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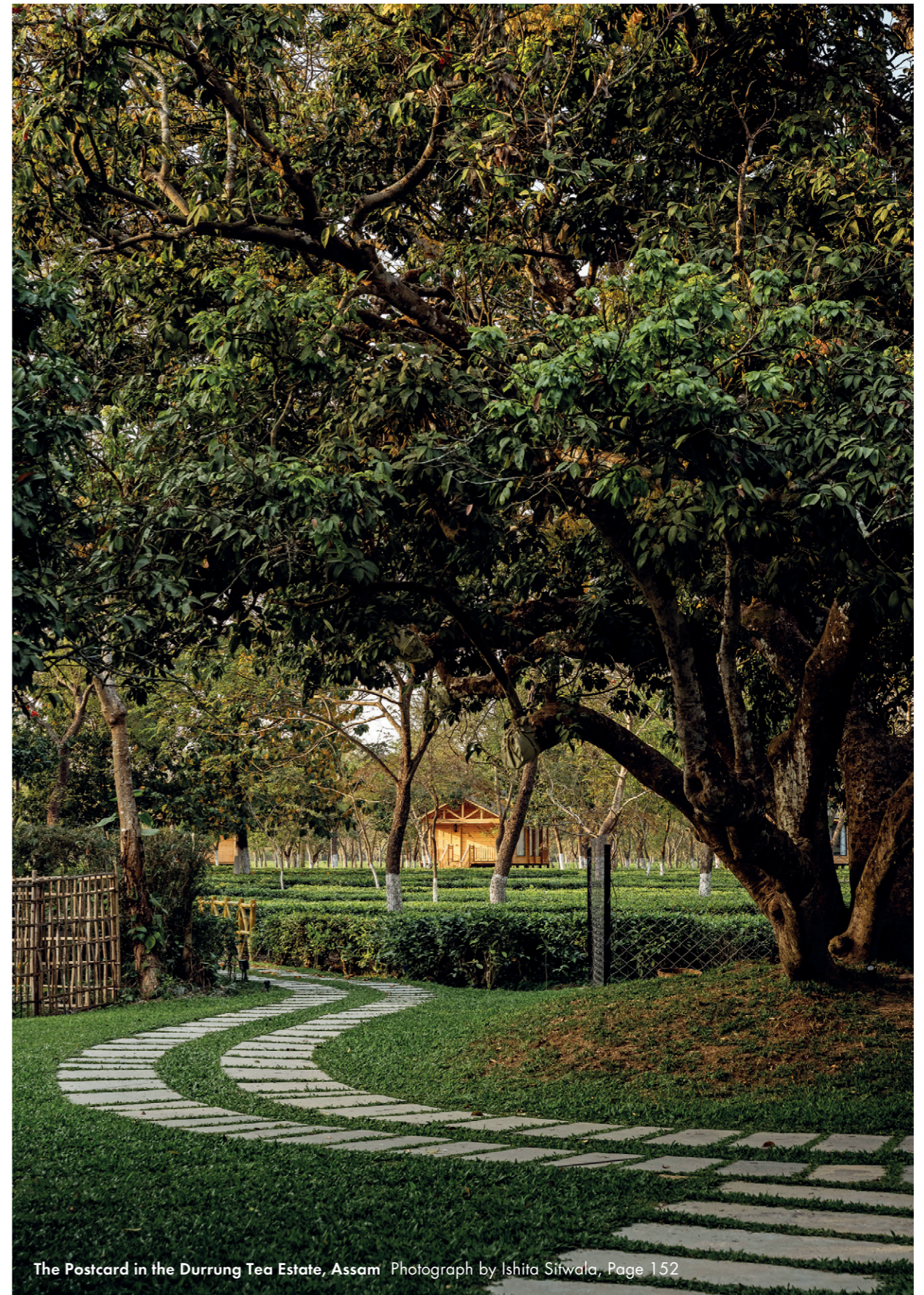
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ELLE DECOR STYLE

Page 140 **STEP INSIDE A THEATRICAL AGE** of India and Paris inside a Mumbai residence sketched out by Vaishali Kamdar and Komal Sanghavi Vasa **Page 152** **MY VIEW IS BETTER THAN YOURS** at The Postcard in the Durrung Tea Estate in Assam **Page 162** **OBJECTS OF OBSESSION** conjure art collector Jaiveer Johal's Chennai apartment, crafted by his friend and designer Samir Wadekar **Page 170** **VOLUME, LIGHT AND QUIET** inside this understated Hyderabad show villa designed by NA Architects **Page 178** **WHAT WOMEN WANT** at this Mumbai apartment anchored by a serendipitous friendship between the homeowner and architect Amritha Karnakar



The Postcard in the Durrung Tea Estate, Assam Photograph by Ishita Sifwala, Page 152

