

Spotlight

Keong Saik shophouses
back in demand amid
revival **EP4**

Highs and Lows

Jervois Prive sets new
record with \$3,313 psf for
freehold unit **EP11**

Gains and Losses

Resale at Ardmore Park
earns seller \$6.5 mil profit
EP12

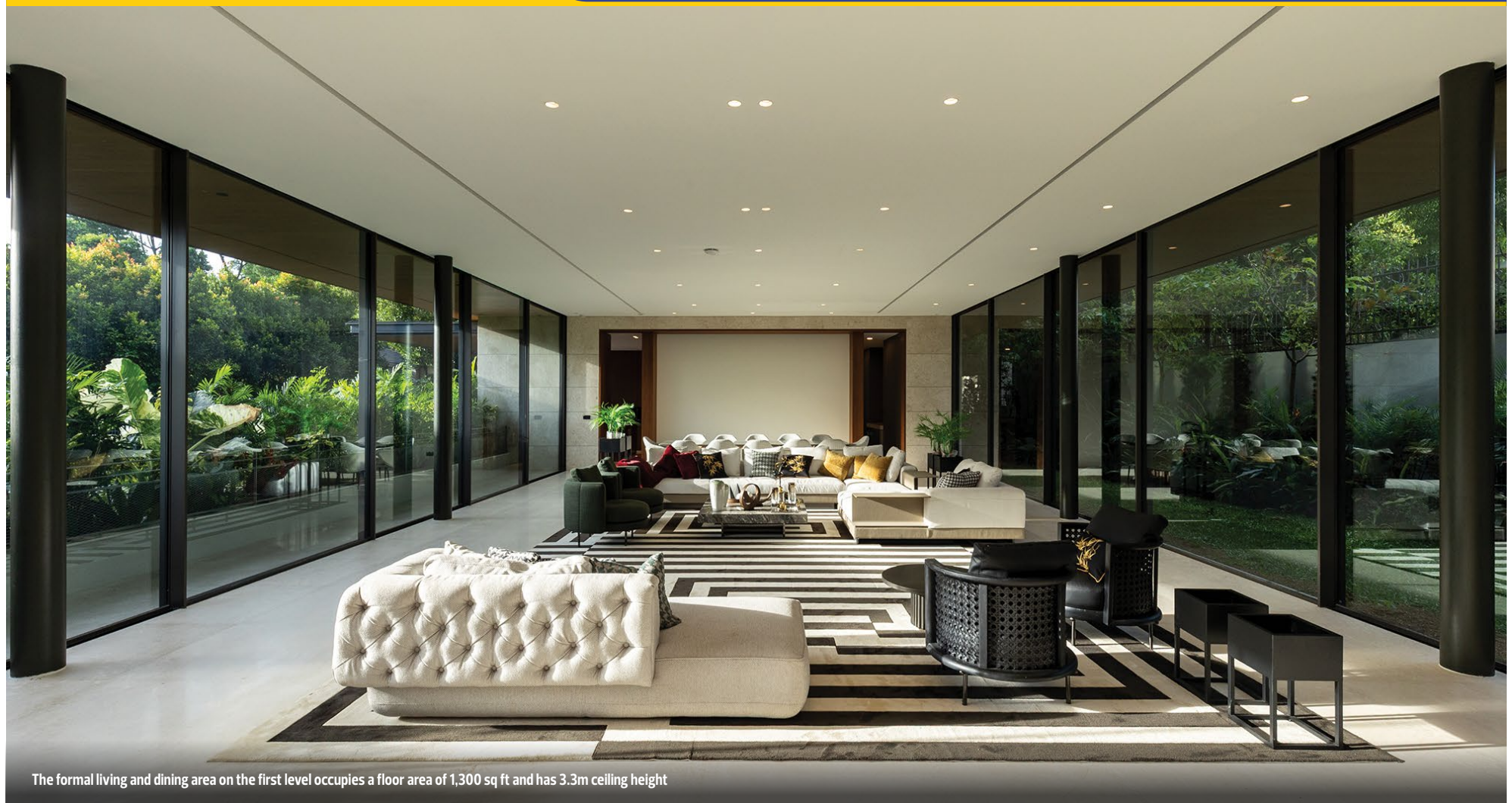
Under the Hammer

Freehold semi-detached
house in Hougang on the
block for \$8 mil **EP16**



**New Good Class Bungalow with luxury
interiors at 4A Swettenham Road
for \$59 mil**

Turn to our Cover Story on **Pages 8, 9 and 10.**



The formal living and dining area on the first level occupies a floor area of 1,300 sq ft and has 3.3m ceiling height

PICTURES: SAMUEL ISAAC CHUA/THE EDGE SINGAPORE

New Good Class Bungalow with luxury interiors at 4A Swettenham Road for \$59 mil



First glimpse of the GCB at the end of the driveway

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Once a dated home built in 1998, the Good Class Bungalow (GCB) at 4A Swettenham Road has been transformed into an 18,000 sq ft, five-bedroom mansion completed early this year.

