

HONG KONG

THE PEAK

DECEMBER 2012

KO WING-MAN
DOCTOR WITH
SEVEN MILLION
PATIENTS

STAYCATIONS:
7 GREAT WAYS TO
ENJOY CHRISTMAS
IN HONG KONG

CHRISTMAS IN A
WINTER WONDERLAND
CALLED **FINLAND**

PROUD FRENCH FAMILY
TACKLES CHINA'S MASSIVE
WINE MARKET

HK\$50.00



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32 Ko Wing-man: Doctor with seven million patients
Hong Kong's once world-class medical system is beginning to show ominous cracks. But a seasoned, cool-headed surgeon-cum-civil-servant may be just the medicine needed.

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As Hong Kongers are becoming increasingly more health-conscious, more people are turning to organic foods. But OBE Organic – Australia's largest producer of grass-fed organic beef – and a major supplier of organic beef to Hong Kong – says let the buyer beware. False or misleading labelling is rampant.

46 A proud French family winery tackles China's massive wine market

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Hong Kong's Plus One Partnership interior design firm has won the prestigious Andrew Martin International Interior Design of the Year Award for 2012, the first Asians even to claim the coveted prize.



AWARD-WINNING DESIGN DUO INSIST ON TELLING THEIR OWN STORY

Hong Kong's own Plus One Partnership interior design firm has won the prestigious Andrew Martin International Interior Design of the Year Award for 2012 – known as the Oscars of the interior design industry. The company's two young founders are the first Asians ever to claim the coveted prize.

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Virginia Lung and partner Ajax Law Ling-kit of One Plus Partnership had already one some 70 Asian awards before news of their latest industry prize.

“It felt surreal,” Virginia Lung recalls. “I still couldn’t believe that we’d gotten the award.” In fact, the award that Lung, a founding partner of the Hong Kong-based interior design firm One Plus Partnership, was referring to, was the prestigious Andrew Martin International Interior Designer of the Year Award for 2012. She and fellow founding partner, Ajax Law Ling-kit, had defeated more than 90 strong industry rivals from around the globe to win the respected prize, and is the first Asian firm to claim the honour.

Called “the Oscars of interior design industry” by the *London Times*, the Andrew Martin International Interior Designer of the Year Award is one of global design industry’s most prestigious awards. Each year, the best design work from hundreds of interior design firms are sent in, and the very best are shortlisted and then published in the “Interior Design Review” book, which some industry insiders have described as the ‘Bible’ for the interior design world. And this year’s Hong Kong’s own One Plus team is the first ever Asian firm to win the award.

The Wuhan Pixel Box Cinema is the winning design created by Lung and Law. Known for basing their project designs on a novel theme, the husband-and-wife team

was inspired by the word pixel. “Now that almost everything is digitized, movies are especially very much related to pixels. Films are composed of moving images, which are made up of millions of tiny pixels that move continuously,” Lung explains. In the shape of a square or a cube, pixel is the smallest addressable element of any image that appears on screen. Thus, the design of the cinema addresses the relationship and movement of pixels in movies and explores the versatility of the cube shape in the space.

One Plus has long been keen on doing such theme-specific projects. “This has been our signature practice ever since we started the company in 2004,” says Law. “We wanted to create an original design that has its unique characters, but which also had a unified focus. It’s common to find people detaching design elements, say, a featured wall or a lighting effect from the original context and inserting it into their own project – just because they think it looks great. But that’s not what we want. There has to be a meaning behind everything that we include in our designs.”

