

Inside Outside

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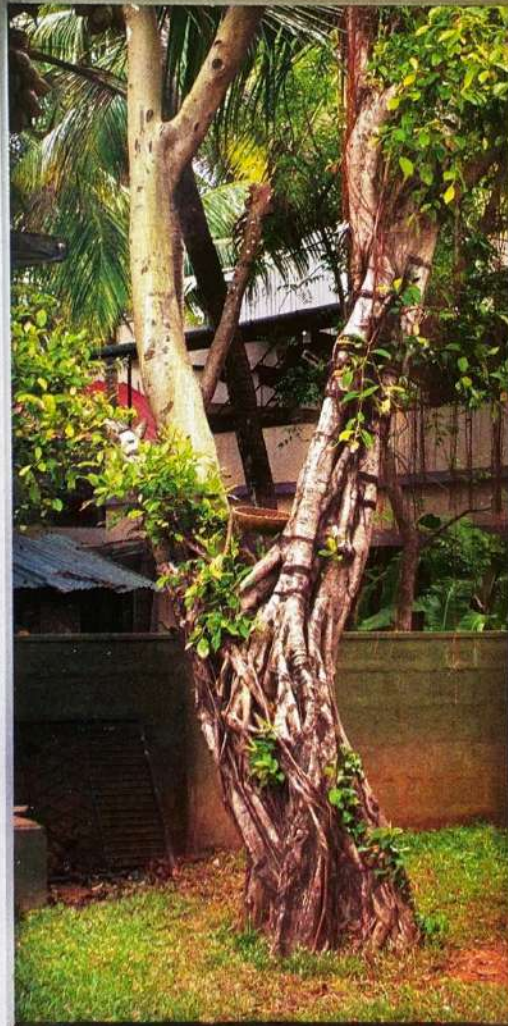


A CONTEMPORARY BUNGALOW BY ANANDA

**A corporate office for a
TV channel conglomerate
by Planet 3 Studios**

**Aamir Sharma's
Platinum rated green
office in Hyderabad**

COVER STORY: P JAGAN MOHAN'S GREEN SCENE STUDIO IN HYDERABAD



It is a modern structure with an all white exterior punctuated with tall glass windows – quite different from the rest of the houses in the neighbourhood.

residence



A new dialogue

Architect Jayadev calls his practice Architecture Tangible. And as he breaks away from stereotype solutions in a home he has designed near Kochi, he goes on to win the IIA Gold Leaf Award for its design.

TEXT: RUCHI SAWHNEY

PHOTOGRAPHS: ASHOK RAM, COURTESY THE ARCHITECT





Stepping into the house is like stepping outdoors once again, for there's a small courtyard right in front of the main door.



'People come to us with their dreams,' says young Kochi-based architect Jayadev, who has won an award for this residence he designed on the outskirts of the city. Driving together with him early one morning, I quiz him on his reasons for the contemporary design and why he has veered away from the traditional context. 'I find it difficult to relate to a historical theme in the modern scenario. After all, even if people are looking at a traditional form, we as architects, are actually addressing a lifestyle rooted in the present. Design which glorifies faux-traditional is something which I can't justify. We *can* and *do* relate to the old ethos and values and we can integrate all of their intangible aspects into the design, so why stick to and relate to them through graphic cosmetic touches and elements from history? Live the moment,' he says emphatically.

Standing in front of the house, my eyes sweep over a completely modern structure which has an all white exterior punctuated with tall glass windows. It is so different from the rest of the houses in the neighbourhood that I wondered how Jayadev had managed to convince his clients to depart from the norm. But then in a few minutes he managed to convince me too about the rationale behind his design.

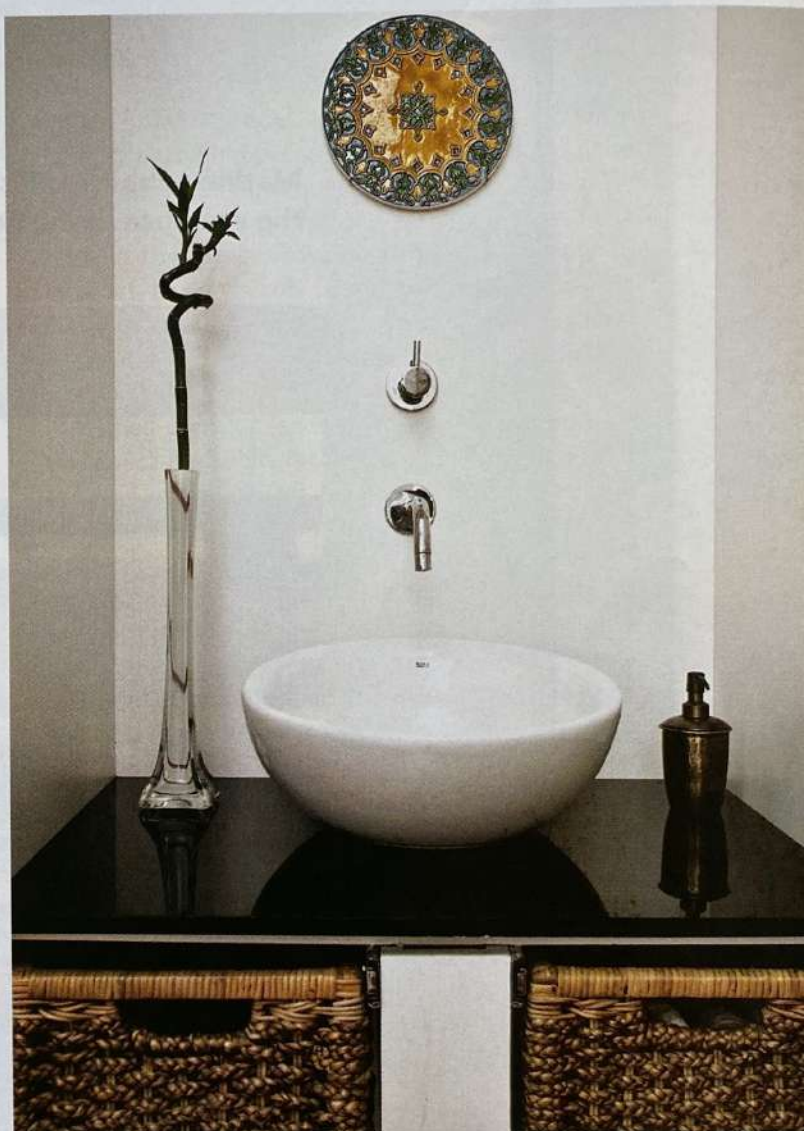
'When people think about the kind of house they want, they always think in terms of the form, the shape of the house and how it will be perceived by others. They don't





