



# CHILLING IN A CONTAINER



rounds the tree, never barring its presence as one walks to and from the floors, from one container room to the other, that are secured on steel column-beam structures.

Every room on every floor stays true to the theme of relaxation and tranquility with large windows, beckoning in natural light and the neutral colours of the furniture and interior to complement one another. Materials for the walls, floors and stairs comes from abandoned wooden decks used in ships, and interestingly enough, the architects chose to preserve that 'rustic' feel rather than mask it. "We wanted to preserve the containers in their original state and not cover them up and hide the stories they had to tell from their travels by sea," he added.

**LIFESTYLE**



For most of us, the thought of shipping containers reels in memories of ship yards or ports. But what about as a house? The architectural firm 'River & Rain' loves to take on projects that are not too mainstream. In fact, when their previous client, Tanjim Haque showed up to discuss about a 20 katha land that he owned in Bashundhara, the initial assumption they had was that they were taking on a project to construct a high-rise building.

'River & Rain' architect Kazi Fida said, "The client wanted us to build a temporary home instead, which he could visit during the weekends to spend time with his friends and family, and worked as something which had a weekend getaway feel but still within city limits." When inspecting the site, they quickly realized that the ground would not be able to withstand the weight of a building, and instead, had to think of a structure that would require less piling or footing; something light weight. Post visit, on their way back to the office, Fida had a 'eureka moment', "It's not that I haven't ever heard of the concept of using containers but it was like a light went off. We quickly came up with sketches and wasted no time in pitching the idea. Tanjim Haque was on board instantaneously!" exclaims Fida

It took 'River & Rain' a total of seven months to finish the 'turn-key project' (the firm was in charge of construction and interior) named, the 'Escape Den'. As intriguing as the concept sounded, nothing had prepared me for what waited in Bashundhara when Fida had asked me to accompany him on a visit to Block M.

The three-storied structure is now a hidden secret, tucked far away from the prying eyes of urban life.

One step onto the plot, and a sense of calm and stillness sets upon you just as the architects intended. Past the entrance, the first sight to befall your eyes is the harmony between the greenery and large open spaces within the structure. As I breathe in the serenity, and walk towards the front of the house, a juvenile almond tree at the atrium welcomes me, adorned with floating Mason jar candles. A wire mesh screen with aluminum pergolas covers the top of the tree. Hints of green vines were steadily growing to cover the mesh and protect the sapling for many summers to come; this young tree resides in the central triple height of the house, beckoning in fresh air for ventilation.

The front lawn made me nostalgic. All you see is green, the perfect place for children to run around, riding their bicycles, while the elders sit in the gazebo, sipping tea, sharing a laugh while watching over the little ones.

The staircase that sweeps upwards sur-

