

OUT OF THIS WORLD

This neoclassical-inspired Kolkata home by A Square Designs is a palimpsest of mirrored rainbows, sculptural furnishings and celestial-inspired luminaires

WORDS VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR
PHOTOS GOKULL RAO KADAM STYLING KUNAL DASS

Anchored by a rare Paresh Maitty painting, the living room balances restraint and grandeur. Louvred panels reference neoclassical order, while mustard-toned seating from Ravish Vohra Home and Ochre At Home lifts the palette. A chequered ceiling with Leviosa chandeliers establishes rhythm, framing a contemporary reading of 1970s Art Deco neoclassicism. The carpet is a Jaipur Rugs find

The home office is a rose-tinted haven, its translucent walls tempering the rigour of work with warmth and whimsy

A curvilinear stone table anchors the home office, its sculptural form softening the strict geometry of the walls and ceiling. Abstractions by Prangopal Ghosh inject a pop of colour



The dining area reprises the foyer's striking flooring. At its heart, an Ochre At Home dining table with a hand-cut, mirrored wooden base highlights artisanal craftsmanship, while an opulent Leviosa chandelier, inspired by tropical flora and fauna, unfurls as a luminous canopy overhead. A Jit Chowdhury mural acts as the room's crown jewel. Chairs by Within complete the setting



Crowning the home is a spacious family lounge with plush seating by Ravish Vohra Home and an Ochre At Home coffee table. Overhead, steel-and-glass fixtures by Nitush and Aroosh recall drifting asteroids, while a three-dimensional jute artwork by Prangopal Ghosh roots the space in earthy tactility

The thing about interior design, for better or worse, is that it rarely treads the middle ground – clients either love it or loathe it. When interior designer Ajay Arya, founder and principal of Kolkata-based A Square Designs, was tasked with transforming a 7,000 sq ft bare-shell duplex on the city's coveted Loudon Street for Rashmi and Vishal Saraogi, a couple in their forties, he had little inkling of just how swiftly the verdict – or verdicts – would swing in his favour. “Their daughter developed a keen interest in interior design,” says the aesthete – so keen, in fact, that she chose it as her field of study, even going on to intern with Ajay’s firm.

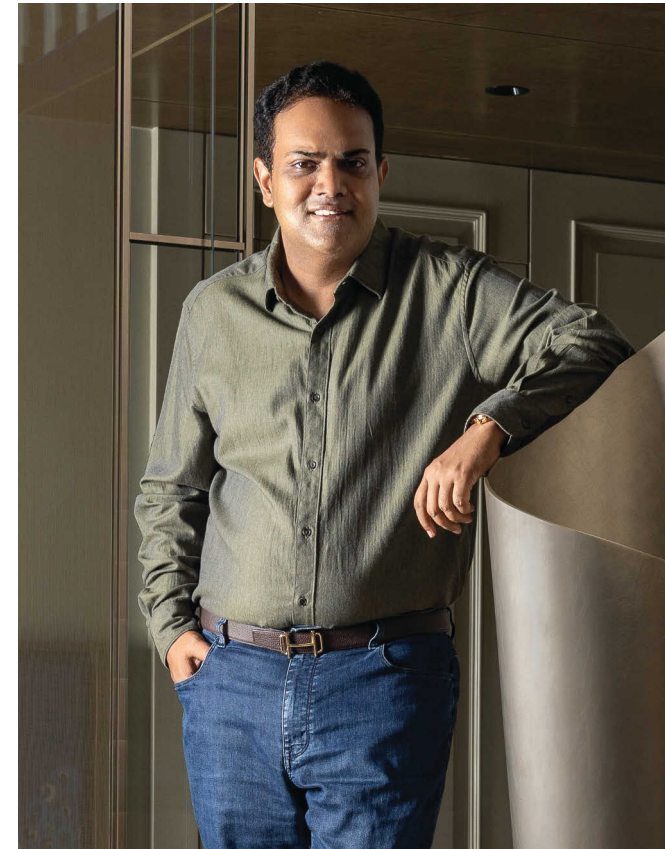
Admittedly, his spirits weren’t quite as high at the start of the project. Maybe it was because he was designing another home in the same complex, or because, as he likes to quip, “I was then one intern short,” designing a nest for the Saraogis became an exercise in reinventing the wheel or, pray, ditching it altogether. “The real challenge was making sure this home had its own identity—something that truly reflected them—without it looking like what we were already creating next door,” he reflects. What followed was a neoclassical fever dream: ornate mouldings, marble chequerboard flooring, an ebony-and-ivory staircase, flora unfurling across fabrics and murals, and chandeliers inspired by the tropical wilds. It was theatre, yes, but theatre with

