



# better

MAY 2016 134-page Issue

SUBSCRIBER COPY NOT FOR SALE

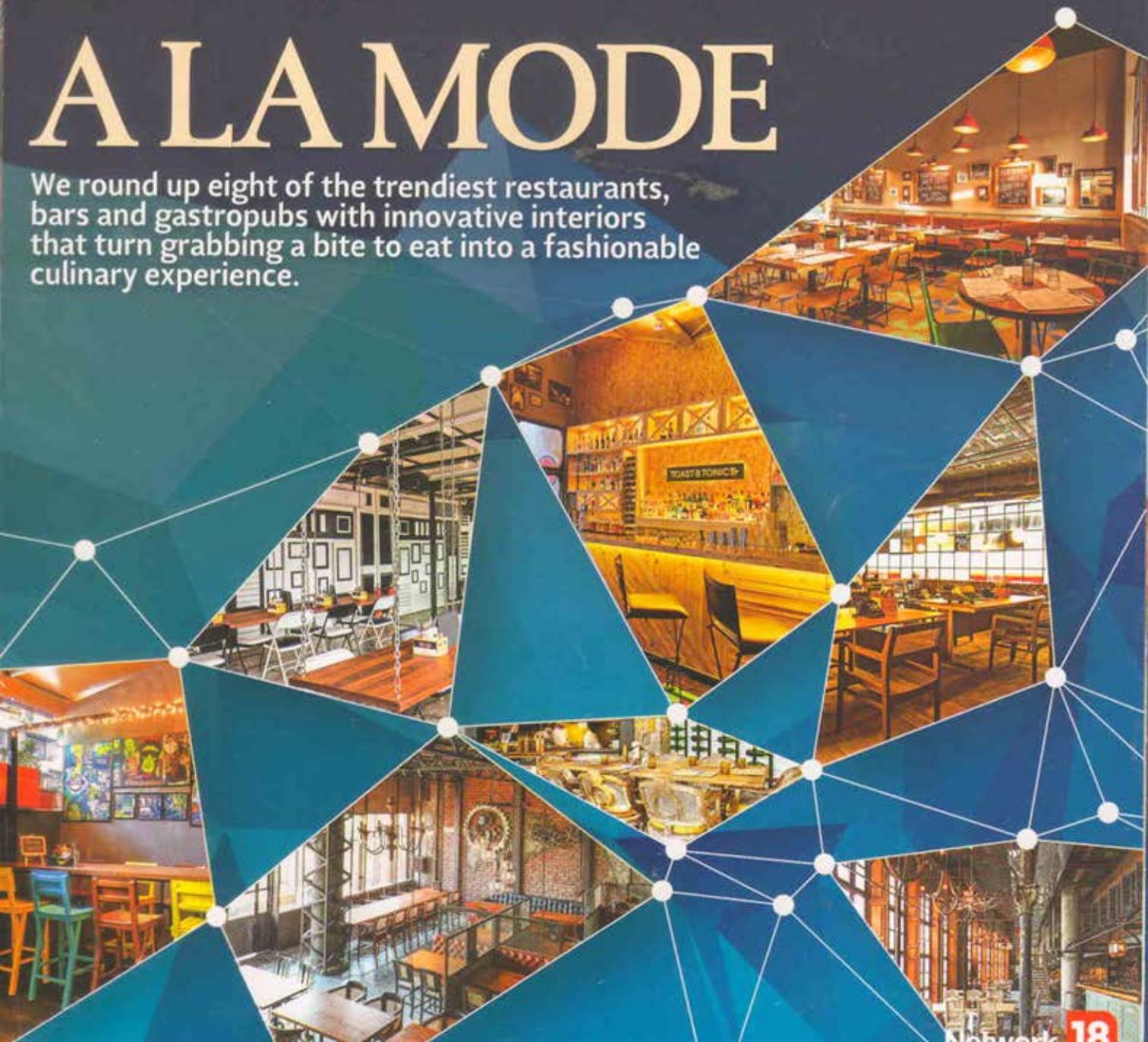
₹ 100

# interiors

IDEAS AND DESIGN FOR BETTER LIVING

## ALA MODE

We round up eight of the trendiest restaurants, bars and gastropubs with innovative interiors that turn grabbing a bite to eat into a fashionable culinary experience.



www.betterinteriors.in



A wooden pergola, bright yellow planter boxes and the white planters adorn the exterior facade.

