

profile



**Dipen
GADA**

A Versatile Oeuvre

PHOTOGRAPHS: TEJAS SHAH, COURTESY THE ARCHITECT



The exterior of the bungalow is defined by grills in the form of skeletal trees. The imagery is replicated in a cast concrete block on the elevation of the bungalow as well as one on the garden wall.



Devyani Jayakar talks to Dipen Gada about his design for a restaurant and two bungalows in Vadodara, each one with a distinctive aesthetic, tailor-made for its context and use. A small bungalow on a small plot, constructed partly in RCC. A restaurant, partly indoors and partly semi-outdoors...and a farmhouse in an earthy aesthetic. Dipen Gada reckons these are representative of his versatile oeuvre.



The staircase acts as a buffer for private and semi private spaces abutting the living room. Splashes of colour in the soft furnishings enliven the neutral colour palette and the grey of the RCC.

FACT FILE:
Client's Name: Shah
Built up Area: 4,085 sq ft
Date of completion: Feb 2013
Principal designer: Dipen Gada
Design Team: Dolly Pari, Forum Patel
Site Coordinator: Rahi construction; Rajesh Patel



L House



Standing on an L-shaped 4,000 sq ft plot, this structure with a sloping elevation is constructed in a combination of RCC and brick with plaster. RCC walls rise higher than others and different techniques have been employed to achieve texture on them, such as a corrugated effect through moulds.

A garden in the north-east corner is connected visually to almost all parts of the house. The living and dining rooms, kitchen, staircase and two bedrooms, all enjoy a view of this green space. Being protected by the shadow of the building itself, it remains a cool space to relax in.

The exterior of the bungalow is defined by grills in the form of skeletal trees. The expected windows and balconies have been replaced by this safety feature which has been designed to make an aesthetic statement. Vertical strips of aluminium guard all fenestrations, overlaid with aluminium plates cut in the shape of a dry tree. Viewed



An artwork of 'footprints' in burnt wood by Kanti Rana occupies pride of place in the studio located in the basement.

L House

from the inside, they simulate a forest in silhouette, while effectively disguising the function of the grills. The imagery is replicated in a cast concrete block on the elevation of the bungalow as well as one on the garden wall. The repetition ensures that the theme is seen as continuous and pervading, without the randomness attributed to isolated gestures.

The main door has an attractive white metal cut-out in a floral pattern overlaid on the wood. Step in and you are faced by a panel with 12 cows and two hanging lamps like temple bells, establishing the cultural affinity of the homeowners immediately. The interior has a cool white colour palette, alleviated by punches of colour in the cushions and paintings. The flooring is in Greek Thassos. 'I was against it because it's expensive and difficult to maintain, but the clients were insistent,' says Dipen, who had to forego his preferred kota stone.

The staircase acts as a buffer for private and semi-private spaces abutting the living room and the parents' bedroom. The master bedroom is a huge space with a balcony, which overlooks the garden below. This balcony connects to the daughter's room and has a jaali that forms a part of the elevation of the house. The four poster with pink curtains proclaims the femininity of the occupant. The son's bedroom is adjacent to the master bedroom and has a feature wall to display toys and his pictures as a back-drop. The bed sits on a marble platform, freeing up space in the bedroom.

The open-plan kitchen and dining area has become the favourite space of the family. The bungalow also has a large basement which



Bright and colourful – the home theatre in the basement.

