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DESIGN DESTINATION : DUBROVNIK

MY SPACE : MORPHOGENESIS

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In the salubrious environs of Panchgani, HS Desiigns have designed a functional bungalow with a contemporary aesthetic, and added touches of whimsy for good measure.

COLONIAL YET CONTEMPORARY

Text By Devyani Jayakar
Photographs Ravi Kanade







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Two tall vertical units flank the tall breakfast table, the mirror behind their Duco painted jaali creating an illusion of transparency.

When the client's brief specified "Low on maintenance and very functional," Hitesh Shahanand, Malay Shah and Rakesh Adivarekar of HS Desiigns took it very seriously. So much so, that they've used an exterior paint for the walls inside the bungalow and tiles meant for exterior cladding, for the flooring.

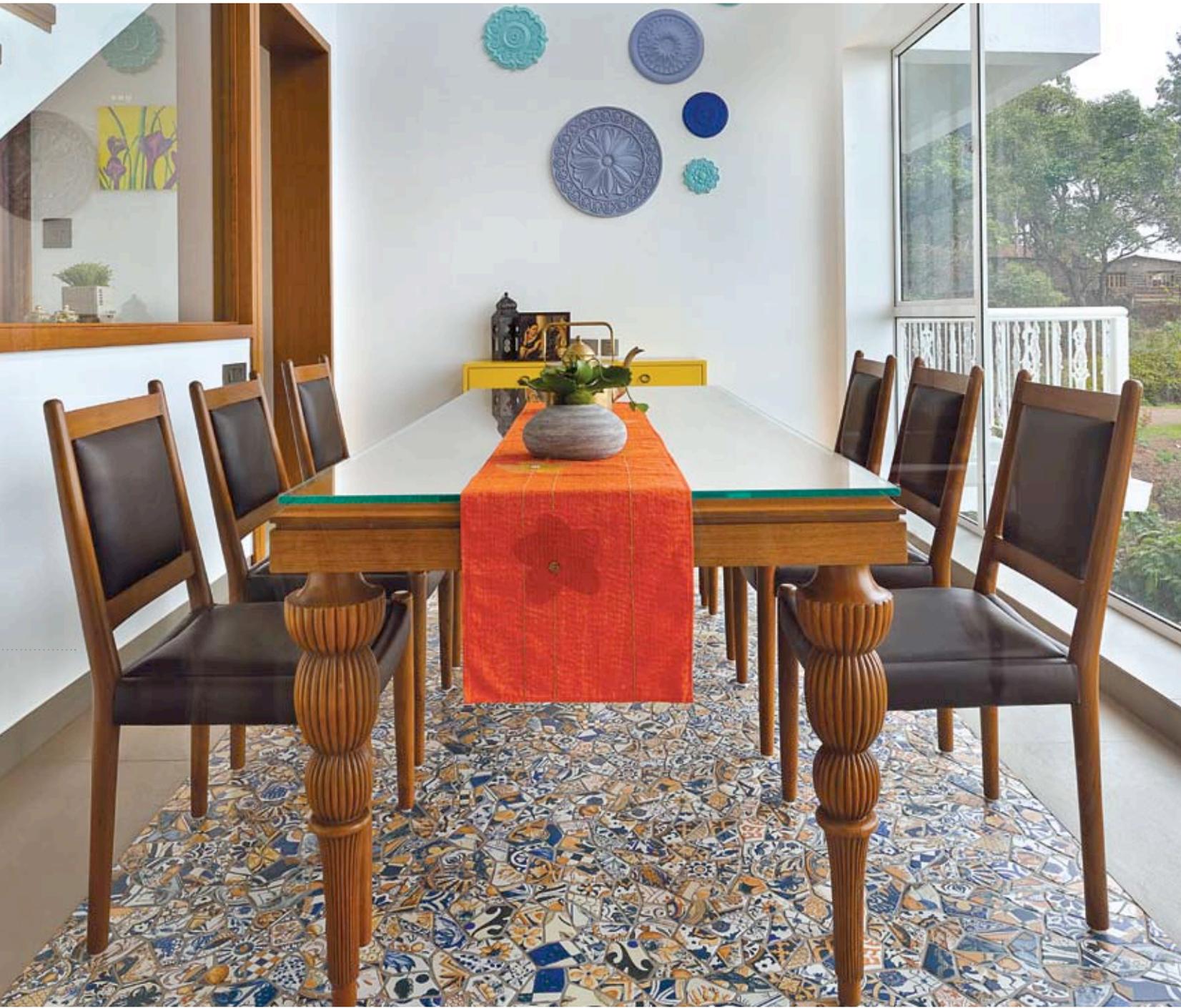
"This client was clear about his requirements and didn't change his mind about anything throughout the process," says Hitesh. "Since he planned on visiting Panchgani just for two or three days at a time, he didn't want to spend a couple of days out of it, cleaning up the place, as the hill station is notorious for the moisture which seeps into the interiors during the torrential monsoons."

