



THIS PAGE The central glass covered courtyard segregates the private spaces from the rest of the house. The wooden pergolas create patterns of shadow as light fills the space. A planter sports the centre of the courtyard and is surrounded by a mosaic floored water body that reflects the sky above.

RUSTIC SAGA

Architect Dipen Gada's expertise came to fore in his design for a farmhouse in Baroda. Replete with rustic elements, the interior design of this house is a tribute to its pastoral setting and contemporary style.

TEXT BY KANISHKA RAMDHANANI • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY THE ARCHITECT

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The place called home which every one of us has or aspires to have is usually a convenient abode to stay in... in the heart of the city with offices and shopping malls nearby. Such a place is as much a part of the cityscape as it is of our lives. And then there is a place that is 'my zone', a space which is completely cut off from the buzz of urban setting. Such a place is also home - a home that is dear to one's heart.

One such home is 'Mangalas', a rustic dwelling of the Patels, which was given a unique facelift by Architect Dipen Gada of DGA Design.

One look at the structure and its bucolic façade is enough to floor you. Standing on the periphery of Baroda, Mangalas stands on a beautiful rural landscape. Built as a farm house, it spreads across 3000 square feet and sits atop 100000 square feet of landscaped plot. With a relic like appearance this house has all the romance of a period building - slanting roofs, inner courtyard and exposed brick work.

The Patels wanted their home to be true to its natural surroundings. They asked Gada to create a living space which offered respite from the hum of city life. Taking into account the demands of modern day living, Gada has created a space which has strong rustic overtones and has a contemporary edge to it too.

The rural feel was not limited to the look of the ▶

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THIS PAGE A brick archway that opens in the courtyard and leads to the living area beyond. **OPPOSITE**

PAGE TOP The living room is rustic chic. Rough wood panels are used for the ceiling and wicker ottomans add a splash of colour and liveliness to the space.

BOTTOM The dining room has a rustic feel which is further reflected in the custom made teak dining table. A bay window with a view of the swimming pool area is visible.



THIS PAGE Gada has made good use of the original features of the house. The wooden polished beams used for the sloping roof appear like wood rafters that are reminiscent of traditional architecture.

structure only. Gada has used locally sourced materials to recreate the magic of a country home. To heighten this effect, he has effectively used a lot of Kota and Jaisalmer stone as well as teak wood. "Inspiration was drawn from the setting as well as the architecture and trueness to materials can be seen almost throughout the house," says Gada.

The house, a single storey structure, lies at the end of a long driveway lined on either side with trees. The driveway ends with a large open space that is paved with custom made cobblestones and is used as the parking area.

The first breathtaking aspect of the house is its exposed brick work walls and slanting roof. The structure seems to have emerged from a bygone era and has a dreamy aura of the past about it. A series of pillars supporting the roof create verandahs that have been creatively utilised by Gada. Overall the house has clear lines and an arresting look.

Typically, everything about Mangalas is an understatement, including its grandeur. It also pays homage to the scenic beauty that surrounds it and blends beautifully with the landscape.

Gada's love for details sets the tone of things at Mangalas and the creative use of materials is evident in the entire house. The porch floor with its impressive Kota stone with unique pebble inlay further raises one's expectations about the interiors as well. The inscribed wooden door at the entrance opens up to the small foyer area that acts as a buffer between the

porch and living area. As Gada describes it, "The foyer has bright Jaisalmer flooring and wooden ceiling. There is a motif of terrazzo tile work inlaid into the floor, reminiscent of inlay work seen in old manor houses."

The prayer room lies at the end of the driveway, a little detached from the main house. To create a serene ambience inside this room Gada has used the basic colour palette of white... with glass white marble flooring and white walls. A hand carved wood panel serves as a backdrop for the idol. Gada has effectively used hand carved jali panel for windows too. This helps in ventilation and natural lighting of the room.

The living room is the highlight of the interiors as it offers scenic views of the pool and gardens outside. Gada has made sure that the original features of the house were used to the best advantage. Since the central ridge of the slanting roof lies across the living room, he has created it differently to create a startling effect. As he explains, "The polished rough wood planks in the sloping roof create the impression of rafters."