The informal living room with its wall mounted dining table and the kitchen form the core of the house, where the family gets to spend quality time . 'I wanted them to be able to interact, to be visually connected. Even if the wife is cooking and the child is playing and the husband is reading or watching TV, they're all in one space.'





Natural light streams in throughout and not a single bulb has to be switched on. That's because there is a skylight above the corridor and there are plenty of floor to ceiling windows in each room.

Marble pebbles and sleeper wood planks at the entrance of the home.



necessarily consider how the space will respond to their needs. It is important to understand that your needs are most important, more than someone else's perceptions about you. It is an architect's responsibility to educate her/his clients about the fine line between "want" and "need". Just as you go to a doctor with a medical condition and to a lawyer with a legal issue, you come to an architect with a dream and it's up to the architect to give it shape. I like to be given the freedom to interpret the dream creatively.' Luckily for Jayadev, his clients who are a young couple with a little child were open to his interpretation and gave him a mighty free hand.

Close interaction with his clients gave him an insight into their lifestyle. Jayadev noticed that the family got to spend very limited time together. They would leave the house early in the morning and all three of them would return together late in the evening, so he wanted to give them a space where they could be together as much as possible. This was the overriding thought behind the layout of the house. Also why should an urban setting be devoid of any connection with nature? Jayadev's design weaves the space around the family members and also embraces the outdoors at every opportunity.

Attention to detail is evident right at the beginning. The boundary wall skirts the periphery and then moves slightly inwards so that one can park one's car and enter through the small wrought-iron gate. Smooth marble pebbles crunch under your feet as you climb up the gentle steps lined with sleeper wood planks. You go by a clump of bamboo, a water body filled with fish which race you as they swim by, past a tall window that gives you a peek into the breakfast nook and you're at the front door. It's a deliberately orchestrated gradual journey from the gate to the main door and builds up anticipation for what lies ahead.

Take a step into the house and you feel you're stepping outdoors once again, for there's a small courtyard with a statue of the Buddha that has a lush, passion fruit creeper as its backdrop right in front of the main door. A small cosy formal living room is to the right and to the left, the house opens up into a seamless unit for the family.

The informal living room with its TV, a wall mounted dining table, wooden bench and table

in the breakfast nook and the modular kitchen – form a part of the core of the house where the family gets to spend quality time when they're at home. 'As I said earlier, the family gets so little time in the house, I wanted them to be able to interact, to be visually connected. Even if the wife is cooking and the child is playing and the husband is reading or watching TV, they're all in one space,' says Jayadev.

A small corridor leads to the three bedrooms – the guest bedroom faces the child's room and at the end is the master bedroom. Clutter free and airy, the master bedroom is connected to the child's bedroom through a door in the dressing area. It's an idea many parents would like to replicate as the door is flush with the wardrobe shutters in the master bedroom and opens into the child's dressing room. 'Once the child grows up, the wall can be sealed and extra shelves can be created in its place in the dressing room,' elaborates Jayadev.

Walking around the house I noticed that there was natural light streaming in throughout and not a single bulb had to be switched on. That's because there is a skylight above the corridor and there are plenty of floor to ceiling windows in each room. Also ventilators in the bedrooms keep the rooms cool, as air flows in through the windows and the hot air escapes from the openings above. Good cross ventilation and natural light are an intrinsic part of this design.

Jayadev believes that you don't always have to rely on historical details to ensure that architecture corresponds to the climate. With the good roofing treatments available today, the flat roof also works in a tropical climate. To further keep the house cool, Jayadev has laid out a terrace garden on a part of the roof while a gym and laundry cover the other.

A door from the family room leads to a charming garden at the back, which with its sleeper wood benches and lush thriving plants, is ideal for chilling in the evening with friends. Taking a last look at this utterly modern and minimalist home I wondered if the clients did have their way with something. 'They wanted terracotta tiles for the floor and I agreed,' says Jayadev. It contrasts very well with the all white interior adding much warmth to this home – a home, that's a dream come true! 