

www.elledecor.in

# ELLE DECOR

24 YEARS

SUBSCRIBER'S COPY

JUNE - JULY 2025, ₹150

**TREND**  
HEART OF  
GLASS

**FOCUS**  
40+ FRESH  
IDEAS FOR  
TINY TOTS

**SALONE  
DEL MOBILE**  
DISCOVERIES  
IN MILAN

WE'RE STAYING  
INDOORS!

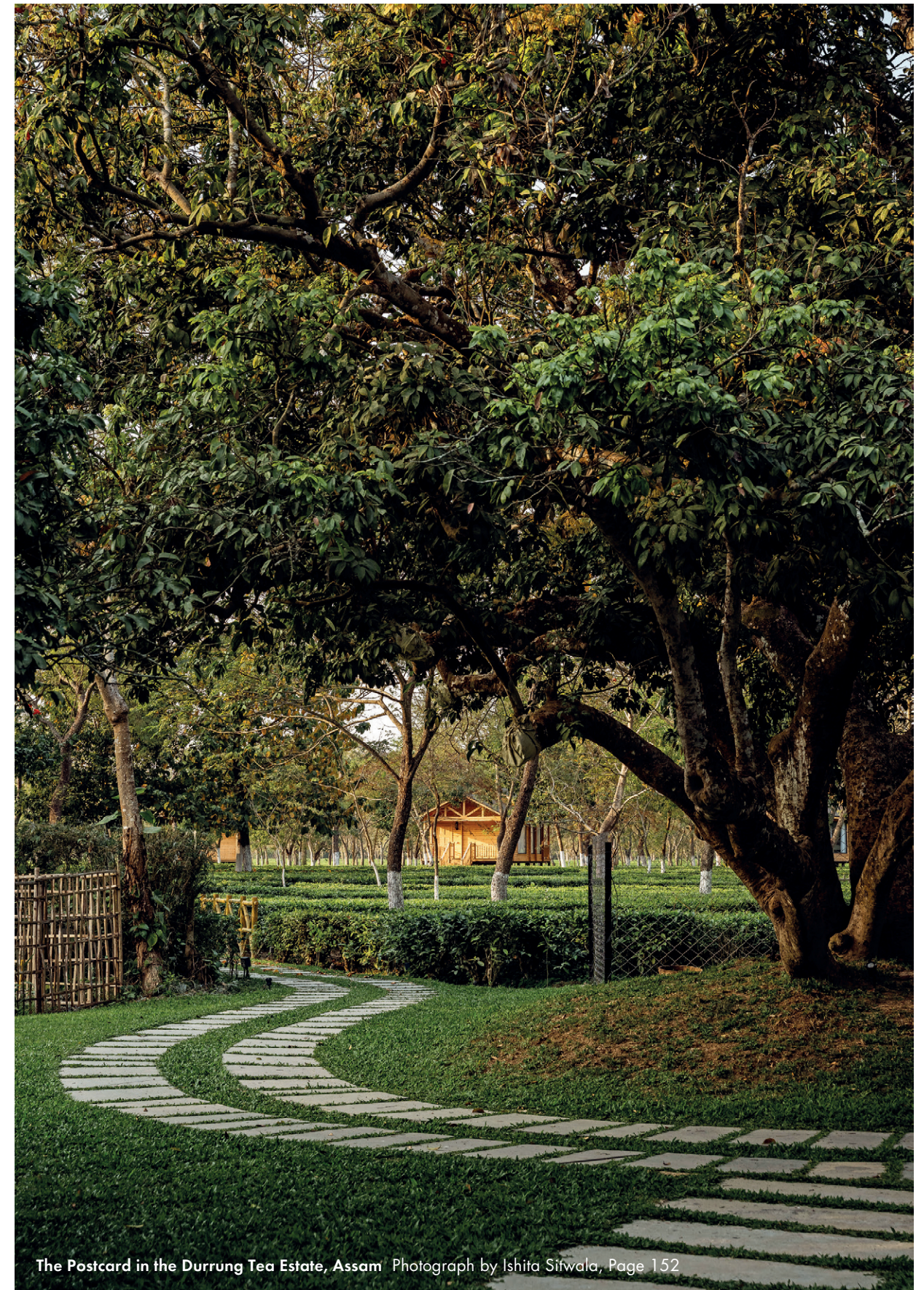
Chennai Mumbai Hyderabad Durrung



GETTING AWAY AND COMING HOME:  
LIVING FAST AND SLOW, IN AND OUT OF THE CITY

# ELLE DECOR STYLE

**Page 140 STEP INSIDE A THEATRICAL AGE** of India and Paris inside a Mumbai residence sketched out by Vaishali Kamdar and Komal Sanghavi Vasa **Page 152 MY VIEW IS BETTER THAN YOURS** at The Postcard in the Durrung Tea Estate in Assam **Page 162 OBJECTS OF OBSESSION** conjure art collector Jaiveer Johal's Chennai apartment, crafted by his friend and designer Samir Wadekar **Page 170 VOLUME, LIGHT AND QUIET** inside this understated Hyderabad show villa designed by NA Architects **Page 178 WHAT WOMEN WANT** at this Mumbai apartment anchored by a serendipitous friendship between the homeowner and architect Amritha Karnakar



The Postcard in the Durrung Tea Estate, Assam Photograph by Ishita Sifwala, Page 152



Smoky burgundy walls envelop the living room with a bench and sofa from Phantom Hands. An untitled oil on canvas by Laxman Shreshtha hangs over the sofa, while a Wood'n Design table takes centre stage. FACING PAGE Titled Identify 2022, is a mustard-hued triptych by Lakshmi Madhavan, offsetting one wall of the living room. Below it sit bronze and silver *mukhalingams* (lingams with faces), their floor placement echoing a centuries-old temple tradition. The rugs are vintage finds



# OBJECTS OF OBSESSION



*Art collector Jaiveer Johal's Chennai apartment, brought to life by his friend and designer Samir Wadekar, weaves together deep hues, rare antiques and eclectic treasures into a space full of narrative and charm*

TEXT BY VAISHNAVI NAYEL TALAWADEKAR PHOTOGRAPHY BY TALIB CHITALWALA



# HOME CHENNAI



In the corridor a bronze sculpture by Himmat Shah, a goddess statuette and an ink on cotton paper artwork by Karan Shrestha on the wall. The bench from Saudades, Goa  