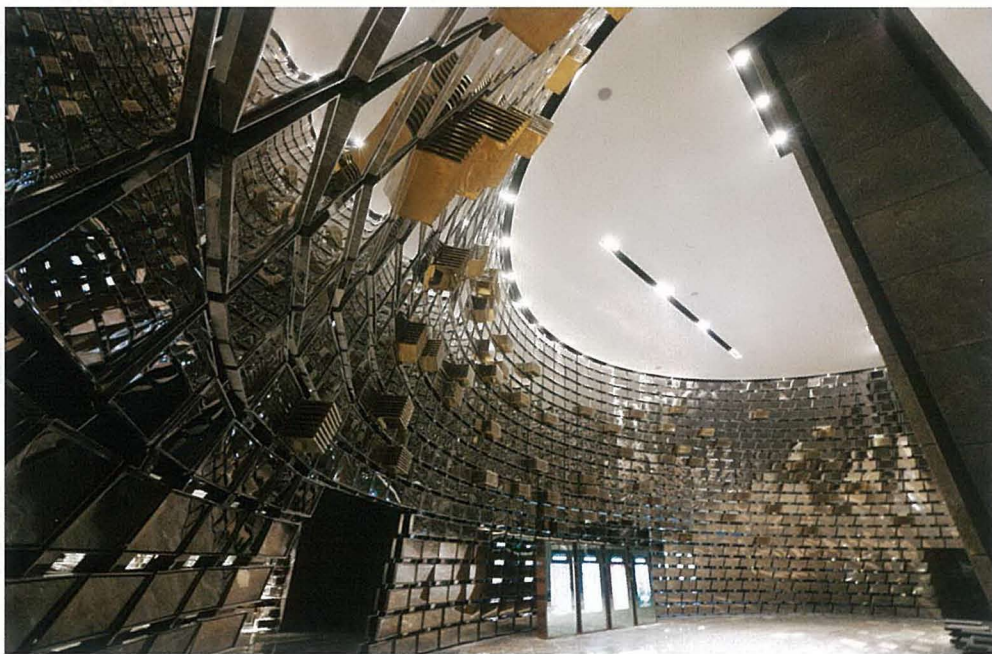
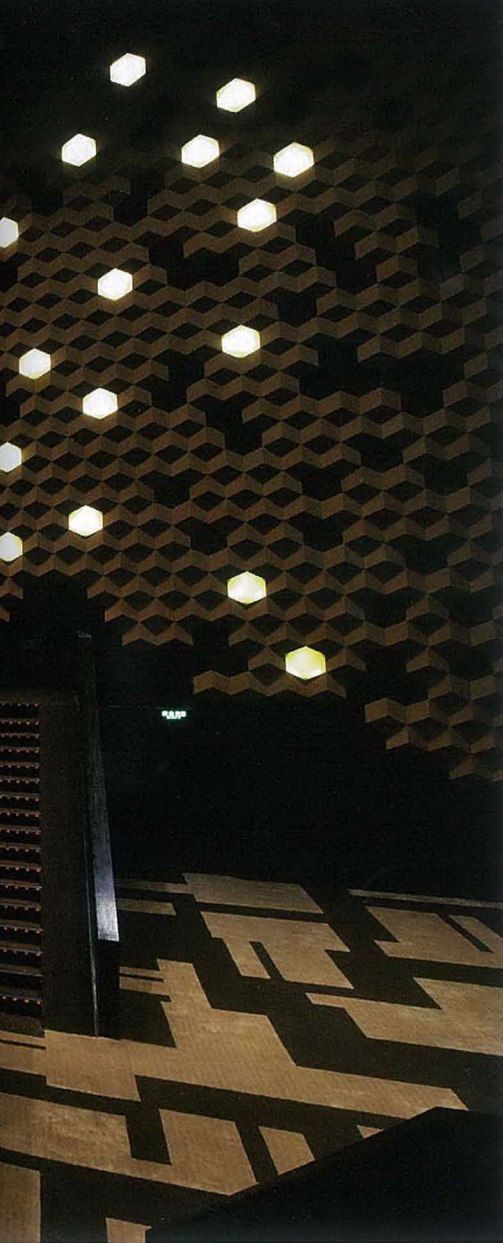
Continuing the theme of moving pixels, in One Plus’ award winning design – squares, cubes or rectangular shapes are presented in every part of the cinema—from litter bins to bathroom sinks, to benches and stools. The box



office is a grand hall in the shape of a curved envelope made from over 7,000 pieces of rectangular stainless steel panels, resembling a spinning tunnel of thousands of pixels swirling around inside the digital world. Cinema visitors will even be immersed into a mesmerizing maze in the bathrooms, where every toilet cubical is individually designed into squared cylinders in different heights. Cinema chairs are deliberately covered with jumbo-coloured fabrics to add a vibrant touch to the theatre.

“Designing something based on a main theme is like having a story behind your design. The end product can then easily become a unified one. Traces of the ‘story’ will be recognised throughout the space, presenting the story in a different way using different mediums and methods. If the initial principle and direction is clear and relevant, designers will not make the wrong decision with their design. For example, they will not add an irrelevant colour to a wall without knowing why,” Law explains.

Even though this method somehow



makes Law and Lung’s design life easier, not all clients are willing to sit down and listen to the narratives behind the commissioned projects. The design duo note that, in Asia, most clients would rather get straight to the point. They will often interrupt the designers while they are making a presentation, and want them to cut the so-called gibberish. All they want to know is how the structure will appear when it is finished, what it is made of, what the colour is, and – most important of all, how much the project will cost. They are not much interested in the reasons behind the design, which in fact are the creative crucials of what makes the project stronger. Therefore, most [Asian] designers have strayed away from using this storytelling approach; Law and Lung, however, insist on staying with it.

One Plus is recognised for its edgy, modern designs in China, including the Wuhan Moulding Show House and Parc Four Seasons Shanghai, projects which were also submitted to the competition this year. Currently, over 80 percent of their design projects are commissioned by mainland clients, the balance coming from Hong Kong and Macau.

“As much as we would love to venture into the international market, it’s undoubtedly a great challenge for us. Each region has its own colours, culture and style. A Singaporean client would prefer to have their site designed by a Singaporean designer, who speaks the same language and they would understand each other better; the same would be true of Taiwan clients. In the United States, they already have a good talented pool of designers they can choose from. Also, with the global economic crisis, people today would rather assign their projects to a local firm to cut down costs,” Lung says.

Although being awarded with such honour may not necessarily bring immediate benefits, Lung and Law have certainly made history and have drawn more attention from designers from around the globe to their ambitious projects.

Having already claimed gained 70 Asian industry awards plus nearly 60 overseas awards, it is only a matter of when – not if – that this dynamic young Hong Kong interior design team make their mark on the international design market. ▲

▲ One Plus is known for its edgy modern designs in Hong Kong and China, and each design comes with a story behind it.