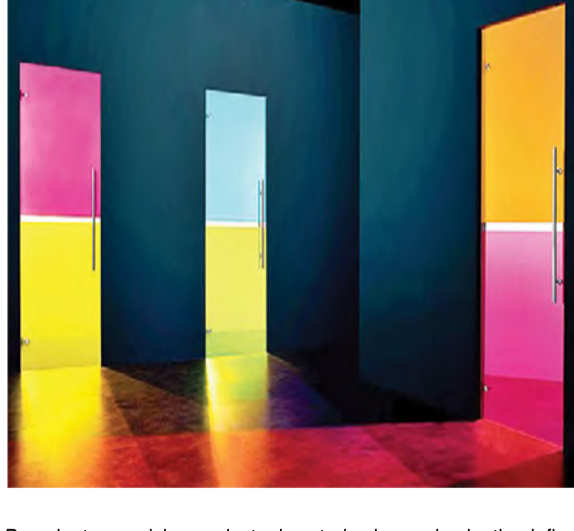


All About The **Glassy Effect**

IN THE PRESENT WORLD OF INTERIORS, GLASS HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY CREATING ITS OWN PRECEDENCE PRESENCE. WITH ELEGANCE AND STYLE, IT'S A NICHE PRODUCT THAT HAS NO REPLACEMENT. IT TRULY REIGNS.

by REENA DHANKHER



Prevalent as a niche product, glass today has a dominating influence on both interiors and exteriors. Years back, glass was a strict no-no for many families, mostly for the element of security. Those days, glass was much more brittle but today thanks to advent of new processes, 'toughened glass', which is five to six times stronger than the regular glass, is in use.

"Glass can be bullet proof; what else do you want for security? Nothing can penetrate glass for at least two hours," remarks Pathak. Bhutani echoes his sentiments. "Since rising crime is the new urban phenomenon, glass is one of the best security solutions. There is a wide range of burglar-resistant glass available that is made up of different types of laminated glass that does not compromise on aesthetics," he informs. Subramaniam from Saint-Gobain adds, "Tempering, bullet proof and lamination are some of the speciality techniques that make glass safe and durable for use and are also seen across our range of exteriors".

SAFETY

Being transparent, glass also help detect fire and enable visual security

**TERRACES**

One of the most aesthetic uses that glass is put to is in terraces. Being the most preferred option for railings, glass is now used for glass rooms on terraces where you can enjoy the raindrops falling with no fear of damage. Says Pathak, "Railings mostly use glass. We did a project where it was just bent glass with no support. It's in and will never go out of fashion. During rains, you need a transparent product. Here you cannot use acrylic. It will crack and break."

Railings apart, glass chairs and tables can also enhance the beauty of the terrace. Bhutani explains how people have even used glass staircases and rooms inside their houses. "Glass rooms are elegant and can achieve the dual function of transparency and privacy. Glass with integrated blinds and view control film as well as switchable glass can add to the finesse of the room while creating aesthetically pleasing effects.

LIVING ROOMS

Elegantly designed glass furniture has a charm of its own and can spruce up a living room. Pathak explains how these days fabric is used between glass sheets, mostly for tables, and thus customised solutions to match living room interiors are achieved. In addition, beautifully stacked glasses can make for stylish glass corners that add to the glamour of the room.

Says Capt Neena Singh, a senior pilot with Jet Airways, "I have used glass in my living room as a partition and have abstract designs that provide a stylish look to the room. Even the railings in my house have glass. In fact, on the first floor there is a corner of printed glass which stands out".

Is there an alternative to glass in interiors?

Swapnil Pathak, Director, Art and Glass, is quick to reply, "No, there isn't." Delicate, fragile and beautiful are words that have always been associated with glass but over the years, its use has become almost inevitable to beautify residences and give them the desired touch of excellence and elegance. "Glass has the potential to create stunning ambiances that have the power to transform living and elevate lifestyle," says Aditya Bhutani, Director and COO AIS Glass Expert.

That's the reason modern residential housing projects are increasingly taking to glass as the preferred material for paneling, partitions, furniture and other interiors. "Glass is not just versatile and provides flexibility in design, it addresses comfort, aesthetics, safety, design and sustainability challenges of the modern world," points out R. Subramaniam, MD, Glass and Glass Solutions, Saint-Gobain India Pvt Ltd.



Another misconception is that glass attracts heat. Pathak addresses the concern: "There is high-end glass that will cut UV hundred percent and decrease energy cost too. The U values are coming down and double silver coatings are popularly applied solutions. The Horizon Centre in Gurgaon has used glass beautifully and it will cut off 50 to 60 percent heat, that's a fact".

Asserting the popularity of their Sunban range of products in this regard, Subramaniam informs, "These glasses possess wide range of performance characteristics from basic solar control properties to providing high selectivity in the form of light transmission and heat reduction. Moreover, the solar control and can cut up to 70% of direct heat gain due to incoming sunlight, thus reducing the cost of cooling the building.

