

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ELLE DECOR brings you in-depth articles and insights into design, architecture, decor and culture. Introducing our special contributors



AAMIR KHANDWALA

PRINCIPAL, AAMIR KHANDWALA INTERIOR DESIGN

The Karachi born and bred interior designer graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and worked for over a decade at creative legend Robert Couturier's office before establishing his namesake practice.

Home to me is... Sacred, grounding, spiritual and colourful
I find joy in... My work, exercising, a hearty meal, practising calligraphy and nature

I'd love to live in... Mexico

My favourite monsoon memory... Drenching happily as a teen, on the rooftop of my family home in Pakistan

In this issue, he gives us a peek into his stylish residential project in New York in "A weekend haven", Pg 60
Portrait by Jacob Snavely



NEESHA ALWANI AND SHRUTI JALAN

FOUNDERS, NS*A ARCHITECTURE

The power duo established their creative practice in 2000, which has since been dedicated to providing functional, aesthetic and economical design solutions. While Jalan is a proponent of sustainable and zero waste creations, Alwani loves to discover new crafts, cultures and cuisines.

Home to me is...

NA: A place without inhibitions

SJ: A feeling of belonging

My favourite monsoon memory...

NA: Taking in the sights and sounds on long drives through verdant foliage

SJ: Running barefoot out on the wet grass to play during holidays spent at my family home

In this issue, they open the doors to a city apartment in "Ahead of the curve", Pg 76



LINDA BERGMARK

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, ELLE DECORATION INTERNATIONAL

Hailed as the creative mastermind behind numerous global brand developments across varying platforms, the Swedish Parisian is lesser known for another talent—singing.

Home to me is... My refuge, where I reboot and freely express myself

I feel happiest when... I'm singing, playing music or napping with my cat

My favourite monsoon memory... Swimming alone in the sea during a heavy downpour

My ideal holiday includes... Forests, mountains, seas and discoveries of all kind, together with friends and family

In this issue, she co-authors a piece on architect Bill Bensley's fusion Hotel de La Coupole in "Flight of fancy", Pg 82
Portrait by Jair Lanes



THUY DUONG NGUYEN

MANAGING EDITOR, ELLE DECORATION VIETNAM

Alongside managing the Vietnamese edition, the creative works as a graphic design lecturer, a position she has held for the past four years. She also earnestly promotes her country's vast spectrum of crafts and design across the globe.

Home to me is... Where and when I can be alone with my thoughts

I feel happiest when... I hang out with the people I love and respect

My favourite monsoon memory... Waiting for the sound of thunder to follow a flash of lightning in the sky

My ideal holiday includes... Quiet mornings and the fresh air of mountains

In this issue, she co-authors the feature on Hotel de La Coupole in "Flight of fancy", Pg 82

EDITORIAL

NAVIGATING YOUR HAPPINESS

I'd always imagined writing my editorial, in a very comfortable lounge, with the perfect backrest, upholstered in a soft cushioned tropical print fabric (my favourite!). Next to me would be a marble side table with three essentials—a potted plant and a cup of lemongrass chai, both of them bathed in the warmth of the morning sun.

Cut to reality: It is a Saturday afternoon and it is pouring outside. I've kept the phone far, far away, out of sight and out of mind, so that I can concentrate on my thoughts. There is

a commotion in the house, bickering over lunch, cleaning... things I was never party to in the past. And if you had to visualise my state of mind, it would be like a Jackson Pollock painting—hundreds of thoughts, some faint, some solid, jostling over each other. I have no qualms in admitting that I am anxious about how the next few months or the year will pan out. Did we ever imagine not being able to go to work? I miss being out on house shoots, going over to my team's desks for a chat, walking to the end of the office lane for some chai. It was these mundane things that made up my day. Looking back, even the not-so-good days now seem like happy days!

In the last few weeks, the one thing I've realised is the fact that no matter which corner of the world or the house you are in, one can still find happiness. You could be living in a palatial home or even a cosy studio but we're all motivated to be happy. And aiming for the perfect space, perfect chair or perfect feeling can be daunting. So, how about meandering your way to finding little joys. How about improving your space each day? How about baking that cake, overcooking it and enjoying the burnt taste after all. We need to embrace what we have and slowly keep working on

what we enjoy and what gives us joy. As for me, I am planning on getting a chubby seater soon! Why Chubby? Refer to page 10, and tell me what you feel about this trend.

"Home" is my happy place. In the mornings, I check my emails at the desk, calls are taken by the window, and post-work conversations with family take place in my open kitchen while I am cooking. I've realised that joy is not a complex feeling to achieve. Even my bright yellow sofa can bring a smile to my face. Some days, I just place fresh twigs from the garden in a vase because colour and nature play a pivotal role in how we as humans feel. It is this thought that led us to the theme of this issue—Navigating Happiness. Life is not picture perfect, especially not now. But as Alan Watts famously said, "In reality, there is nothing in the universe which is completely perfect or completely still; it is only in the minds of men that such concepts exist. That which is absolutely still or absolutely perfect is absolutely dead." Here's to truly living! Stay safe, stay masked.



