

Inside Outside

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Cover Story:
Devi Ratn
A Jaipur hotel
by Urban Studio

Architect
Brinda
Somaya's
office in
Mumbai

AWARDS SPECIAL

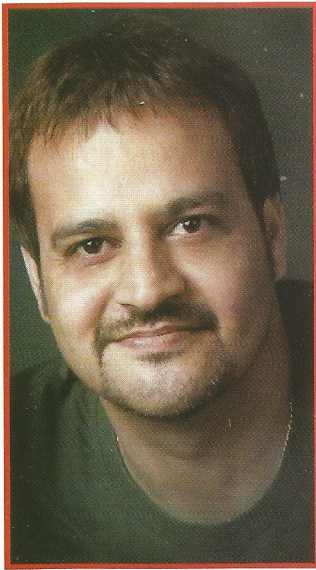
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Simple & Serene

Architect Anil Ranka uses a limited palette to design a home in Pune for the Rathod family, Sunita, Manoj and teenager Tanay, which blends tradition with modernity, style with function.





TEXT: BRINDA GILL

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANAND DIWADKAR, COURTESY
THE ARCHITECT

'A home designed in tones of white brings much peace, but it is difficult to design. You have to get the composition, mix and balance of elements right to create a cheerful, peaceful and stylish space or else it can easily slip into being dull, boring and austere,' says Anil Ranka. Since Manoj and often Sunita, spend long hours at their jewellery showroom which is brightly lit, they were very keen on a home that would be peaceful, warm and inviting, filled with natural light by day and white light by night, and one which respected fundamental vastu principles.

Traditional Roots

Exploring the Rathods' brief and the limitations of the 3,200 sq ft plot, Anil created a simple plan, complete to every minute detail in a 2,500 sq ft built-up area. As the Rathods did not want a tall structure, the residence was kept to a ground plus one level and Anil ensured space utilisation and a sense of openness by doing away with passages.





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In keeping with vastu directions, the ground floor has the kitchen in the south-east with the burner in the east; the guest bedroom in the north-east; the double-height dining area in the north with the temple set in a wall to ensure that no one can walk above this sacred space. The formal and informal living areas are along the west, with the main entrance door being placed exactly in the centre of the west-facing façade.

The staircase, set in the heart of the home, leads to a small lobby area on a level above which informally divides the level into four equal squares. The master bedroom and Tanay's room on this level have spacious walk-in closets. Drawing from the courtyard design of traditional Indian homes, where a central open space forges links between spaces and interaction between family members, Anil designed the central lobby to overlook the dining area below and thus linked the levels, allowing for easy connectivity between the spaces and the family members. Each room has ample windows to ensure natural light and cross ventilation.

Contemporary Elements

Anil opted for clean lines and surfaces as they are easy to maintain and do not go out of fashion; used tones of white for most surfaces; minimised the palette of materials; and kept niches and display spaces to a minimum. To ensure the home looked spacious and uncluttered, he used elements like glass, table tops with marble and surfaced storage units with PU

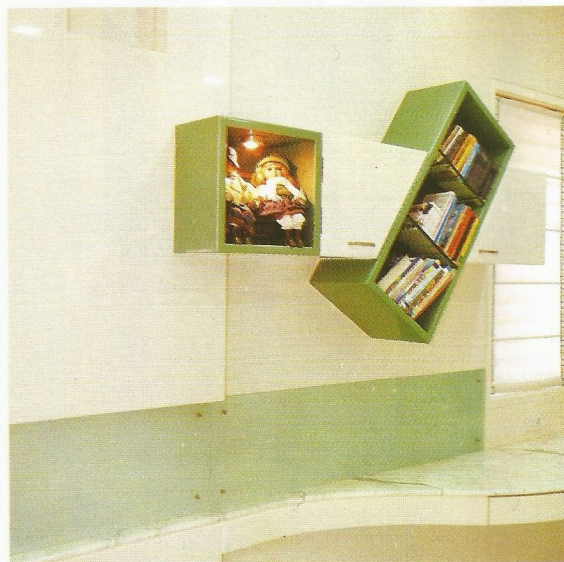


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INTERIORS



The home is filled with natural light by day and white light by night.



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lamination. The walk-in closet in the master bedroom has glass fronted wardrobes and its far wall is fitted with a mirror, visually doubling the space. Tanay's room in sea-green has a skylight and the adjoining bathroom with a jacuzzi has a glass door for the WC area, which can be shut to make the space 'more like a room rather than a bathroom'. The bathrooms have small courtyards with skylights, a wall is finished with brown natural stone that takes on different hues through the day with the shifting angle of the sun.

White lights and cove lighting have been recessed in slots in the ceiling, and in niches. And to link the spaces, polished Statuario marble has been used everywhere including the bathrooms. Blending traditional and contemporary elements, and working out a plan to maximise functional spaces, Anil has created a simple, spacious, comfortable and functional residence for the Rathods. As Sunita says after a few days of being away from home, she gets restless to return to the peace and space it offers her! 