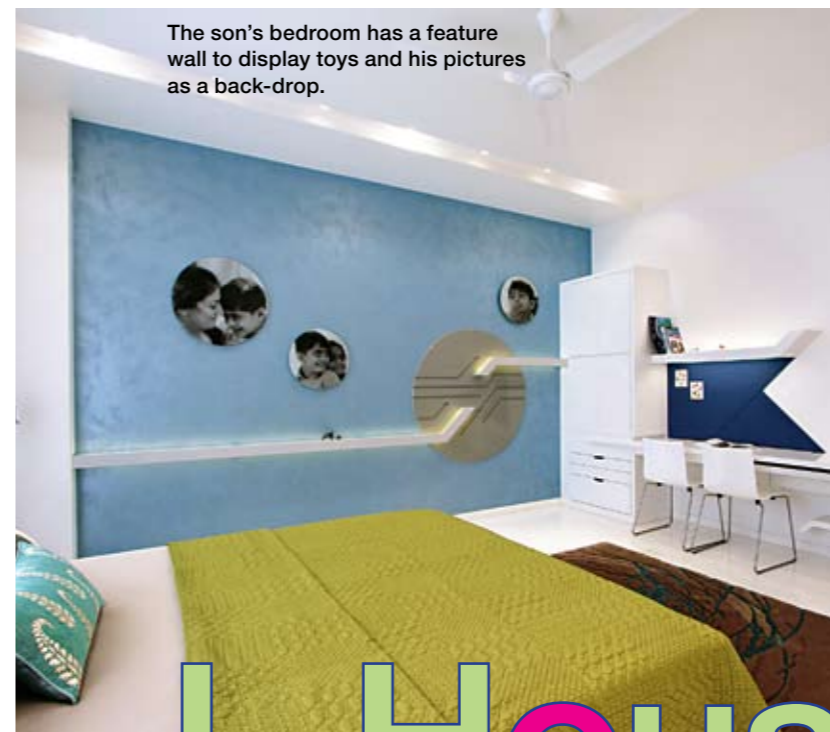
L House



Study table in the daughter's bedroom, backed by an RCC wall.



The daughter's bedroom. The four poster with pink curtains proclaims the femininity of the occupant.



The son's bedroom has a feature wall to display toys and his pictures as a back-drop.



The spacious master bedroom overlooks the garden below from the balcony.

L House

houses a home theatre, a gym and a studio for the lady of the house, who is an artist. An artwork of 'footprints' in burnt wood by Kanti Rana occupies pride of place in the basement.

An unusual aspect of this bungalow, is what Dipen calls a 'fantasy bathroom'. Located on the terrace level, it is the most luxurious bathroom in the home, but is not connected to any of the bedrooms – it is meant for the entire family. Spa-like in its ambience, it is available to all, without encroaching on anyone's privacy. Housing a jacuzzi, a sauna and a shower cabin, it has a Moroccan inspired theme with flooring in white mosaic and furnishings in blue and white. There is a free standing wall which holds candles and also divides the sauna and the jacuzzi. The adjoining terrace also has colourful mosaic.

'I plan to use this concept in all planning in future. Most clients exhaust their budgets without being able to provide everyone with the same level of luxury that the master bathroom has. Children often grumble about this. The fantasy bathroom ensures that everyone is happy,' says Dipen.



An attractive main door with a white metal cut-out in a floral pattern overlaid on the wood. Step in and you are faced by a panel with 12 cows and two hanging lamps like temple bells, establishing the cultural affinity of the homeowners immediately.

