

ROBB REPORT INDIA MAY 2013

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DOWN TO EARTH

An inviting farmhouse on the outskirts of Delhi exudes sophistication in simplicity.

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The thought of owning a house that was far from the hustle-bustle of the city yet was well-connected to it proved irresistible for a Delhi-based businessman and his wife. The couple bought a built-up 2.5-acre site just outside the country's capital and approached interior and furniture designer Anjali Goel of LaSorogetka, Delhi, to convert it into their dream home. It took Goel nine months to transform the existing structure into an elegant, Vastu-compliant abode with warm, earthy interiors. The husband's affinity for the property stems in large part from the generous green expanse surrounding the single-level, 1,858-square-metre house, where he now regularly hosts social gatherings. His wife, on the other hand, has reserved a corner of this verdant space for a more peaceful pursuit—nurturing a small organic farm. ➤

By AROMA SAH ANANT | Photography by ANSHUMAN SEN



Perfect Hosts | Goel wanted to give the house a dramatic entrance. She placed hand-carved sandstone columns topped with horse-head sculptures on either side of the six-metre-tall Burma teak twin doors, which open into the foyer to reveal a stunning black glass-and-bronze light installation custom-made by Goel suspended from the hand-engraved wooden ceiling. Similarly impressive accents add a vibrant character to each area of the house, though the over-arching theme throughout is minimalism. “The selection of colours [beige and salmon] right through the house is very soft, and we have used natural materials such as stone, wood and jute to give it a resort-like feel,” says the designer.

The wife’s penchant for silver becomes apparent in the living (top) and formal dining rooms. Four silver elephants acquired by the homeowner on a trip to Rajasthan occupy a pride of place in one corner of the living room. Other silver artefacts, such as an intricately engraved tray along with a small chest and bowl set, are displayed atop a rose quartz centre table. Goel even added two *kofigari* chairs with silver legs next to it. She also created a silver frame for an alcove in the living room, where the wife displays various silver curios from her private collection. Czech crystal chandeliers in amber and hand-painted gold and a Lladro porcelain sculpture placed on a pristine white centre table are other highlights of the room.

The homeowners also wished to have a grand dining space (above) for hosting lavish sit-down dinners. Taking centrestage here is a 12-seat dining table featuring a five-centimetre-thick, black Kadappa marble top with white inlay which, owing to its enormous size and weight, had to be placed atop the frame using a crane. At the head and foot of the table are chairs with silver-plated backrests. Goel, who custom-made almost every piece of furniture for the house, says, “Dining should be an experience and so I have added a Moroccan-style light through the entire length of the table.” This white-metal light, which took a Muradabad-based craftsman two months to create, lends a dramatic character to the room; its intricate hand-

cut design throws vivid patterns on the walls and ceiling. For a smaller family gathering, Goel added a casual, eight-seat dining area beyond this formal setting. Another area where the businessman likes to host family and friends is the covered verandah (opposite page, below), which opens out into the back garden. Sunshine streaming in through the tall glass doors during the day reflects off the Spanish Terrazzo floor and the central Bidasar stone-clad column, whose base boasts a fireplace. “We tried to bring in elements from different places and create a kind of synergy,” explains Goel. Faux wooden beams on the ceiling give the space an additional Spanish touch, despite the absence of painted coffers.



Suite Escapes | The couple's brief for the interiors was quite straightforward—everything must be kept simple. “We constantly reminded ourselves to tone down all elements as the homeowners did not want anything to be over the top,” says Goel. Except for the bold dining and bar area, Goel stuck to muted tones and used minimum accessories. Running through the entire length of the house, from the games room at one end to the homeowner's son's bedroom at the other, is a well-lit, 48-metre-long gallery (above). Here too, only two mother-of-pearl vases feature as accessories. The gallery also provides access to the deck, where fuss-free rattan lounges and a hammock allow the family to recline in comfort.

The blend of international styles seen in the formal parts of the house extends to the master bedroom, bathroom, dressing area and his-and-her closets. The furnishings include a LaSorogetka tasselled hanging lamp and a three-layered, tied-back mock curtain arrangement. The master bathroom (right) features a restrained opulence, having been done up in beige from floor to ceiling. The centre and side tables in the master bedroom's sitting area (opposite page, below) feature a hand-painted leaf pattern to complement the one on the focus wall.

The bedroom of the couple's son (opposite page, top) follows a black-and-white theme. Here, a central wooden console houses a television system that can swivel to face either the all-leather sleigh bed or the suede-and-leather combo sofa set opposite it. “We broke the wall separating the sitting area from the bedroom and placed the swivelling console, as the 20-something son enjoyed the idea of an interactive room,” says Goel.

In the quaint locale, the homeowners have found all that they wanted—an elegant abode with uncluttered spaces and every opportunity to appreciate the simple yet finer pleasures in life. ☐

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