Gada has maintained a fine balance between the rusticity of the original structure and demands of contemporary living. The wooden ceiling, rough Kota flooring and brick walls comprise the rusticity element while modern pieces of furniture and soft furnishings add up to make for contemporary living. He has even experimented with an eclectic mix of colours like magenta, fuchsia, orange and green for the soft furnishings... this makes for a rich blend of the rural and the contemporary. This effect of amalgamation not only ▶



THIS PAGE TOP

LEFT A unique recliner chair adorns the living room. **RIGHT** A beautiful brick-arched opening leading to one of the bedrooms.



THIS PAGE BOTTOM

LEFT The indoor courtyard acts as a transition space between the private and public spaces of the house. **RIGHT** The partial canopy above the bed draped with white linen fabric enhances the romantic feel of this room.





THIS SPREAD The master bedroom is simple yet maintains a very contemporary feel. The bed dominates this room and the low seating provided in the bay window enhances the sense of romance.

TOP The shutters of teak wood wardrobe in the master bedroom are made from wooden strips that have been woven together.



accentuates the lifestyle of its occupants but also makes a style statement.

Held at the heart of the house, the courtyard is a transition space between the living area and the private rooms. Gada added wooden pergolas to the erstwhile open courtyard. This was to maintain privacy and security of the place.

A mosaic floored reflecting pool lies right below the skylight in the courtyard. While it ushers the outdoors inside, it is also a successful experiment at converging two styles: the traditional Indian and the contemporary. Giving details about this particular design, Gada says, "The blue china mosaic border highlights both the terracotta tiles and Jaisalmer stone used here. On a subconscious level, the blue also reflects the sky and water element present in the courtyard. A beautiful Adenium tree sits in the center of the planter, with its branches reaching out to the sky, thereby connecting the indoors and the outdoors." With sunlight flooding in, the courtyard is the brightest spot in the house and a great place to spend leisurely afternoons.

In the dining room that lies next to the courtyard, the large dining table is the focal point. The teak wood table is custom made with tile inlay on it. A bay window overlooking the gardens beyond is comfortably nestled with a window seat. The simplicity of the furniture and beautiful views outside are reminiscent of colonial times.

To further enhance the rustic look, Gada has used antique looking tiles and teak wood cabinets in the kitchen. Although the kitchen appears to be traditional, it is well stocked with modern day amenities.

Mangalas has two bedrooms: the master bedroom and the guest bedroom. Although the design and treatment of both the rooms are different, yet both lay enveloped in a romantic aura of peace and seclusion.

Carrying the traditional element further, the backstead of the guest bed is made up of river polished Kota, which provides an interesting contrast to the



THIS PAGE TOP The master bathroom has a very rustic ambience. Here rustic tiles have been used for the floors and walls and polished Jaisalmer stone for the counter. The bathroom opens out into a private outdoor shower area. Bamboo screening provides privacy to the space.

BOTTOM The Jacuzzi set into a Jaisalmer platform is the focal point of the master bathroom.

soft furnishings. The room is drenched in soft lights - a detail that accentuates its romantic ambience.

The master bedroom is a tribute to the original house as well as Gada's creativity. The master bed lies covered in plush linen and rich silk drapes. Enhancing the sense of romance in this room is the comfy window seat. Even the furniture pieces like the teak wood wardrobe add to the sensuality of this room.

According to Gada, the master bathroom is one of the best spaces in the house. Describing his favourite nook, he says, "Rustic brown tiles of the walls and floor compliment the Jaisalmer basin counter with stone basin. A Jacuzzi set into a Jaisalmer platform is the focal point of the bathroom. Just off the bathroom is an outdoor shower area complete with rain shower."

Gada's love for details is also seen in the attention paid to furniture. Some pieces have been handpicked by Gada himself as well as the original Madhubani painting by Bhava Devi put up in the guest room. These details add a touch of exclusivity to the design.

It is a rarity that such varied elements of nature and design co-exist within one living space. It takes brilliance like Dipen Gada to create a masterpiece from a traditional structure and fill it with style and sophistication of high living. Gada has the final word: "This project was truly a labour of love from both the client's as well as our side. It is rare that the client's and the designer's ideas about a house seem to be in such synchrony with each other."

