



grand residences

# Living it up

Drawing inspiration from different periods of time, the homes on these pages reflect an affinity for varying architectural styles

# Flight of fancy

Grand and opulent, this weekend house blends classical elements with contemporary accents

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The façade of any structure is usually a good indicator of what architectural elements lie within. But sometimes appearances can be deceptive, and open up to reveal wonderful surprises.

Wadhawan Palace is one such weekend residence that hides within its structure a classical fountain, Corinthian pillars and a grand dome. Designed by architect Mahesh Punjabi on a 9-acre plot on the outskirts of Mumbai, its simple exterior gives way to a living room that looks through to a central courtyard and a grand dome with a 10-ft chandelier.

"The owner often travels to Europe and desired a classical, palatial weekend home where he could host colleagues. It had to be in a different league altogether," says Punjabi. "The interiors therefore have double-height ceilings, chandeliers, a grand staircase design and many intricate details."

The architect says that the façade, in contrast, is understated. Since an indoor fountain and a dome had to be accommodated, Punjabi's design includes a structure with high sloping roofs. In keeping with the classical look, the gables feature colourful stained glass that filter light indoor.

"Inside, the central courtyard is the highlight of the house. The fountains and the dome here have been built such that they are visible from all the areas of the house," says Punjabi.

The courtyard is awash with light that comes in through the dome. Over the decorative, stained glass dome is another dome made of polycarbonate, which stands at 35 feet.

"The glass dome that is visible from the void had to be brought lower because the skylight was not visible on the upper dome. This one now stands at 22 feet," says Punjabi.



*Preceding pages:* A stained glass dome in this weekend house is reminiscent of the grandeur of European palaces. The 10-foot chandelier has been tailor made.

*Left and above:* A fountain amid the cobbled pathway gives direction to cars to turn around and park. While gables lend the structure a classical look, fins bring in a contemporary touch. The entrance features tiles in a carpet pattern. The floral pattern has been hand carved in the wall.





**Top and above:** The fountains in the central courtyard have been made of travertine and recycle water. For practical reasons, the lion head has been fabricated in fibre. Beige Italian marble features inlay in a darker shade.

**Facing page:** Craftsmen from Rajasthan have etched the floral pattern in the 20ftx8ft Danish cream stone wall behind the bar. Artist Hema Desai has designed the stained glass wall section at the rear.

The fountain and two other water bodies ensure that the sound of water fills the lower level, including the living room, which is the main access to the house. It stands out for its detailed ceiling, two passageways that lead to the courtyard as well as a raised glass wall that frames a view of the grand dome and the chandelier. Decorative pillars that are visible through the glass lend the area a Corinthian look.

"The glass wall enables those in the living room to have transparent views of the courtyard and yet because it is at the entrance, it is private enough to host colleagues," says Punjabi.

The passageways lead to the courtyard, which hosts the dining room, the kitchen and two guest bedrooms. The upper level has four bedrooms, a lounge and a terrace sit out.

High ceilings and textured walls characterise the upper level where various materials and colours come into play. Stone walls in the bar area feature hand-carved patterns while the seating space showcases wooden panels as well as a huge stained glass section in the wall.

"Stained glass is a regular feature of medieval churches and cathedrals. But while those are usually bigger, about 20 feet or so, we have







shrunk the size to 5ftx8ft," says the architect.

Punjabi has used many elements to accentuate the ceilings. Criss-cross wooden trusses have now been used as decorative elements. The architect has also wooden sheets in an interlocking pattern to line the under sides of the roof.

All the bedrooms have diverse styles of furniture and feature chandeliers to maintain opulence throughout the house. The bathrooms use Italian marble with streaks of different colours brought in by the use of precious stones. The powder room has backlit red onyx walls and inlay work in the flooring.

**Left and above:** The chandelier complements the ornate furniture in the dining room. Wooden panels offset the sheen of the glazed stone wall. The staircase stands between the courtyard and the living room and so screens or jalis have been used to enable transparency. Glass too has been used at the mid-level landing so that the courtyard fountain is visible from all the areas of the house.



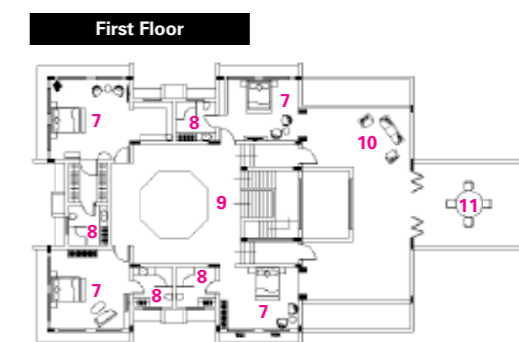
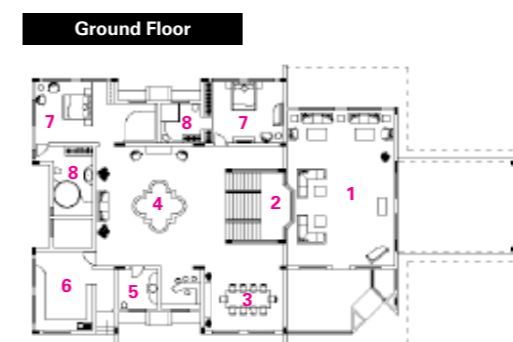
*Right:* An interlocked pattern of wood and Italian marble make up the master bedroom floor. Dark colours have been used in the stained glass in the gable to bring in minimum amount of light from the roof. The chandelier has been entirely made of gold and bronze.

*Following page:* Sloping roofs in the bedrooms have been broken into inclined and flat sections. The flat sections have been used to suspend chandeliers while textures have been added on the inclined surfaces.



**Architect/designer:** Mahesh Punjabi  
**Cladding:** Jotun  
**Roof:** Spain  
**Window/door:** On site solid teak wood doors with walnut veneer  
**Tiling:** Italian marble  
**Supplier:** Classic Marble  
**Flooring:** Italian Marble  
**Supplier:** Paras Prabhu Granites  
**Wallcoverings:** Carved stone from Stone Source  
**Lighting:** Sejal Encasa  
**Furniture:** Italy  
**Bath:** Kohler  
**Vanity:** Kohler  
**Cabinetry finish:** White polycoat

**Story by** Marisha Thakur  
**Photography by** Mrigank Sharma - India Sutra



**This page:** Italian marble has been used in the bathrooms. The subtle colour palette is broken by the use of coloured stone on the walls with an inlay of precious stones.

**Legend for plans:** 1 Living room, 2 staircase, 3 dining room, 4 courtyard, 5 powder room, 6 kitchen, 7 bedroom, 8 bathroom, 9 landing, 10 Lounge and bar, 10 terrace seating.

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