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# da

LA RIOJA TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTRE  
G HOTEL PENANG  
GARDENS AT GERALD DRIVE  
HOUSE AT LUCKY VIEW  
HONDA SHOWROOM ALEXANDRA  
CLUB F1 HONGKONG

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ISSUE 039. 2007 | \$8

# the *hip* factor in **g**

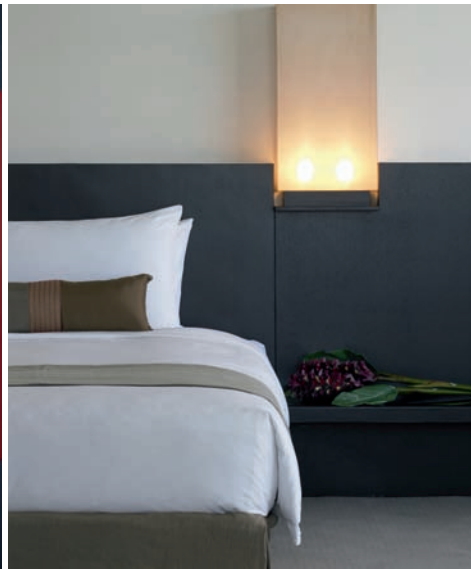
BY AU TAI YAU | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON POCOCK,  
STAEK PHOTOGRAPHY (COPYRIGHT G HOTEL),  
AND KO SHIOU HEE



G Hotel, a recently completed 304-room hotel on Penang island, has broken the mould of hitherto staid approach to the design of business hotels in Penang. Conceptualized by Ko Shiou Hee of K2LD Architects, could its über contemporary image perhaps be an indication of a new attitude towards design here?





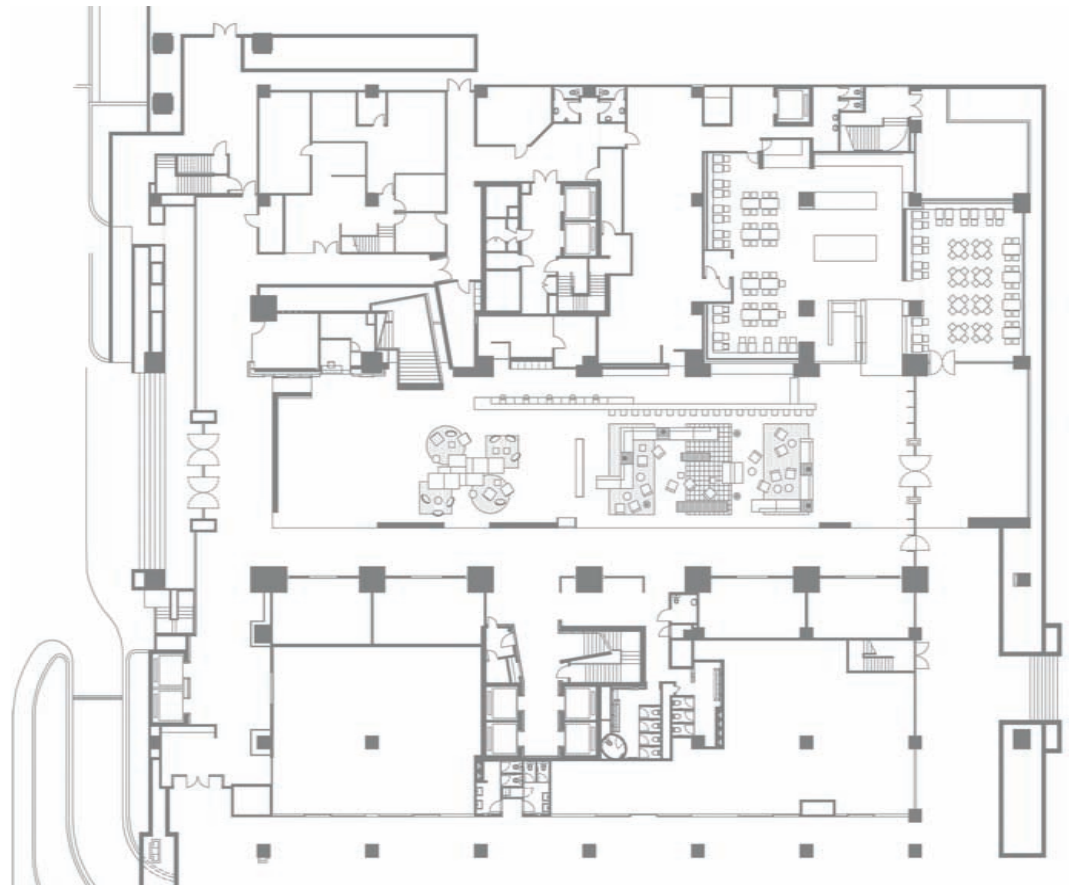
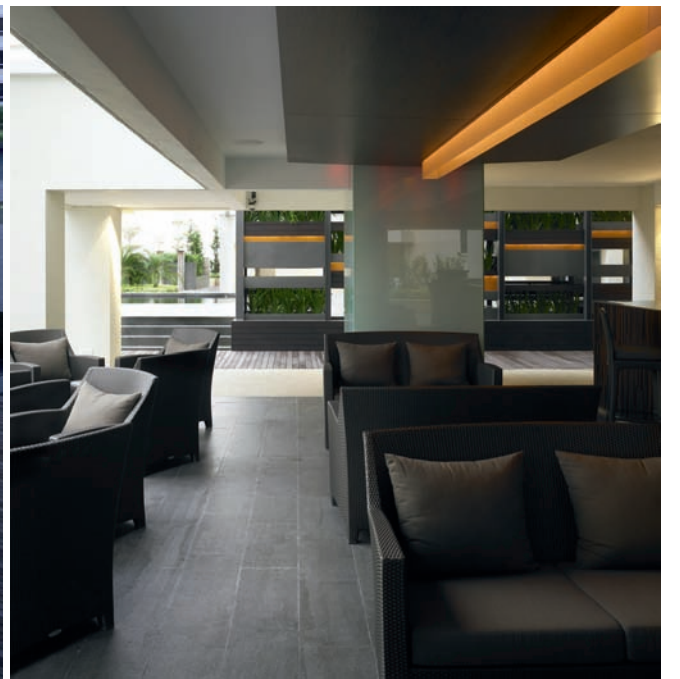


