

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

OUR NEW
HOSPITALITY AND
TRAVEL SPECIAL

The art of hospitality: reap what you sew (and bake, make and brew)

The basics of being a good host: start in the home or a well-equipped Finnish classroom. Monocle gets a few lessons from battle-hardened GMs and some charming ambassadors. A new **MONOCLE SPECIAL**

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- A AFFAIRS** Hostile hostels: check in at the world's most dangerous hotels
- B BUSINESS** Take a bow: how to be funky and gracious in a single move on the shop floor
- C CULTURE** Southern scene: the art world's other Louisiana
- D DESIGN** Panasonic makes a move into town-planning
- E EDITS** Nice meat in Lisbon, edgy living in Melbourne and perfectly printed invites

Learning needs to be hands-on and heads-down

I'm part of a new generation that can actually...

The Hospitality Rule Book

1 Focus on the details 2 Lead from the front 3 Be authentic 4 Hire staff based on potential, not credentials 5 Speak with a consistent tone of voice 6 Turn the lights down 7 Figure out your signature soundtrack 8 Avoid fads and trends 9 Keep your plates and bowls round 10 Old school is more welcoming than new school

...run a household, tend a bar and mend uniforms

AT YOUR SERVICE

1 THE FINEST EMBASSY



Putting on a corking event for esteemed guests requires exemplary decision-making

2 THE SMARTEST AIRLINE



The well-designed airport lounge that makes you pray for a long delay

3 THE TASTIEST CHEF



Ruth Rogers of the River Café describes the menu for her perfect 'last meal'



UK £5
USD \$12
EUR 12(GER)
EUR 10(ITA)
DKK 122

SEK 95
JPY ¥2,200(+tax)
AUD \$13.00
SGD \$19.90(w/gst)
CDN \$12.00(usa)

KEEPING IT LOCAL —Bangkok

Preface

When relocating from the US to Thailand, the couple behind design practice Studiomake decided to take the best ideas from the nation's provincial architecture to use for their own home-cum-studio.

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As architecture students at the University of Arizona, David and Im Schafer learnt that the desert can be conquered by a building. But in the tropics, they discovered, you can't fight the weather. The year-round heat, moisture and humidity in Thailand – where the couple relocated to start their award-winning design practice Studiomake – means buildings are in a constant battle with nature.

“Moisture will delaminate everything you have, termites will devour anything soft, the sun will bleach any kind of colour, the winds will tear up your roof and rain will leak into your house,” says Im, who was born in Kansas to Thai parents but moved back to Bangkok aged seven, where she lived until she left for the US again as an undergraduate.

Undeterred by the foreboding conditions, the couple were fixed on creating a base that provided spaces to live and work on a plot 30 minutes from Bangkok, inherited from Im's grandmother. They wanted somewhere that would blend with the environment and maximise insulation and ventilation without relying entirely on air-conditioning. For that, they had to travel back in time.

“Thailand's older architecture is surprisingly forward looking,” says David, leafing through a Thai design book that shows wooden structures on stilts with peaked roofs that allow the hot air to



Double act

Studiomake is a design studio and architecture practice based in Nonthaburi in Thailand. It was set up by David Schafer from San Diego and his wife Im, from Bangkok, in 2009. Projects completed by Studiomake include The Gallery Building, a 1,200 sq m design space at Rangsit University in Thailand and the Dude Cigar Bar in central Bangkok, built in teak, red brick and sand-finished powder-coated steel.

The concept at Studiomake is to bring design as close to the construction process as possible, which means builders and technicians work alongside designers and attention to materials, finishes, angles and joins is meticulous. studiomake.com

- 01 Architecture and design studio and workspace
- 02 Workshop table with scale model of recent project
- 03 Living room and library
- 04 Kitchen and living area
- 05 Daybed area outside master bedroom

rise. Originally from San Diego, David says that when they arrived in Thailand, Im took him to the provinces to study simple houses built for rural life. "These buildings were designed for families who worked downstairs in the cool in the day and retreated upstairs at night."

While the single elongated steel-and-glass box that the couple have created is anything but traditional, Baan Sai Ma borrows from some of the same ideals. The workspace downstairs blends into a breezy living space upstairs that is partly open to the elements through a wall of bi-folding glass doors. The pitched roof is high and lined with vents to create a vacuum for hot air to escape while rooms are created using removable panels.

"We wanted a changeable space," says Im. "If our family grows then rooms

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We liked the idea of clients not being sure if they were in a living room or an extension of the studio

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can be added and if the studio expands the walls can be removed to create one big workshop."

As we speak, the soft buzz of an electric saw downstairs is punctuated by the sounds of their daughter Sa in a room next door, proving this is a building with several functions. But if David and Im concede that falling in love at architecture school means work and home have never had much separation, there's a distinct sense of order to the clever building that encourages a subtle divide.

Downstairs is the studio and a double-height workshop used to build prototypes, fulfilling a concept central to Studiomake: that design ideas should always be put to the test. Upstairs a design library-cum-sitting room links the studio to the heart of the family's home.



- 01 Exterior of house and workshop
- 02 Staircase leading up to the front door of the house
- 03 Workshop in double-height garage
- 04 Baby's room
- 05 Interior of the master bedroom
- 06 Upper-floor living space as viewed from the entrance
- 07 Living room and library space on upper level



"We liked the idea of clients coming in here for a meeting and not being sure if they were in a living room or an extension of the studio," says David.

The structure of the building is important, of course, but upon closer inspection the detail really stands out. "We joke that we're proud that our buildings are quite boring from far away," says David. "The closer you get, the more interesting we want it to be." In the master bathroom, pea-green tiles add colour and texture to the otherwise soft teak interior. The landing is made from cream-coloured terrazzo: a granite, quartz and cement mix that is perfect for a warm climate says David, who chose it for its durability. Even the couple's collectables betray an obsession with functional materials. In the library a copper pot from India sits on a silver base that is actually the drum of a washing machine.

As we finish speaking the heavy sky outside breaks and spots of rain start rolling down the windows. With the doors pulled shut and the air-conditioning on the change of temperature is imperceptible but the view across the green grass to the damp trees is magnificent. Neither David nor Im – who seems more American than Thai – have adapted to the climate in the years living here. But in their self-built home-work habitat, they have found a way to enjoy it. — (M)