



French connection

> How to dress home stylishly in Parisian mode

BY ALYSSA JOON

PARISIANS have long been hailed as trendsetters. Be it food or fashion, the Parisians can take anything and give it a touch of sophistication. This week, we look at how the French have not let homes escape its touch. Impossible it is for these Parisians to keep their hands off and adapt the interiors to their decorating principles and style reflecting a sense of simple and stylish with hints of opulence and luxury.

There are a number of fixtures that are common in a Parisian home. Some decorators may find that putting together a wholly Parisian room may burn a hole in the bank book, but a little bit, perhaps one or two fixtures, can bring a whole new look to a room.

WHITE WALLS

Despite the bright and airy feeling that photos of French homes display, the reality is that most French apartments do not receive much natural light unless they are on the top floor. To maintain the bright and airy feeling that is often shown in photos, the walls of these apartments are kept white. The white walls help in maximising the amount of natural light that is filtered into the room. In Malaysia however, we get ample sunlight that a wholly white room can be blinding. Go for colours that are neutral or slightly off-white, such as light greys and cream.



HARDWOOD FLOORS

Hardwood floors in chevron patterns are a popular choice in French-inspired homes. Besides its homey and antique vibe, various colour options are available in the market. Light-coloured hardwood aids in maximising the natural light of a room, while dark-coloured hardwood will make bright coloured furniture stand out more and add a modern vibe to it.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Bring in more light with French-style windows and doors. With ceiling-to-floor heights, the wooden framed entry points give the room a country retreat home touch. It's perfect for areas with high activity, such as the hall and kitchen. The French use a number of materials as window treatments, such as silks, damasks and lace. A country home theme would call for flowery patterns, while a contemporary theme would have plain lightweight materials. For homes with backyards, consider using a French-style glass door to add a splash of country chic instead of a plain glass door. Metal-framed French glass doors instead of the usual wooden ones fit better into a modern-themed home.

RUGS

Carpets, or rugs as we call them, are a necessity in French homes. Where space is limited, the simple addition of a rug can do wonders in adding personality to a plain room. The production of carpets in France began in mid 17th century, in a closed soap factory outside Paris called Savonnerie. The patterns on these carpets consisted mostly of flowers, usually in vases or baskets, inspired by Dutch and Flemish textiles and paintings. In the 18th century, production began in Aubusson, where the designs were inspired by Turkish designs. These vintage designs make a great addition to the living room. Alternatively, go for a crochet rug for bedrooms for that



feminine touch.

HUGE BOOKSHELVES

Belle from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* was every bit French in showing her love for books. No French home office is complete without towering ceiling-to-floor bookshelves. In some homes, the whole library takes up an entire wall – almost like an accent wall, but made of books. Many of the shelves are in-built, and filled with aging brown leatherback books. If a whole wall of bookshelves seem a little too much, go for an antique standing shelf and add a set of Britannica titles along with other quirky porcelain decorations to achieve the look.

CHANDELIERS

An inclusion of a massive light set may seem ludicrous, because no person needs a chandelier unless they own a ballroom. However, chandeliers come in different sizes, which makes it a functional yet fashionable addition to any room. In dining rooms, for example, the bigger the chandelier the better. Hang it right above the dining table with a height space of 30" and 36" from the tabletop for better effect and to avoid any headbanging incidents. In other rooms, such as the bedroom or living room, go for

multiple smaller-sized chandeliers instead of a single, large one. Chandeliers also come in iron-wrought designs, for rooms with a contemporary theme.

IRON-WROUGHT BALCONIES

Also known as a "Juliet balcony", French balconies are more of window guards or ledges that prevent you from falling out the window when you open it. These iron balconies are welded in intricate swirled patterns and are evocative of a French country home, which makes them lovely additions to windows that need a little sprucing up instead of being left bare outside. Use French balconies to create a reading nook or a mini garden, perfect for unwinding during the weekends.

