

**DETAILS**

**What** A large modern townhouse

**Where** Mumbai, India

**Design** Jannat Vasi Interior Design



# OVER THE RAINBOW

MODERN COLOUR COMBOS  
AND WILD ONE-OFF PIECES  
OF FURNITURE TAKE YOU ON  
A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

Photography Suleiman Merchant  
Words Gillian Welsh



**J**annat Vasi lives and breathes colour. Timid pastels or washed-out neutrals are not for her. One of India's most sought-after young tastemakers, she thrives on bold, punchy knockout brights, often combined with dazzling patterns. She has had clients in the past who have been nervous about taking the plunge into her kaleidoscopic world, but that did not apply to the owners of this house in one of Mumbai's most affluent suburbs. The neighbourhood is known for its gothic and neoclassical buildings left over from the colonial era, but this property couldn't be more different. Just ten years old, it is ultra-modern, with clean lines and large windows, offering plenty of scope for flexibility in both the design and the layout.

The three brothers who share the townhouse with their respective families were already fans of the designer's daring style. Well travelled, with a longstanding interest in modern art and culture, they saw this as a chance to create something really special. Vasi's remit wasn't just to devise a decoration scheme for the house, though. With four adults and four children here already and the family growing, new spaces – particularly extra bedrooms – were required, so a rethink of the layout followed by structural changes were in order. Happily, Vasi is an interior architect and a furniture designer as well as an interior designer, so this project was made to measure for her talents. Her multi-disciplinary practice specialises in space planning, conceptualising, design development and execution, with a global clientele who turn to her for luxury residential, commercial and hospitality projects. Whatever else she does, she always delivers lots of character – as this property so vividly demonstrates.

Across its 7,000 square feet there are now two living rooms (one formal and one informal), a large kitchen, seven bedrooms (most of them with en-suites and walk-in wardrobes), additional bathrooms and a rather special ▶



**[Above and previous pages]** The master suite's rich blue and timber walls create a cocoon of luxury. The bedspread was made to order to match the room's colours. The lights are by Barovier & Toso. Jonathan Adler's Neo Geo obelisk sits on the coffee table by Scarlet Splendour, who also made the rug. The curtain fabric is by Safomasi and JAB's Carlucci velvet was used on the sofa.

**[Opposite, top]** Unified in blue, the walk-in wardrobe's crisp lines are broken up by the organic swirls of the Hatsu rug. The chair and bone-inlay coat hanger are by Scarlet Splendour. **[Opposite, bottom]** Marble from the Classic Marble Company makes a statement in the master bathroom. The resin accessories are by Yasanche



**[Below]** Jannat Vasi designed the room divider, with the kitchen on one side and the living room (opposite) on the other. The polished marble floor and the simple white veneer walls from Tabu allow rich tones, such as the turquoise Le Creuset casserole dish, to emerge clearly. **[Right]** The living area makes up for the restraint of the kitchen. Gufram's sculptural Rossocactus sings out against the deep blue wall, which itself sets off the work by American artist David Kracov. The painterly effect continues with the Pierre Frey fabric on the custom-made sofa. Tom Dixon Tank vases sit on the Stella coffee table by Scarlet Splendour (who also made the rug and the grey dining chairs); a mirrored Ligne Roset clock reflects the blue wall, and the dramatic Perch lights in both rooms are by Moooi

garage with an entertainment area and a gym.

“I met the owners through a referral from a previous client, and we instantly connected – I loved the vision they had for their home,” she recalls. “The brief they gave me for this captivating project was to create a unique look for each room, making them colourful and bright spaces that would reflect their personalities and fit their needs.”

Helping her to achieve this was the house itself, its

rooms for the most part flooded with natural light, giving it an energising and stimulating ambience. “I believe that design strategy starts with human experience,” notes Vasi. “Everything I create is a reflection of what I sense, feel and see.”

Determined to steer clear of conventional luxury and the glitzy glamour that has long been a part of the high-end Indian market, she instead envisioned what she calls a “future house”. “The key for me was

to develop a bright space with a ‘happy’ energy for the owners. The palette is inspired partly by emerging trends, as seen on the fashion runway, but we’ve paired this with pop colours, modern art and vibrant patterns. It comes together to make an impact.”

It certainly does. Graphic primary brights add a Mondrian-esque feel to the master bedroom where almost every surface is saturated with colour. Vasi also cites Pop Art and the Memphis Group as two ▶



**[Right]** This bathroom was designed for one of the children in the family and is alive with pattern and geometry. The fittings are by Fima, the tiles are by the Classic Marble Company, and the sanitaryware is by Geberit. Seletti accessories add to the fun.

