

# The entrepreneurial avenue

*Prajacta Kadu talks about how she set up Arch Avenue and dealt with the challenges that came her way. In four years, she has worked on an impressive range of projects spanning residential to hospitality-- with services that range from design consultancy to full-scale project management.*



## *How did you decide to venture into architecture and interior design?*

I founded Arch Avenue in June 2007. There are very few things in life as exciting as starting your own firm and chasing your dream. Initially, I worked with some of the premier builders in the country and gained industry experience. Somewhere along the way, I realised something was still missing. After a few weeks of deliberation, I figured I would be happier running my own studio and decided to take the plunge.

## *What were your early experiences ?*

It has been a super thrilling journey ever since - full of roller-coaster rides, daunting challenges, immense learning and self-discovery. This was my conscious path, as I had a choice to continue at my well-paying job as an architect.

The first 3 years were a period of intense struggle with little capital to invest, inconsistent revenue streams, few clients, unreliable vendors, and deadline-defying contractors. Managing super demanding client expectations amidst all the chaos was akin to walking a tight-rope. Clients were unforgiving of delays and hurdles and justifiably so, but it was unnerving to be at the receiving end with little control on vendors and contractors.

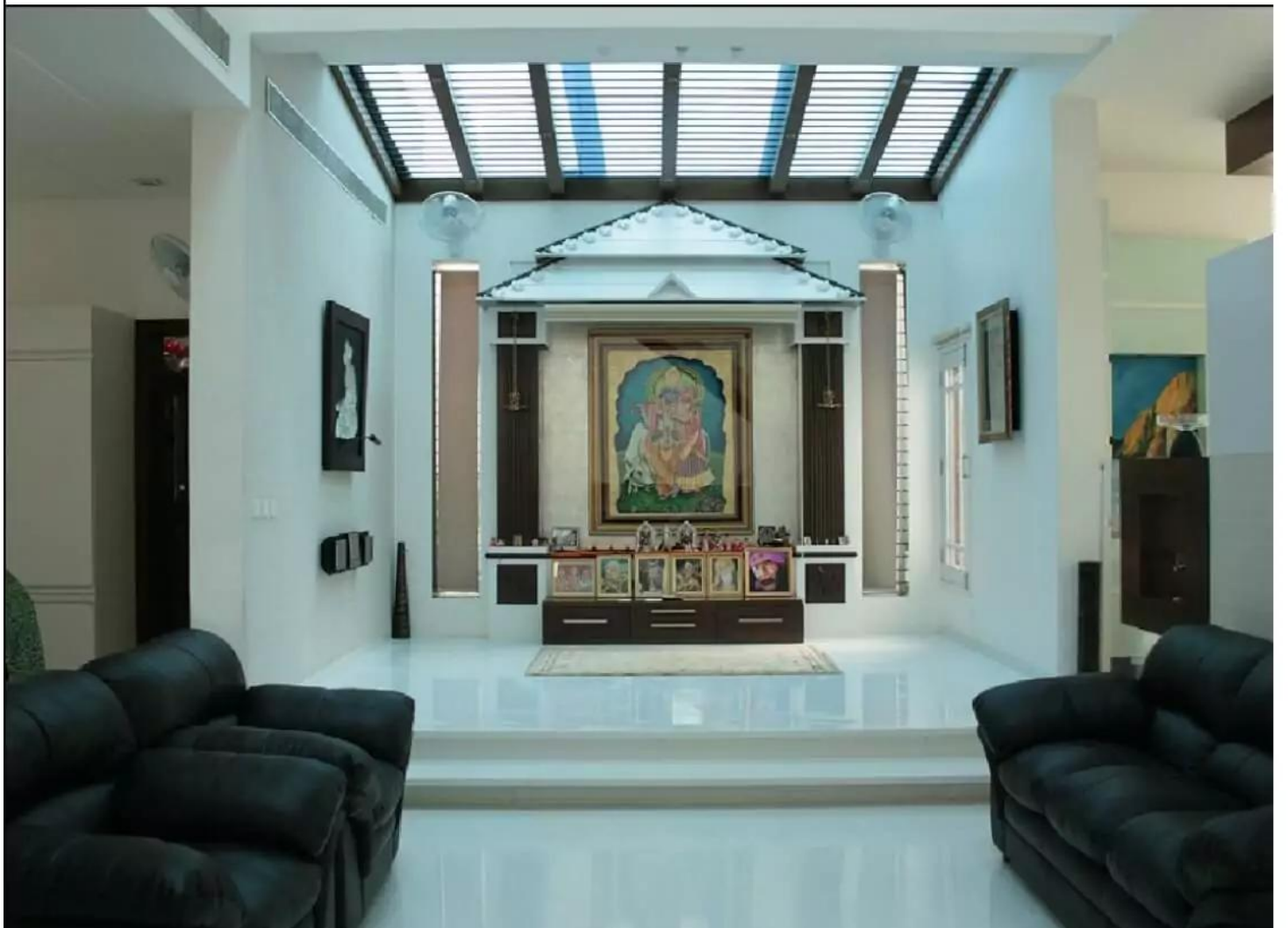
It took a lot of courage and perseverance on my part to keep going while pitted against several obstacles that never ceased. My passion for creating great designs and building dream homes kept the fire alive.



