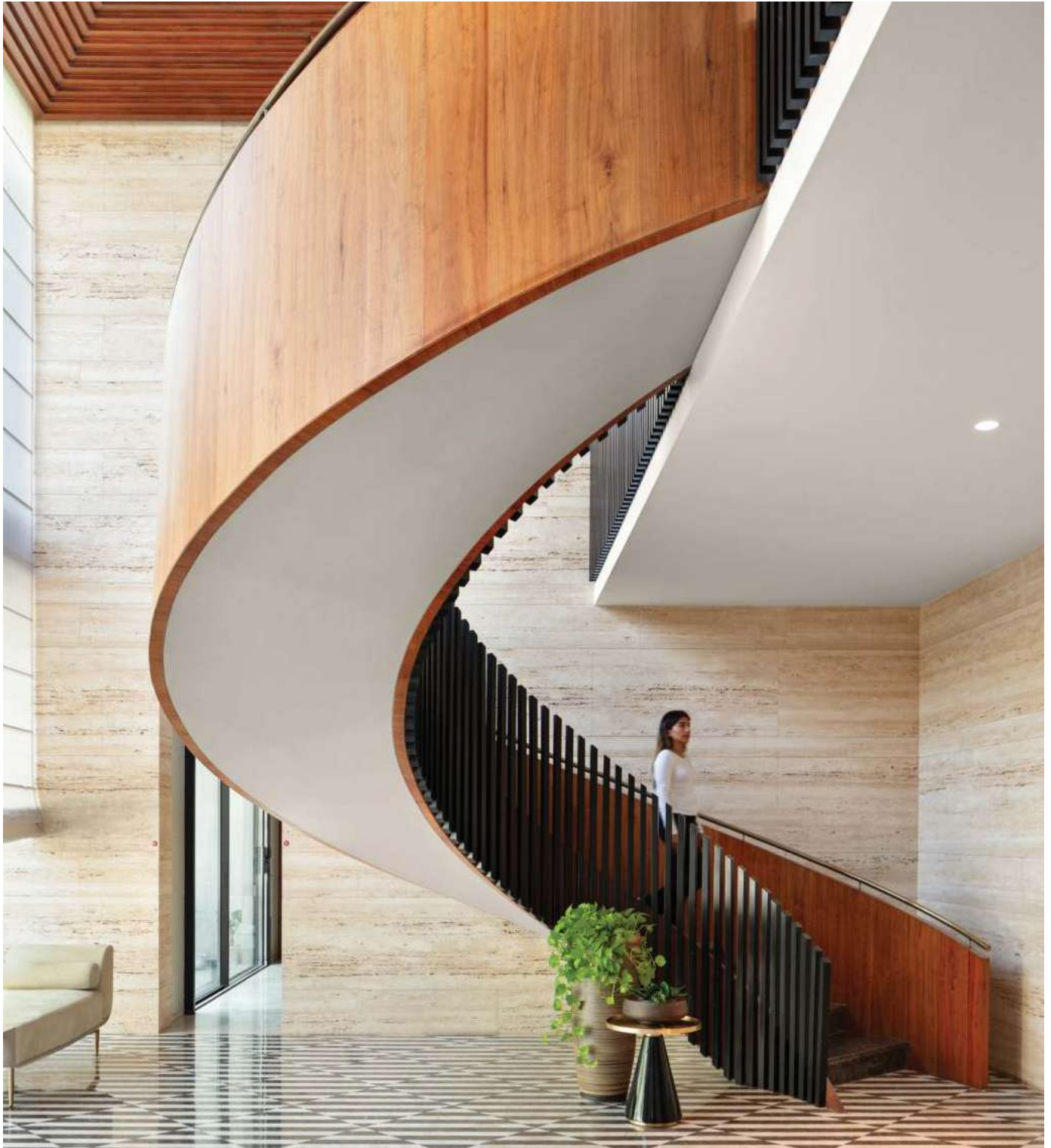


# LUXE CODE

RNI NO. MAHENG/2018/75890 | VOL 5 | ISSUE 3 | ₹500



## DESIGN COLLABORATION

“ *This has changed my life!* ”

- Year 11 Student  
Avalon High International School

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CRITICAL THINKING**

Callido Learning is an organisation founded by former Ivy League graduates who work to develop and bridge the skills gap in students today.

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Art and design have always been powerful mediums for expressing ideas, emotions, and cultural narratives. They have the ability to transcend boundaries and create connections that span across the globe. In this edition, we celebrate the spirit of global collaboration in art and design, showcasing remarkable stories that highlight the power of collective creativity.

The recently concluded London Design Biennale left us in awe with its remarkable display of global collaboration and design innovation. Designers from all corners of the world came together to present their unique perspectives, resulting in an exhibition that was truly a testament to the beauty of diversity.

Speaking of beauty, interior designer Susanna Cots has crafted an extraordinary retreat in "Eternal Spring." This breathtaking project embraces the essence of spring in every detail, reminding us of the harmony that can be achieved when art and design merge seamlessly.

Meanwhile, Bourgeois / Lechasseur architects demonstrated their powerful creative vision in a project that pays homage to the cultural heritage of the Boulevard des Forges area. By respecting the area's physical constraints, they have created a space that reflects both history and innovation.

Art has the incredible ability to evoke a sense of belonging, and Pascale Girardin's captivating ceramic sculptures have managed to do just that. Her awe-inspiring works have amazed audiences at ICFF and Révelations Biennial, creating connections and sparking conversations that transcend borders.

Sometimes, art and design can serve as an escape to serenity. "East India House, Uttan" offers a glimpse into the allure of a space that exudes tranquillity, allowing individuals to find solace and peace amidst the chaos of the world.

In an exclusive conversation with Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani, the founders of MuseLAB, Luxe Code explores inspiring design journeys and creative collaborations. Their insights shed light on the collaborative nature of the artistic process and its

ability to push boundaries and redefine spaces.

The blending of technology and luxury living takes centre stage in "The Classic Green." Plüsch showcases a new kitchen that seamlessly integrates advanced technology with a touch of opulence, creating a space that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

Studio Lotus takes us on a journey where nature and light converge in a multi-generational residence on the outskirts of Raipur in India. Their design philosophy merges new notions of luxury with the raw beauty of nature, creating spaces that nourish the soul.

In the spirit of sustainability and innovation, Quba Homes demonstrates how luxury can be upcycled. By using marquee straw sourced from local farmers, they create luxury furniture and lifestyle products, proving that art and design can be both aesthetically pleasing and environmentally conscious.

Mumbai is known for its dynamic blend of tradition and progress, and a Mumbai apartment featured in this edition showcases this juxtaposition perfectly. Through its tastefully modern design, it brings the hotel experience home, sculpting a progressive yet rooted parade through design.

"Villa Vanilla" in the coastal town of Alibaug offers a sense of tranquillity and serenity. With breathtaking views of the beach and the Arabian Sea, this private property creates a connection between nature and art, reminding us of the infinite beauty that surrounds us.

Lastly, we delve into the inspiring work of ARA Designs, a firm that redefines spaces with artistic ingenuity. By pushing boundaries and challenging conventions, they demonstrate how art and design have the power to transform and elevate our surroundings.

As you immerse yourself in the stories presented in this edition, I encourage you to embrace the collaborative nature of art and design. Let us celebrate the diverse perspectives and creative journeys that shape our world, reminding us that when we come together, we can create something truly extraordinary.

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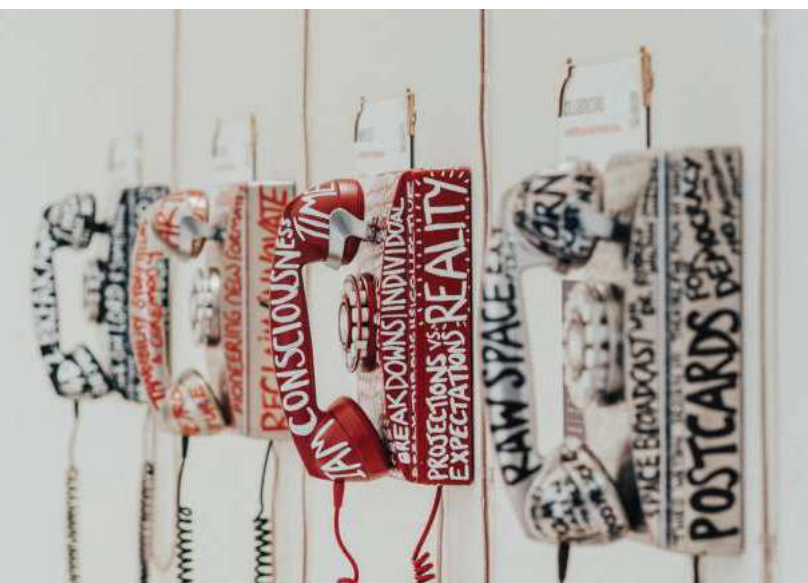
Discover the Inspiring Work of ARA Designs in Redefining Spaces with Artistic Ingenuity



# GLOBAL COLLABORATION

London Design Biennale Concludes, Showcasing Global Collaboration and Design Innovation

Photo courtesy: London Design Biennale



The highly anticipated London Design Biennale, held at Somerset House, came to a successful conclusion, leaving behind a trail of inspiring installations and transformative design experiences. The event, which ran from 1st to 25th June, brought together more than 40 exhibitors from around the world, presenting their vision and solutions to global challenges under the theme “The Global Game: Remapping Collaborations.”

Under the curatorship of the Nieuwe Instituut, led by Artistic Director Aric Chen, the fourth edition of the London Design Biennale created a platform for international cooperation and innovative design practices. The event sought to redefine traditional notions of collaboration in response to the pressing issues faced by humanity.

