

MIRA

THE COASTAL CONTEMPORARY BUNGALOW

Fact File:

Project Name, Location – Mira – The Coastal Contemporary Bungalow, Bangalore

Architecture Design Firm – Studio Skapa Architects

Typology and Square Footage – 3-BHK Private Residence, 3,000 Square Feet

Month and Year of Completion – December 2022

Principal Architect – Charita Kishore

Text Credit – Lavanya Chopra

Photography Credit – Nayan Soni

Studio Skapa Architects journeys into the revival of an ancestral Bangalore bungalow, unearthing potential yearning to be expressed through the language of coastal-classic design for a young family.

When new beginnings are viewed through the memory-laced lens of nostalgia, the role a home shoulders is elevated by many notches! Sequestered within a prime gated community in Bangalore, 'Mira' carries the mantle of being a generational home within the client's family. Christened affectionately as a homage to their daughter, the residence is a beacon of their preserved roots that look hopefully in the direction of the future.

"Our clients came to us with the most layered and intriguing brief, a narrative that pushed us in the direction of upping the ante on any renovation we have ever undertaken as a studio! Neha and Madhu are a young and dynamic couple who have shifted base to Bangalore after years of inhabiting New York City. The home was originally built and inhabited by Neha's parents, who have now passed down the space to the couple to make their own! The challenge with reimagining homes of this nature is not embedded solely in structural or vernacular changes. Instead, it comes with the essential duty of preserving the emotional DNA of the spaces while making room for newfound experiences and magic," muses Charita.

Helming the narrative, the client's vision painted the portrait of a warm and cosy scheme of spaces which made the time spent with loved ones a snug experience and, most importantly, an abode that could be a haven for their daughter's upbringing.

Tropical Modern, Coastal, and Southeast Asian influences meld poetically in the home's embrace, lending it a palpable new lease of life! The family's trove of hardwood furniture, heirloom pieces, and antiques cameo in nooks of the conceptualised spaces, establishing

a dialogue between the past and present. Catalysing a harmonious equilibrium between old-world charm and modern sensibilities, the home takes fondly to open-hearted planning, doses of greenery, raw materiality, and the celebration of light and morphing vistas to create a rooted milieu.

“One of the most exciting parts of the process was not just delving into the jigsaw-like reconfiguration of the physical spaces but dreaming up the new role and character of each room within the remodelled construct. The interests, preferences, and lifestyle of the family became our compass. We married the aspects of elegance with a rich heritage they carried and distilled it into the intrinsic overhaul of the home — a process which addressed redesigning the old villa’s façade and interiors in tandem with one another,” she reflects.

A short drive through the gravel-strewn and red-soiled roads within the residential layout reveals the modest yet stark structure of Mira. The former old-school elevation was stripped down to its bare canvas. The façade today is an amalgamation of muted tones (whites and greys warmed up with hints of terracotta over gabled roofs) and clean geometry which lends it a contemporary demeanour.

“The driveway is stippled with Sadarahalli stone pavers, meshed with greens that create a picturesque entry to the home with a selection of tropical plants sprucing up the landscape which cradle the bungalow. The newly constructed portico perches in the front of the compound, instating the coastal character,” the Architect adds. Sheltered by a sloped, Mangalore tile-clad roof, the portico’s peripheral columns and plinth are sheathed in the laterite blocks, adding tactile ruggedness to the pared-down façade.

At the end of the driveway, a series of steel pergolas (entwined with newly planted vines which will take over the structure soon) demarcate the former garage. This area has now been transformed into Neha’s den, a congenial space for the client to unwind, work, and host friends. The strategic use of materials allows a play of light to penetrate the den, connecting the indoors to the verdant outdoors while Neha dwells inside.

