

NAFA Alumni Cupid Series

Bouncing Fresh Ideas Together



Andre Tan and Fiona Lee

Diploma in Interior Design (2006/2007)

1. First things first, please share with us how did you meet?

F, A: Fiona used to have a crush on Andre, her senior, during schooldays at NAFA. They eventually linked up over social media after graduation and are happily married since 2016.

2. Tell us where your creativity has taken you since leaving NAFA?

F: I've had fun working alongside inspiring designers at reputable hospitality design firms such as Hirsch Bedner Associates and Wilson & Associates.

A: My background in FF&E (Furniture, fixtures, and equipment) allowed me to look at finer details and a heightened sensitivity to colour schematics, space and proportions.

F: Having majored in furniture design under leading designer Mr Patrick Chia helped me gain a good sense of balance in proportion and colours. This greatly helped with my mental visual planning skills, which in turn gave me an edge over peers while job hunting.

3. What's been the biggest highlight of your careers?

F: To step out of my comfort zone and start our own interior design practice - Colourpencils, together with my husband who is my best friend and working partner.

A: Now! I rejoined Robinsons to helm its Visual Merchandising (VM) department as head last year, a decade since my last position there as a VM coordinator.

This position allows me to guide my team, working alongside with them and giving them opportunities to present their creative ideas.

I strive to inspire and bring the team's ideas to reality in stores across Singapore and Malaysia.

I am thankful to be giving back to the company just like how my ex-boss gave me many opportunities a decade ago (at Robinsons).

4. Share with us what is it like to be in the same field as a couple?

F: It is definitely fun but crazy at times! We can get obsessed with ideas when we get on the same page.

We endlessly bounce ideas off each other as we inspire the other a lot. There are times we disagree, but eventually we come to agreement after a few cat fights.

A: It is amazing how we bounce ideas off each other! At times we have our disagreements over some design lingo, but I must say we are generally very alike and appreciate the clean lines in design!



From classmates to partners for life and their careers, Andre and Fiona are indeed living examples of the NAFA "happily ever after" story!





The couple's wedding shoot at the 3DD workshop at NAFA Campus 1



5. What do you miss most about your NAFA school days?

F: I miss our inspiring lecturers and design-centric classmates on campus.

A : Having time to work on projects and appreciating design with like-minded classmates!

6. What's the best advice you have received while studying in NAFA from your lecturers?

F: This goes to my lecturer, Mr. Kenneth Yeo, for emphasizing the importance of presentation skills.

A: I recall Mr. Edwin Chong telling me "if you accept the role of a drafter*, you will be one forever". This motivated me to aim higher throughout my life and I have always planned ahead in my career.

7. Graduation is round the corner, what are three essential soft skills that you think is essential to young aspiring designers entering the market soon?

F: Learn to be humble, have a positive mindset and always be ready to give your best.

A: Believe in yourself, have the self-awareness that you are good but still stay humble. Lastly, be open and adaptable to changes!