



The glass house

Besides being an architectural delight, this sprawling New Delhi residence creates apt spaces for all three generations of the Rastogi family

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Eco-friendly indoor garden

The indoor rock garden is the focal point of this home. With palm trees, wooden furniture and a double ceiling allowing for natural light to filter in, it brings back the courtyard concept in a very modern setting. The furniture is by Mike Knowles and the inlaid table is from Kaaru. Sonali bought the funky hanging lights in Milan, long before this home was even built.



House fact file

Owners Sonali and Mani Rastogi with their kids

Property Bungalow

Location New Delhi

Area 5,000 square foot

Even at first glance, this bungalow in New Delhi's Panchsheel Park's posh lanes seems nothing short of spectacular. The home has an almost all-glass façade, supported with stone and teak. Natural light floods its interiors while a brilliantly manicured garden and indoor courtyard garden creates a perfect synergy between the outdoors and indoor space.

Of course, such architectural perfection is not hard to imagine, when one learns that the couple who designed this dream home are none other than Sonali and Mani Rastogi, renowned architects behind the award-winning interiors design and architectural firm Morphogenesis.

Given that both Mani and Sonali are such celebrated architects, one wonders how it was for them to put their ideas together. "Mani and I have been working together since 1991, so it wasn't difficult at all," explains Sonali. So what did they have in mind when they designed this home? "We were very clear about the lifestyle that we enjoy. After that, the house just evolved," states Sonali. A green and sustainable way of living was crucial, and hence, the planning, structure and materials used in the house respond to the essential passive energy-efficient techniques suitable to the Delhi ►

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— SONALI



climate. It incorporates high thermal mass in the west, earth damping for the basement studios, landscape buffers on the south, high performance surfaces in the east and a large cavity on the barrel roof as well as a lap pool which helps with heat absorption on the top terraces. The lap pool is fed by harvested rain water and runs the length of the terrace on the second floor.

Having created a design for green and sustainable living, it was very important for Manit and Sonali to

make their home a haven for the three generations that share this abode. “We feel that every single house should be designed to respond to a family over a lifetime. Right now, our kids are young. Once they grow up, they may go away to college and so on. A house needs to cater to all these changing life situations,” elucidates Sonali, adding that they didn’t want a very large house with ten rooms. “We have an open door policy with our family and friends,” she discloses. That’s why the living quarters

of Manit, Sonali and their kids are close enough to each other to enable them to shout out from one room to another. The interconnectivity between the floors makes for easy interaction between all the age groups while providing them all with adequate privacy too. “Our home caters to a modern-day family where there’s freedom to interact by choice and not forced,” she says.

Manit’s parents stay on the ground floor. And while they share a common atrium entrance, their floor is kept



exclusive to give them enough privacy. The stairs leading to the first floor are separated from the ground-floor unit with a glass partition made by Japanese paper sandwiched between two glass sheets. These types of glass partitions are almost a trademark of Morphogenesis, where translucent divisions are created without compromising on the openness and fluidity of design.

The open-plan space also allows them to host many cultural and enjoyable evenings. From the monthly meetings of Manthan (a cultural group founded by them that promotes the exchange of ideas between various creative disciplines) to musical soirees, they can easily accommodate over a hundred guests in this space.

Both students of the School of Planning and Architecture, the couple

admits that they have a large circle of creative friends. This home is enriched by and for the kind of people we interact with," states Sonali. The couple's love for art is evident from a series of paintings, photographs and art pieces by renowned artists like Manisha Gera Baswani, Sanjeev Sonpipare and photographer Ajay Rajgarhia that adorn the wall lining the stairs. As I am led upstairs, Sonali shares that most of these famed artists are very close friends of theirs.

Almost every piece in this home is either crafted or gifted by a friend. The living room is strewn with artefacts, furniture and other knickknacks presented by friends from China, Australia and India, of course. Even the upholstery has been designed by Mandeep Nagi of Shades of India. The focal point on this floor is a rock garden ▶▶

Modish dining area

Red is clearly the accent colour throughout the house. The open-space dining area too features a huge red table. Although ideal for large get-togethers, the family chooses between eating here or on the open-air deck.



▲ Spacious living room

The L-shaped seating makes for smooth interaction for the many parties that the couple enjoys hosting. Most things are designed or gifted by their artistic friends. The glass walls are lined with silk-thread curtains, maintaining the openness of design. One of Sonali's close friends lives in China and hence the Oriental influences (she invariably gets some gifts for the house from there). Then there are the didgeridoos, original Australian tribal artefacts.

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— SONALI

► Understated master bedroom

All the rooms, like this one, are kept free from clutter. There are no sofas in the bedrooms since the Rastogis avoid bedroom living. Their love for art is evident here as well, with two paintings by Manisha Gera Baswani. The sleek-lined furniture and accessories give this space a very contemporary look and feel. A small and compact study is ensconced in a corner. The colour red makes an appearance in this otherwise black-and-white room in the form of a rug.



◀ Leisurely lounge

The recreation area on the second floor is put to good use for reading, studying, music lessons and games of chess. The family also uses the lap pool outside almost throughout the year. The plants from the indoor garden grow in to this space and add a lively green touch to the lounge. Red, clearly is the couple's favourite colour. Here again, it makes an appearance in the form of furniture. All this is set against a startlingly white backdrop and dramatic landings.




with palm trees and wooden furniture. The double ceiling lends it the feel of a courtyard, albeit it's covered.

Before moving in to this house, the Rastogis lived in a second floor apartment in Sarvapriya Vihar. "So when this house was being built, the kids kept asking us 'Where is the garden?' Whenever we showed them the garden, they said, "but where is the garden in our house?" Sonali recounts. That's how this little garden came about, but with its fair share of

problems. Once again, friends came to their rescue. "Loads of our colleagues are in to landscape architecture from whom we learnt how to make this indoor garden thrive," shares Sonali. She recalls that initially they used some delicate plants and finally came to the conclusion that palms would grow best in here. They were advised to install an aerator, sunlight simulator, carbon dioxide sensor and evacuator... and today this little indoor garden is the focal point of this home.

While no area in this home is off-limits, this family resists bedroom living. That's why there are no sofas in the bedrooms. The recreation area on the second floor is put to good use with 12-year-old Ananya's music classes, 16-year-old Aryaman's chess practice, studying, reading and, of course, swimming.

So many different spaces with such varying identities, yet a brilliantly cohesive design formula integrating them all... Sheer luxury indeed! 

Cosy corner

These elegant chairs were designed by Mike Knowles especially for the couple



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