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VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 4
JULY 2011 | ₹ 100

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WHAT'S NEW

'ASTRO ARCHITECTURE'
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Winning team

Architect Neeta Sinha's principles of Astro Architecture form the cornerstones of Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla's swanky city apartment

FEATURE AVRIL NOEL D'SOUZA
PHOTOGRAPHS ARJUN SHAH

A rare glimpse—that's how best we'd like to describe this experience. After all, it's not everyday that one of India's hottest, leading fashion design duos—Sandeep Khosla and Abu Jani—open the doors of their home to the media. So, when *GoodHomes* was invited for a special walkthrough around their recently completed 1,000 sq ft apartment, the sheer sight of the space blew us away.

What's more, we got the chance to get familiar with the recently patented principles of Astro Architecture. Neeta Sinha who is the mastermind behind this rage of a concept, along with Sandeep and Abu, invited us to get better acquainted with this theory.

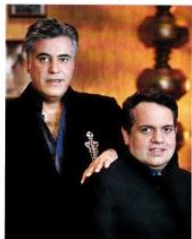
Situated in the realty goldmine of a bustling Mumbai suburb, this apartment is at par with the visual pleasure that one experiences on entering a Sandeep and Abu store. Ohh, ah, wow...these exclamations will definitely follow suit, with every turn, step and glance. "Modern and eclectic," says Sandeep, when we quiz him about what describes this space best. "I love the clean and panoramic view it provides." And we can see why.

From the word 'go', we were left speechless. Enter, and the first thing that holds the eye is a giant panda sculpture that sits smugly on its very own throne in the entrance passage. Cute and cuddly are generally words associated with a panda, but this sculpture is in stark contrast to these expressions. Its robust and imposing form has a larger-than-life effect which adds to the ambience of this apartment. "This panda made from car mudguards is quirky, eclectic yet



◀ Eclectic living room

Drama reigns here. With yellow adorning one wall, and a bold red painting on another, this living room is anything but boring. By incorporating elements that alleviate negativity like the colour yellow and drooping plants, this space has a great feel to it. It highlights the principles of Astro Architecture well, while also showcasing the sensibilities of owners and designers Sandeep and Abu.



Getting personal

Names Sandeep Khosla and Abu Jani

Current Projects After winning over the fashion world, they have recently ventured into the decor scene

Passionate about Colour, art and Indian motifs

modern. And I guess that's what makes the entrance area my favourite space," reveals Sandeep. The statement made is definitely clear—"it's our house, it's who we are, and we are proud of it".

On broaching the topic of Astro Architecture, Sandeep's face breaks into an enthusiastic smile. "I've been following Neeta's work for a few years now. When we were doing up this place, I decided to consult her. Most people assume that drooping plants or the colour red can do little to enhance the positive forces of a house. But, based on my actual experience, I have to say that Astro Architecture works fabulously. Neeta identified the positive and negative spaces here and created an ▶



▲ Designer and adviser

Sandeep had been following Neeta's work for quite some time, and took her inputs on how best to balance out the soul of this pad. The result: now, Sandeep swears by Astro Architecture!

environment that protects both Abu and me. And although Abu doesn't really believe in Astro Architecture, we have managed a balance between the elements of this theory and the design of our space."

Although Astro Architecture is in its nascent stage, one look at this apartment confirms that this ideology will soon garner the reputation of being the latest decor religion. Neeta, the mastermind, behind this concept, has gone a few steps further from the conventionally popular principles of Vaastu, Feng Shui, etc. Having studied all these forms in their current formats, Neeta admits, "I wasn't too convinced that the general pointers of these traditional decor styles were full-proof methods. There have been situations where homeowners have been told that as per Vaastu, their kitchen is placed in the wrong direction, ▶

