

Six weeks flat

Mumbai-based Design Inc creates a luxurious temporary living space for a family of four in a surprisingly short time.

Text: Amrita Shah
Photographs: Anirudh Goel;
courtesy the architects

TIME IS ALWAYS A HUGE factor in any design project, and anyone who has any experience with interiors will know that doing up a 2,800-square-foot apartment in six weeks is no easy task. So, when a long-term client approached architects Khushboo and Kunal Khandelwal of Design Inc to do up a sprawling three-bedroom sea-facing flat as a temporary residence, in this short span of time, they took it up as a challenge. Khushboo and Kunal did, however, get lucky in three regards — there was no civil work to be undertaken at all; they were aesthetically on the same page as their 30-something client; and having worked with him over the years, were well-versed with his lifestyle. Add to that, Design Inc is one firm where every detail is well thought through before work commences on site, so there is no dithering on decisions at any point during the





Wood panelling and a burnished gold wall defines the foyer, creating a sense of luxury and space from the onset.



concept & materials

Concept

An apartment with a plush luxurious feel and an international outlook, with a special emphasis on materials, colours and textures.

Materials

Walls: Painted, except some walls which are treated with wallpaper. The altar area has a Corian-backed wall

Flooring: Existing marble polished in certain areas and wooden flooring from Symphony and Prodigy

Accessories: Good Earth, Symphony, Dhoop, Carmicheal House, Bungalow 8, Apartment 9, Zeba, Yamini, Little Kangaroos, ME, Abracadabra and Abaca

Hard furnishings: Red Blue & Yellow, Tranceforme Designs and Fusion Access

Soft furnishings: Bharat Furnishings, First Impressions and Yamini

4 The wood-panelled elevator block acts as a backdrop to the bar

5 Polka-dotted wallpaper adorns a wall with a backlit niche that makes for some dramatic lighting at dinnertime

6 The simple study — the desk was specially angled such to make the most of the view

1 Crisp lines and neutral tones define the material and furniture palette for the stylish living room, with the view being the piece de resistance

2 Luxurious furnishings and textures complemented with shades of gold and tones of sandy beige spell out understated elegance

3 Polka-dotted sheers echo the wallpaper in the dining area; a leather seat provides an intimate seating near the bar





7 Clean, contemporary lines mark the master bedroom where a trendy palette of turquoise and chocolate makes a bold statement

8 Having to make do with the wardrobes in the master bedroom, the architects decided to paint the overhead storage the same colour as the walls to make it seem less obtrusive

9 & 10 Pretty in pink, this bedroom is Little Girl Heaven!

robes and storage units around the house to be incorporated into the new scheme. But at the end result, one would never be able to tell that the flat had been through a complete overhaul. Elements were accentuated or added to create a design language that was enhanced through the use of material, colour and texture seen in the lobby. Additional storage was a

priority in the apartment, and a minimally-styled crockery unit was introduced to demarcate the foyer while creating a sense of privacy for the dining area.

A majority of the walls in this space were panelled with wood to create a sense of depth. The panelling was carried further



As the couple puts it, this project required a quick-fix solution given the stringent time constraints. The design had to be frozen on, and all decisions had to be taken instantly to make the most of the time they had been given. "We approach each project like a blank canvas. It's only after a lot of interaction with the client that we finalize a program and evolve the design. He specified that the house was to have a rich, luxurious and international feel that would befit his social standing. But after the initial briefing he left all decisions in our hands — from the wall finishes and the furniture to the artwork and even the candles!" From the onset, Khushboo and Kunal realized that the stunning sea-view had to take precedence, so the house was treated as a neutral palette using shades of ivory, cream, beige, gold and chocolate. These were complemented by dark wood tones, rich fabrics, textured surfaces and clean lines that not only lend a contemporary vibe to the apartment, but also an understated sense of luxury.

However, this spacious art-deco apartment came with a set of constraints that the architects had to work around. The basic shell had to be left untouched — which meant that defining elements such as the existing floor, walls, openings and ceiling could not be touched. The old built-in





A Moroccan-style cabana, lanterns, candles and a low divan... no wonder the family loves the terrace!

into the living area around the elevator block, which helped create a focal point in the room to which an altar and a bar were anchored. The house was treated as a series of layers, "as texture upon texture," says Khushboo. For starters, a wall in the lobby was treated with a burnished gold wallpaper sporting a bamboo motif that offsets the rich wood tones. Leading to the main living space beyond, a back-lit niche finished in a trendy polka-dotted wallpaper creates the backdrop for the dining table and its low-back bench seating. Lending to that sense of cohesiveness, a gold-textured wall housing the entertainment unit emulates the treatment of the wall in the foyer. Minimally-styled furniture (ordered from stores across the city that were also given a strict deadline!), plush fabrics, shaggy rugs, luxurious tobacco-coloured leather sofas, plumped up cushions, a stylish day-bed, funky vases and unusual artefacts complete the room – never once detracting from the sea-view.

One of Kunal's favourite rooms in the house is the den, a simply designed room with a wood-finished floor and a large desk angled to the windows. Of course, the client's two daughters have their own opinions on which room is the best. Each of their rooms reflects their individual tastes, with delicately patterned wallpaper used to disguise old wardrobes, and girlie colours and accessories carefully sourced by the architects.

The master bedroom posed a bit of a challenge, with its odd cupboards and skewed walls. To ensure that the king-size bed made the most of the sea-view, a specially skewed headboard was constructed to counteract the impeding wall. Offending shutters were taken care of with polish and a coat of paint. But the sea-view aside, it is the terrace balcony that adds that something more to this house. With its children's play area, divan-style seating, white cabana replete with candles, hanging lanterns et al, the charming Moroccan-inspired space is a favourite with the entire family. Now isn't it hard to believe that all this was put together in just six weeks? 🍷

factfile

Size: 2,862 sq ft + 600 sq ft terrace
Location: Marine Drive, Mumbai
Principal designers: Design Inc
Associate designers: Kunal and Khushboo Khandelwal, and Kshitija Neelkanth
Duration of project: 6 weeks
Date of completion: March, 2007
Main contractor: M/s Sonu Furniture Works