



Interior designer Archana Gandhi transforms an awkward Mumbai apartment, filled with beams and columns, into a snazzy contemporary home for herself and her family.

The living-cum-dining room originally looked like a railway compartment but Archana has given it a whole new dimension by furnishing it with minimalist low furniture and benches instead of chairs to give a feel of openness. The colours of the furnishings harmonize with the Raza above the sofa.

When Archana first saw this apartment she was dismayed, to say the least! It did fit her budget, but she wondered how she was going to manage to transform this 'crooked' space, filled with beams and columns, into a comfortable home.

Looking at it, she realized that it was a new addition, shoe-horned on top of an old two-storey building – hence the columns and beams. Anjana how-

ever decided to take it on as a challenge and opportunity to benchmark her ability as an interior designer. Starting with the entrance door, she installed an ingeniously designed grill into the solid wood, which allows her to get a full view of visitors, as well as receive deliveries without opening the door. 'This extra safety measure is important as my mother is often alone at home,' she explains.

Archana is passionate about contemporary Indian art, and Husain's Ganesha greets one



the
magic
pencil



PHOTOGRAPHS: INDRAJIT SATHE,
COURTESY THE DESIGNER



The kitchen, a dream in red, steel, glass with counters of man-made stone is fully equipped for Indian needs and is in conformity with the principles of feng shui. Two Manjit Bawas adorn the walls.

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Simple and smart – an extremely functional bathroom.

right at the entrance. A huge Raza presides over a couch in the living room, Prabhakar Kolte graces the entertainment area and two red Manjit Bawas keep watch over the kitchen, adding depth to the colour palette.

‘Originally, the size of the living-cum-dining room was only slightly larger than the average local train compartment!’ smiles Archana, but she has added a whole new dimension to the space in various ways like creating a nifty recess opposite the couch, and opting for an open plan kitchen. White walls add to the open feel,

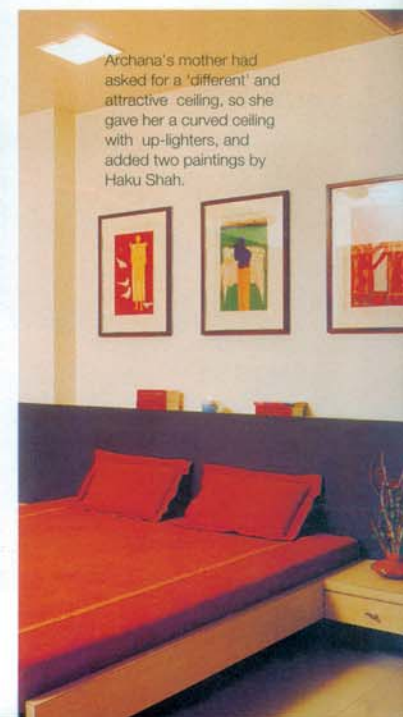
accentuated by the 14-foot-high ceiling, and simple vitrified flooring is complemented by attractive custom-designed skirting. One wall of the living room has two windows on top of each other, separated by a solid wood ledge...the upper one is glazed with glass bricks, which allows natural light into the apartment during the day, and is easier to maintain than a glass window pane.

The dining table in wenge wood is simple and contemporary and has benches instead of conventional chairs. ‘I wanted to do away with backrests, to give a more

