



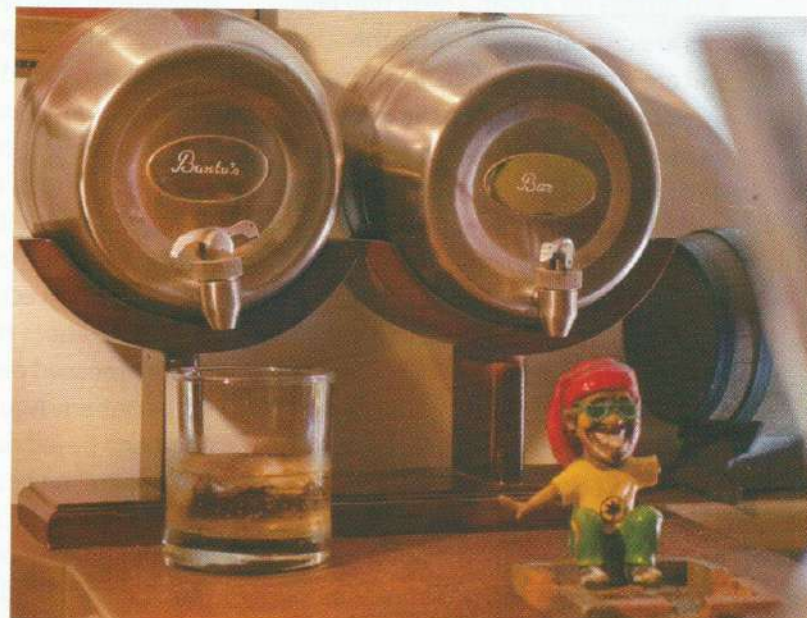
# Raising the Bar

Plan ahead and let your imagination run wild as you create a stylish bar area in your home

**VIKRAM ACHANTA**

Your nice new pad is ready and now you want to show it off to your friends; alas, a bar would have been nice with you at the centre dispensing drinks and dazzling one and all. No fear, you should still be able to find space for a bar cabinet, but it would have been better if you had planned this right at the start, as location is vital when it comes to the bar.

First, it's crucial to decide whether you're keen on getting



a wet bar or a dry bar; the key difference is that for a wet bar, you'd need to connect up the plumbing so that you can have a sink installed. You can also choose to have a bar fridge integrated into the wet bar. The next decision is to then determine where the bar will be located. Says Vishpala Hundekari, a Mumbai-based interior designer, who also specialises in bar design, "Cultural norms vary across the country." In north India, it's considered acceptable to have a more prominent bar, while in other parts of the country,

## WHILE DESIGNING YOUR BAR, ENSURE YOU HAVE ADEQUATE STORAGE FOR CRUCIAL ELEMENTS.

this is not often so. As a result, a more conservative family may spend up to Rs 50 lakhs on the interiors, but may only opt for a discreet bar.

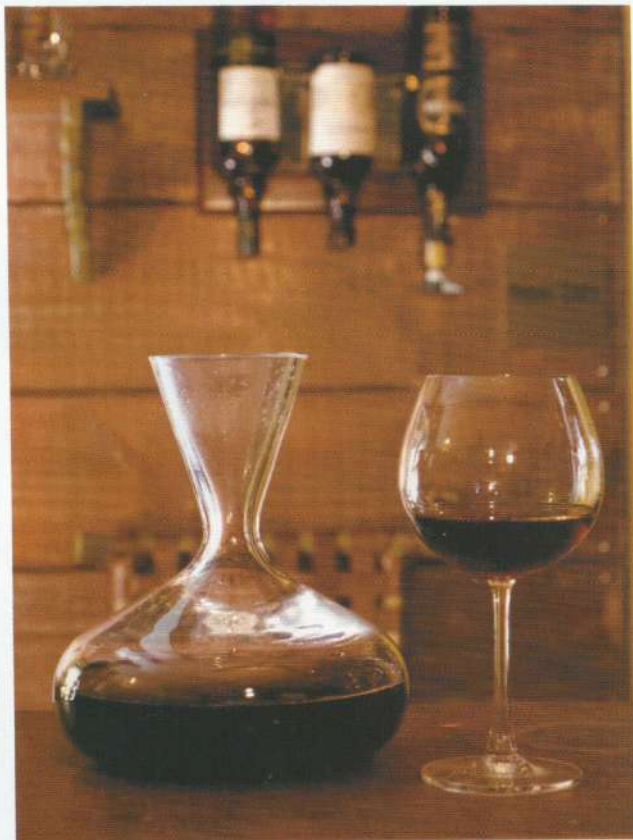
There are all kinds of places you can position your bar, says Vishpala. It can be tucked into a corner of the living room or if you have the luxury of a large balcony or a rooftop terrace, then an al fresco bar would be great. Your bar could also act as a divider between the drawing and dining areas and can be a great point for people to gather around. As Vishpalapoints out, the crucial decision really is "if you want the bar to merge with the house or stand out".

You can also decide if you have the space to kit out an entire room in your house as a bar-cum-lounge, as Delhi's Vikrant Nath did. When Vikrant went house hunting in 2003, one of the criteria he had was that the house, apart from the normal upstairs and downstairs, should have a room which could be converted into a full-fledged bar-room. As he says, "I had been meaning to own a bar ever since I had seen Tom Cruise, acting as a bartender, twirl those bottles in the Hollywood movie, Cocktail. Sadly, the commercial economics of opening a bar in the capital were forbidding, so I had decided to have my own private bar. The advantages? It always plays your kinda music, there are no dry days, it doesn't close down just when you are beginning to have fun and you can never be the designated driver."

Once Vikrant had identified a suitable house, he decided on a Wild West theme and painstakingly scoured the length and breadth of Delhi and Gurgaon till he had finally collected the accoutrements he needed—from the cork bar counter to the camel hide bar stools, the saddle stools from a polo playing friend and even the carefully designed murals on the wall. It truly was a labour of love and resembled a beautifully recreated Wild West saloon.

If you want to take the easy way out however, most online furniture sites as well as major lifestyle stores will have home bar options for you to buy. Otherwise, if you want, you can get the bar custom-made to your specifications. Once you have your basic bar structure in place, organised for comfort and functionality, you can always accessorise it in the way you want. The options are many, but a few Vishpala suggests are:

- Highlight the front of the bar—you can get craftsmen to make a special design or even use glittering onyx;
- Lighting—Light up the bar front and have spotlights over the bar counter to provide a highlight;
- Backdrop—Either go in for something artsy or use this as



an opportunity to show off your collection.

While designing your bar, do ensure you have adequate storage for the crucial elements, such as a certain minimum number of bottles, key bar equipment as well as glassware—the stemmed glassware, like your wine and martini glasses, will definitely prefer an overhead glass storage rack. A wine rack is also useful.

When it comes to what goes inside the bar, unfortunately there's not a lot of high-end bar equipment which is readily available in India. Magppie makes a good range which should meet the bare necessities and on your next trip overseas, make it a point to order online from Cocktail Kingdom or pick up some great designs from brands like Alessi.

Once you're set and all ready for the day of the bar warming, there's one last step: don't forget my invitation!

*Vikram Achanta is the co-founder and CEO of Tulleeho, a drinks training and consulting firm, and also edits Swizzle, an online beverage magazine*