

HOME & DESIGN

A TIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION

VOLUME 9 NO 8

TRENDS

**ALSO
FEATURING**

Cutting Edge
Design Studio
for perfecting
the traditional
narrative

And...

AREP
Gracinha Viterbo
Mimari Studio
Nama Home
Nappa Dori
Story Architecture
Studio Motley
Suite N°8

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maintaining the balance while working with each other*

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Priyanka and Piyush Mehra,
PS Design
Image: Meetesh Taneja



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EDITOR'S NOTE



I've always marvelled at how homes, like the humans who inhabit them, have the innate ability to transform and evolve over time. And yet, when you look closely, you realise not much has changed after all – unless of course, there have been structural changes.

Thanks to the pandemic, almost every single one of us has initiated some change or other in the basic design of the way we live. While we're all aware of the changes on a larger macro level that society and public spaces across the globe have undergone, those in homes all over the world are a lot more personal. It's precisely these "bespoke" changes that I find most interesting about this entire period.

From our learnings, we realise that it doesn't stop at the home. Changes – big, monumental alterations as well as small strategic shifts – are being incorporated into almost every space that enjoys human engagement and inhabitation. Nothing is ever going to be the same. Not our homes, not offices, not schools and colleges and definitely not public spaces. Do you know why? Because spaces are all about the people they interact with. It's as simple as that.

Take rental homes, for instance. The same address, the exact same space, will look completely different with two different people living in it. And that's why I can and will never stop appreciating what our design fraternity does. In 2022, it will be our endeavour to bring to the world at large the incredible talent and skill of our very own Indian design industry.

More power to you all!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ronitaa' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ronitaa R. Italia
Editor in Chief

MEET THE JURY

TRENDS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2021 - DECADE SPECIAL



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PRESENTS

TRENDS

EXCELLENCE
AWARDS 2021

FOR ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

DECADE SPECIAL

DESIGN IN CONTEXT

*Products where design blurs the lines
between art and functionality*

Text **AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA**

SLENDER LIGHT

It functions like a candlestand but could easily pass off as art. Grande is a slender and almost art nouveau-inspired design from the house of Nappa Dori. Hold it around the curved handle or place it on the console table, this versatile design might be petite, but its three-candle nodes will ensure one's interiors are well-lit. ►



PERCH AND HOW

Designed to imitate the tank of the scuba diving apparatus, the Scuba End Table is curvy, cylindrical and classy. Brought to us by Nama Home, this structure is made from iron. Its minimal form will make a great addition to modern interiors or maximalist overtures as well. Find it at The House of Things. ►

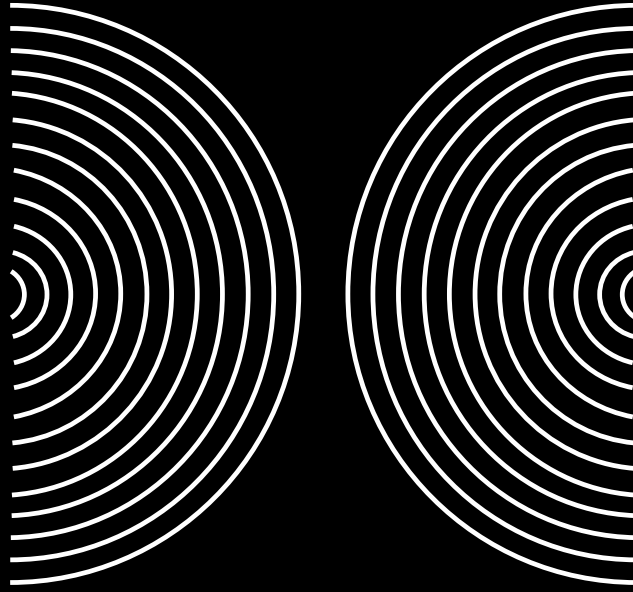


FRUITS OF LABOUR

The humble pomegranate has inspired an entire range of high-end decor designs. Suite N°8 interprets the hardy exterior of the fruit as an adaptation for everyday decor needs. From vases and candle stands to decorative forms, this simple shape has given birth to an evocative collection. Available at The House of Things. **H&DT**

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SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

