

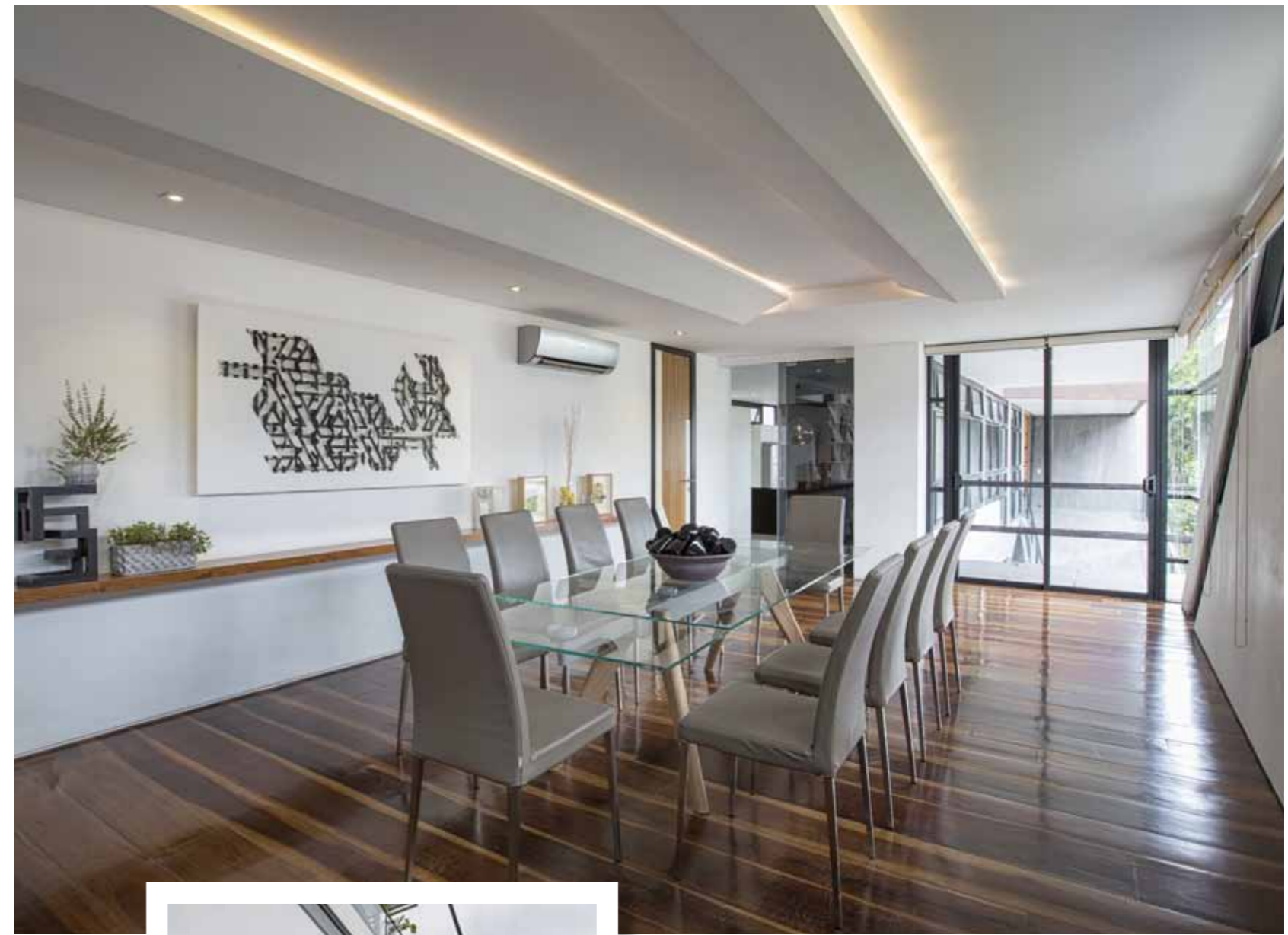
# A Play on Volume

*Carlo Calma cleverly converts a property's constraints into a unique design opportunity, creating a modern yet cosy home for a young family, writes MJ Jose*

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**A PLACE CALLED HOME**  
*The open floor plan gives this home a bright, inviting feel*

