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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ELLE DECOR brings you in-depth articles and insights into design, architecture, decor and culture. Introducing our special contributors



VAISHALI KAMDAR

FOUNDER AND DESIGNER
VAISHALI KAMDAR ASSOCIATES

EDIDA winner, two-time winner of the lemon and spoon race, stationery obsessed, wannabe bad*** who makes up her own words to every song, lover of fools, flowers, citrus fragrances, colour, Nancy Meyers films and serial killer shows in equal measure.

A colour I'm obsessed with...

Emerald green

A fictional character whose home I'd love to redesign...

Nancy Meyer

A compliment I still think about...

My son admitting that I was the funnier parent

In this issue,

she takes us to FCML's showroom in Mumbai, **pg 80**



IRAM SULTAN

PRINCIPAL DESIGNER
IRAM SULTAN DESIGN STUDIO

With 27 years of expertise in luxury residential design and boutique hospitality, Iram Sultan leads her eponymous studio in Gurugram. As Art Director at Sunday Design, she launched the brand's furniture and lifestyle collections and defined the creative direction of all its stores across India.

A colour I'm obsessed with lately...

Washed out shades of terracotta

A product I wish I had designed...

The Klismos chair

A fictional character whose home I'd love to redesign...

Jo March

A feeling I wish I could bottle...

Joy

In this issue, she takes us to the Baid residence in New Delhi, **pg 164**



APOORVA SHROFF

FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL DESIGNER
LYTH DESIGN

Apoorva leads an architecture and interior design studio celebrated for its narrative-driven spaces. With over two decades of experience, she brings a deep sensitivity to context, materiality and innovation. Her philosophy is rooted in conscious decision-making and meaningful impact.

A client request I'll never forget...

After a shower, I want to be able to stretch out my arms and automatically dry

A product I wish I had designed...

Instagram and "fix" the algorithms

A fictional character whose home I'd love to redesign...

Iron Man

In this issue, she crafts a palatial home in Lutyen's Delhi, **pg 192**



SAAHIL PARIKH

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT
WE DESIGN STUDIO

He graduated from the AA School of Architecture, London with an M. Arch in Architecture & Urbanism. Since 2002, Saahil has worked with renowned international firms, most notably, Zaha Hadid Architects and has taught architectural design at the Academy of Architecture and the Balwant Sheth School of Architecture, Mumbai.

A colour I'm obsessed with lately...

Brown

A client request I'll never forget...

Meetings on Sundays

A product I wish I had designed first...

iPhone

A piece of advice I keep returning to...

Stay grounded

A place that feels like home, but isn't...

Singapore

In this issue, they design a voluminous villa in Goa amidst picturesque salt pans and thick mangroves, **pg 178**



NUPUR SHAH

PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT
WE DESIGN STUDIO

She graduated from the Academy of Architecture, Mumbai in 2002. Since then, Nupur has worked with Studio Mumbai and Serie Architects in Mumbai and Zaha Hadid Architects, where she was centrally involved in several successful building projects and international design competitions.

A colour I'm obsessed with lately...

Blush pink

A client request I'll never forget...

A walk-in wardrobe bigger than the bedroom

A product I wish I had designed first...

Sunglasses

A place that feels like home, but isn't...

London

ANCHORED BY AIR

Nestled between sprawling salt pans and dense mangroves, this villa in Goa by We Design Studio is a thoughtful exploration of volume, vernacular, and visual continuity

TEXT BY **VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ISHITA SITWALA**



Set on the edge of a sprawling salt pan in Goa, the villa appears to grow from the ground itself, dissolving gently into its natural surroundings



Two years ago, architects Saahil Parikh and Nupur Shah set foot on a plot of land in the Goan village of Agarvado – and were instantly captivated. “The land was completely untouched,” recalls Saahil. But it was equally wild. “Our first site visit took place during the monsoon, and the terrain was remarkably marshy. I remember struggling to walk across it. By the time we were done, our feet and shoes were caked in thick mud right up to our ankles. Cleaning up took some effort,” adds the co-founder of the Mumbai-based We Design Studio, who went on to clear not just his footwear, but, in time, the spectacular surrounding quagmire as well. Tucked away on a storybook estate spanning ten acres, the site lay cradled between the Chapora River and an expanse of mangroves, its surface dotted with three man-made salt pans. Completing the setting with a villa just as idyllic, then, was a challenge that called for sensitivity over spectacle.

If nature laid the groundwork, the law laid the blueprint for order. Because there were stringent regulations limiting the built-up area of the home, the architects took a prudent approach, distilling the design philosophy of the 6,000 sq ft villa – comprising five bedrooms and six bathrooms – into a manner that put the landscape first. After all, to them, this wasn’t a home to be embellished; it was one to be uncovered, layer by thoughtful layer. “From the outset, the vision was one of restraint and reverence: a spatial response guided not by ornament, but by climate, context, and material truth,” Saahil shares.

