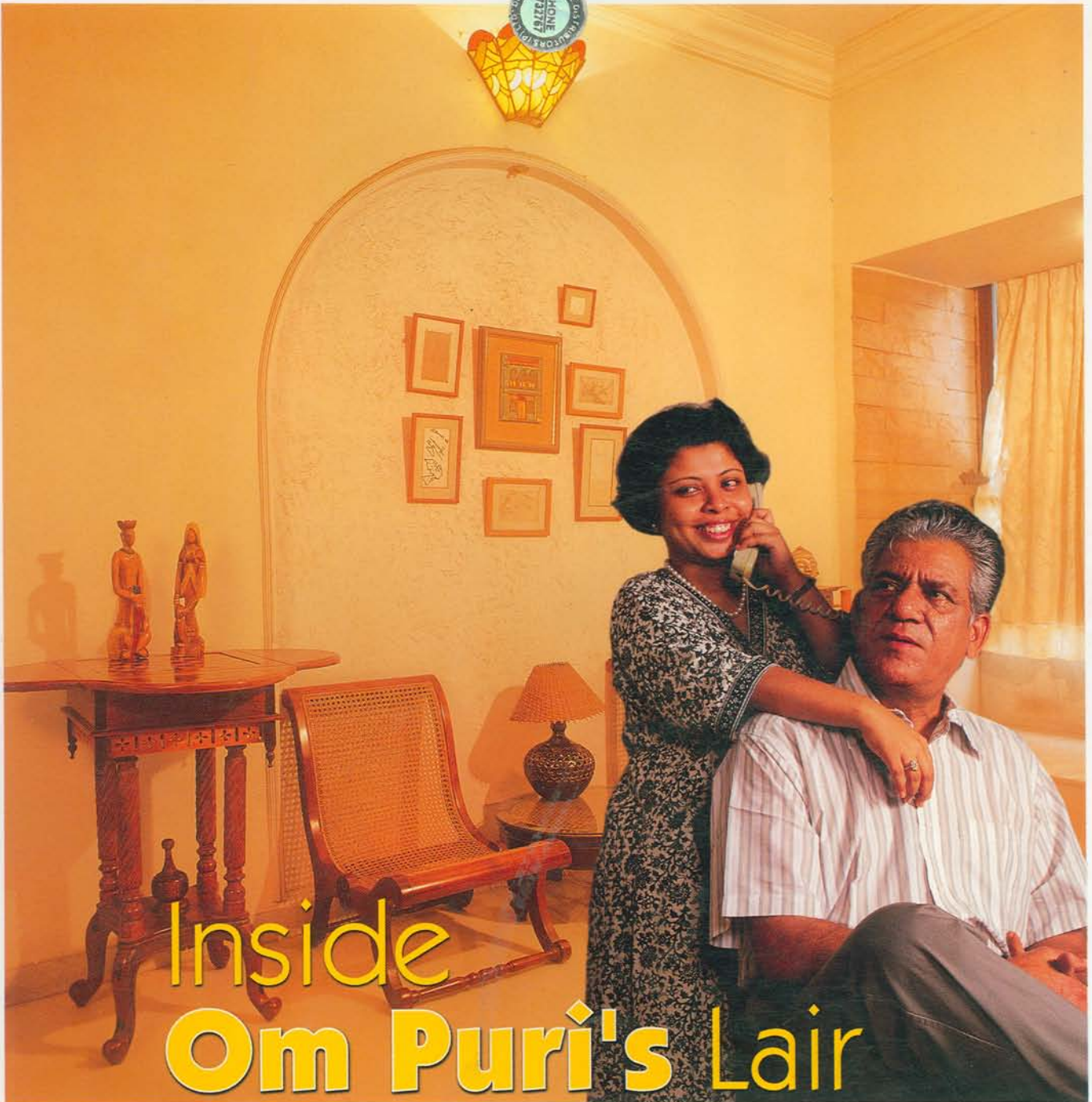


INDIAN

DESIGN & INTERIORS

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Inside Om Puri's Lair

— a first-hand account by his wife Nandita

Also

AT HOME WITH GERMAN SCULPTOR DIETRICH KLINGE • RAJEEV SETHI LASHES OUT

Q I have just acquired a striking 3ft by 2ft abstract painting in green and yellow tones. The seating arrangement in my living-room is low-lying – the ambience tilts towards the traditional Indian. Please advise me on the type of frame and placement I should opt for. I also have a series of old prints that I wish to put up – please give me some guidelines that I could follow while putting up pictures.

Sheena Raheja, Delhi

A I presume your painting is an oil or acrylic one on canvas and 3ft is the length, thereby making it a horizontal artwork. For such a painting, it should first be stretched properly and then framed. As your new acquisition is a contemporary abstract painting, I suggest a simple frame of wooden moulding of approximately two inches in a pale finish. Many such frames are readily available in the market.

Art work is best hung at eye-view level, veering towards a lower height rather than higher. You could place your painting at a height of 40 inches from finished floor level.

