

# MY FAVOURITE THINGS

*Designer and real estate developer Carl Gouw talks about his garden sanctuary, London's diverse metropolis and the beauty of The Louvre*

BY NADINE BATEMEN

**C**arl Gouw is the managing director of the family-owned Goldig Investment Group and also founder and principal of the Acts Group. Gouw designed his first project at the age 18 and has since developed, co-designed and designed many projects—including four Acts Serviced Apartments in Hong Kong, the newly-opened FC Residence in Bali, and the transformation of his 35-year old family home. As a former director of Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design, a non-profit organisation, Gouw also helped Hong Kong University with “The Still Point”—a three-week project in September 2014 that combined exhibitions and performances on art, faith and humanity.

**Favourite area at home?**

A flat bed in the garden where I can have long naps while being wrapped around by plants, with the sound of birds and classical music in the backdrop.

**Favourite city?**

Hong Kong always comes first. Paris as its core oval is a piece of beautiful architecture that is available to everyone. London, for its cultural and heritage preservation as well as its constant innovations. The metropolis is both European and internationalised, and has diverse fabrics.

**Favourite hotel?**

I have been a fan of the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong (and the group) since I was a child. Without using cliché wordings like institution and legend, it is an assemblage of many different elements (sometimes awkward) accumulated both consciously and effortlessly over a long time.

**Favourite building?**

I M Pei's the Louvre, as it rigorously considers all of aesthetics, context, form and

programme. I am interested in both old and new buildings.

**Favourite artwork?**

Ju Ming for how he sees his own works and life. Francis Bacon as I wonder what was in his heart and mind when he came up with those faces. Also Chu Hing Wah, a painter from Hong Kong.

**Favourite restaurant?**

I am not a foodie but I love the China Club.

**Favourite bar?**

I don't particularly like noise and nightclubs. The Chinnery Bar is an unchanging corner. One could write a book or script there about a British taipan's affair with a Cantonese opera singer, the night before the Japanese invasion.

**Favourite book?**

*Poetics of Space*, as it depicts how the smallest bit of space can affect a person mystically. Also *Delirious New York*—a “must-have” for architects as it provokes thoughts about the relationships between urbanism and cultural contexts.



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(From top) The main outdoor area at FC Residence in Bali; Carl Gouw's favourite sanctuary at home is a flat bed in the garden; Gouw is the founder of Acts Group

Photographer: Wesley Lam of Acts Studio