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A taste of European luxury in
uptown Pune...

Architect Anil Ranka

brings the opulence of a Swiss chalet
to a bungalow at Mukundnagar.

"Home design is getting so much more sophisticated and technologically brilliant...architects are designing homes that are a dream to live in. The irony is that people have lesser and lesser time to spend at home!"

This is one of the points raised in our conversation with Anil Ranka, an architect who worked with Hafeez Contractor and Iqbal Chaney before setting up independent practice in the year 1994. They were years, he agrees, that were vital to the design world and everything associated with architecture. Engineering (as in technology) was changing our hitherto concepts of space planning and from there to now, it has been a defining factor that will continue to make its impact. Every design or architectural decision today is aided and determined by technology, and this is a good thing, for it makes systemized planning possible. The architect also opines that automation - though the twin of engineering- is actually a shot in the arm for pure design, for without it, we would not see the wonderful interiors and swanky spaces that are the norm of 'now' interiors.

We feature here a home that this senior architect has designed recently. It once again brings to the fore how much bungalow design has changed and evolved in the last twenty years.



Usually, a to-be-constructed bungalow is faced with a conundrum - should the design go for the understated or the 'display all'? Should it follow plain logic or plain embellishment? Here, there was no such problem. Of course, though plot area is mid-size at 3200 sq.ft, the home could still have easily accommodated the most lavish of soft furnishings, the most elaborate of internal décor, and the most flamboyant fixtures for light. Asked to design a bungalow in a housing layout where visitors cannot decide which is 'best of the best', the architect could have been tempted to - within available space - do a Roman villa, an Indian mansion or an American home. He chose neither, with good reason; the client is a much traveled man, having seen much of the globe. His love for Scandinavian reticence is equaled by his admiration for Swiss excellence. It was during these frequent trips to Europe that he began to greatly admire the steep slopes, gabled roofs and French cottage homes or Swiss chalets. It proved to be, in fact, the sole design brief given by the owner to the architect; as is apparent in the unique design, it was more than enough. Move over special effects, this home is like real gold; it glitters, but without ostentation. 'Expensively expansive' it certainly is, but not vice-versa. Exquisitely designed inside and out, the home does what flash, kitsch and overkill can never achieve- a true blue aura of the 'real thing'. It is intricately planned to make everyone happy, and it succeeds. The best part is, from a design perspective, that it veers away from stereotypes with a passion as strong as the prevailing sentiment of calm, tranquility and understated poise that lies beneath the surface.



Italian marble is used throughout the house. The Living Room has a TV room instead, a separate TV room adjacent to it. (It can be seen through a glass partition behind the couch). Ground floor is made up of Lobby, Living and Dining, Kitchen and the Guest/Parent's room. The first floor has the bedrooms—Was one bedroom each for the boys and attached sit-outs. All the lights are automated and interlocked.



The owner likes to think of this little Zen-like garden as a courtyard, giving peace and beauty to the entire home. For the architect himself, it is more like a live painting, that changes its textures as the day and seasons change. It must be noted that there are no paintings in the entire house, so this is easily the centerpiece and the masterpiece! A massive slab of toughened glass is the only barrier between the garden and the living room.





All bedrooms have - in addition to Italian Marble- walk-in wardrobes with a full length mirror. All surfaces are laminated. There is something else; a dedicated W.C and a separate Bath area, separated by a counter basin.

Note the detailing for light- since there is a bungalow next door and privacy was important, slit windows are given within the architectural design itself.



The daughter's bedroom, with photos of her on the headboard.



Son's bedroom.

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