The garage was completely remodelled, and raw Kota stone flooring now swathes the blueprint. A decadent olive-green hue washes over the study nook cabinetry, drawing one’s gaze into the room’s volume. The fluted infills and brushed brass hardware elevate the look and feel of this corner while rooting for simplicity. *“Creating a conversation zone, a colour-laden carpet by Jaipur Rugs grounds the space upon which a cool grey sectional sofa and ottoman rest. Curated pieces of artwork sourced from Art&Found feature in the space, creating a zesty gallery wall which becomes a definite conversation starter! The hardwood accordion doors stand at the periphery of the den and fold on a whim to connect the room to the bungalow’s landscape,”* she illustrates.

Upon entering the house, one is welcomed by a prominent, roomy foyer characteristic of charming, old Bangalore residences from the 60s and 70s. The entryway is defined broadly by a wood console and antique mirror above, peppered with dated bric-a-brac to silently nod to the classic undertone of the home. A wooden step has been introduced at the threshold of the foyer and open dining area, marking a sense of subtle transition amid the contiguous zones. Constituting a live-edge dining table from Beruru, a bench, and spindle-

back chairs, the space is illuminated by an amber glass and black metal pendant sourced from *The White Teak Company*.

The foyer and dining zones flank the light-filled, rectilinear volume of the living area. A palpable connection has been established between these spaces via a large opening that visually links them and enlarges the feeling of vastness within the communal areas. The jamb of the newly introduced opening is lined with teak veneer, offering the family an unintended nook to perch and converse.

Washed in the north-eastern daylight, the living room at *Mira* frames views of the lush garden bordering the home along its perimeter. Diving headfirst into its penchant for revival, the studio was cognizant of working with select pieces of furniture that have been within the family for decades. *“We recycled, upscaled, and refurbished many key pieces of furniture (with fabric from Home Stories) that have been a part of the residence’s being for years! It felt like a special way of preserving legacy while being sustainable about new additions. Hues of rich ruby and pastel pinks rule the roost and pair perfectly with the transitional area rug by Carpet Kingdom,”* adds Charita.

Reclaimed side tables pose as low accent tables, hosting tall lamps and coffee table books. Accents of wood and brass contribute to the timelessness of the space, allowing colour to take centre stage. The vintage telephone bench belonging to the family was repolished and reupholstered to its former glory and occupies a wee spot within the living area. ‘The Balcony’ art print by Artist *Tanya Timble* was curated from *Art&Found*, and poses as the focal point, enunciating *Mira’s* tropical and vivid persona!

“An all-green kitchen topped the client’s list of desires from the get-go! The team went through a bevy of samples and colour concoctions to perfect the ‘right’ shade of green which claims the canvas of the kitchen,” she reminisces. The shaker-style cabinetry is paired with matte gold handles, creating a balance between dated charm and modish sensibilities. The grid of handmade glossy tiles in shades of white layer the backsplash, adding to the intentional, textural imperfections. The contrasting black granite debuts as the robust choice for the countertops, making their upkeep virtually maintenance-free! Adding prime real estate and organised functionality to the kitchen, the newly constructed utility area has been built with insulated PUF roofing and UPVC sliding windows for beneficial ventilation and light.

Tucked away in a nook off the foyer space, the powder room was transformed intrinsically to create a classic look and feel that echoes an era bygone. A matrix of printed and patterned tiles frame the space, with a smoked glass pendant levitating over them. A large mirror graces the wall, heightening the volume and light within the nook. Accessories such as the terrazzo basin, matte black mixer, and the duo of wall sconces add to the rooted gravitas of the area. A wood and glass curio cabinet masquerades as a linen closet, leaning into the classical undertones of the home. A black Duco-washed door leads into the guest bathroom on the ground level, continuing the sleek interplay of monochromes.

Marking a sense of transition into the intimate portions of the home, the stairwell is layered with subtle yet impactful changes to freshen up its look and experience. The focal

wall has been painted a moody purple-grey hue, drawing attention towards the arched and glazed window original to the abode's primitive bones.

The stairwell on the first floor reveals a tucked away family lounge for the clients to unwind with views of the terrace peeking through. *“Cosy and steeped in colour, the family lounge epitomises comfort. Hues and textures make their way into the space mostly through soft furnishings, bespoke furniture, and art which give the area an almost parlour-like ambience,”* adds the Principal Architect. Hints of earthiness come through in the form of the wood coffee table by *Freedom Tree* and the rattan lounge armchair.

