



Named after the Arabic word which means "the breath of life", Aira Residence, scheduled to open in 2019, is a luxury residential property of 105 condominium units, making it the very last low-density development within its vicinity. Nestled on a 3.01ac plot located at Jalan Batai in Damansara Heights, the units range in size from 2,679 sq ft to 7,730 sq ft. More information can be found at airaresidence.com.

GOING DUTCH

As one of the most relevant and iconic designers of our time, Piet Boon shares with *The Peak* his design philosophy and upcoming plans for Aira Residence, a new residential project by Selangor Properties that aims to redefine what it means to live in the lap of luxury.

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It's been a long journey for Piet Boon. Having travelled thousands of miles for a two-day stopover in Kuala Lumpur – his sixth visit and counting – the towering Dutchman still appears relatively animated for someone battling jetlag. Then again, this latest jaunt pales in comparison to when Boon first founded his eponymous design studio more than 30 years ago. "I started with a small construction company that did refurbishments, while also building and designing small houses. Back then, I assumed that was all I would be doing for the rest of my life," he says.

Fate, however, had other plans in store for the designer and master craftsman. As he regales his very first break that started it all, one would be convinced it occurred just yesterday,

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when, in fact, it all began nearly 15 years ago: "At the time, we had been struggling for at least two decades. Then, a big developer in the United States approached us to redesign an entire floor of this apartment located on Fifth Avenue in New York, which was right beside Central Park. Seeing as it was one of the most expensive buildings at the time, there was definitely a lot of pressure. But what made it fun and very different was that they gave us the freedom to do it our way, and everything turned out beautifully. It is important to have that level of trust and, since I'm not the one who is going to end up living in that space, the final result must be able to convey the client's emotions."

With his exceptional eye for materials and colours, combined with a 'no-nonsense' attitude towards design, it didn't take long for Boon's talent to gain traction among design aficionados throughout the globe. This eventually led to numerous projects, ranging from furniture and cars, to offices, resorts and even the occasional neighbourhood. "I'm actually working on a village in Washington, where all of them will be 'Boon Houses'. There'll be three models, each with different colour schemes. If you buy one model, you're not allowed to buy the same one on the next plot, which results in a nice mix of different designs."

"I never imagined I'd end up working in design, but it has certainly been interesting. Not only do I get to travel, but I'm doing things that I like – from building beach houses in the Caribbean, to working on high-end residential projects in places like New York and now Malaysia. I'm definitely living my dream, but the main drawback is that you don't always have the time to really celebrate and bask in these achievements because, once a project is complete, I'm already on to the next one – and it's all happening so fast."


When asked how the Aira Residence project with Selangor Properties first transpired, Boon explains: "We first met with the developer about three years ago, just to see if this partnership would make a perfect fit, and it was. That

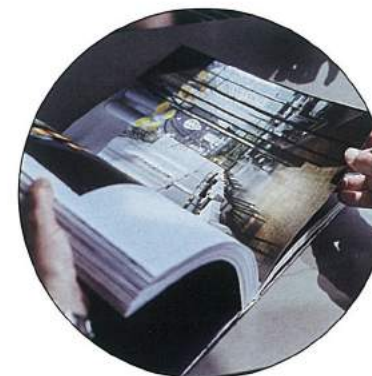
was my first-ever visit to Malaysia, and I remember feeling captivated by how green and hilly this place was. I especially love the warm weather here, but the moment I start to acclimatise, it's already time to head back home to Amsterdam."

As for his plans for Aira Residence, Boon emphasises that it all boils down to two things: comfort and luxury. "Not only must the rooms be built using the right proportions, but it must also exude that sense of warmth that makes you feel at home, even if it is just a residential building. There will also be design packages available, where you can choose the type of interior, furniture and even lighting fixtures based on your preferences," he says. "It's about keeping things

simple while making sure they are well designed, so that the moment you walk in, everything is exactly where it is supposed to be. It's about ensuring that all these elements fit together in perfect harmony."

As Boon reiterates: "I believe that good design should be for everyone and not just catered towards one specific demographic. Design is constantly evolving, so maintaining that level of prestige becomes a major challenge, especially once you consider how fast trends change. This is also why I prefer designs that are simple yet timeless. If you were to compare our earlier furniture collections with our most recent releases, the lines are still pretty much the same." And, while every project has its own fair share of challenges, for Boon, it's all about finding ways to include quality materials without going over-budget, "while simultaneously maintaining our design aesthetic."

"At Studio Piet Boon, we want to create things that are not only timeless but will also age beautifully with every year that passes. It's like when you install wooden floors: you need to keep in mind that they will be scratched and worn out the longer they are used, which is what we like to refer to as 'the beauty of imperfection'." 



For an in-depth look into Piet Boon's recent projects from around the globe, be sure to pick up a copy of *The Studio Piet Boon Inspiration Book*, a glorious 271-page tome brimming with creative inspiration. pietboon.com