



# TEXTURES AT PLAY

With coral tones, wave-like furniture and unending sea views, this Chennai home by Chestnut Storeys is one with the seafront

WORDS VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR PHOTOS ORANGE AND TEAL



The family room situated upstairs, swims in wave-like forms. A coffee table from Vkr Studio underpinned by a Jaipur Rugs carpet takes centre stage. The artefacts are from Home4U and West Elm (OPPOSITE PAGE) A cosy work nook with novelties from H&M, The White Teak Company and Home4U



In the living room, a soaring arched display cabinet channels a brilliantly manicured saltwater cave. Tchotchkes are from Cottons and Satins, HeritageBlend The Studio, West Elm, H&M and The White Teak Company



**H**ow do you maximise the views in a sea-facing home? You minimise everything else. At least that's what conventional wisdom will have you believe. But if you know a thing or two about Farah Agarwal, you know the word conventional isn't part of her vocabulary. When the Chennai-based interior designer and founder of multidisciplinary design practice Chestnut Storeys was entrusted to design a three-level penthouse by the sea, the first thing she did was dial up the colour. "Not all the way, mind you—just enough to rival the views and fulfil the clients' caveat of no neutrals," continues the designer, who is widely known for her minimalist signature. "The real question, then, was how much colour was too much colour?"

It was a question she asked and answered herself. By leaning into the light, she brought in a happy spectrum that held a mirror to the seascape, while also holding its own. In came sofas and armchairs in shell pink and moss green. Up went swirling grey walls of marble. Floors were calmed in gleaming marble, while upward and downward tide-like arches were given pride of place in the double-height living room. It was much, but not too much, and as Farah puts a finer point on the subject, "pleasing to the eye while still being wonderfully colourful."

In Farah's eyes, one thing was clear: if she was going to do ocean, she was going to do it right. Which meant no dark tones. No overwhelming accents. No retro-

fitted furniture. Each and every object was made to measure—some in briny prints, some in brooding pops—to inspire a scintillating saltwater cocoon. The lift lobby is a curious case in point. Enveloped in a painterly wallpaper in tropical burgundy, it enlivens the shades and spirit of a glorious underwater coral. As Farah tells it, it's also an object lesson in highlight and shadow. "The space lacks natural light, so the wallpaper is a lovely little pick-me-up for an otherwise sun-starved space."

There's a sense that perhaps the home was born off the shoreline, in the same breath or the next as the ocean itself. Upstairs, the entertainment room coalesces at once with the sky and the sea, a lush smorgasbord of wallpaper and wood that could well have been washed ashore. "We designed everything for and around the view," avers Farah.

As so often happens in the making of a coastal home, Farah espoused a curvilinear design ethos, but not entirely so. She made exemptions in the angular dining room, and again with the vertical garden, taming the hard lines with natural flourishes and easy-breezy tones. She also added plenty of shine, especially upstairs in the primary bedroom in the way of mirrored-panelled doors—one leading to the bathroom, another to the walk-in closet—that camouflage against the sparkling shell.

