

www.elledecor.in

ELLE DECOR

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2023, ₹150

50 PAGES
TRACING THE
SILHOUETTES
OF SRI LANKA

SPECIAL
75 YEARS OF
LUNUGANGA

GUEST EDITOR CHANNA DASWATTE

**WHY WE LOVE
BAWA'S GENIUS**



An emerald-toned staircase serves as the home's crown jewel. A KOY sectional sofa and a peg table by Length Breadth Height enliven the first-floor lounge

POSTCARD FROM PARADISE

With a spiral emerald-toned staircase, sea anemone-like installations and art that seems poised to come alive, this New Delhi weekend home by Studio Prefix is a sum of many scintillating parts

TEXT BY **VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ANKUSH MARIA** PRODUCED BY **YASHIKA PUNJABEE**



FROM TOP By the foyer is a lounge animated by a sea-anemone-like lighting installation by origami artist Ankon Mitra, a Phantom Hands centre table and a sofa by AKFD. A peanut-shell-shaped bench and a pedestal accent, both by The Wicker Story, add a touch of whimsy. The art is sourced from LATITUDE 28; Adding a pop of sunny yellow is the sofa from Ek Kalakaar Design Studio paired with the coffee table from Phantom Hands FACING PAGE The terrace lounge, cocooned in natural materials explores the whimsy of elements with a suspended light fixture from The Wicker Story, a statement bench by andblack, the chairs and couch from Studio Works and Sunday Design, accompanied by a Hatsu floor lamp



HOME NEW DELHI

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The living room, situated downstairs is a kaleidoscope of curiosities. The suspended lamp, gilded floor lamp and coffee table are FLOS by Aux Home, Case Goods and andblack respectively. A Jaipur Rugs carpet underpins the AKFD Studio chair and the couch is by Sunday Design; The palatial proportions of the primary bathroom inspire visions of queenly Sunday soaks. Pink custom terrazzo sheathes the floor and walls, accentuated by a golden tray from The Good Earth. The gilded table is by AKFD Studio; The mandir is illuminated by light fixtures from Length Breadth Height



"I wanted the staircase to be the focal point. As nature's colour, green was the obvious choice"



The terrace lounge, a gabled double-height volume, is cocooned in natural materials. The custom terrazzo bar is flanked by bar stools by Project 810. Bracketing the painting are lights by Shailesh Rajput Studio while the suspended ceiling lights (partly visible) are from The Wicker Story

In New Delhi's Chhatarpur, where verdant lanes and fortress-like facades are par for the course, there's a 12,000-square-foot weekend home that gives little away. As an urban farm turned weekend retreat, its fine details and natural materials exude a warm and earthy quality reminiscent of the landscape. And yet, its identity is entirely its own, with geometric shapes and organic forms that at once complement and contrast one another, conjuring the illusion of a larger-than-life sculpture. When designer Preeti Kaur, founder and principal of her Delhi-based design firm Studio Prefix, was enlisted to create the retreat for a family of three, the focus was on conjuring up a sanctum that echoed the natural environment. Courtesy of the original builder, two of the home's three storeys were already in place when she took on the design reins. Her role was adding another and weaving the home into a cohesive whole.

The unadorned facade serves as an antithesis to the interior, where kaleidoscopic artworks and scintillating objets d'art animate the earthy shell. Sweeping panes of glass flank the front door, granting a glimmer of the entrance vestibule, whose emerald-toned spiral staircase and island-like seating area summon visitors deeper inside. The latter is of particular note. With an overhead sea-anemone-like lighting installation by origami artist Ankon Mitra, the setting channels a boat adrift at sea – a metaphor, perhaps, for the home's shapeshifting ways. "I wanted the staircase to be the focal point. As nature's colour, green was the obvious choice," says Preeti, who specified the construction in metal to be able to exercise greater control over its curves and angles (a cement alternative would also have taken far longer to execute).

In a bid to reconfigure and reorient the layout of five bedrooms along with living and dining areas with an entertainment floor as a roof top glass structure, Preeti gutted the interior down to the studs and repositioned the bedrooms, while also redesignating the staircase to the front of the house. Additionally, she appointed the public areas to the ground floor and the bar to the terrace, giving the latter a hut-like roof to evoke a cosy countryside dwelling. In harnessing native treasures, she maintained a strictly Indian material palette, opting for Kota stone flooring, louvres made of locally sourced timber, and custom terrazzo objects. By the same token, all the furniture, lighting and accessories in the home – barring two lights that weren't available in the desired specification – are India-made, with an approach to local materials and crafted furniture, lighting and accessories; a philosophy that finds particular expression in the enclosed, double-height terrace. With hard wearing stone floors, dazzling terrazzo tables and terracotta-toned brick walls that nod to the exposed brick facade, it doffs its hat to India's rich artisanal legacy. The living room, on the ground floor, is enveloped by picture windows that highlight the garden beyond.

Wooden accordion-like shutters stand in for curtains along the fixed windows, transforming into a light-proof screen when shut, while dove grey drapes sheathe the operable ones, serving as a soft counterpoint to the breeze. As far as artworks go, one curiosity leads to another, and then another, as evidenced by the selection on display. Paintings of psychedelic human organs and vibrant one-eyed sculptures make up an army of curious creatures that serve as a foil for the pared-back shell.

Another consideration was keeping the furniture restrained and adding colour and character through carpets and art. "The idea was to leave room for edits in the future," notes the designer. The understated design ethos is echoed in the dining room, where muted tones and rustic textures hark to the surrounding landscape. Sliding doors with linen-lined panes keep the outside out and the inside in, affording intimate mealtime moments.

The bedrooms upstairs are a world unto themselves: scalloped skirting and bent wood lights enliven the primary suite, while the sons' bedrooms play host to colourful tchotchkes that act as complements to the enchanting panoramas. In the same vein, no matter where you go – upstairs or downstairs, this way or that – the home presents like a tightly knit tapestry. "It's a home where each object complements another and is part of a larger story. You can take one thing from here and put it there and you'd never know. Everything just fits together like a magical puzzle," observes Preeti. The common and private realms parlay into one another and the outdoors in equal measure. Most evenings, moments after the sun disappears and the moon takes its place, it's the sort of space where work and play might happen together or apart, inside or outside, or not at all. "Here under the stars, anything is possible," Preeti signs off. ♦

The bedroom is dressed in neutrals with wooden shutters for curtains, sculptural pendants by Klove and a grey armchair by Phantom Hands. The bed and adjoining table are from Sunday Design above a Kaati Carpets rug on the floor

