

# A House Named Macadia

A homeowner chats with *Astra C Alegre* about how she found the perfect place for her small family

**H**ER TWO SONS had lived in a condominium in San Juan all their lives, so when the homeowner brought up the idea of moving, one of her sons said he wanted to live in a new area while the other wanted to experience living in a house. She recalls, “McKinley Village was one of my choices due to its proximity to the Fort—a community I enjoy. I liked the charm of the village, which reminded me a bit of San Francisco, and the proximity to dining and convenience establishments. Its easy access to C5 was also a big plus.”

She was going around the village with a friend when they saw a house for sale. “It wasn’t too modern, had style, and we were pleasantly surprised at how spacious it was when we entered,” she recalls. They took note of the architect’s name written on a placard, and it happened to be Robert Lilles.

The lots in McKinley Hills have an average size of 200 square metres and allows four-storey homes with a maximum height of 13 metres. Architect Lilles relates, “The owner was lucky enough to get one of the bigger lots fronting three streets. We wanted it to look like no other house in the village. The owner had her own ideas of what she wanted. We looked at houses and agreed on a particular look that will hide the fact that it is actually four storeys. The house has a more traditional contemporary



Photography: TOTO LABRADOR

**THE CORNER SPOT**  
This four-storey house is located in a corner, making it appear larger than it seems

look, with a limited lot and floor area, we were still able to make both the lot and house look much bigger than it is, with a 360-degree view on the fourth level. We maximised every square metre." He adds, "The owner had a timetable. Planning took just one month. We were groundbreaking on the second month and the house was finished in twelve months!"

Interior designer Rachel Le Roux, together with her team from Imagimax, also created several custom pieces to help the homeowner's vision come to life. "The custom-made wood wall in the living room, which is one of my favourite features in the house, was actually conceptualised by Rachel," the homeowner says. "She collaborated with Jerome, who is a French furniture maker. It took some back-and-forth of sample prototypes before it got approved." Right in the middle of living room is a custom-made acacia wood table also from Imagimax. "We decided earlier on to have a natural wood coffee table. The whole table with the metal legs was designed by Rachel and Miko de los Reyes. It was revised as the first delivery was too tall!"

Just across the living room, separated by a glass sliding door is the patio. It has a dining table, a chair with a foot stool, and a custom-made swing. The homeowner relates, "One of my first requirements for the house was that it should have a swing. I submitted several pegs and one of them was of a sofa swing. However, my peg was quite 'country' looking, which didn't go with our theme. Rachel saw another photo that contemporised the swing. It is pretty much how it looks now. Jerome, who made the wood wall in the living room, thought of the hardware and how to attach the ropes at the sides. The proportions were passed back and forth until we got the look we wanted."

The patio is one of the homeowner's favourite spots in the house. "I like being in the patio where I can be on the swing and hear the water in the pond, the wind chime, and the birds, and see the



*"The custom-made wood wall in the living room is one of my favourite features in the house," the homeowner says*

calming interiors of the house as well as the garden greens."

On the other side of the patio is another sliding glass, which leads to the open kitchen. Across the kitchen is the dining room. One can't help but notice the unique dining table. The homeowner explains, "The custom-made dining table was a challenge for us. I wanted a glass top table with artistic, natural wooden legs so the

**WOOD ELEMENTS**

The living room; A custom-made acacia table; The entertainment centre





**LIGHT AND AIRY**  
*The dining room with the custom-made table; (top) The homeowner's bedroom and bathroom is one of her favourite spots in the house*

room will not look too heavy. The first execution was a cluster of wood stumps—but there was a challenge of putting the stumps together. It didn't look good at all. This S-shaped design from Imagimax was inspired from one of the pegs I submitted.”

As you look up, you will see another interesting detail in the dining room. The homeowner says, “The wood beams are a design element from one of my pegs and

which Imagimax incorporated in the design. The idea is to be a bit rustic and ‘natural’ so the wood beams we sourced are from old houses and used Meralco posts. It wasn't finished smooth on purpose and we made the colour as close to the original as possible.”

The homeowner's love for nature is apparent throughout the house. She says, “I love wood and greens! I love wood that has nice grain and a play of colours. I do not like red tones though—I prefer walnut or natural colours. This was a challenge with the narra staircase as the natural colour of narra is reddish. We had to stain it well. I like unusual plants. With the landscaper, I specified that I don't like the over-manicured look. Although I like order in the garden, I don't like plants to be constricted so much. I wanted a ‘free’ look.”

Between the living room and the dining room is a short narrow hall leading to the third floor. A Sanso painting hangs



**A RELAXING HAVEN** *The patio, with the custom-made swing set, is another one of the homeowner's favourite spots in the house; (opposite) A view of the garden with the fish pond*

on the wall, a gift from her mum. “She bought it 25 years ago, and at first, it was not signed,” the homeowner recalls. “The gallery told her that she could bring it back for signing as Sanso was travelling then. Mum never got around to having it signed, although the painting came with genuine documentation. The painting was put aside after some years as my mum redecorated and the painting no longer fit the new look of her condo. She remembered the painting when she saw me looking at a coffee table book about Sanso, and gave it to me as a gift. It was fortunate that someone referred me to the owner of the gallery the painting came from and it finally got signed by Sanso!”

The third floor is where the rooms of the two boys, aged 18 and 20, are located. It also has the homeowner's bedroom and bathroom, which happens to be another one of her favourite spots in the house.

The fourth floor is dedicated to the boys' entertainment centre. The homeowner says, “My sons definitely had some requests. They actually wanted a table tennis table but it wouldn't fit anymore. They wanted space for their friends who stay overnight, tables for laptops, a big TV set for video games, and a mini bar for snacks. I made

the gym a requirement when the house was being designed, and making it adjunct to the ‘man cave’ was just brilliant.”

The house has received a lot of compliments. A priest told the homeowner he liked the calming energy of the place. “It's the openness, the modern yet homey appeal,” the homeowner says. “The most frequent compliment though is that the house looks so much bigger than it really is—they all say excellent space planning and space distribution. Recently, someone said that it is scaled to human living.”

Some of the homeowner's favourite events that took place in the house was when she had her siblings from abroad stay with her and they had a special dinner with family and friends. The adults would then be usually in the dining/open kitchen area while the children would be in the patio. They would then come together in the living room for some live entertainment. She adds, “I also enjoy it when I see my boys are enjoying their ‘man cave’ with their friends.”

The homeowner says she wouldn't change anything in the house, which she named Macadia. “To me, Macadia is a retreat, a sanctuary, a place of soothing energy. It is inviting, welcoming, refreshing.”