The freehold property sits on a 15,398 sq ft plot in the exclusive enclave of Peirce Road, Ridout Road and Swettenham Road, located just off Holland Road in prime District 10.

The new mansion was developed by Singaporean businessman Yang Tse Pin, owner of Eco Energy, a company involved in projects ranging from workers' dormitories and student accommodation to luxury homes.

Yang purchased the property for \$22.5 million (\$1,461 psf) in November 2021, marking the most recent recorded GCB transaction in the neighbourhood.

Beyond the location, Yang liked the property because of its private driveway leading to the house, which is set back from the main road. "It gives a sense of exclusivity, and once you're inside, it's very quiet and peaceful," he says.

Multi-generational GCB living

Yang decided to redevelop the house to create a space better suited for modern, multi-generational GCB living. "The original house had too many different levels and steps," he recalls. "It wasn't elderly-friendly."

Beyond improving accessibility with a home lift to all floors, the redevelopment offered an opportunity to optimise land use, create a new home with a contemporary design and layout, as well as incorporate smart home features, he adds.

Yang engaged ArMo Design Studio, a boutique architectural firm founded by Colombian husband-and-wife principal designers Diego Molina and Maria Arango, to bring the vision to life. After spending two decades at the Singapore-based architecture firm Ong & Ong, where they designed over 100 luxury homes, the couple launched their own practice in 2021.

'Building anticipation and transition'

The GCB at 4A Swettenham Road was one of ArMo's first projects. "The design started with the idea of creating a journey," says Molina.

Rather than viewing the long driveway as a constraint,



The fully-equipped wet kitchen including V-Zug appliances



The dry kitchen is wrapped in wood and soft stone

SAMUEL ISAAC CHUA/THE EDGE SINGAPORE



The family room on the second level

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View from the sitting area of the master bedroom

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Yang: Traditionally, GCB ownership was dominated by older, established individuals. However, younger entrepreneurs and next-generation heirs are increasingly acquiring these prestigious homes, reflecting shifting generational wealth dynamics

ARMO DESIGN STUDIO



Maria Arango and Diego Molina, co-founders of ArMo Design Studio, designed the home “as an escape — quiet, peaceful and surrounded by nature, even in the city”

SAMUEL ISAAC CHUA/THE EDGE SINGAPORE



Tan: Most buyers prefer a brand-new GCB, where they can better appreciate the design and space

he saw it as “an opportunity to build anticipation and transition.”

Upon entering the property, the driveway gradually reveals glimpses of the house. “We framed the approach with soft landscaping, curated lighting, and shifting perspectives so that by the time you arrive at the entrance, it feels intentional and serene — a moment of arrival,” adds Molina. “It becomes part of the experience, like an unfolding prologue to the home.”

The driveway leads to a covered car porch that comfortably fits five cars. From there, the entrance foyer opens into a 1,300 sq ft great room, comprising an 800 sq ft formal living area and a 500 sq ft dining space. Both are lined with full-height, 3.3m glass slid-

ing doors that open to landscaped gardens.

“Using full-height glazing was intentional — to blur the line between indoors and outdoors, to bring in the gardens, the sky, the breeze,” says Molina.

The dining area flows into a spacious wet and dry kitchen. “Each space is designed to feel grounded and connected,” says Arango. “The dry kitchen is open and bright but wrapped in wood and soft stone.”

Space and comfort

The first level spans 4,000 sq ft, while the basement measures 4,600 sq ft. It includes a wine cellar for up to 3,000 bottles, a lounge, an en suite bedroom, and a separate room that can function as a home office or study.

Although the basement is sunken, glass sliding doors open to the swimming pool and garden, drawing in natural light and greenery, notes Arango. “Comfort, for us, comes from how spaces feel — not just how big they are,” she adds.

In addition to the bedroom in the basement, there are four more bedrooms on the upper floors, including the master and junior master suites.

