



[1] The glass-enclosed rectangular lobby cum sitting area leads to the bedroom. It is also where the stairs to the terrace floor start. It has niches high up on the wall, close to the ceiling, and carefully placed light fittings. An abstract art piece by Kapil is set in a wooden frame



[2] The terrace as the central point of the apartment is surrounded by the two rooms and the kitchen, with a partial view of the entrance lobby through the glass door. The colour scheme, in earthy tones of beige, brown and terracotta, is accentuated by the royal blue glow of diffused lighting reflecting on the wall



Labour

of Love

Art meets innovative architectural elements, in architect Kapil Aggarwal's own home in Delhi.



A Left to right: Architects Nikhil Kant and Kapil Aggarwal

TEXT: SUMITA SENGUPTA | PHOTOGRAPHS: AKHIL BAKSHI; COURTESY THE ARCHITECT



When a student of fine arts studies architecture and later gets engaged in designing his own home, this very personal area justifiably turns into an exuberance of colours. Kapil Aggarwal of Delhi's Spaces Architects, poured his unbridled design ideas within the four walls while doing up his residence, as he says, "Clients come with their own ideas which we have to translate into the interiors, but here I could give myself full freedom." Nikhil Kant, Kapil's college classmate and now partner at Spaces Architects, helped him in the execution of the structural design, while Kapil's wife Pooja joined the design team with her regular (and relevant) feedback. The result is 1,100 square ft of innovative ideas defining a very personal space.

Originally a *barsaati* (a single room set on the second floor terrace of his father's almost 40-year-old house), this is the same space where Kapil took occasional breaks from the hustle and bustle of a busy household during his growing up years. Many of his artworks (for which he has won 24 awards so far) have been conceived sitting in the quietude of this remote corner of the house where none of the family would care to step in.

"The family lives on the ground and first floor of the house," says Kapil, "and the terrace and the *barsaati* had always remained neglected. I decided to renovate and create a private studio apartment for Pooja and me. The whole design has been an experience involving a stimulation of thought process."

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[3] The kitchen ceiling is marked by fluid shapes in POP, illuminated by lights. The wall throws up surprises with a veneered abstract form. The dining table has simple lines, and the four chairs have been designed in a single line

The second-floor apartment presents a stark contrast to the setting of the house, which is in chaotic south Delhi, and the simple designs of the ground and first floors. A rather steep and old-fashioned staircase leads to a small rectangular area which is now used as the lobby of the house, with a sitting area surrounded by art pieces. Sliding glass doors on the terrace side create an enclosure where the original sunshade has now been clad with veneer. A small artwork done by Kapil is framed imaginatively in a large wood, and covers most part of one wall. The

[4] The glass encased window spread along the outer wall of the kitchen offers an unhindered view of the terrace. The subtle glow of the concealed lighting accentuates the abstract form of the ceiling



corner where the stairwell ends, has been converted into a storage cupboard whose door sports another painting of Kapil's.

Following the basics of any design rule book, the open terrace has been kept as the focal point of the space so that all rooms overlook it. "I wanted to use the openness of the terrace as the central theme," says Kapil. "It has been an exciting journey of exploration and creation of a relationship between the exterior and interior."

Other than the contemporary version of a *tulsi vrindavan* that forms a visual anchor in the 500-square-foot terrace, a water spout is the other important feature that Kapil finds stimulating and soothing. The inspiration for it has come from one of late Sri Lanka-based architect Geoffrey Bawa's creations. Besides creating a serene ambience, the waterbody 'covers up' most of the external sound pollution.

The bedroom and the adjacent guest room (the latter is used more as a studio), are striking in their openness and uncluttered decor. Glass has been used extensively to achieve this: as a partition between the kitchen and the bedroom; as a floor-to-ceiling window facing the terrace, and as door and window panes in all enclosed spaces. A large colourful painting and other



[5] The other end of the sitting area in the lobby has a storage cupboard hidden behind a large painting by Kapil. The rich strokes of colour brighten up space. The glass door opening into the stairwell visually extends the area

