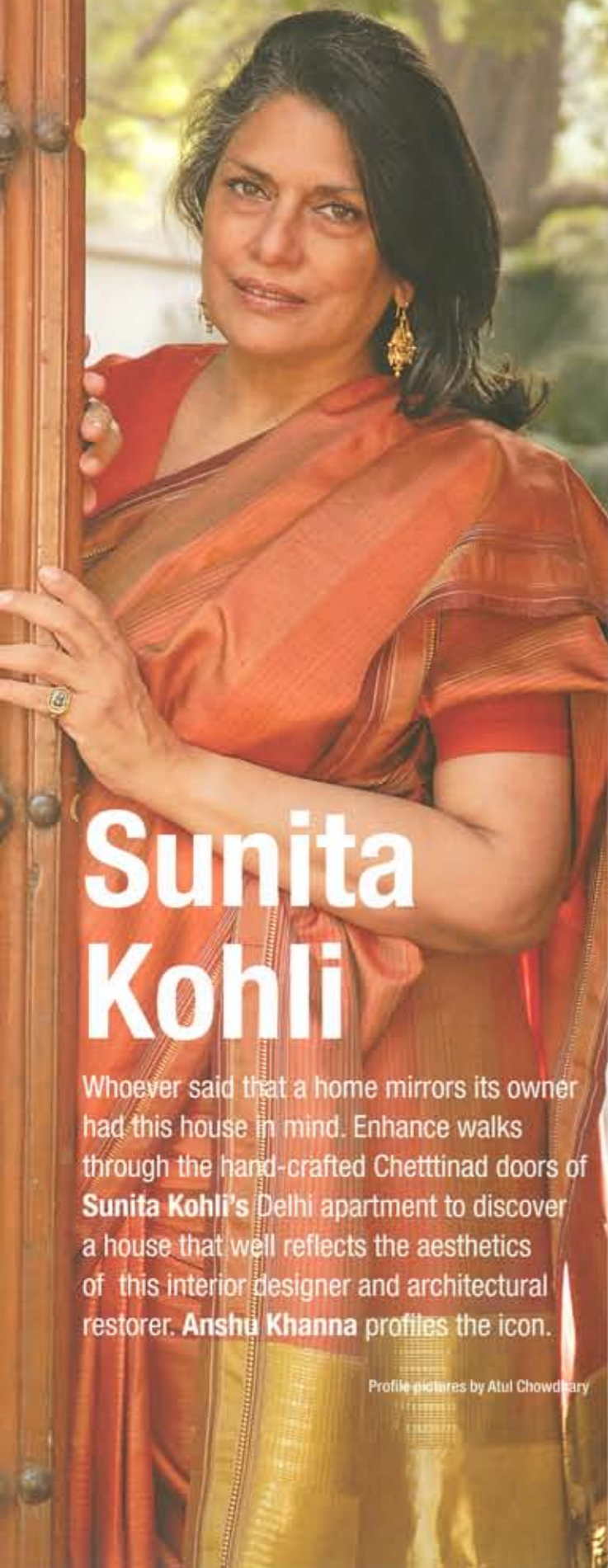




my space my style

Step into the worlds of renowned interior designer Sunita Kohli and her daughter Kohelika Kohli; celebrity interior designer Neetu Kohli, famous for many film star homes; and Bindu Vadehra, whose store Vaarya is a style and design destination...





Sunita Kohli

Whoever said that a home mirrors its owner had this house in mind. Enhance walks through the hand-crafted Chettinad doors of Sunita Kohli's Delhi apartment to discover a house that well reflects the aesthetics of this interior designer and architectural restorer. Anshu Khanna profiles the icon.

Profile pictures by Atul Chowdhary



a designer who bases her work on diligent research, Sunita Kohli's home reflects her affinity to organic materials and her deep understanding of the Indian arts and crafts traditions. Walk into the peaceful courtyard, with its granite temple at the far end, and one instantly understands that this space reflects a sense of rootedness that also echoes through all her professional projects. Her ability "to root" a design project in its own cultural milieu is well-known. She has been known to possess the design sensibilities of ten designers all in one person – the range of her work, reflecting different design vocabularies, bears testimony to this.

Although the discipline Sunita studied was English Literature, Sunita, when she first started her career, almost forty years ago, studied the history of classical English furniture and the architectural history of British India. "I used my university discipline of research for this....Good restoration is when it is done respecting the original vision

of the architects who have created them. Creativity and originality of form are only desirable when one is designing a new building, not when one is restoring an old one".

In 1972, Sunita Kohli set up a furniture manufacturing company, Sunita Kohli & Company, to provide to a discerning clientele, fine reproductions of English classical furniture – primarily of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The furniture is entirely hand-made and hand-polished by master craftsmen. Now known as 'K2India' - with Kohelika heading the company - new styles of furniture have been introduced. These include contemporary, classical-contemporary, Art Deco and Biedermeier collections of furniture.

Sunita Kohli Interior Designs Pvt. Ltd., was established shortly after the furniture company. A research-based interior design firm, concerned and sensitive to the physical context of a project and its cultural milieu. Sunita Kohli is an established leader in interior

design and historical architectural restoration. She has successfully completed projects in several countries such as Egypt, England and Bhutan, and most recently in Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The company specializes in the design of public buildings, hotels and resorts, luxury hotel boats, forts, palaces, heritage properties, aircrafts, corporate offices and private residences.