French multidisciplinary firm AREP's prototype of an urban cooling device presents a sustainable, low-tech, and an inexpensive solution to cool down outdoor spaces

Text AVNI RAUT Images Courtesy AREP



The issue of heatwaves is increasingly becoming a cause of concern in the cities of Vietnam and is expected to intensify further in the future. The team of designers at AREP, a French multidisciplinary firm, has designed an urban cooling device that uses neither any coolant gas nor energy, offering a potential solution to this problem. For this, they drew upon a concept that dates back centuries - the adiabatic principle. "Adiabatic cooling is a sustainable technique which does not require any coolant gas. It is based on a simple and natural principle: to evaporate, water needs energy, which will be 'absorbed' from the heat of the ambient air, thus generating a cooling effect. The only elements required are hot air and water," explains Melanie Lan-Doremus, General Manager at AREP South Asia.

The shape of the device was determined via BIM parametric modelling and then through a collaboration with a local craftsman, a full-scale operational prototype was constructed in Hanoi, using bamboo. A medium is set up between the main poles on which water runs by gravity. A blower is fixed in the center and the hot air is taken from above and pushed down at human height. In this process as it passes twice through the water, the air naturally cools down.

"By crossing the principle of an adiabatic cooling device with Hanoi's know-how in art and craft, wrapped into a naturally resistant hyperboloid parametric structure, AREP was able to create a functional device, proving the viability of a sustainable, low-tech, and low-cost concept to cool down our city's outdoor spaces," says Melanie Lan-Doremus. **H&DT**



The structure was constructed entirely in bamboo and the hyperboloid shape was ideal as it offered structural stability. The MEP components used for the device were either recycled or reused.



The full-scale model was constructed and erected in Hanoi and a test was carried out. A temperature drop of 6°C (from 30°C to 24°C) was observed and cooler air could be felt around the device.

in Balance

Design has always been our first love.
It is a vital part of our existence and
the reason we get along

Text PIYUSH MEHRA

Profile images MEETESH TANEJA



“

The early years were tough on Piyush. He had to put in serious effort. But he absorbed knowledge like a sponge as it came.

– Priyanka Mehra, Principal Architect, PS Design

Priyanka's early years in school in Delhi where she was inclined towards the arts and inspiration, through Ayn Rand's *Fountainhead*, drew her towards beautiful spaces. She has always wanted to “design beautiful homes for people who would remember (her) every single day in every aspect of their life at home.”

For me, architecture-specific education started early with my father in Lucknow. I went on to graduate as a Gold Medalist from The Birla Institute of Technology in Ranchi, before moving to France to work with legendary French architect Dominique Perrault. Apart from academics, I also freelanced with practicing architects in Ranchi, developing building elevations and designs. This not only helped me assist my parents to fund my education but also gave me hands-on experience in the field and in the economics of it.

After working for Hafeez Contractor for five years, Priyanka felt saturated. In 2009, when the world went through a recession, Priyanka branched out on her own. From a small garage in Goregaon, she built on her dream that has brought us where we are today. “I worked morning to night, putting in more than 18 hours at work at times and the result was that I had to move to a bigger office within a year of starting the practice,” she says. The second year was bigger and better projects, with two bungalows of over 20,000sqft along with several apartment interiors. “Personal life, however, was dead and I was really craving for someone to help me out. And that's when Piyush reached out to the firm”.

“We met in the most unusual manner for most design practices. I had already been in the industry for over nine years, and Piyush was still in college and had applied for the position of an intern in the company. As a young practice, I was skeptical why someone with such a bright portfolio would come to work with me. However, I guess some things are destined to be”.

A year before reaching out to Priyanka, I had an opportunity to intern with Romi Khosla Design Studios in New Delhi. The next year I wanted to try out a firm in Mumbai, as that's the city I eventually wanted to settle in. Through my search, I came across Priyanka's practice. She was doing brilliantly well

for such a young firm at that time. I saw immense potential for learning if I interned with her and hence, I applied.

Despite the age gap, what stuck with both of us was that our synergies were perfectly aligned. This was also attributed to the fact that since I had worked on my own through college days, I entered the industry with sincere seriousness.