PLANTS

When the winters get too cold and residents are stuck indoors, a little greenery is a warm reminder of warmer days to come. This is the very reason the French line parts of their homes with hanging vines. The splash of nature is refreshing in a small space. Incorporating small succulents into the home is also an artform of its own kind, as there are many clear geometric-shaped vases for the succulents to sit in that give a touch of contemporary to the room.

Use watering cans, jugs or tin boxes as vases for bright-coloured flowers in the dining area or the entryway.

VINTAGE FURNITURE

Chaise loungers, wooden-carved armoires, wingback armchairs and tufted bedframes are just some of the essentials in a vintage-themed French home. Keep a look out for flea markets, as they are a primary source for antique items. While most Malaysian markets may not have furniture pieces for sale, the little knick knacks are perfect for decorations for the home. Complement with large golden-framed mirrors in the hallways, bedrooms and bathrooms that also work to amplify the limited lighting in a room. Be a little bold and mix and match styles for a French room that speaks of the old and the new.

The French decorate their homes to echo their lifestyles – simplistic, relaxing and celebrative of beauty. If at the end of a long day, you dream of coming home to plush couches and relax the night away or spend a weekend indoors without feeling imprisoned, then a French-styled home is what you need.

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Hill Park, Seremban

Spotlight on Seremban

PART 1

> Inspecting IJM Land housing projects in the state capital of Negri Sembilan

THE strong demand exhibited by Seremban 2, a planned township, has seen a rise in the number of large-scale projects in the area.

The area has also fired up demand due to increasing price tags of properties in Kuala Lumpur and urban areas that include Damansara and Ara Damansara, Bangsar and Pantai, Subang and USJ, Bandar Utama, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, Kota Damansara, Bukit Kiara and Sri Hartamas, plus Petaling Jaya and others.

“With prices of homes in the Klang Valley on the rise, Seremban is now considered an ideal place for double-income professionals and young families. Properties in Seremban, Nilai and Senawang have also enjoyed good capital appreciation,” said iProperty Group CEO Georg Chmiel.

What more with the government’s PRiMA projects ongoing in Seremban.

“Experts believe that there will be a lot of changes in Negri Sembilan’s property landscape in the next five years where there will be a greater influx of investors and developers as land prices in the state are relatively cheaper than in the Klang Valley,” Chmiel added.

With townships in Nilai, Labu, Sendayan and Seremban contributing significantly to Kuala Lumpur’s growth and viewed as an extension to Greater Kuala Lumpur, plus the state government already recognising Seremban as a city, *theSun* focuses on Seremban and Seremban 2 over the next few weeks, an area already taking shape as the new cosmopolitan city it is planned to become.

MASTER DEVELOPER

IJM Land is the master developer for the entire 3,800 acre Seremban 2 township. There are more than 28 residential parcels spread out across Seremban 2 and Seremban 2

Heights, also known as S2 Heights.

Seremban 2 is strategically located just 1km away from the Seremban toll and 4km from Seremban town itself. The township is easily accessible via the Elite, Lekas and North-South Expressway. This brings it closer to KL city centre, which is just about a 45-minute drive away and 30 minutes to KLIA via the existing toll-free road.

The township also serves as the gateway into the Greater Klang Valley (KV). This comes under the National Structure Plan which gazettes 30% of Negri Sembilan, including Port Dickson, Nilai and Labu, as the Greater KL/KV conurbation areas.

There are a wide variety of house types in Seremban 2. From affordable apartments to well-planned terraced and super-link and semi-detached houses and bungalows in exclusive gated areas – these are facilitated with amenities like schools, lakes and parks, a sports complex, an S2 Club, a modern shopping centre and commercial business centres among others. More modern and spacious homes are offered in S2 Heights. Here the residential development highlights security, connectivity,



Aerial view of Seremban 2 township.

space and greenery.