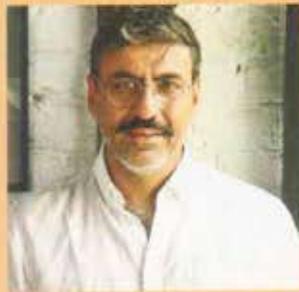
There is no love sincerer than the love of food — this quote from Irish playwright, George Bernard Shaw, certainly rings true, but it's vital to note that when it comes to dining, the ambience of a space plays an equally important role. And restaurant owners have certainly taken note and are leaving no stone unturned to provide an extraordinary array of delicious culinary choices with an ambience to match. As is the case with Amour Bistro — a contemporary Mediterranean bistro located in the plush Chanakyapuri neighbourhood of South Delhi.

This quaint restaurant caters to the neighbourhood's expat community and is owned by Randeep Bajaj. It is a casual diner and happens to be the second location for Amour Bistro in New Delhi, the first being in the heart of Hauz Khas Village. The former recreates the warmth of a rustic European restaurant and serves Mediterranean cuisine. Despite the fact that the first one is much larger and more of a destination restaurant, the Chanakyapuri outlet is quite the opposite.

The inspiration behind Amour Bistro is the beautiful little establishments found in European countries that are frequented by the people living or working in the vicinity.

Intending to launch a similar kind of bistro in India, Randeep roped in DCA Architects — an award-winning, multi-disciplinary design firm based out of New Delhi. Founded by Rahul Bansal and Amit Aurora, the studio has, over the last 20 years, successfully designed award-winning spaces and retail identities for various corporate and luxury brands along with luxury stores, boutiques, restaurants, salons, residences, and other commercial work. With regard to Amour Bistro, the project was headed solely by Amit. "The brief was to take a cue from the existing Amour Bistro and maintain the rustic theme but also add edgier elements, which we did with the juxtaposition of glass, metal and rough stone and the walls and furniture that is again classical as well as rustic European. We have used a combination of simplistic, minimal elements and earthy tones that endow the space with elegance," asserts Amit.

Though the design has elements of international style; the usage of natural materials goes well with the local environment. The restaurant's look is thus a wild mix of urban pulse and warmth. The existing structure, spread across 950 sq ft, had a lot of old wooden paneling, small windows and low false ceilings. The fact that they had to work within a very constrained plot size was one of the design team's main challenges. Further, in



#### ARCHITECT

Amit Aurora



**CONCEPT:** To capture the charm of European street cafes in a modern environment.



**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP** The warm interiors exude a combination of simplistic, minimal elements and earthy tones that endow the space with a sense of elegance.

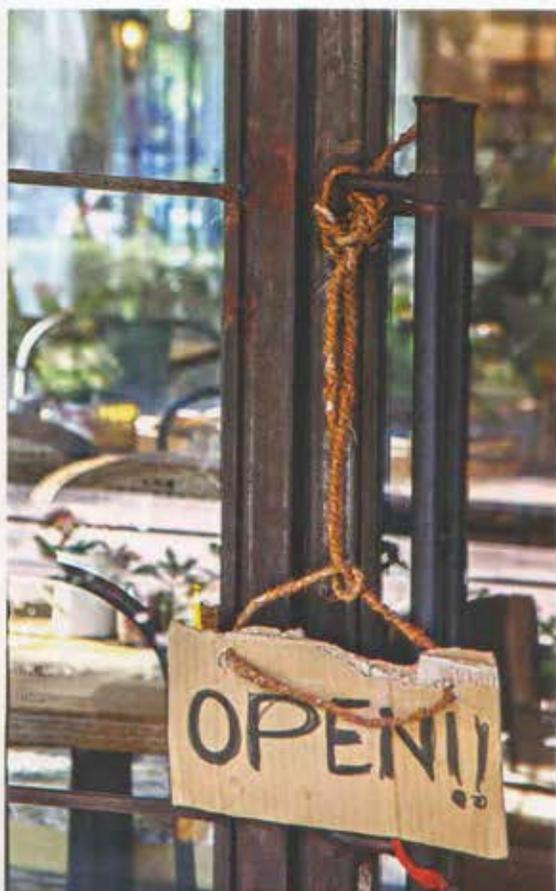
The furniture, inspired by a vintage style, is made of fine materials with rustic colour finishes.

