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## An Indian Summer

Homes that celebrate craft & colours!





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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



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**PAVITRA RAJARAM**  
FOUNDER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
PAVITRA RAJARAM DESIGN

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Her multidisciplinary design practice straddles the worlds of product design, architecture, interior design, brand strategy and customer experience. She is the recipient of several awards, including the INTACH Urban Heritage Award and an EDIDA for product design. Passionate about India and its rich repository of art and culture, Pavitra is most excited about projects that connect her with craftspeople and weavers. Books, textiles, travel and trees are a few of her favourite things.

**A fond summer memory...** Climbing the mango tree in my home and plucking mangoes to eat!

**A summer essential...** Rosewater

**My go-to comfort movie is...** Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara

**I'm currently reading...** Yellowface by R. F. Kuang

**In this issue**, she opens doors to her home in Mumbai that is drenched in colour and decked with art, pg 130



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**PASHMIN SHAH**  
CO-FOUNDER  
AMOEBIA DESIGN

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She obtained her bachelor's degree in Architecture from Nashik in 2004 and went on to pursue her M-Arch in Energy Efficient Architecture from the State University of New York, Buffalo. She worked with a boutique architectural firm in New York City for three years and has also worked with the Sustainable Futures program in Costa Rica focusing on community-identified projects that help envision and create ecological futures.

**A fond summer memory...** The vacation at my maternal grandparents' house

**A summer essential...** Sunscreen

**My go-to comfort movie is...** The Devil Wears Prada

**A historical place I'd like to visit...** Machu Picchu

**In this issue**, she takes us to Goa to a home cradled between lush green hills and cashew groves, pg 152



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**ASHIESH SHAH**  
PRINCIPAL & FOUNDER  
ATELIER ASHIESH SHAH

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A serial EDIDA winner, he has been spearheading his design firm, handling various high-end design projects in India and beyond. Integrating Indian culture with contemporary design aesthetics, he is committed to the revival of indigenous crafts. His aesthetics are rooted in the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi, reflecting his vision of space and choice of materials that resonate with the authority of being a tastemaker in the architectural world.

**A fond summer memory...** Visiting my Ahmedabad home, designed by the late architect Hasmukh Patel

**A summer essential...** Water, sunblock and sunglasses

**My go-to comfort movie is...** Usually a Christopher Nolan film and sometimes Tom and Jerry is good to unwind

**I'm currently reading...** Francois-Xavier and Claude Lorraine: In the Domain of Dreams

**In this issue**, he designs a home in Mumbai where traditional crafts find contemporary expression, pg 144



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**SATYAJEE PATWARDHAN**  
CO-FOUNDER  
AMOEBIA DESIGN

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After his bachelor's degree in architecture from Nashik, he went on to obtain his M.Arch in Sustainable Design from University of Texas at Austin, USA. He was practising in New York City with Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP before moving back to India in 2010 and co-founding Amoeba Design. He has also done production design for two feature films and has acted in one.

**A fond summer memory...** Sneaking out of the home when everyone is taking a siesta

**A summer essential...** Kairee Panna

**My go-to comfort movie is...** Satya

**A historical place I'd like to visit...** Sahasralinga in Karnataka

**In this issue**, he takes us to Goa to a home cradled between lush green hills and cashew groves, pg 152



In the past decade or so, the term 'wabi-sabi' has been discussed – and demonstrated – with wild abandon. A dining table with a dent? Wabi-sabi. A chair without a back? Wabi-sabi. A lopsided lamp? If it can't be straightened, wabi-sabi. As the term has gained currency, more out of convenience than a resolve for cultivation, the Japanese concept, which references a *Weltanschauung* of finding beauty in imperfections, has been distilled beyond recognition by many, barring a few. A proud member of that minority is architect-designer extraordinaire Ashiesh Shah, the powerhouse behind the eponymous Mumbai-based atelier, who has long been a standard-bearer of the increasingly *du jour* concept of minimalist design, reimagining Wabi-sabi as an aesthetic paragon equally inspired by the practical and the poetic.

Ashiesh's latest masterstroke – a penthouse perched on the 58th and 59th floors of a Worli skyscraper – is a compelling case in point. Designed as a luminous aerie for a family of four, the 5,000 sq ft nest is a dreamscape of sky tones and cloudlike elements that quietly slough off the stridency of the city. The designer employed a legerdemain that involved dividing the home into two functional levels: an upper double-height volume comprising bedrooms and a family room, and a lower storey for entertaining with living and dining areas, a kitchen and a home theatre. Across realms, Ashiesh conjured constellations of objects of his own design in handcrafted ensembles that embody shared aesthetic values while establishing connections to various styles, regions, eras and crafts. In short, he created an art gallery – if an art gallery was comfortable enough to live in. A sense of asymmetry, of deliberate imperfection, permeates each space, as evidenced in the living room, where a Chaar Chaand light – part-terrestrial, part-celestial hovers to one side, backgrounded by screen-like oakwood walls with walnut bowtie inlay. >>

## LIGHTNESS OF BEING

*In this sky-high Mumbai duplex by EDIDA winner Ashiesh Shah, minimalist details meet maximalist forms to reveal a lightness of being that belies the chaos of the Maximum City*

TEXT BY VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR PHOTOGRAPHY BY ASHISH SAHI