**FACING PAGE FROM LEFT** An Art Deco chandelier from Hatim Taherally's crowns the foyer with a portrait of Guru Nanak by Arpana Caur, underpinned by a colonial-era campaign chest bearing 18th-century *dvarapalakas* (traditional door guardians); In the living room, the end table sits resplendent in a 20th-century peacock *phulkari*, playing host to a trifecta of 18th-century Shiite *alams* (metal finials) from Bengal

When he isn't busy styling or decorating spaces, Samir Wadekar likes to disappear into antiques stores — on the lookout for curious objects, not conversation. "I go for the things, not the people," he jokes. But once every six years, fate throws in a bonus. "We first met by chance at an antiques store in Mumbai nearly six years ago, and instantly bonded over our mutual love for the past," says Samir of his encounter with the Chennai-based entrepreneur and art collector Jaiveer Johal. As it turned out, the pair had a lot in common, sharing a penchant for vintage, Wedgwood, Indian art, and the 1979 British series *Antiques Roadshow*, preferably on repeat.

That first meeting led to a close friendship and later, a creative partnership. "Over the years, I had the joy of helping Jaiveer curate and decorate his apartments," says Samir. So when it came time to redesign this one, a spare three-bedroom apartment in the same building as Jaiveer's primary residence, he jumped at the chance. "The process was fluid, full of spontaneous shifts and sparks of inspiration," he says. With no fixed brief or deadline, creativity had room to breathe, and so did the home, which was thoughtfully reimaged into a mignon one-bedroom jewel box with a home gym, reading room, two bathrooms and a powder room, tailored for evening soirées and intimate weekend brunches.

If there is such a thing as rules for decorating, Samir put them away. "I've often derided the idea that modern spaces must mean white walls, bouclé furniture, and a fear of colour," says the self-described eclectic. Here, he embraced chromatic drama with signature abandon, painting the living room a smoky burgundy, swathing the bedroom in deep blue, and darkening the doors to a near-black. Wide wooden planks were trucked in to lend a warm, earthy foundation, grounding the saturated palette and moody furnishings.

