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HIGH STYLE

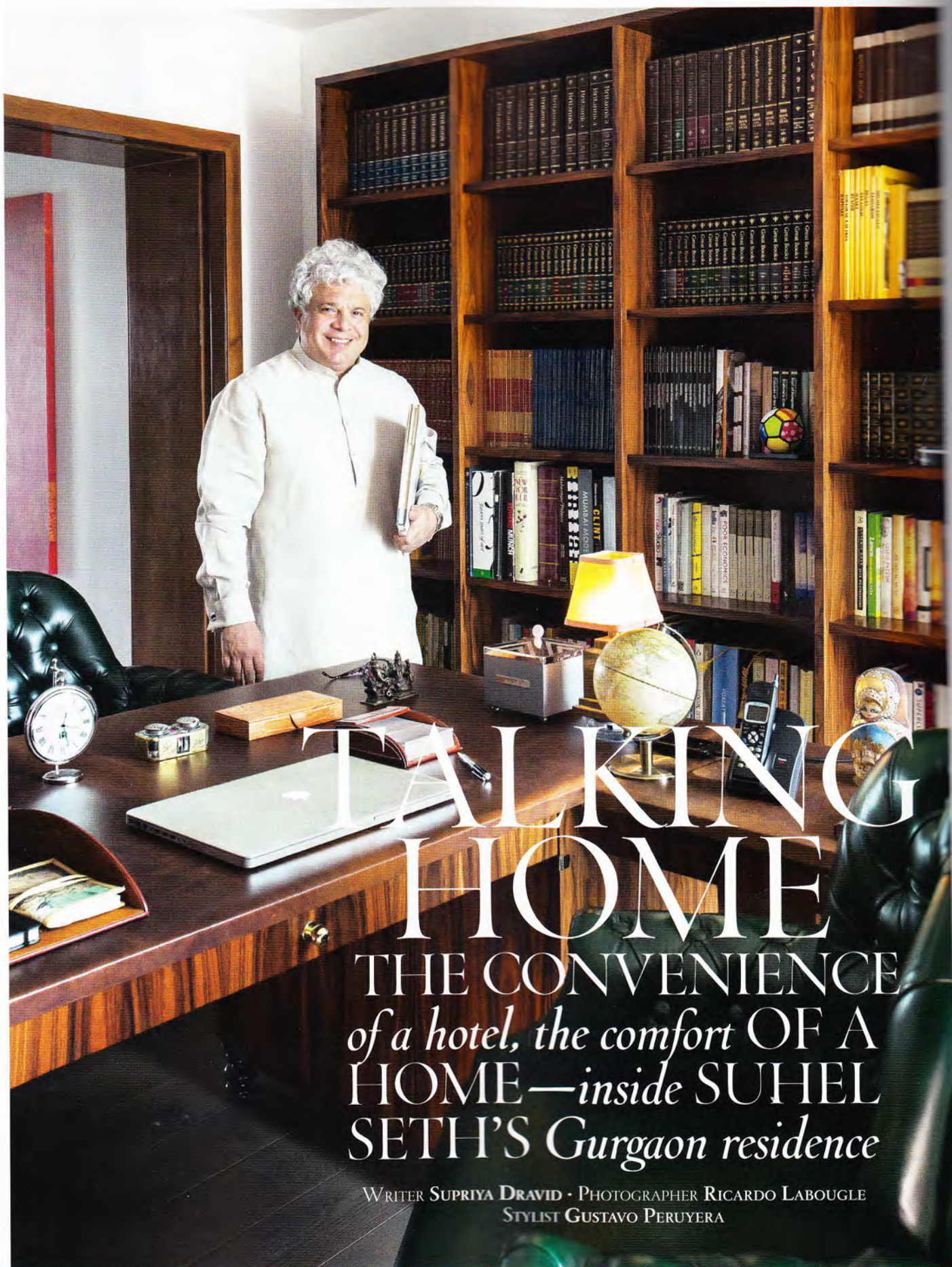
A MUMBAI PENTHOUSE
BY ASHIESH SHAH

DESIGN IN 2016
TRENDS, INNOVATIONS
AND ICONIC BUILDINGS

EXCLUSIVE
SHIGERU BAN
TELLS *AD* ABOUT HIS
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AD'S ANNUAL
BATHROOM REPORT
50 IDEAS TO FRESHEN
UP YOUR SPACE

PLUS RAHUL MEHROTRA • SUHEL SETH • SHAMIR SHAH • MARTAND KHOSLA



TALKING HOME

THE CONVENIENCE
of a hotel, the comfort OF A
HOME—*inside* SUHEL
SETH'S *Gurgaon residence*

WRITER SUPRIYA DRAVID • PHOTOGRAPHER RICARDO LABOUGLE
STYLIST GUSTAVO PERUYERA

WALL PAINTING

In the living room, a Siraj Saxena canvas hangs above a sofa by Puru Das of Urbanist. The trunk in the corner is from Ralph Lauren.

(Facing page)

DETAILED STUDY

Homeowner Suhel Seth in his study, which has Austrian teak wood flooring. The mahogany desk, with a tooled leather inset, is by Ralph Lauren. The wooden shelves and the chesterfield chairs have also been designed by Das.



MEETING GROUND

The living room extends into the dining area, which is separated by a round centre table from Milan.





