

**HABITAT**

The entrance is flanked by dramatic Kalinga lion statues that are reproductions of the originals from Konark in Orissa



Large mirrors and verdant greenery add to the spacious and airy ambience of Sunbeam



# THE ART OF LIVING

Jivi Sethi's Goa home proves that it's possible to balance a love for design with the beauty of your surroundings

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The visitors book has little notes and illustrations from friendly travellers and well-travelled friends



Jivi lends his touch to a flower arrangement





The guest bedrooms are spacious and airy



The guest bedroom opens onto the veranda



The powder room is located at the far end of the veranda. The sink, fitted into a Goan style dressing table, and embroidered hand towels all add to the Goan charm

A furniture designer, stylist and interior decorator, Jivi Sethi's approach to design can best be described as opulent, abundant and almost always unpredictable. His home in Goa, aptly named Sunbeam, throws light on his ability to mix and match colour with texture, combining something new with something old, thereby creating a balance that only he can achieve. "My lack of education in design has only helped me break the rules with greater ease," says the self-taught Jivi. Where else will you find little girls' dresses used as lamp shades? Or a *palki*-style chair used as a lighting installation over the dining table? Together with his Bangalore-based partner, Viki Sardesai, he is responsible for the Design Laboratory – an attempt to retain, experiment with, and push the boundaries of Indian crafts. Jivi's association with Goa began 16 years ago while working on a project at the Christian Arts Museum at the Rachol Seminary. It wasn't long before his circle of friends began to grow with his number of visits to the sunny state, so it only seemed quite natural that he have his second home here. "I didn't go around looking for property, it was pretty much decided for me... Actually, I only saw it only after I bought it!" he exclaims.

When Jivi bought this home, he was faced with the challenge of making it his own: "It was not a grand Portuguese house, neither was it my style of property." The original owners had replaced the beautiful Goan floor with new tiles and the rooms were dark and dingy. "The trees around the house and in the property were really the main reason I bought it," recounts Jivi. And so he had to work towards "completely changing the orientation of the house," which he did with the help of Edgar Afonso, a builder and dear friend. Changes were made to the original structure – the ground floor of the house – by breaking down walls and generally "opening up" the rooms

to light and ventilation. Attached to the old structure was a chicken coup that became a sort of separate little bridge connecting the ground floor with the newly constructed top floor. Built alongside a hill, each floor or level of Sunbeam now leads to the next via a pathway that runs along the house. On the ground floor, a long stretch of veranda overlooking a courtyard serves as the entrance to Jivi's home and is the heart of this space. Connected to it on the left are two guest bedrooms, and further down, a living and dining room. A powder room marks the end of the veranda and the beginning of a flight of stairs to the kitchen above. It is in this veranda that Jivi entertains larger crowds over exquisite lunches and dinners, which are a fusion of colours and flavours for which he is just as famous. Just across from the veranda is the Spa Room, which was added later. A Tree of Life made from local Goan seashells marks the wall of this room. The oils and fragrances used are completely natural and retailed under the Just Jivi brand.

The aesthetics of the ground floor are quite different from the top floor with a more distinct Goan edge. Most of the furniture is antique and many of the pieces have been carefully selected from the lifestyle shop in Baga, Casa Goa. Large mirrors lean forward over the dining table to create an air of drama while Goan altars and pictures of Christian art hang ceremoniously from a golden wall. Giant leaves in interesting vases add to shape and form in the living and dining area. The top floor is of a more contemporary nature: If there were any rules left to be broken, it would seem like Jivi's broken them here. Spread out on this floor are a dining and living room, a guest bedroom and a kitchen. A flight of stairs at the entrance leads to Jivi's "sacred space" and

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The dining and living room have an air of drama about them (this and below)



bedroom, the wall of which is decorated with his personal collection of fine art photography. Textures, prints and colours all come together to form a spectacular story in this space. “Red and black seem to be the distinct colours for now, but this changes often and is especially fun over Christmas,” Jivi tells us. The cool grey cement floor and unfinished silver ceiling offset these well and maintain a balance in which these all the elements come together perfectly. The space is filled with interesting pieces – the wrought iron chair with reindeer horns, for example, sits like a throne in a corner of the living room. “The chair was designed especially for me by Sonja and Thomas of Sotohaus and Soto Décor in Goa as a present,” says Jivi.

Just outside, on the terrace, is the *puja* room, which is less of a room and more of an open space. Ganesh and Radha Krishna idols and candle stands rest on a carrier chariot in the form of a bird or Vahan. “It was used to carry deities in processions around towns and villages,” explains the proud home owner.

The bright, bold and very comfortable sofas and chairs are one-off pieces, also designed by Jivi



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The guest bedroom on the top floor showcases a fabulous interplay of colour and print. Designed by Jivi himself, the pieces can be made to order

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The swimming pool situated on the last level is surrounded by trees and giant hand painted backdrops at the far end as if to say in Shakespeare’s words, “All the world’s a stage...”. “They are the original tiatr backdrop curtains from travelling drama companies in Goa,” says Jivi, “I have been collecting them for a long time.” And it is through the process of collecting and creating that Jivi’s home has come to be an extension of himself. He has been able to take the usual and make it unusual, to create magic out of the mundane, something that comes quite naturally to him. The result is a beautiful home, on a hill, in a sunny place called Goa.

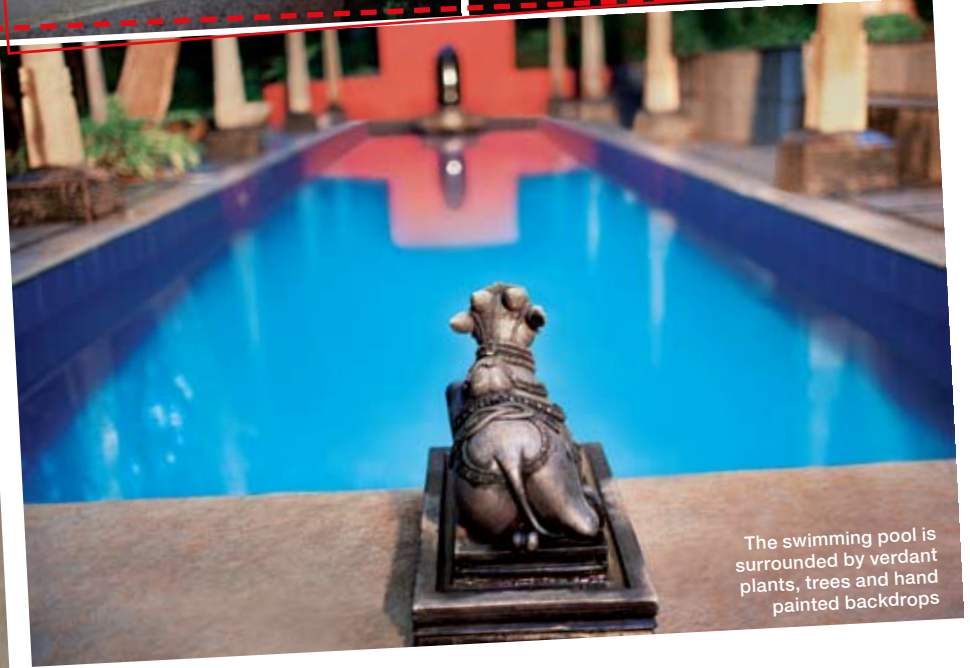




This space is where intimate dinners are hosted frequently



The house displays an often eclectic assortment of souvenirs and mementoes from all over



The swimming pool is surrounded by verdant plants, trees and hand painted backdrops

Jivi's sensibilities extend to fine dining, making him famous for being an excellent host