

# Grand Plaza Parkroyal Penang

ARCHITECT

CHONG KUM KWAN & ASSOCIATES

REVIEW BY

AR AU TAI YEOW

When Ar. Chong Kok Choong of Chong Kum Kwan & Associates approached me to review the renovation of Parkroyal Penang, I was a bit hesitant. After all, what could possibly be done to the building – which is situated along the beachfront of Batu Ferringhi with an immaculately landscaped garden – designed by Leung Ching Fan & Partners (*Majalah Arkitek* Jan/Feb '93, pgs. 23-25) in the late '80s and completed in 1990.

I was, nevertheless, pleasantly surprised. The hotel, now renamed Grand Plaza Parkroyal Penang, had been transformed into a vibrant and fun resort while retaining the quiet serene landscape. This metamorphosis can be summed up in the word of Austin Powers – groovy.

The initial part of the project started with the identification of the revenue-generating spaces which were then rearranged in order of functional hierarchy. As such, the basement Borsalino discotheque which was one of the more popular nightspots in Penang around the 1980s, where yours truly previously gyrated to the disco beat was duly converted into an administrative space.

The hair salon was relocated from the basement to the ground floor to give it more visual exposure. Frankly, in all my years of going to the hotel, I did not realize it had a hair salon.

Tamarind Brasserie



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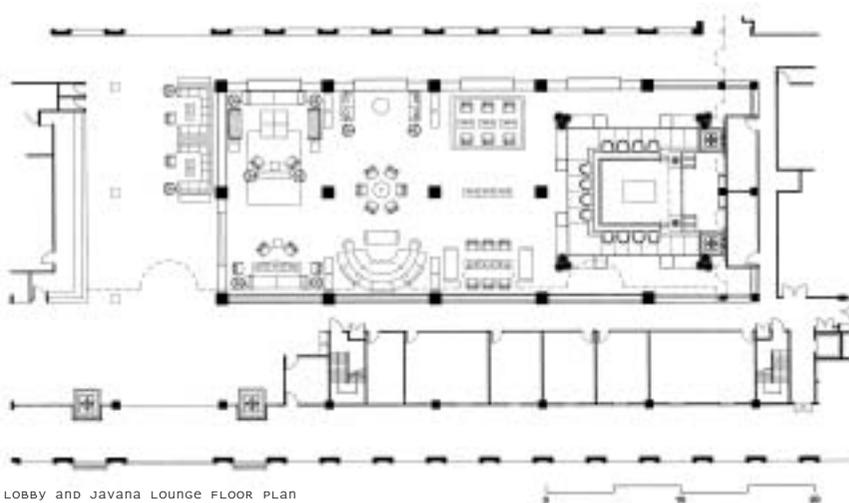
**ARTWORKS**  
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**GRAPHICS**  
Lin Keong

**LANDSCAPE**  
Pacific Nature Landscape

**PHOTOS**  
George Mitchell

- 1 Pool view
- 2 Premier room
- 3 Javana Lounge



LOBBY AND JAVANA LOUNGE FLOOR PLAN

Function rooms are now located on the first floor, overlooking the lobby. Guests using these facilities are now able to have a better view of the lush seafront landscape. The gymnasium was relocated from the basement to the first floor allowing hotel guests to have access to a private garden via the gym.

Upon arrival, guests are greeted by a "framed" view of the lush landscape through to the sea via a black granite portal where a pool bar had previously obstructed this view. The existing high arcaded verandah was retained to allow the natural flow of air into the ground floor spaces. The former Japanese restaurant that was sunken has been raised to be at the

same level as the cocktail lounge. In its place now is the new Javana Lounge with couches affording the guests a view of the skies through the skylight. The simple act of having the floor at the same level has made the whole place appear bigger. The earth-tone furniture interspersed with bamboo help accentuate the Zen-like atmosphere, blending the space with natural stone laid in a freeform manner on the ground floor.

The former pub has been changed to a family area called Cool Bananas with a reading lounge, PlayStations for children, and a pool table for young adults. The design incorporates the theme of cool colours and bananas throughout: from concept right down

to the details of seat cushions, lighting, artworks, signage and menu. The coffeehouse, renamed as the Tamarind Brasserie, has been rearranged with an open terrace seating for natural ventilation and an air-conditioned room for those who are more accustomed to mechanical cooling. It is a surreal experience to view the sunrise in the morning at the open-air timber platform, flanked with water features and sparrows darting about.

In the past, colours used in the hotel were quite controlled; now, bold hues are chosen to contrast the green foliage surrounding the resort. The original exterior colour scheme of light green has been repainted with dark orange at the base of the building,

arches, and verandahway. Beige is then used for the exterior of the guest rooms with side panels in ash orange. The use of timber is extended to the interior. The rooms on the second floor are more unique in that guests are able to walk out onto a roof garden.

It is good that the hotel management has maintained the existing landscape. The green swimming pool tiles have been replaced with playfully coloured tiles. Existing grey-coloured square pavement tiles were also changed to a more resort feel by having irregularly shaped natural tiles. 

AR. AU TAI YEOW IS CURRENTLY RUNNING HIS OWN PRACTICE, T. Y. AU ARCHITECT, IN PENANG. HE CAN BE CONTACTED AT 04-229 5133.



COOL Bananas FLOOR PLAN



COFFEE House FLOOR PLAN

