

PICTURE THIS: HISTORICAL BRISBANE SPECIALIST: CANOE JUICE UNCOVERED: SONA REDDY STUDIO

# HOME REVIEW

VOL 16 ISSUE 02 FEBRUARY 2017 TOTAL PAGES 132

RS 100 HOME-REVIEW.COM

THE BACKYARD  
BY DCA ARCHITECTS

CLASSY ALL THE WAY  
BY A + T ASSOCIATES

# UNREMARKABLY REMARKABLE

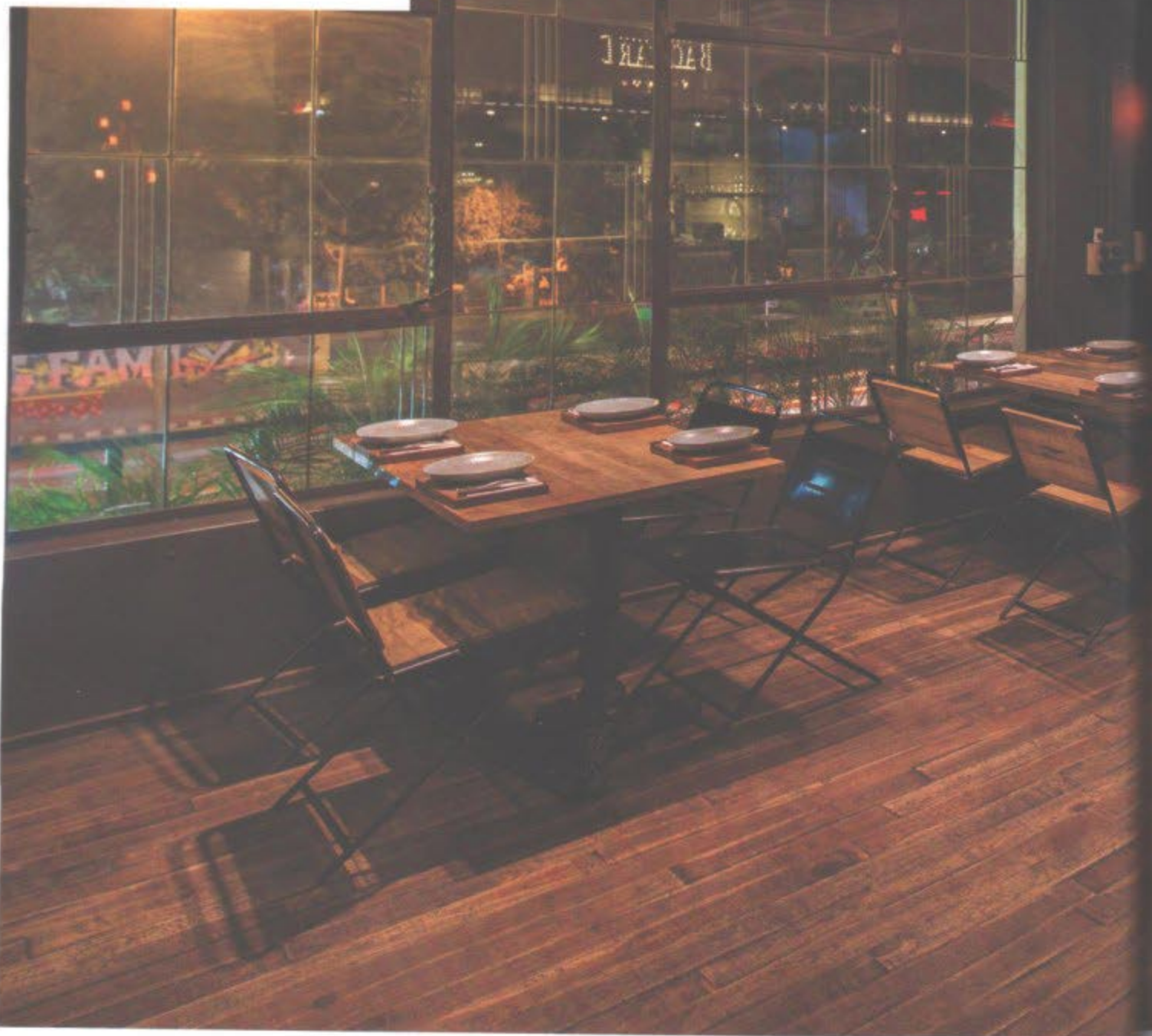
MANDVI HOUSE BY SPASM ARCHITECTS

HOME AUTOMATION PRODUCTS AND IDEAS THAT ARE REDEFINING YOUR PERSONAL SPACE

*A casual café cum bar located on a busy street in New Delhi provides an oasis in the midst of all the chaos. DCA Architects have employed a laid back aesthetic, encouraging diners to watch the world whiz past as they enjoy a leisurely meal.*

## **CRATE AND BARREL**

Text By Devyani Jayakar  
Photographs Andre J Fanthome





The trees outside get lit up, to simulate the feel of an outdoor space after sunset - festive and yet relaxed.



quiet oasis on a street with high traffic... That requires a willing suspension of belief. "Not really," counters Amit Aurora of DCA Architects. "There are trees which act as an effective buffer, so the cafe is actually much quieter than you'd expect."