Spanning the entire Somerset House, the Biennale took visitors on a captivating journey through a range of installations and sensory experiences. From VR gardens and musical instruments to ancient weaving and bread baking, each exhibit pushed the boundaries of design, addressing topics such as urban environments, sustainability, and humanitarian responses to conflicts.

A notable addition to this year’s Biennale was the EU-REKA exhibition, which showcased design-led innovation from the UK’s leading research centres. Academics, leaders, and problem solvers presented cross-disciplinary inventions and creative solutions, highlighting the potential of design to shape the future.

The public program of the Biennale featured engaging talks, hands-on workshops, screenings, and performances. The opening keynote by renowned Japanese architect and humanitarian Shigeru Ban set the stage for thought-provoking discussions on the role of design in addressing global challenges.





Throughout the event, visitors had the opportunity to explore over 40 installations by design teams from diverse backgrounds, representing countries such as Malta, India, Turkey, Chile, Nigeria, South Korea, and many more. Each exhibit presented a unique perspective and invited viewers to contemplate the power of collaboration and the potential for design to create positive change.

The London Design Biennale also awarded several prestigious medals to recognize outstanding contributions. The winners were selected by the International Advisory Committee & Jury, along with the Public Medal, which was voted on by visitors. The medals honoured excellence in overall contribution, inspiring interpretation of the theme, exceptional design, and public acclaim.

Victoria Broackes, Director of the London Design Biennale, expressed her excitement about the event, stating, “The desire to collaborate and drive change in the world for the better - across borders, continents, and disciplines - is more important than ever. We are excited to invite Londoners and visitors to the capital to experience these multisensory and interactive exhibitions seeking solutions.”

Aric Chen, General and Artistic Director of the Nieuwe Instituut, highlighted the importance of global collaboration, stating, “The Global Game: Remapping Collaborations aims to create an alternative geopolitical landscape driven by cooperation. We hope real international exchanges will arise from this biennial, inviting visitors to become part of the process.”

The London Design Biennale has once again demonstrated the power of design to inspire, confront challenges, and ignite collaboration on a global scale. The event provided a platform for creative minds to come together and envision a better future through innovative design solutions. □

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO EXPLORE THE EXHIBITS FROM THE LONDON DESIGN BIENNALE, PLEASE VISIT [LONDONDESIGNBIENNALE.COM](https://london设计biennale.com)

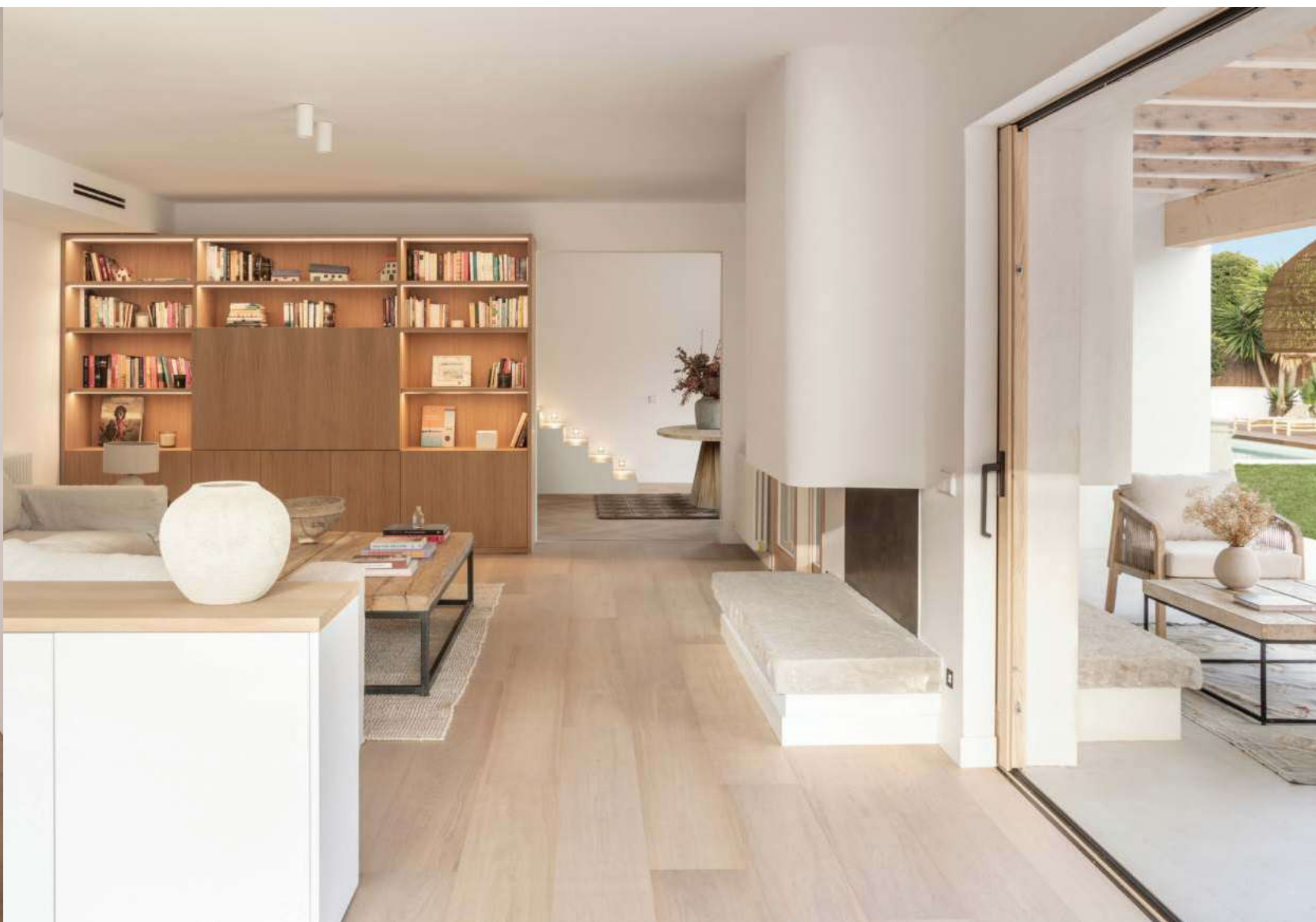


# ETERNAL SPRING

Interior Designer Susanna Cots Creates a Breathtaking Retreat  
Embracing the Beauty of Spring in Every Detail

Photo courtesy: Mauricio Fuertes







Although it is not written in any book, there is a type of spring we call Ibiza. It is a spring where white and green colours rule, and where sand is at the helm. It is a spring where a small fountain waters the sunlight, and one filled with that which is born, that which says farewell, and that which we do not see, but feel inside ourselves.

If the briefing for this project were a season, it would be a dimly lit winter in the 1970s, looking to create a new path. With that in mind, interior designer Susanna Cots took charge of the design, guiding it toward the light by opening up the space using large windows looking outward so that nature could penetrate 350m<sup>2</sup> of this Mediterranean house, with 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of the garden.

And so, spring begins. The tour begins from the entrance hall, where the first opening reveals part of the garden that presides over the pool, and where the guest house can be seen as an annex to the house. It is a space that connects to the main

building through a glass corridor.

#### **A fusion between the natural and the intimate**

This spring, as in any season at the Susanna Cots studio, there is a language of fusion between the natural and the intimate, giving rise to a symmetrical dialogue between the interior and the exterior. In this project, that dialogue is found in the living room and the kitchen, where the doors fully open: the porch becomes a dining room, and the dining room becomes an extension of the porch. The uniting element is a single chimney, projected in a symmetrical way, which is found in both rooms.

#### **Give space to the essential, without saying it**

The dining room undoubtedly sits at the heart of the home and family activity. Like a jewel in the designer's subtle style of framing prominent areas, the space is crowned by a natural beam ceiling and is defined by one of two cupboards that mark the identity of the room.







In the kitchen – which covers almost the entire elongated space of the house – another cupboard is found in the form of a small office and breakfast area. What one thinks (opening yourself to the world) and what one does (celebrating the world) are elements that the interior designer knows how to transition from thoughts to reality, with symmetry of spaces being a mirror of fidelity between thinking and doing.

Connected to the dining room, the living room, with a television and an additional fireplace, offers moments of security and protection. Again, the designer creates a new interior-exterior projection here through doors that open completely to integrate the living room with a truly extroverted exterior: an exterior space with a purely Mediterranean-inspired white bench, accompanied by a fountain to refresh the surroundings.

With the same game of symmetries – vertical in this case – the upper floor contains the office, which is a versatile area for study and play that becomes a third living room.

#### **A garden culminating in a beautiful greenhouse**

The garden features a Nordic-inspired greenhouse that serves as a meeting point for family and friends. It is a magical space that combines the enjoyment and warmth of any season of the year with ubiquitous gastronomy and beauty.

#### **Maximum privacy in the upper areas**

The versatility that the owners sought to infuse into the ground floor, as well as their desire to share every single corner of their home, is expressed through a protective intimacy engulfing the first floor. The maximum comfort point is reached in the master suite, where another fireplace warms the bed and the shower. Two symmetrical suites that share a fully furnished bathroom were designed with doors integrated into the furniture, thus being hidden from the views of all rooms. The project also features another suite with a separate bathroom. □



# CREATIVE VISION

This project by Bourgeois / Lechasseur architects reflects a powerful creative vision that respects the cultural heritage of the Boulevard des Forges area and its physical constraints.

Photo courtesy: Adrien Williams



Inspired by a narrative that calls on nature and culture, in which tales and legends have been fed by the surrounding natural setting that follows the meandering St. Maurice River, the project itself becomes a work of art articulated around the site's own attributes.

Since the Quebec firm's founding in 2011, Bourgeois / Lechasseur architects has been attracting attention to its carefully crafted public and private commissions. The architects' fascination with Quebec's majestic landscapes, as well as the dramatic cliffs of the Magdalen Islands, has led them to constantly search for innovative solutions, while never losing sight of their roots.

