

# perspective

March 2016

INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE &amp; DESIGN

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## SCULPTED BY WIND & WATER

MAD Architects' design for the new Harbin Opera House sees a transfusion of local identity, art and culture into a building deeply inspired by the city's untamed wilderness

**+ HKIA president Vincent Ng:  
On engaging the community  
and challenges facing  
Hong Kong's architects**

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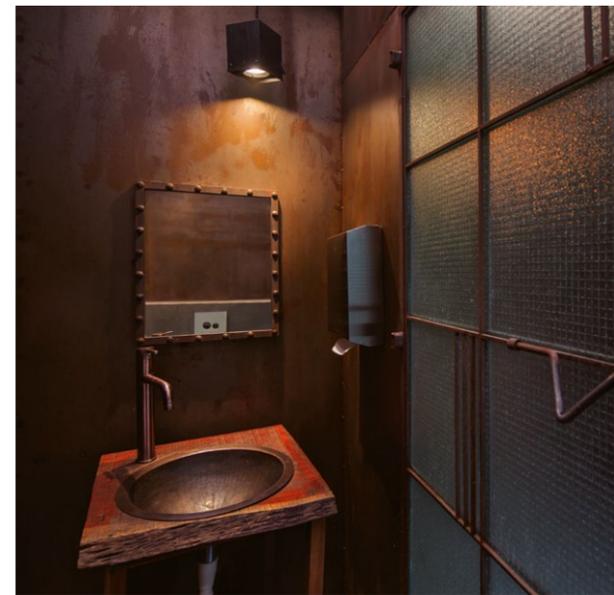
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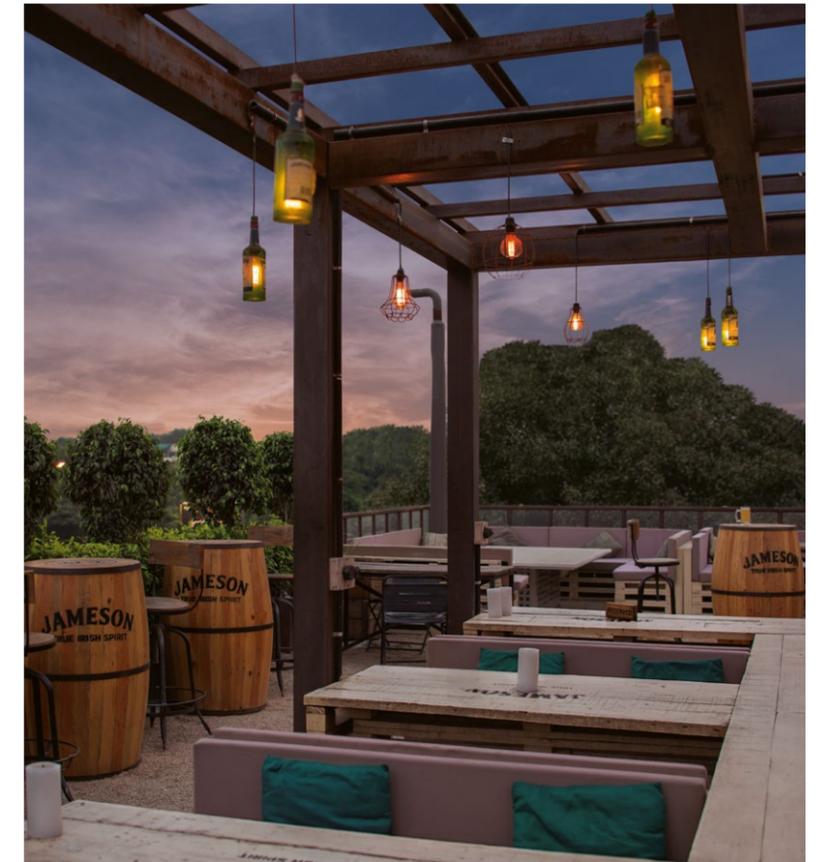


HK\$48  
US\$18  
€15



*Clockwise from below*  
Centred on the essence of a comfortable, welcoming backyard, the tables and benches were made out of reclaimed crates and barrels, while old bottles become new lighting overhead. Perceived as a casual hang-out place by the client, The Backyard is a unique café space designed to make visitors feel like they are in someone's backyard. The raw, industrial feel extends into the washroom facilities, where a sink is set into a rough-edged wooden slab, and bronze and copper are the primary colour palette.

*Facing page*  
Featuring wooden flooring and a long central bar, the lower floor serves as an exemplary example of amalgamation of exterior landscape with the interiors, by placing large glass windows next to the seating arrangements to bring in plenty of natural light during the day.



## Every detail matters

*Sited on one of the busiest streets in Green Park, New Delhi, The Backyard – a café cum bar created by DCA Architects – exudes an aura of relaxation and welcome, as if you're being invited into a friend's home*

**TEXT:**  
Leona Liu  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:**  
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**Right from the start, the client knew what he** wanted The Backyard to be: a casual place to hang out in with friends and family, as perfect for a Sunday brunch as for a drink after work during the week. The brief for designers DCA Architects was straightforward: to create a unique café space which would lift visitors' moods, and endow them with the feeling of relaxing in the backyard of a friend's home, as indeed the name suggests.

DCA's team set about creating an oasis amid the chaotic streets – and in response to the usually frantic traffic outside, the intent was to exploit the views of the venue's Green Park setting. Planned in a manner that enables a leisurely experience while

sitting on the terrace or next to a window, the visitor gets a sense of the world whizzing by. Demarcation of space is enabled by means of plants and trees that augment the natural ambience, while reducing the sound generated from the streets nearby and vice-versa.

Featuring wooden flooring and a long central bar, the lower floor serves as an exemplary example of the amalgamation of the exterior landscape with the interiors, by placing large glass windows next to the seating arrangements to bring in plenty of natural light during the day. After dark, the plants and trees outside are lit up, transforming the space with a touch of magic.

The strategically and asymmetrically-placed antique mirrors on the exposed ceilings craft a myriad of reflections, adding drama to the interiors, while a white brick wall with lighting fixtures enriches the monochromatic colour palette. Chairs and tables on the lower floor are adjustable, thereby easily redefining the purpose and look of the area by transforming it from a seating to a standing space.

The terrace revolves around a central pergola structure, which has layers of fittings and innovative lighting fixtures draped gently over the beams, and a layer of loose gravel underfoot emphasising a feeling of being outdoors. In the corner, a bar is the focal point of an open area where guests can gather.

Sealing the deal on The Backyard's relaxed, casual mood is its recycling approach, utilising elements that would otherwise be thrown away – or used in the backyard of home. Furniture is created out of crates and barrels, and stools are made out of industrial metal and reclaimed wood. ●