

# P

PostMagazine

NOVEMBER 16, 2014

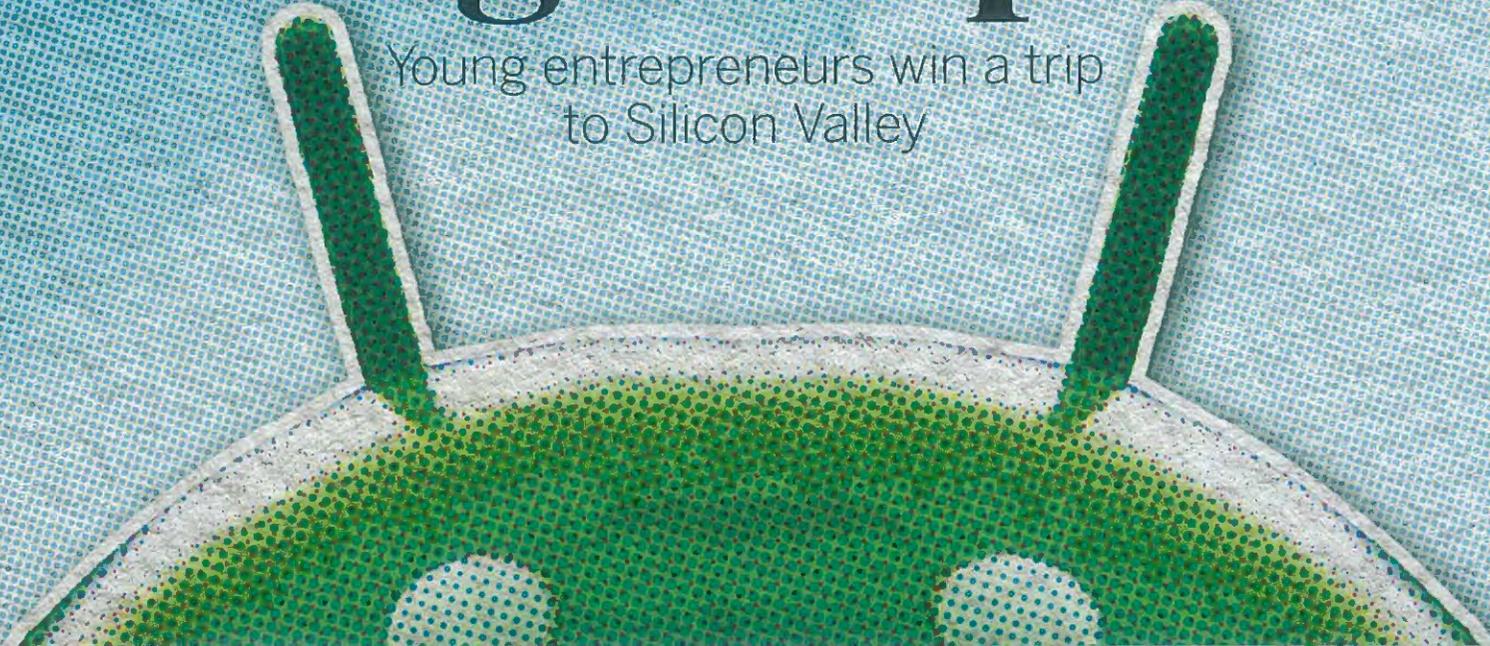
Photography  
festival  
lights up  
Lianzhou  
P24

Berlin: the  
white line  
and the wall  
P28



# High hopes

Young entrepreneurs win a trip  
to Silicon Valley



HOME

# Access wall areas

An open-plan Mid-Levels apartment required a creative approach to housing its owner's eclectic art collection.

Text Catherine Shaw / Styling David Roden / Photography John Butlin

When Italian furniture designer and contemporary art collector Stefano Del Vecchio arrived in Hong Kong eight years ago, he made the Mandarin Oriental hotel his home.

"It was the perfect base while I established my furniture-manufacturing business in China, but eventually I wanted a space where I could have a kitchen and enjoy my art," Del Vecchio says.

Then he made an unusual find in the city: a 900 sq ft, ground-floor apartment tucked away on a quiet path a minute's walk from the Mid-Levels escalator.

"The flat was in very bad condition," he recalls. "When I bought it last year, the layout was a typical old-style, three-bedroom Hong Kong apartment and very dark. I could see it had huge potential."

Because none of the internal walls were structural, Del Vecchio realised he could create a unique space designed around his eclectic collection of post-war Western art and contemporary Chinese works.

In addition to a small private terrace by the entrance, the apartment had a large and secluded courtyard at the rear.

Venice-born Del Vecchio turned to a fellow Italian, interior designer Stefano Tordiglione, to help create a modern, one-bedroom, open-plan home.