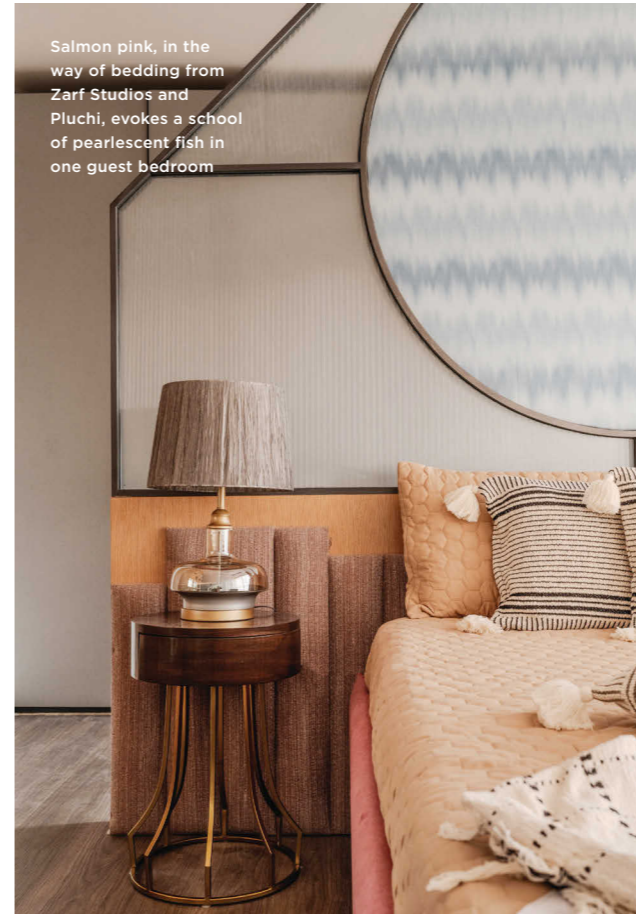
Ask Farah if she managed to achieve what she set out to and she doesn't hem or haw. "Maximising the views without minimising the interior is our biggest triumph," she reflects. "I couldn't have asked for more." ♦  
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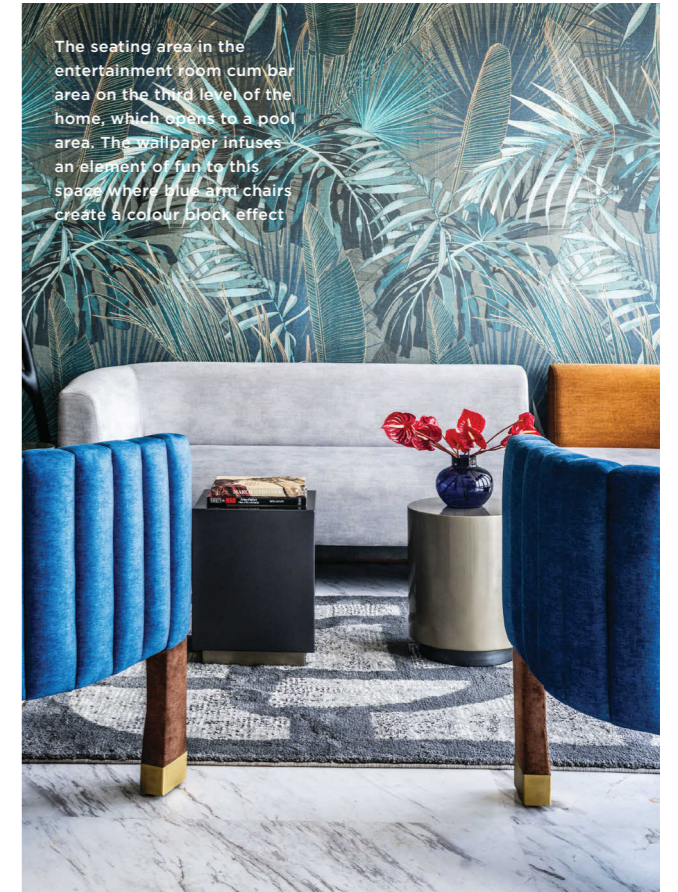
The dining room is a briny deep hideaway enlivened by coral chairs, Clearte lamps and a bust from HeritageBlend The Studio



Salmon pink, in the way of bedding from Zarf Studios and Pluchi, evokes a school of pearlescent fish in one guest bedroom



The seating area in the entertainment room cum bar area on the third level of the home, which opens to a pool area. The wallpaper infuses an element of fun to this space where blue arm chairs create a colour block effect



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**CHESTNUT STOREYS IS A FULL-SERVICE**

Chennai-based design studio helmed by principal Farah Agarwal. Known for its ultra-luxury signature and eclectic flair, the firm stands apart for its ability to elevate spaces into artful abodes while retaining a spirit of minimalism. The firm has successfully undertaken interior and exterior residential, commercial, hospitality and retail projects in India and abroad.

**IF THIS HOME WERE A POPULAR SONG, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

Sunday Morning by Maroon 5, because it's always Sunday morning around here.

**WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'D REDO IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME?**

Probably coerce the client into incorporating a lot more art around the house. It would have added a beautiful new dimension.

**WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST SPLURGE WHILE DESIGNING THIS HOME?**

The wardrobes and kitchen from Poliform.



An extension of the informal living room opens up into this area which has a bespoke curved sofa for a more informal feel. The walls are clad in marble and wood as a rich material combination