



a day without light

Faustina Johnson explores Daylight House, a tropical Bangalore home that glows with natural light, while remaining introverted and cosy.

Light is one of those things that are more present in their absence. Darkness makes us long for sight. The light of the sun that we take so much for granted comes to us from another world, and is our cosmic portal, the thing that that opens up life on earth, opens up sensation, and connects us with the rest of the universe. Accordingly, our bodies are wired to respond and thrive to the energy of the sun. The ubiquity of light only proves its indispensability.

It is this glaring necessity for light that Ashwin Architects address in what has come to be called the 'Daylight House'. This independent four bedroom house is located somewhere in tropical urban Bangalore, India, seated on a cosy 40 square yards by 60 square yards plot. The clients wanted their home to somehow be spacious, the first challenge for the architects. In response, the house was fitted with the perfect solution- a 20' stretch of a skylight that lights up every area in the house.

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The skylight opens down into an indoor water body replete with a refreshing garden. This landscaped area further adds to the feel of being in a large house. Moreover, the skylight and the water body are placed such that they fulfill different functions for each area- on the ground floor, the water garden is a refreshing respite from the heat, making the central living area a cool and shaded space that is also open. The light from the skylight also peeks into the kitchen, where it illuminates, and creates an inviting ambience, fit for a kitchen-dining space.

For the master bedroom on the second floor, it acts as a balcony. The skylight opens up the house. Meanwhile, it also helps create an indoor climate that is both pleasant, while connecting the house with the outside. The gargantuan glass facades of modern architecture seem to misunderstand the nature of daylight, even as they are obsessed with letting in as much light as possible. Daylight is a tactile thing that has properties like temperature, color, orientation, all of which the human body responds to.

Large glaring windows, thus, only lead to a lifestyle that is over-stimulated by light, unnatural and taxing on the body which responds





The living room, with views onto the indoor water garden

“The tiny pockets of green landscapes placed around the house give the house its own climate”

to subtle changes in the quality of light. The glass palaces that often pass off for homes today are, moreover, temperature controlled artificially, creating an unhealthy discrepancy between the internal and external atmosphere. Not to mention the energy that is wasted in doing this.

This Bengaluru daylight house is nicely “introverted”, as principle architect Ashwin puts it. The tiny pockets of green landscapes placed

around the house give the house its own climate. This is a relief from the stressful publicness of modern life, the forswearing of privacy that is enforced by 21st century glass fortresses. The ribs that the skylight has been thoughtfully fitted with counters the harshness of direct Bangalore sun, and creates a picturesque texture of shadows and contours- features that show off daylight better than unbroken infestations of glass.



“The hanging staircase placed directly below the ribbed skylight contours the light and gives texture to the daylight streaming in”



Black and white marble complement the bright yellow and white walls

The entire house, including the ground floor car park, sits on a cosy 40 square yards by 60 square yards plot





One of the bedrooms, which comes with an entertainment area

“The scientific principles of Vaastu guided the control of the climate within the house”

Bright yellow and white walls enhance the legacy of light. “The built form should never exceed the requirements”, the architect says, highlighting the simplicity of the design that makes it so efficient. As per the client’s instructions, the scientific principles of Vaastu guided the control of the climate within the house. This capsule of serenity represents the firm’s underlying philosophy of bridging the divide that exists between people’s perception of their homes and the stark reality of the buildings that are actually coming up. ■

The dining room adjoining the kitchen