(Clockwise from above)

ART AROUND

The foyer has a 140-year-old Afghan kilim, and Greek Thassos marble flooring, used through most areas of the house; a series of muted canvases by Siraj Saxena is placed over a lacquered table from Milan; the red canvas is also by Saxena. The master bedroom has a bed from Armani/Casa; portraits by Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, artist Amrita Sher-Gil's father, line the wall above. The dining table—which is made out of a single block of teak wood—is from Lava East, a bespoke contemporary furniture store in Singapore.



(Clockwise from this picture)

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

The master bathroom has Greek Thassos marble flooring. Seth first came across the idea for a steel base for the basin from a boutique off Sloane Square in London, and had it recreated for his Gurgaon home. Seth converted a bedroom into this walk-in closet.

The winter sunlight filters into the study—the polished Austrian teak wood parquet flooring a perfect canvas for the play of shadows. It is the kind of made-to-order lighting that every homeowner probably wishes for, but seldom achieves. However, that's not the only thing that captures your attention in this study. There are also

immaculately maintained floor-to-ceiling bookshelves on both sides of the room, punctuated with photographs, awards, Ganesha idols, limited-edition Coca-Cola bottles too. And plenty of books. It makes for one hell of a good universe to lose yourself in.

"More and more books, which is what I'd like my world to be," says Suhel Seth, the peripatetic and proud owner of this intriguing 6,000-square-foot apartment in a residential complex in the heart of Gurgaon. A caricature of Seth—made by his old friend, the late famed cartoonist and humorist, RK Laxman—smiles benignly at us. Sitting behind his mahogany Ralph Lauren desk with a tooled leather inset, the managing partner of branding and marketing firm Counselage and the founder of advertising agency Equus says, "I live most of the month in hotels, so I wanted to replicate a similar situation when it came to the conveniences here. At the same time, I also wanted to make it feel like a home." Which was reinforced by the fact that his mother, who lives in the flat next door, ensures he still enjoys a hot, home-cooked meal. "No food is cooked in my house; it comes from my mother's. But a lot of drinks are served here," he laughs.

The tech-wired, iPad-controlled apartment was designed by AD50 architects Sonali and Manit Rastogi of Morphogenesis. "They don't usually design apartments, but I wanted them to do mine," says Seth. "I felt that they would appreciate the sense of minimalism I believe in." Under Seth's watchful—and rather creative—eye, the apartment took a year and a half to complete. The result: a modern space that is an example of smart contrasts, a deceptively sprawling home unravelling itself methodically, somewhat nesting like the matryoshka dolls—each tucked inside the other—placed in his study.

SHOW FLAT

From a bare shell provided by property developers DLF, Seth decided on just two bedrooms, one for himself (with a walk-in closet the size of another bedroom) and a guest bedroom. He also has a rather indulgent leather-floored man cave. But that's not the pièce de résistance. It's the en suite bathroom, which features a mirror framed by a stingray-leather border, an intricately carved marble *jaali* covering the basin, and a mother-of-pearl wall (perfectly suited for the Shah of Iran, maybe?). "It's the only bling in the house," says Seth.

While the bling may be restricted to just the bathroom, an artistic aesthetic permeates the entire space, with a collection that can best be described as eclectic. An avid art connoisseur, Seth uses this space to showcase the enviable works that he has collected over the years, including those by FN Souza, Anjolie Ela Menon, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Jamini Roy and Siraj Saxena. At the entrance of the home is a life-size fibreglass tiger, which was a part of the Artiger fundraising project that raises awareness about the conservation of India's national animal. The most stunning piece of art, though, is opposite the dining table—an oil on canvas depicting Amritsar's Golden Temple by Hungarian artist Gyula Tornai, when he visited India in the late 19th or early 20th century. "I picked it up at Christie's," says Seth.

The master bedroom has walls lined with portraits photographed by Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, father of artist Amrita Sher-Gil. The regal foyer that we pass through on the way to the main living room, on the other hand, has a series of Siraj Saxena canvases pitted against the explosion of colours seen in the work by Puducherry-based French artist, Pierre Legrand. An easel by Seth's friend, Natasha Singh Kohli, holds a dog-eared copy of an old Chinese book of symbols. "Instead of a painting, I thought, 'why not put a book?'" explains Seth. A 140-year-old Afghani kilim brightens up the Greek Thassos marble flooring, which is used through most areas of the house.

"MORE *and* MORE BOOKS, which is what I'D LIKE MY WORLD to be."

AN ORIGINAL MAKE

Seth's home isn't just a showcase for blue-chip contemporary art, but also for 21st-century design and the best in artisanal craftsmanship. "All the pieces

of furniture have been made from scratch," he says. Like the Puru Das-designed bar in the living room, evidence of the fact that entertaining guests at home was part of the agenda when the design was under way. Co-founder of New Delhi-based interior design firm Urbanist, Das is also the man behind a lot of the furniture in the house, like the leather-upholstered chest of drawers in Seth's bedroom, the chesterfield chairs in the study and the couches in the living room. "Puru has done a beautiful job with every piece of furniture I asked him to create," says Seth. Another piece, though not by Das, is no less unique—a stunning dining table from Lava East, a bespoke contemporary furniture store in Singapore, made out of a single block of teak wood.

The visual drama within is easily matched by the scenic display outside: given that Seth's home is on the fifth floor, your vision is in perfect symmetry with the top of the manicured treeline. Beyond that is the vast expanse of a golf course. Ever a stickler for perfection, Seth has ensured that everything sits in its allotted space. He knew the sort of house he wanted to live in and succeeded in creating a haven that shows off his life and times over the years—a curated space with the state-of-the-art sophistication of a hotel and yet very much a home at its heart. ♦