An eco-friendly bungalow in Bhuj by Hiten Kakadiya
To Dream... Perchance to Purchase!
When Aum Architects designed a show flat for Mahindra Lifespaces at Pune, they were clear that the space had to attract potential buyers, as is the mantra of all show flats. Converting ‘Look and See’ into putting down money, is the essence of good show flat design, the architects tell Devyani Jayakar.

Photographs: Prashant Bhat
‘There was a story line to the design of the apartment,’ says Sonali. ‘It was to be inhabited by a fictitious couple in their early forties, who had an interest in art. This theme was connected to the name of the building, “L’Artista,” a premium project by Mahindra Lifespaces Pvt. Ltd. at Sopanbaug, Pune. The brief for the show flat was to reflect the signature of these stylish luxury residences. So we designed the space for a make-believe family of four, which included an elderly father and daughter in her teens. The route taken was that of a narrative, rather than just filling up rooms to beautify them. We planned the rooms with a purpose which helped in identifying the space, its utilisation and functionality.’

One of the four bedrooms in the apartment was converted into a lounge for intimate conversations, but the flooring and the layout provided by the developer remained unchanged...buyers need to see walls and doors in the same places where they will be later.
Besides, a powerful incentive for buyers was the private deck which each room opens on to. ‘The entrance of the home opens directly into the living-dining. We retained that without creating any vertical partitions for privacy, for two important reasons. Firstly, we wanted the line of vision to pass through the room into the deck outside. Secondly, this also makes the house more welcoming,’ says Sonali, cognisant of the effect which partitions have, creating a feel which is more one of exclusion, than inclusion.

The focus in the dining-cum-living room is on functionality. ‘We didn’t want to just fill up the space because it was so huge. Objects have been handpicked to change the monotony of certain elements. The corner between two sofas is invariably filled with either a side table or a floor lamp. We decided to have a beautiful long light suspended from the ceiling. This black ceiling to floor fixture bears a resemblance to Medusa’s locks, its bottom
**FACT FILE**

**NAME OF THE PROJECT:** Show flat for Mahindra Lifespaces Pvt. Ltd.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Pune

**PROJECT COMPLETION YEAR:** 2016

**PLOT AREA (SQ. METRE):** 3138 sq ft

**PROJECT TYPE:** Apartment

**FLOORING:** as provided by builder, bedrooms have laminated wooden flooring and living kitchen & bathrooms Dyna marble

**WALL CLADDING:** Wallpaper from Metamorf

**INTERIOR FINISHES:** Lustre paint, Wallpaper

**LIGHTING FIXTURES:** Hybec for general lighting, decorative lights sourced from various vendors

**FURNITURE/DECOR:** Sourced from various places, wardrobes customised by Metamorf

**SOFT FURNISHINGS:** Good Earth, Mumbai

The lounge is the most playful of the rooms.

being lit by several filament bulbs. A long sofa upholstered in leather sits in the centre of the wall, which is clad with a subtle wallpaper. On the other end of the sofa is another table lamp that “grows” from the side table,” says Sonali. The bright yellow leather statement chair is the punch of colour in this otherwise understated living room, adhering to the idea of a statement piece as a focus in each room. Taking their cue
mushrooms placed on the TV unit and coffee table. ‘The carpet in the lounge has a bold geometric design, to break away from the solid colours filling up the room.’

The dead wall that forms part of the passage that leads to two bedrooms is animated with a painting of an African woman. ‘The larger than life portrait is intriguing without being overwhelming. Elements like these help accentuate the height of the space. With this purpose in mind, the scale and size of all the paintings is intentionally large,’ says Manish.

The passage leads to the daughter’s room on one side and the grandfather’s room on the other. ‘Unlike the daughter’s room which was made imaginative, the grandfather’s room is a more utilitarian space. A king size fabric bed with a tall backrest becomes the prime focus of the room. The idea was to make it look very relaxed and laid-back; the colour tone in the room is cream and white, with hints of colour added from this piece, touches of yellow are scattered across the space. A pair of lime green leather clad chairs completes the seating in the living room.

The use of wood in the base and sides of the sofa, the top of the centre table, the grooves of the entrance console, the low height TV unit and the leg of the dining table, all serve to anchor the room. ‘The dining table was especially picked for its sculptural leg,’ says Sonali. All over the house, lighting fixtures sport multiple bulbs, like a leitmotif.

‘The lounge is the most playful of the rooms. Very modern furniture in shades of blue and a contrasting pastel armchair form the seating layout,’ says Sonali. The room sports quirky art; a huge orange modern painting of a cage, a pair of wire mesh vases in blue and yellow and small ceramic
In the grandfather’s room, the king size fabric bed with a tall backrest becomes the prime focus of the room. Creams and whites predominate, with hints of colour added through the soft furnishings. The custom-made wardrobe and book shelf are aligned to one side and appear as if they are a part of one unit.
The narration of the story took place through the design, with a distinctive character connected to the function and purpose of each room.

In the daughter’s room, the muted colours are from the olive family, including those of the upholstery, the bed and the drapes. The element of fun is the colourful hanging light with multiple bulbs, its lines resembling a carousel, the rug that appears like a map of a hilly terrain and the shape and sunny yellow of the desk.

Through the soft furnishing. The custom-made wardrobe and bookshelf are aligned to one side and appear as if they are a part of one unit,” adds Sonali.

The master bedroom is the largest of the four bedrooms, employing shades of grey in its colour palette. A king size grey, leather-clad bed sits in the centre of the room, the wall behind echoing the same colour. ‘The dresser was placed in the corner with a fixed mirror, so as to make the room look wider, since it was a very long room. It’s important to maintain a visual balance in a room, especially in such cases where the room is elongated. The mirror also helps in bringing the outside indoors, once the curtains are

‘The daughter’s room was supposed to be that of a mature teenager, in which Sonali and Manish have moved away from trite stereotypes like pink being used for girls’ spaces. Liberated from norms of colours defining a space, the design concentrates on functionality. ‘There was a quiet corner for a study, with a chair inclined to face the deck for her reading. The overall colours were muted and from the olive family; that included the upholstery on the bed and the drapes. The element of fun was the colourful hanging light with multiple bulbs, its lines resembling a carousel, the rug that appears like a map of a hilly terrain and the shape and sunny yellow of the desk. Fun giraffe art adorns the wall. A wardrobe was custom-made for functionality and a tall, open storage unit was placed adjacent to it,’ says Sonali.
The master bedroom is in shades of grey. The dresser was placed in the corner with a fixed mirror, so as to make the room look wider. On its other side is a three-legged floor lamp. The wardrobe is a deconstructed one, with its carcass exposed. Since our aim was to keep the room light and airy, we did not want a heavy box at one end of the room,’ says Sonali. This ‘open’ wardrobe works since this is a show flat, unencumbered by the personal belongings which real occupants would bring with them...a liberty which is often taken by designers in such spaces.

‘The narration of the story takes place through the design,’ says Manish. ‘We decided to take a minimalistic approach in order to create a harmony of art, style, simplicity and luxury. The idea was to have a space that was free-flowing, yet with a distinctive character connected to the function and purpose of each room.’

Says Sonali: ‘The layout of the apartment is such that natural light filters into each room. Sheer curtains have been used to cover the large windows that open into the adjoining decks, so one gets a glimpse of the sculptural façade that wraps the building. As one walks around the house, there is an experience of a story unfolding, helping buyers to identify with the space and place themselves in it.’

The large en suite bath has ‘His’ and ‘Hers’ washbasins.

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