



My Foundations: Soo Chan

Singaporean architect Soo K Chan, founder and principal of SCDA Architects, on the buildings that have inspired him



By Staff Writer

One of Asia's most acclaimed architects, Soo K. Chan studied at Yale. In 1995 he established the Singaporean-based SCDA Architects. Specialising in luxury residential and hotel projects, Chan recently received acclaim for Alila Villas Soori in Bali, a resort he designed and developed under his Soori brand. Completing in 2016 is the high-rise, Soori High Line, making Chan the only Singaporean architect owning, designing and developing in New York's iconic High Line Park.



"The piece of architecture that first impressed me as a boy was the clan house Khoo Kongsi, which is an Unesco world heritage site in Penang, Malaysia where I was born. All the members of the extended family lived within a courtyard compound of homes, with the ancestry temple being the centrepiece of the complex."



"Mies van der Rohe has inspired me throughout my career. His Barcelona Pavilion has taught me so much for its structural order, free flowing plans, precision in its details and the expression of materiality, it is a rational approach to design."



"If there was one structure I wish I'd designed it's The Pantheon in Rome. It's actually quite contemporary in its use of concrete, purity of form, structural integrity – and with the oculus on the roof allowing light and shadow to model the space."



"I really admire New York architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, particularly their Lincoln Center refurbishment."



"If I could choose any public space to add an extension to it would be Grand Central Station. This McKim, Mead and White structure is one of my favourite buildings in New York. It is a gateway building and one of the greatest civic buildings that every person in New York would have been familiar with and could call their own."



"Tadao Ando is another favourite and I love his masterpiece, the Ibaraki Kasugaoka Church of Light in Osaka."



"I particularly admire the Postal Savings Bank by Otto Wagner in Vienna. It sits on the threshold of classicism and modernity. The spatial organisation is classical, but the construction and technology is modern. Otto Wagner also designed the building holistically, including the furniture and mechanical outlets. I like the way the work was presented graphically as a composite piece of art."



"The piece of primitive architecture that most impresses me is Borobudur in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It's a massive stepped pyramid made from giant stone blocks and the levels rise up concentrically representing different stages of enlightenment."