

DESIGN TODAY

SPACES · ETCETERA

December 2007 Rs 35

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ARCHITECT'S HOUSE, NEBRASKA, USA
HOME SPACE, GURGAON

PUBLIC SPACES

ART STUDIO, ROME
STUDENT CANTEEN, DELHI

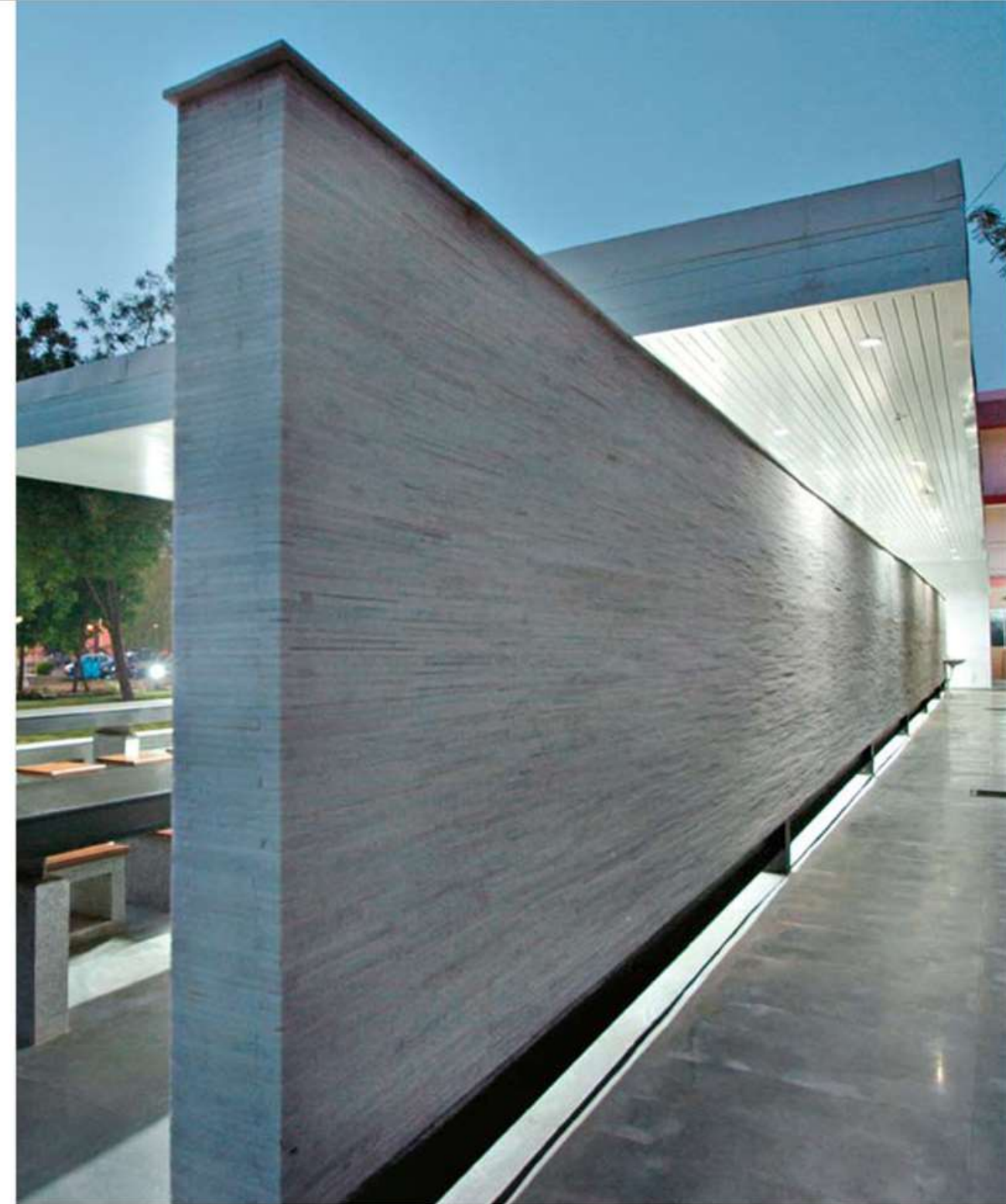
PLUS

PHOTO ESSAY



INTERIORS: CHENNAI HOUSE, CHINESE RESTAURANT, DELHI ■ ARCHITECTURE: CORPORATE BUILDING, SWITZERLAND

PHOTO: DELENG/2007/0742



CANTEEN CHIC

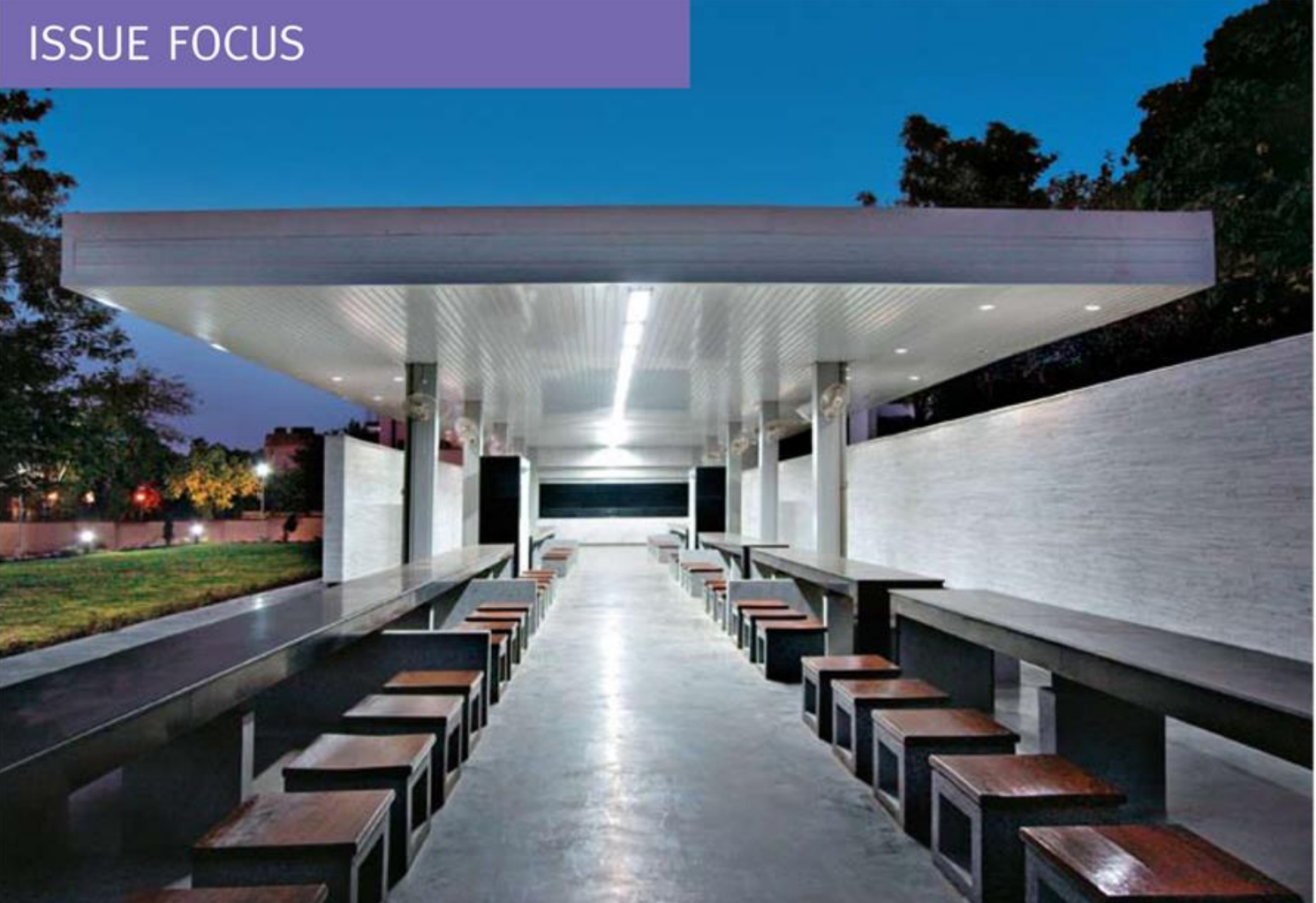
THIS UNUSUAL, TRENDY CAFETERIA IN DELHI'S JAMIA MILIA ISLAMIA UNIVERSITY IS FASHIONED FROM STEEL, marble and kota stone. Romi Khosla Design Studios has pioneered a new trend by using a concept that uses easily-available, inexpensive materials that are very climate-friendly

The Jamia Millia Islamia University campus, a hub of social activity needed a modern 'trendy' cafeteria that was adaptable to Delhi's extreme climate, even while it used easily-available, budget-friendly materials. Architects Romi Khosla and Martand Khosla of Romi Khosla Design Studios with project architect Praveen Rajput tackled this challenge by creating a semi open-air café that allowed for an ambient temperature through most of the year, good ventilation and ample shade at varying times.

From a distance, this unassuming cafeteria is smooth,

shiny and white, its walls almost floating on air. Upon closer look, one can see the waste marble slabs stacked together that delineate the main eating area from the east-facing kitchen. The marble-clad RCC walls stand elevated from the floor on a steel I-section. Not only does this design provide a sense of weightlessness, but also lends a contemporary edge to the café.

The kitchen block again uses marble cladding over its walls, and is a fully enclosed space to cook and serve in. Coated galvanised iron sheets laid over a steel framework serve as the roof. The tables in the seating area sport granite



The architects made the most of locally-available materials with kota stone used in the flooring, skirting, dado and step raisers



Being in a high-traffic area, the canteen's ceiling has perforated aluminium sheets to reduce the elevated noise levels within

tops, while the benches set in pre-cast RCC have sheesham wood tops, smoothed and finished with melamine.

Spatial contexts blur as one walks along the length of the building, away from the kitchen. The interiors are initially defined by the two walls and the roof that melt into a single wall and ceiling. Further as one proceeds, the roof and wall disappear and finally you are left with only the flooring, which too eventually stops. In this changing landscape, the seating is the only common refrain that unites the entire café. Says Martand, "The idea was to blur boundaries between the inside and the outside, where these undefined margins act as negotiators between the user and the climate." All elements of the building are distinctly defined and are independent of each other. The marble walls don't touch the kota-stone floors, and the roof doesn't touch the walls. This architectural suspension of disbelief is what lends character and drama to this university canteen.

(Text by Shiny Varghese)