Priyanka Mehra and Piyush Mehra, Principal Architects, PS Design at Art Gallery and Experience Lobby at Rajiaskaran Tech Park, Mumbai.

Eventually, we both were driven and the hope of creating good design, bound us. After the short but mindful internship with Priyanka, I went back to college to finish my thesis and eventually moved to Paris.

“We kept in touch occasionally working on one or two odd projects. A year later I flew down to Paris and convinced him to come back and work as a partner in the firm. The initial years were probably tough on Piyush, as he had to put in serious effort, compared to my experience in the field. But he absorbed knowledge like a sponge as it came.”

Mutual respect and positive criticism are the two key elements that have helped us negotiate working together. It is pertinent to realise that you cannot do and know everything. It is OK to allow oneself to be helped occasionally.

With the two of us, the energy in the office changed drastically. We put systems in place and there was more time for everything. Together we learned how to balance building a business with the rigor of bringing our vision of design to life.

“Somewhere in between, we fell in love. It was a blurry mishmash. We are not too sure what came first. Against a lot of conventions, we got married and officiated our companionship. We now have two beautiful children who are our number one priority.”

Marrying Priyanka was coming full circle for me and perhaps the best decision of my life, given the fact that I could not have found anyone better who understands me and my proclivities.

However, what was always aligned was our goal to create a better design. By the grace of the almighty God of Design, we managed to keep a symbiotic



Built for the next generation of a 30-year-old agrochemical manufacturing company, this office is situated in the commercial hub of Nehru Palace in New Delhi. The move from their previous office in old Delhi called for a change of identity that would break through the traditional corporate style.





“

“Somewhere in between, we fell in love. It was a blurry mishmash. We are not too sure what came first. Against a lot of conventions, we got married and officiated our companionship. We now have two beautiful children who are our number one priority.”

– Priyanka Mehra, Principal Architect, PS Design

relationship between work and personal life. We are often discussing sites over the dinner table. Priyanka hates it at times because every conversation is about sites or clients even at 12 in the night, but then there are some ups and downs to every relationship, and we have accepted it. Even the kids love the conversations now! Site stories are hilarious (when discussed over dinner).

Over the last 14 years, we have realised that the only constant in architecture and design is change. It is a highly entropic field and called a practice for a reason! We see it as a constant learning process. Through the journey, our design senses have evolved organically and only for the better. Our creativity is fueled by our passion to learn new things because we strongly believe that learning is infinite, there are always new products, technology, or something historic to delve into in addition to new clients that provide us with new perspectives, trust us and eventually push us to evolve. We are

always observant, finding inspiration everywhere—from the varied colour of the blue sky to textures in city streets.

It has led us to never follow any trends both personally and professionally. We don't have a “specific style of design” and remain true to our thoughts and vision and do not allow what others are doing to dictate our creative process. This makes our work unexpected and full of surprises. We constantly evolve as we learn about more materials and what we can do with them.

Priyanka feels a good design should be classically influenced yet contemporary in its intent. She will always include an emotional element into the space, bringing in vintage pieces in a contemporary setting and weaving a story around it. She loves colours and is constantly working with unexpected combinations, layers and patterns, and creating fearless, fun, and spirited spaces. Whereas I am more traditional and believe in simple, good, and honest design. I look at



interiors also as an architectural space and the forms are more structural and timeless.

When we were younger, we wanted to work more but over time and with the birth of our children, there is a certain maturity that has come about, and our practice has evolved to a point where we drop the projects we don't care about and work for what gives us positivity and happiness. We now want to avoid boredom and have our minds racing all the time. Spending time with our children has also brought a new perspective to our design because seeing the world with their eyes gives us creative freedom and wonderment. You start looking at things with a different lens, making life playful and spontaneous.

We are like chalk and cheese and always tend to our individual clients, illuminating our personalities and design styles in the process.

We did not arrive at this so easily though and the transition happened after the first few projects, post which we decided that it is always better that we work on separate projects.

We consult each other over critical design ideas. Over the period, we have identified our plus points and taken each other's help to better the project. This often involves bribing one another with 'thoughtful and proportional' gestures!