The apartment's contents form a pastiche of cultures and eras, gathered from flea markets, antiques stores, auctions, and travels. Nothing is showroom-perfect — and that's exactly the point. "Some combinations felt instinctive, with a touch of epiphany," Samir reflects. "Like a blank canvas scattered with puzzle pieces." >>





A handpainted mural by a local artist is punctuated by lightbox artworks by Manisha Gera Baswani. The seating area comprises a table from House of Yali and inherited Jeanneret Chandigarh chairs  
**FACING PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**  
 A collection of chariot panels mounted by Jaiveer and among them is a small but rare Mithuna; The Art Deco teak and ebony sideboard, acquired at auction from Saffronart, serves as a platform for 19th-century wooden palanquin finials from House of Yali and a sculpture by Rathin Barman. Above it hang an untitled watercolour by Bhupen Khakhar, an acrylic on canvas by Jithinlal N R, and a crosshatch drawing by Jogen Chowdhury; The colonial-era chair is a find from Mumbai's Chor Bazaar



"Each piece catches the natural sunlight differently — some glinting softly, others absorbing the light"





A four-poster bed, made in Georgian-era England is draped with a 20th-century *phulkari* and crowned by a contemporary Raas Lila Pichwai canopy, serving as the crowning glory of the bedroom. A cupboard from French-colonial Pondicherry, sourced from House of Yali, gleams by the window, which is veiled in a lace pichwai made in 19th-century Germany. A planter's chair from Souk sits to the right

**FACING PAGE FROM LEFT** Vintage glass paintings depicting the avatars of Vishnu bring about a spectrum of colours to the bedroom; The central artwork is a rare 18th-century Kalamkari piece that Jaiveer believes was once part of an umbrella



Among them: colonial-era campaign furniture, an aged window seat from Goa, original Chandigarh chairs by Pierre Jeanneret from Jaiveer's collection, and a pair of colonial chairs Samir found at Mumbai's Chor Bazaar – intended for himself, until he decided they belonged here instead. "This way, I can still visit them often," he quips. Every room, he adds, has its own crown jewel, from the scarlet hand-painted mural in the dining room to the resplendent *Raas Lila pichwai* above the bed. Because they weren't bound by timelines, the duo curated the space in phases. "It became a journey of discoveries," Samir says, "with each object finding its place when the moment felt right."

Anyone who knows Jaiveer knows he has an eye for the unusual – both in sourcing art and in displaying it. "Some of the art was brought out of storage and hung up for the very first time," says Samir, who played with scale and placement to give the pieces new life. A *Qissah-e-Panj Dar aur Abr* artwork by Arshi Irshad Ahmadzai was laid flat against a wall; a vintage table became a stage for an early 20th-century peacock-patterned *phulkari* and a trio of 18th-century Shiite *alams* (metal finials) from Bengal. A contemporary mustard triptych by Lakshmi Madhavan was paired with vintage *mukhalingams* (lingams with a face) in silver and bronze, placed directly beneath it "in a grounding gesture of reverence," as they might have been in a temple 200 years ago. "Each piece catches the natural sunlight differently – some glinting softly, others absorbing the light," says Samir.

In line with Jaiveer's vision, textiles became the thread tying the redesign together. Old bags were repurposed into cushions, while contemporary artworks and vintage rugs brought in layered warmth. Where there was no view to frame, the pair created their own. "Jaiveer came up with that ingenious idea," Samir says of the sheer living room curtains, emblazoned with vintage textiles to obscure a dull view. "I love that I was present when some of these pieces were acquired, even before this apartment was dreamed up," he adds. From his base in Mumbai, much of the planning unfolded through quick site visits and blurry video calls. Jaiveer puts it more playfully: "After years of Samir wrongly accusing me of being a hoarder, he enjoyed sifting through all the pieces. Like true crotchety oldies, our setup days included mid-day gin and tonic breaks which made the entire editing process even more streamlined." All's well that ends with moonshine. ♦