Regarding your series of old prints – I presume they are lithographs or aquatints – you could have them framed with an ivory mount board. The lower portion of these boards should be at least half-an-inch more than the other three sides. A good framer would be familiar with this proportioning. On these boards, a series of ink lines and a water-colour wash between two of these lines could be drawn. This is a traditional European way of framing prints. These could then have simple wooden moulded frames or slightly heavier ones. But, no ornate frames – that would detract focus from the delicacy of your old prints.

The visual appeal of a collection of prints is enhanced when they are grouped together forming a definite horizontal or vertical rectilinear measurement. The spaces between each frame should be one-and-a-half inches if they are small to two-and-a-

half-inches if they are large. You could start fixing the lowest row of prints at 40 inches from floor level. If both these artworks are in the same room then keep the lower levels the same. It looks neater.

DESIGNER



Answers

Please write in with your design queries. Top designer Sunita Kohli offers solutions

Q My husband is in the air-force and we keep moving from station to station every two-three years. So far, I have acquired very little furniture. Now I am tired of using the tasteless furniture that comes with the houses. Please suggest what kind of furniture I should go for. (I don't have too hefty a budget.)

Mala Tripathi, Bhowali, UP

A Moving every two to three years must be tough but also quite interesting. The compensating factors must be the many new regions you can explore as well as the pleasures of tasting different regional cuisine.

As you have acquired little furniture so far, you can begin with a clean slate. The backbone

of a living room is always a sofa or sofas. I suggest you buy a classic three-seater sofa or a pair of classic two-seater sofas. The latter could be used together with a coffee table between them or in two separate arrangements, whatever your spaces permit. These should be fully upholstered or on small turned wooden feet. Also, acquire a pair of arm-chairs to place on either side of the sofa. Later, you can add a pair of side tables to complete the arrangement.

For dining purposes, invest in a small round table of four-and-a-half feet diameter on a single pedestal with six dining chairs. This size is comfortable to move around. Also, round tables are easier to adjust and such seating greatly provokes conversational combustion.

For your bedrooms, buy very simple beds in which the headboard is detachable. This will facilitate packing and installation. Invest in good quality mattresses. These are good for the back. I suggest a six-inch mattress which has four inches of coir

with two inches of rubber in it.

Furnishing a house can carry on ad infinitum. But, it is better to err on the side of less rather than more. You could later add a good desk, a side board, a mirror and so on. However, good furniture is like good bone structure. The warmth and personality of your home will ultimately depend upon your choice of floor coverings, soft furnishings and your books, music and artefacts. And most importantly, you yourselves. Much of this does not require "too hefty a budget".

Q I have moved into my own house with my son – he is seven. I would like to do up his room (a space of 15ft by 12ft) in a special way. Please advise.

Sushil Rastogi, Calcutta

A Seven years is a delightful age and your son is fortunate to have a reasonable sized bedroom. When you say you want "to do up his room in a special way", I presume you mean it should be age-specific. In that case, list his basic requirements which should be a bed, a wardrobe, a desk and storage space for books, toys and games.

But be sure to only select a theme in consultation with your son. They have their own dreams and passions. You could then use suitable vibrant colours on walls and ceilings. You could even get the ceiling and/or a wall or walls painted either in solid colours or as part of the theme.

If you are going to use "funky" furniture, there are a few specialist shops that manufacture such items. Otherwise, you could create a dramatic effect on ceilings and walls with paints but use non-gimmicky furniture that he does not outgrow. A good example would be 'campaign' style furniture. Little boys quickly grow into young teenagers. The walls you can re-paint as he grows older. It is more difficult to keep changing furniture.

Q I live in a two-room *barsati* so I need a lot of multipurpose space. What kind of lighting and floor arrangement would you suggest for a bedroom (20ft by 25 ft) which also doubles up as a living-room?

Sheena D'Souza, Delhi

A Your 25ft by 20ft bedroom is quite large and easily lends itself to being a comfortable studio apartment. I suggest that on your main wall you place a six foot sofa-cum-bed with two lamp tables on either side. In front of this you could use a smallish chest in lieu of a coffee table. This would give you a little extra storage space. Place two light armchairs on either of the sofa-cum-bed. In this way you would have a comfortable seating arrangement during the day which converts into a bedroom at night by only moving the chest. You could use a corner of the room for placing a

small square or round table for eating and writing. This could have two or four light armchairs of which two can be used as occasional chairs for the sofa arrangement, whenever the need arises. Also, try and fit in slim cabinets or shelves wherever the space allows. The cabinets could be mirror-fronted so that visually the space looks larger. It also makes the cabinets 'disappear'.

In any available corner use a very tall indoor plant in an attractive container. In this, stake a planter upright. This will make the space look larger, bring freshness

into the room as well as create drama at night. I am sure you have a *barsati* terrace. Fill this with plants and softly upright these arrangements with exterior lights. When seen from your room, this will visually extend the boundaries of your room.

For the lighting in your room, use high table lamps on the pair of lamp tables, pedestal uplights and pedestal lamps wherever else required. Avoid the use of wall brackets. Use those spaces instead for hanging artwork.



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