

Dimensions

DESIGN FOR HOMES □ OFFICES □ PUBLIC PLACES

APRIL 1994 □ HK\$35



SPLIT PERSONALITIES

Tired of trekking up and down Lockhart Road and sifting through endless shop inventories in search of the perfect fittings and fixtures for your bathroom? Check out Designers' Gallery in Happy Valley, a showroom that lives up to its name, reports **Robi Gallardo**

Project: Designers' Gallery
Client: Harbour Building Material Supply Co Ltd
Design: Builtart Design Ltd
Designer: Lewis So
Ceiling: Jointool Design (Building Materials) Ltd
Flooring: Harbour Building Material Supply Co Ltd
Main contractor: Wing Kai Decoration Engineering
Area: 200 m²
Location: 57 Wong Nei Chong Road, Happy Valley
Photography: Clive Cheung, Foto Alfa Ltd

Streetfront view of Designers' Gallery, below, the duality of the shop established by the dividing faux column, itself half classic, half modern in treatment. Interestingly, *fung shui* requirements had specified a column or pillar to counter the presence of a street lamp immediately in front of the shop. View from the entry into the shop, right, with the area for the classic products on the left marked with display boxes recessed into the stuccoed wall and custom-made display stands ranged along the centre line. A muted study in greys, blacks and white, the right side holds contemporary products. Note the staggered configuration of the walls and the black and white tiling framing the sanitaryware.



It was a frustrating experience at first, designer Lewis So admits: seeking a design both suited to the site and for the display of the client's products. The challenge of dealing with a long, narrow showroom was compounded by the presence of structural columns right down the centre line of the space — not to mention a small corridor towards the rear which led into an additional space.

It was however, the products themselves — or rather the two overall categories into which they fell — which provided So with the inspiration he needed, and the final solution. Using the showroom's physical limitations to best advantage, the designer turned the interiors into a veritable gallery of sanitaryware and fixtures. Key to his concept was the separation of space, implemented through the structural columns which serve to divide the showroom into two distinct but complementary display areas — one set aside for classic pieces, the other for the modern hardware.

Marble mosaic floortiles and stucco walls round out the setting in which bathroom hardware of the classic tradition is displayed — like so much jewellery — in recessed, framed boxes along the wall and in display stands with pyramidal glass tops. On the opposite side, shades of grey, black and white set off an entirely different, and altogether contemporary ambiance. Displayed against a backdrop of staggered panels of stained dry cement substitute laid over a wood substrate, the fixtures and sanitaryware stand out against their black and white tile frame.

The dichotomy is further underscored by the two-tone treatment of the columns