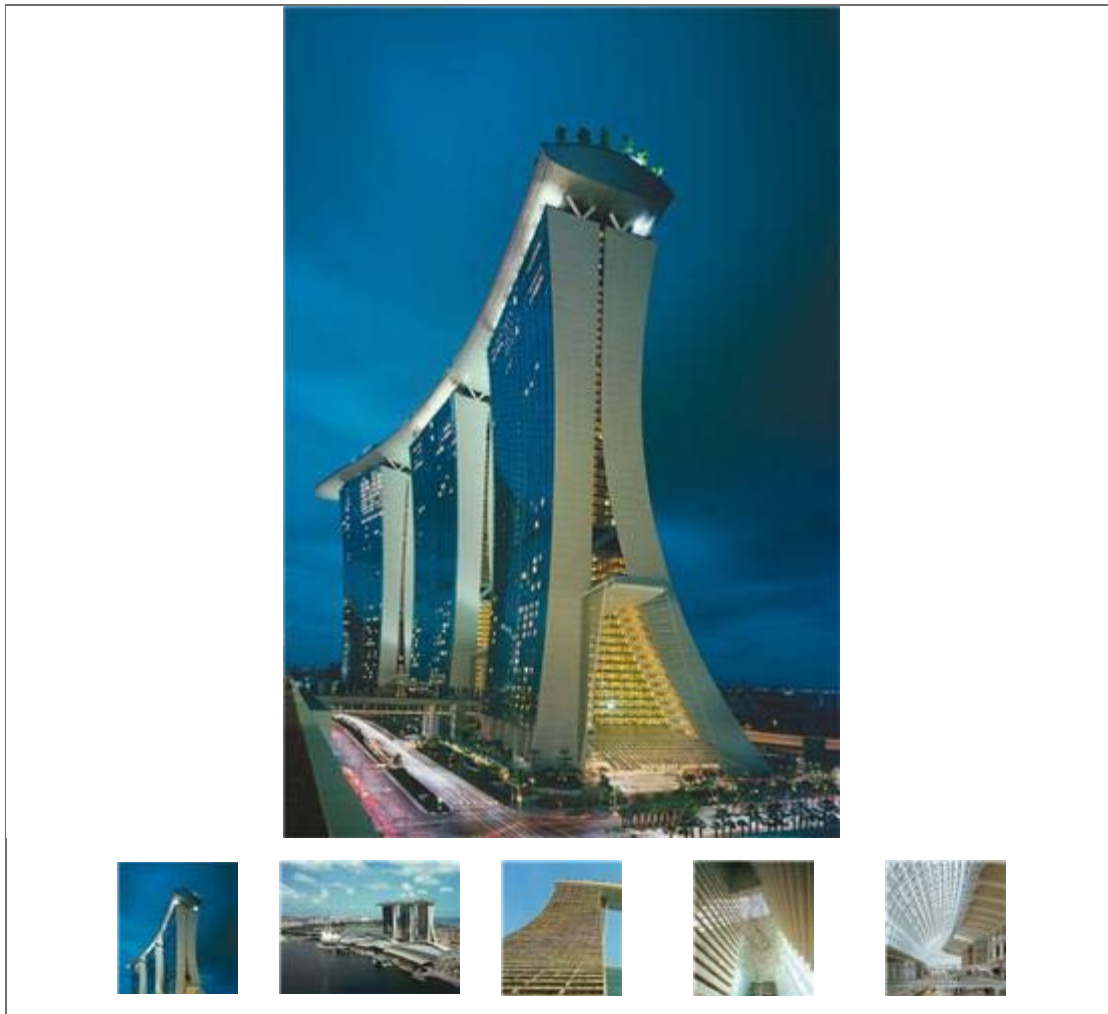


PRESIDENT*S DESIGN AWARD SINGAPORE 2011

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PRESIDENT'S DESIGN AWARD 2011

[DESIGN OF THE YEAR](#) | MARINA BAY SANDS INTEGRATED RESORT, SINGAPORE



Hear what the design team has to say about design [here](#).

The Marina Bay Sands (MBS) is a mix-used integrated resort across Singapore's Central Business District that brings together a 2,560-room hotel, convention centre, shopping and dining, two theatres, a museum and a casino. Safdie Architects was approached by Las Vegas Sands Corporation to come up with a design to help it win the bid to build the city's first integrated resort.

A major factor in the project selection for the competition was the design of the resort and the developer's capability, says Mr Moshe Safdie, lead designer and head of Safdie Architects. Moreover, there were very explicit terms on what the resort had to have, including a promenade, view corridors, and transportation connections. "We had this shopping list of objectives, but I knew that beyond that, they were looking for an architecture that was so strong and memorable that it would represent Singapore,"

says Mr Safdie. "It's like the Sydney Opera House, everybody says Australia when they see it."

In collaboration with Aedas, the executive architect of the project, Mr Safdie created the hotel as three 55-storey towers instead of just one, so as to open up views between the city's downtown and its harbour. On top of these towers, he placed the SkyPark, which celebrates the notion of the Garden City as a key feature of Singapore's urban design strategy. As a whole, Mr Safdie's design has led the MBS to become one of Singapore's architectural icons.

While the high-rise hotel towers and SkyPark made MBS an iconic architecture, Mr Safdie also humanised and made legible, such a mega-scale project. It is an important principle in his design philosophy. It was not a project requirement, but he decided to set the high-rise buildings back and away from the waterfront. He drew inspiration from ancient Roman cities that were ordered around a vital public thoroughfare — *the cardo maximus and decumanus*. The MBS is organised around such major urban spines, the centre of public, civic, cultural and commercial activities.

The resort's 74,000 square metres retail arcade, the ArtScience Museum, and the waterfront promenade are all integrated into this new urban place, a 21st-century *cardo maximus*, or Grand Arcade. From here (also integrated with the Bay Front promenades), a network of public paths also take you to MBS' two theatres, which have a total of 4,000 seats, a casino, a 9,000 square metres convention and exhibition centre, and a hydraulically adjustable public event piazza of 5,000 square metres.

"I felt the best scheme would be for all these low-rise programmes to be near the water, and the high-rise would be pushed far back to the other side," says Mr Safdie. "It makes it a much more humane place, not having the shadows of towers above you."

These design approaches have helped to make the MBS a popular destination in the city since it officially opened in early 2011. Not only tourists come, but also Singaporeans, notes Mr Safdie. While many regard this project as designing another integrated resort like those in Las Vegas and Macau, Mr Safdie begs to differ. With its variety of uses, including shopping, he sees the MBS as an urban centre for Singaporeans as much as it is for tourists. "Integrated resorts have been in towns with not much going there. In Las Vegas, everybody is a tourist, same in Macau, but that's not true in Singapore," he says. "With Marina Bay Sands, I wanted to create a mixing bowl between Singapore and the world, a place that Singaporeans and tourists alike would enjoy and be inspired by. It appears that the design has succeeded in achieving this objective."

"We are now basking in something that is very rare: an architectural success story that is also a commercial success story," adds Mr Safdie. "It doesn't come together very often."

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