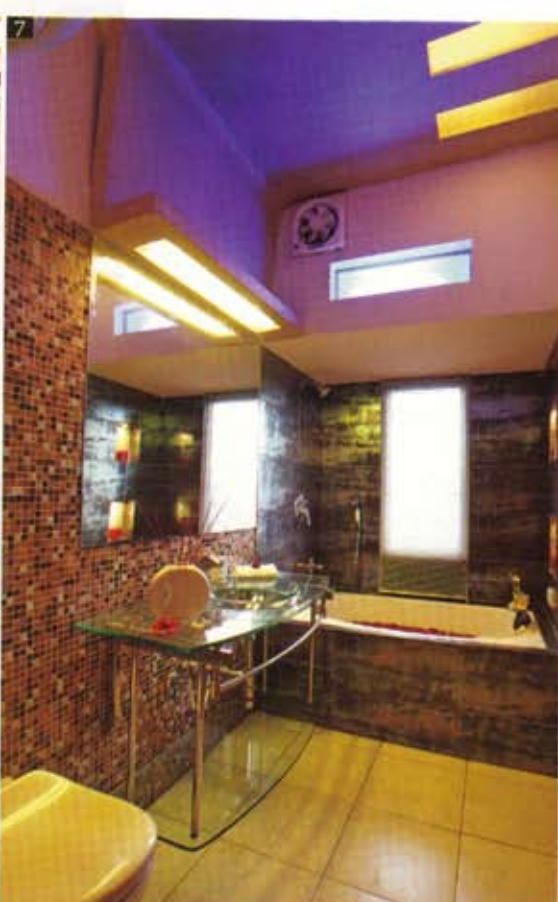
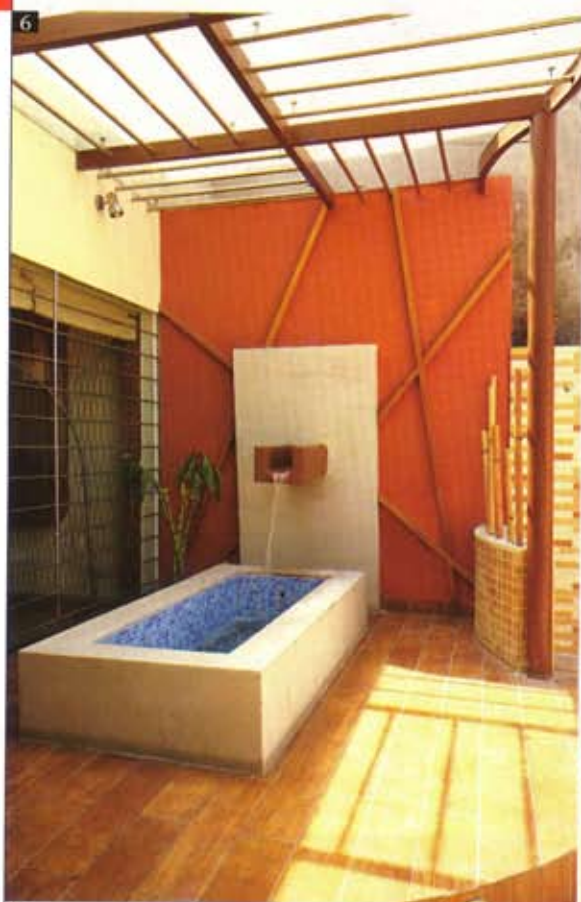
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>CONCEPT

A very personal space of an artist and architect where he has allowed his imagination to take wing, keeping in mind the basics of good design that involves optimum use of light, space and air.

>MATERIALS

Floor	Italian tiles (for lobby and bath); Somany vitrified tiles (for kitchen cum dining area and guest room) and wooden floor (bedroom)
Walls	Italian stone (lobby); wallpaper (bedroom); veneer paints from Donear and MDF (dining area); textured paint (guest room); and Unitile (terrace)
Other materials	Modi Glass and light fittings from upmarket shopping arcades at Khan Market



[6] The fountain is an important design element in the apartment. The small pool cools the space, the sound of the falling water shields from outdoor noise

[7] Use of imaginative lighting high up in the niches in the wall and glass extends to the washroom. Jacuzzi-fitted bath, and the glass shelf in front of the mirror on the left add style

[8] The guest bedroom, when not in use, is used by Kapil as a studio





[9] Clever use of lighting transforms the bedroom into a dream land. At the far end, the left door leads to the attached bath while the right one opens to the entrance lobby. The tiny illuminated cylindrical side table is actually a medicine cabinet

[10] Linear POP patterns on the ceiling extend to the wall of the bedroom, and accentuate the curves of the bed and sofa. Glass has been used as the wall and door between the kitchen and the bedroom

artworks by the architect complement the muted walls of the bedroom. The headboard of the curved double-bed extends into bedside tables, while its footboard turns into a seat. "The only seating space in the bedroom is this recliner, so this extended space in the bed doubles up as seating when I have company," says Kapil.

Two cylindrical tables (with concealed storage) comprise the other furniture in the room. Two suspended lights, hovering exactly above these tables, create cohesiveness. Similarly, wall-mounted wooden frames and other artwork encased

in wood complement the wooden flooring, while the curved ceiling heightens the abstract shape of the bed.

The open kitchen with its dining area is another place where Kapil's imagination has been allowed free rein. An amoeba-shaped veneer-coated wall adds a touch of excitement to the space. The expanse of the wall is broken by a wooden display with niches to house sundry objets d'art. Hidden light fittings cast a dramatic glow.

The area opens to the terrace and the water body is placed right next to its glass wall. An extended glass shade above the water body allows daylight to play on the water. In the night, the tiled wall behind the water body and the *tulsi vrindavan* are gently illuminated, add multiple dimensions to the earthy picture.

The architect has played with the ceiling everywhere, creating drama through flowing abstract shapes in POP. A ceiling may be an unlikely place for crevices, alcoves and niches, but he has used the spaces thus created to illuminate the house in an unusual way. As it becomes dark outside, simple CFL and halogen lights placed in these niches cast a different hue on the interior.

Kapil looks indulgently at the self-designed pad. Each area in his new home is picture perfect, composed by the artist in him, after scrutinizing every aspect of shape, colour and size of each design element, transporting the house from the realm of the commonplace to that of the extraordinary. ●

[factfile]

Project	Renovation of the <i>barsaati</i> of the architect's two-storey family home
Covered area	1,100 sq ft
Location	NDOSE I, New Delhi
Architect	Kapil Aggarwal
Design team	Architect Nikhil Kant and Pooja Aggarwal
Execution	Kameshwar and Surendra
Time	Four months