

WHAT lies behind the design approaches and philosophies that guide international designers at work? How do they continuously find unique design solutions that exceed expectations in innovation and creativity?

The REKA Conference taking place on Saturday in Kuala Lumpur is Malaysia's inaugural international interior design conference and it features the theme "Design Diversity". Five award-winning designers from Australia, Britain, France, and Malaysia will be sharing their experiences and inspirations during the conference held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from 10am to 6pm.

The speakers are:

Vincent Koh of Environment Design Consultants, who are renowned for their hospitality, corporate and retail works. He has designed the interiors of the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Kuala Lumpur, Park Hyatt Saigon, and Sheraton Hotel and Spa at Nha Trang, Vietnam.

Dig into designers' minds

Here's a rare chance to hear expert designers share how they work.

Philippe Villeroux is a French designer with a penchant for overwater resorts and has designed over 40 resorts in remote locations with a strong emphasis on the natural environment.

William Harald-Wong is a Malaysian urban identity designer who works in the overlapping areas of brand vision, graphics, and Asian culture. He sits on the Regional Expert Panel for the prestigious Design for Asia Award, Hong Kong Design Centre and other advisory panels in Malaysia, China and India.

Jan van Schaik, the co-director of the Melbourne-based M&V Architects, has received numerous awards from the



Designing beauty: French designer Philippe Villeroux will share his approach to creating overwater resorts such as this project in Bora Bora, Nui.

Australian Institute of Architects for the Victorian College of the Arts Centre for Ideas, Southbank Health Centre, Healesville Sanctuary (2006), and Wattle Avenue House, Mildura (2012).

Martin Haeger, the director of HI Design, is a British architect who has been residing in Asia since 1990. He holds a post graduate degree in architecture from Edinburgh University and worked with the renowned Skidmore, Owings and Merrill firm in the United States before moving to Singapore. Haeger recently appeared as a judge on the first season of *The Apartment* interior design reality show.

The convener and moderator of the conference is Dr Tan Loke Mun, director of Archicentre and adjunct professor at Universiti Putra Malaysia; he is also a past president of the Malaysian Institute of Architects and a pioneer of the Malaysia Green Building Index, Malaysia's official green certification tool.

"This conference is most timely as we are celebrating 50 years of the interior design profession this year," says Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers (MIID) president Ronnie Choong.

"The conference will serve as a catalyst for a calendar of other design events that will lead to the grand finale when MIID will host the International Federation of Interior Designers' general assembly in Kuala Lumpur in May 2014."

Choong says that in his 30 years of practice – which has included a four-year stint serving as an executive board member of the International Federation of Interior Designers and Interior Architects – he has had many opportunities to participate in design conferences around the world and he has seen his field grow by leaps and bounds.

"Since our profession began back in the early 1970s, the number of professional interior designers has grown tremendously cumulating in the legislation of the profession in 2007," he explains.

"With the growing importance of the profession, there is a need to provide a platform for interior designers to be exposed to the creative thinking and design philosophies behind the minds of great interior designers and architects.

"The MIID council has always desired to hold such a conference beginning with our regular monthly Reka sessions where ideas are shared. These series of small but successful sessions gave us the confidence that our profession here in Malaysia is indeed ready for an international interior design conference."

"We welcome practising designers, students and anyone who is interested to learn more."

Registration is RM150 for MIID and PAM members, RM50 for students and RM200 for others. The registration form can be downloaded from www.miid.org.my or requested by e-mailing rekaconference2013@gmail.com.

– **Chin Mui Yoon**