

DOMAIN

THE PEAK SELECTIONS



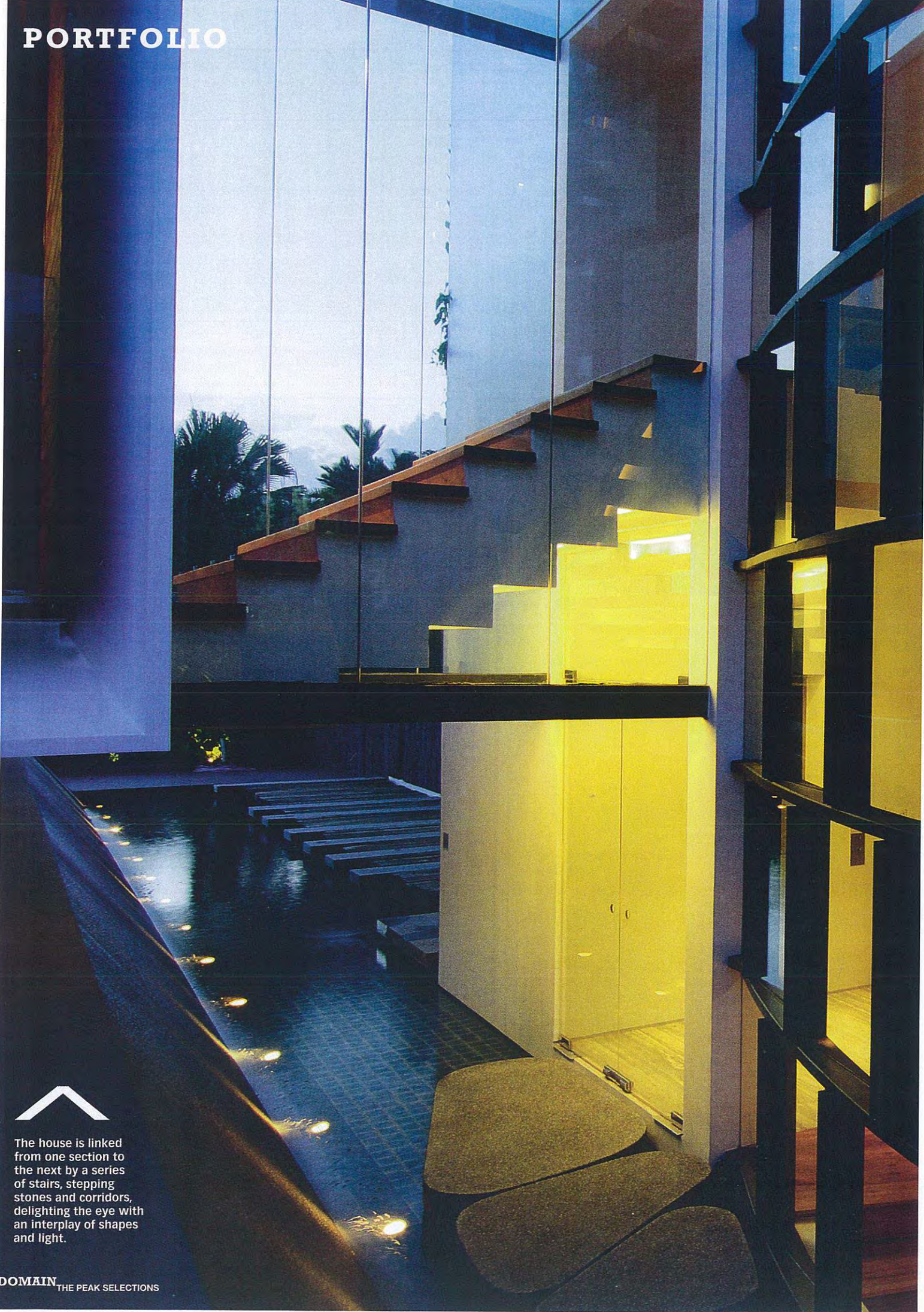
design • architecture • homes

UN-PRIVATE HOUSES

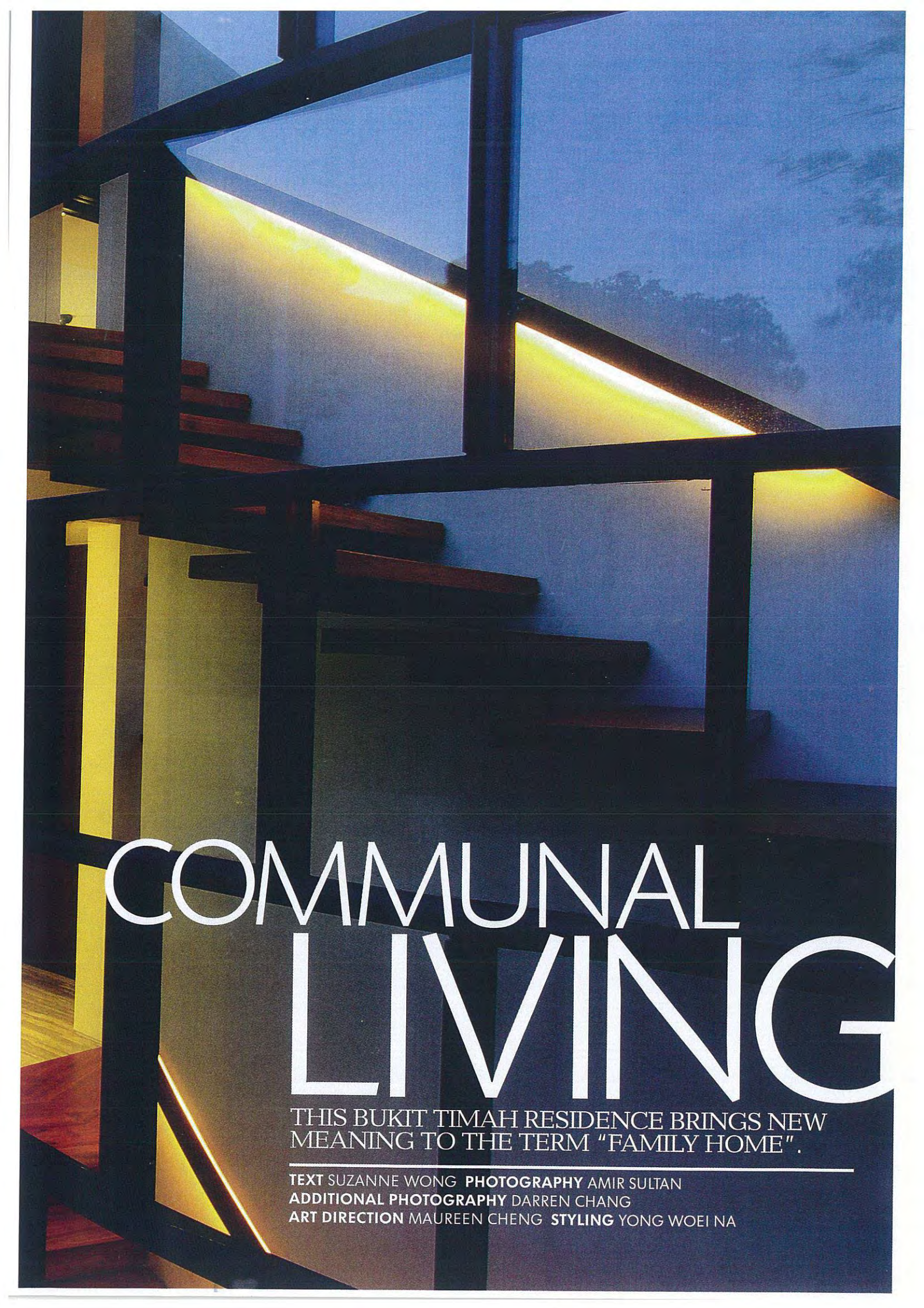
THE NEW HOME BECOMES PUBLIC SPACE

PRIME BAYSIDE LIVING
HOT REGIONAL ARCHITECTS
BEST OF MILAN DESIGN WEEK

PORTFOLIO



The house is linked from one section to the next by a series of stairs, stepping stones and corridors, delighting the eye with an interplay of shapes and light.



