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THE WINDOW SEAT

With traditional katta benches, cement oxide finishes and plenty of verdure, this cabin-like Bengaluru home, designed by Taliesyn is a nod to the homeowner's childhood

TEXT BY VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR
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Holding a mirror to the outdoors, the breeze and sunshine mingle in the central double-height volume of this modern rendition of an old vernacular home. The dining room with furniture from Diale Modern and kitchen are connected by a traditional, built-in bench or *katta* (Kannada for bench) in pigmented cement oxide that runs along the wall. The fans are from Bayside





“The entrance, marked by a pair of 18 ft tall bifold doors, serves as a curious antithesis to the home’s scale and signature, which is an object lesson in paradoxes”



Most weekends when they’re there, Aprameya Radhakrishna and Parinita Narain can be found on the *katte* (Kannada for ‘bench’) in the courtyard, sometimes with a friendly neighbour, always with some piping hot filter coffee. For the couple, such weekend sojourns are a regular occurrence—the happy result of a long-ago manifesto to escape the city more often, albeit on their own terms. “A weekend home was the obvious solution,” says Shalini Chandrashekar, Principal and Director of Bengaluru-based architecture and design practice Taliesyn (co-founded with architect Mahaboob Basha in 2007), who were tapped by the couple to breathe life into their recently acquired 3,800 sq ft plot in Bengaluru.

When it came to the brief, Aprameya and Parinita, who have an eight-year-old daughter, had a checklist ready: open-plan layout, multi-functionality, kid-friendly spaces, and *kattes*—lots of them. “The initial brief was very simple: just a one bedroom, one bathroom space where they could relax and rejuvenate,” shares Shalini. Adding that for Aprameya—a start-up founder and angel investor, and a fourth generation Bengalurean—it was important that the home nod to its time-honoured neighbours. That meant three things: embracing the vernacular, keeping nature close, and above all, casting the spotlight on the *katte*. >>



Another view of the kitchen, which extends out of the living room’s double-height volume. The birch ply cabinetry is by Hanuman Suthar Carpenters and faucet is from Kohler. Ceramic vase from Clayfingers and a planter from Bamboopecker further furnish the kitchen
FACING PAGE FROM TOP The pigmented cement oxide staircase connects the ground floor to the mezzanine. The lowest portion morphs into a bench that extends through the living and dining areas

HOME BENGALURU

The traditional *katte*, as seen here, is a prominent leitmotif throughout the house, representing many happy memories from the homeowner's childhood. Coupled with furniture from Dtale Modern the home embraces the outdoors and romances the sunshine by virtue of its lofty doors and windows





FROM TOP The living room accommodates furniture from Dtale Modern, a Varanasi series painting by Yuvraj Patil and a built-in bench or *katte* in pigmented cement oxide. The carpet is an artisanal creation sourced via A Hundred Hands while the brass tray is the creation of local craftsmen. The louvred doors and windows are Dtale Modern designs; Below the mezzanine is a bathroom suite with an extended walk-in closet. The fittings are by Kohler, while the wardrobe

and mirror are by Hanuman Suthar Carpenters. The louvred sliding door is a custom design by Dtale Modern; Low ceilings in the primary bedroom conjure a quiet, intimate air. The ash wood bed and nightstands are by Dtale Modern, cushion from Gulmohar Lane whereas the bed linen has been picked up from Spain

FROM TOP An arched doorway leads into the bathroom, which holds a mirror to the rest of the home with its brooding walls and ceiling; A peep into the kitchen, where Aprameya and Parinita like to brew their customary filter coffee. The bull painting is by Sujith Kumar GS Mandya, while the artefacts are by local craftsmen. The stoneware accessories are Beruru finds; The kitchen and dining room are two halves of a whole, echoing each other in scale and signature. The dining table with furniture from Dtale Modern is backdropped by a terracotta-toned *katte*



HOME BENGALURU

“Likewise, earthy tones throughout the dwelling evoke the Deccan landscape, whilst the cement oxide walls serve as a cooling antidote to the louvred windows and wooden furniture”



The bathroom in exposed cement finish is a concrete cocoon that leads the eyes to the landscape beyond, visible through the window with wooden blinds from The Curtain Shop. The showerhead and fittings are by Kohler while the wooden tray and accessories are from IKEA
FACING PAGE FROM TOP From the outside, the home resembles a cabin house; Occupying the mezzanine, the exposed cement finish primary bedroom features a three metre high ceiling that cuts a stark antithesis to the double-height volume of the common areas. The bay window offers generous views of the surrounding foliage and a Varanasi series painting by Yuvraj Patil brightens up the interiors. The furniture and window frame are by Dtale Modern



For Shalini, the main priority was working out how to retain the mango tree and jackfruit tree that presided the site. “We ended up making several architectural edits to accommodate them,” recalls the architect, for whom the trees were welcome emblems of the past, akin to the architecture around. In a bid to ground the dwelling in the landscape, Shalini lent the 2,045 sq ft structure, the character of a cabin house, with high ceilings, imperceptible thresholds, and cement oxide floors and walls (which were completed in a single sitting to achieve a seamless finish).

Set along the east-west axis, the house enjoys the sun’s enduring presence. Of course, it isn’t the orientation alone that helps romance the sunshine. It’s also the way the home unfolds, at once upward and outward, blurring the line between nature and the built form. The entrance, marked by a pair of 18 ft tall bifold doors, serves as a curious antithesis to the home’s scale and signature, which is an object lesson in paradoxes. For example, a double-height volume comprising the living and dining areas and the kitchen, also plays host to a mezzanine floor, which houses the master bedroom.

Likewise, earthy tones throughout the dwelling evoke the Deccan landscape, whilst the cement oxide walls serve as a cooling antidote to the louvred windows and wooden furniture. Below the mezzanine hides a washroom with a full-sized walk-in closet and a concrete basin cast in-situ. For Shalini, the diversity of form and levels is merely a metaphor for the various avatars the home must assume (Aprameya and Parinita imagined hosting friends and family there, so it also had to be suited for entertaining).

The *katte* makes a reappearance in the dining room, then again outside, beneath each of the windows, masquerading as an extended windowsill. “We imagined it as the home’s protagonist,” explains Shalini, noting that for the family, most days begin and end on the *katte*, with filter coffee and unfiltered conversation in ever abundant supply.

For Aprameya, the jackfruit tree and mango tree, the friendly neighbours, the *katte* and the filter coffee are little hat-tips to his childhood, re-lived now through the eyes of his daughter. “It’s as if the decades in between just melted away—it’s life coming full circle,” he signs off with a smile. ♦

