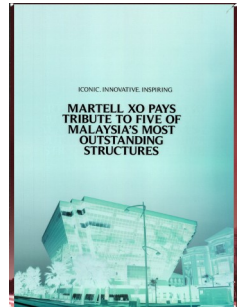


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ICONIC. INNOVATIVE. INSPIRING

# MARTELL XO PAYS TRIBUTE TO FIVE OF MALAYSIA'S MOST OUTSTANDING STRUCTURES





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THE GOOD LIFE | **ARCHITECTURE** |

RENOWNED ARCHITECT FRANK Gehry has much to say about architecture but one of his most oft-quoted would have to be:

**“ARCHITECTURE SHOULD SPEAK OF ITS TIME AND PLACE, BUT YEARN FOR TIMELESSNESS.”**

In the cityscapes of Malaysia are numerous forms of structures. While each is reflective of the time, day and age in which it was built, few can claim to have achieved the timelessness they yearned for. But the few do exist and from the mass of non-distinguishable concrete structures across the country, five stand tall as paragons of architecture excellence.

Running the gamut from an administrative building to a sales showroom, a series of residential towers to a shopping complex, these exemplary structures have several qualities in common. Each building boasts a design that is in harmony with the lifestyles of its inhabitants; an aesthetic that reflects modern times while strongly suggestive of the future; a pioneering effort in the form of shapes never before seen and materials never before used; and above all, a great deal of thoughtfulness dedicated to its day-to-day function as a space for living, working, playing, building and creating.

Truly these are monuments of today that will stand the test of time.





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## ENERGY COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA

Smack in a sea of grave government offices in Putrajaya is the Energy Commission of Malaysia, a dazzling upside-down pyramid structure nicknamed The Diamond Building. Designed by NR Design Group with Thai architect Dr Soontorn Boonyatikam as the project principal and IEN Consultants as the sustainability consultant, the seven-storey building, as beautiful as it is, isn't just all form and no function.

Featuring a passive design response to energy efficiency, the structure relies greatly on sunlight. Its inverted pyramid shape allows more roof space for solar panels and more ground space for surrounding greenery. Because of the light that comes through the roof via a light trough and mirror light shelves installed above the windows to deflect daylight onto the white ceilings to further

illuminate the interiors, no artificial lighting is required, thereby resulting the building consuming just one-third the amount of energy used by a building of its size. The use of rainwater harvesting systems saves up to 80 percent of the building's water usage and the building stays cool in the day thanks to coils of water embedded in the concrete floor that cool it down by night.

The Diamond Building holds Platinum ratings under Malaysia's Green Building Index (GBI) and Singapore's Green Mark programme, and was awarded the top prize in the ASEAN Energy Awards (AEA) last year, making it not only the most energy-efficient building in the country but also quite possibly, in the region.



IMAGE COURTESY OF NR DESIGN GROUP



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### STARHILL GALLERY

Along the shopping belt of Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, is the iconic Starhill Gallery. The luxury retail complex has existed since the mid-90s and is therefore by no means new, but its prismatic façade which was unveiled in 2011 meant that it would be tough to find a story on architecture in Malaysia that did not include Starhill Gallery.

Rising modestly above the bustling foot traffic of Bukit Bintang is an asymmetrical structure wrapped in a crystalline blanket of glass, granite and lightweight steel that is today one of the most photographed in the city. Designed to resemble the "wet drapery" seen on the ancient statues of Greece and Rome, not to mention the diaphanous fabrics of some of the luxurious labels housed within, the building appears from a distance to resemble a massive art installation. Passers-by respond accordingly too, with many stopping to observe and photograph its play of solidity and transparency resulting from the alternating glass and granite panels. The crystalline glass gently reflects the sunlight by day and blue LED lights make the prisms appear to glow from within at night, lending the structure an otherworldly quality that adds vibrancy and visual interest to the streetscape of the country's most important shopping belt.