Crowned by Channapatna and Chaar Chaand lights by Atelier Ashiesh Shah, the living room is a constellation of lunar forms. Achille armchairs by Studio Pool, sourced from Theoreme Editions, channel a part-throne, part-seat character. The sofa and side table are by Yasanche. Atop the latter sits a table lamp by Alexander Lamont from Theoreme Editions. The Haldi rug and Shoonya stool are both Atelier Ashiesh Shah novelties. The foreground is enlivened by a rug from Ashiesh's Brahmaand collection for Jaipur Rugs and a brass centre table by æquo



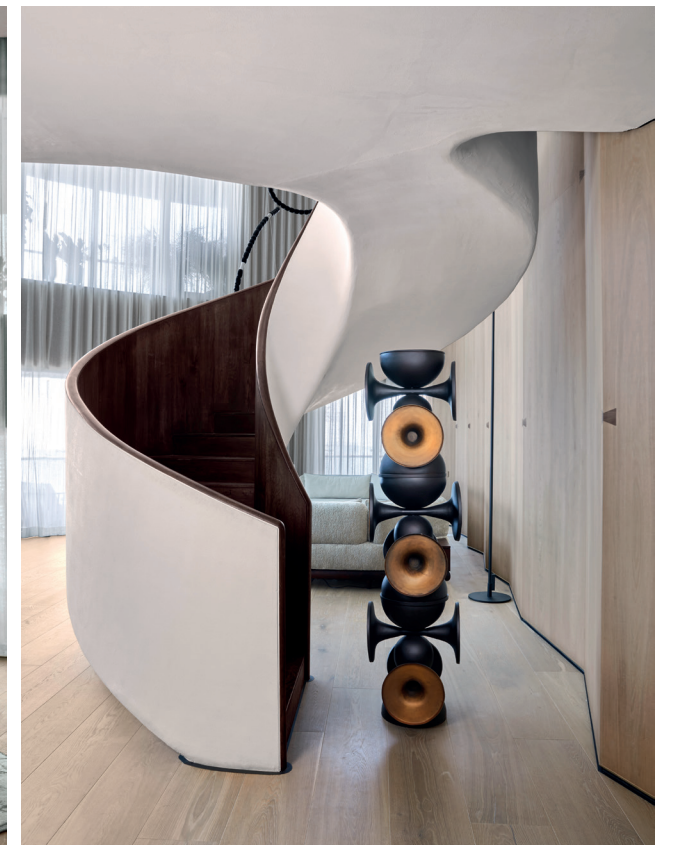




**FROM LEFT** Another corner of the living room steeped in an abiding sense of calm. The Liminal sofa and Damroo stool are both by Atelier Ashiesh Shah, as is the Ekapada situated atop the Dyad coffee table designed by Florence Louisy for æquo; A Kantilo Stambh by Atelier Ashiesh Shah cuts a celestial figure. **FACING PAGE A** Swayam table and Haldi rug, both of Ashiesh's own design, take centre stage in the living room. A lamp by Alexander Lamont from Theoreme Editions sits atop a side table by Yasanche, which was also the brand of choice for the chair and sofa. The hanging lights in the backdrop are by Casegoods

Of course, in Ashiesh's eyes, it isn't the luminaire or the walls or even the colossal volumes that deserve special attention, but rather the spiral staircase, which rises like a giant helix, culminating in a Juliet balcony that channels the tilting tide. As he puts a finer point on the subject, there's more to the staircase than meets the eye. For one, it's a theatre of ebony and ivory, but equally, or perhaps more importantly, the upper railing is a sleight of hand, mimicking the profile of the nearby Channapatna light. Carving out the double-height volume was equally monumental, a process that Ashiesh describes as a remarkable triumph. "Breaking down the entire structure, including the slab connecting the two floors, presented a challenge in determining the staircase placement," recalls Ashiesh, who contemplated various configurations before magicking up a white envelope that appears to somehow levitate.

There exist glimmers of wabi-sabi everywhere. In the deliberate lightness of being; in the *stambh* by Atelier Ashiesh Shah, seemingly askew, in the foyer; in the Casegoods hanging light in the dining room. Nothing, yet everything, is perfect. The primary bedroom is another example. A tapestry of undulating curves, it pinnacles behind the bed, projecting the illusion of an otherworldly third eye. In each space, Ashiesh accentuated one vantage point to capture the ebb and flow of the city. The sea link glittering to life at sundown. Planes taking off and landing. On some days, even a flock or two of Alexandrine parakeets fly home at the first stroke of dusk, just as the first drove of office-goers board their trains in a similar hope. The result is a view that channels a slowly turning kaleidoscope that at once complements and counterbalances the stillness within. Evidently, in this home, there's beauty on either side of the threshold. ♦







Gatherings of all manner and sizes are possible in the dining room, thanks to the æquo table that divides and multiplies to suit the occasion. The chairs are by Yasanche, while the Ekapada on the table and the Mehendi rug underneath is by Atelier Ashiesh Shah. The Seven Tube hanging lights are by Casegoods  
FACING PAGE Otherworldly forms, including a Moon pendant by Davide Groppi, Ashiesh's Damroo stool and centre table and a sofa by Yasanche enliven the primary bedroom



The primary bedroom is a smorgasbord of grooves and curves that meet behind the Yasanche bed, projecting the illusion of an otherworldly third eye  
FACING PAGE Monumental proportions define the primary bathroom in the way of megalithic forms and theatrical details. A dyad of Atelier Ashiesh Shah's Channapatna basins, also an EDIDA India winner in 2023, stands sentinel in the centre, flanked on either side by complementary stools. A Third Eye N2 pendant levitates to the right is also by Atelier Ashiesh Shah