The dining space is dotted with black painted metal chairs that are paired with sand-blasted custom-made chairs.





The life-size sculpture of an orchestra by the balcony just above the open kitchen and the wine rack installation in the center are sure to attract the attention of visitors and guests by



**CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT**

An excellent range of high end wine bottles in bold colours gives definition to the brick backdrop painted in white.

The hand-written signage in a simple unevenly cut cardboard sets the tone for the warm rustic interiors.

Yellow planter boxes add a pop of colour to the exteriors.

Accessories like this centerpiece of fresh flowers are simple but go a long way in replicating the warm, relaxing feel of European cafes.



**ABOVE** The entrance has a warm long expanse of wooden seating decked up with cosy printed cushions and upholstered seating.

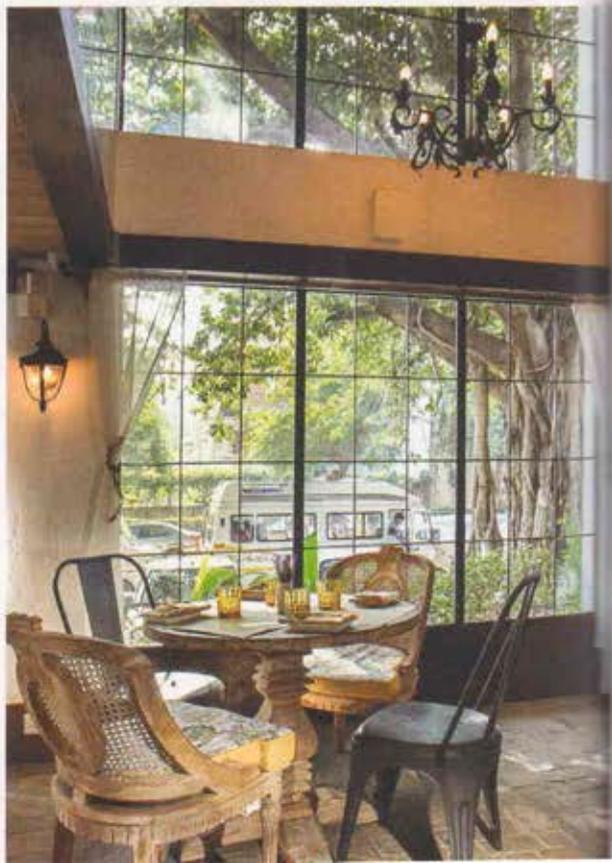
**RIGHT** The view of green surroundings from the dining area gives a sense of openness and interaction with nature.

### MATERIALS

**Walls** Textured white plaster **Floors** Rustic, hand-tumbled sandstone from Nitco Tile and Terrazzo **Furniture** Teak wood

order to maximize the interior space and optimize the maximum permitted height, the facade has undergone a major retrofit with structural implications by means of new openings. A wooden pergola and bright yellow planter boxes adorn the exterior facade that sets the tone for the elegant interiors that follow.

