

# better interiors

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# A TALE OF TWO WORLDS

The Library house by Khosla Associates evokes the tranquility of old Bangalore, yet is contemporary. This eco-sensitive house showcases different moods within its plan, packs a surprise as you enter and effects discovery as you move along.

TEXT: DEEPA NAIR; PHOTOGRAPHS: SHAMANTH PATIL J; COURTESY KHOSLA ASSOCIATES

It was a conscious decision to place the library centrally in the house to combine various activities for the family. The highlight of this space is the 30-foot length of the custom designed teakwood bookshelf which was a special requirement of the client. Note the balance in colour achieved through the L-shaped sofa, the lovely cluster of three Frank Gehry Cloud Lamps from Vitra, the soft tones of the rug, the rough textures of the console, the beige of the walls and the yellow of the jaisalmer floor.

Ensnconced within the silicon city of India, Bangalore, is a home that brings the outdoors inside, literally. Balmy air drifts into the rooms and natural light fills up the volume of the house, throwing patterns on textures and reflections of the natural world. The spirit of the house is simple and calm, rather than being precious and decorated... its exquisiteness lies in its seamless homogeneity. It's inherent in its material palette, its furniture, lighting and accessory — nothing jumps at you, instead, they draw you in. Most definitely, the house is stamped with all the romance and sensibilities you'll find in every project the gifted Khosla Associates works on.

The brief which architects Sandeep Khosla and his partner, Amaresh Anand received from the family of three before work began on the project was a well-articulated document with perfectly drawn out nuances. The entrepreneur-industrialist, married to a bohemian writer and their teenage daughter wanted a house that would reflect the diverse range of their lives. The clients wanted privacy from staff and casual visitors and desired a peaceful oasis. Though they wanted the architecture to reflect the clean modern lines of contemporary aesthetics; they didn't want to let go of the memories of growing up in old Bangalore, a city of sleepy colonial bungalows. Most importantly, the clients demanded an ecologically sensitive house filled with natural light and air. There would have to be plenty of open space, a verandah to watch the rain fall and a garden to potter about in.

"As architects, we were confronted with a unique proposition; to create a relatively small program of a three bedroom house within a

large 13,000 sq ft plot of land," says Sandeep. "This afforded us a luxury in the manipulation of space, especially rare in the urban context in which we live. The design of the house grew out of the several conversations and deliberations we had with our clients. That the house should in its modernity be interpretive and nostalgic of Bangalore's colonial past, that it should demarcate public and private spaces cleverly, that it should be energy efficient and sustainable." But the most crucial requirement from the client was a virtue from which the project derives its name. The Library House, as it came to be known, should accommodate and give utmost emphasis to their ever-growing collection of books.

These imperative demands were instrumental in establishing the essential spatial flow of the project. To begin, the entrance; marked by a bright blue door and a beige-toned entrance wall, welcomes you in to a modest colonnaded Mangalore-tiled covered walkway with wooden columns. The tropical courtyard with yellow ochre walls nearby features a fishpond and an ancestral swing. Further, a dramatic light-filled cathedral like foyer space acts as a buffer — one can either move towards the dining, kitchen and staff areas on one side or head to the double-height library on the other.

