

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023  
S\$8.50/Rp85,000

# epicure

life's refinements



## PERFECT PAIRINGS

Two husband-and-wife teams share how they keep the flame alive in and out of the kitchen

## INDULGENCE WITH INTENTION

Healthy and inclusive desserts by Delcie's Desserts and Cakes

## SWEET SHOWSTOPPERS

Where to get your daily dose of sweet treats in Bali and Jakarta

PEOPLE  
*Perspectives*

# THE PLACEMAKER



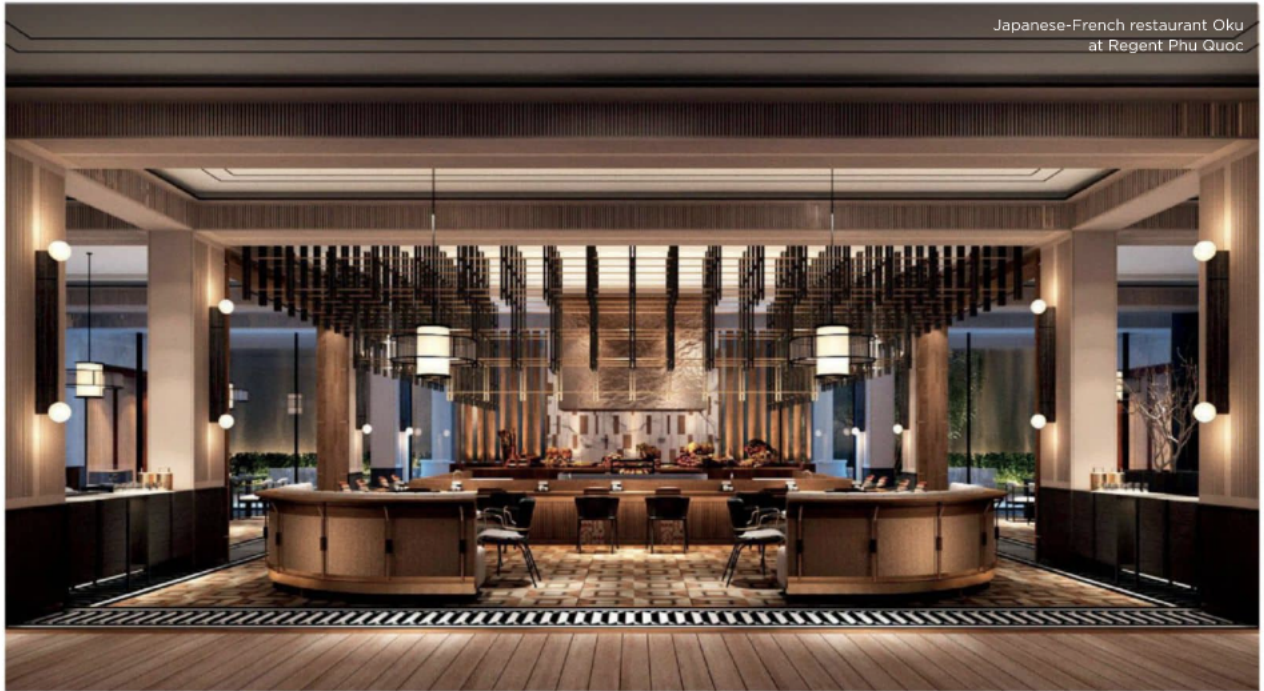
Founder and creative partner of BLINK Design Group  
Clint Nagata shares his award-winning ways and reveals why it's  
no longer sufficient to simply have a design that looks good.



Clint Nagata



PEOPLE

*Perspectives*Japanese-French restaurant Oku  
at Regent Phu Quoc

**B**LINK Design Group has been on a roll. From the serene contemporary spaces at Roku Kyoto to the modern bohemian interiors of W Dubai, the multi-disciplinary design studio led by founder Clint Nagata has been introducing travel-hungry guests to a new era of post-pandemic experiences.

"Hotels and resorts are more than a place for people to sleep," says Nagata. "Rather, they are environments that create memories." Together with his team, the Japanese-American spearheads projects under a guiding philosophy he has dubbed "placemaking".

These spaces are conceptualised and realised through smart design and sustainable solutions rooted in the culture and heritage of the locale. Last year saw six properties launched, including the "once-in-a-generation" renovation of Millennium Hilton Bangkok.

It's a design philosophy that has earned the firm – which has studios in Thailand, Shanghai and Singapore – numerous accolades for its projects. The latest, however, went to Nagata himself where he was awarded Interior Designer of the Year 2022 – Designers' Choice at the 9th Annual Design Excellence Awards. We speak to him about his journey into interior design, recent projects, and plans for 2023.

