

## Indian modern redux

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Namita Luthra has called many places home. She was born in Chandigarh, India, and immigrated to Nottingham, England, as a child, before moving to Weirton, W.Va.

But Ms. Luthra's true roots are in modernism: her grandfather was an engineer who helped build Chandigarh, a planned city in northern India partially designed by Le Corbusier in the 1950s.

So when Ms. Luthra, 39, a public interest lawyer, and her husband, Anil Shrivastava, 40, a partner at Vestar Capital Partners, a private equity firm, saw the raw, unfinished apartment in the East Village in 2006, they fell for the long, clean lines of the split-level space. They bought it for \$2.35 million one year later, and spent \$300,000 turning the empty shell into their version of a modernist temple.

"We wanted to capture that feeling of being very true to India, but also very modern at the same time," Ms. Luthra said.

With the help of Pulltab Design, a young New York City firm she found through a magazine article, the couple dreamed up details that speak to their shared identity.

Ms. Luthra loved the way polished concrete floors in Indian homes feel cool, even on the hottest days. So she spent months finding a contractor who could cover the entire 2,400-square-foot duplex in a dark brown concrete, finished with a glossy sheen that glows softly in the light.

True to her modernist roots, Ms. Luthra also abhors clutter. To keep the space open and orderly, the architects constructed a white-paneled living room that hides an array of built-in furniture that flips open like a Swiss Army knife.

A 14-foot dining table folds down like a Murphy bed, revealing seating for 10, while bottles shimmer against the backlit bar behind another panel. A square panel flips up to serve as a worktable, which Mr. Shrivastava also uses to play chess.

"The designers gave us this dynamic, changing room," Ms. Luthra said. "But when you want it to be a quiet room, everything gets tucked away."

Though the choice of white is decidedly purist, the open panels reveal splashes of rich Indian hues like saffron, persimmon orange and peacock blue.

And the couple's attitude is far from precious. With two young children, Amartya, 4, and Jaya, 2, "things get nicked and things get scratched," Ms. Luthra said, "but over time it really adds to the beauty of the place."

The apartment is in the Flowerbox Building, a new doorman condominium on East Seventh Street named after the built-in, self-watering flower boxes that stand in contrast to the street's dingier tenement walkups.

The couple, who had previously lived in a small, three-bedroom apartment on First Avenue and East 10th Street, were drawn to the condo's indoor-outdoor feel. Leafy treetops sway in the wind, shrouding the neighborhood's grittier streetscape, while offering views of a lush community garden below, where children play in the sandbox and koi swim in the small pond.

Ms. Luthra and Mr. Shrivastava went a step further and invited the natural world inside. A wall of ivy was planted along the interior balcony that overlooks the living area. Directly below the garden is a shallow, 12-foot-long reflecting pool, where goldfish dart just below the surface.

Much of the décor walks a fine line between modern and Indian. In the master bedroom, blond wood Wegner chairs are mixed with four Indian ivory-inlaid nesting tables; Indian statues line the floating bookshelf designed by Carlo Scarpa — the couple's first big design purchase.

In one of the children's rooms, a George Nelson sofa, reupholstered in a striped fabric from Paul Smith, complements ocean-blue walls hung with South African animal prints.

Two of the bedrooms also have balconies set with table and chairs, where the family enjoys summertime tea.

"You could be in an Indian forest," Ms. Luthra said.

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