



GLITTERING ALLURE

A curvaceous, double-height glass facade signals the presence of the new Mandarin Gallery retail centre on Singapore's famed Orchard Road

These pages The Mandarin Gallery's undulating curtain wall fronts onto Singapore's renowned Orchard and Grange Road shopping precincts. An adaptive reuse of the entry podium to the Mandarin Hotel (now Mandarin Orchard), the new retail centre is already 99% occupied. Sustainability was one reason for electing to refit, rather than rebuild. A double-skin facade – an external glass wall and an inner layer of existing walls – greatly reduces heat load on the building.

Repurposing an under-utilised area of a noted hotel as an upmarket retail mall presents more than one advantage. Benefits include a high-profile, familiar location, and an association with the glamour and chic of an international hotel.

The gleaming, four-level Mandarin Gallery on Singapore's Orchard Road is a reinvention of the entry podium of the former Mandarin Hotel. Developed by Overseas Union Enterprise (OUE) and designed by DP Architects, Mandarin Gallery stands apart in a city that abounds with covered shopping precincts.

Marketing spokesperson for OUE Patrina Tan says Mandarin Gallery has several market advantages.

"Mandarin Gallery gains through its proximity to the long-established hotel and also from its prime inner-city location – an extended 152m frontage along Orchard Road."

The shopping centre design exploits this valuable connection. A realignment of access ways by DP Architects meant flagship shops could open directly onto Orchard Road. This move also allowed for the construction of a grand sky-lit lobby for the hotel.



Mandarin Gallery was designed by DP Architects, with interior design by Aim Create, to have the visual delicacy of a modern Japanese teahouse. The Orchard Road frontage comprises a broad, covered pedestrian walkway and a curvaceous flow of six 8m-high duplex shop fronts showcasing global retail brands, ranging from Boss Orange to Mauboussin and Emporio Armani.

Project architect Paul Appasamy says in a retrofit of this nature, the facade is the main opportunity for dynamic design expression – the facade, articulated by feature fins, light boxes and flying edges, has been carefully calibrated to bring urban character to the interface between the building and Orchard Road.

“In addition, a curvilinear circulation loop allows for a sequential reveal of each shop front, adding an element of discovery to the shopping experience,” says Appasamy. “The building’s columns are placed to create a sense of forward movement.”

Pedestrians enter directly from the duplex shop fronts, or are guided from Orchard Road up to the

Mandarin Gallery’s second level via escalators. Behind the curtain-wall facade there is nearly 18,000m² of retail floorspace, accommodating a total of 103 shops, to greet them.

“Faced with the constraints of retaining levels two and three of the existing structure, a hierarchy of design styles was adhered to over the four levels of the centre,” says Appasamy. “This was to make good use of intimate low ceiling heights that in some areas are augmented by introduced suspended ceilings.”

A sleek, refined decor in Mandarin Gallery’s ground and first floors reflects the luxury brands on display here. The second floor has a lighter and edgier feel, with wooden trellises overhead and chic pebble floors, and is home to electronics, lifestyle and fashion stores. Interior finishes on the top floor are warmer – reminiscent of a domestic residence – with wood floors, timber surface veneers and paintings hanging on the walls. This level features home-related retail stores and food and beverage establishments.

Left The ground level and first floor have a refined aesthetic and a patterned, resin lattice augments this feel. Entry to the Mandarin Gallery from the hotel is at ground level and via escalator from a new fifth-floor hotel atrium into the uppermost level of the shopping centre.

Facing page upper A modern, youthful ambience is in keeping with the sports apparel shops on the second level. Wood-slat dropped ceilings reference the simplicity of a Japanese teahouse.

Facing page lower Homeware and food and beverage tenants inspired the decor for the top floor of the shopping centre. Long sightlines through the complex give shoppers a sense of progression.





Facing page Montblanc occupies one of Mandarin Gallery's duplex street-front stores. Carpet placement delineates the various product areas, while inset paths lead the shopper through the environment.

