

HOUSE CALL

When Dr David Lye comes home to his Balestier flat, he steps into a soothing, brilliantly organised, very compact home.

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sylvia living

THE FLAT IS FLOODED WITH LIGHT FROM TWO WALLS OF ALMOST FULL-LENGTH WINDOWS.

ON THE FLOOR: Chinese screen rug, studio cube tables, yellow glazed lantern vase, orange lantern jar, teapot and teacup, all from *John Erlos Home*. ON THE SOFA: Hand-crafted Chenille cushions and hand-woven throw, all from *Enn Gallery*. ON THE SIDE TABLE: Wooden pagodas, from *Javanagahome*. Flower votive holder, from *John Erlos Home*.

David Lye, a specialist physician in a local hospital, literally lives just a stone's throw away from his workplace, at The Axis at Mandalay Road. He says, "I chose the area because it is very near to the CTE and PIE, and a short drive to Orchard."
Walking into the 818sq ft two-bedroom unit, visitors are greeted with a polished symphony of assorted woods, creams and beiges, and blacks, punctuated with splashes of colour: The artwork in the entryway, a few small souvenirs left out on the surfaces. A major theme of the flat's colour scheme is wood: Almost all the walls have some form of carefully hidden cupboards, whether it's floor-to-ceiling hidden bookshelves with varied-depth panelling on the doors to add texture, or the suspended wooden lockers holding personal belongings over the television, or the wooden bay-window storage in the bedrooms.





LEFT: THE FREE SPACE BETWEEN THE PURPOSE-BUILT SHELVING UNIT AND THE WINDOW BREAKS THE MONOTONY OF THE WOOD AND THE WALL. **ABOVE:** THE BUILT-IN SLIDING SIDE UNIT ON THE BAY-WINDOW SEAT IS CLEVER FEATURE.

BELOW: UNEVEN PANELS ADD INTEREST TO THE DOORS OF THE BOOKCASE. **LEFT:** Yellow and orange glazed bottle vases, all from *John Erlos Home*. **ABOVE:** Silk photo frames and lotus ceramic votive candles, all from *John Erlos Home*.

The overarching impression one gets is of light and lightness: The flat is flooded with light from the wall-to-wall glass window-walls that form two sides of the sitting room, and at least one wall of every other major room in the flat. So the obvious question for Dr Lye was: How do you survive Singapore's burning afternoon sunlight?

He says: "The flat is not in direct sunlight. The blinds filter out most of the harmful ultraviolet light and the heat. The place rarely feels warm and is never hot. In fact, while I rarely open the windows, cross-ventilation is part of the design of the building, especially with the external fin designs. If I open the windows in the second bedroom, and the ones in the dining area, it is very airy."

"The blinds allow me a view of the outside and let in enough sunlight to keep the place bright and sunny, without sacrificing my privacy. The second layer of black-out blinds in the bedrooms ensure that I do not have to wake up at sunrise on weekends when I enjoy sleeping in."



"When I received the keys, I was shocked by the *CoMPaCTNESS*. However, any dismay at its size was soon displaced by the many ideas I had to *MaXIMISE* it."

When did you buy the flat, and how much did the renovations cost you?

I bought it in June 2009. I chose The Axis because the developer, Novelty Asia, is known for maximal space utilisation, quality construction finishes and European furnishing. For example, the kitchen cabinet is from Schifflini, the wardrobes are from Lema, and the taps and showers are from Gessi, which have a sleek design. It made thinking about what I wanted to do with the interiors easier. The renovation cost \$27,000, undertaken by Ciscern Interior Designs. Appolonia Yeo, my interior designer, understood my ideas and provided practical suggestions. I wanted a lot of carpentry work, and fine workmanship was crucial. I am very pleased with the results.

BELOW: DR LYE'S AIR DIVISION TABLE AND TULIP VENEER PENDANT LAMP CREATE A FOCAL POINT OF INTEREST IN THE DINING ROOM.

RIGHT: Hand-crafted Chenille table mat, from *En Gallery*. Faceted candle holders, red candle, café bowls and mango wood bowl, all from *John Erlos Home*.

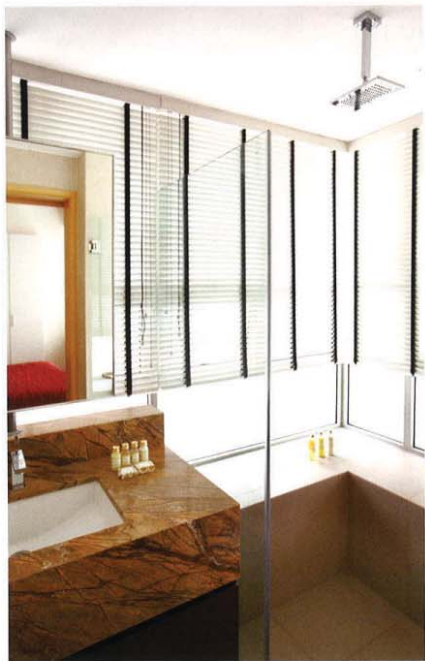


I received a lot of helpful advice from a good friend, Tony Law, on such details as the selection of the walnut laminate used throughout the flat, choosing the sofa and dining table from Air Division, the pendant lamp and the wallpaper, and even to the design of the door panels of uneven depth for the huge bookcase.

Did one spot in the flat make you fall in love with it? It was not really one spot that took my fancy but the fact that windows wrap around the unit on three of the four sides. It made the feel of the small unit more spacious than its actual floor area. When I received the keys to the unit, I was shocked by the compactness. However any dismay at its size was soon displaced by the many ideas I had to maximise it. I bought interior-design magazines and visited friends' apartments to gather more ideas. I also drew many sketches and showed them to anyone who cared to listen!

What made you choose this colour combination? I wanted a warm, wood-based theme, earth-toned, yet contemporary. It reminded me of a lot of five-star hotel rooms that I had stayed in overseas. To create points of interest, accessories with bright colours were chosen. The neutral colour scheme will be easy to live with for years — though it might be less striking at first glimpse for some people.





What is your favourite room/item of furnishing?
 I like the living/dining area. There are many items of interest. The pendant lamp above the dining table is tulip veneer, which I found in a shop in Park Mall. It casts a nice pattern on the ceiling and the floor at night. The orange light that shines through the veneer adds colour to the neutral interior. The structural column was wrapped in textured wallpaper, and the top and bottom sections were laminated to create another focal point. I wanted the place to be clutter-free, so a lot of storage space was needed. My bookcase was designed with uneven panels to break the monotony of huge, plain wooden door panels.

The most striking piece of furniture would be the dining table from Air Division. The glass top draws attention to the unusual leg design.

What made you think of making baywindow seats for your sitting room, bedroom and bathrooms?
 The unit has too many bay windows! The solution was to add drawers so they serve as storage, desk space and seating.

What was the most difficult decision you had to make when renovating your home?
 It was in deciding what not to do, and making sure a consistent theme was kept. I kept reminding myself that design has to be practical and functional. Apollonia Yeo helped remove decorative ideas that served no real purpose. :



“I kept reminding myself that *DESIGN* has to be practical and functional.”

ABOVE LEFT: AN UNUSUAL ELEMENT: BAY-WINDOW SEATING IN THE SHOWER STALL.
ABOVE RIGHT: RICH MAROON BEDLINEN COMPLEMENTS THE PAINTINGS.
RIGHT: CONCEALED STORAGE SPACE IS PUT TO GOOD USE.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Bath gels, from *Iwanagobone*. Paintings, silk bed spread and pillows, all from *John Erdos Home*. Sea vase, from *John Erdos Home*.