The firm gained notable acclaim for Est-Nord-Est, an international artist residence located 100 kilometres east of Quebec City. Bourgeois / Lechasseur architects have built several projects in the magnificent Charlevoix region, one of Quebec's most compelling tourist destinations. The firm is currently working on a unique set of cottages to be built a short distance from legendary Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

If the master founder was the orchestral conductor of operations at Les Forges, the architect is the craftsman-blacksmith of the residence. Designed and motivated by the region's industrial, yet poetic heritage, the house is sculpted

and moulded to carefully reflect and respect the topographic slopes, the views, the vegetation, and the meandering curves of the river.

Accessed via a 265-metre long private driveway along Des Forges Blvd., the black, unusual shape of the residence gradually reveals itself through the immense pines. As you approach, the vision grows clearer: Résidence des Forge emerges, entered from the lower floor, on the forest side.

Located at a height of 55 m on the edge of the cliff's erosion zone, the upper floor of the house rises from the ground and follows the curves of the St. Maurice River. The area presents several challenges, particularly in respect to municipal regulations, but also in terms of the steep slope that characterises the site's topography. Siting restrictions limit the construction of buildings near the cliff. Therefore, in order to fully enjoy the views, the new construction had to be built in alignment with the cliff's profile at a distance of 20 m. This specific site constraint is echoed behind the sprawling design that defines the project's morphology.

Résidence des Forge consists of three wings set on a natural stone foundation. Each of the wings is supported by a main structure of steel, as well as an intentionally exposed secondary woodwork structure. The latter intertwine at the centre of





the project to showcase an open space, where a monumental stairway becomes the centre of attention.

Black spruce plank siding was chosen for its visual neutrality.

The whole ensemble creates an unusual volume that breaks away from the horizon to reflect the desired effect the designers were seeking to convey from the very first sketches. When approaching the site, the intention was to project an image of a mysterious object floating among the trees and interacting with the river bends. The upper floor appears to be suspended in mid-air, while the living areas are cantilevered and focus the views on the surrounding landscapes.

The idea was for the prism to blend in with the surroundings and to leave as much room as possible to the natural texture of the stone used for the foundation.

The ceiling is covered with knot-free cedar slats, providing a warm and soft contrast to the black exterior. The cedar ceiling extends outside into a screened room, accentuating the transparent effect. The entrance is accessed through a covered outdoor space, sheltered from the elements and arched on all four sides. The design of the arches is inspired by Les Forges du Saint-Maurice, echoing traditional natural stone masonry techniques. The design is quite simple and effective, with the solid wood and glass front door opening onto the centre of the

residence where the three wings meet. In terms of spatial planning, the living areas and the master suite are located on the second floor, whereas guests and visiting family areas, as well as garages and utility rooms, are located on the first floor.

Shaded, natural stone siding runs inside and across the double-height space to cover an enclosed block that separates the two open areas upstairs. The staircase wraps around cascading pendant fixtures and directs attention towards the upstairs living areas. Beyond the kitchen, in the boudoir, a wood-burning fireplace integrated into a massive stone wall soothes the room and offers a warm contrast to the raw materials of concrete, steel and glass. Supported by a V-shaped steel structure, this generously fenestrated space offers a breathtaking view of the St. Maurice River and connects to a large deck. The exterior staircase delicately follows one of these angulated frames and leads directly to the ground level, into a covered outdoor relaxation area.

This modern residence blends in respectfully with the landscape of the St. Maurice River. It demonstrates that the constraints of the site, as well as the region's cultural heritage fed by folklore surrounding Les Forges du Saint-Maurice, can serve as a basis for a strong concept that generates quality architecture that is also environmentally aware. □



# BELONGING THROUGH ART

Captivating Ceramic Sculptures by Pascale Girardin  
Amaze Audiences at ICFF and Révélations Biennial

Photo courtesy: Stephany Hildebrand

**R**enowned ceramicist Pascale Girardin astounded visitors with her latest collection of extraordinary artworks at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York City and the Révélations biennial in Paris. Showcasing her unique fusion of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design sensibilities, Girardin captivated attendees with her larger-than-life compositions and thought-provoking concepts.

Girardin is celebrated for her architectural installations, which consist of meticulously handcrafted pieces meticulously arranged into stunning masterpieces. Her extraordinary creations adorn luxury retail spaces, restaurants, and hospitality establishments worldwide, including notable clients such as Four Seasons, Nobu, Peninsula, and Saks Fifth Avenue.

At this year's ICFF and Révélations events, Girardin unveiled her latest collection, Figura II, a series of awe-inspiring large-format ceramic sculptures. Each piece, ranging from 38 cm to 160cm in height, presents a visual narrative that resonates with the universal theme of belonging. The sculptures' grand scale and distinct contours serve as a symbolic representation of our shared human experience. In a world marked by increasing population movements and exchanges, the concept of belonging becomes a fluid state influenced by our interactions within various social ecosystems. Drawing from her personal experiences of multiple relocations during her childhood, Girardin infuses this collection with profound conceptual, formal, and

personal significance. Her relationship with clay and her contemplation of humanity are intertwined, resulting in artworks that evoke a deep exploration of identity and belonging.

In addition to Figura II, Girardin presented Dunes, a limited-edition lighting collection created in collaboration with Montreal artist and designer Maud Beauchamp. Inspired by the ever-changing formations found on the Earth's surface, Dunes serves as a testament to the impermanence of our world. The captivating landscape created by these lighting fixtures invites viewers to reflect on the transient nature of existence.

Girardin's artistic process embraces traditional coiling and slab-building techniques, intentionally leaving traces of her touch on the sculptures. This tactile connection, rooted in the ancient Greek term "haptēin," meaning touch, forms the essence of her artistic approach. Through the Figura series, Girardin aims to deepen our understanding of our interconnectedness as human beings through our relationship with the material world. The sculptures, intentionally open to interpretation, encourage viewers to engage in a dialogue based on their personal perspectives and experiences.

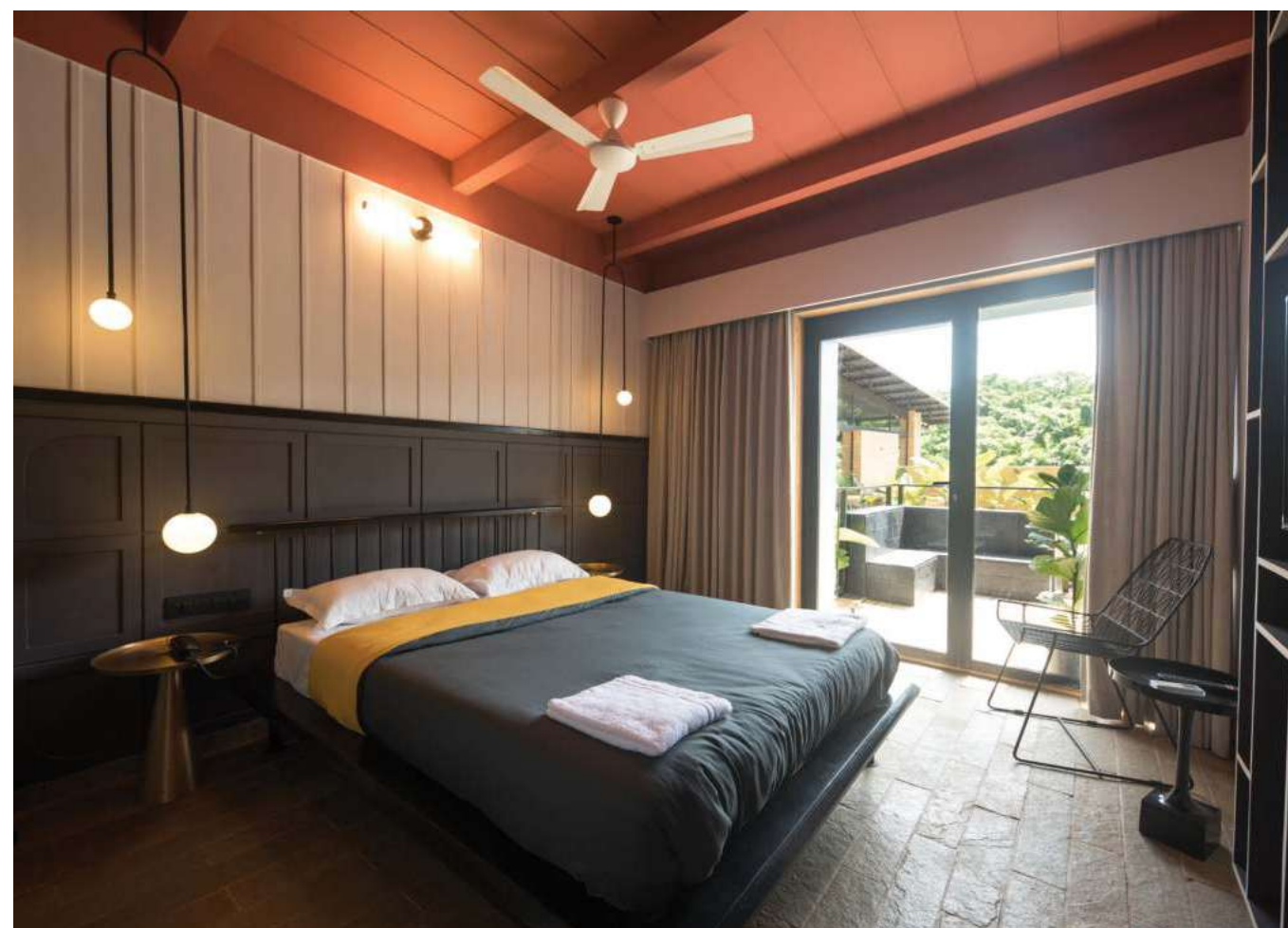
During the ICFF and Révélations biennial, visitors had the exclusive opportunity to meet Pascale Girardin in person and engage in insightful discussions about her captivating artworks. Girardin's presence added an extra layer of depth and understanding to the viewing experience, allowing attendees to gain deeper insights into her creative process and artistic vision. □