Another significant property related to glass is its fire safety property. "These not only offer passive fire protection and contain fire but also provide up to 120 minutes of fire resistance, thus protecting material and human life. Being transparent, they also help detect fire and enable visual security," says Subramaniam.

No wonder, glass today is known not just for its beauty but other relevant features too, one of the reasons why the Millennium City is dotted with high rise glass buildings. Glass provides the ultimate connect between interior and exteriors.

"Acoustic glass is a special type of laminated glass with a PVB inter layer that diminishes external sounds, making spaces sound-resistant," informs Bhutani. He further adds, "Few people realise that delightfully beautiful effects can be achieved with glass that is available in a stupendous variety of styles, colours, designs and textures'sounds, making spaces sound-resistant," informs Bhutani. He further adds, "Few people realise that delightfully beautiful effects can be achieved with glass that is available in a stupendous variety of styles, colours, designs and textures"

GLASS WALLS

People are bored of paint and wall and want something new which glass can offer. It's a hundred percent waterproof material

**BATHROOMS**

Bhutani feels that glass has tremendous scope for use in bathrooms. He explains, "Glass tiles can be used on shower walls, tub surrounds and as backsplash. Lacquered or back painted glass is ideal for application in bathrooms. Its unique coloured, opaque appearance adds life to the décor. It is also moisture resistant. Glass shelves too are light and unobtrusive and ideal for bathrooms. They make the bathrooms look larger and brighter." The wide range of mirrors available in terms of effects, patterns and colours also give a polished look to the bathrooms and create an illusion of more space. For a contemporary look for bathrooms, Subramaniam feels Planilaque Evolution glass, which is more durable in wet and humid conditions, is ideal. "That apart, there are a variety of designs etched on glass that are used for sliding doors," he adds.

One of the best qualities of glass is that it is stain-free and water resistant. The wide range of glass wash basins stands testimony to that. Pathak, in fact, swears by glass walls too. "People are bored of paint and wall and want something new which glass can offer. It's a hundred percent waterproof material. In fact, we now get glass printed in such a way that it is scratch, heat and waterproof. We print niche textures and designs. You can put your own picture too. We can print stone surface on glass too and make the bathroom look luxurious and expensive. Since it's highly glossed, it looks exactly like stone," he explains. He also points out how LED mirrors with lacquer frame and shower cubicles, particularly the ceramic fitted shower cubicles, are in huge demand.

KITCHENS

Gone are the days when kitchens used to be plain and simplistic. The new modular and open look has given kitchens a new meaning. The preference for open kitchens in most modern homes has also led to a trend of combining the dining space with the cooking space. All of this means that today's kitchen has to look as aesthetically appealing and inviting as it is functional, and blend in with the overall design of the house while retaining its own unique look as the heart of the home. Bhutani explains, "If there's one material that can help, it's glass. Use of glass for kitchen countertops has become very popular (and) that can be customised in terms of colour, size and shape. The doors too can feature a glass panel to match a particular theme or décor."

Adds Subramaniam, "In terms of colour and texture, lacquered glass is increasingly prevalent. It is used widely in kitchen counters, cabinets and cupboard doors. Also, it's easy to clean and maintain". The use of glass in kitchens also includes ceilings, backsplashes and cupboard doors. "Since glass is stain free, this part of your house needs it the most and it can give a neat look to the kitchen," says Pathak.

**WARDROBES AND FLOORS**

Step on it confidently, however apprehensive you may be, since glass is highly recommended for floors too. People love glass floorings to give a trendy look to their living rooms. "Glass floorings that are preferred are ones that have pieces of crystals and a glass sheeton them for that striking crystal look. If not entire flooring, some portions can be done in glass to give the room a voguish look," informs Pathak.

Wardrobes these days are highly preferred with coloured glass and most surprisingly with even pictures of children on the wardrobe doors. "I have got wardrobe having cartoon characters printed on the glass shutters for my kids. There is so much creativity one can experiment with glass," says Jyoti Saxena, a resident of Nirwana.

Adds Subramaniam, "For sliding wardrobes, Planilaque Evolution glass is preferred since it's eco friendly and available in dozen colours."

STACKED GLASS AND FUSION LOOK

A beautifully used phenomenon in glass is the fire fusion process. Explains Pathak, "We take clear glass and with moulds of various designs, we heat glass which later cools down to take the shape of the mould. It looks stunning". The designs can be created according to the look of the room to give the interiors an edge in beauty.

Bhutani, on the other hand, talks about the process of stacking glasses for an innovative look. "It is basically layers of glasses which are placed one over the other to create a wall of glass. Various patterns and designs can be created with this technique including beautiful sculptures," he explains. He adds, "Glass with artistic carving on the surface lends a smooth, satin-like effect with white, frosted finish. We call this etched glass."

Fabric printed, laminated, frosted, ceramic printed or any other form, glass is here to stay and deserves the importance it gets. Water proof, safe, secure and of course stain-free, glass rules in interiors. "Even the crayons and permanent markers kids experiment with cannot spoil glass," sums up Pathak