Starhill Gallery was designed by Stephen Pimbley, founding director of Spark Architects and the man who designed Singapore's Clarke Quay. The iconic mall also features the highly complex façade technology by the French engineer RFR, the same team that designed the Pyramid at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

IMAGE COURTESY OF STARHILL GALLERY



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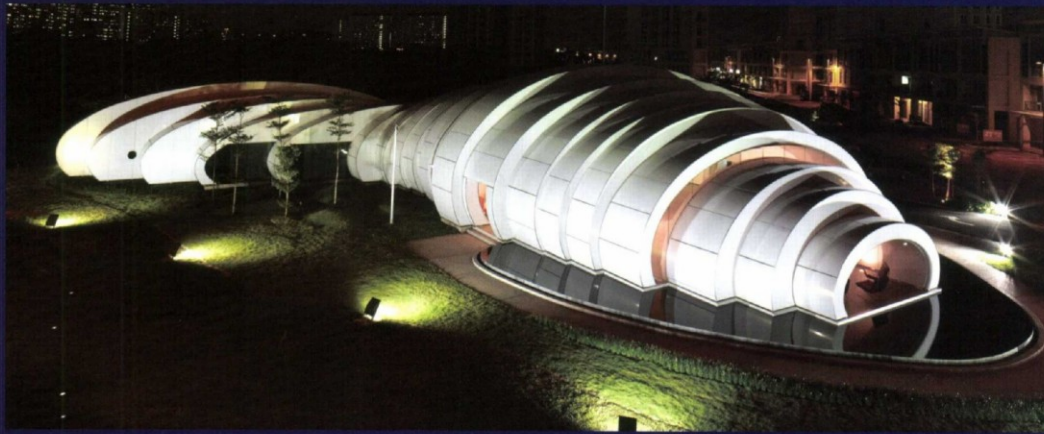
| **ARCHITECTURE** | THE GOOD LIFE

## THE POD PAVILION

Somewhere in an unassuming, quiet part of Petaling Jaya is the emerging development, Petaling Jaya Commercial City (PJCC), which is set to be the urban landmark of this age. The design ethos that will govern the massive 33-acre development can be seen in the much talked about Pod Pavilion, which functions as PJCC's showroom and sales office. The Pod Pavilion was, in fact, even the venue of a Martell Pure Gourmet dinner back in September 2011.

Designed by Hijjas Kasturi in collaboration with Studio Nicoletti Associati of Rome, the Pod Pavilion is a dynamic spherical structure that will elicit nothing less than amazement from its audience at first glance. Inspired by water droplets in the wild, the building achieves its round and appealingly "soft" appearance with a body constructed with a series of elliptical sections of variable widths and heights. The building is "wrapped" by a protective shell that looks as though it had been sliced into a series of ribbons, thereby giving the structure a sense of life and movement.

Sitting on an expanse of greenery, its edges wrapped by a reflective water pool, the Pod Pavilion is unique, modern and futuristic, yet in many ways, wild and embryonic. It was named winner of *Cityscape Asia 2010 Best Development Award for Mixed Use (Future)*.



IMAGES COURTESY OF PJCC



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THE GOOD LIFE | ARCHITECTURE |



IMAGE COURTESY OF STUDIO NICOLETTI ASSOCIATI

### PUTRAJAYA WATERFRONT RESIDENTIAL TOWERS

To paraphrase British architect Stephen Gardiner, the interior of a home personifies the private world while the exterior of it is part of the outside world. One shining example is the stunning Putrajaya Waterfront Residential Towers situated in Precinct 4, Putrajaya, just 30km south of Kuala Lumpur.

