



BY ALYSSA J. OON

WE'VE just stepped into the new year and what better time than now, to take a look at what will be the in thing in interior design and home decor according to experts and authorities in the industry. From colours to statement pieces and styles, it looks as though homeowners will have a whale of a time where home decor and furnishing are concerned.

COLOURS

Beginning with the most highly anticipated announcement especially to those in the "artistic" and "creative" fields, Pantone Colour of the Year, *Pantone Colour Institute*, the highly regarded international institution pronounced a blue-based purple "Ultra Violet" as the trending colour for 2018. Ultra Violet apparently "takes our awareness and potential to a higher level," says Pantone Colour Institute vice-president Laurie Pressman.

In the announcement, Pantone representatives claimed that Ultra Violet symbolises experimentation and represents non-conformity, spurring individuals to "imagine their unique mark on the world, and push boundaries through creative outlets".

Speaking to Los Angeles Times, *Lamps Plus* trends and interior design producer Michael Murphy said, "Having its root in two colours (red and blue), it is a colour of inclusion." Murphy advised homeowners to pair the colour with Pantone colours "Lemon Zest", "Monaco Blue", "Hemlock" and/or "Poppy Red".

For those unaccustomed to striking colours, Ultra Violet might be a little overwhelming and bold. Hence, it is advisable that the colour is introduced in the home through accents (*main pix*). It can be as simple as placing stalks of lavender in glass vases or a rug with threads of violet.

For HGTV *Home* creative director Nancy Fire, Ultra Violet "works well as an accent pillow, wallpaper geometric combined with grey, and of course, a regal paint colour that plays well with grey, loden green and many neutrals". *Jotun Global* on the other hand, released three colour themes as its "Jotun Global Colour Trends 2018". The shades are called City Motions, Silent Serenity and Lush Garden.

"Our research identified three trends that are common to inhabitants of every global city - our longing for the restorative power of nature; our dream of a calmer, slower-paced way of life in the sun; and our desire to make the most of our increasingly compact urban living spaces in minimalist but



PHOTO: WWW.APARTMENTTHERAPY.COM

creative ways," shared Jotun Global colour manager Lisbeth Larsen. These themes were curated to reflect both, the realities of modern living and inspire the imagination, which tends to allow homeowners to create and capture a distinct temperature, feeling and atmosphere that best reflects reality and creativity.

City Motions is reflective of the creative culture of the modern metropolis. With its deep blues, marble greys and woody browns, it is the theme for the design-conscious urbanite who wants to transform a compact living space to represent cool, clean lines and understated elegance. Blues create a calming effect, which is needed to survive the urban jungle, and when paired with materials such as wool, linen, leather, velvet, stone and ceramics, the combination creates a relaxed, down-to-earth style.

Inspired by the travels of the global nomad and multicultural lifestyles, Silent Serenity is used to create a peaceful and relaxed atmosphere with soothing creams, desert browns and muted peaches. Cultural pieces such as old pots, iron, baskets, ceramics and handcrafted pieces in natural materials (think stone, natural leather and terracotta) complement the colour theme.

Lastly, Jotun Global may have taken a leaf out of Pantone's Colour of the Year for 2017 for its Lush Garden theme. The colour configuration, which is actually inspired by the natural habitats of our very own country and neighbouring Vietnam, uses blue-greens, golden yellow and red browns. It expresses a playful combination of hues that correspond with modern interiors. Style the room with a fun mix of colours, huge plants, bright flowers, ethnic and vintage objects, and natural materials like linen, silks, baskets and ceramics.

DECOR AND DESIGN

Backed by global data, *Pinterest* identified its interior design trends in its annual "Pinterest 100" report. Here is what "it" says:

Homeowners are wising up and choosing "sage" as the new neutral (+170%). The warm shade is perfect for rooms looking for a tranquil and relaxing atmosphere. Many agreed to pair sage with cream and grey furniture and textiles, or take it to the next level by mixing metal accents such as bronze and brass (+423%).