Acceptance is the key in any relationship whether personal or professional. Priyanka is Utopian and a hard nut to crack. She is a perfectionist when it

The 'Mehta residence' was designed to have high-end, resort-like amenities in order to allow the homeowners to enjoy vacation-level relaxation in the comfort of their own home—a design strategy that ended up being ideal for life during the pandemic.



“

Priyanka is Utopian and a hard nut to crack. She is a perfectionist when it comes to the outcome. She is tenacious and wants the result to be the way it should be.

– Piyush Mehra, Principal Architect, PS Design

comes to the outcome. She is tenacious and wants the result to be the way it should be. It sometimes creates situations with clients, vendors, and even the team where intervention is needed.

That is when I step in, to ease things out. I have a pragmatic approach and I am flexible. Priyanka says I am also kinder and have greater empathy towards people.

As partners, we are always present for each other. Bestowing space and at the same time being sentinel towards the other is the day-to-day demeanour for us.

For us, the married-partner model has proved strong because it allows two compatible but opinionated people, with crazy levels of obsessiveness and drive, feeding off each other's energies. The only downside is that there is barely any distinction between work and family and on the other hand being in a marriage diminishes the need to explain.

On a few projects that we do work together, there is a rigid division of labour. We end up working on different elements of a project, but the crucial conceptual work results from a constant exchange. Over the years we have started to understand each other's language and collaborate seamlessly, however, the time there's violent disagreement, that's where the interesting stuff happens.

Once you understand what you're good at, it is also important that you continuously hone your craft. This always results in spaces that are not just born out of good design but are also enlightened and honest.

The future is exciting for us! We are currently working on 4 large-scale bungalows in Dubai, and we are considering expanding to UAE soon. There is an upcoming residential school campus, a project in Chitrakoot, several holiday homes in Lonavala and Goa, private villas in Delhi and Chandigarh, and apartment interiors in Mumbai and Bangalore. Recently we have collaborated with Sunday Whites, a venture by Yuvraj Rajan, where we are focusing on designing products that are exciting, interesting, and appropriate for the current market.

Over the years we have realized that even the two of us are not enough, there have been several wonderful people associated with us who make P S



IMAGE ASHISH SAHI
STYLE SAMIR WADEKAR

Design what it is today. Right from our Associates, our team, and the helper staff, everyone contributes. We have a very diverse team that is creative, passionate and has a strong work ethic that makes us stronger and better every single day. Surrounding ourselves with people who have these attributes is the only way we can function flamboyantly in our profession and successfully navigate through projects.

We have learned that to run a business you need a bold mindset. There is no room for fear or doubt. You must create your own path, break rules and not be restricted by boundaries. Eventually, you learn to attune, to thrive, to question, to research, to defy and spread your wings and fly. It is important to have big dreams, but the key is to acknowledge the work and effort it takes to realise them. **H&DT**

(Top)

Syamantaka Villa is a retirement retreat in Aamby Valley, designed for an elderly couple otherwise residing in Dubai.

BLENDING ART WITH CONTEMPORARY DESIGNS

*This house in Hyderabad, crafted by **Cutting Edge Design Studio**, is a unique combination of traditional art and modern design style*

Text VANITA ARORA *Images* CUTTING EDGE DESIGN STUDIO



"We believe that our strong connect with traditional roots, coupled with thoughtful design aesthetics allow us to deliver homes that last for generations."

