THE ART OF ALMOST

This duplex in Karur, Tamil Nadu by Edom Architecture finds clarity through conversation and craft

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Ascending the staircase is a journey through warm terracotta tones, culminating in a botanical mural courtesy of Sneha George (OPPOSITE PAGE) The living room whisks you away on safari, with furniture from The Lofts, a black urn by FERROCON Concrete Factory and an elephant painting curated by Sneha George

If there's one thing architect Rose Thampy of Kochi-based Edom Architecture has learned over the years, it's that the unplanned often has a better sense of proportion than anything over-determined. Her latest project – a renovation of a bare-shell duplex apartment in Karur, Tamil Nadu – proves the point. The commission wasn't exactly on her bingo card, and what began one way soon became something else entirely, with the design evolving much like the brief itself – unexpectedly, but all the better for it.

The project, as she tells it, began almost entirely by accident. "We had initially connected with the clients for something completely different," Rose recalls, "and somewhere in those conversations they casually mentioned they were also thinking about their personal home." That passing remark subtly re-routed the brief. One conversation led to another, and then another – and before long, the architects found themselves sketching the first outlines of a home they had never expected to design.

But as the outlines sharpened, so did the differences in how the clients and architects imagined the home. The clients gravitated towards something modish and minimal. Rose had her sights set elsewhere. "Materials like wood, terracotta, brick oxide finishes, and other handcrafted details naturally carry warmth and texture, but the challenge was to use them in their most authentic form while still maintaining a crisp visual language," she explains.

It took a fair amount of conversation (and coffee) for the clients to see what Rose saw: that warmth, texture, and elegance can comfortably coexist. Slowly, the mood shifted. The brief loosened up and the project found its footing somewhere between voguish restraint and earthy character. By then, the architects had been handed something far more valuable than approval: carte blanche. As it turned out, that was the easy part.

The real task lay in bringing the vision to life. "Since many of the finishes and details were handcrafted, we collaborated with different sets of craftsmen from various parts of South India," shares Rose. Getting artisans on the same page was one thing, but getting them on the same timeline was another. With people spread across the country, coordination became a project unto itself. "It was challenging," she admits, "but also deeply rewarding once everything came together."

At first glance – or even the last – the apartment resists easy categorisation. It doesn't lean too far into minimalism or fully commit to rusticity. Instead, it sits comfortably in the in-between: measured, warm, and resistant to neat definition. A space where materials don't compete for attention but comfortably keep each other in check. If anything, the project becomes a subtle echo of its own beginnings: very little went according to plan – but in the end, that's exactly what allowed it to settle into place. ◆

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In the dining room, a sculptural dining set from Magari sits against a backdrop of elephant-motif tiles from Parman Designs (OPPOSITE PAGE) Brooding monochromes are counterbalanced by warm wood tones, expressed through a sweeping sideboard and an artwork from The Purple Turtles

A rich palette of burgundy, rust, and warm wood tones envelops the primary bedroom, where a custom-made bed sits alongside artwork from Sneha George and a lamp from Interstellar Lighting

A bespoke work nook sits opposite the bed, featuring a custom desk, lamps from Interstellar Lighting and a chair from The Lofts

The bar was dreamed up as an intimate, jewel-box setting, centred around a bespoke table and chairs, and illuminated by lamps from Interstellar Lighting

The second bedroom strikes a balance between bespoke craftsmanship and collected pieces, featuring a custom bed, a chair from The Lofts and a tailor-made desk

HOME KARUR

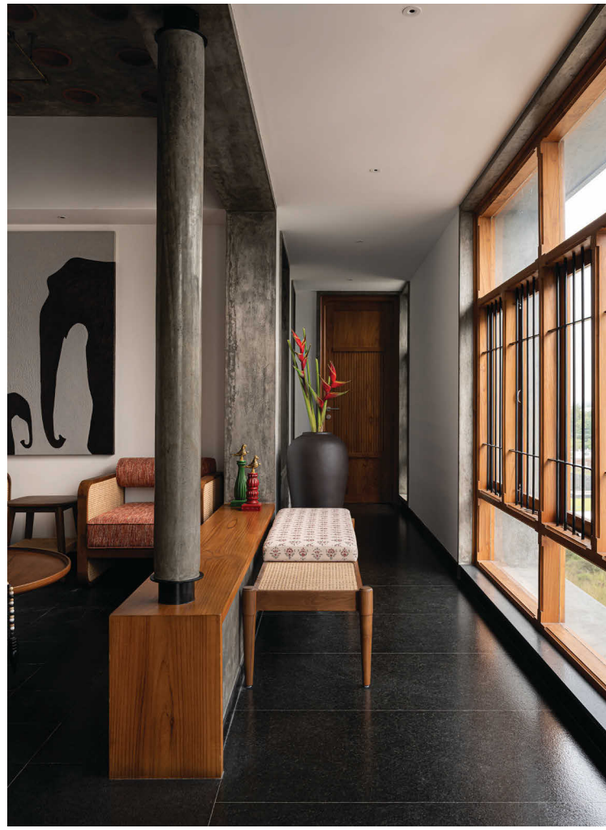
A study in grey, the lounge is layered with a sofa by Magari, armchairs and a coffee table from The Lofts, and vintage wall panels sourced from Fort Kochi (OPPOSITE PAGE) The passage is pared back yet purposeful, featuring a bench from The Lofts and an urn from FERROCON Concrete Factory

EDOM ARCHITECTURE is a Kochi-based practice specialising in tropical modern minimalism infused with a distinctly South Indian soul. Founded by architect Rose Thampy, the studio explores restrained forms, climate-responsive design and tactile materiality. Its work balances contemporary clarity with regional memory, drawing from southern Indian landscapes, craft traditions and vernacular sensibilities. Each project reflects a subtle elegance, prioritising light, airflow and lived experience while maintaining a refined architectural language rooted in context.

IF THIS HOME WERE A CELEBRITY, WHO WOULD IT BE?
Undoubtedly its owner, Vignesh – already something of a celebrity in the equestrian world. Like him, the home carries itself with discipline and ease: elegant yet grounded, calm yet defined by an inner strength.

IF YOU COULD BORROW ONE THING FROM THIS HOME FOR YOUR OWN, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
The deck. It's one of the most serene corners of the home – an open-air retreat that feels almost meditative. Even the gym is oriented towards it.

GIVE THE HOME A FUN TAGLINE.
Started with design, ended with friendship.

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST SPLURGE?
Custom detailing and craftsmanship were definitely our biggest investment.

AND YOUR BIGGEST SAVE?
We balanced splurges with simple, functional finishes in quieter spaces.