"Initially, we wanted to use kota stone for the flooring, but gave up the idea because of the variation in the shade of the stone. This wasn't in sync with the planned aesthetic," says Rakesh. "So 15mm thick Simpulo tiles with a textured, non-skid surface met our requirement." There is no marble flooring in the entire home.

The low-maintenance material palette starts from the gate itself, which is in a cement sheet whose appearance simulates wood but resists wear and tear from constant exposure to the elements. The compound wall is low, permitting view of the surroundings.

Within, the living room has carved wooden sofas with leather and fabric upholstery, bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. The pop of red and blue in the leather juxtaposed with the botanical, cartological and ornithological prints on the fabric is at once colonial as well as Indian, while the earthy tones in the geometrical pattern on the dhurrie play no small part in adding to the colour palette. A slatted wooden bench provides casual seating and doubles as a side board when required.

The dining room is a long narrow space with a double height ceiling, its flooring is in an interlocking tile in cobalt and ochre providing the appearance of china mosaic. At the periphery of the room, a border of kota-finish tile demarcates the space. Snug against the wall, a console in a cheerful canary yellow attracts attention; the wall above it is scattered with round medallions in different sizes bearing floral motifs in POP and painted in Mediterranean blues and aquas.





Light floods in from the floor-to-ceiling windows on one side of the room, which also provide a sweeping view of the garden. "The centre glass is fixed, while the two sides can be opened," says Malay. Downlights run the length of the room on both sides of the dining table, while up-lights at the two ends set the upper part of the room aglow after sunset. Above, the curlicues of the chandelier are matched by the ceiling medallion which has an intricate pattern in metal and MDF with a concrete finish.

The open plan kitchen has a dado created from the same tiles as the flooring. Two tall vertical units flank the tall breakfast table, the mirror behind their Duco painted jaali creating an illusion of transparency. This decorative feature conceals their function of storage and utility.

Also on the ground floor, the guest bedroom has a single wardrobe, adequate for the needs of visitors in transit, its porcelain handles recalling an old world charm. The wall behind the headboard has a metal installation with a mock verdigris finish. The attached bath has a ceiling in interlocking wood plastic composite board, to withstand warping from moisture while providing the look of wood. The inverted cone of the pendant light is hand painted, adding a bespoke touch.

The staircase behind the dining room has risers in handmade tiles, their colours reflecting the blues and yellows in the dining room. The treads are in wood finish tiles, while the railing is in teak and toughened glass. The wall at the top of staircase has a giant oval mirror in a wooden frame, simulating the smaller hand-held version of yesteryears, used at the dressing table of a lady.

The living room on the first floor has Duco painted sofas which appear to stand on impossibly fragile carved legs. "Barely visible, sturdy legs behind the carved ones do the actual work of supporting the sofas," discloses Hitesh. The colourful dhurrie on the floor echoes the colours of the one on the lower floor.

In the master bedroom, a patch of yellow Jaisalmer on the floor beneath the bed creates a carpet-like effect, also adding a shot of colour to the space. The wall opposite has three round 'sliced logs' in different sizes. Created from a synthetic material, their niches are used to display artefacts. The attached master shower has an outdoor feel. In the son's bedroom, the bed rests on a similar 'carpet' of Jaisalmer.





On the second floor, another living room fits snugly under the sloping roof, utilising the height at the centre. With terracotta and printed tiles on the floor and a wooden ceiling, it has a distinctly country aesthetic.



On the second floor, another living room fits snugly under the sloping roof, utilising the height at the centre. With terracotta and printed tiles on the floor and a wooden ceiling, it has a distinctly country aesthetic. All the furniture in the home has been customised, with the doors to the rooms having a long wooden handle with carving at the lower end, creating a uniformity which runs through the house.

Sitting at the crossroads between colonial and contemporary, this home adapts comfortably to the requirements of a hill station in tropical India. HS Designs' goal is to discover the intrinsic potential in every project, questioning the obvious, exploring the surroundings and cultural heritage. This while looking for harmony between sustainability and innovation.

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