

URBAN SANCTUARY

Cheerful interactive zones filled with natural light and outdoor views, Ar. Mahesh designs a contemporary home for a young family in Thiruvananthapuram.

Photography/Suraj Khan & Shabeeth Baker * Words/Mridula Sharma



DINING AREA

A glass wall on the left floods the ground floor with a warm luminosity which changes as the day progresses. A rare brown-lavender travertine top with SS legs makes a stunning bespoke dining table. The pattern of metal embroidered red artwork panels are referenced against peacock feather pattern. The door seen here, leads to a four-stage kitchen behind it.

GET THE LOOK The dining table, chairs and the sideboard are bespoke designs from Alchemy. The red artwork panels were created by KAARU, candle stands are from OMA Living.

HOME PROFILE

THE OWNERS Gayathri and Suhas and their two college-going daughters, Navya and Manya. Gayathri and Suhas work with the family jewellery business. The family loves to travel and to entertain. Both the girls are animal lovers and volunteer regularly for the cause.

THE PROPERTY Built on 10,000 sq ft, the four level home has a footprint of 5000 sq ft with the rest reserved for landscaping. The basement takes care of all the services and back-end facilities. On the ground floor are the formal living room, dining area, casual lounge, outdoor dining and two guest suites. On the first floor are the master-suite, and two bedrooms, with open-to-sky en-suites; the bar and informal living area with a terrace. The top floor has a spa, gym and home theatre.



DINING AREA

A customised metal wire-embroidery artwork panels by KAARU hold the vastness of the space together. The open plan is cleverly demarcated without one getting in the way of the other. This view from the dining looks all the way past the foyer, formal living leading to two guest suites. The formal living cuboid is segregated with a step-up and a brass screen.

GET THE LOOK A black lacquered sideboard is coordinated with the SS element of the dining table and was customised by Alchemy. Artwork panels are from KAARU, candle stands from OMA Living, foyer console from Casa Paradox with a mirror from Indi Store. At the far end, on the wall is a brass panel from Viya Home with a console from Furniture Library.



Gayathri and Suhas with daughters Navya on the left and Manya on the right.

When Gayathri and Suhas decided to move from an apartment to an independent house, the biggest issue that arose was about finding an appropriate sized plot in the heart of the city. Their girls were growing up and while they didn't want to lose the physical closeness that comes with living in an apartment, yet they definitely wanted to move into a more spacious accommodation.

For architect-designer N. Mahesh the brief was to create a spacious house with manicured lawns and a lot of greenery. The family wanted interactive spaces, well designed and suitably tailored to sync with their lifestyle. "The plan had to accommodate formal and informal living areas and five large bedrooms with wall-to-wall wardrobes; bathrooms had to have greenery, skylights and patios. They also required large back-of-house areas to accommodate staff quarters, HVAC systems, parking for five to six luxury cars and a laundry set-up, with external access to the basement area. And all this had to look good and be easy on maintenance and housekeeping. Not exactly a small order," smiles Mahesh.

Today, as one drives through the city's charming labyrinth of narrow lanes, the sudden openness of the site is unmistakable. The 5000 sq ft house has been positioned at the far end of the 10,000 sq ft site, allowing a generous front

lawn, at one end of which is a wide deck connected to one of the ground floor suites.

With Gayathri's wish for "a home with plenty of natural light and ventilation, with views of the outdoors," well granted, it is a sensorial envelope that one walks through upon entering. A wide entrance leading into a double height open plan creates a sense of exuberant grandiose and everything else is an off-shoot of that. The entrance vestibule (before the foyer) becomes a transitional zone and there is a sense of space and scale as one arrives home.

"We also wanted ample entertaining areas both indoors and outdoors, without compromising privacy for us as a family," elaborates Gayathri.

The foyer manifests as a point of convergence for three zones: Straight on, escalating over a water-body is the staircase and elevator leading to the private areas on the first and second floors. To the left is the family area, the dining leading to an outdoor space and the kitchen. On the right is the formal living, which further leads up to the guest suites. With natural light streaming from the dining side, the family zone is always warm and cheerful. A four-step very large kitchen (pantry, cooking areas both dry and wet) takes into account all the activities and is also efficiently equipped.