In New Delhi, Sunita has restored and decorated many British period buildings – designed by Sir Edward Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Robert Tor Russell – notably Rashtrapati Bhawan, the Prime Minister's Secretariat and Hyderabad House. Most recently, she restored the official residence of the Prime Minister. She is presently working on the re-restoration and re-decoration of Rashtrapati Bhawan. The firm

Right: Sunita Kohli at the entrance to 31 Golf Links. Above: The Living Room with its museum quality collection of Tanjore paintings and Italian lamps by Suryaveer Kohli Home.



has also worked on the interior design of the British Council Building, its largest complex world-wide. In Thimpu, Bhutan, she had designed the National Assembly Building and Sunita and Kohelika are currently working on it again for the SAARC Summit of 2010.

Since 2004, joined by her daughter Kohelika, an architect, they have created an architectural firm, 'Kohelika Kohli Architects'. All three firms work under the umbrella of 'K2India' headed by Kohelika. The firms have been working on numerous turn-key projects. They have set up a highly qualified team that can undertake designing and executing

Facing page: A sofa-end table with Buddhist butter lamps, a Hyderabad 'malapashdaan' filled with small lingams and an antique crystal Oseer oil lamp; A corner of the entrance courtyard with a Surya statue in Konarak sandstone by Raghunath Mahapatra, an old Kerala urli and old Ottoman candle stands; Sunita's Study. Above: Fireplace wall in the Living Room with the sculpture 'Vishnu Throng' by Stephen Cox, with a sleeping Vishnu in bronze on the mantel shelf, a cast-iron old English 'Franklin stove'. On the 'bejot' a collection of old Islamic and Hindu ritual and everyday objects in silver.



of architectural, structural, interior architectural and interior design projects. The company is driven by the pursuit of excellence and quality, with a strong belief that our surroundings directly influence the quality of our lives- whether in the work place, at home, or the public spaces in between. It is their endeavour to provide their clients with the most cutting-edge and original designs and cost-effective solutions of form and functionality that are backed with an international outlook.

Internationally today, all major projects are driven by interior architecture and design to their final architectural form. This is the strength of K2India. Sunita and Kohelika Kohli are able to envision spaces from their conception to their final execution and end-use, customized to individual requirements.

Facing page: A client's apartment in West-End, New Delhi designed by Kohelika Kohli Architects.
Below: The Dining Room with two walls inlaid with small square tiles in iridescent abalone shell, Hanging Italian lights by Suryaveer Kohli Home: The Guest Room.





Kohelika Kohli, Architect

Kohelika Kohli

Profile pictures by Atul Chowdhary

An architect who blends modern day design with her personal knowledge of heritage and art, Enhance visit's **Kohelika Kohli's** studio apartment to understand her vibrant design sense.

Kohelika's space, on the second floor terrace is a meeting point of practicality and a well-defined contemporary and an Indian aesthetic. Existing 50's spaces have been re-vamped with strong contemporary architectural strokes. Kohelika says, "having grown-up in Lutyens' Delhi, I did not truly understand the premium on space till I lived in Manhattan. It is this ability of 'doing a lot in a small area', or call it space management, that is reflected in my apartment and in my design projects".

Kohelika's one-bedroomed apartment comprises of an all-purpose living room, attached to a small bed-room which is contiguous with an open bath and shower area. Her apartment is vibrant and stylish and very personally adapted to her own requirements. Here contemporary



Kohelika's all-purpose Living Room – contemporary furniture and styling juxtaposed with Indian bronze artefacts. In the foreground – a steel and glass sofa table with antique Bhutanese 'khos' and Romanian glass votive candle holders.

items of furniture, designed by her, sit on a large antique Persian Lalihan carpet. This same juxtaposition is seen in the artwork - the contemporary mingles with old Indian bronze and brass artefacts.

Kohelika did her A levels at Milfield School in England. In her final year she was Head of School. A keen sportsperson, Kohelika was Juniors and Sub-juniors Equestrian Champion for four years before she left to school in England. But, it was a love for the creative arts, reflected in India's great monuments, that made her seek a career in architecture.

From England, it was across the Atlantic to New York, where Kohelika studied architecture at the prestigious Pratt Institute of Design. Living in New York – in that fast-paced, cutting-edge city, like

no other in the world – was also part of her learning curve. "Part of me will always be a New Yorker", says Kohelika, although after graduation, she consciously decided to return to India to live and work, "because, although like many of my generation who have studied abroad and can easily adapt into most countries, I wanted to be amongst my own family and people, in my own country, in my own cultural milieu". But, whilst studying in New York she worked throughout - first as a resident advisor at Pratt and then as a model-maker and later as a designer with Oliver Cope Architects who specialize in high-end town houses in Manhattan and holiday homes in the Hamptons.

"Living in New York was an education by itself", says Kohelika.

Whilst studying to be an architect at Pratt, was one thing, educating her eye and mind was done at New York's many superb museums. New York was also about theatre, films, music and sampling myriad cuisines from all over the world. Part of Kohelika's architectural studies were done at the Pratt Studios in Rome. She and her college mates were taken on extensive tours of the towns of Northern and Southern Italy, as part of their course on 'Urban Design'. After graduation, Kohelika together with a small group of friends, went on a road tour across the United States – seeing the country and its architecture.

Today Kohelika Kohli heads 'K2India' that creates stylish town homes, offices and resorts. They work on six to twelve projects a year.