

# MEMO FROM KUALA LUMPUR: NEW BUILDS

Adele Chong | March 27, 2014 |



Previously under the radar, Kuala Lumpur's building scene has boomed in the last five years. While the bulk of recently realized or soon to be completed developments have encompassed residential blocks and mixed-use properties, small-scale projects by local boutique firms in less-centralised neighbourhoods are also steadily gaining traction. Yet, it's still hard not to wax lyrical about dramatic new downtown additions such as Starhill Gallery's freshly revamped facade by Singapore-based *Spark Architects*. Composed of folded glass and stone panels, the structure's wildly fragmented skin (inspired by "the succinct tailoring of Christian Lacroix's theatre costumes") serves as a sculptural new face for one of the city's swankiest shopping complexes, setting it apart from the run-of-the-mill malls that occupy the same bustling corner in Bukit Bintang.

PROJECT NAME	Starhill Gallery; Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur; Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral; Angkasa Raya
LOCATION	Kuala Lumpur

A brisk walk past Pavilion Shopping Centre through the connecting skybridge leads pedestrians directly to the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur on Jalan Pinang. Touted as the city's first international luxury hotel in nearly a decade when it opened in mid-2012, the 40-story edifice features a distinctive "upside-down hotel concept" by *Wimberly Allison Tong and Goo*—accessed with an express lift, a top floor lobby with panoramic views of the city makes a memorable first impression. The equally stirring facade, rendered in gold tinted glass and materials that draw on the stainless steel cladding of the nearby Petronas Towers, is aptly complemented by opulent interiors by *Bilkey Llinas Design*.

Travellers after a quirkier overnight experience should look no further than *Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral*. Decked out with pop-inspired artwork, a chic yet casual vibe prevails at this tech-forward 482-room offering by Starwood Hotels where vibrantly hued guestrooms are anything but understated.

A widely identified Malaysian icon, The Petronas Towers will soon be facing stiff competition in the form of Angkasa Raya, a new mixed-use development by *Buro Ole Scheeren*. A complex arrangement of horizontal volumes punctuated with lush green areas and open spaces, Scheeren's design—essentially a city within a building—will undoubtedly redefine the skyline upon its completion in 2016.