

# Inside Outside

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**Uber-luxury  
apartments in  
Poona**





As a green wall bearing the distinctive project signage in brass hovers over a reflecting pool, one pauses before entering the building via a wood and brass portal set into a 20ft wide frameless chamfered glass portico leading into a triple height entrance lobby.

# LUXURY DE-LUXE

Pravir Sethi converts probably the only corner of greenery and water left in Poona into Uber-luxury apartments.

TEXT: SUBUR MUNJEE  
PHOTOGRAPHS: FABIEN CHARUAU AND SQUARE ONE





The entrance lobby is a study in chamfers, with a reception and a water body scooped out to leave the central area open to highlight the hero of this space: a triple height lighting installation made of 276 hand blown glass drops with brass stems within, featuring dynamic fibre optic lighting that twinkles playfully.



Stretched fabric in chamfered coves light the main double height space, while a mezzanine balcony floats between lift lobbies at two levels.



An acid etched bar code pattern on the staircase glazing speaks the same language as the wood finish fins that screen the service ducts.



Expansive double height balconies run along the north and south façades.

When the distributors of St Gobain glass in several countries decided to build an apartment building in this leafy corner of Poona, they hired a celebrity British company to prepare the master plan and work had begun as early as 2012. Then, probably befitting the, as yet nebulous luxury they might have had in mind, they requested Pravir Sethi of Hinge studio to pitch for the lobby.

The sheer creativity and innovative technology of the design of the lobby probably sealed Pravir's fate. The main feature was a cascading curtain of light. 276 hand blown glass bulbs, with fibre optics lighting sleeves through brass tube inserts, shimmer down from 30ft above and then disappear in waves into a crevasse-like cove in

the lobby rear wall. When lit, they look like moving flights of birds and/or fireflies. Water gurgles out of brass channels recessed into an inclined marble face that meets the floor. The different techniques that were tried to create what is nothing short of a work of art clearly defines Pravir not just as an interior designer, with a masterful knowledge of electronics and an architect. He ended up not only winning the lobby project but got to build the building itself. Water wraps around the entire building and Pravir designed glass lines on the façade of the building to echo the patterns on the wood-finish aluminium fins that screen the service shafts. A traditional canoe from Kerala is sliced in half and installed vertically through two niches, recalling the river and its link with the name of the property – 219 Boat Club.





Light spills through the gaps between undulating ribbons of walnut veneer in this feature wall in the private lift lobby of the show flat.



The glazing between the study and the private lobbies of the lift and entrance foyer features switchable privacy glass - going from clear to frosted at the touch of a button- punctuated by double doors and fluted teakwood.



The study, accessed from the private entrance lobby, also serves as a meeting room and can be variously used as a mandir, gym or even a bedroom, given the provision for an adjacent bathroom.



The dining area and door to the kitchen are screened from the entrance using a series of brass fins set into fluted wooden ribs on the wall.







The claw chandelier starts life at the floor level as a freestanding space divider between living and dining areas, and screening the kitchen door from the main entrance of the apartment. As it soars upwards in the double height living area, it nestles within carved teakwood fins which guide it to the ceiling at 21ft.



The chandelier fans out across the ceiling before each arm arcs downward holding a custom light pendant in brass and solid acrylic rods.



The living room terrace features an infinity plunge pool, nestled amongst tree tops.





Ground Floor Plan



Show Flat Plan



Rooftop Plan



Pravir Sethi

#### FACT FILE

**Type:** luxury residential architecture + interior

**Area:** 1,00,000 sq ft

**Floors:** 2 basements, ground, 2 podiums, 10 residential, terrace + party deck (total 17)

**Status:** complete

**Client:** Merint Developers Pvt Ltd

#### Design Team

**Studio Hinge:** Pravir Sethi, Aastha Kothari, Shivangi Saxena + Chintan Zalavadiya

Canopy, Security Cabin design and show flat furniture & accessory selection: Anand Menon + Ruchika Jain ADNDD

**Swarm installation at Lobby:**

Klove Lighting

**PMC:** Gensys

**Lighting Design:** Atelier DADA

**Contractors:**

**Building works:** Viraj Contracting

**Lobby:** Siddhi Interiors

**Show flat:** R-Evolution



Both the living and dining areas open up onto expansive private terraces.



