

# HOME & DESIGN

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# TRENDS

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## An intricate canvas

Designed by Rakeshh Jeswaani, the interiors of this apartment come together in an elegant manner

**Beginning with a bare shell, Rakeshh Jeswaani** of Rakeshh Jeswaani Interior Architects (RJIA) employed his finely tuned design sensibilities to create a tasteful interior for this Chennai apartment. A contained explosion of materials and textures results in a luxurious unified aesthetic that manages to avoid seeming ostentatious.

“We’re very detail-oriented,” Jeswaani remarks while discussing the project. That might be a slight understatement as every corner of this 4000 sq ft project (approx) has clearly been put together with meticulous attention. Driven by the spirit of experimen-

tation, Jeswaani combined materials like Italian marble, petrified wood, silver leaf and many others to achieve a polished finish for the apartment. This final layer of decor is what elevates the residence above the realm of the ordinary.

“The surface layer is the first layer that strikes you. I don’t do a project unless I’m going to be involved from start to finish because when you’re doing up a space every little detail contributes to a look. I cannot do a project while doing 80 percent and then move out, because that last layer of decor is what makes or breaks a project,” says Jeswaani.

**Facing page** An entry foyer welcomes visitors to this Chennai apartment designed by Rakeshh Jeswaani. A key feature of the foyer is the alcove seating, that houses two armchairs as well as a woven jute and straw artwork on the wall.

**Above left** A wooden screen bifurcates the living room from the dining area. The screen was fabricated at the Curiosity Furniture workshop, and installed on site.





Given this attitude, it's only natural that Jeswaani would employ an unorthodox approach. Here, the artefacts and accessories were chosen before any upholstery or interior work commenced during a three-day purchasing marathon with the client in tow. This allowed the character of the apartment to take shape naturally and gave Jeswaani a clear sense of where the design was headed.

One example of this process in action is the seating area that connects to the entry foyer. A guest arriving through the foyer would be greeted by a sofa set placed against a monolithic backdrop of travertine

marble, perfectly framed by two low-hanging lights.

"I knew I was going to be hanging these low lights and that was going to be the focus, which made me decide not to put any art on this wall, keeping the focus on the two lights. Typically, you would do something back there, but instead we decided to have this simple travertine panelling and show off these lovely light fixtures, because we loved them."

Similarly, the upholstery on the armchairs and sofa in the same area was determined by the natural striated patterns visible on the side tables made from petrified wood. In fact, each of the spaces seems to draw

**Facing page above** The home's entry foyer leads to this sitting area, with its dramatic travertine marble backdrop. Two hanging lamps from Crate & Barrel, Dubai, picturesquely frame the space.

**Facing page below** The relatively simple, monochromatic colour palette springs to life with the inclusion of the royal blue lounge chairs, also from Curiosity Furniture.

**This page** Judicious selection of the accessories and artefacts add manifold layers to the house. Seen here are the multipurpose bowls, made from petrified wood.





inspiration from the curated collection of artefacts and accessories that dictate the visual design language in the rooms.

The grey floors that run through the residence tie together the three bedrooms, two living rooms and the dining room. The two living rooms and the dining room lie along a contiguous axis, with the dining separated by means of a wooden screen that was manufactured by Curiosity Furniture, a furniture manufacturing company led by Jeswaani and his partner, Roomi Maneckshaw. Curiosity also provided majority of the apartment's furniture, which upholds the understated

ambience that the designer was seeking to capture.

The tasteful restraint displayed in the decor is what contributed to the apartment's final clean aesthetic, which manages to be glamorous without going overboard. ■

**Architect & interior designer** Rakeshh Jeswaani; Rakeshh Jeswaani Interior Architects

**Furniture** Curiosity Furniture Pvt. Ltd.

**Lighting** Crate & Barrel, Ethan Allen

**Bed linen** Address Home

**Story by** Dushyant Shekhawat

**Photography by** Pankaj Anand

**Facing page** The bedroom has the same micro-managed approach, with a suede covered bed and sourced tripod lights for the wooden bedside tables introducing an element of luxury.

**This page** The balcony was considered a breakout space, with several little touches adding a flourish. Apart from the chairs, a modern take on the traditional *khatiya* provides additional seating.