

pushing the envelope

PRIDE STUDIO MAKES A BIG SPLASH IN THE LOCAL INTERIOR DESIGN SCENE. NOW, IT'S READY TO TAKE ON OTHER REALMS OF DESIGN.



Mike Saw (left) and Patrick Chin, directors of Pride Studio opposite page
Pride Studio office in Sunway Mas.



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We met Patrick Chin and Mike Saw for the first time in September 2011 at The Jekyll & Hyde Project in Bangsar Shopping Centre. We were lured into the design shop by a most peculiar object sitting on a shelf in the display window – a standing soup ladle called Tate Otama. Designed by Mikiya Kobayashi and produced by Japanese design studio H Concept, the Red Dot Design Award-winning kitchen accessory has a flattened bottom that allows it to be easily accessible while in use. Other oddities in the shop include colourful animal-shaped rubber bands, door stoppers in the form of toothpaste tubes and tote bags that doubles as a stuffed rabbit when folded. The shop, while diminutive in terms of its floor space, packs a big punch when it comes to its design. The logo, with an image of a rabbit and a fox, was designed by Mike while the interior design Patrick, who lined the walls of the shop with

curved, undulating shelves that mimic the contours of a rabbit's burrow.

A visit to The Jekyll & Hyde Project can be likened to tumbling down a rabbit's hole, where a plethora of design wonders awaits. The shop offers products for the home that are imported primarily from Japan but a special collection of T-shirts, notebooks and wrapping papers from Pride Studio, the Project's parent company, is available, too. These vibrant designs are a reflection of the artistry of the multifaceted studio, whose services include creating brand identities, brochures, packaging and interior design. The studio believes that creativity has no boundaries and that its clients will benefit from its comprehensive package: not only do they need not liaise with multiple design firms, they are assured of design consistency. All design works are done by the studio's team of seven.

Before Pride was established in 2004, Patrick and Mike worked in

separate companies but collaborated often. "We are comfortable with each other and share the same vision. We decided to join forces," says Mike. "Our studio is small but it is a combination of two seemingly disparate trades." The duo brought in a friend Leonard Phang and officially set up Pride Studio in 2005. Leonard's wife also came onboard as the office administrator. At the beginning, the studio worked on residential projects it managed to get via recommendations from friends, family and satisfied clients. Later, it began designing commercial spaces such as restaurants, retail shops and recently boutique hotels. While the projects are getting bigger, the team remains small. "We are a 'boutique' design studio. We enjoy being small," says Patrick. "It's hard to be hands on when the company grows too big. Besides, the soul of the company will be lost and very often the sense of fulfilment, too, diminishes." >



1. Antoinette women's boutique in Starhill Gallery.
2. Apple Holiday headquarters.
3. Birdie paper knife from +d.
4. The Nest boutique hotel.
5. Leo men's boutique in Starhill Gallery.
6. The Jekyll & Hyde Project.
7. Tate Otama standing soup ladle.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY

Some of Pride's earliest projects are Pho Hoa Noodle Soup, Carlos Mexican Canteena and Pink Evil's Fashion Supermarket. The studio later took up more prominent ventures such as Leo and Antoinette, both fashion boutiques in Starhill Gallery, with the former winning an award given by the Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers (MIID).

Last year, the studio attracted rave reviews when it completed The Yard Boutique Hotel in Bukit Bintang. Nestled on one of the secluded lanes of Changkat Tung Shin, the run down building was transformed into a beautiful hotel with a Colonial twist. Colourful Peranakan tiles juxtapose against raw, concrete walls, creating an interesting mix of the old and the

new. Lanterns hang on the ficus tree in the courtyard, giving the public space a cosy, welcoming sense. The studio struck gold when it was hired to design another boutique hotel the same year called The Nest. Not only did the team give the old building on Jalan Ipoh a new lease of life, it was in charge of the hotel's branding. Pride walked away with another award from MIID.

The Nest is a prime example of Pride's ability of blending graphic design and interior design. Recently, the studio worked on a pizzeria called Pizza Plus where it designed not only the interior but the logo as well. At the restaurant, you'll find posters that explain the variety of pastas and pizza toppings designed by the studio. The team, however, does not stick to one





particular look. For the Apple Holiday office, Pride created a minimalistic yet comfortable environment, utilising archetypal Japanese elements in the design, complete with a tatami room. But Patrick uses a different approach when it comes to residential projects. "A home is not a showroom," he says. "A homeowner will incorporate his own touches as time goes by. This evolution is propelled by technology and experiences."

In 2010, Pride tried its hand at retail by opening a shop in Bangsar Shopping Centre called The Jekyll & Hyde Project. As mentioned earlier, the team was responsible for the branding and the interior design. The shop has attracted a strong following, mostly from consumers who favour practical everyday objects

with a design spin. "We underscore design," says Mike. "But these pieces are not overly quirky; they are very functional." Today, you'll find not only imported home accessories of high quality but also furniture, too. The studio plans to roll out more T-shirts, notebooks and wrapping papers in the near future and aims to become the leading distributor of Japanese brand +d by H Concept. The future is bright for Pride as it continues to push the design envelope. "We never restrict ourselves," says Mike. "We will explore other fields of design and strive to broaden our creative horizon." ●

To view more of Pride Studio's work, visit www.pridestudio.com.my.