# ESCAPE TO SERENITY

Discover the Allure of East India House, Uttan

Photo courtesy: East India House





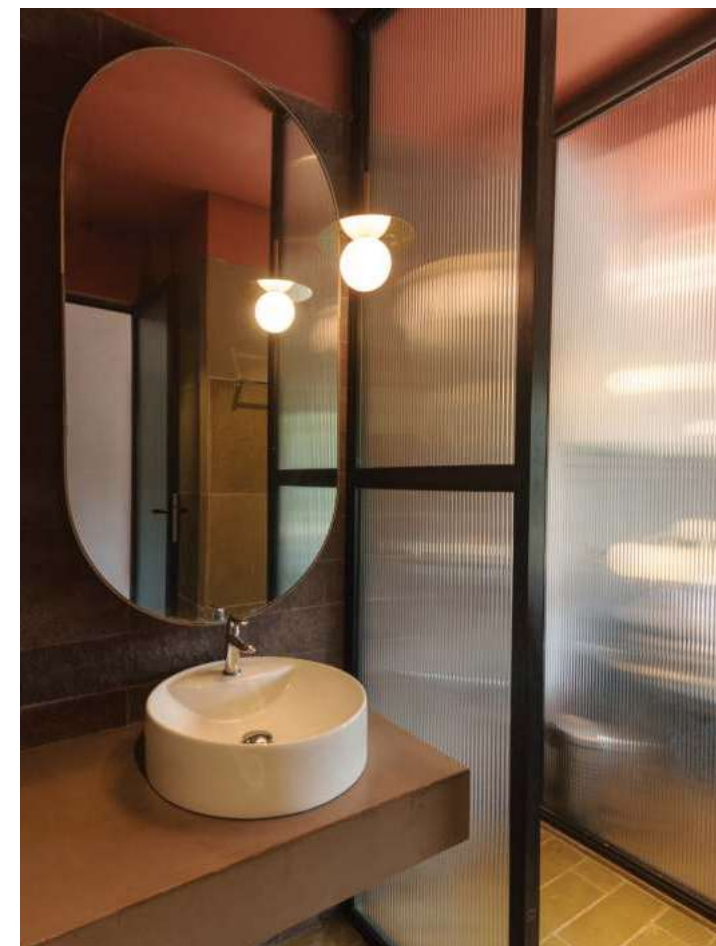
Nestled amidst the unexplored beauty of Uttan, just a short drive away from the bustling heart of Mumbai, lies a hidden gem waiting to be discovered. East India House, a venture by experienced architects and real estate experts, invites discerning travelers to embark on a journey of tranquility and immerse themselves in the rich culture of East India. With its unique blend of luxury, nature, and authentic experiences, this boutique hospitality destination promises an unforgettable escape from the ordinary.

#### The Vision Behind East India House

Drawing inspiration from their 18 years of expertise in architecture and realty, the founders of East India House recognized the untapped potential of Uttan. Their vision was to create a space that not only showcased the region's pristine wilderness but also celebrated the vibrant East Indian community and its traditions. Situated on a secluded spot that overlooks a picturesque hillock, East India House captures the essence of Uttan, offering guests a chance to disconnect from the urban chaos and reconnect with nature.

#### Unveiling a World of Experiences

While indulging in the luxurious amenities, such as the mesmerizing infinity pool and savoring the magnetic flavors of the curated menu, East India House goes above and beyond to ensure a truly enriching stay. Guests can delight in the evening's live and unplugged events featuring upcoming talents, where they can sing along to their favorite tunes. In the mornings, a serene yoga session accompanied by the soothing melodies of a live flute sets the tone for a peaceful day ahead.



To foster community bonding and creative exploration, East India House plans to introduce an amphitheater space. This innovative addition will host various workshops conducted by professionals, spanning art, music, and culture. From intimate gatherings to larger events, these initiatives aim to bring people together and spread joy. Additionally, guests can partake in cycling and walking tours through the captivating East Indian villages, immersing themselves in the local architecture and culture. The journey concludes with an authentic East Indian meal cooked by one of the locals—a true feast for the senses.

#### Embracing Sustainable Farming

Promoting sustainability and farm-to-table experiences, East India House has established a small farm managed by local experts. This farm not only supplies fresh produce to the kitchen but also provides guests with the opportunity to participate in harvesting activities and witness the journey from the farm to their plate.

#### Unveiling Future Plans

As East India House enters a new phase of expansion, it envisions the addition of five elevated tree houses nestled amidst the wilderness of the hillock. Accessible through an elevated

ropeway, these unique accommodations will offer a truly immersive experience surrounded by nature. Furthermore, plans include hosting brunches during events and opening specialty restaurants across Mumbai, spreading the essence of East India House's distinctive hospitality.

#### Exquisite Experiences at East India House

East India House presents a collection of ten intimate rooms overlooking the serene lily pond and infinity pool. The upper deck rooms boast balconies that offer breathtaking views, while the lower deck rooms feature tranquil Balcaos surrounded by the enchanting lily pool. The infinity pool itself captivates with its panoramic vista of the hillock, complemented by a separate kid's section and a reflection pool—a haven for relaxation.

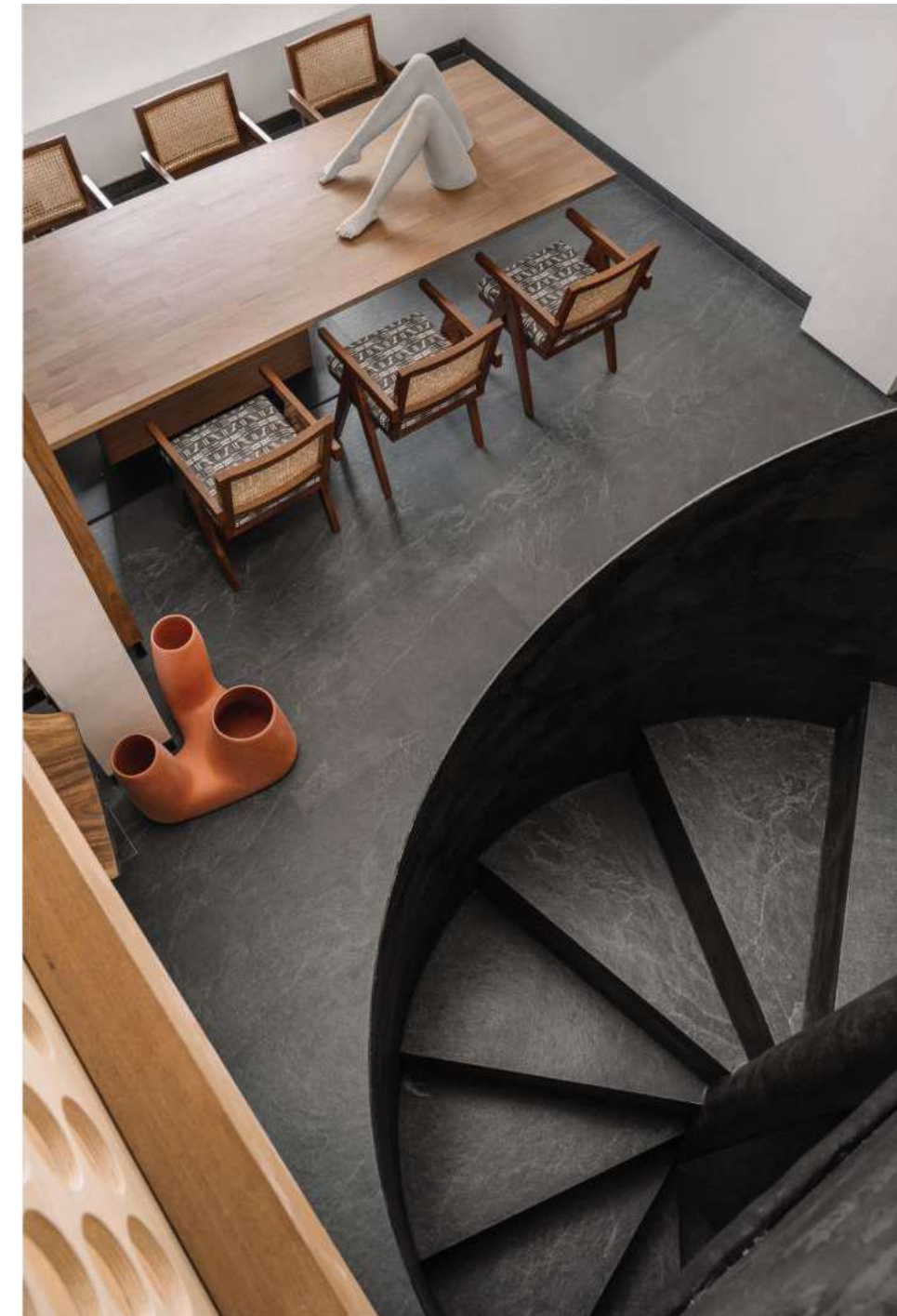
Guests can start their day with a revitalizing yoga session accompanied by the mesmerizing melodies of live flute performances. The curated food experience takes center stage during mealtimes, offering a rotation of Indian, pan-Asian, and continental flavors. Lunchtime unveils a modern twist on the traditional thali, presented in an elegant bento box format. Come evening, indulge in a five-course plated meal while basking in the soothing ambiance of live unplugged music—a delightful treat for all. ▣



# CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

Luxe Code in conversation with Huzefa Rangwala and Jasem Pirani  
founders of MuseLAB.