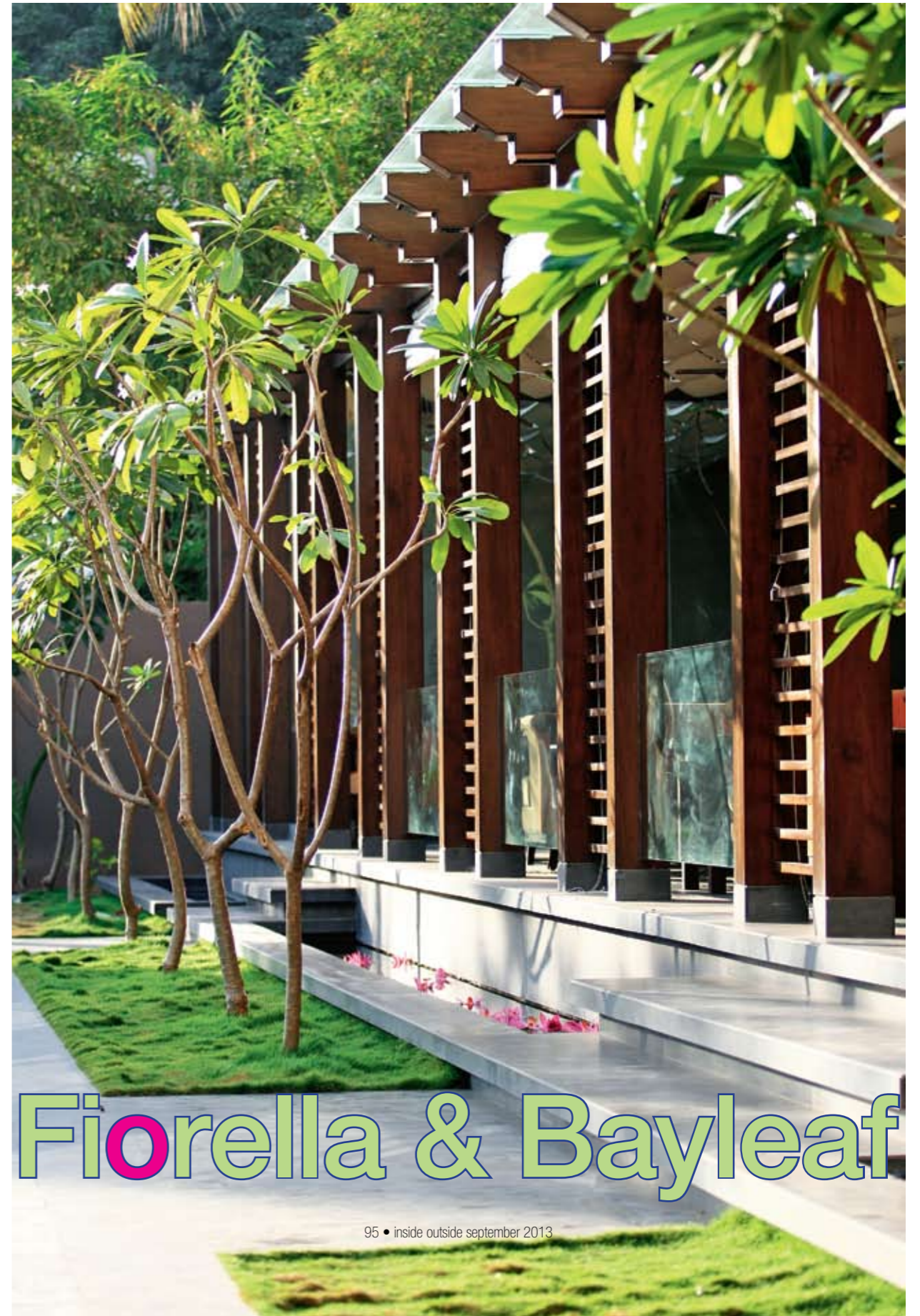


The 'fantasy bathroom', with a Moroccan-inspired theme in blue and white.