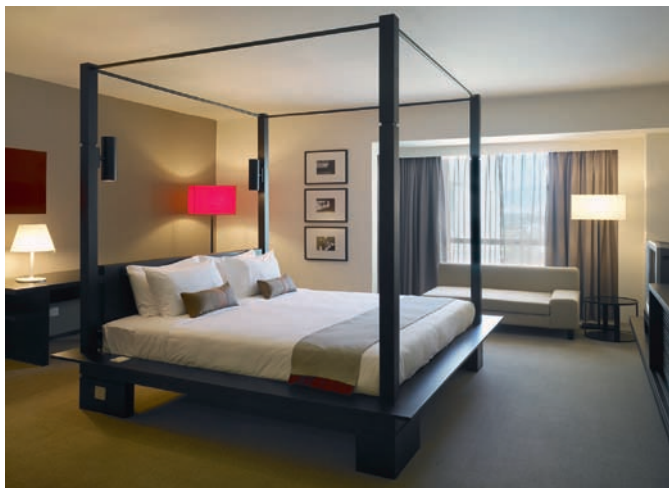
**G** hotel is located at Gurney Drive in Penang, a name that conjures images of hawker stalls and the long promenade. It is situated next to Gurney Plaza, a very modern complex that visitors and Penangites throng to satiate their shopping urges. Both hotel and shopping complex were forestalled by the economic downturn in the region during the late '90s. Their revival coincides with the return in confidence that investors have for the economy of the island. In fact, the superstructure of the hotel was about 80% completed when Ko came on board to work on the interiors in 2004.

Ko's design philosophy of architecture is very much apparent in G Hotel – the intricate relationships between light and material to allow for spatial freedom, and the natural beauty and interplay of materials can be seen throughout the project. On the exterior, the

building is symmetrical but inside, this symmetry is skillfully dissected. At the lobby, a large wide timber platform, uplit with concealed lighting, appears to float off the black granite floor and carries through to the outdoor coffeehouse that overlooks what was previously a park but is now a hoarded-up construction site. Yes, Gurney Plaza, next to G, is now being primed for the overflow of visitors and investors to the island.

The circulation of the lobby is easily detected; access to the upper floors is located at the sides and dining spaces carefully concealed off the circulation path. The lobby space is huge, possibly big enough to house a Boeing 727! Yet, the atmosphere here is one of intimate comfort. The reception lobby countertop continues right through to the lobby bar. Giant light troughs, cantilevered off the feature timber wall, allow indirect





lighting to filter and wash the paneling in warm light. Branded designer furnishings populate the area in a fashion that guests can comfortably mingle in.

Surprises abound. For instance, a huge aperture at the patterned walnut-coloured timber feature wall frames the specialty restaurant, Sesame & Soy, on the first floor. LED lights carefully placed in the glass feature above the reception subtly change the mood of the lobby with each hue transition. Doors to the back of house are carefully integrated into the feature timber-panelled wall. The banquet and conference halls at the second floor carry through the design theme of space, colors and material.

On the third floor, where the gym and spa are located, is a very well crafted infinity pool and timber deck. The pool's structure and the massing of the building were beyond modification by the time K2LD Architects took on this project. The gym was designed to take advantage of both views of the sea and the pool deck. Its changing room is very theatrical and playful in design, a distinct contrast to the regimented colors of the gym and the high-tech sports equipment present. A modern metal landscape partition screens off the pool bar from the public deck.

#### G HOTEL IN PENANG

INTERIOR ARCHITECT	K2LD ARCHITECTS
DESIGN TEAM	KO SHIOU HEE, IRIS YEO, LEONG LAI PING, ROMAIN DESTREMAU, CHRISTINE GOH
SIGNAGE CONSULTANT	DUET DESIGN PTE LTD
ARCHITECT-ON-RECORD	BEP AKITEK SDN BHD
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	T Y LIN INTERNATIONAL SDN BHD
M&E ENGINEER	JURUTERA PERUNDING VALDUN SDN BHD
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	LIMITED EDITIONS (M) SDN BHD
INTERIORS CONTRACTOR	LEXON FURNITURE & CONSTRUCTION PTE LTD



Ko's philosophy that a home should be a receptacle for living is clearly visible in the hotel rooms as the design approach is akin to that of a residence. Unlike most business hotels where the atmosphere is temporal, the rooms at G Hotel have a home-ly feel to them. The colour chosen for the walls is light beige, offset by simple dark walnut timber furniture, punctuated and accentuated by a bright lamp, a carefully designed sofa or a seductively positioned chaise lounge. The rooms are sparse, uncluttered yet have a luxurious feel to them. Bathrooms are spacious, with dark colored glass mosaic lining the walls and black polished granite floor contrasting with light colored solid surface countertops.

G Hotel could be K2LD Architects' finest work to date. It has also proved to be a photographer's delight – from the furniture and soft furnishings to the signage throughout the entire hotel have all been carefully thought out and placed; one can easily find a 'frame' to view at any angle. The contrast in materials and artfully composed lighting impart an inviting, sensorial, richness. A minimal budget and a restrictive envelope had not hampered but instead challenged Ko to further explore relationships of material, light and space in this project. ✦