SERI BINJAI @ RAHANG

Rahang is a suburb located 5km away from Seremban town and 4km away from Rasah. It is part of Seremban. Though once a small village, today, Rahang is pretty much bustling, especially since the establishment of IJM Land’s Seri Binjai development project.

Seri Binjai spans 55 acres of land. The development is built on elevated ground and offers freehold properties spread out in two phases. Phase 1 is fully completed. Only bumiputra lots are still available. Buyers can choose from double-storey link and double-storey semi-detached house types of three different dimensions.

Phase 2 is targeted for completion by the third quarter of this year. It will offer 123 units of two-storey bungalows, super-links and double-storey semi-detached houses. Unlike the quaint settlement it once was, the area will soon boast amenities like Tesco Extra hypermarket, Giant, KTM stations, banks, hospitals and schools among others. The housing area is also easily accessible through PLUS and Lekas highways and other major trunk roads.

RISE OF SEREMBAN 2

For those who have never stepped into Seremban or Seremban 2 for that matter, brace yourselves as you will be amazed with what you see. Gone are the days when Seremban was considered antiquated and slow-paced. Today,



Chap Goh Meh celebration for the residents.

it is alive and bustling with activity.

Says IJM Land Berhad central region senior general manager Hoo Kim See: “Development of Seremban 2 began in 1995. It offered house buyers the amenities and conveniences of city living while maintaining the grace and serenity of the country atmosphere.”

“We have a population of 60,000 residents today and the Seremban 2 township is at 70% completion. We have delivered an excess of 13,000 units of residential and commercial properties,” he informs.

Seremban 2 celebrates its 21st anniversary this year. It has emerged as one of the most progressive and successful developments in Negri Sembilan, offering a good mix of residential, commercial and light industrial properties that are complemented with modern and effective amenities and facilities. Both Seremban 2 and S2 Heights are developed by IJM Land Berhad, the property development arm of IJM Corporation Berhad.

Watch our property section next week for more on this developer’s township and residential offerings.

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Seri Binjai.



Middle-range residential developments.



Spotlight on Seremban

PART 2

> Examining various IJM Land Seremban 2 and Seremban 2 Heights residential projects

WHILE last week's article got us acquainted with IJM Land and its Seri Binjai @ Rahang property development project in Seremban, this week, we delve into the hip and happening Seremban 2 masterly developed township.

THE TOWNSHIP

Boasting a population of 60,000, with excess of residential units amounting to 13,000 in a township that is already at 70% completed, seeing is believing. Seremban 2 or S2 as it is fondly referred to, is a game changer that has altered the housing and economic scene in that part of the country. With its offering of residential, commercial and light industrial real estate in just the right proportions, one could say that S2 encapsulates a township with just the right balance.

Strategically located and perfectly planned, the township has enjoyed good growth and development potential, especially in the last couple of years. Considered part of the Greater Klang Valley, S2 is almost like a hop, skip and jump away from Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley. Its fully integrated and sustainable township planning allows residents to fully enjoy the developer's "live, play and invest" development concept.

The thriving township is appended with a host of amenities and facilities which include shopping malls like Aeon and Mydin. Its commercial section offers banks, hotels, car showrooms, one-stop home centres, pharmacies, mini-marts, boutiques, health clinics and F&B outlets, not forgetting schools, colleges and education centres, government and public

offices, as well as a huge amount of recreational space.

NEIGHBOURHOOD NUANCES OF S2

The S2 township is established across 3,800 acres of freehold land. Within this area are 28 parcels of residential land besides commercial and light industrial real estate projects built according to the developer's live, play, invest ideals.