**[Below]** The child's bedroom has a townhouse skyline, with lighting by Karman and bedding by Safomasi.

**[Opposite]** Bright colours meet bold patterns in this bedroom. Pierre Frey's Carriacou pattern was the inspiration for the hand-painted mural. The sculptural furniture, looking like the remains of an ancient temple, is actually part of a limited-edition range of outdoor seating by Gufram. The chevron-patterned bedding is from Sarita Handa





[This page and bottom right] The family's Lego passion is in evidence in this bedroom, as is their love of play. A customised artwork depicting Antoine Greizmann hangs above the bed. The bedspread is by Sarita Handa, the Jenette chair is by Campana Brothers for Edra. The Monkey lamp is by Seletti and a Hatsu rug lies on the Transition ceramic flooring by Mirage of Italy.  
 [Top right] The bathroom attached to this bedroom feels minimalist in comparison, but check out the ceiling, which has been papered in Pierre Frey's striking Eighty Thirty graffiti pattern. There's a Tangram boat mirror, Geberit sanitaryware and a tap from Italy's IB Rubinetterie, along with Diesel Living glass and leather tiles

of her favourite movements and both have informed her work in this project. The latter, at its peak the 1980s, was characterised by a postmodern melding of bright colour and asymmetrical shapes, and was led by the Italian architect Ettore Sottsass, along with key figures such as Michael Graves and Alessandro Mendini.

Vasi has paid homage to Memphis across the house: "We proposed an exciting chromatic pattern and pure colour blocking reminiscent of the Memphis design movement – a tribute to Ettore Sottsass's Deco-meets-Pop style," she explains. "Playing with pattern, shapes and diagonal stripes has made a powerful visual impact. The colours and angular lines visually connect the walls, floors and ceilings."

Her obsession with pattern and geometric design is much in evidence too, as is the influence of computer games. The design is so varied, she says, "It surprises you like a special-effects machine!"

It's not all an eye-popping sensual overload, though. The handsome display wall that divides the kitchen and living room, which comes complete with a built-in floating dining table, is a restrained, elegantly designed piece of furniture that could find a home anywhere. Here, the owners have used it to show off a fine collection of art books.

But playfulness is at the heart of Vasi's design for this home, as the garage on the ground floor demonstrates. After all, what's the point in having gorgeous limited-edition cars if you then hide them away in some dull ordinary garage? The clients had asked her to develop a "contemporary vision" that would breathe new life into this part of the building, so she skilfully added restrained pops of lively colour into the stripped-back, functional space. The black-painted ceiling, for instance, is brought to life with Pac-Man graphics in bright primary hues, while the polished concrete floor is broken up with coloured shapes.

There's also space for a gym and a games room down here: "We aimed to create an environment suited to high-energy workouts and entertainment through a clever play of bright colours and rough and refined surfaces – it should satisfy one's party soul!"