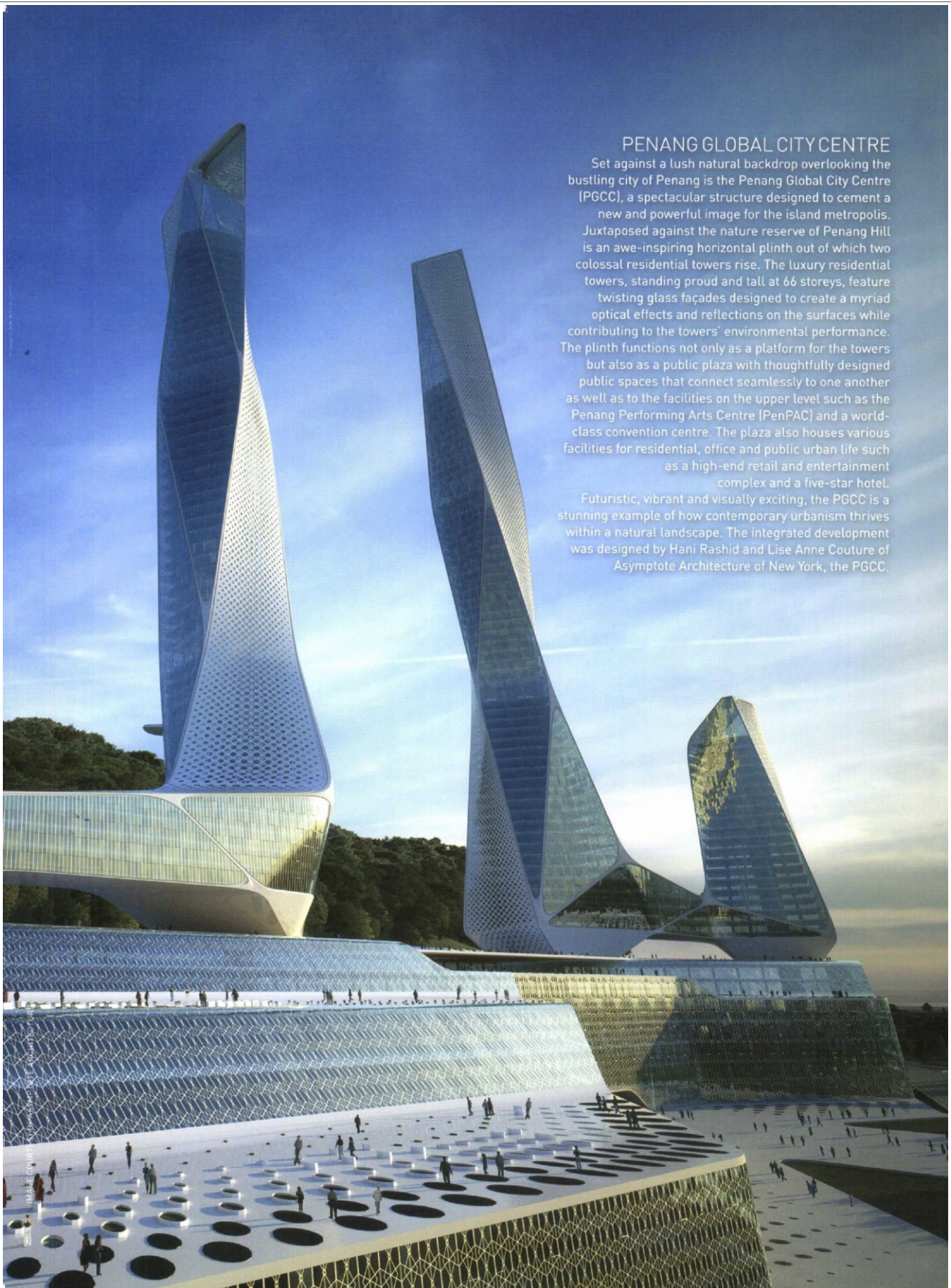
Off in the distance on a massive artificial lake is a series of dome-shaped residential towers inspired by the design of the sailboat and life at sea. The towers vary in height and orientation to mimic the fleet of sailboats constantly in motion in the high seas, and each one is adorned with Islamic design sensibilities such as the contemporary ogive arch in a nod to its place of origin and beliefs of its inhabitants.

Truly a vision of grandeur that is in harmony with its surroundings, the residential towers were also designed to be eco-conscious with integrated green terraces, generous sunshades, natural ventilation systems and integrated alternate energy sources that have successfully reduced the carbon footprint of the towers by more than 50 percent.

