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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

 **MAGZTER**

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ELLE DECOR

OCT – NOV 2025

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ON THE COVER

How do architects live? In his home in New Delhi, Akshat Bhatt channels discipline into a composition of light and precision, revealing what it means for designers of spaces to truly inhabit one

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ISHITA SITWALA

PRODUCED BY
MRUDUL PATHAK KUNDU



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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**

A photograph of a modern courtyard. The building has a white, textured facade. A large, rectangular window is visible on the upper level. A wooden deck with a geometric pattern is in the foreground. A large, dark, round planter holds a small tree. A green vine climbs a vertical metal post. A glass door on the right leads to a dining area with a wooden table and chairs. Lush green foliage is on the left.

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



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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





HOME NEW DELHI

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



HOME NEW DELHI



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



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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. ♦



"Height, light and space are the real luxuries here"

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HOME NEW DELHI



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 Panton 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

