing it to the door frame. Choose between a right-hand or left-hand swing, which will determine where your hinges and handles will be placed and which way your door opens and closes. Avoid installing a door that opens into a hall or corridor, so as not to obstruct traffic flow or cut into the required corridor width.

### French doors

These elegant doors are hinged and installed on both sides of the opening, so that they swing inwards or outwards. They offer a dramatic entrance and match most house styles. The door features a frame around one or more transparent panels usually made of glass. Commonly used to separate the living room from the patio.



**Bi-fold doors**

These are hinged doors that fold and stack neatly when you close them. These make a popular choice for smaller areas such as closet doors because when they are closed, they only take up half the space of a regular hinged door. If you want to construct a small study or game room out of your living room, one easy solution is to use Bi-fold doors with glass panels to demarcate the spaces but still offer privacy when you pull the doors shut.

**Pivot doors**

These look sleek and modern as they swing on metal pivots at the top and bottom of the door, instead of the usual hinges. Great for minimalist-looking homes, as there are no door knobs – you simply push the door open.



BI-FOLD DOORS



PIVOT DOORS

**Knock Knock!**

Choose your doors according to your favourite material.

**Solid wood:** Ranges from hard to soft woods, and a variety of prices. The most common and inexpensive is made from pine wood but some of the most handsome doors are made from mahogany, maple and cherry wood and add character to your room.

**Hollow core:** Made of plywood or moulded composite skin. Very affordable but since it is hollow, sound and heat/cold passes through easily too.

**Solid core:** Also made of plywood but the middle is filled with a wood fiber blend. Thus, it is better quality than a hollow core but still a notch below the solid wood door.

**Medium-density Fibreboard (MDF):** This engineered wooden door combines broken down hardwood or softwood residuals, wax and a resin binder and is then formed into panels using high temperature and pressure. Denser than plywood and thus more lasting.

**Metal and glass:** Sleek and oh-so-chic, these look great in homes that want to look like light-filled cafés. You need deeper pockets though – they are costlier than your usual hollow core, solid core or MDF doors.



# ONE OF LIFE'S LUXURIES

Brought to you by Sealy Singapore

## FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO IN BED

Your bed should be a haven for your body to relax and escape to. After a busy day, your active muscles deserve to rest, recover and to recharge your body for another beautiful day ahead. Your bed should also be a place to laugh, dream and reconnect, whether it is with yourself or the ones you love. A good night's sleep assists in keeping your body healthy.

From the mattress through to the foundation, Sealy Posturepedic® is designed to provide the perfect balance of correct support and superior comfort.



### Maximum Stability

Sealy's most innovative edge support system – UniCased® XT – provides greater stability and a seamless transition from one edge of the bed to the other, maximising your sleep surface.

### Ultimate Comfort

Layers of premium foams conform and mould to one's body, providing pressure-relieving conformance where it is needed most.

ComfortCore® is featured in the centre third of the mattress, the concentrated layers of ultra-soft foam or gel-infused memory foam conform to the lower part of the back and is designed to disperse pressure where it is needed most.

### Correct Support

Sealy's unique SRx® support system is designed to sense your body's weight and motion and to respond with initial conforming support and firmer deep-down support your body needs.

This is especially important for people who desire better back support as it provides the right amount of support needed. In addition, our premium quality Titanium Alloy coils are hinged together for enhanced strength and durability.

Follow us on:



### Our 10 Year Guarantee

When you sleep on a Sealy Posturepedic®, you are choosing a trusted bedding brand. Each component is of the highest quality so you can enjoy your mattress for many years to come.



ORTHOPAEDIC  
ADVISORY BOARD

### OAB Accreditation

To ensure you are getting the best support available, Sealy Posturepedic® is designed with the help of the Orthopaedic Advisory Board (OAB). The OAB is a panel of eminent orthopaedic surgeons, clinicians and sleep experts assisting Sealy in developing better sleep systems.

Visit their website [www.sealy.com.sg](http://www.sealy.com.sg), online shop [www.shop.sealy.com.sg](http://www.shop.sealy.com.sg) or their stores at:

#### Sealy Sleep Palace (Flagship Store)

Tanglin Place, 91 Tanglin Road (Next to St. Regis Hotel), #01-02 | Tel: 6235 3166

#### Sealy Sleep Boutiques

- Century Square, 2 Tampines Central 5, #03-07 | Tel: 6260 2860
- City Square Mall, 180 Raffles Place, #03-33 | Tel: 6634 0383
- Funan Mall, 107 North Bridge Road, #03-14 | Tel: 6970 0790

- IMM Building, 2 Jurong East St 21, L3-05 | Tel: 6566 8233
- KINEX, 11 Tanjong Katong Road, #03-35 | Tel: 6702 2592
- Plaza Singapura, 68 Orchard Road, #05-06 | Tel: 6238 6721



**KOKE.ZEN INTERIOR**  
Let nature inspire your space

Koke.zen = Koke 苔 ('Moss' in Japanese) + Citizen.

Our company offers bespoke greenscaping design solutions guided by the principles of integrating urban green and its benefits into our lifestyles.

Koke.zen can be interpreted in two manners – the first being our mission of bringing peace and Zen through moss, and the latter being every citizen should be able to enjoy the beauty of moss & nature.

We want to help reinvent work, play and living spaces - to bring nature back into our 21st century concrete jungle.



### 100% Natural Preserved Moss

Our preserved moss is not to be confused with dried or artificial moss. Unlike the latter two, preserved moss is 100% natural live moss that is delicately processed to preserve its lifespan.

### Rising Star of Interior Plantscaping

Enhance the liveliness of your home with a statement plantscaping piece. It's bound to be the talk of your next dinner party. That we promise.

### Sustainable

How long does our moss last? The first batch of preserved moss was produced nearly a decade ago, and is still looking good.