L House

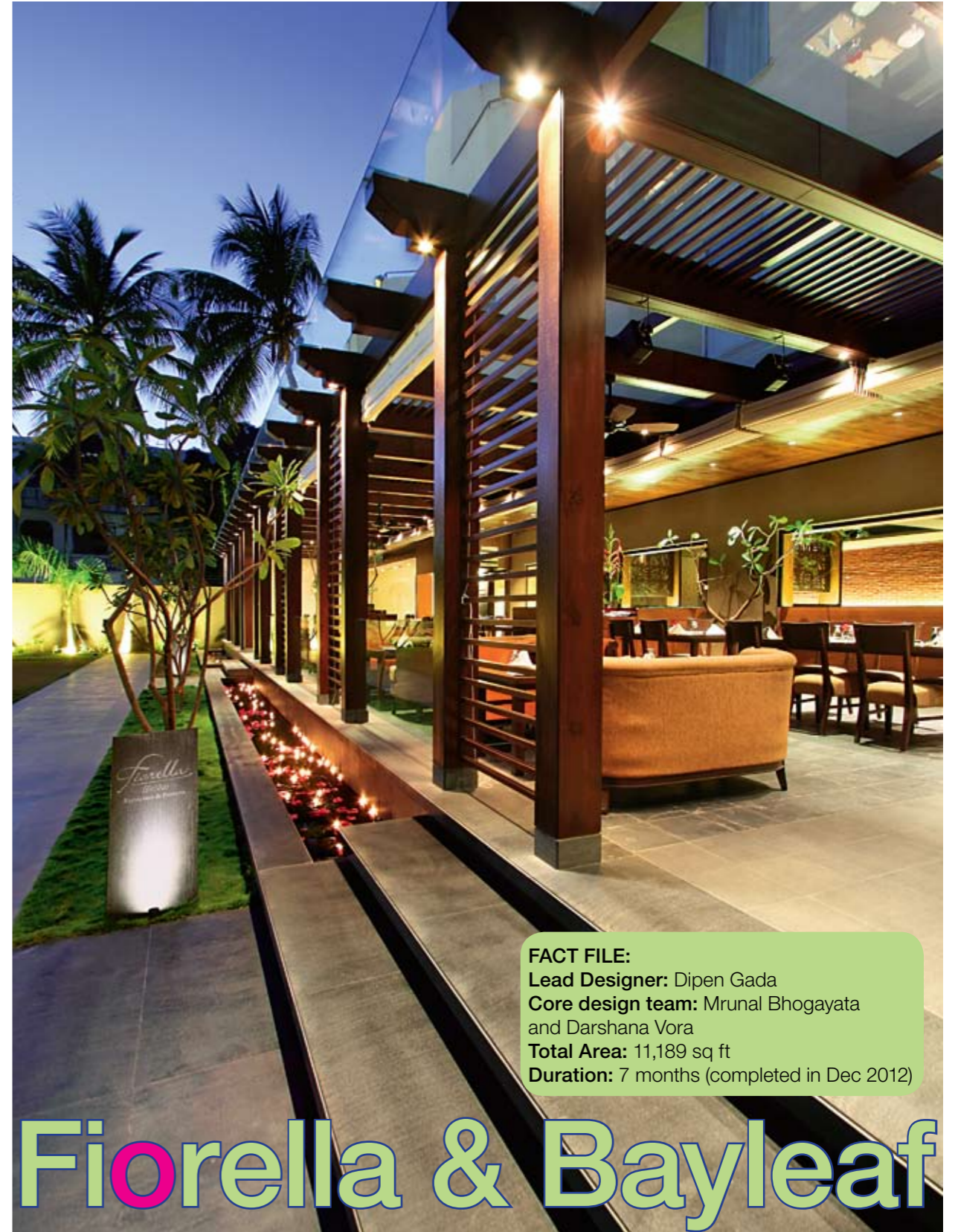


A long lily pond runs along the wall of the restaurant. The path outside leading to it is in river finished granite and slate. Champa trees add interest.



Fiorella & Bayleaf

The glass topped, semi-open area is spaced with alternating pergolas. To shield it from direct sunlight during the day, a cost effective 'horizontal curtain', draped in scallops is an attractive solution.

