



personal space |

White house

Pale orchids, frosted pine cones and silver accents form a merry mishmash of white that Daniel Yun, CEO of film company Homerun Asia, warms to. **By Audrey Phoon**



As Americans un-sheath their shovels to battle snowed-up driveways this winter, and wealthy Europeans sink their ski poles into the blanketed slopes of Switzerland and France, one Singaporean will join them in celebrating his version of a white Christmas.

Daniel Yun, chief executive officer of the film-making and distribution company Homerun Asia, has declared this season that "white is my new black" – and at his Thomson home, Yuletide touches in frosty shades of white and silver have been artfully worked into the existing East-West decor theme. "Every year my Christmas decorations have a different colour scheme, and this year I wanted something with a clean palette that matched the house," he says.

Visitors coming up the driveway of Yun's 3,000 sq ft double-storey corner terrace this month, then, will be greeted by a silver wreath hanging at the entrance above one of the film-maker's favourite furniture pieces, a colonial-style wooden bench with a rattan back and a cushioned white seat. ("It's usually inside, but I had to bring it out to make way for the Christmas tree," he says.)

Within the house, another wreath circling a trio of glass candlesticks makes a pretty centrepiece for a squat wooden Chinese-style table that has been painted

white, while a live Christmas tree – beribboned and bedecked in white, black and silver – stands under the staircase leading to the second level, its fragrant pine scent a sweet accompaniment to the jazzy Yuletide carols that are playing softly in the background.

Other seasonal touches include a wooden bowl of green apples and frosted pine cones on a display table, and a profusion of cream-coloured poinsettias in the living room that mirrors a vase of home-grown white orchids in the dining area. "If you mix and match well enough, even a white orchid can be Christmassy. That's what I like about Singapore, it's a mishmash of the East and the West," pronounces Yun.

Indeed, the film-maker has devoted his career to producing movies and TV shows that connect with a local audience, yet are transferable to a global stage – think *I Not Stupid, Under One Roof* and *Growing Up*. And it's clear that the decor of his home goes by that philosophy as well. Yun's living and dining areas serve as mini-galleries for his collection of Chinese contemporary artworks by artists from China and Singapore, which individually complement a marble-topped coffee-shop-style table here, or a set of vintage high-backed Raffles chairs there.

It all looks quite professionally put together but, in fact, the only help Yun engaged in doing up the house when he acquired it five years ago was a contractor and a fengshui master. "I knew exactly what I was going for, a retro classic look," he says. "Not retro fashionable or hip, mind you, just classic. I wanted people to



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Daniel Yun (above)



PHOTOS: YEN MENG JIIN

walk in and feel that this is a classic house from the 1960s or 1970s." And he managed to get it all done on something of a shoestring budget too, with the most costly item a 300-year-old stone Buddha acquired from a cousin "who runs a museum in China". "I just gave a token donation of \$5,000."

Yun is a firm believer in getting good things at a good price, be it antique statues or Christmas decorations ("I got six of these for \$4, and six of those for \$9," he tells us proudly, gesturing to some elegant baubles on the tree).

He takes it as a challenge, he says, because "anyone can go out and buy the nicest, most expensive things, but it's not easy to buy things that are unusual and not so expensive. My taste is very exacting, and I like to look for rare finds on a budget".

Yet, as prudent as he is with himself, the film-maker is generous when it comes to friends.

How else to explain a guest bedroom complete with loft area and rainforest-shower-equipped en-suite that is significantly larger than the host's own? That's what Yun has in his house, which he says he opens up to his visiting artist or movie-industry friends.

"They like it here because it's on the outskirts of Singapore and there's a maid and good local food around... it's quite a unique experience for them," he shares.

That generosity is displayed under his tree too, which is chock-a-block with prettily wrapped gifts for his friends. "I actually enjoy shopping for presents because I like the whole process of the joy of buying

and giving something that you think the other person would like," he says, adding that this year, most of what he's bought are DVDs; "movies I want my friends to watch".

Already, some of those recipients have begun pouring into his home to celebrate the Yuletide season; on Wednesday, the Homerun team had a Christmas party at Yun's home, and over the next few days friends and family will be hosted there too, to the tune of local delights hand-picked from around "this part of the world" – fish head curry from Ang Mo Kio, chicken rice from Toa Payoh and much more. "This is the de facto house where people come for parties," the film-maker says. "I love entertaining and I don't mind opening up my house to others."

Yun is not a Christian, but he considers Christmas special all the same. "I don't see it as a religious thing, but I do think that Christmas is a time when there's something magical in the air," he muses. "It's something that happens at the end of the year, a week before the New Year... you know, whatever happens during this period, it's already the end of the year. And whether it was a good year or a bad year, you need to count your blessings that you are still alive and healthy. When you do that, it means that you are thinking positively and you put all the things that are so-called not blessings into perspective."

There's a pause, and then he finishes: "I guess that's part of the reason why I want to make my house Christmassy. I want to bring the magic in." aphoon@sph.com.sg



HEARTH AND HOMERUN
Yun's classic retro house in Thomson has swathes of white, providing the perfect canvas for the film-maker's art pieces, furniture and festive embellishments

