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# ELLE DECOR

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**TREND**  
ANATOMY  
OF LEATHER

**PALETTE**  
AMARANTH

**INDIA AT VITRA**  
MAKING OF THE  
DOSHI RETREAT

**EXCLUSIVE**  
NOTES FROM  
NOZER WADIA

## HOME GROUND

How architects build their world

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*ELLE DECOR brings you in-depth articles and insights into design, architecture, decor and culture. Introducing our special contributors*



**PURAN KUMAR**  
PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT  
STUDIO PKA

When not immersed in his role as Principal Architect of Studio PKA, a three-decade-old award-winning architecture and interior design firm in Mumbai, Puran (a.k.a. PK) can be found on long drives, catching a film, unwinding at a bar, or hosting friends at 9 PM, his home and haven. Oriented towards human-centric architecture, PK thrives upon the process of life and design intertwined as his existential expression.

**On my bucket list...** Drive from home in Mumbai to London

**A party essential...** Wear the attitude and listen to good music

**Design to me is...** Self-expression, and also a responsibility

**What I'm currently watching...** Homebound, One Battle After Another, Santosh

**In this issue,** he welcomes us to his residence in Mumbai where his modern sensibilities coexist with his love for nature, **Pg 192**



**AKSHAT BHATT**  
PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT  
ARCHITECTURE DISCIPLINE

Heading a New Delhi-based multidisciplinary practice founded in 2007, Akshat studied at TVB School of Habitat Studies and the University of East London. He aspires to create environments that foster happiness and optimism for the future, rooted in a context-driven, rational approach defined by technical precision and longevity. The studio's portfolio spans a multitude of typologies.

**On my bucket list...** A trip to the Arctic, Greenland and Iceland

**A party essential...** An excuse to stay home; otherwise, sparkling water, tangerine and kaffir lime, and electronic music

**A historical place I'd like to visit...** Peru and Machu Picchu, to see if I can uncover the mystery.

**In this issue,** he opens doors to his home in New Delhi that revels in a balance of rigour and personality, **Pg 172**



**RAAHUL KUKREJA**  
INTERIOR STYLIST AND CURATOR  
RAAHUL KUKREJA STUDIO

Raahul Kukreja is an interior stylist and curator based in Gurugram, with a studio in Alwar, Rajasthan. He believes in curating like a storyteller, where less always speaks louder. Rooted in intuition and drawn to the quiet power of simplicity, his work celebrates the richness of the senses. Every detail is intentional, softening and bringing depth and elegance into being.

**On my bucket list...** Curating a home in Marrakesh, Morocco

**Design to me is...** The art of knowing when to stop

**What am I currently watching...** A Gentleman in Moscow: graceful, layered, quietly powerful

**A historical place I'd like to visit...** Petra, Jordan

**In this issue,** reflects upon his journey, the lessons learnt and his love for styling at his studio in Alwar, **Pg 80**



**ISHITA SITWALA**  
ARCHITECTURE AND SPATIAL PHOTOGRAPHER  
THE FISHY PROJECT

Architect turned photographer, Ishita has been documenting beautiful projects of all kinds and scales, chasing sunlight for almost a decade now. She has been published extensively in some of the most renowned magazines and online platforms.

**On my bucket list...** Read all the greatest novels ever written

**A party essential...** an invitation ;-)

**Design to me is...** Minimal but with fantastic detailing

**What am I currently watching...** Re-watching Frasier

**In this issue,** she captures a retail experience centre in Calicut by Workers of Art, **Pg 100**, a colour-filled restaurant in Jaipur named 1932 Trevi by Shantanu Garg Design, **Pg 118**, and Akshat Bhatt of Architecture Discipline's home in New Delhi, **Pg 172**



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# THIS HOME IS NOT STAGED

*Akshat Bhatt's home in New Delhi is technically rigorous  
yet deeply personal, balancing restraint and intelligence  
paring back ornamentation in favour of light and precision*

TEXT BY **SHRITI DAS** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ISHITA SITWALA**  
PRODUCED BY **MRUDUL PATHAK KUNDU**



The home's material palette is deliberately restrained, allowing the architecture to speak with clarity and purpose. Glazing by Art & Glass is positioned with precision, drawing daylight deep into the interior and setting up a dialogue between inside and outside FACING PAGE A cast-brass sign by Vision Dis marks the threshold in a quiet yet distinctive manner. Its palm motif, now adopted across the avenue, establishes a shared identity that links individual homes within a collective narrative

On the black wall, artwork from Lee Waisler's India series for the National Gallery sets a tone of gravity. Coffee tables made by Ahuja Furnishers are accented with Alessi accessories. The adjoining study with a red KEF Audio speaker creates contrast FACING PAGE An Ash dining table by Krea, paired with Hans Wegner chairs, subtly defines a boundary within the open plan, organising the space through balance and resisting enclosure



A burnt orange BoConcept sofa anchors the living and dining space, with the KFF Kirk chair in aluminium and leather, sourced by Plüsch. Coffee tables made by Ahuja Furnishers are accented with Alessi accessories and iGuzzini lamps. Veneer from Coast to Coast lines one side of the space. The HVAC above it is conceived by Architecture Discipline and realised by Conaire. It integrates into the ceiling, returning air through a perforated architectural fabric that is also an acoustic membrane.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Muslin drapes with leather piping from Tulio calmly frame the glazing, drawing the eye toward the greens beyond. At the far end, a red side table by AKFD and a striped credenza, designed by Architecture Discipline and crafted by Ahuja Furnishers, introduce moments of colour and texture to animate the living space; Akshat Bhatt and his partner and fellow architect, Sneha Gurjar in their living room; The sprawling home in New Delhi was realised in just eleven months, a testament to intelligent planning and streamlined construction. Here, efficiency is a guiding architectural principle rather than a compromise FACING PAGE Charcoal tribal artwork, a gift from the late Siddhartha Tagore of Art Konsult, greets visitors at the entrance, its graphic clarity resonating with the dark-toned veneer from Coast to Coast beyond



