



21 SEP, 2023

## Making her mark in architecture

The Star, Malaysia



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ARCHITECTURE has long been a male-dominated field.

According to Lembaga Arkitek Malaysia, female architects stand at just 25% of the industry, despite women making up 41% of registered graduate architects.

Undeterred by the high drop-out rate of female architects, UCSI University alumna Lam Sook Wan decided that she would cut it in the industry, promote the architecture of happiness and break some stereotypes in the process.

She succeeded with some style as she made a name for herself in the industry, Lam even established her own studio – SWdesign Interiors.

Her portfolio is equally impressive having engaged with multiple celebrities to work magic on their residences.

Lam recently designed Seed by Whitegrass – a celebrated spin-off of a Singapore-based Michelin-starred restaurant, as well as Ling Long – a sister restaurant on top of Seed that serves innovative Chinese cuisine.

“As Seed blends French and Japanese culinary techniques, the ambience had to set the right atmosphere for diners,” says Lam, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Interior Architecture in 2012.

“I wanted it to project the dramatic view of open paddy fields and I implemented a curved counter that represented hills



Lam has designed homes for a number of celebrities and even a Michelin-starred restaurant.

and streams. The cloud-like metal chain ceiling gives the impression of an open space.

“The ambience had to be warm and welcoming to prepare patrons for the gastronomic journey. I wanted the interiors to reflect the inventive menus and the atmosphere also had to be laid-back for people to enjoy the food philosophy.”

Born and raised in Sabah, Lam traces the start of her architectural journey to her Chinese and Filipino heritage.

She appreciated the design

nuances of both cultures and was keen to see the elements come together.

Her father’s career as a contractor also exposed her to the industry.

She was accustomed to building materials, architectural plans, drawings and site visits from a young age, sparking her early interest in the field.

That interest never waned and she enrolled at UCSI after understanding how the interior architecture programme captured the intrinsic correlation between

interior design and architecture.

“I was happy that UCSI had a programme that matched my architectural philosophies,” says Lam.

“I did my best from the start and it was a pretty good decision I made in life. I learnt how to create purposeful spaces that offer delightful environments and nuances that stir the soul. And I had opportunities to apply what I learned, which was enriching.”

Lam is quick to credit her UCSI lecturers for equipping her with firm foundations to chart her career trajectory.

From expanding her architectural perspectives to instilling grit and fostering creativity, they helped her to get to this point.

“At UCSI, I learnt how to prioritise functionality, sustainability and the well-being of people who will use the spaces I design, while working within precise budgetary and regulatory constraints,” she adds.

“My sensitivity to those around me fuels my design philosophy. Through functional patterns, sustainability and aesthetic appeal, I craft spaces that ignite happiness, nurture well-being and foster a sense of community.

“You won’t get very far in design if you don’t understand your users.”

Lam’s journey is another addition to UCSI’s long list of successful alumni.

The university has four Forbes

30 Under 30 Asia inductees, two Prestige 40 Under 40 laureates, serial entrepreneurs, scientists and media personalities in its alumni network.

Annic Lyn, one of the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia inductees, took the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Architecture.

The long list of success stories evinces UCSI’s long-standing track record in graduate outcomes.

The university enjoys a 100% graduate employability score in the Higher Education Ministry’s Graduate Employability 2021-2022 survey.

UCSI also stands out as one of Asia’s best private universities in the QS World University Rankings 2024. Classified in the world’s top 1% by virtue of its top 300 ranking, UCSI has improved by around 200 spots since it was first ranked in 2019.

To provide aspiring architects, interior architects and interior designers with clarity on life in the field, UCSI is holding its Architecture Days this coming weekend.

Aspiring students can look forward to campus tours that showcase state-of-the-art facilities, make labs, laser precision cutters and a grand architecture gallery, among others.

■ For more information, visit [ucsiuniversity.edu.my](http://ucsiuniversity.edu.my) or contact 03-9101 8882/ 011-3591 5021.



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### SUMMARIES

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