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FROM TOP Bar stools are placed around a cantilevered breakfast counter and island kitchen. The pendant lamps are from Muuto; Bespoke glass doors with a metal framework fold away to merge the living room with the courtyard. Seen in the foreground are a daybed and sofa from BoConcept, desk lamp from Muuto and carpet from Cocoon Fine Rugs FACING PAGE A cluster of suspended lamps and solitary swing manufactured by The Retirement Plan and customised by Architecture Brio is placed at the heart of the double heighted courtyard



CALM AND COMPOSED
GREEN ESCAPE

Shefali Balwani and Robert Verrijt of Architecture Brio craft a tranquil duplex residence in Juhu that lures with its earthy ambience
TEXT BY **SAKSHI RAI** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PHOTOGRAPHIX | IRA GOSALIA**



A former bungalow in an incongruous part of Juhu that's densely packed with high rises has been redeveloped to include several residences. Among these is a 3,000 sq ft, serene duplex for a couple and their son designed by Shefali Balwani and Robert Verrijt of Architecture Brio to be conspicuous for its nature swamped, urban styled interiors and construction.

The most intrinsic identity of this capacious apartment lies in its fluid connection to the outdoors. "The clients wanted to bring in a setting similar to a typical suburban villa bound by ample greenery into their home," says Balwani, adding, "So, we built a semi indoor, double heightened courtyard, a rare and refreshing sight in modern apartment buildings as most of them lack outdoor spaces."

Centrally located and already at an altitude, this green loft opens out to verdant canopies. Replete with abundant light and ventilation, it also makes for an interactive social space with transparent, custom made, thin framed sliding metal doors that provide visual connectivity across the abode. A fiddle leaf fig tree in the middle stretches across almost the entire height of the courtyard and is surrounded by a terrazzo island counter with seating on all sides. "This breezy corner is flanked with exposed brick pillars and textured green stone strip flooring. It is spruced with four symmetrically positioned, natural cane and cotton rope hanging lamps and outdoor furniture, including a swing from The Retirement Plan," shares Balwani.

Beyond the spectacular courtyard on the concrete finished lower level are the living and dining areas with an open kitchen island. Adjacent is a cosy lounge for the children with a window looking out to a gulmohar tree. Inside a large daybed fans out, making for a comfortable spot to relax. The sleek and minimal furniture borrows from the organic vibe of the home. >>



The metal clad entrance door opens onto a foyer with wall finish and floors by Greenheart Flooring. A lone, cushy seater is paired with inhouse greens to spruce up this nook FACING PAGE The elegant and minimalist wooden dining table and bench from Blue Loft are paired with sleek Iqrup + Ritz chairs. Refreshing greens abound the setting





A simplistic, winding staircase made using folded MS plate and finished with solid oak leads to the family area upstairs. Here, a corridor fitted with storage units and framed with family photographs leads on one end to the guest room, and the master and son's bedrooms on the other. The guest room is bathed in olive green, which continues onto the ceilings of the courtyard and the family room. On the other hand, the master bedroom features colour blocking in white and plum, separated by a wainscoting detail. Its ensuite includes a white, marbled bathroom with matte brass fixtures as well as a dark oak veneered walk-in wardrobe. Just next door is the son's room where a single unit—featuring a bunk bed and playhouse with a climbing wall, monkey bars and swing on opposite ends—facilitates both rest and play.

Despite the play of various materials, colours and textures, the home exudes a warm, lived-in appeal, which makes it a truly happy and peaceful place to be in the city. Balwani adds that it served one other critical purpose: "We explored a variety of colours and inspirations for the interiors rather than sticking to a particular style or palette to better reflect the contemporary lifestyles of our clients." ♦

FROM TOP The guest bedroom features a custom designed Murphy folding bed that tucks into a closet when not in use. The resulting free space then doubles as a yoga zone for the homeowners; A double panelled mirror positioned on the hind side of the bed acts as a reflective surface to use while exercising
FACING PAGE The fully integrated kitchen houses nickel finished knobs and handles along with a Caesar stone counter



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