

Female At Home

House on a Kuala Lumpur

When the Conrad-Ebyefelds were househunting three years ago, they had quite a difficult choice to make—they had to choose between a modern house complete with a swimming pool and ample entertaining area and a rustic tropical home they used to dream about when they were in their native Austria.

They eventually settled for the latter, a two storey wooden house designed not unlike a *kampung* house but with modern architectural details. It's situated atop a hillock of Bukit Tim Ismail (formerly Kenny Hills) with an almost panoramic view of Kuala Lumpur.

It has many facets of tropical living at its best—wide verandahs that



give an airy feel to the house, verdant scenery, generous garden space and a terraced orchard.

The only snag was that the house had been deserted for quite a while because of some conditions that made the house rather difficult to rent out. For instance, at the bottom of the stairs was a mosaic pool with steps rising independently out of it, leading to the entrance of the house. Many who had come to look it over considered such an entrance dangerous not only for their children but also for themselves too.

The architect who designed and built the house for himself about 30 years ago had iron grills instead of solid walls for the living and dining area which face the city of Kuala Lumpur.

There was less need for privacy then as the area was less inhabited.



Today it still enjoys a fair amount of privacy though houses are now being built a little too close for comfort. When the architect and his family migrated to Australia, the house was let out to a bachelor who painted the inside of the house a dark brown making the three-bedroomed house appear smaller.

"We were attracted to the house when we first saw it though it was then in a really deplorable condition," said Christine Conrad-Ebyefelds who took some six months to spruce up and restore the house to liveable condition.

A trip to Sungei Buloh to buy \$200 worth of plants and flowers instant-

r Hillock



ly put the garden in a happy mood again. When the renovation work was completed, the house was quickly filled with the many lovely mementoes and antiques tthe Conrad-Ebyefelds had collected during their last posting in Columbia.

"When it came to the furniture, we deliberated whether to go for plush



1. The living-sitting room is bordered on two sides by a 10 feet wide verandah.

2. The sitting room with the skyline of KL in the background.

3. A section of the hallway is turned into a study.

4. A replica of a Colombian building houses a lamp in a corner.

5. A favourite memento of their stay in Columbia is this model of a public bus with the Conrad-Ebyefelds (right corner of bus) sitting on it made by an artist friend as a parting gift to them.



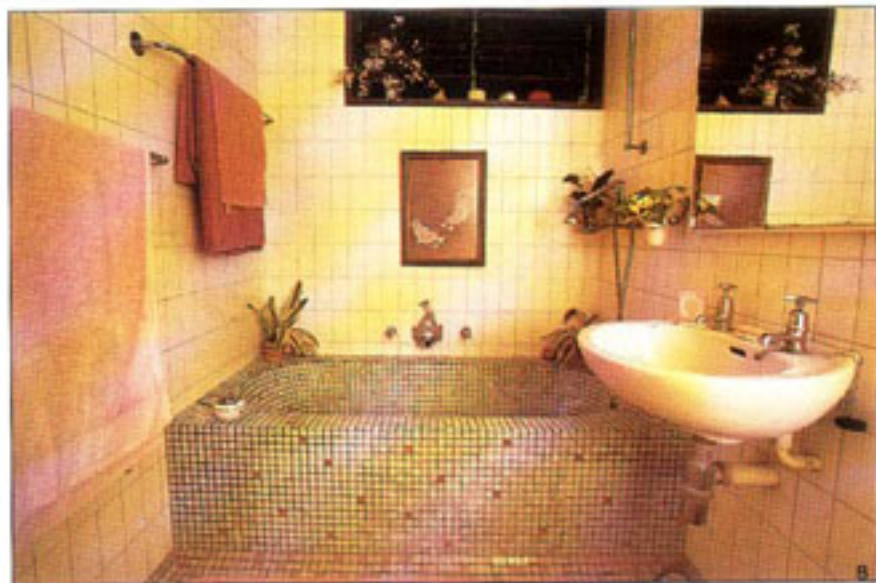




6. The dining room.

7. The daughter's bedroom.

8. The unusual bathtub made entirely of mosaic tiles.



leather sofas for comfort, or cane furniture. We decided on cane because we felt it was more suited to the climate and less expensive," said Bertrand who is the Assistant Austrian Trade Commissioner to Malaysia now.

The rustic house with its lush tropical vegetation that includes a durian tree (no, the Conrad-Ebyefelds have not taken a liking to the fruits yet) tumbling down a terraced garden still has that romantic hideaway air to it.

Said Christine, "The house has actually quite a romantic feel to it. The architect was courting his wife, an artist, at the time he was designing this house. That perhaps explains it."

"We've grown to love the house a lot and was quite relieved when the owner recently decided against selling it when he learned that the prospective buyer wanted to tear it down and build a six storey apartment."

"We've become quite used to the

house, the entrance, the dim interior, even the fittings in the bathroom which at first we found rather quaint. The bathtubs are made of mosaic probably because the architect couldn't get the tubs of the right size then to fit the space. I've found it to be just as comfortable as the ready made porcelain ones."

The best feature of the house, the Conrad-Ebyefelds insist, is still its open design which provides a constantly changing view: "We're aware of the minute by minute change of the weather and some sunsets are simply beautiful, especially when a shower leaves behind a reddened sky," said Christine.

"It brings us very close to nature," Bertrand says, something which he cannot say for his 50-room castle in Austria the walls of which have to be extra thick to fend off the winter cold.