

www.elledecor.in

# ELLE DECOR

TRENDS  
COOL  
CHROMA  
FERTILE  
SOIL

JUNE - JULY 2023, ₹150

**FOCUS**  
BATHROOMS  
WHERE WE'D  
RATHER BE!

50+  
**TOP PICKS**  
SALONE DEL  
MOBILE

# CONCRETE COCOONS

DESTINATIONS COIMBATORE GOA HYDERABAD MUMBAI PUNE SURAT



The living room is a luminous haven with white stucco walls and light-toned accents. With cushions from Good Earth, a daisy sofa from West Elm basks under the larger-than-life picture windows. The globe-like ceramics on the console and the metallic vases on the cabinet are from Flame Store and Rangeela respectively. The console with the antique mirror and the dining table are both Studio Poi creations. The tray table is by Good Earth

# SEAS THE DAY

*With stucco walls, vibrant sea-inspired floors and an air that whispers to the breeze, this Goa holiday villa, redesigned by Studio Momo, is one with the coastal landscape*

TEXT BY VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR PHOTOGRAPHY BY FABIEN CHARUAU





With a lofty ceiling, the kitchen stars a half-indoor, half-outdoor breakfast counter with mint cabinetry which is a hat-tip to the verdant outdoors FACING PAGE The ceramic plate mural in the dining room—designed by Meetu in collaboration with Thomas Louis of Banana Pottery, Goa is imprinted with leaves of native Goan trees. A daisy stucco overlays the home's original laterite walls. The blue vases and planter stools are from Rangeela and Flame Store respectively. The chairs are Studio Poi designs



This bedroom is a tropical oasis with sand-toned furniture and turquoise-patterned cement tiles from Bharat Floorings & Tiles. The Studio Poi bed is adorned with vibrant throw pillows from Good Earth and a dazzling antique suzani. Blue bedside lamps from Rangeela hark to the nearby ocean. The bench is also a Studio Poi make







A reading nook in the primary bedroom evokes shades of the oceans with tiles by Bharat Floorings & Tiles, a sea-toned chair and bench, both by Studio Poi. The cushions are from Good Earth and the vase is from Rangeela FACING PAGE Overlooking the endless sea and sheltered by the infinite sky, the master bedroom deck serves as an interlude between the built and the inbuilt. The chairs are by Studio Poi, the pillows are from Good Earth and the side tables are from Goa's Ranji Antiques. A traditional wheat grinder from Rajasthan serves as a coffee table



A bird's eye view of the deck that is perfect for gatherings or perhaps spend time in quiet solitude. Chairs by Studio Poi are enhanced by bright throw pillows from Good Earth. A traditional wheat grinder from Rajasthan poses as a coffee table

Moments before the jungle dissolves into the ocean in east Goa, is a home that crowns the cliffside. With the tide on one side and tropical undergrowth on the other, it serves as an interlude between the earth and the deep, tipping its hat to the sunshine and the shoreline in equal measure. Of course, its light and breezy air hasn't always been so. When Meetu Akali, founder and principal architect of Goa-based Studio Momo, first took up its (re)design reins, the charm of the 4,000-square-foot property – designed by veteran architect Dean D'Cruz in 2006 – had long faded. And its Bengaluru-based owners, who had purchased it as a holiday villa many years prior, couldn't quite fathom its future.

"The homeowners wanted to use the villa as a holiday home to escape their busy city lives. By the time they approached me, they had considered purchasing one of the many available luxury homes in Goa, but realised that not many were able to match the breathtaking sea view they already had," says Meetu. The obvious solution, then, was to bring the existing villa back to life, while keeping one foot firmly in the original architectural blueprint.

In the hands of Dean, the villa had been conceived in a contemporary Goan style in exposed laterite stone. "The fact that it was built across multiple levels on a cliff was extremely special. Laterite helps the building breathe and creates a brilliant textured canvas for the walls. We retained the texture of the exposed laterite wherever possible and painted directly over it to achieve a country-style charm," says Meetu, who also committed to preserving stone treatments in other ways. "Dean had specified locally available stone for the walls, arched lintels and niches, using a hand-rendered technique uncommon in today's times. We decided to restore these treatments," she adds.

Divided between two floors, the villa comprises a living room, a dining room, a kitchen and four bedrooms. And while the renovation mirrors the original home in room count, it doesn't do so in layout. For good reason. As people who enjoy sharing quiet, intimate moments with family, the homeowners needed plenty of convivial spaces for gathering. What resulted was a smorgasbord of cosy realms. The kitchen lost a wall to gain a half-indoor, half-outdoor breakfast counter. The floating deck was outfitted with a dining area and built-in barbecue. And the rooms lining it were updated with sofas that would afford a front-row seat to the ocean.

Most evenings, when the sun filters through the curtains and the breeze lingers longer than expected, it's unclear where, or whether, the shoreline ends and the built form begins. "I wanted to tread lightly and retain the charm of the original design as much as possible," shares Meetu. And so, in a bid to keep the sea front and centre, she introduced interventions that would give it pride of place:

a cantilevered wooden deck was added to project an indoor-outdoor sanctuary, while glass sliding doors frame equal vistas of the woodland and the waves. Likewise, the living and dining areas, originally on two separate floors, were consolidated, to create a feeling of continuity.

Despite these overhauls, Meetu worked to honour the home's original hallmarks. "The villa had a sloping roof with skylights for natural light to filter through and for hot air to escape. It was a very interesting detail introduced by Dean, pointed at maintaining the interior microclimate," she explains of retaining this feature.

Perhaps it's the calm air, or the way the colours, materials and textures freewheel like kites from room to room. Whatever it is, there's no denying that the villa feels comfortably local. The original red laterite walls, refreshed in pristine coats of white, serve as an imperfect counterpoint to the gleaming terrazzo floor. Almost everything is sourced from within the state: the ceramic plate mural in the living room—designed by Meetu in collaboration with a dear friend and ceramics maestro Thomas Louis of Banana Pottery, Goa—is a classic case in point. Imprinted with leaves from native Goan trees, its colours hold a mirror to the sea, sand and red earth of the sunshine state. Likewise, the bedrooms hark to the seaside, their statement cerulean-patterned flooring echoing the abiding blueness of the waves.

Antique curiosities, sourced during Meetu's travels, peep out from here and there, some presenting in more curious avatars than others. In the foyer, a centuries-old wooden food storage unit with inlay mirror work, originally from Gujarat, masquerades as an entrance console, while on the deck, a traditional wheat grinder from Rajasthan channels a coffee table. Equally, in the living room and primary bedroom, old mirrors and wooden pounders are reimagined as large-scale candles. Meetu's upcycling efforts were not limited to objets d'art alone: the blanched doors and windows, fashioned from reclaimed Burma teak wood, each whisper of a past life.

For Meetu, the project isn't just a project. It's an ode to the Goan soil, sea and sun, "I remember one evening, when we were just completing the house and doing the final deep-cleaning and set up, I slipped away to the deck to say a little prayer of gratitude. When I opened my eyes, I realised I was surrounded by my entire team: assistants, contractors, technicians, deep cleaners, gardeners. They were all sipping their *chai* and watching the sun disappear. Together. In silence. It was humbling and uplifting to know that one project could mean so much to so many!" ♦