*Tell about the 'White Lotus' concept*

The journey has just begun, and I have miles to go. I am looking to expand the design portfolio to include furniture design, ceramics, art work, jewelry, lighting and accessories as a part of the White Lotus brand. The aim is to build Arch Avenue into a reputed design services brand and White Lotus as a premium product design brand, striking that fine balance between utility and elegance. Living the passion, striving for excellence and fulfilling one's potential is what life is all about after all.

Images : Arch Avenue



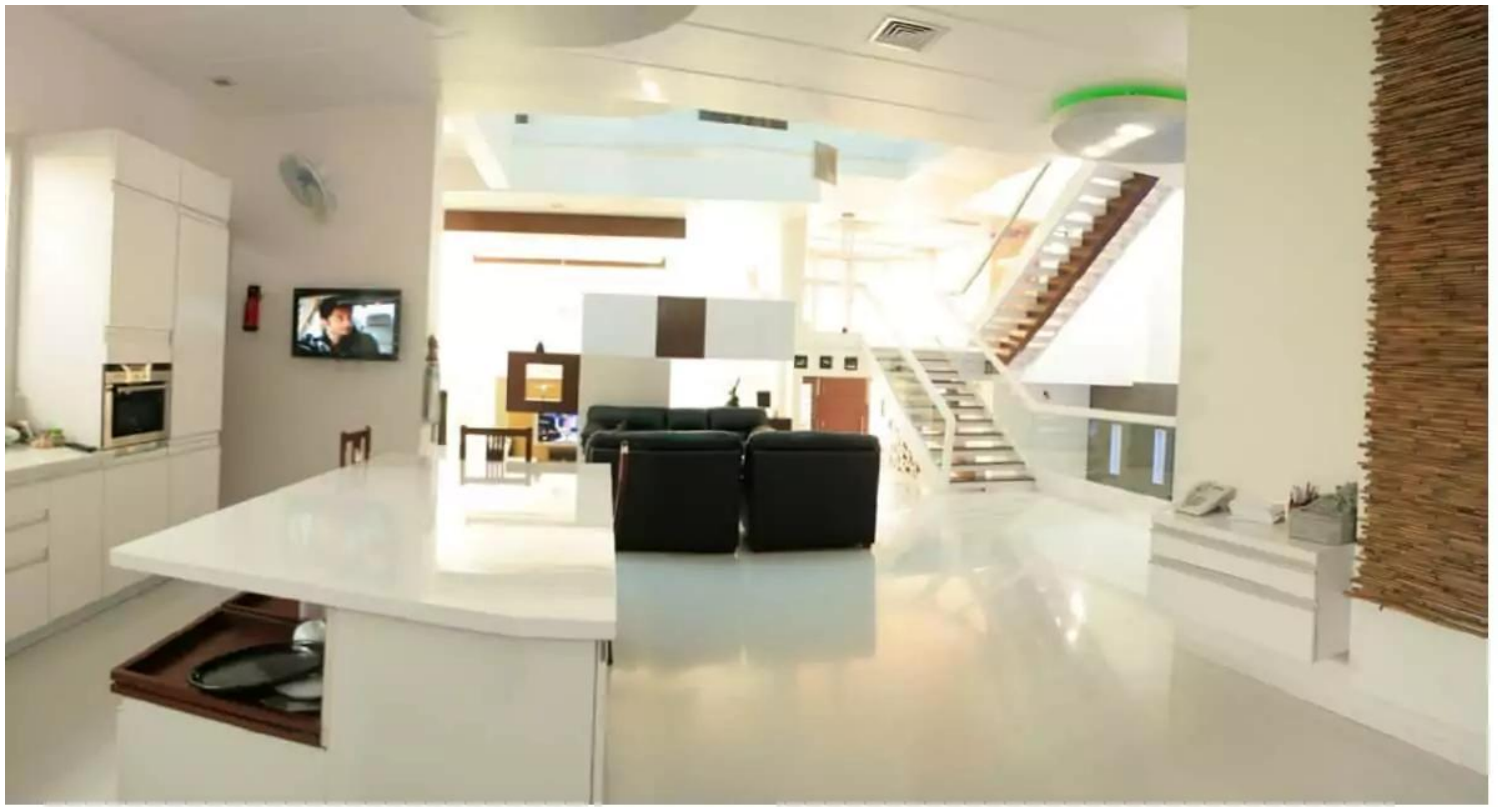
## *Project : Colour and luxury in a rented home*

The best things in the world are custom-made. This philosophy was applied in the design of this apartment. Being a rented property, there was little scope for major structural changes. The clients wanted a very stylish home that would reflect their personality and lifestyle.