# HOME NEW DELHI

A table lamp by Occhio and a vivid red KEF Audio speaker flank the cabinet, while an Ash dining table made by Krea anchors the foreground. Throughout, the floors are finished in locally sourced Indian marble, a material that is robust and enduring. At the rear, the cabinet becomes a repository of memory, showcasing tapes, compact disks, stage-used guitars and pedals. The Tannoy speakers housed within the cabinet were used in Akshat's early music recordings



There's a certain clarity to Akshat Bhatt's house that resists easy categorisation. It is not a manifesto dressed as architecture, nor a soft-focus family portrait. It sits somewhere else, perhaps at the intersection of technical precision and lived informality, shaped by a restless mind more interested in asking questions than presenting a final image. For someone whose practice is defined by control, his home, where he lives with his parents alongside his partner and fellow architect Sneha Gurjar, is fast, frugal (frugal is relative, you will soon find out) and personal. The duo ensured that the project was built in a record period of 11 months. There are no false ceilings and decorative surfaces. Five rules anchor the material palette: no exposed concrete, no kota, no kadappa, no exposed brick and no Italian marble. Instead, floors are finished in Indian marble that cost 20 INR per square feet. The walls are treated with a textured paint finish that deliberately avoids the precision of his otherwise immaculate projects at Architecture Discipline. A technical and aesthetic choice to build robustly, quickly, and intelligently, do not mistake the finishes for fetishising materials. The materials and suppliers were determined purely for speed of delivery and execution, for efficiency, consistency and availability over indulgence. The result is a calm, silent and neutral material palette that holds the architecture rather than competing with it, while allowing light and proportion to lead. "This was a low complexity project because of the approach to the program, simple materials, and refined techniques," says Akshat. His architectural thinking is forged in the friction between reverence and critique. As a student, he was electrified by Coop Himmelb(l)au's rooftop extension. "It was like discovering progressive metal music," he recalls. Piano's lyricism, Rogers' structure, Foster's systemic clarity: these became his intellectual scaffolding, not as idols but as reference points. "Everybody's trying to be a Siza, when we need to be Grimshaw or Foster," he says, "It's the technocrats that have to solve our problems, not the beautifiers. And there is beauty in technocracy as well." His take on Siza is telling: "I admire the scale and detail, it's like a letter written in prose, I wouldn't write like that today just as I wouldn't build like that today." On Gehry, his distinction is sharper, "Gehry's work ends at finding new form. To me, what Jean Nouvel did with Parc de la Villette, or what OMA has done, is real deconstruction."

These references mark his distance from both the heavy-handed contextualism that still pervades Indian architecture, and the hollow icon-making of globalised design. Akshat rejects formal symmetry and visual alignment. He borrows from Richter's relaxed details, allowing elements to seem assembled, moved, or adjusted, without losing rigour. The lintels are intentionally mismatched, a deliberate disruption that frees the eye from linear alignment, allowing the vision to travel, carrying movement through the architecture instead of containing it symmetrically. In the living room, the lintel drops lower, framing the garden like a cinematic aperture. It modulates light and proportion, making the greens feel closer. The greens, of *Badam* and *Kachnar*, were planned by Sneha to match pace with the architecture. Light, too, is not about creating theatrics, Akshat explains, "Light is about creating a wash. Drama through light works beautifully in hospitality projects, but you don't want drama in a house. There's already enough drama in life."

The plan is fluid and transparent, with spaces opening into one another and maintaining clear sightlines. Sectionally, the house is dynamic: windows and skylights modulate volumes, bringing indirect light deep into the interior. "Height, light and space are the real luxuries here," he says. What was to be the master suite became his parents' room, complete with a small temple for his father's daily prayers. His guitars, meant to occupy the large studio space, were accommodated into a bedroom when the build order shifted – a practical decision that became, over time, a personal alcove. These changes were possible precisely because these decisions were quickly turned around and executed between him and Sneha. "Striving for clarity as a client and a user allowed us to make those changes." The house is pragmatic, technically intelligent and philosophically clear. It refuses to imitate architectural heroes, but is in constant conversation with them. It treats robustness not as brute strength but as the ability to evolve without demolition. And it reflects an architect unwilling to merely occupy inherited forms of practice. ♦



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP In the bedroom, light, height, and space take centre stage with a pendant fixture from BoConcept, a Krea bed and crisp millwork by Vania; Some of Akshat’s most played guitars hang proudly on the wall. His first Marshall amplifier rests on a chest of drawers. A chair and daybed by BoConcept share the space with a rug from The Carpet Cellar; A sleek pendant from Plus Lighting hovers above the dining table from Krea. The chairs are Pantone from Vitra. Mismatched lintels frame the garden beyond FACING PAGE Shifting lintels and skylights punctuate the space, orchestrating light and framing views within an otherwise minimal setting. Seating by Ahuja Furnishers and a bench from Krea hold the centre, with light fixtures by Plus Lighting that introduce an industrial touch. In the far corner, a Muji desk organiser completes the composition



“Height, light and space are the real luxuries here”