### Zero maintenance

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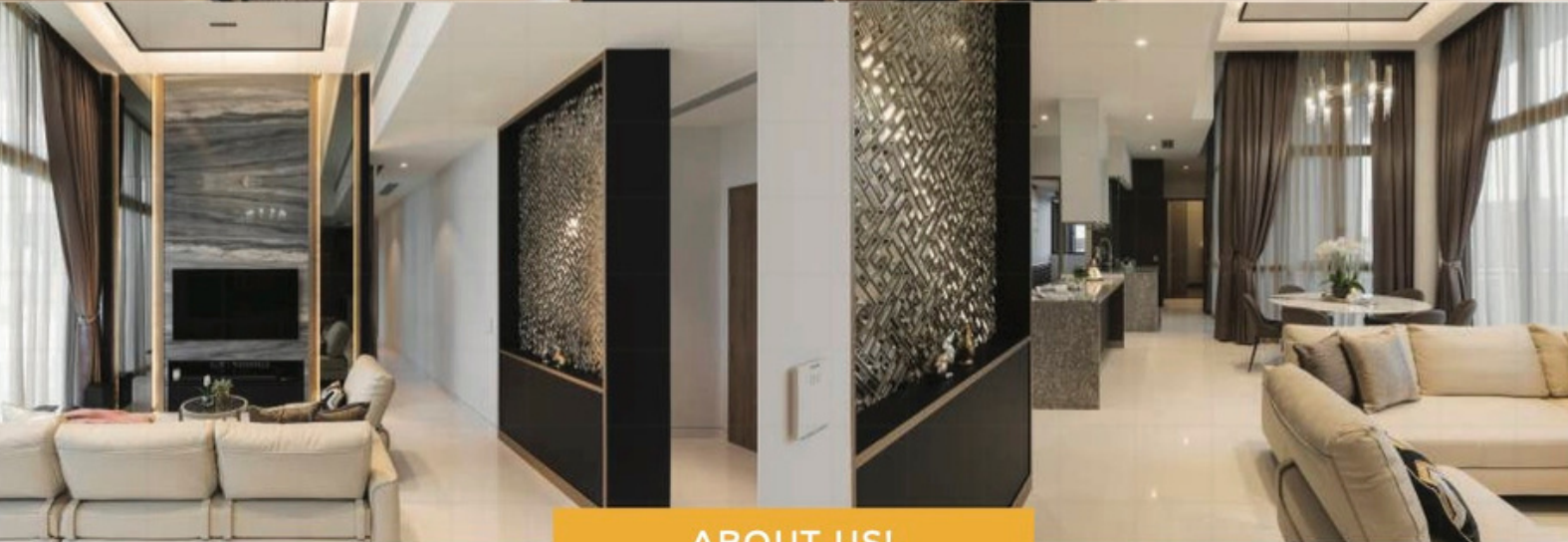
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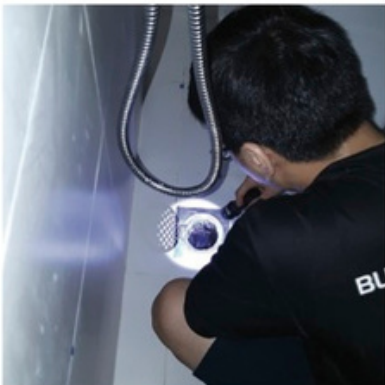
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# EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR YOUR DREAM KITCHEN

They say eating is Singaporeans' favourite hobby and it all starts in our kitchens. We check out kitchen appliances that will help you whip up amazing dishes.

## — Hob

Probably the most important item in every Asian kitchen, the hob is where you cook all your pots of yummy soups and stir-fry dishes. To choose the right hob, consider your usage. If you cook very regularly with heavy usage, the good ol' Gas stove is your best bet. A turn of a knob will give you instant heat which is easy to control, and the heat also distributes well across your pan for easy cooking. If you want the advantages of gas but prefer a more attractive look, try the Gas on glass hob. It's good-looking, easy to clean and offers precise control the fire.

If you want something easy to use and clean which heats up quickly too, consider a Ceramic hob. However, the heat distribution is not as good as using a gas hob. For a sleek look that fits beautifully in minimalist kitchens, the Induction hob works great, especially if you don't cook frequently. It is cheaper to run too since it heats quickly, using only the exact amount of energy needed to heat the pan.

## — Hood

You definitely need one of these to suck up all that cooking grease and cut down on your cleaning. If you only do light cooking, a Slim-line hood is good enough. Plus, its sleek profile looks great in a modern kitchen. If you do a mix of light and heavy cooking, consider a Retractable hood; simply slide



out the second panel to cover more of the cooking area when you deep fry food. When you're done, it pops back in to keep your kitchen looking minimalist.

For those who do heavy cooking frequently, a Chimney-style hood works best for you as it is more powerful. It can look bulky though. If you use a kitchen island, then pick an Island hood to match. This is attached directly to the ceiling and you need a fairly roomy kitchen so as not to clutter up the space. On the plus side, it adds instant street oomph to your kitchen

## — Built-In Oven

Love baking your own cakes or roasting your favourite meats? An oven is a must in your kitchen, then. Incorporating a built-in oven in your kitchen cabinets not just saves space, it also streamlines the look in your kitchen and

prevents unnecessary clutter on precious table top space.

## — Microwave with Convection Oven

This two-in-one model will not just heat up your food like a Microwave oven, you can even bake a birthday cake or grill a chicken in it. It offers a good solution for those who want the convenience of a microwave oven and the function of a regular oven in one appliance. Great for small kitchens or small families, convection microwave ovens are also cheaper to run than regular ovens. On the other hand, they are smaller than ovens so you can only cook one food item at a time. They can also be tough to clean as food often stains the stainless steel interior during cooking, and then get baked into burnt marks. The biggest issue most chefs have? Because there is no bottom element, food like pastry, pizza and



pies simply can't get brown and crisp on the base, though some models come with a crisp plate. Still can't beat that slightly charred awesomeness of a real oven-grilled pizza!

#### Air Fryer

Fast becoming a staple in many kitchens, this is one of our favourite appliances. Just toss in your favourite snacks like nuggets, or even entire slabs of salmon, and air fry them to a crisp – without using any oil at all. Not only is this a healthier way to cook, it also prevents grease from flying everywhere and makes cleaning up a breeze.

#### Blender

Nutritionists say we should eat at 5 to 10 portions of fruit and veggies



every day to keep healthy. That's a lot to chomp on! An easier way to get your vitamins is to blend them into healthy smoothies. We also like using ours to blitz ice into shaved ice for our homemade Ice Kachang.

#### Stand Mixer

If you are a serious baker, you definitely need one of these babies that will mix and whip your dough to perfection. It will save your arm from overwork when you want to bake a light-as-air sponge cake.

Choose from a variety of retro to modern styles to match your kitchen.

#### Breadmaker

Love waking up to the fragrance of freshly baked bread? Invest in a breadmaker, toss in ingredients for your favourite bread and set it to bake overnight so you can enjoy a warm slice for breakfast.

#### Coffee Maker / Espresso Machine

Invest in a good coffee machine for

freshly ground cuppa. Or buy an Espresso machine and take your pick from the many types of coffee capsules. It'll be cheaper than buying your Java from Starbucks every day!

#### Slow Cooker

The Slow Cooker is an old favourite that our mums used to slow-brew hearty stews and soups. Fire up this convenient machine with veggies and meat before you leave for work and set it on auto. You'll come home to a pot of goodness for dinner.