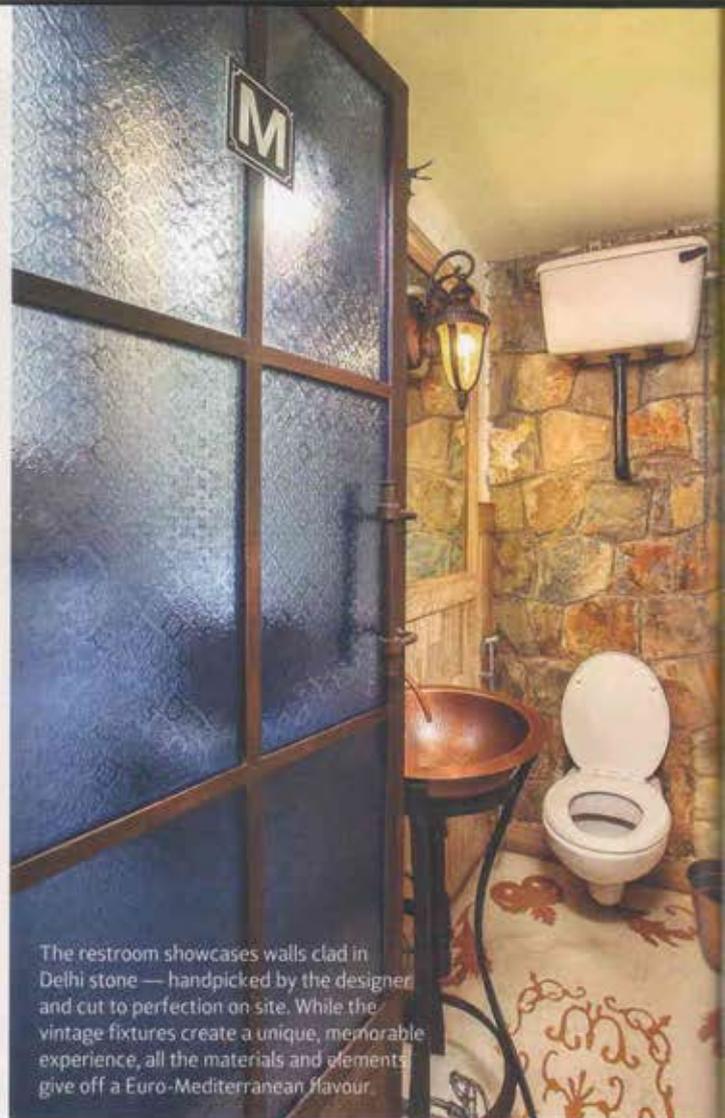
As one enters the cafe, there is a low wooden-slatted ceiling with a textured plaster white wall on one side and full-length glass windows on the other. This setting allows passers-by to catch a glimpse of the interiors. Amit adds, "An open space philosophy has been adopted for the interiors to enable space efficiency and the creation of



## Space & Spice



The wooden paneling, the walls in shades of brown; the flooring and the stand of the structure at the entrance of the washroom gives a feeling of warmth and love for nature.



The restroom showcases walls clad in Delhi stone — handpicked by the designer and cut to perfection on site. While the vintage fixtures create a unique, memorable experience, all the materials and elements give off a Euro-Mediterranean flavour.

Recommended by



### Gamberi Al Ajillo

A crunchy and subtly flavoured dish that has chilli infused butter roast prawns mixed in white wine and is served with garlic bread.

### Charred Mushrooms

This refreshing entree is stuffed with spring onions, broccoli and feta and served on a bed of candied condensed tomato.

### Micro Minute Amaretto Cake

An almond liqueur cake which is served with runny Irish custard and a cherry on top.

an orderly seating plan." The flooring is done with rustic, hand-tumbled sandstone from Nitco, which is suited to rough use and the requirements of the space. The low-ceiling seating area opens up to a voluminous double-height space around the food and bar counter at the rear of the cafe. The highlight of this space are the two eye-catching installations — statues of a trio of musicians above the kitchen counter and the wine rack on the double-height wall. The double-height in the inner part of the restaurant is augmented with an antique mirror on one side, complimenting the life-size sculpture of the orchestra. Further, the excellent range of high-end wines functions as eye-candy for visitors with a three-dimensional display that is achieved through steel grooming. Adding to the beauty of the space are the chandeliers made from wrought iron.

The warmth of the interiors extends to the furniture made from fine materials and the bespoke wall lights. The petite dining space has a combination of black painted metal dining chairs and sand-blasted custom-made chairs. For an interactive dining session or a huge family gathering, there is a provision of side-seating via a sofa arrangement in a wooden frame along the wall with the custom-made chairs placed on the other side.

Though the end product may belie it, the design journey has not been a smooth ride. Getting an ideal design plan for a miniature space which is operational and comfortable for guests in a very high rental environment was the main challenge faced by the architects — and they have certainly come out with flying colours! 

**FACT FILE:** Project Amour Bistro Location Malcha Marg, New Delhi Built-up area 950 sq ft Design firm DCA Architects Principal architect Amit Aurora Design team Anupama Kumar