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PARINEETI CHOPRA THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

AT HOME WITH
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& KHLOÉ
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GOING WEST
**INDIA AT
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GIRL UNINTERRUPTED

Slipping into her role as homeowner, actor Parineeti Chopra makes an impressive debut with a sea-facing Bandra house in Mumbai that is layered with facets of her personality

WRITER GAURI KELKAR • PHOTOGRAPHER PHILIP SINDEN

The custom-designed herringbone-patterned sliding doors open to reveal the den. **Facing page:** Actor Parineeti Chopra leans against a wall of the den, which is decorated with the covers of her favourite books; behind her is the living room.



FASHION STYLIST: SANJANA BATRA. HAIR STYLIST: MARCELO PEDROZO. MAKE-UP ARTIST: VARDAN NAYAK





Above: The living room opens out to the balcony; the two sofas were custom-made for Chopra by Gulmohar Lane; the upholstered coffee table in the living room is from The Charcoal Project; the side table was an antique trunk bought from Chor Bazaar and painted red. **Below right:** One wall of the den features a poster depicting the history of Mickey Mouse, which was gifted to Chopra by Disney. **Below left:** A corner of the living room cabinet behind the leather sofa.



One wall of the living room has an installation of retro fibreglass telephone instruments, which have been reinvented as lights by interior designer Shabnam Gupta. The red rotary phone, which Chopra picked up in Europe, is used as an intercom.





The lamp above the dining table was custom-designed by Gupta. Originally in white, Chopra had it painted pink to match one of the dining chairs. The Manhattan skyline triptych along one wall was also digitally treated to complement the chairs.

Facing page top: Chopra picked up the film light and tripod lamp in front of the herringbone-patterned doors; the three-legged round table is from Rajasthan. *Facing page below:* The den is fitted with shelves, which are filled with DVDs, books, memorabilia and souvenirs collected over the years; the niches to the left hold Chopra's awards; the "American-sized" sofa was made by Gulmohar Lane.





Above: Chopra on her balcony; the foliage-lined path leads to the powder room. **Below right:** One wall of the master bathroom is engraved with the names of Chopra's favourite cities; the black-and-gold fittings are by Kohler. **Below left:** The brass fittings in the powder room are some of Kohler's flagship products; the shallow washbasin in the centre is also made of brass; a pair of antique sewing-machine stands, which Gupta found in a mill and treated in brass, were placed below the counters on either side of the washbasin.





As we stand in the balcony, off the living room of her home in Bandra, Parineeti Chopra says, “I was 155 per cent involved in this project.” Hearing her rattle off details about it with the practised ease of a statistician talking about data, her involvement is apparent, the mathematical hyperbole notwithstanding. The minute you step into the entrance passageway and see the whimsical details—the key holder that spells out ‘drama queen’, the miniature guitar and bike replicas on the wall—you know this house is going to be unlike anything you might have previously imagined. It’s a fun space; born not in an architect’s office, but in the charged, active mind of its owner.

Chopra’s excitement and pride are palpable. And why not? It is a very significant acquisition, a first home. She looked at nearly 30 houses before she found this one. The journey to this point in her life included a change of profession—and country. Born and bred in Ambala, Haryana, Chopra made her way to the University of Manchester for further studies. However, the 2009 global recession had her return to India, where she landed a job in Mumbai-based Yash Raj Films’ marketing department. She moved to acting when she was offered her first movie a year-and-a-half later—and grabbed the opportunity to discover those acting skills she’s now so feted for. A slew of awards followed. Chopra had well and truly arrived, and was doing exactly what she was meant to. Now, after years of living in rented apartments, it was just a matter of dropping anchor. “I always wanted a sea view,” Chopra explains. “[The interiors] weren’t really to my taste, but when I stood in the balcony and saw the sea, I knew this was it. This was my house,” she recalls.