The german modular kitchen is equipped with a fully functional outdoor area for aromatic cooking.





The distinctive curved slide and turn doors are inspired by those at studio HINGE, and when open extend the family area at the centre of the house into the lounge-like adjacent bedroom.



This vanity unit with integrated lighting works as a space divider between dresser and bathroom areas: A free-standing quartz marble frame houses a dresser on one side and custom his & her basins on the other, with twin egg-shaped mirrors rotating to provide shelves or mirror as required.



The master suite (about the size of a 2BHK in Bombay) has a spacious double aspect bedroom giving onto two private terraces enveloped by foliage. A large custom designed island bed with a built-in study desk behind floats easily in the centre.



A customised Drey Bed by Red Blue Yellow is framed by openings with hidden sliding doors connecting the bedroom, dresser and bathroom areas seamlessly.

Pravir chose the second floor for the mock-up flat that his client wanted. The panorama of the city might have been more spectacular higher up but the second floor was in line with the top of the surrounding trees, giving the finished look the feel of a tree house. Lifts with frameless glass doors transport one to the flat, just one on each floor. Although the heavily-indented glass doors already provide ample privacy in the flat lobby, Pravir decided to create a further light but effective private ambience. The claw chandelier starts life at the floor level as a freestanding space divider between living and dining areas, screening the kitchen door from the main entrance of the apartment. As it soars upwards in the double height living area, it nestles within carved

teakwood fins which guide it to the ceiling at 21ft, from where it fans out across the room before each arm arcs downward holding a custom light pendant in brass and

solid acrylic rods. It gives the living area an immense, tented, Arabic feel. The living area opens onto a deck and a pool. On the right side of the living area is a study with



Sliding doors pull back to connect the dresser and bathroom areas, where a sunken jacuzzi sits by a picture window with verdant offerings.





The double height private dining terrace allows for alfresco dining and lounging, with solid Brazilian walnut decking, and a Hunter Douglas ceiling in wood-finish aluminium above.



Broad meandering steps at the rooftop do more than connect the pool deck and lawn levels: they provide an informal amphitheatre style seating for gatherings and performances.



The infinity edge community pool at the rooftop features a floating cabana and a swim-up bar. It seems to overflow into the Mula-Mutha river, and this is best viewed from the deck chairs under the woven fabric pergolas.

a wooden table with simple, rounded edges and four leather chairs with octagonal panels. A single long light suspended the length of the table provides the main light in the study.

The flat has two master bedrooms, both with sunken jacuzzis and two smaller rooms. It has two kitchens, the main one adjoining an open smaller one for outdoor cooking and for storing utilities. Everywhere possible, Pravir has attempted either to do something new or to bring a new feel to a traditional

artefact or piece of furniture. In one room, the lengthwise side of a bed has been transformed into an oval shape. It still reminds you of a four poster bed but with a twist. In one of the master bathrooms, with its double basins, the mirror in front of the basin swings over to provide accessory space on the other side.

The attention to detail and variety is everywhere in evidence. The finish in the detailing is rare even in comparison to the new buildings that are mushrooming all over the metros of India. In the heart of a busy city, the cream and grey furnishings provide a calm refuge. The furniture is a mixture of made to order and designed by Pravir, some pieces are imported and some designed in conjunction with Red, Blue and Yellow in Bombay. The artefacts are both Indian and imported. The maximum use of water bodies around the flat also make it appear to be an extension of the water outside and the design also makes optimum use of the surrounding greenery.

Pravir is grateful for the fact that the client exerted no pressures of either resources or ideas. That, combined with Pravir's very clear vision, has made the luxurious outcome possible. The building and the flat are both a reminder that abundant resources will not do the job alone. Pravir is very emphatic about his perspective on luxury. The visual impact is what first catches your attention but real luxury lies in accommodating both the utilitarian and the personal, if sometimes eccentric needs of the client.

