

DESIGN RULES

THE JARIWALA HOME IN AHMEDABAD IS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT BY M/S PRABHAKAR P BHAGWAT AND Samira Rathod Design Associates. The house has a culturally cohesive feel, with interior design fusing perfectly with its architecture. Shiny Varghese takes a tour



Hollowed in the centre, the house is reminiscent of pol houses in Ahmedabad with a central courtyard and wooden slatted screens

crafted in teak. The landscaping at the entrance sports flowering shrubs, locally grown trees and a deck to savour the lily pond



The formal living and dining areas act as light boxes akin to a lantern, affording ample scope for light and air to flow freely



Sometimes it helps to be empty, bereft of definitions and labels when one enters such a house. The Jariwala gates open to a wide stretch of landscaped greens, with its lily pond and deck surrounded by flowering shrubs that resembles an oasis within the austere, dry suburb of Ahmedabad.

Sprawled on a 3,000 sq yard plot, the house didn't look like it was built in a hurry. Far from it, is replete with details: from a punctured wall with glass inserts, a tree that guards the façade, an all-over union of wood and concrete, and a play of shadows on the lawns, cast by the overpowering walls.

A collaborative project by M/s Prabhakar P Bhagwat and Samira Rathod Design Associates, the house synergises line and form with interior detailing to create a composition that compels you to sit up and take notice. Not because the

The puja room in brushed brass melds architecture and interiors in its design, form and unconventional styling



Local craft motifs such as mirror work on patola embroidery is translated on the ceiling bringing in light to the central court-

architectural imagery adopts cultural significance or the spontaneous expression in its interiors but because in doing so, neither architects have eliminated the other's identity.

Seldom do you come across a residential project where the architecture and interiors meld so perfectly. The two firms have achieved this without compromising on the client's brief. In an age when architects retreat after having done their work to allow the interior designer to take over, it's rare to find this kind of harmony. Sometimes a designer may break down a wall to fashion a new space or re-lay a floor; but at the Jariwalas, the transition from the exterior shell to the interior almost seems effortless.

The Jariwalas wanted their home to have the feel of a farmhouse, with ample air and light, courtyards and water bodies. This house's first courtyard lies at the entrance, and divides the formal living and dining spaces on either side. Reminiscent of the 'pol' houses of old Ahmedabad, the inte-

Customised furniture for each room lends character, meaning and engages the space with its ingenuity and robust import

riors were made hollow, allowing for the free passage of light and air. However, the central spread of greenery seems to take away and distracts from the fine minutiae of the spiral posts, the fine waves in the wood carving and the richness of the teak-brown grain.

In the living and dining areas, the wooden screens that cordon off the respective rooms act as light boxes and play light-and-shadow games at different times during the day. The generous cross-ventilation lets you forget about the grill motifs or the detailing in the furniture. In this house, the synergy of architecture and interiors orchestrates a sym-



The waterfall lends a quirky touch to the formal spaces, flowing down the rooftop of the guest room into a water body below

From brick walls to granite stairs and red terrazzo pathways, materials have been innovatively used in spaces

phony of spaces, without taking away from its functionality.

For instance, the family room is more than just a TV room. The furniture here achieves multiple purposes, for reflection by the waterfall or an elaborate lounge space for the family of four. The bold colours of the upholstery and drapes offer a contrast to the more muted shades in the formal living room.

The master bedroom wears a more formal air, with views of the greenery outside offering visual relief. The children's room is again functional with an exclusive study space while the fun element goes into the wooden platform that continues from the bed to form an informal floor seating. The guest room wardrobes are elegant yet hardy appearing in a ribbed pattern in wood.

Instead of a skylight, the central ceiling sports punc-

tured circles akin to the mirror work seen in patola embroidery. Not only does this element brighten up the central courtyard but also lets in streams of moonlight on full moon nights. Materials too are innovatively used: from brick that quietly features on landing walls to cuddapah that goes up the stairs and on louvered walls, to red terrazzo pathways. What lies outside the vocabulary of generous space and natural materials, is the puja room. Tucked away in a corner, enclosed in brushed brass, this is a sacred place to contemplate, pause, pray. Without any hint of a traditional puja room, one walks in here out of sheer curiosity than devotion and comes away overwhelmed.

Simply phrased, the house is multi-layered. The warp and weft of architecture and interiors blend the culture and climate of the region in a delightful sense of unity. The Jariwalas are delighted with their home; its multiple-courtyards, nature walks in and around the house, speak for the success of this project. This architectural experiment shows how collaborative projects can work, how spaces can be naturally filled up, and how one can move beyond definitions and achieve a multi-cultural modernity.