COMMUNAL LIVING

THIS BUKIT TIMAH RESIDENCE BRINGS NEW
MEANING TO THE TERM "FAMILY HOME".

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ART DIRECTION MAUREEN CHENG STYLING YONG WOEI NA

Sophisticated architecture frequently addresses only the needs of the adults inhabiting the space. More often than not, buildings are tailored to the preferences of its grown-up inhabitants. One exception to the norm is this striking 13,000 sq ft Bukit Timah residence – it extends a family-centric aesthetic to most of its living spaces. “The one thing you want to remember about this house,” says architect Khai Saharom of Aamer Architects, “is how child-friendly it is.”

The property is home to a couple in their 30s and their three young children. Its most outstanding feature is a wood-clad cylinder that stretches the length of the building. This wing houses the bedrooms and a TV

room, and is a deliberate reworking of the longhouse concept – an explicit nod to South-east Asian communal living. The rooms are linked by a common corridor lined with low-level timber ledges and stools to double as a play area. The corridor also leads to a separate staircase, so the children can easily access the pool.

The cylinder comprises a series of curved iron ribs joined by timber slats, and was a challenge to build. Each rib consists of three I-beams welded together and then bent to create the necessary curvature, which demanded much precision work. The cylinder is open to the weather on both sides, but rain-activated auto blinds and planter boxes >