heart, where every scene was meant to be lived in.

Ask him how he chose the art, and Ajay doesn’t hem or haw. “I didn’t,” he shrugs. “The walls chose for me.” And indeed, they did: the living room cradles a rare Paresch Maity painting, while a Calcutta Console from Ajay’s Bengal Narrative collection masquerades as artwork in the dining room. There, the table – perched atop a hand-cut mirrored wooden base – splinters sunlight into a million dancing rainbows, draping the home in a kaleidoscope that shifts with every passing hour. Above the staircase floats an otherworldly luminaire, strewn with asteroid-like gems that look as if they’ve fallen from some distant galaxy, leaving a trail of starlight in their wake.

If there were such a thing as a dominant palette, Ajay didn’t believe in it. He embraced colour as much as he didn’t, steeping some areas in warm molten tones, and softening others, including the grandmother’s suite and guest bedroom, in a spectrum of floaty whites. Where he did embrace the rainbow, he did so sparingly, in the guise of a garden mural here or a leaf-patterned wallpaper there, as head-turning headboards, hand-embroidered ottomans, and handpicked artworks punctuating the calm, creating moments of surprise without ever overwhelming the calm. All in all, it’s a little like Ajay’s life philosophy: a room, like life, works best when bold and quiet each get their turn. ♦ asquaredesigns.in

If Eden were indoors, it would look something like the older daughter's bedroom. The Ochre At Home bed cuts a restrained figure, ceding the spotlight to floral furnishings from OMA Living and Sarita Handa. Above it, a vibrant reef-inspired artwork injects a burst of colour, tying the room's garden-like freshness to an undersea dreamscape (OPPOSITE) From left: The primary bathroom channels a luxurious spa, with fittings from Gessi and Villeroy & Boch, an otherworldly pendant from Jade Design House, and pristine sage countertops; In shades of white, cream and fawn, the mother's room feels as if born from a gentle breeze. A hushed floral mural sits behind the Ochre At Home bed, while a grey Jaipur Rugs floor covering, and furnishings from OMA Living and Sarita Handa, soften the room



SINCE 1999, A Square Designs has been shaping interiors that feel lived-in, original, and entirely personal. Led by Ajay Arya — named on Forbes India's Top 30 Luxury Architects and Designers 2024 — the studio combines careful detailing, inventive furniture, and smart design solutions to create spaces that work as hard as they look. By focusing on clients' real lifestyles rather than labels like “classic” or “modern,” A Square transforms spaces into environments that are functional, stylish, and unmistakably their own.

A FAVOURITE SPOT TO SPEND A SLOW SUNDAY?

In the family lounge upstairs. It's a little retreat – I'd happily sink into the couch and enjoy a TV marathon.

DID THE CLIENTS THROW IN ANY UNEXPECTED REQUESTS?

They did, but some secrets are best kept under wraps!

WHICH SPACE SURPRISED YOU THE MOST ONCE COMPLETE?

Definitely the dining room. The tropical flora-and-fauna inspired light installation above the table completely transformed the mood.

IF THIS HOME HAD A PERSONALITY, WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE?

Warm and inviting - the kind of person who makes space for everyone's quirks but never loses their own character.