Photo courtesy: MuseLAB





#### What is the design practice of MuseLAB?

We wanted to build a place that encourages creative thinking and pushes the dialogue on design possibilities. Everyone at MuseLAB has a say in the design process but the final say is ours. We share equal creative duties and have never had defined roles. We share a close relationship that is built on trust. Not to say that we do not have disagreements of course we do but we both realise when one has to step back and when one has to lead on a particular design decision. We have intentionally decided to keep our practice boutique as we prefer to make most decisions together. What keeps us going is our constant hunger to conquer newer pastures be it a product, interiors or architecture.

#### How did you meet each other?

We met in Savannah where I (Jasem) was attending Savannah College of Art and Design and Huzefa was visiting a common friend over a long weekend. At that time Huzefa was doing his Masters at Georgia Tech. In 2008, while we were travelling



across Central America, our conversations revolved around launching a space that functioned as a gallery/ boutique during the day and transformed into a bistro bar by dusk. Interestingly, we were so enamoured by this idea that there was no discussion of launching a design practice at all. Finally during the last quarter of 2011, when we both decided to move on from the Indian firms we were working for and deep dive into the pool of design start-ups. Design, at the end of the day, is nothing but an exercise in solving problems creatively, sans scale. And it is this philosophy combined with our love for travel, food and fashion that formed the genesis of a coalition and an idea that we would collaborate in some capacity on a creative platform.

#### How would you define each other and how did you go about setting up the business?

As individuals, our dynamics are very different. While Huzefa is energetic, pragmatic and constantly looking to connect with as many people as possible to collaborate with and of course keep the studio on their toes and in splits. I (Jasem) keep everyone





glued together and am a stickler for processes reminding everyone to constantly explore the intangible.

Our early days were not easy and the struggle was real. We lived from project to project but we were blessed with the right ingredients - a supportive family, a zeal to excel, a passion to create and most of all, we had (and still have) each other's back. Going door to door literally and showcasing our portfolio and leaving behind a printed folio with a select few images of our combined portfolios. Within the first six months of 2012, we worked on proposals for a 16000sft home in Chennai with plenty of drama, a public toilet and a high-rise residential building in Mumbai along with some 10-odd interior design projects. The flip side was that these were all on paper and we ended our first year at MuseLAB completing a compact two-bedroom apartment in Mumbai that we lovingly call Braided Comfort. And that is another thing we were impressed upon - to design and detail each project like it was our own; thus naming them came naturally to us.

#### **How did you come up with the name MuseLAB?**

We often get asked why MuseLAB or we get a call asking if we are a sound lab(which does sound fun) or a path lab. While we were very sure of using 'Muse' as the prefix, the contenders for the second half of the word were kitchen, factory and lab. After much back and forth, we unanimously decided on LAB. What does MuseLAB stand for? A 'muse' is an inspiration that we seek in our client's stories, our projects and everyday objects. But, to 'muse' is to think, to ideate. And a lab is a space in which one explores, experiments, researches, develops and eventually creates.

In our formative months, we also realised that the philosophy of good design is simple – listen, learn and narrate. One needs to be sensitive to the context. And with this, one must create an opportunity for self-styled storytelling which is integrated with the design process to focus on creating transformative experiences. The work and the aesthetics of a good designer are a reflection of their understanding of the client's brief. And



so far, this approach has worked brilliantly for us. Each project irrespective of scale and typology is concept-driven and relates to a central narrative.

#### How would you define your design process?

Ours is a collaborative practice. As principal designers, we ensure that designs conceptualised by us are evolved within the studio through creative discourses with the entire team. For us, the opinion of every individual in the studio counts and each viewpoint is considered. Outside the studio, we extend our collaborations to our vendors and fabricators. Be it customised printed tiles with the former or CNC-milled Burma teak wood facades with the latter, our projects involve extensive research and development with resourceful individuals who are as excited about adding value to the project as we are. We also encourage our clients to engage with us in the design process; in some cases, we collaborate with them too. For instance, the craftsmen employed by Huzefa's mom's boutique, helped us create the cross-stitched wool work on perforated bison board panels that donned the walls of the boutique project. And the results showed how thoroughly we enjoyed the design process, one which involved extensive research and development on a collaborative platform.

#### What is MuseMART?

Independent of our projects we like to explore and research materials and design and therefore in 2015 we launched MuseMART our product design division. These self-propelled projects empower us to embrace the uncomfortable, learn from our failures and nurture our creativity. As a practice, we are continuously seeking to explore, learn and find solutions. These learnings then find their way into our projects at different scales. It was always clear that we would take on any design challenge and treat it as an opportunity which is given careful thought and consideration. Rather than focusing only on architecture, we decided to make ours an end-to-end studio that creates thoughtful and engaging architecture, interior environments, furniture and products. We use both intuitive and

traditional methods of analysis to identify the tangible and the intangible. Each experience and or product embodies integrity and is created with the same care, skill and attention to detail.

With so much experience in furniture customization and our learnings from MuseMART products, it was but natural for us to then launch our furniture line; The Hedonist Collection which debuted at the RAW Collaborative in 2019. Each piece from this collection stands on its own and works together as a collection. The first collection explores technique, form and materiality. In the last quarter of 2019, we were itching to further explore materiality and deep dive into research-based projects. In early 2020 we launched MuseX, our studio's dedicated research arm. Through this conscious effort, we are looking to explore relevant technological tools to be able to adapt to changing environments and deliver unique solutions through collaborations. At present, through MuseX we are exploring algal cultivation, a prototype for a market on wheels inspired by the humble cart and a design proposal for a human-centric public toilet system.

#### What is next for MuseLAB?

As we step into our eleventh year, the next couple of years are going to be crucial for us but it is also the most exciting time for us. MuseLAB is currently working on architecture and interior design projects of various typologies in 18 cities across the country while MuseMART has tied up with several makers to foster bespoke furniture collections and products. Our hunger to create is still as strong as it was in 2012. Our plans include adding a workshop space that enables us to be able to further experiment with materiality, and create things by hand. Eventually, we would like to invest in the possibility of having our own bed and breakfast with an artist-in-residence program. The challenges are certainly going to be there - what is crucial is time management and pragmatic planning which is what we plan to do in the year leading up to our 11th year. We are confident of the ecosystem we have built around us and the culture at MuseLAB which values different opinions and every individual personality. □



# THE CLASSIC GREEN

This new kitchen by Plüsch fuses technology and luxury living seamlessly.

Photo courtesy: Plüsch



Plüsch embodies a new energy and a compelling promise in the domain of luxury living; be it kitchens or lifestyle products. The brand was a pioneer in bringing the best German luxury brands to India; beginning with Poggenpohl for kitchens, Gaggenau for appliances and Interluecke for wardrobes. The transition from SIS Imports to Plüsch has been steady and well thought-out. While the parent company SIS IMPORTS remains the same, the Plüsch brand offers the much-needed strong, iconic brand name to assemble the wide product portfolio under one umbrella.

Plüsch redefines contemporary kitchens and the art of space optimization with the Classic Green Kitchen - Beckermann by Plüsch. The Classic Green kitchen is a new-age, elegant kitchen that intertwines innovation and tradition that represents the pinnacle of kitchen design.

The integration of meticulously coordinated intricate de-

tails, materials, and colours establishes a sophisticated country house-style kitchen and the foundation for a harmonious multigenerational household. Inventive organisation solutions and lighting ensure optimal functionality and convenience, enriching the culinary experience with unparalleled levels of excellence. Each kitchen showcases a distinctive shutter design and groove that exudes a unique and characteristic style.

The Classic Green Kitchen features a diverse range of colours and finishes, catering to a wide spectrum of users with discerning tastes. With its soothing tones and simplistic style, Plüsch effortlessly achieves the perfect addition to urban Indian homes. Infused with German standards, superior materials and elegant aesthetics, it is economical and facilitates easy operation and use, while exemplifying luxury. Plüsch harmoniously fuses technology with tradition with the Classic Green Kitchen, seamlessly integrating modernization while preserving its timeless character. □

# CONNECTING NATURE AND LIGHT

Studio Lotus creates this multi-generational residence on the outskirts of Raipur in India, which blends new notions of luxury with nature and light.

Photo courtesy: Noughts & Crosses





Smaller cities in India are becoming playgrounds for a new architectural vocabulary as young homeowners move away from ornamentation and kitsch, focusing instead on a comfortable living experience centred around natural materials, ample daylight, and seamless transitions between the inside and outside. The Quadrant House in Raipur is the result of one such experiment — the multi-generational home stands in understated contrast with its surroundings, weaving in and out of its landscape.

Studio Lotus, an Aga Khan Award-nominated Architecture practice based in New Delhi founded by Ambrish Arora, Sidhartha Talwar and Ankur Choksi, has created this stunning home that visualises the needs of the family and built living experiences that centre around nature and light.

This house is located in a plotted development on the outskirts of Raipur, the 1.3-acre site lies at the heart of the community's public space — the society's temple stands to its south, the clubhouse sits across its northern end, and an arterial road forms its western edge. This location prompted an inward-looking design scheme, with a central green space flanked by the residential block to the south and a pool house along the north. The pool house also acts as a buffer between the community clubhouse and the residence, easing the transition from public to private areas.

The site's zoning emerged from Vastu principles, which resulted in two intersecting axes of movement dividing the house into four blocks. At the intersection of the two axes lies the heart of the home: the family living and dining area where the seven members of the household congregate. The pool house forms the recreational block comprising a lounge, a gym, and an outdoor swimming pool.