Mrudul

MRUDUL PATHAK KUNDU
EDITOR

Write to us on edfeatures@ogaaan.co.in Follow me on [@mrudul.pathak](https://www.instagram.com/mrudul.pathak) Portrait by Bajirao Pawar

RHAPSODIC REALMS: CHIC CITY COVES & GETAWAYS

ELLE DECOR STYLE

Page 54 GREEN ESCAPE Is a Mumbai duplex by Shefali Balwani and Robert Verrijt of Architecture Brio that exudes raw textures and earthy colours **Page 60 A WEEKEND HAVEN** Invites you to enjoy some downtime in Long Island, where elegant forms and playful elements are juxtaposed by New York based Aamir Khandwala **Page 68 ON THE BRIGHT SIDE** Brings nature indoors with the help of interior designer Rohit Bhoite's plan for this villa in Lonavala **Page 76 AHEAD OF THE CURVE** Celebrates wood in this Mumbai apartment, crafted by designers Neesha Alwani and Shruti Jalan of ns*a architecture and interiors **Page 82 FLIGHT OF FANCY** Entrances with a fusion of tribal characteristics and French haute couture in this Vietnamese hotel by architect Bill Bensley



HOME LONG ISLAND

QUIET CONTEMPLATION
A WEEKEND
HAVEN

This breezy beach house near New York City, conceptualised by Aamir Khandwala Interior Design (AKID), is equal parts elegant and playful

TEXT BY **AAMIR KHANDWALA** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JACOB SNAVELY**

Located less than a two hour drive from Manhattan, this waterfront property belonging to a couple and their three children is a picture of calm and peace at dusk



HOME LONG ISLAND

Blue armchairs—in the style of JM Frank and upholstered with Pierre Frey blue matelasse fabric—dominate the living room. Other pieces include a De La Spada coffee table from Future Perfect, ceramic side tables by Tucker Robbins, custom rug by Crosby Street Studio, wall scones by Serge Meulle from Urban Archaeology and terracotta planters by Billy Cotton FACING PAGE, FROM TOP Under the chandelier by David Weeks in the entrance foyer are bespoke pieces such as the farm table by Vermont custom furniture, woollen rug by Alt For Living and walnut bench by Mark Jupiter. Also seen are vintage armchairs, terracotta planters, Undercase hooks and a Stefan Ruiz artwork; The custom tufted leather ottoman by AKID, produced by LF Upholstery using Dualoy Leather, sits in the sunbathed lounge. It is surrounded by a Minotti sofa and cushions with fabric from Angela Brown. On the Crosby Street Studio rug are wooden side tables from Madegoods



“We’re looking for a designer to do one room at our newly purchased house in Bellport”—from this initial conversation with my client, the project evolved to transforming the entire home, landscaping, installing a new gunite pool, and, most recently, the guest house on the premises.

This modern waterfront home was built in 1950 in the quaint village of Bellport in Long Island. It is an idyllic place to take refuge from the bustle of New York City, located less than a two hour drive away. I had the pleasure of working on this project with my clients—a young family of five. This 5,000 sq ft beach escape with six bedrooms and bathrooms provides plenty of space for the three kids to run around and feel free!

The layout of this sun filled home is fairly open, so it didn’t need any major architectural changes. Just inside the spacious entrance hall lies a bold geometric flatweave custom rug by Alt For Living, which connects to the living room overlooking the Patchogue Bay. We selected low profile furnishings with clean lines to ensure that the focus doesn’t shift from the mesmerising view of the sky and sweeping vistas of the bay. >>



HOME LONG ISLAND

This 5000 sq ft beach escape provides plenty of space for the homeowners' three kids to run around and feel free!



The family enjoys unobstructed views of the waterfront from this midcentury modern dining set by Alvar Aalto. Above it are Murano glass pendants FACING PAGE The adjoining, open plan kitchen features custom oak cabinetry by AKID that's produced by Riverhead Millwork and Andy Varney. Design Within Reach stools surround the Azul Macubas counter from AKDO, while the backsplash tiles are from Mosaic House



HOME LONG ISLAND



The living room is connected to an open kitchen and dining area, and a nook with soft upholstered walls in outdoor fabric. From the breakfast room, you arrive at the cosy den—designed for snuggling and watching TV. Upstairs are three spacious bedrooms and baths, and on the level above is a large, open studio style fourth bedroom with an ensuite facility. This room features a turquoise daybed, nestled in an architectural niche with the best view of the water.

Adjacent to the main house is a charming guest house, complete with a lounge, kitchen, dining zone, play area, and two bedrooms and washrooms. Between this and the bigger structure is a pool, wooden decks, tennis courts, and open fields with flowering bushes and evergreens. The homeowners have busy lives between work, raising three children, maintaining two homes, philanthropic commitments and travel. So, we designed this one to be sophisticated (but not precious), playful, colourful, child friendly and easy to maintain. We incorporated high quality natural materials like 100 percent organic cottons, linens and wools that are soft to the touch. Furnishings have been sourced from far and wide—bespoke rugs were made in India, Nepal and South America, furniture was bought from contemporary galleries in the US and Europe. We designed all the millwork as well as the custom barn doors separating the entrance hall and den. The stone for the kitchen is from Brazil, while the tiles are from Morocco. I believe that the materials and subtle textures give the space an eclectic, modern feel that is casual yet chic.



FROM LEFT Both the custom daybed and the oak bed with inbuilt shelves are designed by AKID and produced by Riverhead Millwork; The master suite features a bed and wall scones from Restoration Hardware, a wool and alpaca rug from Alt for Living and bedding from Garnet Hill. Seen in the background are accessories from Bower Studios, The Rug Company and Flos FACING PAGE The powder room uses a wallpaper from DesignTex and vanity stone by Azul Macubas from AKDO. Partially seen is a sconce by Rich Brilliant Willing

My design philosophy—even while I was working with my mentor Robert Couturier—has always been that a home should reflect the sensibilities of its owner. It is not I but my client who lives in this home. So, I make every effort to curate a space that feels timeless, not trendy, with essential pieces that are rich in history but effortlessly styled such that everything has a place, and that there is a sense of dimension and geometry, colour and surprise. Energised by the transformation of this weekend home, we are now collaborating on their townhouse in Brooklyn Heights. ♦