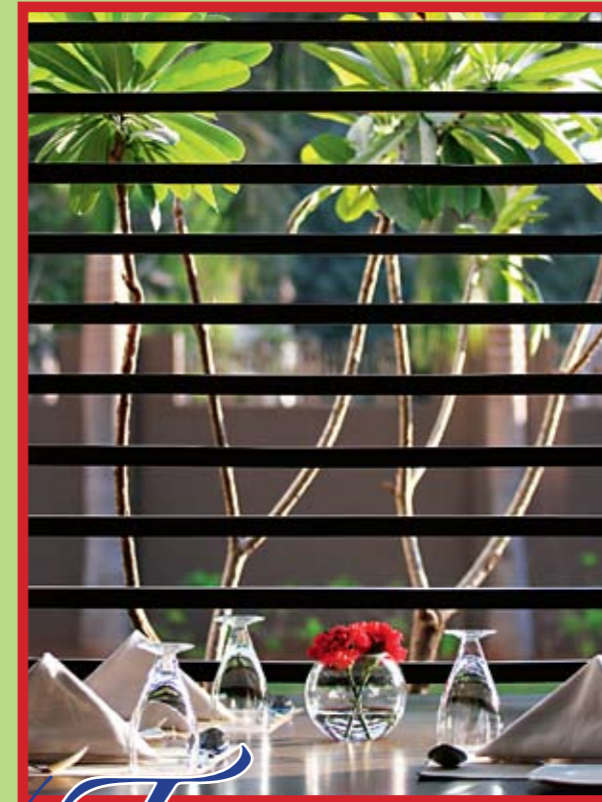


FACT FILE:
Lead Designer: Dipen Gada
Core design team: Mrunal Bhogayata and Darshana Vora
Total Area: 11,189 sq ft
Duration: 7 months (completed in Dec 2012)

Fiorella & Bayleaf



A tree motif signifying a bay leaf appears in the area serving Indian cuisine.



This space was part of a hotel, which the owners wanted to renovate,' says Dipen. His design demarcates three areas for the multi-cuisine restaurant, serving Italian, Indian as well as assorted cuisine on the large patio. Champa trees add interest to the 7,500 sq ft open area which is also used for private parties, while a long lily pond runs along the wall of the restaurant. The path outside, leading to the restaurant, is in river finished granite and slate.

The semi-open area is glass topped with spaces of alternating pergolas. To shield it from direct sunlight during the day, a cost effective 'horizontal curtain' which is draped in scallops makes an attractive solution. Manually operated by a rod, it is made of a washable fabric in textured white. 'A motorised curtain would have escalated the cost to an unaffordable level,' says Dipen.

Grey Italian marble runs through the enclosed spaces, while a tree motif appears in different places to signify a bay leaf in the area serving Indian cuisine. An exposed brick wall and customised square ceiling lights add character to the spaces.

Fiorella & Bayleaf



Central courtyard:
Cobalt blue for the terrazzo in the water body comes together with the golden yellow of the jaisalmer to create a pattern which looks good even if there is no water.



An adenium plant reaches out towards the glass-covered pergola overhead.

Mangala's Farmhouse

The living room offers sprawling views of the outside. The centrally ridged sloping roof has polished rough wood planks to simulate rafters.



Mangala's Farmhouse

FACT FILE:
Lead Designer: Dipen Gada
Core design team: Shruti Patel
and Shalini Pereira
Duration: 1 year (completed in March 09)