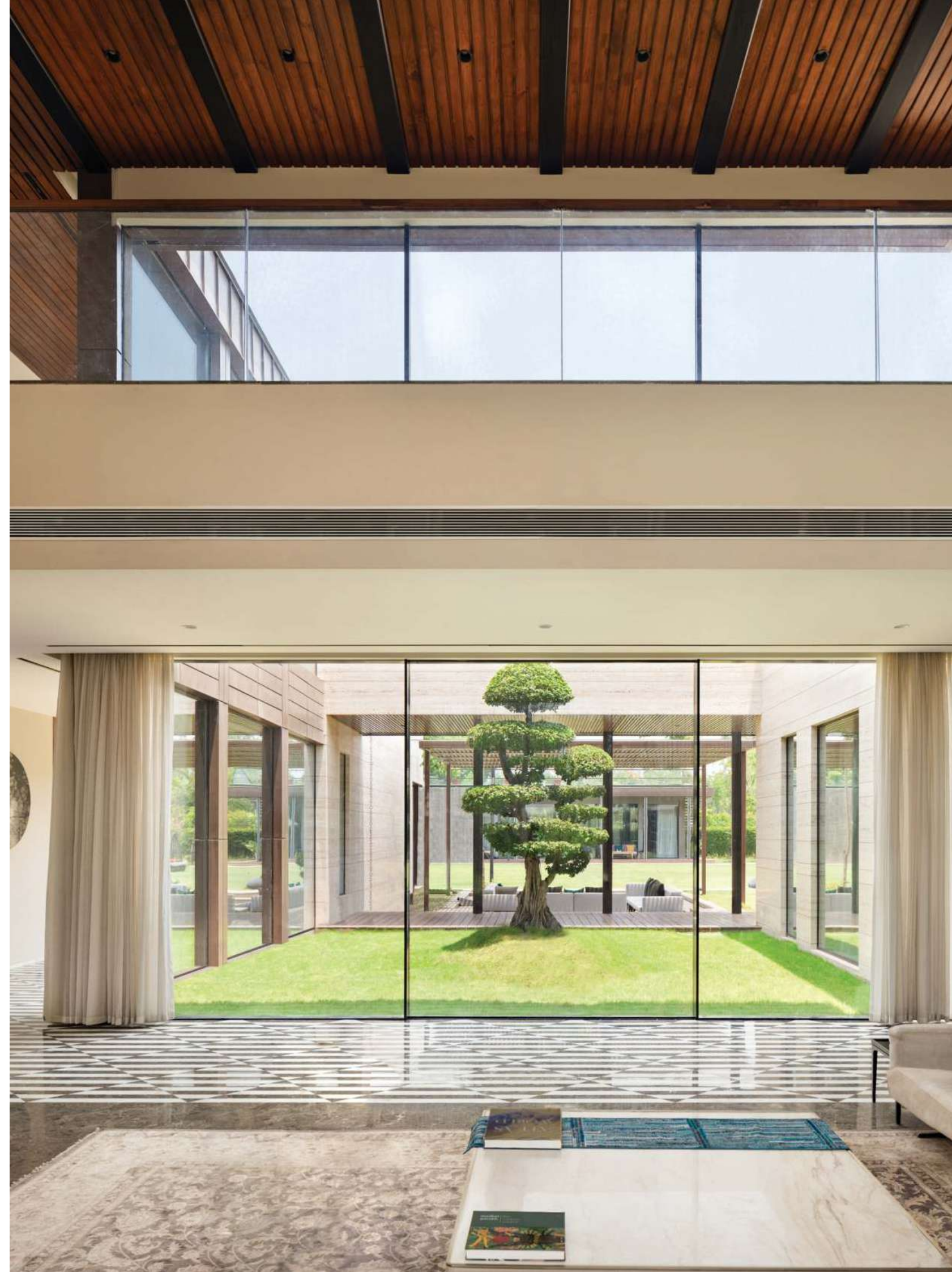
A driveway leads visitors to a shaded entrance porch, where a sculptural staircase greets them in the lobby connecting to the first floor. The lobby connects to the formal living and dining room towards the lawn and the kitchen and service spaces on the south. A corridor leads further to the central family living and dining area. Bedrooms occupy the western blocks of the lower floor, with deep verandahs and solid walls protecting the rooms from the harsh afternoon sun.

The shared spaces of the house are oriented towards a landscaped court, with sliding windows offering uninterrupted views of the lawn and the pool house beyond. Stepping out of the living and dining areas, one enters a verandah that opens to an intimate patio where the family enjoys their Sunday tandoor luncheons. The large central lawn hosts events and cricket matches — two favourite pastimes of the family.

The pool house flanks the northern edge of the lawn, with a deep verandah forming a canopy above it.

The landscape strategy creates a vibrant visual palette that stands out in its muted background while maintaining a sense of privacy. Tall flowering trees like Gulmohar line the periphery to screen views from the outside, creating a high-density boundary. Low-level flowering plants demarcate the internal driveway from the lawn. A mix of fruit and flowering trees, bonsais, and shrubs create a dynamic and variegated environment, with white, green, and purple flowers forming an eclectic canvas of seasonal blooms. Fruit trees like pear and papaya are part of the edible landscape, becoming accessories to the house in its daily use.

The architectural expression of the house is inspired by the rice granaries located near the site. Designed to resemble two barn-style volumes sitting atop a solid structure, the up-





per levels of the residential block are capped by pitched roofs and wrapped in zinc panels, while the lower levels are clad with travertine. The outhouse is encased in a dark local limestone contrasting with the light travertine, with the swimming pool patio floor visualised as an extension and rendered in the same material.

The subdued palette of the exterior is balanced by a rich display of natural materials in the interior décor, expressed in floor patterns, wall cladding, and furniture elements. The entrance lobby features pristine Thassos white & grey William marble, laid in a pattern inspired by a rug weave. The flooring accentuates the length of the circulation across the house. Bathroom surfaces are clad in various shades of marble with minimal detailing, allowing the variegated patterns of the stone to be the element of focus. In the bedrooms, wood is used to imbue a sense of warmth, with hardwood flooring, cabinetry, timber accents, and pitched roofs encased

in wood. The natural material palette in the interior spaces exudes a sense of tranquillity permeating the home.

The house is furnished with statement pieces by international brands, and balanced with bespoke furniture by Mangrove Collective that incorporates local patterns and indigenous techniques into the mix. Rugs with Indian-inspired motifs add a vibrant touch to the residence's bare stone and wood floors, along with draperies in rich silk that feature embroidery and patterned weaves. Contemporary Indian art is featured at different locations around the house, like the hand-beaten brass medallions forming an accent feature in the formal living area.

Balancing the aspirations and varied tastes of the home's multi-generational residents, The Quadrant House reflects their sensibilities in a subdued but visually unique expression, weaving in spaces for reflection and recreation amidst nature. □



## UPCYCLING LUXURY

Quba homes is using marquee straw sourced from local farmers in bulk, to create luxury furniture as well as lifestyle products.

Photo courtesy: Quba Homes

The furniture industry in India is booming, and thus, the dependency on local factories and industries has increased tenfold. Manufacturing furniture directly impacts the environment— including depletion of natural resources, pollution and generating waste. So, a prerequisite is taking the sustainable route to create furniture regarding material choices and fabrication techniques.

Adhering to this pertinent necessity, Quba Homes recently created a range of luxury furniture from an environmentally friendly material, the marquee straw. Sourced from local farmers in bulk, the wasted marquee straw is reused to create furniture as well as lifestyle products in the Quba factory. The straw is cut into thin pieces and dyed in various colours by skilled

craftsmen, who then anchor the coloured stripes on a wooden base, eliminating the need for machinery. As a result, carbon emissions caused by machines during a product's manufacturing process are completely eradicated. Created by hand entirely, the Marquee Straw Collection by Quba unveils luxury and aesthetics curated from waste and eco-friendly materials.

The marquee straw is not just a sustainable and environmentally friendly material but opens the doors for endless creative iterations. By dyeing it in numerous shades to create a myriad of patterns, these discarded heaps of straw have the potential to produce chic yet ecologically sound products. Expanding on these attributes, Quba Homes plans to ideate and curate more products—both in the luxury furniture and lifestyle accessories segments. □



# TASTEFULLY MODERN

Crafted for a family of four, this Mumbai apartment, sculpts a progressive yet rooted parade through design and brings the hotel experience home.