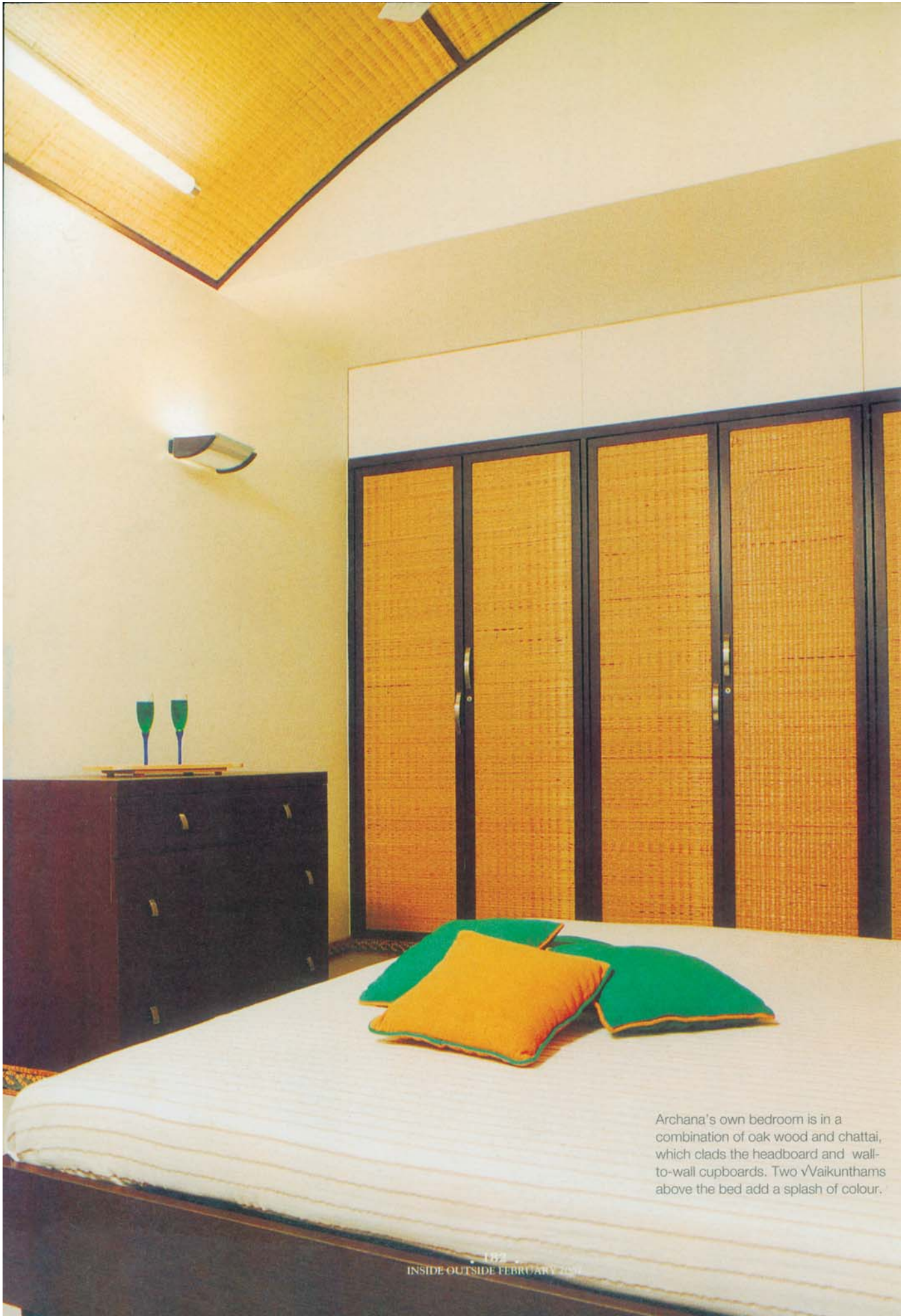
spacious feel. And they are in tune with my minimalist outlook.’

The kitchen opposite the dining area is a dream – Archana had worked for eight years as an interior designer with Venita Cucine, and her experience in modular kitchens is very evident here. The counters are of man-made stone, the cabinet door is in a red and steel finish, and there’s lots of glass everywhere. Archana designed her kitchen keeping in mind Indian needs, while the location of the hobs and the use of red are in conformity with feng shui principles.

Wenge has been used in most of the apartment, though in her own bedroom Archana opted for oak, and to add interest, she combined the wood with chatai and used it to clad the wall-to-wall wardrobe, the headboard and the ceiling. The low bed and the flush wardrobes give a very



Archana’s mother had asked for a ‘different’ and attractive ceiling, so she gave her a curved ceiling with up-lighters, and added two paintings by Haku Shah.



Archana's own bedroom is in a combination of oak wood and chattai, which clads the headboard and wall-to-wall cupboards. Two Vaikunthams above the bed add a splash of colour.