In their eyes, the home had to grow from the earth and breathe into the elements. “It seemed like the perfect response, contextually and climatically, to perch it between land and water, tradition and modernity, permanence and porosity,” says Nupur, We Design Studio’s other co-founder. This vision took shape as a sculpted concrete volume at ground level, housing the living and dining areas, kitchen, and guest bedroom; a louvred, cantilevered volume above, hosting four bedrooms and a family lounge; and a subterranean oasis accessible via the pool deck, featuring steam, sauna, and changing rooms. They crowned the structure with a delicate titanium-zinc alloy roof that serves as a slow exhale into the wraparound balcony below, subtly screened by louvred teak shutters that keep the outdoors at arm’s length. >>

A riverfront patio forms a gentle interlude between indoors and out. A nebulous luminaire by The Wicker Story crowns the West Elm seating and centre table by Cane Boutique FACING PAGE With its muted tones and minimal profile, it’s hard to tell where nature ends and the built form begins





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Concrete walls provide a compelling backdrop for a circular artwork by Vibha Galhotra and a wooden Naga rice mill. A surrealist composition by Ian Davis graces a nearby pillar, mirrored by a carpet from Jaipur Rugs; In the living room, the seating and centre table by We Design Studio gracefully step back to let the art take centre stage. Among them is a textile art by Kallol Datta on the pillar. A pendant by The Wicker Story casts a gentle halo over the setting; A piano stands beside the bar, with a lifesize artwork by Jake Grewal in the background



The home meanders effortlessly — the living room quietly gives way to the dining area, demarcated only by a console from We Design Studio. A pendant by Klove Studio on the ceiling forms a sparkling installation above the We Design Studio table and Phantom Hands chairs, while a Jaipur Rugs carpet grounds the space

"This interplay of mass and lightness, of opacity and permeability, defines the home's visual and functional core"



Framed by bespoke stools from We Design Studio, the bar gently yields prominence to the stairside sculpture by Prabhakar Pachpute
FACING PAGE The entrance lobby exudes an otherworldly aura, with a Jellyfish light by Oorjaa evoking a shimmering constellation

In one bedroom, a cocoon of grey frames glimpses of green foliage and blue skies. The timber bed and nightstands are custom pieces by We Design Studio along with a bench by Phantom Hands, echoing the tree trunks with their humble tones and modest silhouettes. Stygian lamps by Shailesh Rajput Studio lend a whimsical edge. The carpet is by Jaipur Rugs

"It seemed like the perfect response, contextually and climatically, to perch it between land and water, tradition and modernity, permanence and porosity"

HOME GOA

The central lounge is a larger-than-life oasis that brings the elements close. A Moustache sofa and armchairs by The KOY Store bask beneath a theatrical chandelier by Klove Studio, while a centre table and stool by We Design Studio offer a sylvan counterpoint. A round carpet by Jaipur Rugs anchors the space as its visual centrepiece FACING PAGE Come morning, slants of light dance across the home





The home is a wonderful Wunderkammer of paradoxes, for every light element has a Stygian counterpoint to match. "This interplay of mass and lightness, of opacity and permeability, defines the home's visual and functional core," Nupur reflects. Indeed, in building the home, the architects didn't build so much on the earth as from it, sourcing indigenous materials and maintaining an architectural lexicon that echoes the natural environment. For example, the staff quarters are paragons of exposed concrete and locally quarried laterite stone that doff their hat to regional construction methods. The home's ground floor is a similar rendition of polished cement plaster, while the first floor, as Saahil describes, "glows like a lantern at night, the light filtering outwards from within." The architects reined in the colour palette, muting the walls and floors in hues of grey, black, green, mustard and terracotta, and softening the hard lines with accents in cane, wood and stone. "The intent was to develop a pure unadulterated architectural experience, one that respects the innate properties of each material used."

In a word or two, if you're counting, the home is Tropical Modern: a verdant sanctuary that frames postcard-perfect panoramas while gently erasing the boundary between nature and nest. But if the infinity pool, whose outer edge melts into the saltpan, is anything to go by, it's also a visual sleight of hand. "It becomes an architectural gesture of continuity, an extension of the home's quiet dialogue with water," Nupur notes. This continuum parlays into the soaring double-height lobby and reappears in the luminous living and dining rooms, designed to complement one another like two halves of a whole.

The sense of discovery doesn't stop at the threshold. A private pickleball court stands sentinel on one side, while an all-weather gym, equipped with machines crafted from recycled timber, leads to a yoga pavilion and a secluded jetty. Just beyond, a greenhouse yields the homegrown vegetables that often star in the sumptuous spreads served at dinner. To a casual observer, the home might appear larger than life, but to those who live here, it's a study in proportion, restraint and spatial clarity, designed not to impress, but to endure. "Despite its scale and setting, the home remains compact, efficient and deeply connected to its environment," Nupur submits. Yes, building within a coastal regulatory catchment wasn't plain sailing. "From building a coffer dam for the pool to working around an open municipal drain, every challenge pushed us to think smarter, not cut corners. If anything, it made the design even stronger." ♦



In the bedroom, wall lights by Shailesh Rajput Studio and metal artwork by Bhagyashree Suthar elevate the grey shell. Armchairs by Phantom Hands, curtains from Window Passions, and a Jaipur Rugs carpet soften the room's hard lines. FACING PAGE FROM LEFT: A quiet corner of the same bedroom that looks out to the greens; The powder room begins and ends in black, punctuated only by a pair of wall lights from Shailesh Rajput Studio