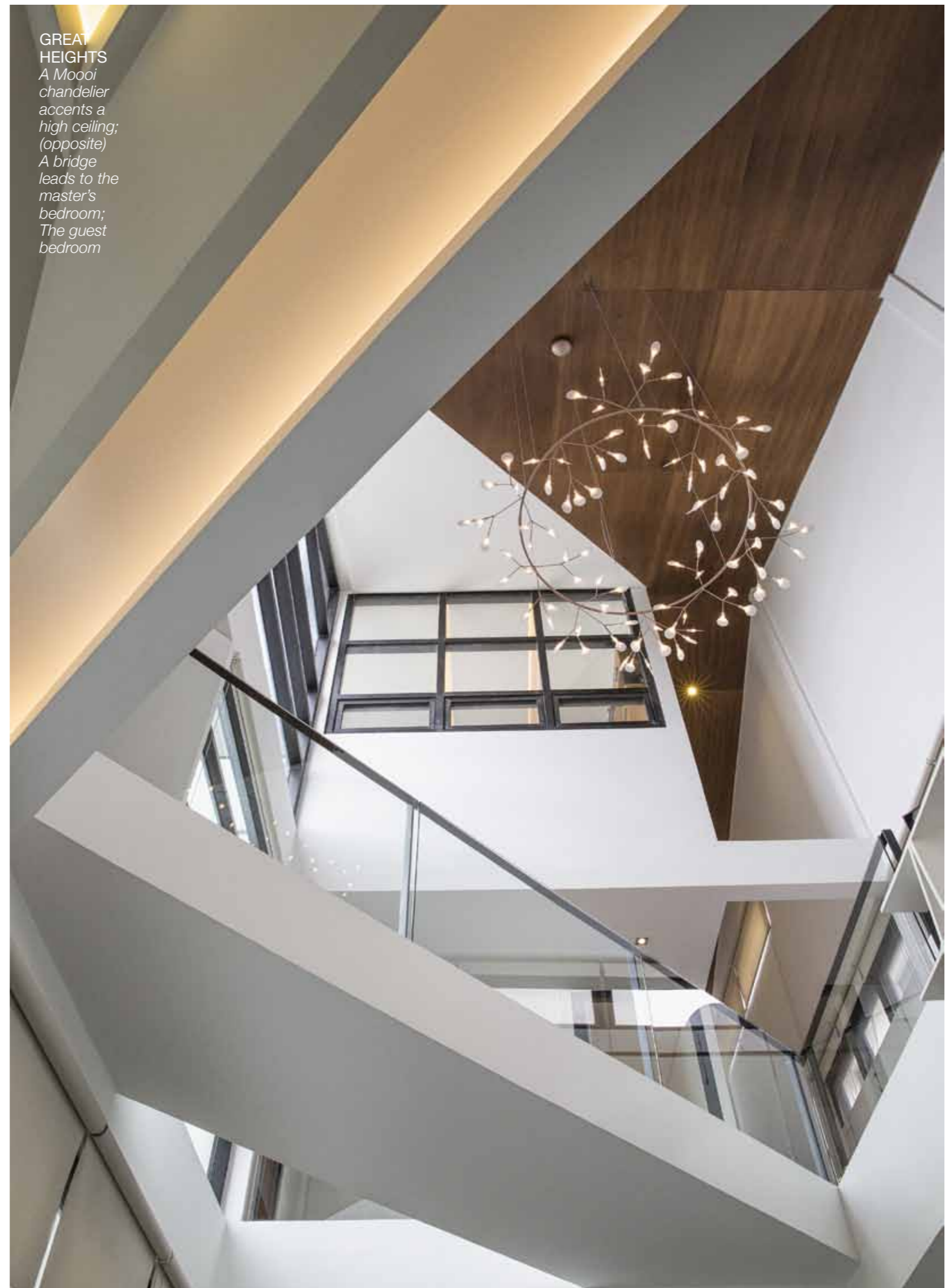


**T**ake a request for modern structure with free rein for artist-architect and Generation T alumnus Carlo Calma to experiment, and you may very well have

the makings of an elegant, out-of-the-box dream house. Dubbed by its creator as the “Envelope House,” this McKinley Hill project paints a striking picture, spanning two lots with a long frontage. Home to a couple and their five small children, the structure bears a resemblance to a plane just about to take off—a nod to the man of the house, who is an airline pilot.