"The first thing we did was to gut the apartment and clear the courtyard," says Tordiglione, whose Hong Kong-based studio, Stefano Tordiglione Design, specialises in private residences and retail spaces. "We transformed the entrance area with a new floor inspired by traditional Beijing courtyard paving. Recycled tiles arranged by hand in an irregular pattern create a distinctive Chinese path while the pair of antique stone lions add a strong sense of entrance."

Tordiglione also created a welcoming lobby, with a new three-quarter-high wall featuring a bevelled mirror

to create visual depth; several pieces of antique Chinese furniture including a 19th-century console; and contemporary artwork.

The core of the open-plan apartment incorporates a single bedroom as part of the living and dining space. Three suspended wood screens, lined on the bedroom side with contrasting Chinese textiles, form a moveable room divider for privacy.

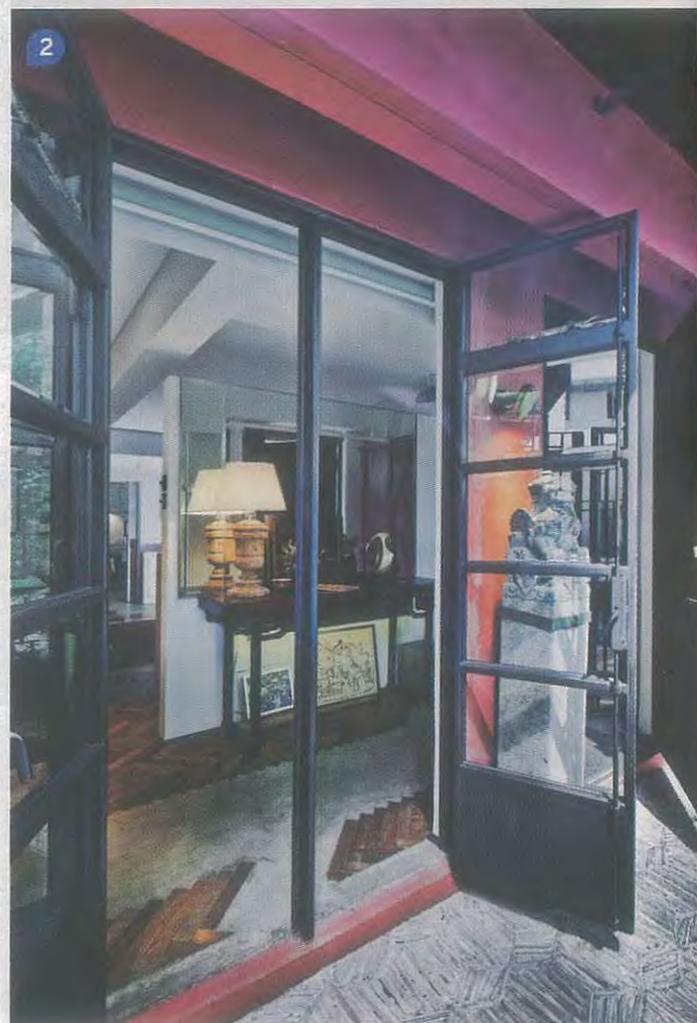
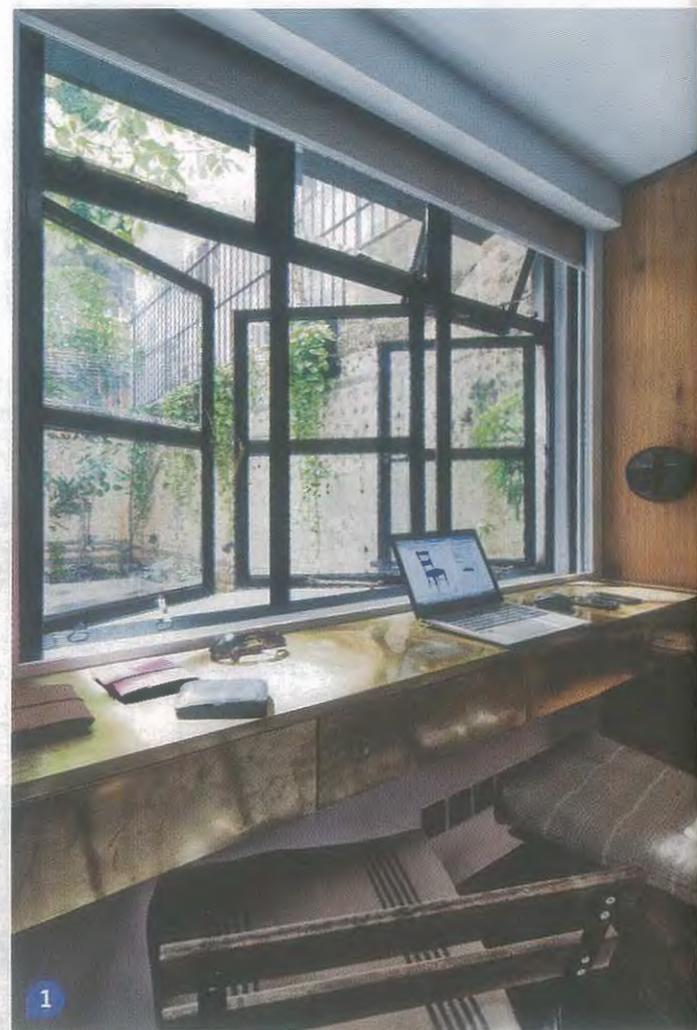
Reflecting the owner's predilection for mixing old and new, the apartment's original parquet floor tiles were removed, polished and then re-laid, creating a striking modern pattern with random areas filled with smooth concrete.