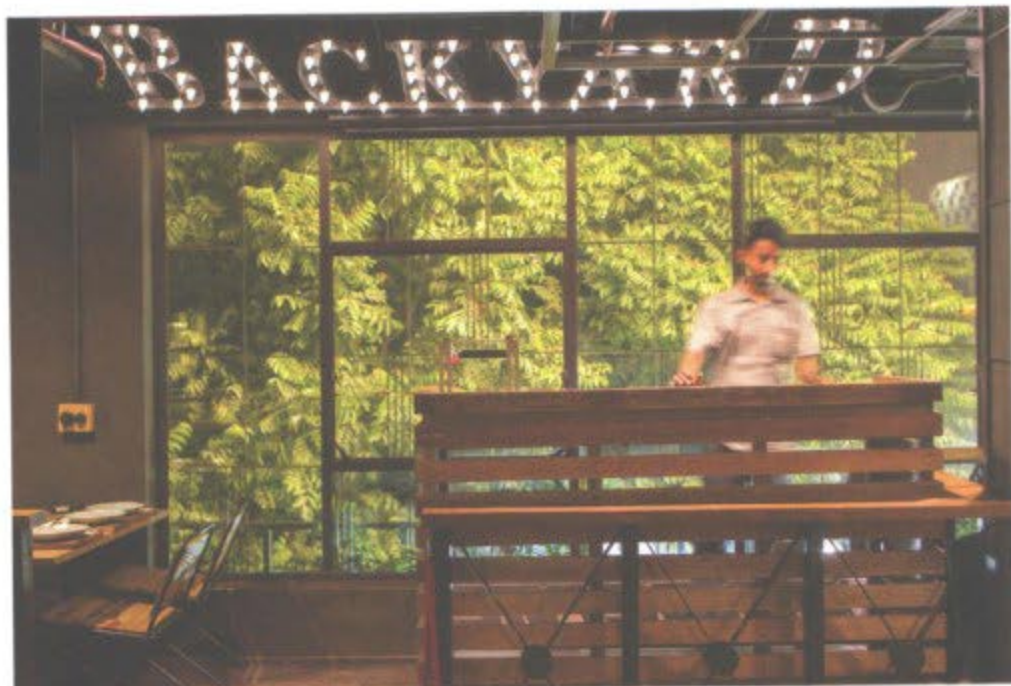
Trusted with a brief which the name of the cafe itself spells out - The Backyard - DCA Architects went about orchestrating a carefully put together "random and studied" look... exactly what one would expect to find in a backyard. "However, it does provide an ambience of relaxation by means of every detail," says Amit.

The client brief called for a casual hang-out space that would be perfect for a Sunday brunch or a Saturday evening as well, for friends and family. Conceptually, it was envisaged as a unique cafe space that would transform the mood and give the visitor a feeling of being in the backyard, just as the name suggests.

At the entrance, the plaster on the wall next to the staircase was in bad shape, so we simply removed what was left and painted over it," says Amit. "Throughout the restaurant, we've followed this method of removing things rather than repairing them." Within, creating an oasis in the middle of a chaotic street that is typically choked with traffic, the intent was to exploit the views, while crafting a restaurant space.

Planned in a manner that enables a leisurely experience while sitting on the terrace or next to a window, the visitor gets the experience of the world whizzing by. The demarcation of space is enabled by means of plants and trees that augment the natural ambience, while reducing the sound that is generated from the movement on the streets nearby," says Amit.

The lower floor has a long bar with seating next to large glass windows which inundate the space with natural light. The trees outside get lit up, to simulate the feel of an outdoor space after sunset - festive and yet relaxed. The wooden flooring offers an earthy grounded base. Antique mirrors strategically placed in a metal grid on the ceiling draw attention away from the services above while they reflect parts of the restaurant. Placed between beams, the grid also holds acoustic panels.



The trees outside act as an effective buffer, reducing the sound that is generated from the movement on the streets nearby, so the cafe is actually much quieter than one would expect.





All the tables have industrial metal bases which are replicas of old drafting tables. With their height being adjustable, they offer great flexibility in the restaurant. At a higher level, they facilitate stand-up cocktails during the evening, whereas at a lower height they are used for sit-down meals during the day. This is in keeping with the requirement of multiple roles and different services being offered within the same space.

The same space may be used for a meeting, a party or by a family. Hence flexibility is very important," says Amit. "Some of this flexibility occurs naturally, as the quality of the music changes from day to night. The music and food on offer supports and is in sync with this change."

In the terrace, pendant lights hang from a pergola, while loose gravel on the existing floor mimics the feel of being outdoors. An open area in front of the bar eliminates crowds and encourages people to use its services without having to jostle for space.

Our design intent was to invoke the imagery of objects that one would discard, store in the backyard," says Amit. To this end, the furniture is created out of crates and barrels and the stools are made out of industrial metal and reclaimed wood. To capture the essence of this look, some of the accessories and accents have been picked up from kabaddi vendors. "The old green glass bottles used for the lighting on the terrace are one such example," says Amit.

Is the terrace very hot during the day? Surprisingly, it is really popular at all times. We've installed a cooling system with mist and fans, so it's actually quite pleasant," says Amit of this space which has close to half of the total seating of the restaurant.

There has been a conscious effort not to overdo the design aspect," says Amit. "There had to be a semblance of order in the chaos, since it had to work at a professional level. It couldn't be too haphazard. Striking the right balance was important. We sourced and carefully curated all the furniture, to achieve the required look. Some of it is made of imports, so it's not seen very frequently in the Indian market," he adds.



Terrace Plan





Terrace Plan Large glass windows blur the boundaries between indoors and outdoors.

*Treading a fine line between contrived or cheesy and maintaining the order that a working space would require, DCA has managed to create a space which may look au naturel, but has all the specs of a restaurant in place.*

✉ [dcaarch@dcaarch.com](mailto:dcaarch@dcaarch.com)  
[www.groupdca.in](http://www.groupdca.in)