LAND SIZE

19,000 sq ft

BUILT-UP AREA

13,000 sq ft

ARCHITECT

Aamer Architects

INTERIOR DESIGN

Aamer Architects + owner

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Aamer Architects + Eliam Ng

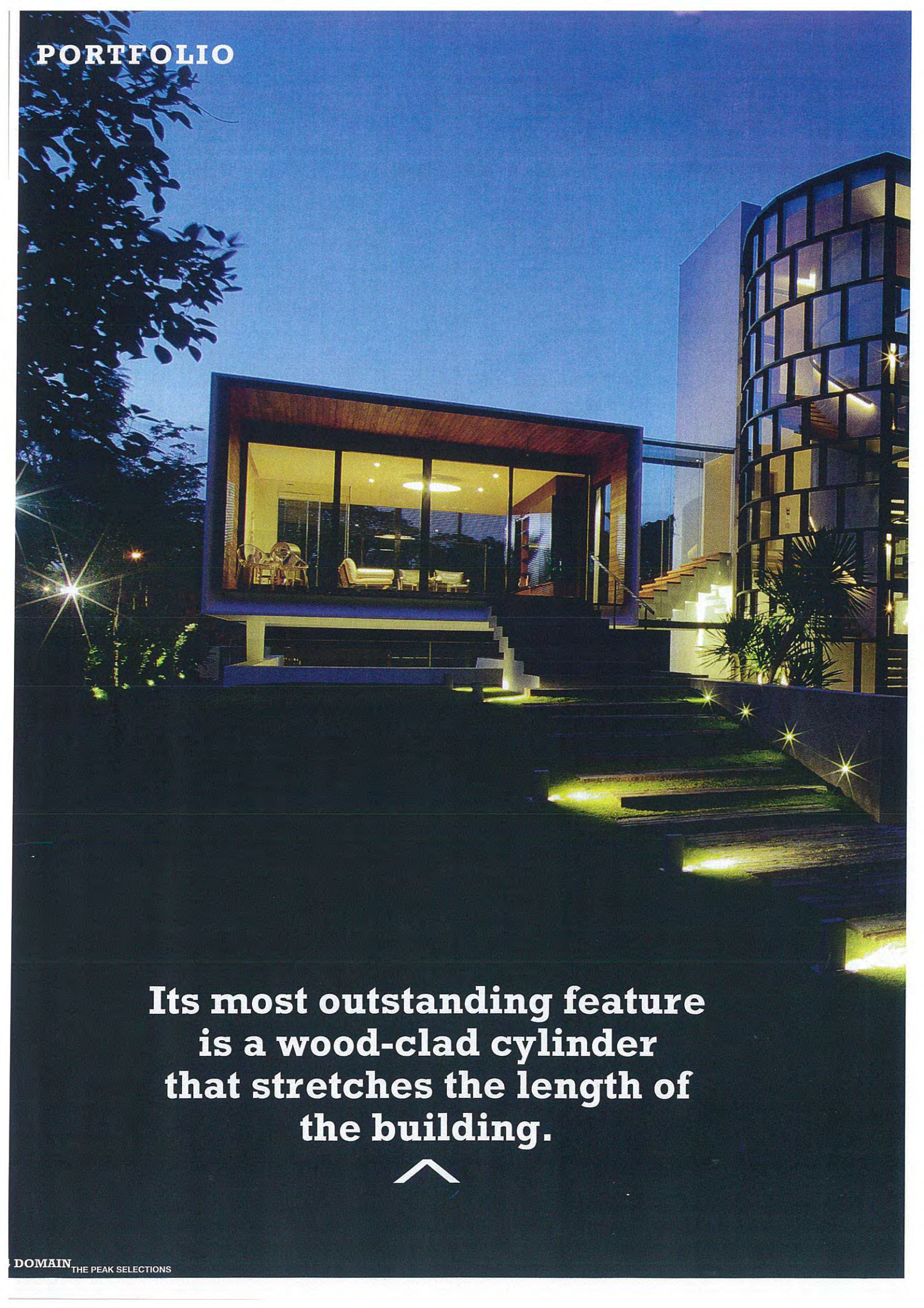