– Phanidhar Paturi & Jhansi Paturi, *Founders, Cutting Edge Design Studio*

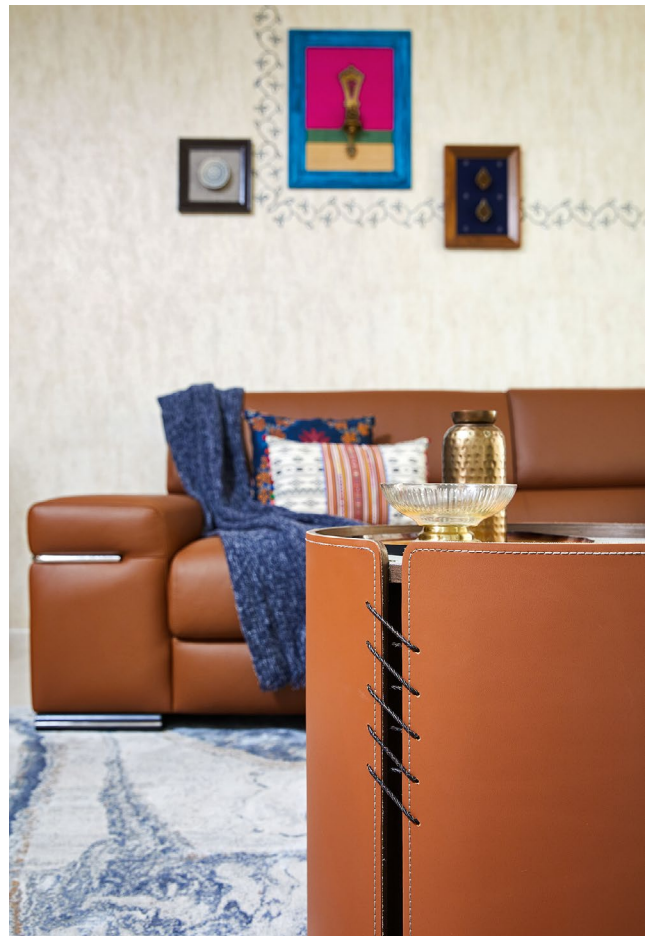
SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*

The living room features seating by the window with bookshelves integrated on either side. These units are rendered in lacquer finish, with artwork and fluted glass adding an element of texture. The bookshelves also have open shelving for displaying books and accessories.



"Our commitment of providing matchless aesthetics with a touch of luxury is what encourages us to create exquisitely planned high-quality residential and commercial spaces that exceed the expectations of our clients."

– Phanidhar Paturi, Founder, Cutting Edge Design Studio





From the swing in the living room, and the teak and dyed veneer ceiling, to the beds and consoles – all the furniture in the house has been custom-designed by Cutting Edge Design Studio. The cabinet next to the dining, with carved legs in different shapes, features veneer framing and shutters in lacquer finish.





Accents of art created by renowned artists add a distinct character to the house design. For instance - the pooja room door has various forms of Goddess Lakshmi in Kalamkari art on cloth done by Andhra Pradesh state award winning Kalamkari Artist, Siva Reddy.



"In the times of declining skillsets and unwillingness to customise, we stand firm in our intent to merge traditional craftsmanship with modern necessities."

– Jhansi Paturi, Founder, Cutting Edge Design Studio





This 4,070sqft apartment, located in My Home Bhooja - one of the tallest residential towers in Hyderabad – is designed by Phanidhar Paturi & Jhansi Paturi of Cutting Edge Design Studio. The interiors exude an eclectic charm and host diverse artworks, with each element integrated in a way that offers a balanced visual composition.

A variety of textures, colours and artistic elements amalgamate, to infuse the home with grace and elegance. The main door featuring hand-painted kalamkari artwork adds a distinct touch that complements the dramatic quality of the interiors as well. “The design concept was to create a space that is unique and remarkable, and this was also the brief given by the owner, Prashanth Deshpande, who stays here with his wife and two young daughters,” says Phanidhar.

Swearing by their design philosophy to customise and execute everything on-site so that whatever they create lasts for generations, the designer duo has custom-designed all the furniture in this house. Another interesting element in this intriguingly conceptualised space is the choice of art. Artworks by various Indian artists and craftsmen adorn the house, like Siva Reddy from Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, Keshav Venkata Raghavan from Chennai, and Prathama Desai of Filigree Arts from Surat, Gujarat. “We started our journey with a few trusted clients and today, we have reached a milestone of over 600 projects - both residential and commercial. Moreover, it is our boundless love and passion for traditional Indian art and design that has helped us carve a niche in the design world,” sums up Phanidhar. **H&DT**