Below The company's premium line of jewellery greets visitors as they enter the shop from the street. Sightlines draw the eye to the central display column and up to the recessed ceiling. Overall, the look is formal and spacious, with practical elements tucked behind full-length curtains.

Together with the expansive, signature facade, the international brand names are a central part of Mandarin Gallery's attraction. The restrained Montblanc store provides a glittering example.

A subtle colour palette, reflecting Montblanc's brand, and recessed ceilings that accentuate the height of the boutique provide a backdrop for individual product settings, dedicated to writing instruments, watches, jewellery and leather wear.

The eye is soon drawn to a feature of the space – a 4m chandelier made from over 600,000 Swarovski crystals carved into individually curved glass panels, each spelling out the word Montblanc. This is suspended through the stairwell that leads to the upper level of the duplex and on to the VIP room. The dramatic art piece was made in Germany and is one

of only two in the world specially created for the brand – the other dazzles Parisians in the French capital's Montblanc boutique.

Spokesperson for Montblanc, Alena Kok, says the Mandarin Gallery shop fit-out, with its sense of height-ened space, is intended to create an inviting retail environment that offers a cultural experience as well as presenting exquisite product ranges.

"For example, enclaves within the boutique are given over to exhibiting artists from the Montblanc's Young Artist World Patronage awardees."

The artwork with the horse race at the entrance of the boutique pays tribute to Nicolas Rieussec's 1822 invention of the world's original chronograph, which inspired the first mechanical movement manufactured in Montblanc's own workshops in Le Locle.



One of the most exotic enticements for those who wander along Orchard Road is the exuberant fit-out of the Mauboussin retail boutique. In a progression of rooms designed to create a sense of discovery, the vibrant purple of the first, circular space draws the eye from the street, says the architect who designed the space, Regis Pean of omni//form.

"The central room has the look of a French salon, with an emphasis on surprising textures," says Pean. "It features four comfortable seating areas with oversized, tufted French-style sofas and chairs, separated by large fans of ostrich feathers.

"A cloud-like dropped ceiling made from tufted white tulle fabric contributes to a private and comfortable atmosphere for customers to view jewellery."


Several elements of the fit-out play with expectations.

The wall panels in the boutique are outlined in lace and the panels themselves are fronted in white feathers, satins and pearl leathers.

The final room in the Mauboussin experience is all in gold with ruffled satin mouldings and leather panelling.