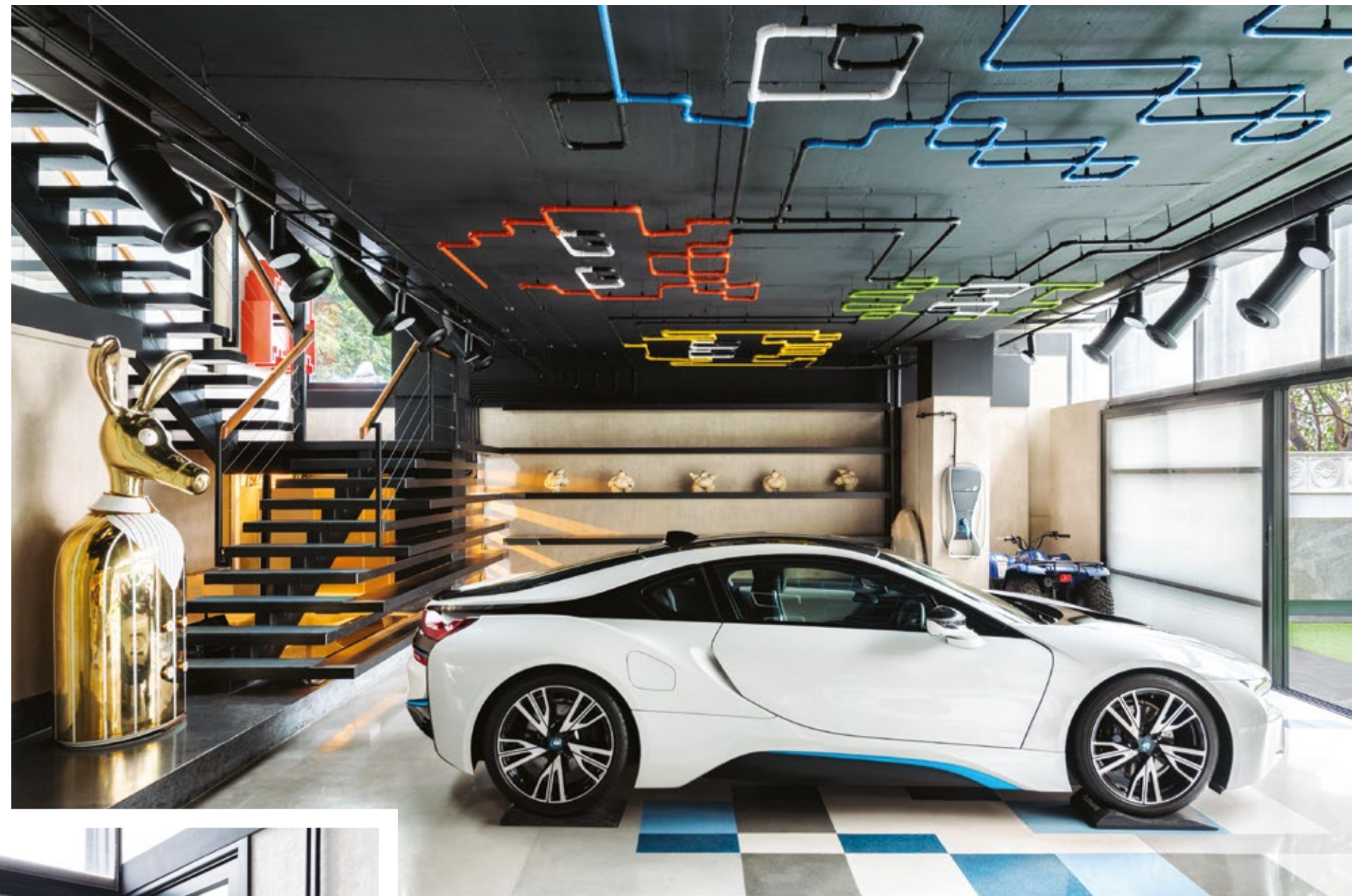
The sculptural staircase with its extended shelving planes leads up to a swimming pool. Standing guard at the foot of the stair is an Animagic Ciuco cabinet by Scarlet Splendour, one of India's most interesting contemporary furniture studios. Glinting gold and more than two metres in height, it's a real showstopper. Vasi, who has previously collaborated with Scarlet Splendour on a number of ▶



“I BELIEVE THAT DESIGN STARTS WITH HUMAN EXPERIENCE. EVERYTHING I CREATE IS A REFLECTION OF WHAT I SENSE, FEEL AND SEE”



**[Above and opposite]** The informal living room with its adjoining kitchenette. Even in this grown-up space, funky colour and quirky motifs abound. Cushions by Wrong x HAY jazz up the plain grey sofa. Natuzzi's Labirinto coffee table is a good place to store art books. The Sistine Chapel-inspired painting above the sofa is by Indian artist Sanuj Birla. Mumbai's The Pure Concept supplied the fabrics, and the rug is a Scarlet Splendour design. **[Right]** The other side of the room has Jannat Vasi's network wall system, where the owners have assembled some of their eclectic artefacts. It also acts as a room divider and morphs into a dining table. The Vertex dining chairs are by Karim Rachid for Vondom. **[Left]** David Kracov's *My heart is all a flutter* reflects off a blue agate inlay in one of the corridors



[Above and opposite] The garage is a fun-filled entertaining space, not simply a place to keep the car. The sculptural staircase has built-in shelving, the floor has been coloured with Archi Concrete paint and the chairs (right) are Campana Brothers' Jenette design for Edra. But the key piece is Scarlet Splendour's golden Animagic Ciuco cabinet which opens up to provide some very quirky storage space

projects, is delighted with it, describing it as “a hero product for luxe millennials”. In her view, it balances the colour palette in the garage by adding a rich gold accent. It certainly fits in with the overall aesthetic of bold, uncompromising design and creativity run wild.

Carried out in several phases, the whole job took a year to complete. The owners stayed in the house throughout the renovation, moving from floor to floor as the work progressed.

“I see this as a project that blended eastern principles of craftsmanship with western principles of style and

colour,” concludes the designer. “Our signature style uses a modern aesthetic approach balanced with a bold palette, embossed textures, unique surface treatments, tactile elements and gentle curves. You’ll find patterned wallpaper and artistic textures with accents of reflective surfaces that give this property an eccentric modern twist. The result yields the perfect blend of comfort and sophistication.”

The three brothers have ended up with a home like no other anywhere in the world – and one they wouldn’t swap for anything. ■