#### Sous Vide Machine

How do you get meat that is fork tender? Buy a Sous Vide machine. By using precise temperature control, you will get consistent, restaurant-quality results every single time, because that's how they cook it too. Cooking is easy. Just put your food in a sealable bag and dunk it in a pot of water, setting the time and temperature according to how well done you want it.





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and out of the tub. One landed property homeowner got around the problem by constructing a customised bath area – which is more like a mini swimming pool constructed lower than the bathroom floor – so that she steps down into it, rather than climb over the bath tub walls.

We also notice that more homeowners are increasingly shunning the tub in favour of a luxurious shower instead. Some even buy shower systems with spa features, with powerful jets shooting water at your body. Do note that you'd need water pressure that is strong enough to power these, and many HDB homes may not be able to offer you that full experience. Of course, there's also the water bill to think about.

One homeowner we know chose to rip out the bathtub in a 15-year-old condo apartment

he bought, converting it into a spacious shower that romantically accommodates him and his wife. They also invested in quality rain showers that they had always coveted.

#### **Invest in shower doors**

They do stretch your bathroom budget but in the long run, they will save you so much hassle. Bathrooms without a shower door means water splashing everywhere whenever someone takes a shower. Besides being a fall hazard, a permanently wet floor also means getting more mould in the grout – which means more cleaning. In the old days, our parents sometimes save some money by just constructing a raised kerb, and using a shower curtain to try to keep the water out. It helps some but mouldy shower curtains are slimy and gross. Just splurge a little and get the shower doors done once and for all. You'll thank yourself later.



#### **Buy durable bathroom accessories**

Yes, stainless steel accessories cost more but they don't rust within months either, or turn a disgusting green. The hassle of shopping for, and hiring someone to replace the set, is just not worth the savings. Nice accessories also make your bathroom look so much classier. Even changing the toilet seat cover to a sturdier, more comfy one will make your daily seat on the throne so much more pleasurable!

#### **Check out sanitary ware sales**

Some of the biggest names in sanitary ware include Sim Siang Choon Hardware, Hoe Kee Hardware, Saniton Ceramic, Adamas Bathroom and more. Shop around for the best deals. If you don't mind an older model, you can get quality brands at a good price when they are marked down. You can even get discounted sanitary ware, such as luxury toilet paper holders, on websites like Qoo10 Singapore!



# SUPERIOR AIR

The ubiquitous air-conditioner is God's gift to humid countries like Singapore. We check out the four most common types sold in Singapore.



**W**ith our temperatures soaring above 30°C most days, Singaporeans depend heavily on air-conditioners. Most of us opt to put at least a unit in every bedroom, though it is becoming increasingly common to air-condition the living and dining rooms too. Depending on the brand and model, prices can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

The first thing you should check is the British Thermal Unit (BTU) rating. A small room of 150sq ft or below (usually the size of a regular

HDB bedroom) needs about 6,000 BTUs for sufficient cooling. Big rooms of up to 350sq ft, like living rooms, will require a unit with 9,000 BTUs. Very big rooms of 500sq ft and above need between 10,000 to 15,000 BTUs. The higher the BTU, the more expensive the air con will be. Thus, think about the room size and the usage before you buy. Do your homework first by checking the various types of air con systems out there in the market.

## — Window Units

Window air cons are compact

and only cool one room. You may remember growing up with the old box units that fit into a hole in the wall; those were the most common air con units back in the 1980s and 1990s.

Window units can also be installed in rooms without that all-essential hole. They fit nicely in the standard window of any room and installation is pretty quick and easy. However, they are not that powerful and suit smaller spaces; they won't cool a big room efficiently. Also, they take up one whole window which blocks

the natural light and breeze. In addition, they can be noisier than multi-split units.

## — Multi-split Units

These are very commonly seen in Singapore homes, and are sold by leading brands such as Daikin, Mitsubishi and Carrier. You can choose anything from one to five multi-split units, which are connected to an outdoor compressor.

It is cheaper and more efficient to use multi-splits if you need to cool multiple rooms. You can also

customize the power required in different rooms – higher BTU in bigger rooms, lower BTU in smaller rooms – and you also get to control the temperature you prefer in every room. Installation is relatively easy and does not need ductwork. However, having bulky compressors outside your house can look unsightly, though new flats and condos now try to hide them better using aesthetically pleasing air con ledges.

## — Central Air Conditioner

This is preferred for larger homes as it cools efficiently, circulating cool air through the supply and return ducts hidden in the wall or floors. How it works is these ducts and registers will carry cooled air into the home. Warmer air will circulate back into the supply ducts and registers, which are then transported back to the air conditioner. On the minus side, you need to carefully plan and prepare the position of your central air conditioning because the right size affects how well it functions. Pick the wrong one and you will waste

more money on utility bills, trying to cool your home.

## — Portable Air Conditioner

Portable air cons are an option for those who want something that can move around easily. For example, if you are renting a home and it does not come with air conditioning, your landlord may not be willing to spend on installing an air con system. By using a portable air con, you can take it with you when you move out. How it works is it takes in air from the room, cools it and directs it back to your bedroom. An exhaust hose installed in a window will vent the warm air outside. Similar to window air con units, portable ones are only powerful enough to cool one room. However, these can be a bit chunky and take up precious floor space.

If you live in a HDB flat, don't forget to adhere to HDB's technical guidelines on installing air-conditioners. Get more info on [http://www.hdb.gov.sg/cs/infoweb/aircon\\_safety](http://www.hdb.gov.sg/cs/infoweb/aircon_safety).





# BLADE RUNNER

Thinking of buying a ceiling fan? We get wind of how to choose the right one.

**Ceiling fans are a great way to cool your room without running up an astronomical electrical bill. A ceiling fan consumes about 50 to 60 watts while an air-conditioner sucks up 500 to 1000 watts – you can imagine the difference it makes to your electricity bill! Follow our tips before you head to the shops.**

## Determine the right size of the ceiling fan

Firstly, measure the longest wall in the room. As a rule, follow this chart:

LENGTH OF LONGEST WALL	MOST SUITABLE CEILING FAN WIDTH
Less than 12ft	36 inches or less
12 – 15ft	40 – 48 inches
More than 15ft	52 inches or more

According to fan specialist KDK Singapore, a large bedroom or living room needs a large ceiling fan with blade length of between 56 to 60 inches, in order to circulate air effectively. Smaller bedrooms can make do with fan blade length of between 44 to 56 inches.

## Decide on the number of blades you want

The more blades the better? Not

always. What you should aim for is a fan that can move 6,000 CFM (cubic feet per minute) or more air, consumes 30 watts or less, and have a fan efficiency of 200 CFM per watt or more. Ask the shop assistant to show you the specifications of the models so you can compare them.