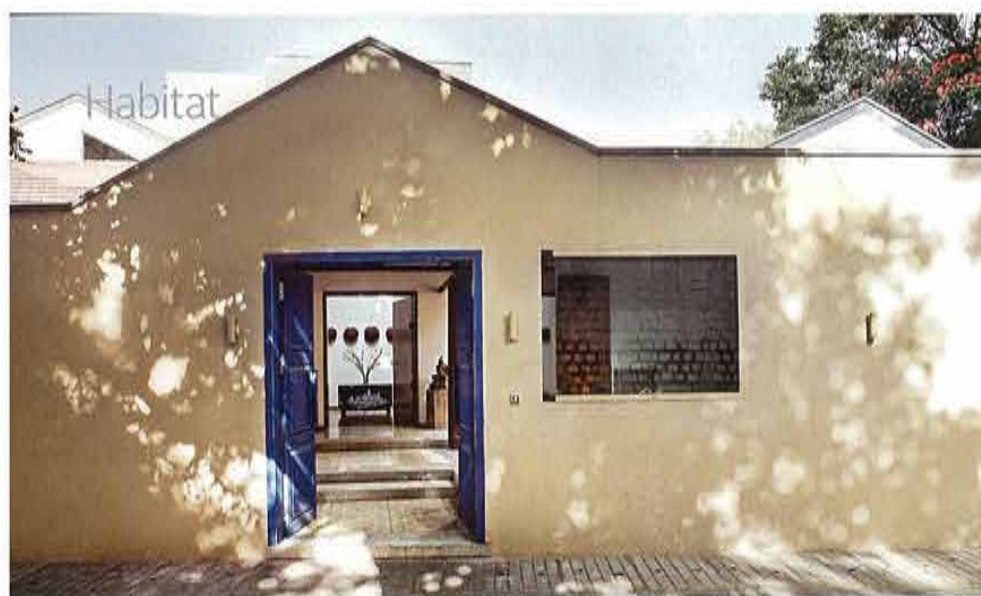
The architects celebrated the client's prerequisite for creating an important space for a library by using it as an anchor for the house. It is the central space of the house and also doubles up as a multi-activity space. This 750-square-foot area has a whopping 25-foot high gabled roof with wooden trusses and a bookshelf spanning over 30-feet in length and 12-feet in height. The old-fashioned generosity of this space gently spills out via large sliding doors into a lavish



ARCHITECTS

Amaresh Anand and Sandeep Khosla





**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** A beige-toned low wall with a bright old-styled distressed blue-hued door forms the humble yet striking entrance of this beautiful abode.

The architects created a tropical courtyard with interesting elements such as a fishpond and an ancestral swing. Note the usage of both local sadharhalli stone and pebbles for the walkway, and the cheerful ochre-hued wall facing the house.

Skylights which bring in ample sunlight, large windows that maintain cross ventilation coupled with the clay tiles used on the roof keep the temperature of the house low.

From the walkway, one enters the voluminous, dramatic light-filled foyer where two beautiful art pieces draw your attention — Low Kabuki art furniture by Vivek Radhakrishnan and artist Sunil Gawde's stunning fiberglass and nails creation, Heart Beat-Beat Heart.

One has to pass through the serene and quaint walkway featuring a Mangalore tiled roof and wooden columns before entering the foyer.

1,500-square-foot verandah and pool deck, as well as a large garden area. The result of this inside-outside dialogue is a large grand and seamless living space. Here, there are carefully demarcated areas for lounging, studying, listening to music, playing the piano and entertaining; all within an open plan layout. The cosy clusters of seating in the verandah and deck interact with the library as well as the garden.

Apparently, the selection of furniture in this house was deliberated upon extensively by the clients and the architects as they wanted each and every piece to tell a story while working with the overall architectural narrative. In the library, a large L-shaped seating is the pivot, the pool table from Italy converts into a study table and other pieces act as whimsical and playful art objects. On the other hand in the verandah; the eclectic selection of grouped furniture handpicked by the architects is all distinctly unique without being overwhelming. It's heartening to see big Italian brands like Moroso, B&B Italia and Emu rubbing shoulders with the humble, yet striking, colonial pieces of locally sourced pieces and those custom-designed by the architects and produced by Virasp Batliwala of Timberworks.

The layout of the rest of the house is laid in the two primary axis that underscore the plan. "One leads east to west from the entrance court to the foyer through the library which terminates at the ground floor guest bedroom," explains Sandeep. "The other is south to north, flowing from the library to the











**CONCEPT:** The family of three wanted their home to reflect old Bangalore, yet be clean and modern in its architecture. They wanted an ecologically sensitive house, with lots of natural light and ventilation and a large enough library to accommodate their ever growing collection of books.







**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** The 25-foot high gabled roof with wooden trusses and a skylight running the length of the roof is an important feature of this central space.

The interconnectedness of the living space and the verandah is clearly seen here. Note how jaisalmer makes way for customized terrazzo flooring in the verandah.

The dining area is also privy to the luscious garden space and can be accessed both from the foyer and through the garden.

The easy marriage of the interior and exteriors is achieved with the help of the verandah... this is almost like living outdoors. The comfortable clusters of seating in the verandah and deck interact with the library as well as the garden.





## MATERIALS

Roof Mangalore and Kerala clay tiles  
Flooring Jaisalmer, Terrazzo  
Columns Steel clad in solid wood, concrete  
Furniture Solid wood

verandah and then to the garden and pool. The two private bedrooms are placed on the first floor with their form hovering over the garden and pool deck."

