



The enclosed balcony

Falguni Gokhale's house is pretty and plush, but with a distinct touch of non-conformity. The quaint balcony is her zone

I first set foot in this lovely house when I got married 25 years ago. I've been staying here ever since. It's a warm, cosy flat. I don't see myself shifting elsewhere as I have developed a deep connection to this place today.

BREATHING LIFE INTO VASTU

About three years ago we decided to renovate the space and I was given a free hand to do the same. I didn't plan anything huge – with a few minor modifications and on a shoe-string budget, I tried to incorporate some freshness into the already existing space. I changed the flooring and enclosed the balcony – two things that made a world of difference. My furniture now is a nice mix of modern and traditional. I like to add a bit of whimsy and quirkiness to a happy, cohesive place to lounge in with friends and family. That's the kind of informal physical space I have always wanted my house to be, unlike my rather dreary office where I spend the whole day designing, planning, organising and coordinating assignments.

PLAYING TO THE GALLERIES

My favourite place in the house is my balcony. In the mornings, we have breakfast here and are greeted by birds tweeting melodiously. I'm crazy about birds so I have even kept a bird feed out there, and there also are a couple of bird nests. To do up the balcony, I hung two of my huge bean pods here. They're the artworks that I am currently working on and I

ART OF LIVING



The dining space



The bedroom

feel happy seeing them swing there. The seat rocks – a brainchild of my husband Satish – have also found their space here. On the opposite side of the balcony, I have a big chikoo tree growing out of a pot, which even sprouts highly edible chikooos every year.

Being a bird fan, I have designed a 'bird wall' right near the entrance of my house. It is adorned with paintings of birds by different artists. Next to this one, we have a wall dedicated to the family's fond memories – perched on it are pictures of the family when they were very young and a framed 100-year-old letter.

My bedroom is my sanctuary. It's painted a pristine white and that, along with the lovely white bedspread, provide to it calming and peaceful ethos. I love to laze here with a book and some chocolates or listen to music.

LITTLE SOMETHINGS

The character of my house lies in the small eccentric things. For instance, we have a 50-year-old Portuguese chair and two corner chairs from Kolkata in a quaint corner in the living room. There's an old 'Munimji table' for my telephones, letters and magazine. I have also managed to find appropriate spots for the little somethings – trinkets and souvenirs – that I got from all the places I've visited such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Indonesia, Bastar and Auroville.

(As told to Mrunmayi Ainatapur)