"It's recycling but recreating as well and it fits well with the urban industrial look Stefano wanted," says Tordiglione. "We also replaced all the windows with what look like traditional iron-frame ones but are actually brand new."

"Sharing a culture and language meant it was much easier to convey my vision and make the project come together quickly," says Del Vecchio, who was introduced to Tordiglione by friends. "I'm not scared to mix Chinese and Western designs in a different way. My homes in Venice and New York are a mixture of styles that reflect their own local traditions. I wanted the design to create a reference point for me in Hong Kong, especially since I travel so much."

The downside of open-plan interiors, however, is that there are fewer walls on which to display art. Tordiglione's solution was to create a custom-designed dark-wood bookcase wall with bespoke lighting to accommodate works and to install pieces in unconventional areas, such as the kitchen, which now boasts a digital creation by Jiang Pengyi.

Furniture includes custom-designed items made in Del Vecchio's Dongguan factory and Chinese antiques. Standout bespoke features include a striking aluminium >>





3

**1 Desk** Stefano Tordiglione, of Stefano Tordiglione Design (3/F, 37 Staunton Street, Central, tel: 2840 1100), installed Stefano Del Vecchio's own-design brass desk (HK\$40,000) under the master-bedroom window, which overlooks the private courtyard. The Tarno chairs (HK\$89.90 each) and cushions (HK\$29.90 each) were from Ikea (various locations; [www.ikea.com.hk](http://www.ikea.com.hk)). The egg-shaped object on the wall is *Flaming Hoop*, by Japanese video artist Ken Matsubara, and was sourced from 10 Chancery Lane Gallery (10 Chancery Lane, Central, tel: 2810 0065).

**2 Entrance** The tiles (HK\$80,000 in total) on the terrace were installed by Permasteelisa (27/F, Island Place Tower, 510 King's Road, North Point,

tel: 3900 8388). The black steel-edged windows (HK\$200,000 in total) installed throughout the apartment were custom made by Del Vecchio. The stone lion (HK\$40,000 for two) was found at the Xiguan Antique Market (West Road, Longjilin District, Guangzhou) and is part of a pair flanking the doorway. The apartment's original parquet flooring was removed, treated and reinstalled (for HK\$120,000) by Permasteelisa in a new pattern that incorporated smooth grey concrete for an industrial-chic feel. The Chinese console table cost HK\$16,000 at Olive Forrest (72 Peel Street, Central, tel: 2526 0277). The reclaimed-pine lamp was designed and made for HK\$6,000 by Del Vecchio. The mirror (HK\$8,000) was provided by Permasteelisa. The vintage Hong Kong maps

were found at Wattis Fine Art (2/F, 20 Hollywood Road, Central, tel: 2524 5302).

**3 Living room** The sofa (HK\$20,000) was from Fabricsmith Curtains (182 Jaffe Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2790 6490). Tordiglione designed the suspended poplar shelving unit (HK\$18,000) to display art. The Flos Fort Knox lighting (HK\$1,500 per light from Zodiac, 70 Morrison Hill Road, Wan Chai, tel: 2882 9082) highlights Del Vecchio's art collection. The matching leather-and-brass stools (HK\$25,000 for a pair) were created by Del Vecchio, as was the brass-and-marble-top coffee table (HK\$60,000). The striped cushion (HK\$800) and rug (HK\$24,000) were found at Carpet Buyer (17/F, Horizon Plaza, 2 Lee Wing

Street, Ap Lei Chau, tel: 2850 5508). The floor lamp, from Ikea, cost HK\$199. Between the sofa and the lamp is the *Goldy* video installation, by American multimedia artist Tony Oursler, bought at Contemporary by Angela Li Gallery (248 Hollywood Road, tel: 3571 8200). Artworks displayed on the wall include (from left): *Heart*, by Robert Rauschenberg, bought at Art HK in 2012; *Lady with Sunglasses*, by Sun Hongbin, found at the Shanghai Art Fair; *Annale XXVIII*, by Jean Dubuffet, sourced from New York's Pace Gallery ([www.pacegallery.com](http://www.pacegallery.com)); and *Shifting Planes*, by Hans Hofmann, sourced from the Hans Mayer Gallery ([www.galeriehansmayer.de](http://www.galeriehansmayer.de)), in Dusseldorf, Germany. The photographs are finds from Del Vecchio's travels.