Some award-winning fans may come with just three blades but are cleverly designed with winglets at the end of the blades to maximize the air circulation effect. One study discovered that four blades were the optimum number to get you into the cool zone. However, depending on the technology behind every fan, a two-blade fan may cool down a room better than its multi-blade cousins too. Irregularly shaped blades can be

sharply tapered, curved, spiraled or twisted so that the blades do not have a constant blade width, rake angle, or blade pitch. These offer a more uniform airflow velocity while lessening the drag and noise.

## Consider the ceiling height

The higher the ceiling, the more powerful the fan you need. You should install your ceiling fan at least 2.3m to 2.8m above your floor. Lower the ceiling fan if needed. Most fans in Singapore's HDB flats are likely to be mounted directly to the ceiling. Rooms with low ceiling will need flush-mount (sometimes known as hugger or low-profile) fans.

However, some condominium apartments or landed properties may feature very high ceilings which need a down rod. To calculate the length of the rod needed, simply use the ceiling height to deduct 2.3m (or up to 2.8m). According to KDK, if your ceiling height is 3.65m, just use 3.65m – 2.3m. You should thus get a down rod of 1m to put your fan-to-floor height comfortably between the 2.3m to 2.8m standard.

## Double up your fan's use with a light

There are many models out there that come with one or even multiple lights. This saves space and cost as you don't have to install extra lights. In fact, if you choose a ceiling fan carefully to fit your home's theme, it can be a lovely and useful focal piece!



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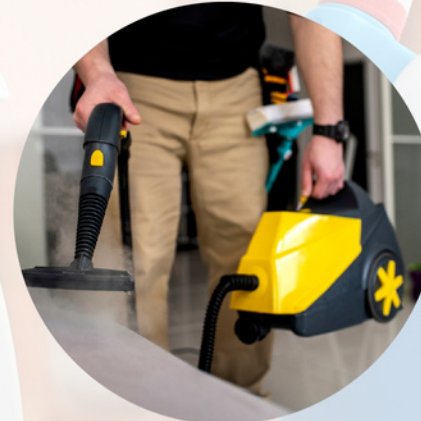
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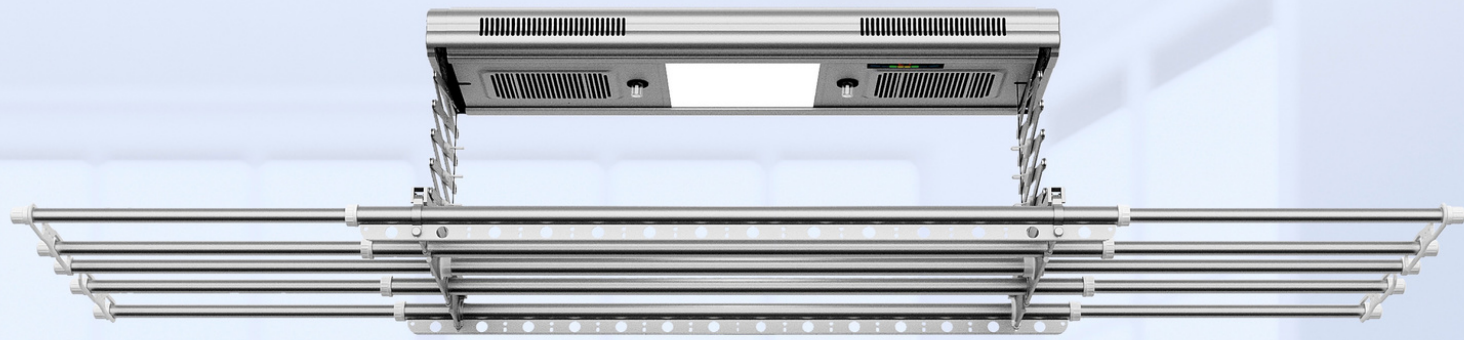
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## LAUNDRY LIST

Front-loading or top-loading washing machine? Don't get your head in a spin.

**D**read doing the laundry? You are not alone. Living in humid, sultry Singapore means many of us shower at least twice a day, which also means our laundry pile keeps growing. While you may not wash your clothes every day, you probably can't afford to keep them longer than a week... unless you want to be knocked over by that musty stench!

Fortunately for us, we no longer have to wash our clothes by hand. These days, most of us dump our dirty laundry into the washing machine for a quick wash, tumble

and dry. Many models now come with very intelligent features that yes, can even wash your delicate items. Having said that, we'd still recommend that you hand-wash very delicate — and expensive! — pieces such as your precious Chanel silk blouse.

But first, should you choose a front-loading or top-loading washing machine? What are their differences? Which cleans better? And perhaps most importantly, which costs more? Here's a comparison chart for your reference.



**TOP LOADING****FRONT LOADING****WASHING POWER**

Not as efficient as the front-loading machine. All that tumbling still doesn't beat the front-loader's washing power.

Controlled tests all show that front-loaders generally remove stains from fabric better than top-loaders. They are also more efficient.

**CONVENIENCE**

Generally considered as more convenient as you don't have to stoop or kneel down to load your washer. Also, if you forget a laundry item, you can always just flip the cover and throw it in. On the other hand, if you're short and you have a big top-loader, you may have to dive in daily to retrieve that last shirt... or grab a tong.

May not be so friendly, especially for the elderly or those with trouble bending low to load the machine. You can't just open the door half way, either. But the good thing is you can stack a dryer on top if you wish to get a standalone dryer. Or, you can always get a two-in-one washer-dryer!

**WATER CONSUMPTION**

All your clothes will be totally submerged in a big barrel of water, before they are tumbled thoroughly to clean your clothes. Definitely uses more water and energy.

Designed to lift and drop your clothes in the water constantly, think of it as kinda hand-washing your clothes. Uses less water and energy.

**TYPE OF DETERGENT**

You can use regular detergent, since your washer will use enough water to wash out all that soap.

You need special 'front-loading' detergent that produces less suds and less lather, since a front-loader uses less water to rinse all that bubbles out.

**PRICE**

Generally cheaper. You can get a modest Midea brand one for as little as \$328 on Harvey Norman's website.

Usually costs more than top loading ones. The cheapest we found on the same website was a EuropAce basic model, at \$499.

# LET THERE BE LIGHT

Lighting can play a big role in making your home look sterile and clinical, or cosy and welcoming. Let us enlighten you.





Shopping for lights can be a fun, yet intimidating experience. Step into any lights store and you will be blinded by the wide array of lights, all ready to dazzle you with their different styles and brightness. From edgy to gothic, modern to country style, there are lights to suit every interior design theme.