The façade is made of Laminam ceramic slabs—the thinnest and lightest architectural skin in the market—from Italy in a corten steel colour, representing the wood Feng Shui element as a nod of respect to the couple’s beliefs. Calma also made use of moss green shingles on the exterior to add to the continuity concept, blurring the boundary

**STARK SPARK**  
*The elevated dining space; (inset) The exterior features a pocket garden; (opposite) A bespoke bar defines the kitchen area*



GREAT HEIGHTS  
A Moooi chandelier accents a high ceiling; (opposite) A bridge leads to the master's bedroom; The guest bedroom



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between floor, wall, and roof. Another area of note is the position of the master's bedroom, which juts out slightly from the main structure, facing eastward. Below the ramp that allows one access to the main entrance is a minimalist pocket garden, featuring a mix of volcanic rocks and stone blocks, and two circular koi ponds.

"I made it a point to utilise to the design's advantage by constructing a ramp that leads up to the front door, injecting a bit of dramatic flair," says Calma. "The village has a ruling that homeowners' roofs have to be at a certain angle—about 15 to 35 degrees—so I used that very constraint as one of my design parameters. If you follow the ramp, it continues upward, wrapping around the roof all the way to the other side like a band. The core concept really is playing on the volume of the structure by

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Large wooden double doors mounted with steel arrowheads lead to an open-plan living and kitchen area. A glance up reveals the high ceiling, from which a whimsical chandelier from Moooi drops, highlighting the geometry of the structure. Décor in the living room is kept to a minimum (the lady of the house good-naturedly points out that it is a challenge to have decorative pieces on display with young children running around), but this does not detract from the cosy feel of the set-up. The blue green Ploum sofa by



**IN THE DETAILS**  
(Clockwise from left)  
A geometric instalment marries both form and function; The pocket garden; An open air balcony dining space; (opposite) The front door; Shelves are lined with ceramic figures from Calma's factory

R & E Bourollec for Ligne Roset, known as a seat that provides optimum comfort, brings a welcome pop of colour to the space. Serving as a perfect accent is a Moooi carpet and a white centrepiece table. Two side chairs and a black Nemo Armchair from Driade—one of Calma's favourite pieces—provide additional seating. A focal point of interest is the pig from Moooi, which serves as both a side table and a conversation piece. While the glass windows allow for plenty of natural light, alcove lighting through geometric recesses in the ceiling illuminates the area in the evenings.

White wooden bookshelves play host to winsome ceramic cacti and birds from the Calma family's factory. The shelving unit flanking the teak wood staircase was a later

addition at the request of the homeowners, who were looking for an additional safeguard for their children. True to Calma's design principles, the piece marries form and function.

The kitchen is stark and spacious, equipped with built-in countertops and storage spaces, and chairs and a pendant light from Kartell. The island-cum-bar is a Calma design that was realised by a local supplier. Separated from the main area by a glass door, the dining area is slightly elevated and furnished with chairs and a glass top table from Bo Concept. The highlight in this space is Calma's bespoke art piece, which adds an edgy touch.

The master's bedroom, home office, and a small storage area occupy the second

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level. The bedroom is accessible through an elevated walkway, a design aspect that Calma employs to cut through space and add dimension. Never one to skip out on even the smallest detail, he designed the doors in such a way that they seamlessly blend in with the space.

On the third floor is an open-air balcony, where the homeowners like to entertain their guests. Recessed lights and stones under glass panels on the floor and an industrial dining set crafted by local artisans set the mood for a relaxed, intimate gathering. Two additional bedrooms can be accessed through this area.

Calma's penchant for exploring continuity trickles into the bedrooms, where, in the guest room, for example, a ledge runs all the way across the top of the bed to a storage nook. The mirrors above the headboard add dimension to the room, giving the illusion of a larger space.

The structure is distinctly Carlo Calma. He took the opportunity to create a concept that is both grand and unique, making use of what was, in essence, a constraint that could have hampered the design. The end result is a masterpiece that marries a seamless flow with a play on geometry and volume—two of the many elements that make a space characteristically his. It has become a perfect fit for the family, who has been in residence for a year now. To the owners and their growing brood, this is home. 📍

TWILIGHT ZONE  
*The house paints a striking picture by evening*