FORMAL LIVING

Distinguished by a step-up and timber-flooring, the living area opens on the water-body hosting the staircase on one side, and on the front lawn at the other. Brass screens add an element of design as well as provide segregation. On the upper level a screened nook makes a perfect bar corner. Frames of family pictures are grouped along the stair wall.

GET THE LOOK The sofas are customised at Furniture Library with fabric from Atmosphere, book cases are from DeMuro Das, and the easy chairs from Muse. The corner table is from Viya Home and the set of coffee-tables is from INV Home, carpet from Carpet Cellar and cushions from Ishatvam. A Versace vase sits on the coffee table.





Ar. N. Mahesh, Iyer & Mahesh Architects

→ **FORMAL LIVING**

The colour palette is contained within off-white, gold and black choreographed into a harmonious one.

GET THE LOOK The book cases are from DeMuro Das, easy chairs from Muse, carpet from Carpet Cellar, side table from INV Home and cushions from Ishatvam.



↓ **READING CORNER**

On the first floor, located between the bar and casual living area is a cosy reading nook. With plenty of natural light and a generous sized seat it is perfect to curl up with a book.

GET THE LOOK The bookcase was customised at Furniture Library and the seat at Daniel Wood, the mirror from OMA Living and cushion from Hmsa Designs.



It is interesting how the private and public areas of the home have been amalgamated without becoming absolutely exclusive to each other. The formal living room, on the ground floor, with its grand double-height ceiling is visually connected to the living area upstairs which also has a bar attached to it. Hence, a large number of guests can be accommodated, separate yet connected at the same time. "All of us love to read but Navya is a voracious reader. Manya, on the other hand loves to bake. Besides, while Navi loves to dance, Manya loves to sing," tells Gayathri. "And there are enough zones for them to indulge in all their recreation without coming in the way of others."

"I love the fact that our master suite is lavish enough in space, and quiet, for us to have movie nights with the girls in here." After living here for almost five years, we can say that our master suite and the library-cum-cocktail lounge are our favourite areas!

Along with the bedrooms on the first floor, there is also a library, a separate living area and a bar for casual entertaining. "The cocktail lounge is where we unwind as a family." Recounting the most interesting and enjoyable part of the journey, "for me", elaborates Gayathri, "was to see it all take shape from a house into a home, the process of doing the interiors with the soft furnishings consultant, deciding finishes, colours etc and most of all forming friendships along the way!" And that pretty much sums up this house — one filled with soulful warmth.



↑ **FIRST FLOOR LIVING AREA**

A timber and glass staircase escalating over a water-body leads to the living area on the first floor. Partially a private space, a place where the family unwinds, the colours here are vibrant and energetic. Cheerful and bright with custom patterned and designed window-blinds, the greenery on the terrace also provides privacy from adjoining homes.

GET THE LOOK The blinds' fabric custom designed by Anita Dalmia of Hmsa Designs. The sofa customised at Daniel Wood, coffee tables and media unit customised by Indi Store, carpet from Carpet Cellar and the light is Artemide.



↓ **CASUAL SIT OUT**

On the ground floor, the dining area stretches into a casual sit out. An end-to-end bookcase with a TV set allows for multi-utility of the space. The openness of the area is hard to miss. Besides the entrance door the only other doors on the floor are the ones leading into the bedrooms and the kitchen. **GET THE LOOK** The bookcase was customised through Zolijns, chairs on the right are from Muse while the other two armchairs and coffee table are from Casa Paradox and the bench is from Alchemy. On the walls are framed BW vintage magazine prints that talk of the Spice Route travels in the 19th century.



← **DINING SIT-OUT**

Glass wall on the dining area side flood the entire floor with ample natural light. Overlooking the courtyard with a fountain, the outdoors becomes a part of the experience even while dining indoors. **GET THE LOOK** The bench is from Alchemy and the fountain was sourced locally.