Prices can range from under \$100 for simple lamps, to even tens of thousands of dollars for crystal chandeliers, if your pockets are deep enough. Then there are the light bulbs. Cool or warm lights? Should you invest in LED lights? It can be a head-scratching affair for first-time home owners.

That's why it pays to do your research before you start shopping. Besides educating yourself, it also helps you set a realistic budget if you know what you are shopping for. Here are a few things you should consider as you shop for your lights.

# 1

## Use it as a focal point and conversation starter

Investing in a classic chandelier or one with an unusual design instantly jazzes up your home. From fancy Victorian style to gothic electric 'candle lights' and even rustic ones, chandeliers are an eye-catcher. Think of it as a lamp that pulls double duty as an art piece. It's worth splurging on, if you want an easy 2-in-1 way of decorating your new home.



# 2

## Consider the use of the room when you choose your lights

Warm yellow lighting sets a soothing, relaxed mood for the bedroom. But you will probably appreciate brighter white lighting for the study where you or your kids work. Having task lighting in the toilet helps you do your grooming or makeup better.



# 3

## Switch to LED lights

They may be more expensive to buy and replace but they are more energy efficient, environmentally friendly and last much longer than traditional incandescent, halogen and CFL lightbulbs. Which means, in the long run, they save you more money too. And they save you the hassle of climbing up and down ladders regularly to replace those darn blown lightbulbs! LED lights don't heat up as much as the rest and are considered safer as there is less risk of fire.



# 4

## Consider a big light over the dining table

The dining table is where family and friends gather for a good time. A low-lying chandelier will work nicely here – and everyone can see what they're eating – or even a collection of pendant lamps for some unity. If your dining room adjoins your living room, do keep the other lights in mind. You don't necessarily need to buy the same for both areas but keeping to the same style will provide continuity to the theme. Two very fussy looking lights that fight with each other will also be unpleasant to the eye!



# 5

## Use table or floor lamps to create ambience

Paired with the right bedside table or strategically placed next to a comfy arm chair, table or floor lamps can add a lovely touch to any room. From cheap ones at Ikea to designer lamps at Space, there is one for every budget and theme to complete your home. Table lamps are particularly useful for late night reading, when you don't want to disturb your partner by blasting on overhead lights!





# Lounge Lavishly

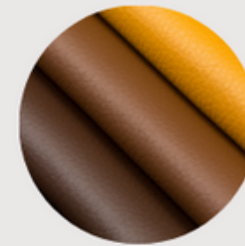
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# FROM HOUSE TO HOME

If clothes maketh a man, then it's the furniture that maketh a home. We round up a list of 'must-have' and 'good-to-have' items for your shopping list.



## LIVING ROOM / DINING TABLE

— Must have:

- Sofa
- Coffee table
- TV console
- Dining table and enough chairs for the family

— Good to have:

- Standing lamp
- Carpet/rug

- Accent chair
- Massage chair
- Display cabinet

**TIP:** If you hate the hassle of cleaning decor items in a display cabinet, have a feature wall instead. This can be a nice art work or all your favourite family photos in matching (or tastefully mismatched) frames. Or, Google

for quirky sayings, print and frame them. Another cheap and cute way is to get the whole family to leave paint hand prints in a heart shape!

If you have a tiny living-cum-dining room but love hosting guests, buy an extendable dining table. Or do away with the table altogether and build a kitchen island that doubles up.

## MASTER BEDROOM

— Must have:

- Queen or king-sized Bed
- Bedside table(s)
- Built-in wardrobe (with lockable drawers) if possible, to maximise storage space
- Space-saving TV console if you have a TV in the room
- Wall-hung mirror or dressing table

— Good to have:

- Chest of drawers or shelves for extra storage
- Bedside table lamp
- Comfortable chair

**TIP:** Don't clutter your master bedroom with too much furniture. Try to keep your work desk out of it too, so as to separate your work and rest environments. If you have a new or upcoming baby who will sleep in your room, make space for a cot. Add a comfortable chair if possible; that will come in handy when you have to nurse your baby multiple times through the night too!



## KID'S OR TEENAGER'S BEDROOM

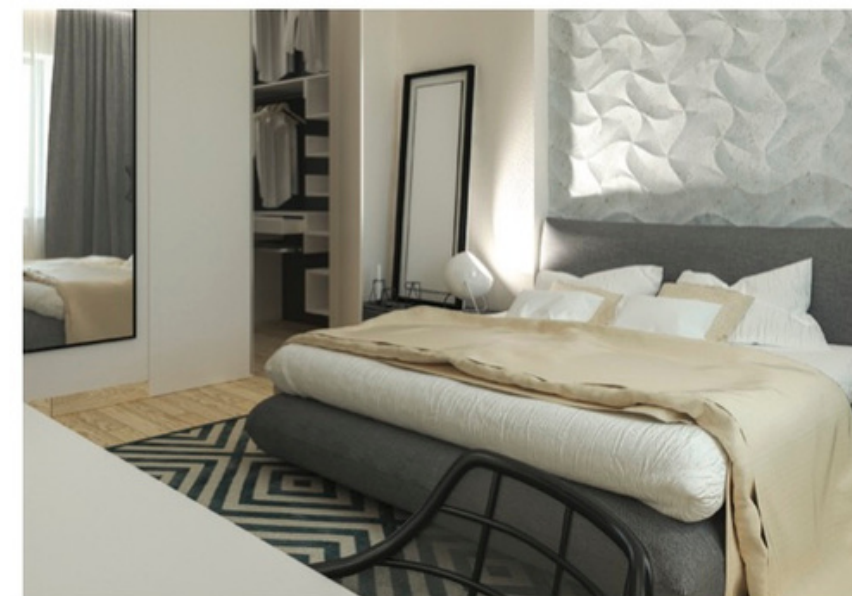
— Must have:

- Single or super single bed
- Wardrobe (At least 2 doors – more if you have a fashion-loving child)
- Desk and chair (or small table and chair for a kid)
- Ample book shelves for school books

— Good to have:

- Bedside table lamp
- Personal TV and TV console
- Built-in wardrobe reaching to the ceiling, if possible, to store seldom used items like winter wear, old toys etc

**TIP:** Your child grows up rapidly so avoid very kiddy-looking furniture such as a toy car bed, which you will have to throw out when he gets too big (or embarrassed). Choosing a childish-looking wallpaper will also mean being stuck with it for a while. Invest in timeless bed designs and decorate it with accents that are easy to replace, like colourful curtains, easy-to-peel-off stickers and framed paintings or drawings. Even if you update the look regularly as your child matures, it will be much easier and cheaper than redoing a whole bedroom!





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# MATTRESS MATTERS

Choosing a mattress may seem more confusing than it should be, especially amidst coordinating everything else for your new home. Here's a quick summary of the three mattress types you should know about.