The new year is also about making a statement in one's home. Wall art (+637%) such as large posters and works of art and

Year of statements

> A peek into what will be trending in 2018



PHOTO: HISUGARPLUM.COM



PHOTO: HTTP://THEDESIGNFILES.NET



PHOTO: C. JOTUN GLOBAL

photography prints are blowing up, as homeowners move towards giving rooms a personality.

Similarly, the ceiling, also known as the "fifth wall", gets the accent treatment (+310%), as it gets drenched in bold paint, given a striking wallpaper or carved with intricate textures. The humble front door gets some extra attention this year, as budding interior designers look for ways and means to make the main entrance more welcoming for guests by painting it in bright shades or simply laying out a welcome mat (+121%).

Unsurprisingly, the ever versatile herringbone pattern (+131%) remains popular with homeowners; used to dress up bathroom walls and living room wooden floors.

What d'you know? Maximalism, as opposed to minimalism, is on the rise as well, and seen in the surge of searches for bone inlay (+207%) patterns. It is a popular choice for accent pieces, such as a chest of drawers or a side table. Terrazzo (+316%), a blast from the past, has homeowners bringing dizzying terrazzo configurations and designs into kitchen backsplashes, shower areas, as well as kitchen counters.



PHOTO: HISUGARPLUM.COM



PHOTO: WWW.ANTHROPOLOGIE.COM

As the "hygge" movement grows, it is no surprise that more people are learning to implement self-care into their daily lives. Finding a moment to "pause" during the day in city living, homeowners are turning their bathrooms into mini spas (+269%), complete with rattan furniture for that "vacay vibe". Complete the look with patterned and purposeful houseplants (+533%) to purify the air and rest the eyes.

Looking at what's trending, it seems like 2018 will be all about

expressing oneself through statement pieces, at the same time, creating a home one can take respite in, to relax and rejuvenate. Whether homeowners follow the trend or not, these are really just views and suggestions - what's popular with the masses. Our take: experiment to find out what suits you and your household, and be happy!

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■ STRATA SERIES

Strata intelligence

> Important information pertaining strata-type property

CONTINUING from our series of features on strata-titled property, previously on Dec 29, this week we feature a pictorial and point-form article highlighting important information on management bodies, the strata management tribunal and the commissioner of buildings, as well as their roles and responsibilities.

MANAGEMENT BODIES

The main purpose of setting up a "management body" (MB) is to "maintain and manage the building or land intended for subdivision into parcels, common property and such other related matters".

The different MBs established during various phases/periods of "completion" of the strata property can be further divided into two categories:

- 1) When the vacant possession of parcels are delivered to the strata owners BEFORE the issuance of the strata titles.
- 2) When the vacant possession of parcels are delivered to the strata owners AFTER the issuance of the strata titles.

FEATURES OF EACH MANAGEMENT BODY POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE MB

The VITAL ROLE of an MB is to control, maintain and manage the common property for the benefit, comfort and enjoyment of the strata owners, including its occupants. These no doubt gives the MB authority, but that which comes with responsibilities.

Below are SOME of the powers and duties of the MB:

- 1) Determine and impose charges commonly known as "service charges or maintenance charges";
- 2) Determine and impose sinking fund contributions, which serve as a kind of reserved fund, usually 10% of the rate of service/maintenance charges;
- 3) Setting up and upkeeping the maintenance and sinking fund accounts; maintaining proper records and annual auditing, statements, filing, and providing financial statements and info to the strata owners, etc;
- 4) To insure building under a damage policy via a licensed insurer;
- 5) To set up a proper administration office within the common property;
- 6) To comply with notices or orders issued by authorities pertaining the common property, the strata owners' parcels, etc;
- 7) To enforce by-laws and additional by-laws - fines and such, where monies collected are deposited into the maintenance