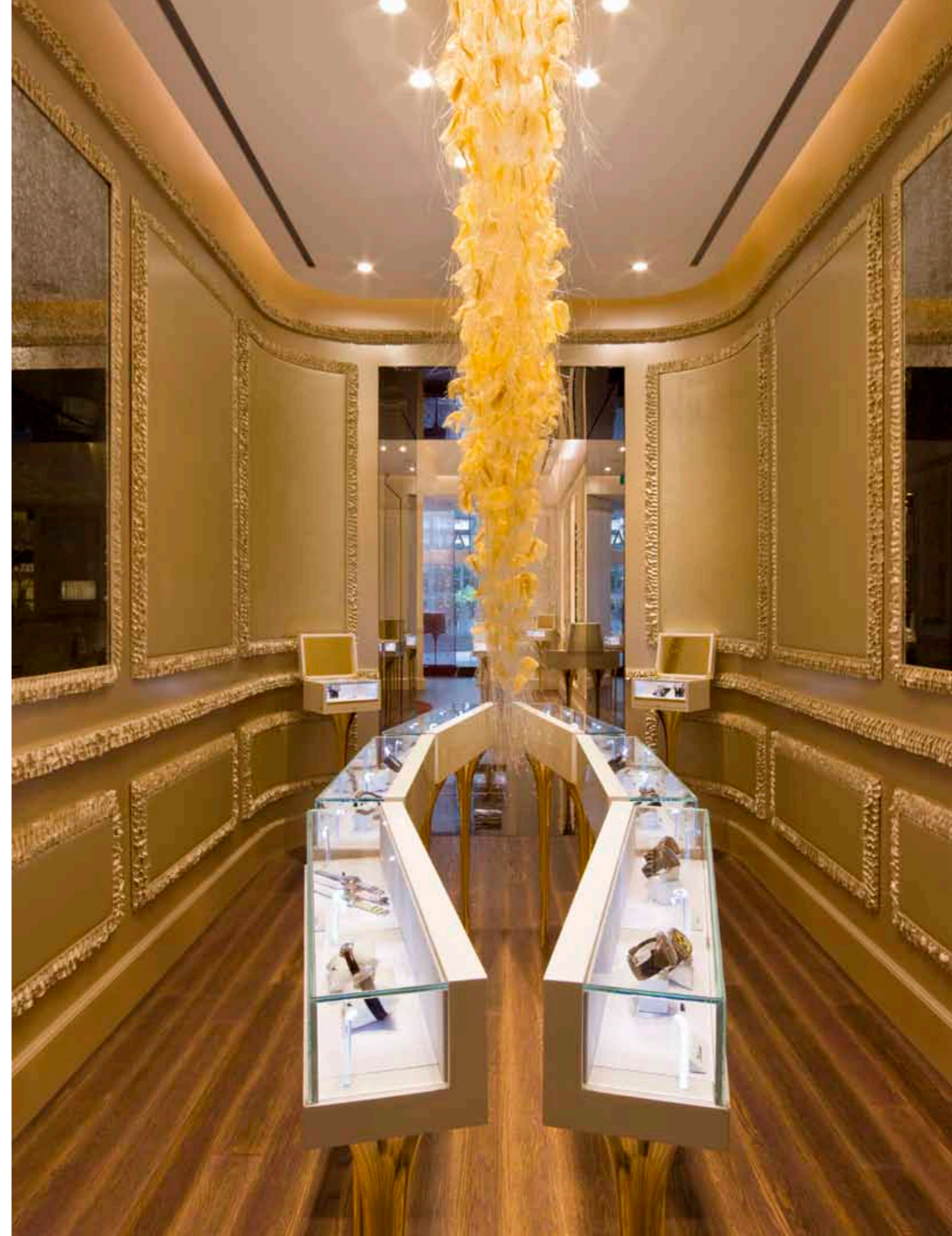
"Individual displays are designed as treasure chests waiting to be opened," says Pean. "The same sense of wonderment a child experiences in tales of magical treasure troves is translated into the pleasure of shopping in this refined, unexpected environment."

In a sense this joy of uncovering and exploring rare treasures is emblematic of the entire Mandarin Gallery – a giant jewellery box waiting to be explored.

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These pages The Mauboussin store reflects a grand opulence, and the fit-out plays with expectations at every turn. Wall panels in one room are outlined in refined materials and a tulle cloud is suspended from the ceiling. From both entrances to the boutique, there is a sense of progression towards the gold room, with its dramatic centrepiece made from fibre optics, hand-knotted fabric and foil.



Location Mandarin Gallery (Singapore)

Developer Overseas Union Enterprise

Architect Ti Lian Seng, SIA, DP Architects

Interior design Takanori Ito, Aim Create

Civil, mechanical and electrical engineer Meinhardt

Quantity surveyor KPK Quantity Surveyors

Landscape Lekker Design

Cladding Unitised facade system from Kao Lee Aluminium Industrial

Roof L5 roof from Lysaght

Facade design St Gobain glazing system, designed by DP Architects; Aurecon Singapore

Flooring: Stonework from Rice Field

Paints SKK

Ceiling Boreal

Lighting Erco, Reclux, Philips

Heating/air conditioning Bintai Kindenko

Signage Sign Mechanic

Lift services Mitsubishi Elevators

Escalator services Mitsubishi Electric

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