**Synthetic Foam Mattress**

Basic polyurethane mattresses are very affordable and thus a popular choice. A more comfortable option is memory foam, which disperses body weight more evenly. It softens and molds in response to body temperature so it does sleep warm.

**Innerspring Mattress**

Manufacturers use a variety of coil systems, such as bonnell springs or pocketed springs. Sometimes softer foams are layered on top. Spring mattresses can be found at a wide range of price points, and are arguably the most common out there.

**Latex Mattress**

The main draw of latex is its natural elasticity, but its breathability and resistance to mould are an added bonus in our local climate. Latex


mattresses have only recently picked up in Singapore despite the technology being around for nearly a century.

There are also hybrid mattresses made of a mix of materials (which may include others not on this list!)

It can be a challenge to keep up with all the information out there, but remember that the right mattress will feel great, not just sound great. So take your time to try them out, and have fun shopping!

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the sleep pioneers keep innovating. "We understand that everyone sleeps differently, hence TEMPUR® has a wide range of mattresses and pillows which cater to different needs and preferences," says Chloe Ng, Assistant Marketing Manager at TEMPUR Singapore. Particularly suitable for Singapore's humid climate is their newest mattress technology, the CoolTouch™. It keeps the mattress surface feeling cool to the touch and helps absorb excess heat. Now that's great news that will lull us to a restful snooze!

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**TEMPUR SLEEP HAVEN**: 6 RAFFLES BOULEVARD, #02-06 MARINA SQUARE, S039594 (ABOVE EMPORIUM SHOKUHIN)

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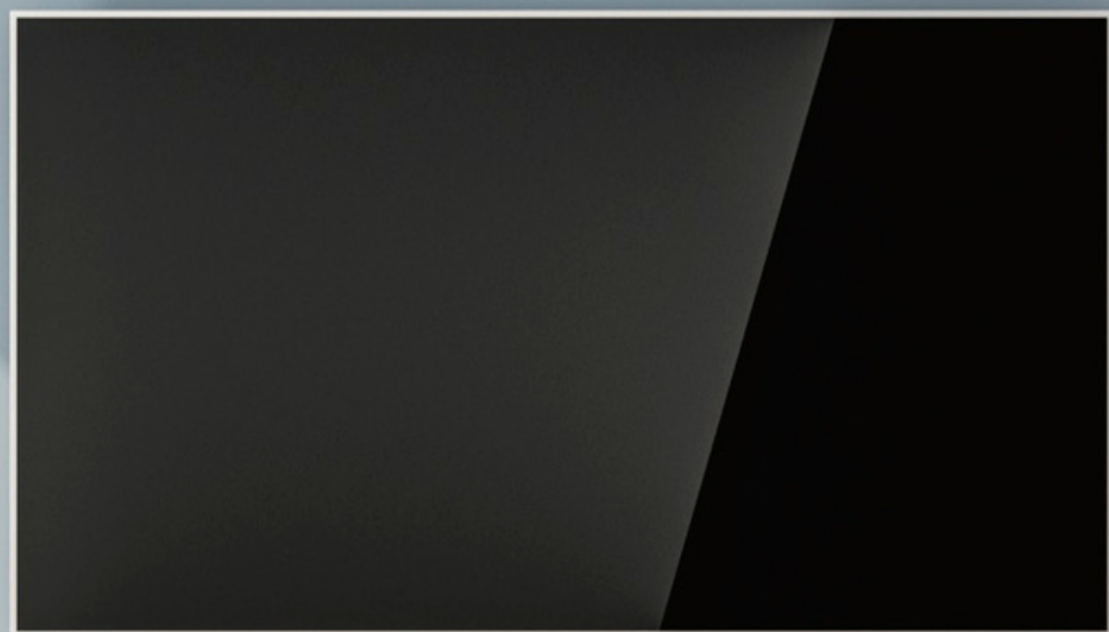




# SCREEN SAVIOURS

Master the ABCs of choosing the right TV for your home.

If you haven't shopped for a new TV in a while, walking into a shop can become a bit of a culture shock. How did the googlebox get so complicated? And how does someone who just wants to watch a bit of Game of Thrones go about choosing a new telly, without looking like a tube noob? Pick up some jargon and get ready to impress the sales person.



## LED and LCD TVs

Most TVs sold today use Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) to light up the Liquid-crystal Display (LCD) screen. These TVs light up some areas of the screen and dim other areas – it's called active dimming or local dimming – so as to display a better mix of light and dark areas in a scene. Some fancier sets even have full-array backlighting to give a better contrast so your TV-viewing experience is all that better. This is seen in Ultra HD sets.

Other LCD technology includes quantum dots. How this works is there is another layer of different sized nanocrystal dots which will light up when the LED backlight hits them. This thus produces a wider array of colours and more brightness.

## OLED TVs

Organic light-emitting diode (OLED) is basically a light-emitting diode (LED) where the emissive electroluminescent layer is a film of organic compound that emits light responding to an electric current. These are better than full-array LED-LCDs as they have a few dozen lighting zones. Instead

of a backlight, OLEDs utilize a layer of organic LEDs so as to get absolute black and precise levels of contrast, at the pixel level. This makes colours pop amazingly. Prices are, of course, also 'organically' more expensive.

## HD versus 4K

This simply refers to how sharp the TV picture looks, based on the horizontal lines of pixels. High-definition (HD) TV is the current industry standard. A cheap older model may support just 720p (meaning, 720 lines scanned progressively) or 1080p (known as full HD).

TV manufacturers are swiftly shifting from HDTVs to Ultra HD sets (known as 4K) which have four times the number of pixels as current HDTV sets – this means 2,160 horizontal lines, or 3,840 x 2160 pixels! 4K sets' most important benefit is you see more details on smaller objects and sharper text on the screen so that the images look richer. For now, most TV channels are not 4K broadcast and only some programmes (eg on Netflix or Amazon Prime Instant Video) offer 4K streaming options. Thus, you may not be enjoying the full impact

of 4K TVs just yet. But that's on the way so you may be better off buying a 4K set now instead of having to upgrade in a year or two.

## HDR and Dolby Vision

HDR (High Dynamic Range) is an upgrade of the 4K format. This delivers more colours, contrast levels and brightness than your regular ol' 4K Ultra HD TVs. For even better TV effects, go for the Dolby Vision, which is by the same people who gave us Dolby noise reduction and surround sound. When choosing a TV set, if you're going for a HDR one, do pick one that is compatible with Dolby Vision. Frankly, for most of us, we may not be able to tell the difference much but TV fanatics will love the richness.