A COSY DWELLING FOR ONE

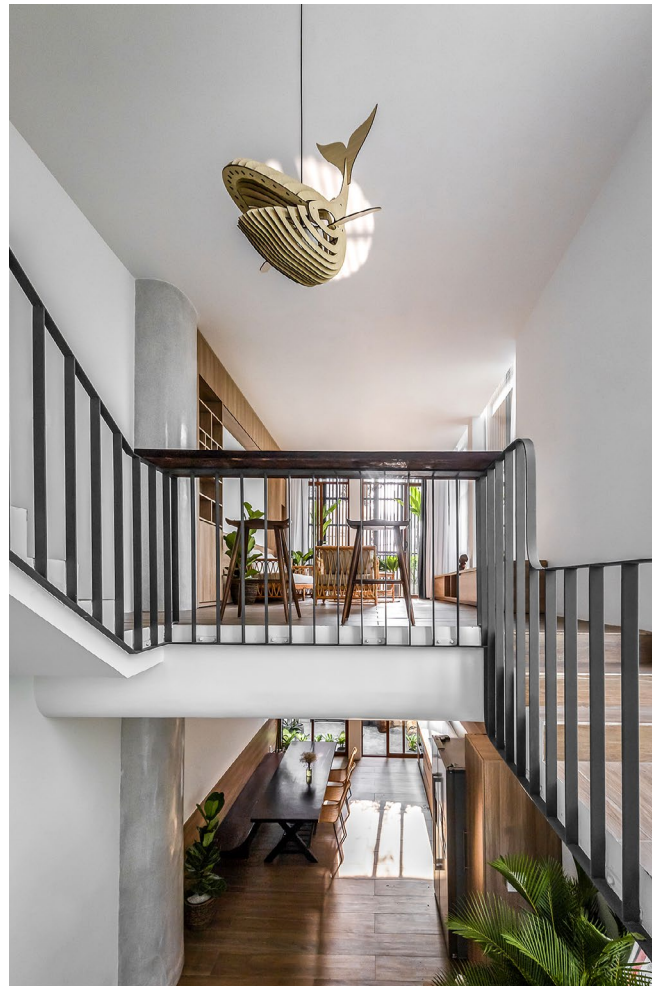
*Natural light and greenery are fundamental elements in the design narrative of this Vietnam home crafted by **Story Architecture***

Text AVNI RAUT Images MINQ BUI

"The large glass panel with irregular curves near the staircase brings ample light inside and also imparts an interesting experiential quality to the space."

- Kava Nguyễn, Founder,
Story Architecture

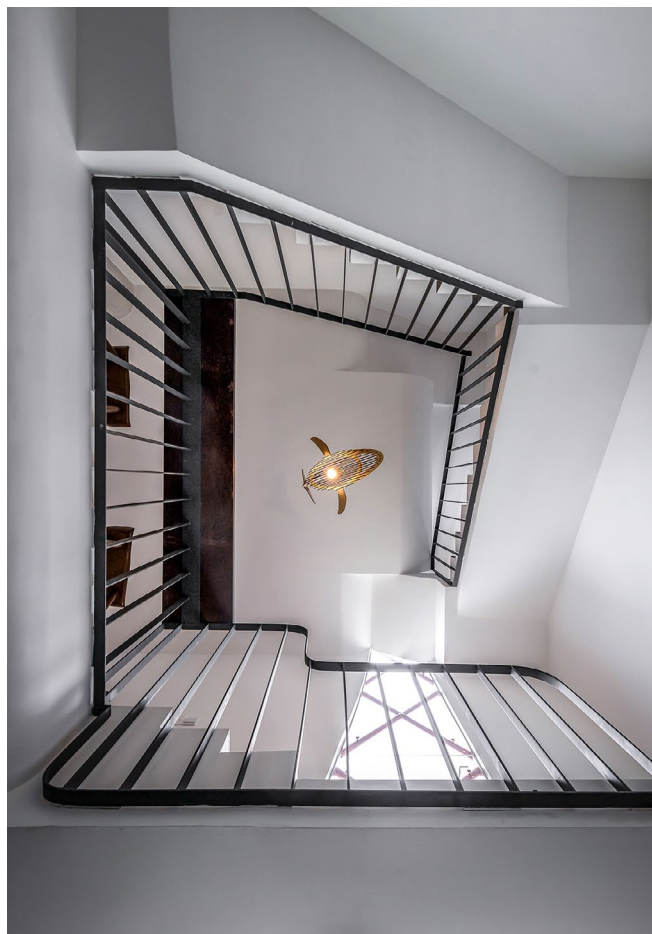
The smartly conceived layout and well-articulated indoor and outdoor spaces ensure that the interiors appear spacious and are sufficiently lit despite a compact plot size. The infusion of greens further induces a calming ambience within.