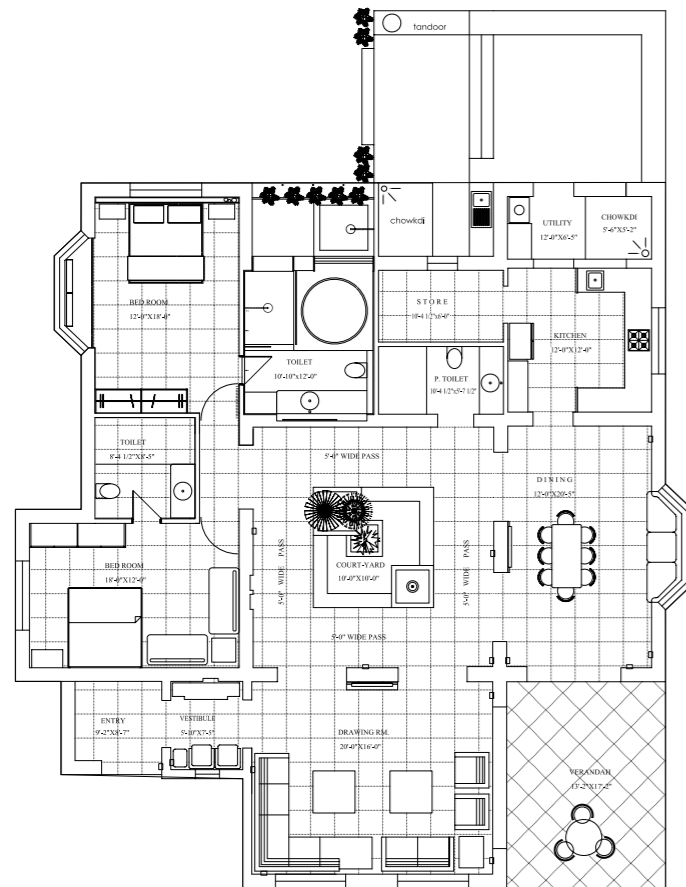




The bathroom offers an outdoor shower.

Exposed brick has been used throughout.

Mangala's Farmhouse



When I was called in to handle this project, the clients had already built half of the structure. It is a small, single storeyed, two bedroom bungalow in exposed brick, with a sloping roof. The 3,000 sq ft structure sits on a 1,00,000 sq ft landscaped plot on the outskirts of Vadodara. The client's brief was to create a space where they

could enjoy the quiet beauty of nature away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

The inspiration for the interiors was taken from the rural setting as well as the existing structure of exposed brick. Dipen's favoured kota stone has been liberally used here. 'I never use vitrified tiles,' he says. The sit-out has mosaic flooring and marble pebbles laid in a random pattern,

with 'reed back' chairs enforcing the rustic aesthetic. A trio of overhead lamps in an organic shape reinforce the vocabulary. Earthy colours, terracotta, teakwood and jaisalmer stone are part of the material palette.

The approach to the house is from a long driveway lined by trees from which one can occasionally catch a glimpse of the house through the foliage,

adding a sense of mystery and drama which is accentuated at night. The driveway opens out into a large open space which serves as a parking area. 'There is cobble-stone paving here, which I have laid in a geometrical pattern,' says Dipen.

The foyer opens out into a living room that offers sprawling views of the outside. The centrally ridged sloping roof has polished

Mangala's Farmhouse



Textured wall and interesting art in subtle shades make for an elegant bathroom.

rough wood planks to simulate rafters. Together with the rough kota flooring and exposed brick work, this reinforces the rustic theme while the furniture with soft furnishings and accents in an eclectic mix of Indian colours of magenta, hot pink, orange and green provide bursts of colour.

A central courtyard, beloved by architects in tropical climates, houses all the bells and whistles – water body, greenery, pergola et al. It acts as a transition space between the more private bedroom areas, the living and dining areas. Cobalt blue has been used for the terrazzo in the water body to create a pattern which looks good even if there is no water. 'There is a problem with scaling

because of the hard water and since the clients visit only over the weekend, maintenance becomes an issue,' says Dipen. A bulbous adenium plant sits in the centre, its branches seemingly reaching upwards to the sky. Multiple levels add architectural complexity to this area, making it a place one would want to linger in.

The formal dining room lies adjacent to the courtyard. The ridged sloping roof has rough wooden rafters and the custom-made teak wood table with tile inlay dominates the space. A bay window to one side of the table allows warm golden light to flood the room and also offers a view of the pool and garden area. Both the dining and the living room

open out onto a large verandah.

Dipen's earlier version of a 'fantasy bathroom' finds expression in the master bath. Not fully articulated to offer itself to the entire family, it is nevertheless the seed of future growth of this idea in his design. An outdoor shower offers an experience which would be very difficult to get in a city. 'Ideally, I would like to provide a couch in the bathroom, to take a nap on. It can function as a "time-out zone" when there is a marital disagreement,' says Dipen. 'I also provide lots of pillows for a "soft fight",' he adds.

'Interior designers as family counsellors', is not an entirely new idea. But Dipen's solutions are entirely original!