## HDMI inputs

Do look out for the number of HDMI inputs the TV set comes with. Cheaper sets may come with less HDMI plugs on the back but these quickly get used up. For example, in our household, we already use one each for the sound bar, DVD player, cable box and a game console. Try to buy a TV set with at least 4 HDMI inputs for your growing needs.



# SOUND ADVICE

Speakers or a soundbar? That is the question. We compare the two to help you make a sound decision.

**Sure, there is nothing really wrong with the sound blasting out from your new TV; you can hear the dialogue just fine. But when your TV is strapped up to a solid sound system, bam! That's when you truly hear the difference. So should you get speakers or a sound bar? We compare them.**

## SPEAKERS



## SOUND BAR



### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Speakers usually come in pairs to project sound from both sides. Speakers have a mobile electromagnet inside, which is a metal coil to create a magnetic field when electric current flows through it. This is then placed in front of a permanent magnet that is fixed in place.

When electricity pulses pass through the coil of the electromagnet, the direction of its magnetic field changes quickly, which then causes it to be attracted to and repelled from the permanent magnet. The cone (usually paper or plastic) attached to the electromagnet then amplifies these vibrations, pumping sound waves into the surrounding air and towards your ears.

Unlike speakers which are placed surrounding you, a sound bar is an all-in-one device that is placed below your TV with multiple drivers in a horizontal position. And yet, it is supposed to have surround sound capabilities – how?

Cheaper ones don't really have the 'surround' feature but offer an amplified stereo effect from two or more speaker drivers. The more expensive models with Dolby Atmos capability, however, can successfully simulate the surround sound set-up by creating an illusion by bouncing sound waves off the walls of the room. You'll get pretty decent sound that is still better than what your TV set offers.

### WHAT'S NEEDED TO SET UP

Typically, a basic sound system requires an audio-video (AV) receiver, loudspeakers (the quantity depends on the speaker layout), a subwoofer, all the connection cables and speaker wires required.

Long and narrow, it takes up less space than speakers. You can choose between the Speaker-only sound bar, the sound bar with wireless subwoofers or a sound bar with surround expansion option.

### EASE OF SET UP

Definitely more tedious than the sound bar! True audiophiles who are particular about their speaker layout will position the speakers at an exact 60-degree angle apart to achieve the best 'stereo image' of the sound.

You should probably mark the floor too, so you don't accidentally knock the speakers off their alignment when you clean the house!

Easy peasy. If you are using the TV as the AV hub, then it's a matter of plugging it into a HDMI port in the TV. This works great for table-mounted TVs.

For wall-mounted TVs, the sound bar becomes the AV hub. Its outputs can then be used for the TV and other gadgets like a DVD player and game console.

### SOUND QUALITY

A more detailed set-up with multiple speakers will give you a better audio experience. This is especially so in a large living room, so that the sound can travel around properly. However, if you sit on say, the right side of the room, you can't get the full impact of the sound produced by the speakers on the left.

Unlike speakers, audio output from the sound bar hits directly at the listeners, thus allowing you to hear everything.

However, the sound quality from sound bars are not as full and good as speakers. But you always raise the bass with a subwoofer, which is available wired or wireless.

### VERDICT: WHICH TO BUY?

Buy speakers for your living room if you want a more complete audio experience. If you have the budget and choose those with great sound and sleek design, they can make your living room look uber cool too!

Buy a sound bar if you want a fuss-free solution and are not super particular about your sound quality (or can't really tell the difference). Sound bars also work great in bedrooms, where you don't have the luxury of space.



# THE COLOUR RUN

What colour should you use in your home to bring luck? Which sexy hue will turn up the passion? Dip into the deeper meaning behind colours.

When homeowners seek help from Fengshui masters, they hope to maintain or increase positive energy, happiness and yes, definitely prosperity in their household. It can cost hundreds to thousands of dollars for a Fengshui master to customize a plan for them, depending on variables like the family members' birthdates and using a Fengshui bagua compass.

It is said that every colour has its own unique frequency. From cheery yellow to cool blue and deep purple, colours have the instant power to transform a room.

Disclaimer: Do consult a Fengshui master for a comprehensive personal review, our generic colour tips cannot be responsible for your luck nor love life!



## GREEN

The colour of life and nature, green represents growth, vitality and abundance. Giving good vibes like balance, healing and relaxation, this wood element is ideal for the knowledge, health and family areas of the Fengshui bagua. Also great for the bathroom since it looks fresh and peaceful.

## BLUE

A calming colour that radiates security, blue represents the water element and sparks inspiration, relaxation and renewal. Suitable for the knowledge, career and prosperity areas of the Fengshui bagua. Use in the bathroom for the same benefits that green offers.

## BROWN

The colour of the earth and wood, representing grounding and stability. Some even describe it as a "motherly colour" – perhaps in reference to Mother Earth? Use it in the knowledge segment of the fengshui bagua, and for the living room or bedroom.

## YELLOW

The colour of lemons, daffodils and sunshine! This uplifting fire element, just like its friends orange and red, can be used in the reputation, prosperity and relationships areas of the Fengshui bagua. A happy colour suitable for spaces where people socialise, such as the living room, kitchen or dining room. Planning to paint your bedroom yellow? A paler or earthier shade like mustard works better.

## PINK

Love, romance and everything sweet – no wonder pink is perfect for the love and relationships area of the Fengshui bagua. Definitely use it in your bedroom to add some sizzle between the sheets!

## PURPLE

A favourite among royals, this noble colour represents abundance and promotes spirituality. Use it in the prosperity area of the Fengshui bagua. A pretty shade of lavender or violet in your bedroom lends a romantic and very Instagrammable touch!

## GREY

This cool colour may be an industrial-chic must-have but when used incorrectly, it can 'lack energy' and even put a toll on one's body. However, this metal element can be used in the knowledge, creativity and travel areas of the bagua. Use it sparingly as an accessory colour.

## BLACK

Sophisticated and modern, this water element is good for the helpful people, career and knowledge areas of the Fengshui bagua. Like grey, use it as an accessory colour.

## WHITE

The shade of innocence and openness, this metal element is great for the creativity and helpful people areas of the bagua. Use it in the bathroom as it represents cleanliness and purity!

## ORANGE

Representing the fire element, orange is a stimulating shade useful for the reputation and relationships sections. This warm and 'sociable' colour is perfect for rooms where people gather, like the kitchen, dining room and living room. An earthy tone of orange in the bedroom will be 'fiery' enough for passion, but not too loud – unlike using red, which is another fire colour.










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# REDBRICK HOMES RENOVATION PLANNER

Filled with checklists, tips and useful information, this planner will help you organise and record the progress of your renovation.





## TYPICAL RENOVATION COST

How much should you pay for your renovation? Here's the estimated renovation cost for a typical 4-room HDB flat. Prices may vary based on choice of materials and fluctuations in labour cost.