The Putrajaya Waterfront Residential Towers were designed by Hijjas Kasturi in collaboration with Studio Nicoletti Associati of Rome, a firm known for projects such as the Palermo Sport Palace, the Italian Parliament Conference Centre and the Hall of Justice in Arezzo. The towers were named winner of the *Cityscape Dubai International Award in 2008* and *Cityscape Asia Singapore International Award in 2009*.



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### PENANG GLOBAL CITY CENTRE

Set against a lush natural backdrop overlooking the bustling city of Penang is the Penang Global City Centre (PGCC), a spectacular structure designed to cement a new and powerful image for the island metropolis. Juxtaposed against the nature reserve of Penang Hill is an awe-inspiring horizontal plinth out of which two colossal residential towers rise. The luxury residential towers, standing proud and tall at 66 storeys, feature twisting glass façades designed to create a myriad optical effects and reflections on the surfaces while contributing to the towers' environmental performance. The plinth functions not only as a platform for the towers but also as a public plaza with thoughtfully designed public spaces that connect seamlessly to one another as well as to the facilities on the upper level such as the Penang Performing Arts Centre (PenPAC) and a world-class convention centre. The plaza also houses various facilities for residential, office and public urban life such as a high-end retail and entertainment complex and a five-star hotel. Futuristic, vibrant and visually exciting, the PGCC is a stunning example of how contemporary urbanism thrives within a natural landscape. The integrated development was designed by Hani Rashid and Lise Anne Couture of Asymptote Architecture of New York, the PGCC.



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THE GOOD LIFE | ARCHITECTURE |

Just as every building tells a story, so does every bottle of Martell XO and its story is every bit as powerful and emotive as those belonging to skyscrapers, pods or domed towers.

Martell XO is an exquisite blend that spells refinement and nobility, its hallmark tastes a sublime expression of Martell's four main terroirs, particularly reflective of the mellow elegance of the old Borderies *eaux-de-vie* and the power of the Grande Champagne growth. The golden amber blend is rich and spicy on the nose, and rounded and fruity on the palate with a deliciously long and silken finish.

It is fascinating to note that the structure that contains the blend has generated almost as much attention and rapture over the years as the blend itself. The bottle's recognisable arched shape and noble curves have evolved over time and are occasionally reinterpreted for limited editions or special commemorative series.

This year, Martell makes a landmark move to collaborate with world-renowned French architect and urban planner Christian de Portzamparc to design the Martell XO Exclusive Architect Edition. This marks the second of two Martell XO Exclusive Architect Edition collaborations, the first of which was with Paul Andreu, architect of the Beijing Opera House in 2009.

CHRISTIAN DE PORTZAMPARC

For de Portzamparc, the world is an intrepid one of swirling verticals and prisms, elaborate creations and spectacular shapes, as evidenced by his works that include the Bastille Opera in Paris, the Philharmonie in Luxembourg, the Cidade de Music in Rio de Janeiro, the LVMH Tower in New York and the French embassy in Berlin, among others. Other projects of his that are even grander in scale include the entire Quartier Masséna neighbourhood of Paris and the complexes of concert halls in Paris, Rio de Janeiro and Luxembourg. Each project – whether it's a building or a neighbourhood – is a monument to the French architect's vision and building philosophy as well as a reflection of the structure's time, location and the culture of its inhabitants.

In 1994, de Portzamparc became the first French architect to win the acclaimed Pritzker Prize, one of the world's most prestigious architecture awards – the Nobel Prize of architecture, if you will. In 2006, the Collège de France created a 53rd chair dedicated to Artistic Creation and named de Portzamparc as its first occupant.



“FOR THE MARTELL XO ARCHITECT EDITION, I SOUGHT TO CREATE A SIMPLE, FLAWLESS SETTING THAT WOULD SUBTLY AND TRANSPARENTLY SUGGEST SENSUAL CURVES AND MYSTERIOUS LIGHT WHICH I FEEL PERFECTLY EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF MARTELL XO”