A hutch-style bar was a quirky addition to the lounge, utterly loved by the clients! The taupe-hued cabinet houses open-faced niches enwrapped in a lobster print wallpaper, an intervention that marries a classical element with undeniable eclecticism! The same lobster print has been framed as art and positioned over the lounge's conversation space to create a feeling of continuity.

Bordering the family lounge, Madhu's study assumes the quintessential spot within the blueprint with an abundant connection to the outdoors. Time stands still within the space, with its design narrative being garbed in colonial spirit! *“Undoubtedly, this makes for one of my most loved spots at Mira! The study was constructed as an additional room over the older balcony. A sea of printed tiles earmarks the room and ushers in the traditional hues of terracotta, deep green, and ochre. The flooring, in some sense, sets the stage for the antiques to be rested atop its dynamic entirety. The desk with turned legs, vintage chair, bookshelf, and sepia-tinted maps sourced from Kerala and Mysore find a serendipitous home within the study, posing as loved pieces that always belonged here,”* smiles Charita.

The existing door was converted into a split Dutch door, strengthening the vein of nostalgia that runs strongly through the space. All the doors and windows of the study were created with robust and seasoned Sal wood. This wood came with inherently varying tones and textures, a feature Neha and Madhu wished to retain in its unpolished and unadorned state, making the space a breathing embodiment of honest materiality.

“A flagbearer of the design sentiment displayed in the lounge and study, the terrace at Mira is an alfresco extension of the indoor spaces which beckons one to initiate a colloquy with nature,” highlights Charita. Shrouded in an envelope of tree canopies, the terrace is complete with patterned tiles, which create an embedded floral carpet in the centre of the floor, paired with a matte black stone variety edging it. The pitched roof studded with Mangalore tiles creates a sheltered sanctuary within, its volume accentuated by a lone bamboo pendant fixture crafted by *Bamboopecker*.

A retreat, the ensuite master whisks one away to the ease of tropical living while materials don the cape of storytellers! Endowed with umpteen light, the ethos of the space was kept consciously simple, with accents of wood tones, whites, and greens weaving the visual tapestry. The omnipresence of woven wicker and wood is portrayed through the artisanal wardrobes, culminating in a petite vanity nook and the bed.

The existing wardrobes in the walk-in closet were refinished in an airy, white hue (replacing the dated, jarring red-toned wood polish). A defined archway was constructed to mark the segue from the primary bedroom into the walk-in space, introducing an architectural feature. With the extension of the design language to the ensuite bathroom, the space witnesses the inclusion of heritage tiles, Indian granite varieties, and monochromes in hearty doses.

Their daughter's bedroom reflects the young child's playful mien and spatial needs as she grows into her personal space. The room is decked in whites, soft pastel shades of pink, teal, and yellows, and abundant storage worked into the room's volume. A cordoned-off play area creates a dedicated zone for her to get lost in the world of make-believe while minimalist art spruces the walls with character! The ensuite bathroom was also completely renovated, switching out the old tiles with patterned ones, character-themed hardware, and an ergonomically-viable space for the young end-user.

With *Mira*, the studio's endeavours were fuelled by realising Neha and Madhu's vision for their future while honouring the past with utmost sensitivity. Being an architectural and interior design intervention, the project came together in the most satisfying manner the team could conceive!

"We strongly gravitate towards renovation and restoration projects simply because we are driven by the challenges it can bring in tow! Old spaces bear a soul, a story to divulge, and having embraced these projects pushes us in the direction of only further honing our skills. We are acutely aware of the privilege this project has come with! Giving someone's childhood home a new meaning is an opportunity laced with great responsibility. How does one inject wonder and love into a home that already holds such profound meaning to a family? I guess we found a way to do it with our clients paving the way with their unflinching trust," concludes a beaming Charita!