◀ Chic dining space

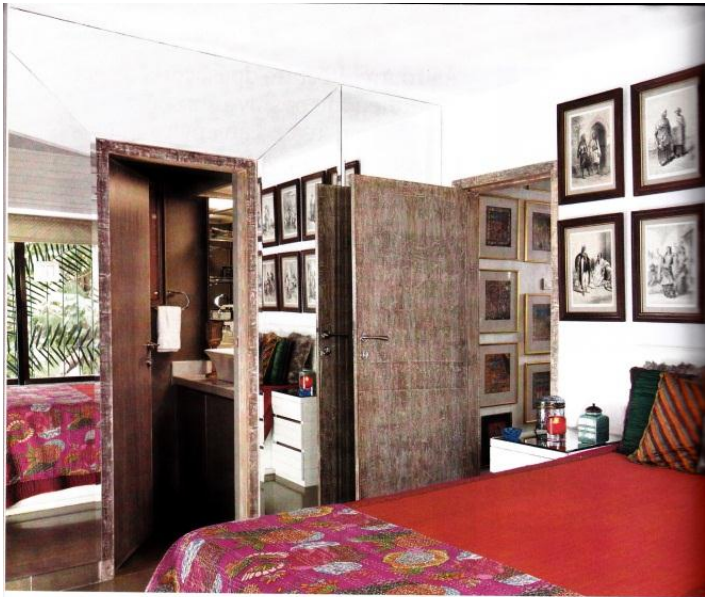
This all-white dining space captures the more sophisticated mood of the apartment. By means of a few dramatic accessories and paintings, this space carves an extremely unique identity for itself.

"Astro Architecture does work! Neeta identified the positive and negative spaces and created an environment that protects both of us." — SANDEEP KHOSLA



Fantasy passage

Situated next to the panda structure, this passage is a stunner. While the cupboards have been covered with brass sheets, the paintings on the walls introduce a truckload of drama.



and that they need to change it... Or that a south-facing entrance exudes negative energy. These pointers can drive a layperson crazy. In Astro Architecture, every single element can be balanced. It's 100% possible."

Based on the individual personalities of each homeowner, Astro Architecture marries the astrology of the legal owner of the house with the layout of the premises. This makes it a highly personalised theory that is based on learning more about the homemaker—the personality, nature, lifestyles and lives—and then, either toning down negative elements or accentuating positive energies. Speaking of how she guided the soul of Sandeep and Abu's apartment, Neeta says, "I spent a lot of time with the duo and then included my suggestions." Neeta's theorem ensures that the

suggestions she makes can be easily incorporated without having to change the existing structure. "In case of Sandeep and Abu, I was called in for a consultation while the structural work was still on." Her suggestions have been incorporated within the design framework by ways of visible and subtle hints.

Neeta felt that a part of the living room initially exuded negativity, and hence suggested the use of yellow and the inclusion of drooping plants, like the money plant, to mitigate this effect. "The inclusion of these elements significantly reduces the negative aura of a space," says Neeta. Sandeep and Abu have further incorporated yellow by means of an expansive yellow painting, drooping plants make it big on the tables. Neeta states that these plant forms help reduce negative vibes. A dramatic red painting of

a bull and tiger here doesn't merely make a style statement; its presence is justified by Neeta. "Red is quite a dangerous colour, and shouldn't be played around with. You should know exactly where to place it. In this case, however, it was used to enhance the positive energy of this side of the living room," she adds. "Positive and negative energies can coexist in the same space. Therefore, to enhance positive vibes, I suggest including mirrors, water fountains, and the colour red."

Every element in this home has a reason and purpose for being there. Every piece tells a story and every story is intriguing. Sandeep and Abu's home makes a very strong design statement and also echoes oodles of positivity and vitality. A restful and calming treat to the eyes and the soul, indeed! ■



▲ Expansive bedroom

Located exactly at the end of the passage, this bedroom has obvious Astro Architecture elements. As Neeta points out, "The colour red, mirrors and water fountains, enhance the positive elements." You could say, this room is the poster space for Astro Architecture.

▶ Arty spaces

We counted and recounted, and can safely say, there are in all 88 original artworks displayed in this 1,000 sq ft space! Maya Burman, Raja Ravi Verma—all original artworks—can be spotted here. Also, the designers' love for movies is clearly visible in the stacks of movie CDs.