The staircase, housed within a tower of steel and glass, links all four levels, including the basement and roof terrace.

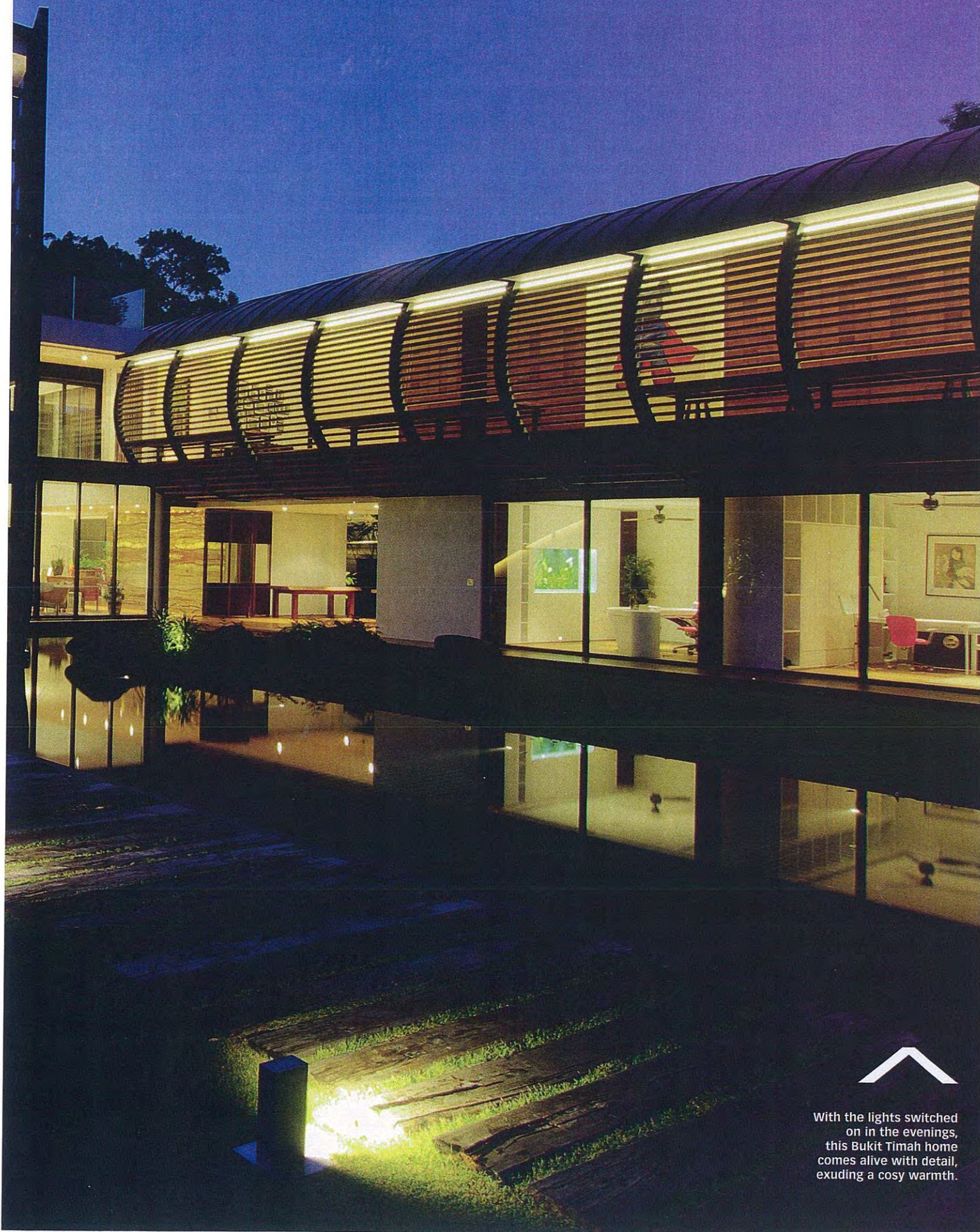
(Opposite) The home is a modern reinterpretation of the traditional Asian longhouse.