Therefore, the spaces were designed with a focus on colour, detailing and furnishings with an added 'luxe appeal'. Every piece of furniture was conceived as an artwork. All the furniture and accessories here have been fabricated by White Lotus. It is a three bedroom apartment with a beautiful long hallway to the living. The hallway is given special attention by placing a chaise and glass mosaic mirror. A huge rectangular Swarovski chandelier completes the look.

The living room extends into the dining, lounge and study. An elegant 12 seater dining table with a marble top has detailing in inlaid strips of mother-of-pearl, thus making it the focus. The overall design is contemporary and the chairs uber-luxe and upholstered in bright silver faux leather. The study has a simple desk with a blue lapiz top which complements the dining table. The main living room has a gold sectional sofa and a coffee table in glass and onyx. The main attraction is the bright fushcia chaise and a black high-back chair with steel legs. A curated selection of lights and pedestal candles add to the luxurious indulgence.





"Building a home, not a house, is one of the most important aspects of a project that architects must keep in mind. A homeowner has to feel connected to the spaces to fully appreciate the architecture and design style."





*Tell us something about your design style and projects where you moved away from the norm and did something new.*

I have managed to create a niche for Arch Avenue as a premium design firm specialising in high-end residential architecture and interiors. We are a boutique firm and maintain a small professional team committed to excellence. I learnt the value of being more selective along the way and focused exclusively on projects that were more design-oriented so I could leverage my passion and strength to the fullest. Appreciation and coverage in media spurred me on further. Recently, Trends magazine included one of my design projects in its Top 10 bathroom designs in India. It is always heartening to find one's work well-received and the encouragement makes it all worthwhile.

### *Project : The Indore Residence*

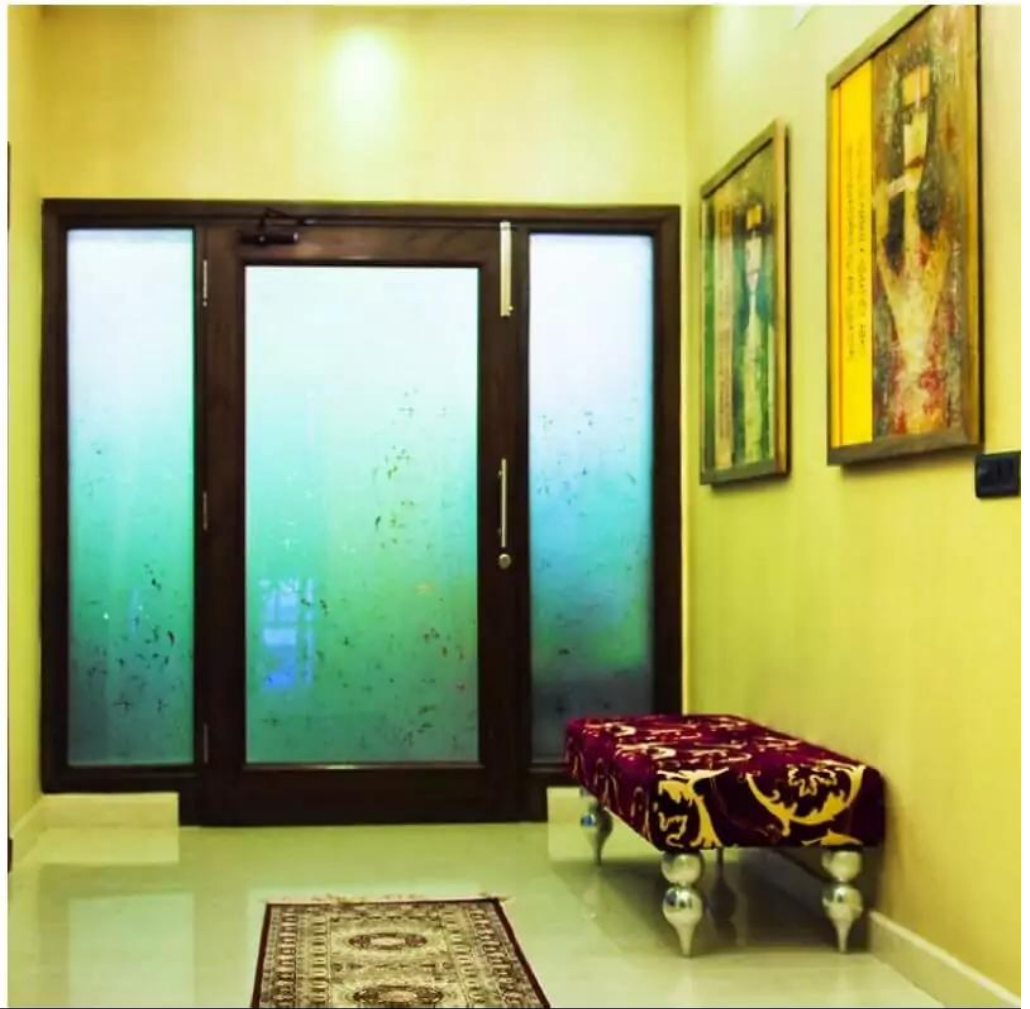
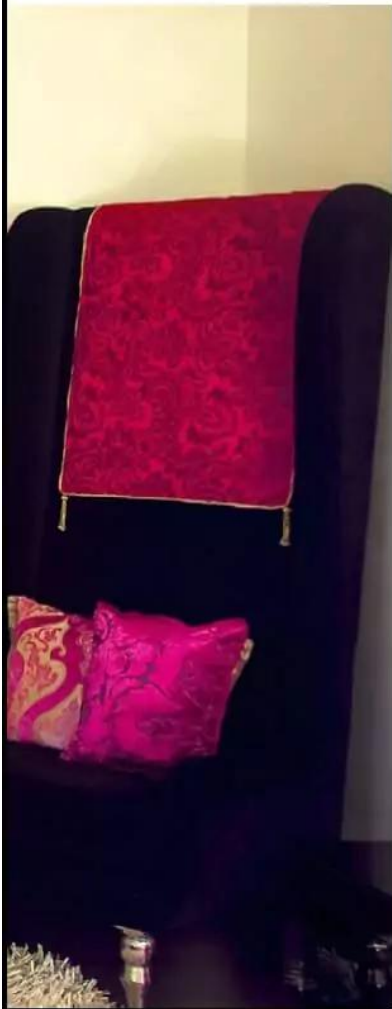
A Gulmohur tree is the focal point in the elevated lawn at the entrance. The exterior of the house is white with glass doors. On the front wall, instead of using one full-length mirror, I created a collage of mirrors punctuating the wall. An elevated plinth has also been created and doubles up as a basement. While the multiple levels of the house are clearly demarcated from the outside, the interior varies between double-heights and split-levels. The doorway opens to a shallow pool, at the centre of which sits a white marble Buddha statue.

