

The terrace spills the home outdoors, turning into a lively, sociable setting, framed by chunky masonry planters and a playful mix of flooring underfoot (OPPOSITE PAGE) A roof that alternates between jute and polycarbonate plays with sun and shade as the day progresses



ROOTS & REMOTES

Inside a Bengaluru home by Aanai Design Studio, where smart controls and Maharashtrian memory find an easy rhythm

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The dining nook nestles a charming little corner banquette alongside a table and chairs by Tusker Katha, coming together as an inviting spot to linger (OPPOSITE PAGE) Custom-designed living room furniture by Tusker Katha draws on Wada architecture, gently echoing the family's heritage



Across the bedrooms, teak wood, rattan and fabric inlays come together to lend a warm, comforting feel (OPPOSITE PAGE) The children's bedroom was reconfigured to widen the connecting corridor, while nautical stripes, planets, rockets and astronauts bring the room to life



In a Bengaluru apartment, there are two ways to switch on a room. One involves an app and a carefully programmed lighting scene. The other requires nothing more than opening the balcony doors to Agara Lake and letting the evening air do the work. Between these instincts – one engineered, the other intuitive – the home finds its equilibrium.

Originally from Maharashtra and now settled in Bengaluru, its owners are instinctive hosts. Their home, they insisted, must be generous: in spirit, in square footage, in the way it gathers people close. When they approached Gayathri Padmam H. of Aana Design Studio – having discovered her work online – they were drawn to her studio's ability to marry contemporary clarity with cultural memory. They wanted references to heritage, but without nostalgia; modernity, but without sterility.

The first act is arrival. The entryway was redesigned to elongate the approach, creating a deliberate moment of pause before the apartment unfurls into the living room and the lake beyond. It's a subtle piece of theatre – the kind that doesn't announce itself but lingers. The balcony becomes a proscenium; the water, the backdrop. The gesture reframes an ordinary threshold as an experience, slowing the tempo before the view takes over.

Material choices anchor the interiors. Jaisalmer stone, warm and honeyed, stretches across the floors alongside the cooler restraint of Kota. At the entrance, a Warli-inspired inlay of triangles, circles and squares subtly acknowledges the family's Maharashtrian roots. The reference is measured rather than declarative, woven into daily life instead of displayed.

Behind the scenes, the challenges were exacting. Storage requirements were extensive, yet invisibility was essential. Cabinets were absorbed into walls; niches folded into the architectural rhythm. A mix of tiles and natural stone required painstaking-level coordination, each variation in thickness accounted for with precision.

And, of course, there was the lighting saga. The husband lobbied for dramatic cove lighting with smart controls everywhere – a house that could transform at a voice command. The aesthetic, however, leaned quieter. After rounds of negotiation, colour-changing recessed lights were chosen: adaptable, yes, but discreet enough not to dominate. A détente, sealed in lumens.

The private quarters soften further. Teak wood, rattan, and fabric inlays introduce texture and warmth to the bedrooms. The children's room was reconfigured to widen the connecting



corridor, prioritising comfort and flow. Custom furniture by Tusker Katha – Gayathri's furniture studio – draws from Wada architecture (traditional Maratha courtyard homes), threading lineage through contemporary silhouettes without tipping into pastiche.

One near-misstep became a punchline. The bar cabinet – generous to the point of audacity – arrived looking almost too grand for its corner. The designers held their breath. But not for long. "Luckily, it was filled to the brim within days of move-in," they laugh.

Upstairs, the terrace extends the narrative outward. Masonry planters and varied flooring articulate spaces for conversation and quiet. A roof alternating between jute and polycarbonate modulates shade and light, while integrated drip irrigation sustains a flourishing vegetable garden – a reminder that, beyond automation and precision, this is a home invested in tending.

The apartment ultimately reads as a composed interplay rather than a compromise. Craft and circuitry, heritage and innovation, operate in tandem. One might adjust the lighting from a screen; the other might open the doors to the lake. Either way, the house responds with equal grace. ♦ aanai.in



AANAI DESIGN STUDIO is a multidisciplinary design practice founded in 2018 by architect Gayathri Padmam H. Initially conceived as a custom furniture studio, it has evolved into a residential design practice spanning architecture, interiors and furniture. Rooted in craft and sustainability, the studio's work blends minimal aesthetics with natural materials and contextual design to create spaces that are both functional and deeply personal.

WHAT'S THE ONE DESIGN RISK YOU'RE GLAD YOU TOOK?
Choosing a bold floor colour and layering it with different materials and inlays was a risk, but it anchored the home beautifully and gave it a strong identity.

WHICH OBJECT IN THE HOUSE HAS THE BEST BACKSTORY?
The Tusker Katha furniture drawn from Maharashtrian influences – the sofa nods to Narayan Peth saree patterns, while the dining table echoes the carved proportions of traditional Wada doorways.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST "HAPPY ACCIDENT" IN THE DESIGN PROCESS?
Early builder restrictions actually worked in our favour – as they eased over time, we had both the freedom to introduce meaningful design interventions without compromising structural integrity.

IF YOU HAD TO GIVE THIS HOUSE A NICKNAME, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
Marathi Mane. It honours the homeowners' Maharashtrian roots while feeling at home in Bengaluru.



In the living room, Agara Lake unfolds like a living kaleidoscope, its views shifting and shimmering through the day (OPPOSITE PAGE) From left: Also in the living room, a Ganesha idol takes pride of place atop a Tusker Katha console, set behind a traditional bench by the same maker; Jaisalmer stone defines a petite wash basin, holding a mirror to the golden light that pervades the home