"Although the house is fairly compact, we have integrated skylights and large glass panels in all the spaces to free up the vision."

- Kava Nguyễn, Founder, Story Architecture





Natural light is channeled into the interiors in diverse ways, creating a strong play of light and shadow in different corners of the house and enhancing the appeal of the spaces that are furnished minimally and rendered in subdued shades.

A SMOOTH DESIGN NARRATIVE

Studio Motley carves out a distinct identity for this Bangalore residence, using teakwood, black stone, glass and concrete

Text AVNI RAUT Images NEELANJANA CHITRABANU



"The site is located within a gated community. Most of the other houses there are designed and built by the developer and are largely repetitive. Our intent was to create a subtle yet strong presence within this context."

- Kajal Gupta and Anand Kurudi, Founders, Studio Motley



Protective overhangs ensure that the large glazed surfaces remain sufficiently shaded and as they mainly face north, the heat gain inside is reduced too.

"A desirable space is one where the outdoors can be experienced from within. So, we conceptualised garden spaces and connected them, visually and physically, to the interiors."

- Kajal Gupta and Anand Kurudi, Founders, Studio Motley





The spatial articulation allows for an effortless transition of one space into another, and from the indoors to the outdoors. Variations in ceiling height and changes in flooring patterns help delineate the various functions within, while maintaining the spatial and visual connect.

SCULPTED SPACES | *Residential*



A strong sense of materiality sweeps across the interiors and is evident on the exteriors of the structure too. A distinguishing feature of the façade is the series of slender vertical louvres, made of laminated bamboo, that form a screen in front of the large glass panels that wrap around the home office.

"A strong material palette, comprising reclaimed teakwood, locally quarried black stone (in leather and polished finish), glass and concrete, comes together to create a warm and earthy ambience."

- Kajal Gupta and Anand Kurudi, Founders, Studio Motley



REDEFINING CO-WORKING SPACES



***Mimaristudio** conceives a thoughtful design for CoBAC Workspace, a co-working, co-development and co-living space in Eminönü, Istanbul*

Text AVNI RAUT Images GURKAN AKAY, EMRE DORTER, CANSU AYDURAN



biraz ka
Sonra bir
daha kahve.



"Users are now able to work with maximum daylight, constant fresh air, and relevant thermal and acoustic comfort conditions while enjoying the freedom to choose where, when, and how to work within the framework of activity-based working principles."

- Ayca AKKAYA KUL and Onder KUL, Founders, Mimaristudio



SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*



The firm has carefully conceptualised the space with the intention to provide a stimulating working environment, one that fosters productivity and creativity. Eschewing a standard layout, each floor exhibits a certain flexibility and hosts working areas of different scales and forms, along with social spaces and outdoor areas where one can comfortably relax as well.



"We prioritised the concept of 'well-being' and offered an interactive working environment with a highly efficient and productive space."

- Ayca AKKAYA KUL and Onder KUL, Founders, Mimaristudio



The thoughtfully designed workspace has all the necessary infrastructure in place to cater to business requirements of institutions as well as individuals.