SETTING THE SCENE

There was, of course, the small matter of changing the interiors, which required an architect, and Chopra found one in Shabnam Gupta, founder of architectural firm The Orange Lane, and lifestyle store Peacock Life. “Shabnam and I just clicked. We share similar tastes, but she’s used to doing really opulent, busy homes. I wanted a simple one, with a bit of quirk. It wasn’t something she had done before, so she too was excited to work on it.” For her part, Gupta was surprised at the clarity that the actress had. “I had references for years on my phone—from all my travels, hotel stays, artworks,” Chopra explains. “There are so many ideas I picked up from something I’d seen on a street. I basically wanted a white house with colours in it. My personal spaces had to be very spa-like—a lot of wooden textures, mirrors, a very soothing, ‘scented candles’ kind of scene. And I wanted my living and den areas to be lively.”

That proved to be a bit of a challenge, given that those were huge spaces, and bringing all the elements together was important. “Some of it was quite tricky, but it was fun tricky,” says Chopra. It’s evident that she and Gupta went to great lengths to find just the right decor and furnishings to create a cohesive design. And the effort shows, which is what makes the unexpected touches all the more interesting. For instance, the distressed oars casually hanging on one wall. Or the installation of retro telephones on another.

“There are lights in the receivers,” reveals Chopra. Gupta had them made out of fibreglass—the result of her client’s desire to have at least “one installation in the house”.

The herringbone-patterned door—which looks like a textured wall—at one end of the living room, conceals the den, a space that Chopra describes as “white, with funk here and there”. The den is really the space where the quirk comes into its own. It features a wall decorated with the covers of Chopra’s favourite books; a big shelf with souvenirs and awards; a *gola* (shaved-ice) machine that’s been refashioned into a lamp; and a centre table in the lounge area with a Monopoly board game hand-painted on the tabletop. “See, the ideas I get are not available in the market, so we had to make everything,” says Chopra, and bursts out laughing. You’re inclined to believe her, given that every piece of furniture—except for the living room’s cushioned centre table from The Charcoal Project—has been custom-made.

GETTING IN CHARACTER

In this house so textured with Chopra’s personality, what makes a statement is the lack of obvious silver-screen memorabilia. What little there is—such as the ‘baby light’ (a type of lighting equipment used during shoots) in the living room, or the clapboard that doubles as a photo frame—is quirky. Her love for travel, though, finds expression in an unusual way. Her bedroom, located behind a spacious dressing room complete with walk-in closet, features a map of the world painted on one wall. The master bathroom has a panel on which the names of the cities she’s visited are inscribed. “I got the idea from a wall of letters I’d seen a long time ago, and had the names of my favourite cities engraved in stone. Those which have really made a difference in my life—like Mumbai, London, Manchester, New York—are in gold,” says Chopra.

The black sanitaryware and gold fittings are all Kohler. “Bathrooms are very important for me. Even when I stay in hotels, they are the first spaces I check,” she says. And like every other space, Chopra was clear what she wanted: “very Zen and hotel-like in terms of comfort”. The guest bathroom and the powder room also have the Kohler touch—a collection of ivory fittings to go with the light green stone and wood in the former, and beautiful brass fittings, including a vintage shallow brass sink in the latter.

One thing of paramount importance throughout the house was comfort. She says, “Every piece of furniture here is sleep-worthy.” The armchairs at both ends of the dining table tell you she’s not exaggerating. Or the many, many cushions—“I have a thing for cushions. All of them have been custom-made by Tulips in Pune. We gave them different designs that we wanted.”

After almost eight to nine months of work, Chopra says that the house is now just what she wanted. “The kind of person that I am, I can’t let anything go till it’s completely fixed.” She even hired a stylist, Tulsi Mehta, to ensure smaller things, like the linens, were in place. For a stickler with everything just the way she wants it to be, you’d think Chopra has no desire for change, at least for the next couple of months. “That’s too long! These cushions [the ones on the balcony’s daybed] will not be here tomorrow.” That constant buzzing of ideas has translated into a home that doesn’t try to impress, but does so nonetheless—just like its multifaceted owner.” ❖