FLOORING		BEDROOM	
	COST		COST
Homogeneous tiles	\$12 per sq ft and above	Wardrobe	\$310 per ft run onwards
Ceramic tiles	\$11.50 per sq ft and above	Bedframe and side table	\$2000
Parquet	\$7 per sq ft and above	Study table	\$1000
Timber floor	\$16 per sq ft and above		
Marble	\$12 - \$30 per sq ft	LIVING ROOM	
Granite	\$14 - \$35 per sq ft		COST
Laminate floor	\$4 per sq ft and above	TV console and display	\$2000 and above
Vinyl floor	\$6 per sq ft and above		(depending on complexity of design)
Installation labour cost	\$5-12 per sq ft	KITCHEN	
			COST
			(Cost varies depending on design and materials)
DOORS		KITCHEN	
	COST		COST
Fire-rated front door	\$1400 and above	Kitchen cabinet	\$250 per ft run onwards
Wooden bedroom doors	\$800 and above	Solid Surface countertop	\$50 per ft run onwards
Pivot doors	\$1200 and above	Quartz	\$80 per ft run onwards
Bi-fold aluminium doors for toilets	\$550	Stone top Granite/Marble	\$90 per ft run onwards
Tempered glass door for kitchen, study, bedroom	\$750	Flooring	See flooring
Sliding door for balcony, bedroom, kitchen	\$1000	TOILET	
			COST
WALL FINISHES		TOILET	
	COST		COST
Plastering	\$4 per sq ft and above	Tiles	See flooring
Wallpaper	\$2 per sq ft and above	Toilet door	\$500 and above
Painting	\$1300 and above	Shower screen	\$650 and above
Tiles (bathrooms and kitchen)	\$12 per sq ft and above	PLUMBING	
Timber wall panels (based on design)	\$15 per sq ft and above		COST
Marble walls	\$25 per sq ft and above	Plumbing	\$1000 - \$4000
CEILING		ELECTRICAL WORKS	
	COST		COST
False/plaster ceiling	\$4 per sq ft and above	Wiring and lighting for 4room flat	\$4000 and above
		HACKING WORKS	
			COST
		For whole house	\$4500 and above

## MY RENOVATION BUDGET VERSUS THAT QUOTED BY MY INTERIOR DESIGNER

Dot down your budget and your interior designer's quotation here, for an easy comparison.

	MY BUDGET	ID COMPANY'S QUOTATION		MY BUDGET	ID COMPANY'S QUOTATION
<b>FLOORING</b>			<b>BEDROOM 3:</b>		
<b>DOORS</b>			Wardrobe		
<b>WALL FINISHES</b>			Bedframe and side table		
<b>CEILING</b>			Study table		
<b>LIVING ROOM:</b>			<b>KITCHEN:</b>		
TV console and display			Flooring		
<b>MASTER BEDROOM:</b>			Cabinets		
Wardrobe			Kitchen Top		
Bedframe and side table			<b>TOILET:</b>		
Study table			Tiles		
<b>BEDROOM 2:</b>			Toilet Door		
Wardrobe			Shower Screen		
Bedframe and side table			<b>PLUMBING COST</b>		
Study table			<b>ELECTRICAL WORKS</b>		
			<b>HACKING WORKS</b>		
			<b>TOTAL</b>		

## MY FINAL BUDGET

Apart from budgeting for your renovation, you need to decide on the amount to spend on loose furniture, fittings and appliances

**RENOVATION:**

**SANITARYWARE:**

**APPLIANCES:**

**LIGHTING:**

**LOOSE FURNITURE:**

**TOTAL**



## POST-RENOVATION CHECKLIST

Now that the big renovation is over, it's time to check your new home thoroughly before you pay up the final bill.

### PAINTING

- Check for uneven and patchy paintwork
- Get a record of the paint chart colour and code, in case you need to touch up the paint in future
- Make sure there are no visible crack lines after the paint job



### WINDOWS

- Check for rusty hinges, screws, frames and locks
- Open and close the windows to ensure they work smoothly
- Any chips or scratches on the glass panels?
- Ensure that there are no missing screws
- Try the locks and keys



### SERVICE YARD

- Open and shut the bi-fold door to make sure it works smoothly
- Check that the drainage panel is installed properly
- Try the clothes drying rack to ensure that the mechanism works properly and smoothly
- Turn on the taps to see if they work and the water runs clear
- Ensure that the drains are not clogged by checking if water drains quickly and smoothly
- Check the pipes to make sure they're not leaking



- Check the taps to make sure they're not dripping
- Let the water run for a while to check if the water is clear
- Make sure your tap is not rusty or old
- Examine your sanitary fittings for chips, stains, scratches or discoloration
- Flush the toilet to make sure it's not clogged
- Test the water system. If the water tank takes more than 5min to fill up again, it may be malfunctioning
- Check if the pipes are leaking and if the drains are clogged
- See if water drains properly in the basin, bath tub and floor, by filling them up with water. If the flow rate is slow, it may be clogged
- Check the showerhead and tube to make sure they're not leaking
- Sit on the toilet seat to see if it is installed properly

### MAIN DOOR AND GATE

- Open and close them several times to ensure they work smoothly
- Listen out for screeching sounds – it could be a sign of misaligned doors or gates
- Ensure that all the mechanisms like the hinge, handle, latch etc are firmly fitted with no loose screws
- Check for rusty hinges or gate frame. If you have a door magnet, make sure that it sticks properly
- Try the doorbell to make sure both the switch and the bell work
- Check the peephole. If it is not properly aligned, you won't be able to look through clearly
- Try all the keys to every door in the house to ensure they work. This includes window grilles
- Don't forget to test the letterbox key too

### ELECTRICAL WORKS

- Ensure that the electrical sockets are not damaged or rusty, and are working fine. Use a say, handphone charger or any sort of light to check.

### FLOORING

- Check if there are any big or hairline cracks, or chipped, stained or discoloured tiles
- Look out for tiles that are not aligned properly
- Listen carefully for hollow-sounding tiles as you walk on them



### CARPENTRY WORK IN KITCHEN, LIVING ROOM AND BEDROOMS

- Check that the swing doors' or sliding doors' hinges function properly and open smoothly
- Check that the doors are aligned properly
- Look out for scratches or chips on the doors or cabinet bodies
- Pull out the drawers to check if they open smoothly, and are properly aligned
- Check through the carpentry to spot any sharp edges that needs the contractor to file down or even replace



### WALLS

- Look up to the ceiling and at the walls to spot any cracks
- Visit on a rainy day and check for water seepage on the walls
- Check the walls carefully and run a hand across to ensure the surface is smooth and nicely completed