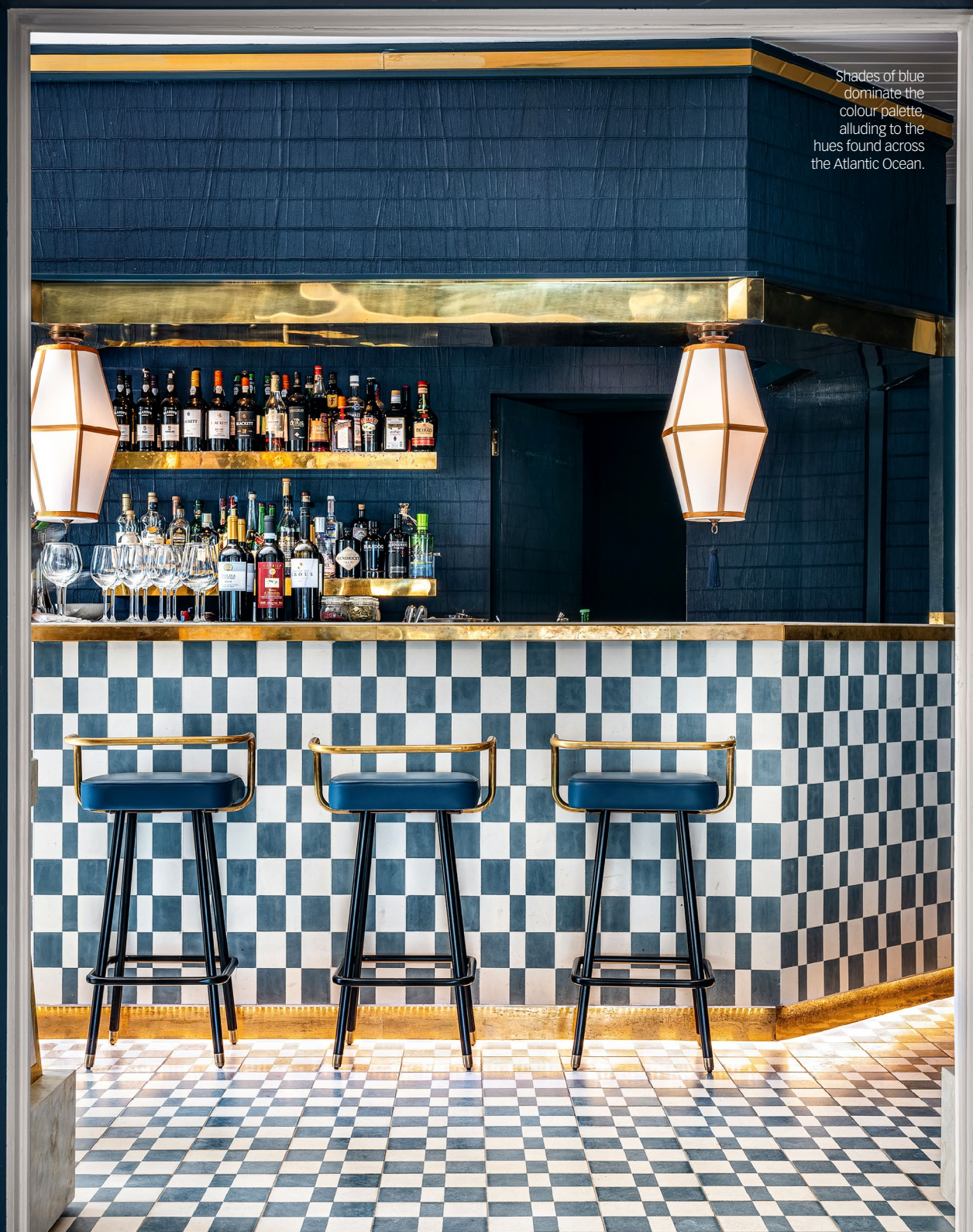
SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*

REVIVING THE PAST GLORY

Gracinha Viterbo revamps Portugal's Hotel Albatroz, reflecting its rich history and suffusing the interiors with a resplendent aura

Text AVNI RAUT Images FRANCISCO ALMEIDA DIAS





Shades of blue dominate the colour palette, alluding to the hues found across the Atlantic Ocean.

"The new Hotel Albatroz is quintessentially Portuguese. We worked with artisans from all over the country to create a classic style imbued with a fresh Portuguese spirit."

– Gracinha Viterbo, Creative Director, Viterbo Interior Design



“Our aim was to evoke the golden years of Hotel Albatroz. After all, it was once dubbed, ‘The Great Dame of the Portuguese Coast’.”

– Gracinha Viterbo, *Creative Director, Viterbo Interior Design*



The structure served as a private residence before it was converted into an inn. It has now been sensitively and meticulously redesigned by Viterbo Interior Design and functions as the new Hotel Albatroz.

SCULPTED SPACES | *Commercial*



Each corner of the hotel evokes intrigue. Few of the original features have been consciously preserved, offering a glimpse into the past. Portuguese craftsmanship is conspicuous throughout the interiors and the firm collaborated with artists, brands and artisans to create certain décor elements, all of which come together to infuse the spaces with a richly layered aesthetic.

HOME & DESIGN

TRENDS