As for the social imprint of the project, Sandeep elaborates, "Right from the start, we had a dialogue with our clients Nikhil Kumar and Lavanya Sankaran to create an eco-sensitive house that would consume less energy. Hence we did a lot of research and planning to try and get off the electricity grid. We accommodated large solar panels on the southern side of the house (on the roof, of the library) which generates around 5 kwp of

electricity every day. All the lights and fans in the house are working on solar." Another important characteristic of the home (an oft aspect in all Khosla Associates projects), is the cross ventilation achieved through large windows. It was created after researching the direction of the wind flow in the area. The open layout and the inside-outside vocabulary of the house further reduce the use of electricity. "Bangalore has good three months of summer, but the clients didn't use the air conditioners; they were comfortable with the fans," says the proud architect. Yet another eco-conscious aspect is the underground sump created in the basement to collect rainwater. The reservoir can store up to 1,00,000 litres of water (including what's collected from the sloping roofs) which could be used for secondary purposes (read gardening) all year through.

Even the material palette too plays an important role in bringing down electricity bills. Case in point, the hand-crafted Mangalore and

**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT** The dining area features a polished kota stone floor, a polished cement ceiling flooring, Wishbone dining chairs by Carl Hansen, a vibrant LZP link suspension pendant lamp, and a dining table designed by the architects and manufactured by Timberworks. The Starburst mirror you see at the far end is sourced from Bungalow 8.

The pool table (Fusion desk by Amarith) which is also accommodated in the central living space, is sourced from Italy and serves dual purpose... it can convert into a table for multi-usage by simply pulling an integrated wooden board over it.

The RCC structure jutting out on the right contains the private areas (read bedrooms) for this family of three. Two concrete 12.5-foot high pillars support the structure.

The swimming pool is placed under the private quarters; it gives easy access to the family from their bedroom besides providing a shade and privacy from the rest of the house.





Kerala clay tiles used for the traditional roof. As for the rest of the house, large expanses of yellow jaisalmer stone is spread out in the foyer, dining and library areas, while lovely floral-patterned terrazzo tiles custom designed for this project strike a pose in the verandah. The textural interplay created by the Mangalore- and Kerala-tiled roofs (painted in white), the patterned colonial tile and the teak of the door and window frames as well as the columns are visually enticing.

The whole idea of introducing lavish verandahs and the concept of outdoor living would be lost without good landscape design. Created by Bali-based DewaKusuma, this feature too is in tandem with the architecture of the house. It's illustrated in the courtyard and garden that's peppered with pretty sculptures and tropical plants. Undoubtedly, Khosla associates designs an island of serenity which radiates in earthy innocence, where every element makes you appreciate the great depth of thought that goes into creating something simple, yet timeless. **BI**

**FACT FILE:** Project The Library House Clients Nikhil Kumar and Lavanya Sankaran Architecture and interior design Khosla Associates Principal architects Sandeep Khosla and Amaresh Anand Design team Priyanka Sams Civil contractors JJ Constructions Pvt Ltd Structural engineer S&S Associates Landscape DewaKusuma, Bali



# Smart Picks

A HOME BY KHOSLA ASSOCIATES



## Eclectic drama

Mixing styles definitely renders a different look to any interiors. Here, the selection of furniture was deliberated upon extensively to blend in with overall architectural narrative. In the living room, an eclectic mix of old pieces furniture stands out against modern furniture. But the architects had a little fun in the verandah by choosing an eclectic selection of furniture — each one invariably different in character. You could also take a cue from this project: contrast modern furniture with rustic, traditional with shabby chic or vintage with modern to create a space that the eyes and the mind view as a whole and has richness and depth.



## A minimalist composition

Restraint is a virtue and if you apply it to design, you'll have a space which is clean-lined yet brimming with character. The architects at Khosla Associates are all too familiar with this dictum. In the cathedral-like foyer space with its off white walls and yellow jaisalmer flooring just two beautiful pieces of art take center stage — an art furniture by Vivek Radhakrishnan and a series of heart-shaped sculptures on the wall by artist Sunil Gawde. Walk in and one instantly gets an art gallery-like feel! One could use this simple yet effective idea to create an impact in any given space. Remember, less is more!