PORTFOLIO



**Its most outstanding feature
is a wood-clad cylinder
that stretches the length of
the building.**





With the lights switched on in the evenings, this Bukit Timah home comes alive with detail, exuding a cosy warmth.



The living room opens out to the pool, perfect for those warm evenings.

(Opposite) The onsen-style family bath allows the children to splash around, even in rainy weather.

help keep the walkways dry. And even if a little splashing occurs, so what? "This is a tropical house," says the owner with a philosophical shrug. In other words, there's no need to barricade nature out.

Coming a close second to the bedroom wing in terms of visual appeal is the master study, a concrete cube with glassed-in front and back walls that provides views of the landscaped garden. The structure is massive, but two deceptively small supports (that by some miracle of precision engineering also conceal electrical wiring and bathroom plumbing) make it seem to "float" above the driveway. Both the glass and the minuscule supports create an illusion of extreme lightness, making you look twice.

Between the cylinder and the cube is yet another arresting structure – a glass and steel tower with a cross section in the shape of an eye. It houses a feature staircase that fits the curves of the walls, with landings at the narrow ends to promote the appearance of slimness. The alternating pattern of glass panels set in steel frames evokes the scales of a fish. Appropriately (and light-heartedly) enough, the staircase overlooks the pool.

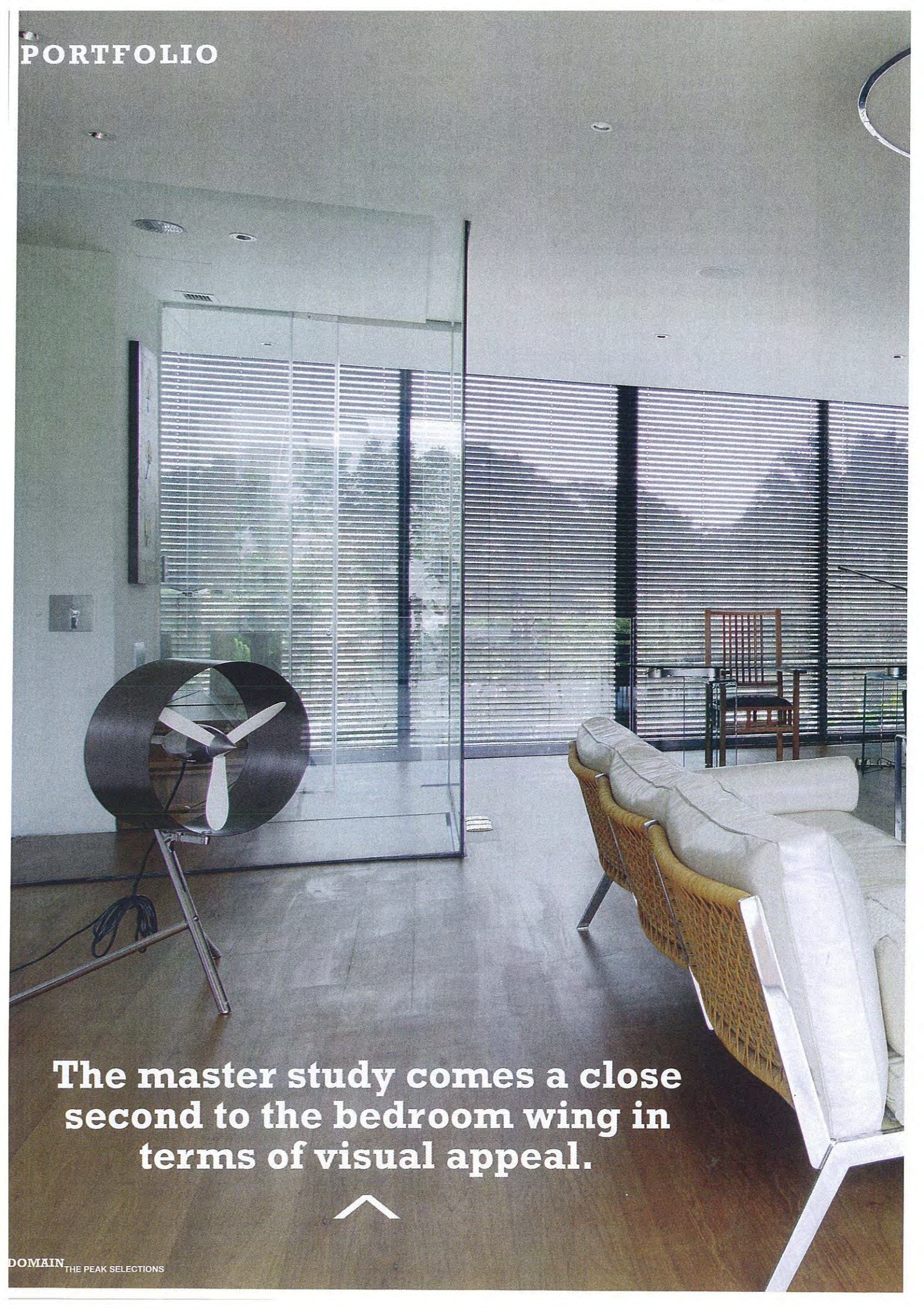
This sense of playfulness extends to the decor around the house and garden, too. Several talking points in the form of animal sculptures pique the interest of the children and their visiting friends.

A bronze crocodile suns itself by the pool, watched over by a trio of frogs. A family of kiwi birds – one for each member of the human family – graze in the front yard. A komodo dragon lurks in the grass by the driveway, while some carved ducks >



The house extends a family-centric aesthetic to most of its living spaces.