The ground floor has very few walls, so the view is unobstructed. While the informal seating is on the same level as the pool, the formal living, dining and the kitchen are on a split-level. A large sofa dominates the informal seating area even as the floor-to-ceiling glass walls ensure an unhindered view of the front lawn.

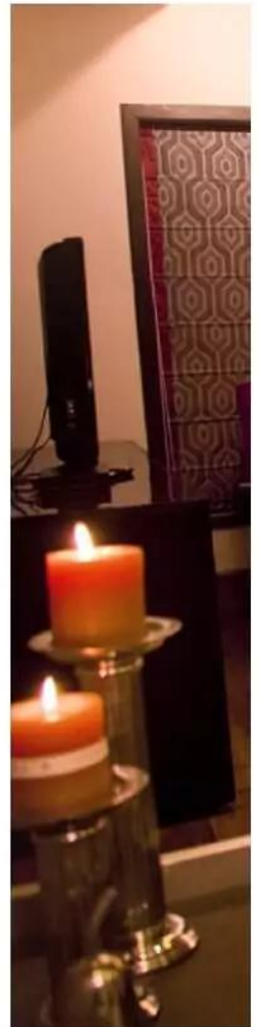
A skylight beyond the formal living space brings natural light into the temple nook at one end. The kitchen and dining form a continuous zone at the rear. The open plan kitchen island is extended to serve the purpose of a breakfast table.

In the master bedroom, a silver textured wall serves as a perfect foil for a dramatic full-length mirror. Wooden flooring defines the seating area in this room. French windows open to the lawn. In the master bathroom, the shower stall is hidden behind the basin and dresser. The neutral colour tone is the perfect backdrop for a burst of colour in the shower tiles.

The first floor landing, used as a reading space, has a brick-clad wall to break the white monotone of the mural and the white space of the ground level. The house has four bedrooms spread over the first and second levels. The owner wanted one bedroom on a lower floor with easy access to the kitchen and living area. The other bedrooms are located on the second floor.









Every bedroom is a statement in flamboyant luxury. With rich tones and textures used in the right form and proportion. Headboards are grand and luxuriously soft fabrics used for the armchairs. The brief was quite clear - flamboyant contemporary luxury with lots of colour. Significantly different to the earlier project showcased in this feature, but I felt quite up to the challenge and enjoyed this project for the creative liberty it offered.