**How did your journey in interior design begin, and why did you choose to specialise in hotels and resorts?**

What sparked my journey as an interior designer was my belief that the best buildings are designed from the inside out. As an architect, I often found myself beginning the design process by doing just that – creating spaces that flowed from the inside out.

I've always loved to travel and explore different destinations. Being able to design luxury hotels and resorts across the world makes coming to work every day a rewarding experience.

**Where do you get your ideas from?**

At the start of every project, we spend an inordinate amount of time embedding ourselves into the place in order to create a refined design that captures the true essence of a place without being cliché.

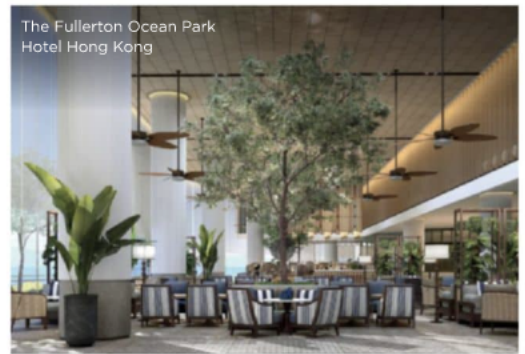
**You've had quite a few projects last year. Is there a particular project that stands out to you?**

I had the opportunity to stay at Regent Phu Quoc which we designed five years ago, and it just opened recently. It's a good representation of the studio's refined design ethos.

PEOPLE  
*Perspectives*



Roku Kyoto

The Fullerton Ocean Park  
Hotel Hong KongGinger Moon restaurant at  
W Dubai - Mina Seyahi

**Can you share some interior design trends for hotels and resorts?**

In this day and age where the need to stand out and be different has never been more important, hotels and resorts must connect to their guests through stories. It's no longer good enough to have a design that looks good. The design must tell a story or create a compelling connection with the guest.

**What new projects are in the pipeline for 2023?**

We have some very interesting projects that we're working on, including some wonderful ones throughout the Middle East, Bora Bora, Mauritius and the Philippines.

**What makes a good architect and designer? If there's one advice you could give aspiring designers, what would it be?**

Be explorers. Make it a point to travel and see as much as you can see. Experience different cultures and connect with different people. It's hard to be a good designer if you're constantly looking through the same lens. You have to force yourself to look at the design from different perspectives. **e**



LIFESTYLE  
*Seen & Savoured*



A total of 204 awards across 35 categories were given out

## BACK WITH A BANG

The 9th Annual Design Excellence Awards 2022 returned with a grand in-person ceremony to recognise top interior design talents and projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

**I**t was a night to remember as top talents in the interior design industry gathered on 2 December to recognise interior design excellence, innovation and talent throughout Singapore, Asia Pacific and the world.

Winners of the 9th Annual Design Excellence Awards (DEA) 2022 were announced by the Interior Design Confederation Singapore (IDCS) at the glitzy event held at Shangri-la Singapore after two years of virtual ceremonies. Editors from Media Group's publications, including *epicure*, *Portfolio*, *SquareRooms*, *d+a* and *JetGala*, proudly presented many of the awards to the winners on stage.

This latest edition saw 204 awards – considered an industry seal of excellence – given out across 35 categories in two tracks: Interior Design Excellence

Awards (IDEA) for completed built projects by industry professionals; and Spatial Design Awards (SPADE) for completed academic projects by design students. Participants were invited to submit projects “in the built-environment that harkens back to a period of peace, tranquility, freedom of expression and offers us a future of hopefulness.”

Among the top winners were Clint Nagata of BLINK Design Group who won Interior Designer of the Year; and Avalon Collective who won Project of the Year – Designers' Choice for Hilton Singapore Orchard, Presidential Suite. The newly created Special Recognition Award – Jury's Choice went to M. Moser Associates for Dyson Singapore, St James Power Station. Tony Chi of *tonychi.studios* received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

LIFESTYLE  
*Seen & Savoured*



President of IDCS, Cameron Woo, opening the event, with founder and managing director of Aym Design, Amy Picanco



DEA 2022 was held at Shangri-La Singapore



The team from *epicure*, *Portfolio*, *SquareRooms*, *PORTFOLIO*, *Square Rooms*, *d+a* and *JetGala* - media partners of DEA 2022



Rengy John, co-CEO of BLINK Design Group, and Crisina Tan, director of Hands Carpets Asia



Si Chuan Dou Hua