Management Body	Developer	Joint Management Body	Management Corporation	Subsidiary Management Corporation
Establishment	Incorporated under the Companies Act 1965 (under the presumption that the Developer is a local incorporated company)	Upon the convening of the 1st AGM under Section 17 of the Strata Management Act 2013	Upon the opening of book of strata register under Section 17 of Strata Titles Act 1985	Upon issuance of a certificate of its establishment by the Director of Land and Mines under Section 17A(5) of Strata Titles Act 1985
Commencement of Strata Management Operation	Upon delivery of vacant possession of parcel to the Strata Owners	Upon the convening of the 1st AGM	Upon the convening of the 1st AGM	Upon the convening of the 1st AGM
Legal Entity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having perpetual succession • Having a common seal • May sue and be sued in its name 		
Members	Shareholders	Developer and all Strata Owners	All Proprietors	All Proprietors who enjoy the exclusive benefit of the designated Limited Common Property

COMMISSIONER OF BUILDINGS

Otherwise known as COB, the "position" can only be taken up by an authority employed by a district city council office e.g. MPSJ, MBPJ, DBKL, etc.

Below are SOME of the powers and duties of the COB:

- 1) To enforce the provisions of SMA including all rules and regulations promulgated there under;
- 2) To act as "trustee" for the Common Property Defect Account;
- 3) To appoint a managing agent if in any case all Strata Owners refuse to become members of Committee or the MB fails to carry out its duties to the satisfaction of the COB;
- 4) To assist/direct the MB - in convening meetings, in exercising its duties and powers in accordance to the SMA, in imposing and reviewing the Charges, and reviewing decisions; and
- 5) To issue warrant of attachment, if required, with the aid of the MB or police personnel, and supervise the auction for recovery of sums vide warrant of attachment.

[All information and charts are retrieved from Owner's Manual & Guidebook by Chris Tan.]

Follow our final part of the series next week on frequently asked questions on strata-type property and advice from Chris Tan himself on certain issues.

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- 8) In statutory presumption cases where leakage and damage to "inter-floor" and/or "party wall" originates from the upper floor parcel (unless the upper floor strata owner can prove otherwise) - the MB has to carry out an inspection within seven days from receiving the "notice/complaint", determine the cause, determine the party responsible to rectify the defect, to issue a certificate of inspection "Form 28", to carry out and expenses from responsible party in the event the responsible party fails to rectify the "problem" within seven days from the date on the Form 28.

[Refer to Chris Tan's Owner's Manual & Guidebook for the complete list of MB's powers and duties.]

STRATA MANAGEMENT TRIBUNAL

A tribunal is established under the Strata Management Act (SMA). Called the Strata Management Tribunal (SMT) - it is established mainly to settle disputes in relation to strata management issues, in a more expedient manner and via minimal costs.

Who can be members of this Tribunal?

They must be appointed by the minister of urban wellbeing, housing and local government.

The position of the chairman and his deputy can only be occupied by members of the Judicial and Legal Services. A minimum of 20 additional regular members must comprise those in the Judicial and Legal Service, including lawyers with more than seven years of experience in practice.

The SMT only takes up issues related to strata management. Claims and disputes sought cannot amount more than RM250,000.

There is also no jurisdiction to hear claims pertaining land title, or estate or interest in land, or any franchise, which is in question.

Some of the more common disputes the SMT resolves include those regarding outstanding service charges, unsatisfactory management, defect rectification by the developer, disputes among strata owners on leakage issues, rejected renovation plans, etc.

Claims must be filed with the "Tribunal Perumahan dan Pengurusan Strata", regardless of the location of the parcel concerned.

Offices are located in Putrajaya, Penang, Johor Baru and Kuala Terengganu.



STRATA MANAGEMENT BOOST

... The Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Act 1981 has been amended has been gazetted on Jan 2, 2018 as Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents and Property Managers Act, 1981 following amendment to Act 242. This led to the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry launching the 'Register of Property Managers'. With this register, strata-property owners can rely on 'professional, well-informed and capable' registered property managers to address their grievances and find solutions to strata-property issues in a proper, lawful and hopefully faster time frame. The photograph features members of the Property Management Committee who will oversee the 'sanctioned/registered property managers', together with (from eighth, left) Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani, Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar and the Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents Malaysia president Nordin Daharom at the official launch of the Register. Follow our property article on Jan 26 for more exciting details.