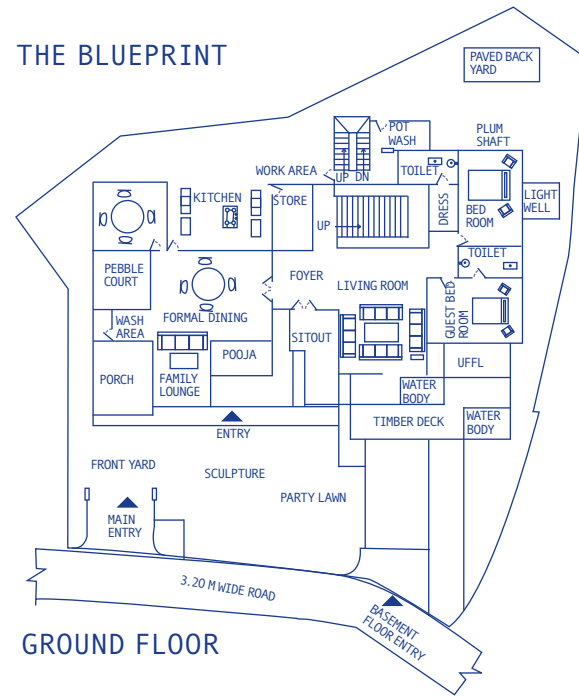


OUTDOOR DINING

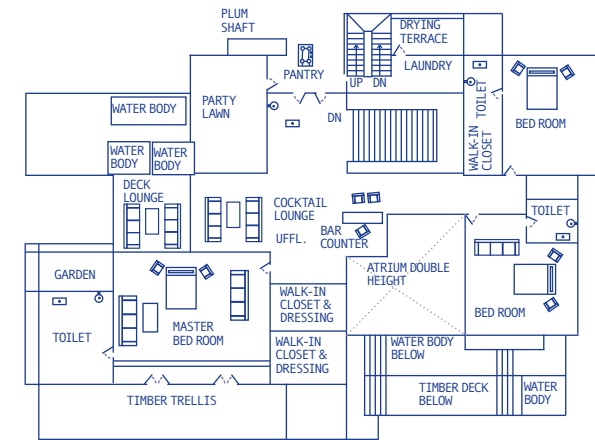
The family's favourite breakfast spot is this outdoor space adjacent to the formal dining. Light on the eye, lending a quasi-zen vibe, Alex Davis' Bamboo collection dining table and side board do all the talking. **GET THE LOOK** The dining table and the sideboard are from Indi Store, artwork and jars from INV Home.



THE BLUEPRINT



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



↑ **BAR**
A metal latticed nook makes a perfect spot for the bar. Being visually connected with both the living areas makes it a good vantage point for any kind of gathering, formal or casual.

→ **GET THE LOOK** The black-mirrored bar unit is from Furniture Library while the leather stools were customised at Daniel Wood, the lights are from Flos and the knick knacks collected from their travels abroad.

→ **MASTERSUITE**
The master suite besides, its comfy loungers and the work-space also accommodates a reading corner by the window that looks out onto a personal courtyard, connected on the other side to the bath. A generous customised leather bed is colour coordinated with the wallpaper.

→ **GET THE LOOK** The bedroom furniture has been customised at Daniel Wood, wallpaper customised by Anita Dalmia, Hmsa Designs and the floor lamp is from INV Home. Lamp on the bedside is from OMA Living, and bedspread from Nur.



↓
EXTERIOR
With slatted timber casing reminiscent of traditional Kerala style, tradition comes across very subtly if at all. The monolith facade makes the home totally private and inward looking.

→ **DECK**
The guest suite opens onto a deck which connects with the area outside formal living room before culminating onto the lush lawn. Once again this works as a spill-over area for large gatherings.



IDEAS TO STEAL

Open interactive spaces keep the spirit of togetherness alive, bringing in a cheerful vibe



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Belleria fan, price on request, Anemos; **cushion**, price on request, India Circus; **log table**, price on request, Indi Store; **venetian mirror**, price on request, Vetromoda; **Etereo glass lamp**, ₹15,500, Address Home; **amazon.in**; **Vittoria armchair**, price on request, Operae Home at Ottimo; **Dayang outdoor swing**, ₹1,15,500, Abaca.



FOR CONTACTS SEE STOCKISTS



TOP AND ABOVE **Amara grey rug**, price on request, Hands Carpets; **wooden flooring**, price on request, Greenlam.