4



5



6



7

**4 Dining area** The three moveable wall panels (HK\$60,000 in total) were designed and made by Tordiglione. Del Vecchio found the 19th-century solid-elm table (HK\$32,000) at Honeychurch Antiques (29 Hollywood Road, tel: 2543 2433) and added his own-design leather and reclaimed-spruce bench (HK\$3,200), a round vintage stool (HK\$1,000, from Tree, various locations; [www.tree.com.hk](http://www.tree.com.hk)) and two Tarno chairs from Ikea. The jug was bought years ago from Indigo Living (various locations; [www.indigo-living.com](http://www.indigo-living.com)). The vintage Japanese cabinet cost HK\$20,000 from Honeychurch Antiques. A small leather and solid brass stool (HK\$12,500), just seen on the right, was designed by Del Vecchio.

**5 Bedroom** Tordiglione designed the cupboards with grey-white sliding panels (HK\$84,000 in total) along one side of the room, to hide the entrance to the bathroom. The bed (HK\$14,000) was from Artura Ficus (15/F, Horizon Plaza, tel: 3105 3903). Del Vecchio designed the matching bedside tables (about HK\$20,000 each) using Nero Marquina marble directly imported from Spain ([www.sevisanstone.com](http://www.sevisanstone.com)). The Keith Haring painting, above the bed, was bought at a gallery in Italy that has since closed. The photograph, by Mika Ninagawa, came from the Tomio Koyama Gallery ([www.tomiokoyamagallery.com](http://www.tomiokoyamagallery.com)), in Tokyo, Japan. Next to the cupboards, the two beechwood-framed watercolours, by Robert Delaunay, came from Galeria

de Arte Carlos Teixido ([carlosteixido.com](http://carlosteixido.com)), in Barcelona, Spain. The gold-framed photograph, from Cindy Sherman's *Portrait* series, and the black-framed, red-ink drawing, by an Italian painter, were bought years ago. The 1838 pencil drawing, by French artist Auguste Borget, was found at Wattis Fine Art.

**6 Bathroom** Tordiglione created a contemporary urban oasis using a combination of smooth raw concrete on the walls and Grigio Carnico charcoal-grey marble that Del Vecchio sourced from Italy for the counter and shower area. The built-in shelving and basin units were made by Del Vecchio and cost about HK\$50,000. The bathroom fittings, including taps and integrated shower (HK\$25,000 in total), and wall-mounted shaving mirror (about HK\$1,800) are by Hansgrohe ([www.hansgrohe-int.com](http://www.hansgrohe-int.com)) and the matching Hatria toilet and bidet (HK\$12,000 for both; [www.hatria.com](http://www.hatria.com)) were imported from Italy. The wall mirror (HK\$8,000) came from Permasteelisa.

**7 Kitchen** Del Vecchio sourced the distinctive Carrara silver-grey marble (HK\$100,000; [www.marmidicarrara.com](http://www.marmidicarrara.com)) from Italy and added a custom-made brushed aluminium bar counter along with two of his own-design bar stools (HK\$4,000 each). The digital artwork on the wall above the counter is by Jiang Pengyi and was found at Blindspot Gallery (15/F, Po Chai Industrial Building, 28 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Wong Chuk Hang, tel: 2517 6238).

bar along one wall in the kitchen and a solid brass desk that fits beneath the bedroom window and matches his own-design marble-and-brass bedside tables. The bathroom entrance, off the master bedroom, is disguised behind a wall of elegant sliding panels, decorated with oriental motifs, that open to reveal a black marble-clad shower and smooth concrete walls.

"There are hints of Italy everywhere," says Del Vecchio. "Not in an obvious way but through touches like using marble, terracotta-coloured walls at the entrance and rough textures on the rear courtyard walls.

"Most important, I want to wake up in the morning and see greenery. I have a remote control-operated window blind so the first thing I do is to look out onto my terrace to see the sun and feel a bit like I am in Italy."

TRIED +TESTED

**Display panel** Stefano Tordiglione put reinforced glass (HK\$18,000) in front of an iron door grille to create a striking entrance to the rear courtyard. The layering of glass and iron allows natural sunlight to enter the apartment and creates a dramatic graphic effect. A black-out blind (HK\$3,000, Sheryia Curtain, 1 Lyndhurst Terrace, Central, tel: 2525 6596) can be lowered for privacy. The vintage-design door grille was treated and painted black before being reinstalled as a feature.