The S2 township development places high emphasis on the following:

1. Security and safety – All new residential home parcels in Seremban 2 are designed in clusters, each cluster comes with perimeter fencing and a guard house. Adopting safety concept elements which include separation of pedestrian walkway from motorised lanes with green buffer zone to combat crime.
2. Accessibility – S2 has a comprehensive networks of roads, interchanges and underpasses for easy and seamless connectivity within the township. S2 also boasts of a strategic location with multiple access points leading in and out of the township.
3. Comprehensive amenities and facilities – These include a commercial precinct, a government precinct, recreational parks and a sports complex.

From high-rise living spaces to semi-detach, link and terrace houses plus bungalows, here are a few clusters and precincts offering various house types to suit different lifestyles, preferences and pockets.

Those looking for a **stylish and**



contemporary lifestyle in a modern, matured and progressive neighbourhood will be happy with what **Kalista 2** has to offer. High-rise living in executive apartments provides lifestyle spaces between 926 sq ft and 1,561 sq ft across 18 floors. Its name, Kalista, of Greek origin, means "most beautiful one". Here, residents will receive breathtaking views of unobstructed skylines and serene landscapes, complete with sky lounges and viewing decks. While these living spaces are captivating and impressive, so are the price tags they come with, which start at RM310,800 plus. Kalista 1, which was launched in October 2013 and is fully sold, is targeting hand-over in August 2016.

If landed property is what you are looking for, check out the latest launch of **Rimbun Irama** double-storey link homes. Comprises 183 units of 20' x 70' and 22' x 70' that provide spacious areas of 2,224 sq ft and 2,451 sq ft respectively, prices start from RM560,800. For larger families, **Rimbun Vista** offers two-storey super-links with choices of 24' x 70' and 22' x 92' that give 2,641 sq ft and 2,649 sq ft of roomy living spaces. While Rimbun Irama is located on **elevated ground and comes with guarded perimeter**

fencing, Rimbun Vista is a **low density development, guarded development complete with a 4.86-acre park** consisting of a central and linear park for its residents. The central park spanning 3.8 acres is a prominent landmark for all residents to indulge in healthy activities and a place to make new friends thus, promoting community building. Both Rimbun Irama and Rimbun Vista show units are available for viewing.

HILLTOP LUXURY AT S2 HEIGHTS

Saujana Duta at S2 Heights communicates absolute luxury. Those with a **penchant for a lifestyle imbued with privacy and elegance** will enjoy the consigns of this **low-density enclave, situated at the peak of S2**. Living spaces come in 116 limited units of gorgeously designed three-storey semi-detached homes and eight units of three-storey signature bungalows. Phase one is completed (with CCC issued). There are 75 more majestic bungalows located in phase two. The architectural design of these bungalows foster a sense of elegance and privacy. Each bungalow sits on plots measuring

between 6,400 sq ft and 13,000 sq ft and offers built-up areas of between 5,000 sq ft and 6,500 sq ft. Prices begin at RM2.8 million.

At 400ft above sea level, Saujana Duta provides residents with cool, fresh air against a backdrop that boasts stunning panoramic vistas of the surrounding greenery and city skyline. There is a Hilltop Recreational Villa, exclusive to the residents of Saujana Duta, which is ideal for intimate social gatherings or larger private parties, complete with clubhouse facilities.

ON THE WHOLE

Besides its residential offerings, IJM Land has exciting perks and freebies that come with its campaigns – Beli Rumah, Jom Umrah and Free Stay, No Pay. Don't forget that at the rate this township is taking off and the fact that the KL-Singapore High Speed Rail will include a stop in Seremban, property here will surely rocket.

With the commitment of building a close-knit community from day one, S2 offers diverse community events and activities annually, with the aim to foster friendships and create stronger bonds with its residents and the public at large.

Some of these include safe neighbourhood campaigns with the police, the IJM Land Run, Chap Goh Meh celebration, Raya celebration, tree planting, smoke-free initiatives in public parks, gotong-royong, health screenings, a cycling event, a treasure hunt, a yearly carnival and more. So, visit S2 if you have not already done so or the developer's website, show houses or office for more information.



Aerial view of Kalista 2.

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