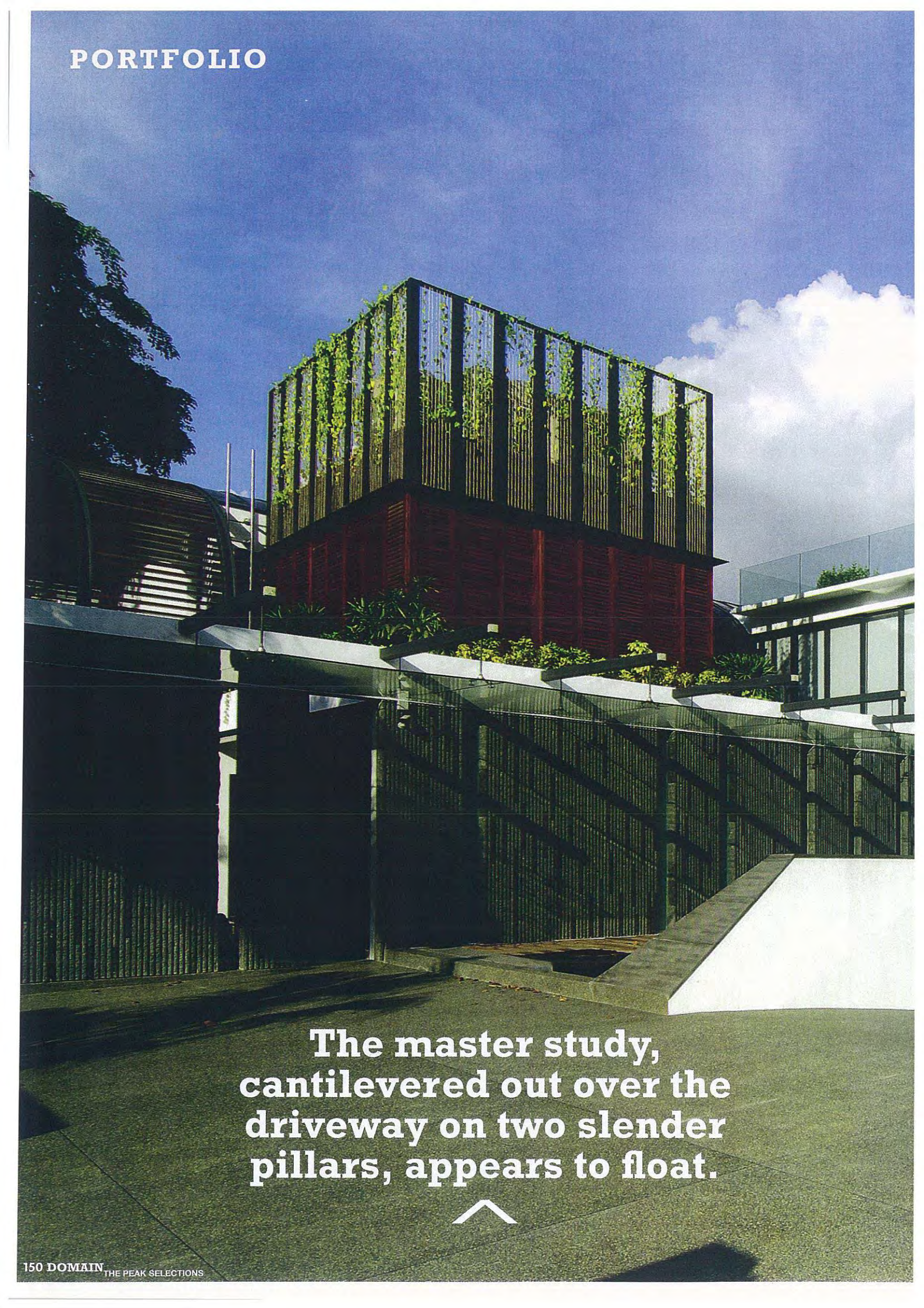


The master study comes a close second to the bedroom wing in terms of visual appeal.



Resting on the master study's coffee table is a scale model of the house itself, offering an overview of the whole project and its use of geometric shapes.



A photograph of a modern building with a cantilevered master study over a driveway. The building has a green wall and a glass railing. The sky is blue with some clouds. The driveway is paved and has a white curb. The overall scene is bright and clear.

**The master study,
cantilevered out over the
driveway on two slender
pillars, appears to float.**



PORTFOLIO



A glass aperture high in the basement wall offers a peek into the swimming pool – to dramatic effect when it rains.

(Opposite) The central corridor doubles as a play area, with platform-cum-tables for the children's use.

look ready to jump into the koi pond. And this is only the beginning – there are plans for additional animal denizens.

The owner delights in these stray pockets of whimsy, yet doesn't shy from stronger touches of commentary. These include the painting of a teddy bear dressed in a superhero costume outside the children's bedrooms – perhaps hinting at future triumphs of the young ones. Elsewhere, the wooden sculpture of a Japanese anime-like robot warrior stands poised by the main entryway like a guardian ready to spring to the heroic defence of the family.

Playful references aside, this is a home that truly looks after its own. From the basement, with its kid-appropriate TV and play area (replete with mini Pantone chairs) alongside its grown-up counterpart with custom-made bar and wine cellar, to the master bathroom with its family-friendly onsen-style sunken bath, it is a family house in the truest sense.

"Why can't architecture be for kids, too?" asks Saharom. But the truth is, it is an issue parents often tend to forget. This residence is a stunning reminder of what a well-planned family home can achieve. 