VOLUME, LIGHT AND QUIET

Defined by double-height volumes, water bodies and strategically framed views, is a Hyderabad show villa by NA Architects that writes new narratives in understated luxury

TEXT BY **VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RICKEN DESAI**



Paintings sourced from Kadari Art Gallery lend the living room a palette that echoes the verdant landscaping, while a luminaire from Delhi-based custom lighting company Viroka Luce gives the space a sculptural edge
FACING PAGE FROM LEFT With furniture by Scasa, wide skylights and an indoor water body anchored by a Flex Stone sculpture bring the elements within. A metal lighting installation by Hoozinc Art And Design Studio crowns the space; Windows stand in for walls in the living room, summoning sunlight into the farthest corners
Styling by Scasa



Anyone who knows Niroop Reddy, or has, at the very least, experienced one of his ambitious designs, knows that the Hyderabad-based architect, for better or for worse, has a penchant for packing double the punch. "It's always for the better," smiles the founder and principal architect of NA Architects, who remains faithful to a more-is-more approach. Although, if his latest project in Hyderabad — a 9,600 sq ft show villa — is anything to go by, more, at least in terms of volume, can sometimes equal less. His restraint from excess, on this occasion, is characterised by the double-height void that punctuates the central living area: a hallmark that has come to define his studio over the past decade, and one that proved particularly fortuitous for this project, which he undertook alongside principal interior designer Rupana Reddy.

To Niroop's mind, embracing a singular design ethos was an impractical folly. "Our goal was to create a shell that could easily be tailored to various styles and needs," notes the architect, whose practice also helmed the masterplan, architecture and interior design of the surrounding enclave. This began with opening up the floor plan to make the common and private areas — comprising five bedrooms and six bathrooms — a cohesive whole, while still demarcating the two to keep the home intimate for a few, yet expansive for many. The ground floor was designed around a central courtyard that radiates into parking areas, side lawns, a sit-out, a living room, two bedrooms and back lawns — offering a free-flowing experience in every direction. The first floor plays host to the informal lounge, as well as three luminous bedrooms. The idea of orienting the home upward, towards the sky, led to the realisation of double-height volumes and openings — windows looking up rather than out to the sides. "When the developer came to us with a luxury villa project, we knew it couldn't feel boxed in. Each villa needed to feel like a standalone home with its own privacy. That's what led us to play with double-height spaces, to open things up and connect the volumes both vertically and horizontally. A lot of villa projects end up with these tiny windows to keep out the neighbours' gaze, but we thought: okay, if side views are tricky, why not look up? No one ever complains about a view overhead," mentions the architect. >>

FROM LEFT In the dining room, a chandelier by LightWorks gives the impression of cascading petals, casting a halo over the table and chairs from Scasa; Above the stairwell, a lighting installation by Hoozinc Art And Design Studio channels an otherworldly constellation **FACING PAGE** The double-height living room keeps the sky close, ensuring the abundance of natural light





Niroop used nothing more than sky, water and space to conjure the various levels of the stairwell. A glass balcony on the upper level affords a bird's eye view of the majestic water body below



"We placed the water body right under the staircase to make it feel like it's floating, and also to bring in a sense of positive energy from the entrance"

FROM LEFT The upstairs lounge, outfitted with SCASA furniture, serves as an interlude between the ground and first floors; A mural by Hoozinc Art And Design Studio enlivens one wall of the lounge. At the far back, a curvilinear bar stands sentinel, perfect for drinks after dinner. The furniture is by SCASA. **FACING PAGE** A curved, emerald-toned headboard by SCASA is the crown jewel of the primary bedroom. The bed, armchairs and console are also by the same brand

Of course, the move was underpinned by a value-driven intent. Niroop puts a finer point on the subject, "From a real estate point of view, it's actually a great selling point – the double-height opening faces a private zone of each villa. And the next villa's wall that faces it has been smartly planned with low-use spaces and barely any windows, so privacy is never an issue." What followed was an exercise in upward elevation, including full-height windows – most oriented towards the east and north to keep the sun close, but not too close. To mitigate heat gain, the design team double-glazed the windows and incorporated cantilevered elevations to keep the elements at arm's length, but still within reach. Take the water body in the internal courtyard or in the garden outside; it keeps the landscape centre stage at every turn. "It brings this really calm, serene vibe to the space. We placed the water body right under the staircase to make it feel like it's floating, and also to bring in a sense of positive energy from the entrance," says Niroop of the monolithic sculpture, which serves as a natural focal point and blends in beautifully with the overall airy feel.

Guided by an aesthetic lexicon rooted in luxury, the design team opted for marble finishes and stone cladding, leather furnishings and curated art. Individually selected LED lighting temperatures and generous landscaping were also part of the firm's remit. "We count landscapes as a material too," Niroop says. It's little wonder that the villa comes together like a well-balanced composition – each element deliberate, each detail in service of a space that feels refined, rooted and quietly confident. ♦