



# GREEN FROM THE TOP

The roof terrace is almost an anachronism in Singapore- with a climate so hot it makes it almost impossible to enjoy the roof terrace in the day time, and where buyers of real estate quibble over every single square footage perceived as 'wasted'. The continued inclusion of the roof terrace as a feature in penthouses can only be explained away as it being an expression of a preferred lifestyle.

## THE GARDEN IS ON THE ROOF

Long a coveted feature in Singapore apartment living, the roof terrace has always been associated with the stealth wealth of penthouses, a life of luxe entertaining and the renewed fad of having private pools on the roof terrace. While private pools on luxury penthouses have been a feature of Singapore residential real estate since the 1970's, the trend has been renewed by the enthusiasm of award-winning architectural practice, WoHa. Helmed by Wong Mun Summ and Richard Hassell, the first conspicuous re-emergence of the private pool on a roof terrace within the lexicon of contemporary urbanites was the development of No.1 Moumen Rise. A modernist contraption in the Novena area that later went on to win the first Aga Khan architectural award for Singapore demonstrated how a private pool- long relegated as a kitschy, sybaritic excess of the 70's, actually finds perfect expression within a modern vernacular.

Barring the architectural feat of having a pool on your roof terrace, the other prevalent water feature sitting on Singapore's roof terraces is the jacuzzi. From its previous cheap fiberglass incarnations, the jacuzzi has evolved into a more discrete feature- sunken in within a raised decking of suitably modern materials-spelling discrete luxury rather than cheap pretensions towards ostentation.

In line with the idea of the roof terrace being used for relaxation and entertaining, the ideal of the roof terrace is always one that is suitably geared up - from the self-sufficient serving kitchen to the bar counter, the luxury sound system, and the arrangement of the roof terrace to encourage the most efficient use of space and to encourage mingling between guests.

Floor plans of penthouses in uncompleted developments used to feature a spot for that above ground fiberglass jacuzzi. Fancier condominiums now factor in a space for a serving kitchen or bar counter.

Yet, it would be wrong to say that everybody who buys into the idea of a roof terrace has endless weekends of entertaining in mind. Some do it for the love of lounging in open air- a feature so



private purposes, ensure that the outdoor seating is suitable for Singapore's tropical and increasingly erratic weather.

### 3. LIGHTING

Architecture has taken a recent interest in lighting and the right form of lighting can really enhance your roof terrace at night. From the lighting in water features to lights around the decks, lighting has become an indispensable feature to every roof terrace.

cruelly divested of once Singapore grew vertically. Those resentful of no longer being able to enjoy the outdoors within reasonably private confines seek solace in the roof terrace. The love of the outdoors has manifested itself in rather interesting ways- artful loungers have found ways to bring their bathing experience outdoors, with outdoor bathtubs or showers given a privacy screen by plants or a chastity wall, those looking for a piece of zen within their homes install a lot pond (the water feature central to all things zen) within visible proximity of their putative lounge area.

### 4. THEMED ACCESSORIES

Depending on the theme of your roof terrace, accessories complete the look. From the Balinese blow torches to the Moroccan moucharabiya, the little details frequently make or break the look on the terrace.

It is probably not surprising that the way roof terraces are decorated would reflect the prevailing aesthetic of the day. In the mid-80's and early '90s, a newly affluent Singapore, keen to bring back a slice of their Banyan Tree holidays home, invested in the Balinese look- lush foliage, moss covered granite sculptures, torches of wicker and an elevated ceremonial looking jacuzzi covered by a pergola. A notable champion of this look was Made Wijaya, responsible for the landscaping of St Martin's Residences on Nassim (arguably the first development in Singapore that tried to distill the essence of Bali within a condominium) and various regional hotels.

### 5. WATER FEATURES

Although not necessary, it has always been very popular and it can be argued that the roof terrace has partly been synonymous with the presence of a jacuzzi. Take your pick from lot ponds, Balinese water features, jacuzzi or even a swimming pool.

## TIPS ON CREATING A ROOFTOP GARDEN

### 1. DECKING/RE-TILING.

Very few people are likely to be happy with the original flooring of their roof terraces. A popular choice is timber decking, taking a leaf off the Balinese/tropical look. Increasingly, more homeowners are choosing to re-tile their roof terraces.

### 2. OUTDOOR SEATING.

Whether your roof terrace is going to be used for entertaining or

### 6. TAILORING THE LOOK

Understand that what looks great in the magazines (foreign or otherwise) might not translate within the context of the local weather and space. Understand the constraints of the space that you are working with and do check with your condominium's management board before starting on any renovations.

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