

# HOME REVIEW

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## LIGHT PERSPECTIVES

M:OFA STUDIOS' BRIGHT AND AIRY TALE

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anish Gulati and his team at M:OFA Studio articulate the design of a home in Delhi to take on the rigours of a complex joint family arrangement. At the heart of the scheme is an open core that links the three floors with plenty of natural light flooding its volumes. Essentially built on the lines of a courtyard home, the team cleverly positions private and common spaces with the ability to overlap and mingle, creating the mandatory interactions required by the family.

The interiors are expressed by a smart juxtaposition of wood, glass and steel, with a series of customised light fixtures designed to work as art installations. This home does not shout for attention, instead stays true to its calling of facilitating interaction and relating to a human scale - something that M:OFA Studio have done remarkably well.

### Cover Story

Taking light as a crucial architectural element M:OFA Studios binds three generations of values and perspectives in a thread of warmth spread across a 360 square yard home

### M:OFA Studios

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Headed by Principal architect Manish Gulati, M:OFA since its commencement has grown from a boutique architectural design firm to a comprehensive institution. Here architecture and design have gone beyond passion to an elaborate conglomeration of innovative minds and efficient systems. M:OFA is based out of New Delhi and is doing projects across India.



Photo: Cyrus Dalal







# LIGHT PERSPECTIVES

*Using light as a key architectural element M:OFA Studios binds three generations of values in a home situated in New Delhi.*

Text By Meghna R Kothari  
Photographs Courtesy Abhinav and Manish



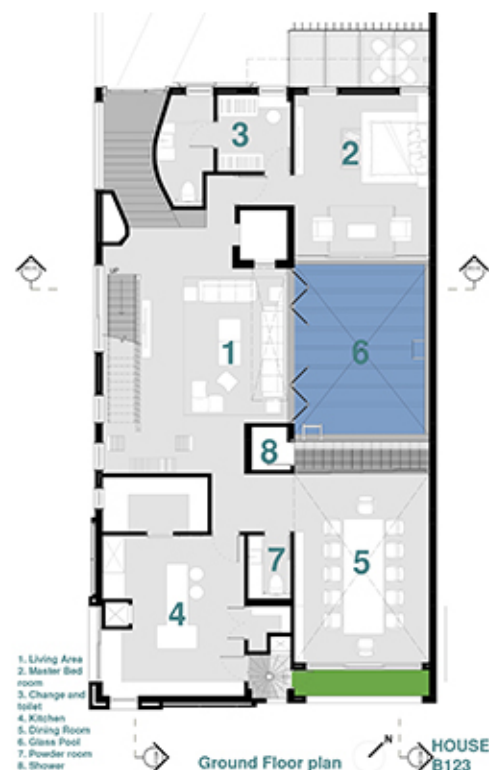
Amidst the bustling streets of Malviya Nagar in New Delhi sits a residence that efficiently cuts out the prevailing chaos and weaves a complex family arrangement together through its architectural fluidity.

Delhi based architectural firm M:OFA Studios were faced with the unique challenge of designing an abode for a joint family that needed to provide privacy for three generations under one roof.

They had to create interconnected spaces that enabled individual privacy and yet emanated the spirit of a true joint family system. Moreover, the site restrictions made it crucial to chart out the distribution of the harsh sunlight in a manner that it outlined the spatial context and characteristics of the residence.

Balancing various disciplines interjected within the realm of architecture M:OFA Studios specifically emphasise on layering narratives that explore and reflect the human factor.

Principal architect Manish Gulati says, "We spend time understanding the vision of the client and though it may not translate in the building literally, a deeper understanding of it is woven into the DNA of design which manifests itself in every small or big detail throughout the project."



The clients came in with a clear brief, citing the house would have to integrate a complex familial arrangement; hence the M:OFA team made way for private and individual spaces inundated with overlaps, voids and volumes to create multiple common spaces throughout the house.

To encourage interactions, they designed an open core that not only linked the three floors but also effectively directed the natural light within, whilst creating a dramatic play of light on different planes.

Designed as a flat slab construction it is the sturdy exterior with precast concrete panels offset with reclaimed wood planks and strategically placed openings that facilitate function and shape to the structure.





A combination of techniques like cavity walls filled with polyurethane foam for temperature control, aluminium windows with low E-glass, railings around the balconies with clear glass and laser cut MDF panels have turned the drawbacks into veritable architectural strengths.

Besides, the optimised fenestration and open plan manages to bring in the best of nature from the exterior into the interior whilst leaving out the noise.



Treading the traditional route, a courtyard home forming a plunge pool with a glass floor on the ground level seemed as the best way to bind the family together and yet stay true to the individual requirements.

The courtyard boasts a colourful art piece on one wall that runs till the skylight on top and branches out at every floor into two bedrooms and seating areas.



Starting from the very ground level one enters through a stilt floor that works as the garage and leads into the basement flanked by an entertainment zone.

Steps leading upwards, to the raised ground floor introduces one to the glass pooled courtyard. The ground floor also accommodates the main dining area and kitchen along with the master bedroom.



A glass lounge suspended between the second and third floor is skewed from the grid plan and hangs partly over the glass lit courtyard and partly within the main core of the house; it serves as a leisure space for reading and other rejuvenation activities.



Hanging above this space is an exposed air conditioning duct with multiple shafts carrying cool air stemming out of it; these also work as light fixtures and make it look like a piece of art.

On every floor the bedrooms with sliding glass doors overlook the courtyard and its steel cut-outs. The glass and wood combination employed within the staircase and passages adds a distinct personality to the spaces. Lyrically playing through every space are the hanging lights that add warmth and bind the areas into a cohesive unit.

The contemporary steel cut-out design used in the pathways also finds its space within the walls as art pieces, enhanced with back-lighting and further matched with long hanging lights in different metals.

The terrace at the top has a serene open garden with an enviable view of the Qutub Minar on one side and the Bahai temple on the other.

Manish and his team at M:OFA have efficiently adopted the strategy of fusing light with architecture - this has worked as the language for this project and created both spaces and art that explore human experiences remarkably.

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