



RIVER MODERN IS POISED AGAINST THE TRANQUIL BACKDROP OF KIM SENG PARK AND THE SINGAPORE RIVER.

SPACE

# BY THE RIVER

Award-winning creatives Yip Yuen Hong and Nathan Yong share their interpretations of modern living and the exclusivity of living by the Singapore River.

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IMAGES COURTESY OF GUOCOLAND



A LAWN WAS INCORPORATED INTO THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN FOR MULTIPURPOSE USE AND CHILDREN TO RUN AROUND IN.



A RENDERING OF THE POOL AT RIVER MODERN THAT FEATURES FLUID LINES, INSPIRED BY THE SINGAPORE RIVER.



IN THE TWO-BEDROOM SHOW FLAT, NATHAN YONG A PUNCHY RED SOFA AND BAR-HEIGHT DINING TABLE REFLECTS "A YOUNGER, MORE CASUAL WAY OF LIVING."

**K**im Seng Park sits along a meander of the Singapore River next to Robertson Quay. It has a significant history, being part of the sprawling estate of wealthy businessman and community leader Tan Kim Seng during the 19th century. Future residents of the upcoming River Modern condominium development will soon have intimate connections with the park and river, as the plot traces this green lung in the city.

River Modern continues the successful relationship between GuocoLand and Singaporean architect Yip Yuen Hong. The founder of ip:li Architects and four-time President's Design Award winner had first collaborated with the property company on Martin Modern, and later, Midtown Modern. The former garnered multiple accolades, including the 2024 FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Award (Silver). "Through his vision, Martin Modern has become a landmark that stands out as a botanical sanctuary amidst the surrounding dense urban jungle, creating a space for nature in the city," says Dora Chng, Residential Director, GuocoLand.

Yip's idiosyncratic approach to tropical design was earlier applied to many single-family dwellings. Functional layouts, shaded spaces, rugged materiality, natural light, breeze, and nature are all his

hallmarks. Martin Modern's painted concrete walls were inspired by the go-downs of the nearby Robertson Quay. For River Modern, Yip looked to the Singapore River's fluid lines. Two blocks with subtle curves contain 455 apartments. At its doorstep is Great World MRT station that sits along the Thomson-East Coast line, offering future residents convenience in minutes.

The capacious landscaped grounds of River Modern tiers down to Kim Seng Park. "What we wanted was to visually merge River Modern's plot with the park and the river so that they look like one continuous site; it gives a greater expanse of space," says Yip, who highlights that the blocks were angled to maximise river views. The first storey units are raised almost 1.4 metres above ground so nature comes right in, and the lowest units enjoy elevated views. In this project, Yip departs from his usual dark palette, colouring River Modern with light-grey and beige rough-textured paint "so that it blends better with the landscaping, with the tree trunks, and leaves."

Yip is adept at creating dynamic architecture but layouts remain uncompromised. "Everybody who wants to buy a house or apartment has the same motivations and aspirations so architects, as problem solvers, have to satisfy these needs," Yip comments, on providing homes that are exclusive but also well functioning so that homeowners can "inject their own charisma and soul to make it a home."



DESIGNER NATHAN YONG DESIGNED RIVER MODERN'S MAIN ENTRANCES AND THE SHOWFLATS.

One example is eliminating corridors in the units as much as possible. "Aside from looking bigger, it allows for flexibility so the homeowner can create a bigger room, or partition spaces to acquire another private zone," says Yip. Balconies are sizable for use, such as for enjoying coffee at a bar counter with a view. Most importantly, Yip wants to create a sense of place here, just like he did with his previous projects.

"To create a sense of place is very important in an environment like this; how to do this is to have spaces that are very comfortable. People always gravitate towards spaces that are very comfortable — even in the common areas so that homeowners can make a place 'theirs,'" explains Yip. Different parts of the development are also linked in ways that "creates that sense of familiarity", contributing to an overall ease in staying here. Another feature that facilitates seamless family living is a lawn. "The lawn is very important; it is for children to kick a ball around, for residents to fly a kite, or erect a tent for a special event, for instance. Many condominiums don't have that [anymore]," Yip explains.

The sense of places starts when residents enter the development and designer Nathan Yong — also a President's Design Award winner — has crafted nuanced thresholds between River Modern's private



FULL-HEIGHT GLAZING IN THE BEDROOMS BRING IN PLENTIFUL NATURAL LIGHT; PICTURED IS THE THREE-BEDROOM SHOWFLAT.



ARCHITECT YIP YUEN HONG, FOUNDER OF IP:LI ARCHITECTS CRAFTED A DEVELOPMENT FOR MODERN LIVING.

realm and the public spaces. Reflective columns, curving metal chain curtains, and tactile travertine add friendliness and soften the harshness of a car park entrance.

Yong designed some of River Modern's showflats, concocting narratives to showcase the potential of each apartment without losing sight of the property's character. "The key is clarity, distilling the spatial potential so that visitors can immediately understand how to live in it. This means careful control of proportion, material transitions, and visual cues that guide movement and perception," explains Yong.

For example, elements of curiosity, expressiveness, a lifestyle deeply connected to food and living for the two-bedroom unit bear sensibilities of a travel-savvy couple; rituals of gathering, and furniture and spaces for multigenerational living with "dignity and ease", as well as quiet luxury through subdued tonalities and crafted elements signify confidence and generosity in the largest four-bedroom unit.

Both Yong and Yip's experienced, sensitive design hands capture River Modern's fluid, multi-faceted, and inclusive lifestyle, reflecting a true understanding of modern living. [P](#)



SOME OF RIVER MODERN'S FOUR-BEDROOM UNITS ARE AS LARGE AS 1,830 SQUARE FEET, WITH SPACIOUS LIVING AND DINING AREAS AS SEEN IN THE SHOWFLAT.