■ STRATA SERIES

STRATA-TYPE property is and has been all the rage. It is also expected to be "the living model" if not already. Whether in cosmopolitan cities or suburban fringes, and as space becomes "in want" and prices hike, we feature our final article on strata-related property highlighting pertinent questions frequently asked to which Chris Tan (CT) gives input on.

Q: What should one look out for in the S&P before deciding on buying a particular strata-titled residential property?

CT: Buying a strata title property is not just buying a property but buying into a community living regulated by law. As a buyer, you are not only responsible for your very own unit but also the common property within the development too.

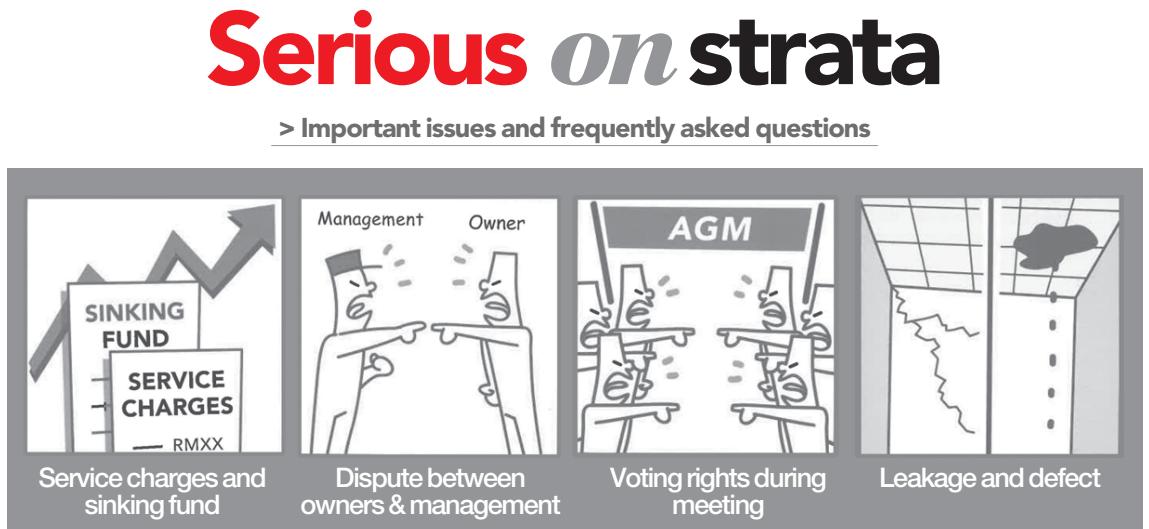
There is an ongoing obligation to pay the monthly service charges and sinking fund until the day you sell the same to another owner.

Besides the S&P Agreement, you are normally expected to sign the Deed of Mutual Covenants too, that regulates the relationship of the many owners within the same development with house rules vis-a-vis the prescribed by-laws under the Strata Management Act. In addition to the compliance with these rules, you are also expected to participate in the management of the common property at the Annual General Meeting as well as the Extraordinary General Meeting.

In the completion of the S&P Agreement, do ensure that the seller has no more outstanding charges and sinking funds owing the management and that the deposits paid are to be adjusted accordingly.

Q: Can you please explain further on 'share units' of strata-titled property? How does this affect a residential strata-titled property owner or what is the relation between the owner and the share units?

CT: Share unit has always been there in strata living as it will be stated in the strata title upon its issuance. It is now capturing the limelight, given that it is now the basis to be contributed into the maintenance charges and not the usual rate psf of the size of your main parcel. There are different 'weightages' for the main parcel, the accessory parcel and the type of usage to



Service charges and sinking fund

Dispute between owners & management

Voting rights during meeting

Leakage and defect

make up the various elements of the share unit. Suffice to say that two units of apartments of the exact same size might have different share unit allocation, if one has more accessory parcels than the other, or one is of commercial usage while the other is residential.