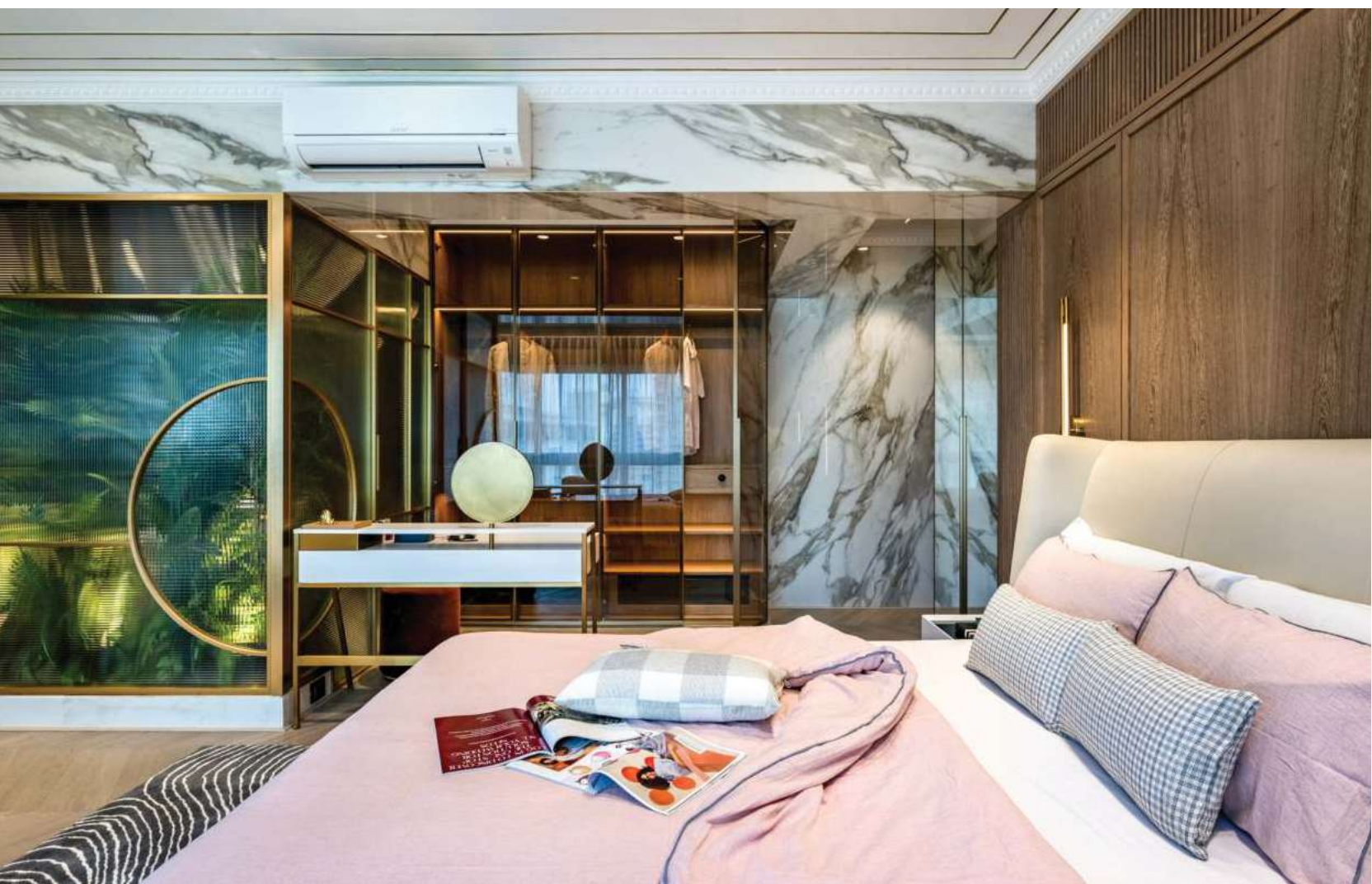
Photo courtesy: Prashant Bhat

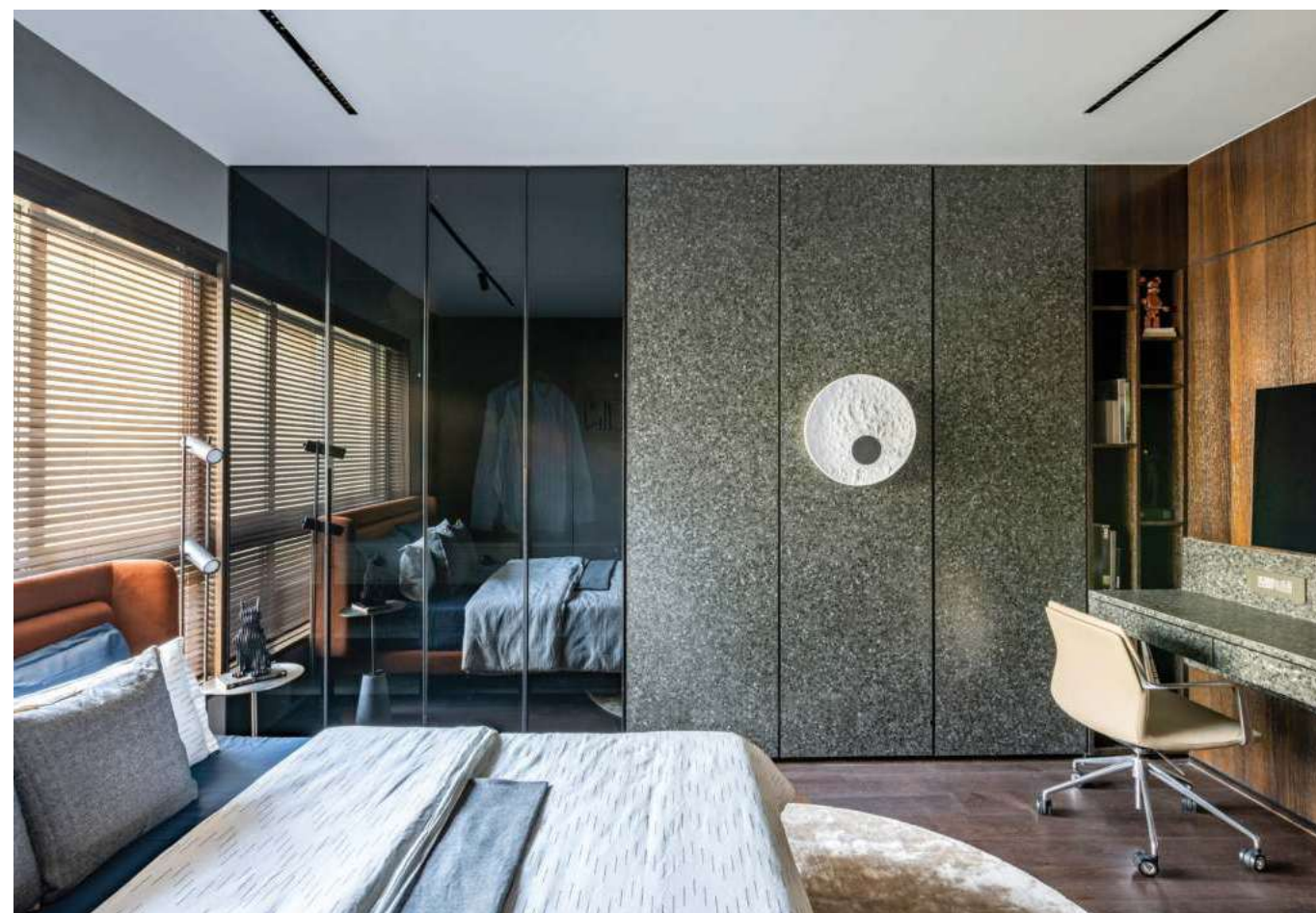




**S**uave Suite is a display of tasteful modern luxury softened by a subdued palette of materials. Catering to the client's brief of "maintaining an understated austerity", this home is designed as a classical-contemporary duo. The visual spectacle spans from Indian prints to imported furniture functionalized with automation and marks the fusion of themes with fundamentals. Crafted for a family of four, this 2200 sq. ft. apartment in Hiranandani, Mumbai, sculpts a progressive yet rooted parade through design.

An expansive living space with glimpses of creative corners reflects the sense of spatial luxury within the home. A paneling in charred grey with wainscoting detail forms the backdrop of this lounge-like living space. With the approach of maintaining an indo-classical ambience - black marble inlay work is chosen for flooring design. Articulate use of lighting with pertinent lux levels set a tone of opulence throughout the spatial ambience of this haven. A handcrafted blue and gold rug overlaps with imported pieces of furniture, directly displaying the traditional plus modern vibe derived from the home. A gallant wall of wooden veneer with a black marble TV unit jutting out gives a civil character to the elevation. While the larger opening subtly sits alongside the lavish living,





another window beams natural light on the interactive dining space. The unique built-in wall in foil laminate and wooden veneer brings your eye to displaying personal artefacts and collections. A custom-made imported chandelier in porcelain floats upon the classic dining table as the crown of the show. Mobile and comfortable dining chairs upholstered in velvet green add vibrancy to the space. Tying with the contemporary ambience, the custom-made Shrinathji frame in a gorgeous black sits on an intricate ribbed marble wall.

The nooks and nudges of the architectural layout are cleverly occupied with hidden storage, services and wiring conduits to maintain the seamless look and feel. For example, a high-tech air-conditioning packaged unit with slim modules is concealed within the conventional 6inch false ceiling to avoid loss of clear height. In its entirety, this living room is a spectacle of diverse detailing with elements like low-height seating, large accent pieces and extravagant intelligent home

features.

A flexible glass door takes one to the gorgeous kitchen space of this elegant abode. The plan is designed in such a way that it gives a holistic and assertive experience. A beautiful island in white marble is enveloped by counter space on all three sides. Ample storage, easy-to-maintain surfaces and pockets of functional appropriation make this kitchen a dream come true. Moreover, appliances like a touch-screen refrigerator, high-tech coffee machine, teppanyaki or a custom control wine chiller add to the impressive statement of luxury intended for the habitants.

Effortlessly camouflaged in the living room elevation is the door to a guest bedroom meant for family elderly or other company. This bedroom showcases a modern relish of brown and shades of grey on a white canvas of edgings and details. The focal bed wall in brown walnut veneer is stalled



with a concealed headboard in soft grey. Two movable single beds demonstrate the optimal planning of this space. Sliding reading lights, minimal nightstands and comfortable fabric choices give a cosy and simplistic experience.

The master bedroom is an exorbitant checklist of luxurious amenities and experiences. Cladded in soft veneer, gold inlay ceiling, classic wooden flooring and unique planters, this Suite is enclosed with undertones. A beautiful custom king-sized bed interacts with edge-to-edge wall treatments and a freestanding advanced television. The closet area is demarcated with a charming marble ceiling for visual separation. A grand closet with glass shutters and a custom-made vanity dresser with a velvet ottoman provide a celebrity green-room-like experience. A tried and tested detail for the bathroom partition made from planters closed inside fluted glass adds to the luxurious persona of the primary suite. The intricate detailing in brass and gold throughout the bedroom and bath space seamlessly connects the spatial expanse with ease.