The master suite on the second floor spans 1,400 sq ft and includes a bedroom, walk-in wardrobe, and bathroom. The 800 sq ft master bedroom is large enough for a sitting area, while the wardrobe features twin islands. The bathroom has a separate his-and-hers sink and vanity area, a double

shower, an enclosed water closet, and a standalone bathtub.

All bedrooms feature full-height glass windows that frame picturesque views of the surrounding neighbourhood. The second and attic levels have their respective family rooms, with floor-to-ceiling windows opening to expansive views. The attic level has a large balcony, making it an ideal setting for entertaining.

Luxury in the detailing

Large slabs of marble flooring span the entire first level. All bathrooms and powder rooms are clad in full marble, and even the exterior walls of the GCB are finished in treated marble.

Natural stone (including marble), timber and brushed metal were selected for their tactile quality and the way they age gracefully over time. “It was essential that the house feels refined but liveable,” says Molina.

Arango adds: “The luxury is in the detailing — the way marble veins flow seamlessly across surfaces, how the doors disappear into the wall panels and the softness of indirect lighting.”

Landscape design was integrated into the architectural process from the beginning. “It wasn’t an afterthought — it’s part of the architecture,” states Molina.

‘Creating a sanctuary’

The duo at ArMo envisioned designing the house for a resident who appreciates design, values privacy and calm, and enjoys entertaining, but also wants a sanctuary.

“Creating a sanctuary was very much at the heart of the design,” says Arango. “We wanted the house to feel like an escape — quiet, peaceful, surrounded by nature, even in the city.”

CONTINUES ON PAGE EP10

SAMUEL ISAAC CHUA/THE EDGE SINGAPORE



The walk-in wardrobe fits two central islands

SAMUEL ISAAC CHUA/THE EDGE SINGAPORE



The master bathroom



The family room on the attic level



The balcony on the attic level is an ideal setting for entertaining



The wine cellar in the basement is large enough for 3,000 bottles



The basement lounge

FROM PAGE EP9

They also envisioned a well-travelled homeowner — someone familiar with different ways of living and seeking a home that feels timeless, grounded in nature, and thoughtfully put together. “That idea guided many of our decisions — from spatial flow to material choices to how the house connects with the landscape,” says Molina.

Next-gen GCB owners

Yang, the developer, also notes a shift in the GCB landscape. “Traditionally, GCB ownership was dominated by older, es-

tablished individuals,” he says. “However, younger entrepreneurs and next-generation heirs are increasingly acquiring these prestigious homes, reflecting shifting generational wealth dynamics.”

He also sees a growing emphasis on sustainability, with buyers favouring energy-efficient systems and smart home technology. “The shift underscores a broader demand for modern, sustainable luxury properties,” Yang adds.

GCB clusters are emerging, particularly in Districts 10 and 11, due to their proximity to top schools, retail hubs, and lifestyle amenities. The Peirce Road-Swet-

tenham Road-Ridout Road triangle, in particular, is among the most sought-after, given that it’s an established GCB enclave with large land plots, says Yang.

In addition to its prime location, he notes that Swettenham Road is close to the restaurants at Dempsey Hill, the Singapore Botanic Gardens, and the Orchard Road shopping belt.

Yang has appointed KH Tan, founder and managing director of Newsman Realty, as the exclusive marketing agent for the Swettenham Road property.

Tan previously brokered the sale of another GCB developed by Yang: a newly

completed home at Chee Hoon Avenue. That property, situated on a 15,479 sq ft freehold site with 26,000 sq ft of built-up area, sold for \$55 million (\$3,553 psf) last year.

‘Fair price’

The GCB at 4A Swettenham Road is currently on the market for \$59 million, or \$3,832 psf. “It’s a fair price for a new GCB in today’s market,” Tan notes. “Most buyers prefer a brand-new GCB, where they can better appreciate the design and space.”

By contrast, buyers who acquire older properties and engage architects to design their new dream homes sometimes face unexpected outcomes. “The rooms may be too small, the staircase too narrow, the carpark too tight — or water seeps in during a heavy downpour,” says Tan, who has been marketing luxury bungalows for over 25 years.

For such buyers — especially those with no experience in property development or construction — “it’s better to purchase from an experienced developer,” he adds.

With new GCBs in short supply, Tan believes it’s only a matter of time before 4A Swettenham Road secures a buyer. ■



The swimming pool on the basement level

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