Q: What are some current and common issues faced by owners of strata-titled residential property and how would these be best settled?

CT: Issue 1: Contribution to service charges and sinking funds from the owners have always been done on the total size (in sf) of the main parcel. Under the new regime since June 2015, it should now be based on per share unit instead.

Share unit is a concept that takes into account the size and the usage (of different allocated weight) of both the main parcel as well as the accessory parcel. It's stated clearly in the strata title when it is issued. It is also the basis of voting by poll, if so requested in any General Meeting. Share unit is therefore now the basis of both contribution and control as opposed to just control in the past.

In theory, it should be a fair method for all. The issues are:

- Some strata owners find themselves paying more than before while some strata owners now pay less; and
- The Share unit allocation under the previous legal regime was a result of consultation and discretion and not as

transparently guided under the new law. It is a difficult process and to adjust the process again, particularly when the strata titles have been issued, will be tedious.

Issue No. 2: In Phased Development there is now a requirement to file the Schedule of Parcels (SOP) stating clearly the total share units to be offered under the entire development before one can proceed to sell. It therefore includes the later phases of a development that will only be developed in the future.

The issue is that this SOP can only be adjusted if we can get 100% of the owners to agree or it is a direction from the authority. There will be no flexibility accorded to the developer who might want to change the SOP for the feasibility or sustainability of the development, taking into account the new circumstances of the future, in the best interest of the entire development.

Another related issue would be on the contribution of the allocated share units by the developer for yet to be developed phase in the maintenance of the common property already built and delivered.

Q: Any other 'surprises' or areas of concern that many strata-titled residential property owners are unaware of until after purchase of such residents?

CT: Don't be surprised if the property does not come with an allotted car park, although it

is a norm to expect a car park to come with the unit. It is not always the case.

Q: Like many busy owners of a strata-titled property who do not have the time to sit in at resident's meetings with the management body - many have simply 'gone with the flow' of things as 'questions/disputes' require time for discussion. What would you recommend for busy individuals who have 'no time' to attend such meetings but can only look at the annual/bi-annual strata/building management statements/financial reports? What should one keep an eye out for in these financial statements? Why is it important to attend these meetings; what would owners be losing out on by not attending and being an 'active owner'?

CT: It is a regulated community living and participation is expected of every owner. Although many have chosen to be passive, you need to participate or run the risk of letting major decisions lay in the hands of the active few. You should keep an eye to ensure that the charges collected are well spent, that collection should always be



monitored and the performance of the appointed property manager.

Also, understand your rights and obligations as a strata owner is important, and ensure that you and your neighbours are equally aware of the same too.

Q: As a tenant, and not the owner of the 'parcel' - are they bound to all the By-laws?

CT: The by-laws, additional by-laws and amendment of such additional by-laws made by the Management Body shall not only bind the owners but also the tenants, chargees, lessees and occupiers.

Q: Any other important issues that you would like to highlight to readers of theSun?

CT: Moving forward, strata living will be the preferred way of community living. Take a keen interest to learn and understand this living model in order to get the most out of it.

There are many more frequently asked questions, especially on management bodies, by-laws and leakage and defects. Answers to these can be found in Chris Tan's *Owner's Manual & Guidebook*.

Follow our property column next Friday for more insights on the market in the local scene.

► Email your feedback and queries to: propertyqs@thesundaily.com



CALLED TO CARE AND SHARE ...

SkyWorld Development Group launched its #DaretoCare charity drive in December last year. To date, many have come on board in support of its undertaking. Recently, the Lions Club of Puchong made a contribution of 20 sets of school bags, each filled with a new pair of school shoes, socks and a pencil box. Members of the public who wish to make donations towards the charity drive can get details at www.skyworld.my/#daretoCare. The photograph features SkyWorld COO Lee Chee Seng (standing, centre) with Lions Club Puchong president Ling Sew Chin (standing, third left), together with personnel from the property firm, Lions Club and the media.