The son's bedroom is a robust palette of terrazzo stone with contemporary shades like matt black and tangerine. In addition, this room showcases unconventional sensibilities like a window as a bed-back, a corner library unit and minimal accents. While the son's space has a sober and earthy vibe, the daughter's bedroom is a fresh wave of brightness from blue and white. The full-length closet cleverly hides civil changes to incorporate lavish and efficient storage. The gorgeous study table extended as the dressing is the star element for this room. The intelligent home modules of lighting and audio systems are replicated in the bedroom space for optimal functionality.

Intended for a well-travelled and distinguished hotelier client and his family, the name "Suave Suite" is a projection of a hotel suite's luxury and home fundamentals. With no compromise on decor pieces and conscious mindfulness of the choice of materials and mechanisms – this home is a result of a balanced design process. □



# SENSE OF TRANQUILLITY

'Villa Vanilla' is a private property in the coastal town of Alibaug that looks out to the beach and its quaint fishing hutment, offering breathtaking vistas of the sun setting into the Arabian Sea.

Photo courtesy: Gajendra Mandrekar

Project name: Villa Vanilla

Clients: Randip and Ruchi Munjral

Architect: Darius Dhalla



The house is designed with sensitivity towards ecology, respect for existing biodiversity, and consideration of water management needs. The driveway, made entirely of gravel, maximises rainwater infiltration, recharging groundwater storage and reducing surface runoff, contributing to local flood mitigation. Lawn space occupies less than twenty per cent of the site area- not only is this a key water conservation strategy, but it also promotes soil health and diversity.

Every year, the clients eagerly await the spring and summer months for profusions of bougainvillea to add a blast of fuchsia to the white canvas that is the built form. The planting palette consists of a rich mix of tropical favourites- philodendrons and monstera rest in the shade, whilst tall, fragrant blades of pandanus, dainty white crinum lilies and champas,



and vibrant bracts of heliconia bask in the sun. Towering indigenous coconut palms are interspersed through the dense, lush green shrubbery. The free-flowing character of the softscape reflects KMA's philosophy of "studied negligence," which prescribes taking a step back and handing back to nature the power to assert its design statement.

A sunken seating area is comfortably wedged between the pool and an angular, asymmetrical pond. Adjacent to it is glorious frangipani, planted as a specimen tree that frames views out from the pit. A wooden plank rests across the water

channel as a footbridge, and lotuses float in the water below. Walking the plank, one has the transient experience of being in a luxury resort in the Kerala backwaters of South India. The foliage, the calming presence of water, and the light-coloured Shabad stone hardscaping all contribute to the creation of a microclimate.

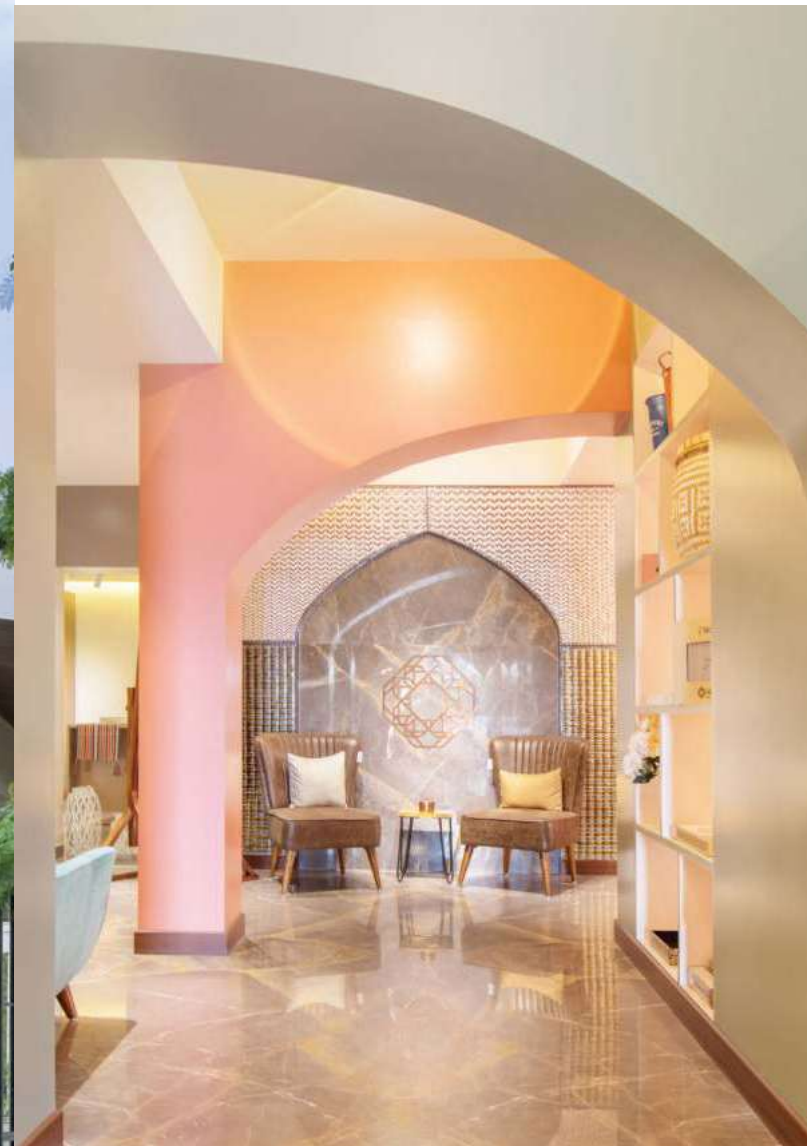
Ultimately, the estate exemplifies the carefree aesthetic that defines modern tropical living, simultaneously showcasing site-specific landscape design that subscribes to principles of sustainability. □

# PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Discover the Inspiring Work of ARA Designs in Redefining Spaces  
with Artistic Ingenuity

Photo courtesy: ARA Designs





In the realm of architecture and interior design, there are visionary firms that go beyond the conventional, infusing life and art into every space they touch. ARA Designs is one such remarkable practice, making waves with their ability to seamlessly blend creativity, functionality, and a deep understanding of human experiences. Established in 2011, ARA Designs has quickly emerged as a dynamic and multi-disciplinary firm specialising in boutique villas, hospitality, commercial, and mixed-use developments.

Led by their founder and renowned architect, Amey Dahanukar, ARA Designs is known for their relentless pursuit of architectural excellence and their unwavering commitment to crafting spaces that inspire and delight. With a keen eye for

detail and a passion for innovative design, Amey Dahanukar has propelled ARA Designs to the forefront of the industry, earning them a stellar reputation for their transformative creations.

At ARA Designs, the philosophy revolves around weaving life into spaces through art and design. The firm recognizes that exceptional architecture extends far beyond the physical structure; it has the power to shape emotions, enhance experiences, and create lasting impressions. With this understanding, ARA Designs approaches each project as an opportunity to create unique narratives, where the interplay of light, materials, and spatial configurations bring forth a harmonious balance.



What sets ARA Designs apart is their holistic approach, which involves collaborating closely with engineers, technologists, artists, and other professionals. This collaborative effort ensures that every aspect of a project, from its initial concept to its final execution, is meticulously executed and infused with a remarkable attention to detail. By engaging in this interdisciplinary dialogue, ARA Designs creates spaces that transcend expectations and captivate the senses.

Amey Dahanukar's mastery over modern and contemporary art and style shines through in ARA Designs' portfolio. Drawing inspiration from the site and location context, their designs seamlessly integrate functionality with aesthetics, resulting in spaces that are visually stunning and purposeful. Whether it's a luxurious villa, a cutting-edge commercial development, or a transformative hospitality project, ARA Designs consistently pushes boundaries and delivers architectural brilliance.

As ARA Designs continues to redefine architecture and design, their impact extends beyond the structures they create. They inspire others in the industry to embrace creativity, embrace innovation, and push the boundaries of what is possible. With each new project, ARA Designs leaves an indelible mark on the landscape, transforming spaces into artistic masterpieces and elevating the human experience.

In a world where architecture and design play a vital role in shaping our lives, ARA Designs stands at the forefront, championing the pursuit of excellence and reimagining the possibilities of space. Their unwavering commitment to artistic brilliance and their ability to merge functionality with aesthetics have firmly established ARA Designs as a force to be reckoned with. With Amey Dahanukar's visionary leadership, ARA Designs continues to create spaces that inspire, captivate, and leave a lasting impression on all who encounter them. □



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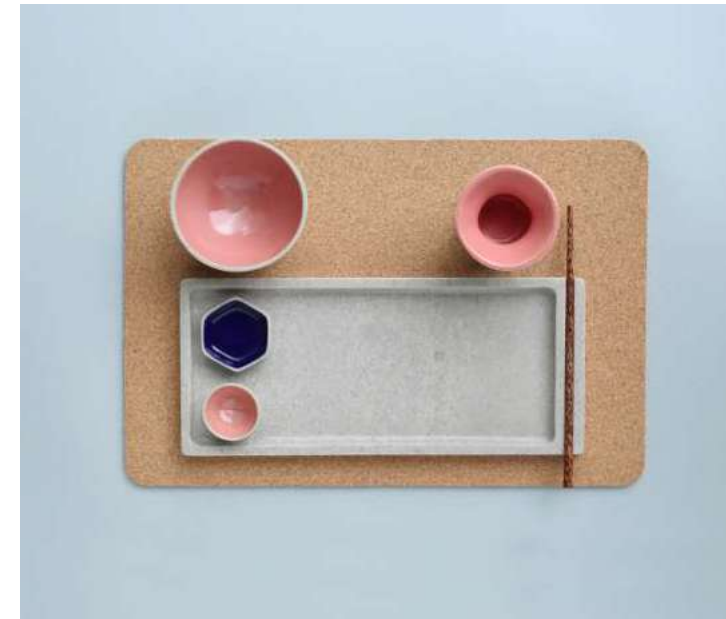
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