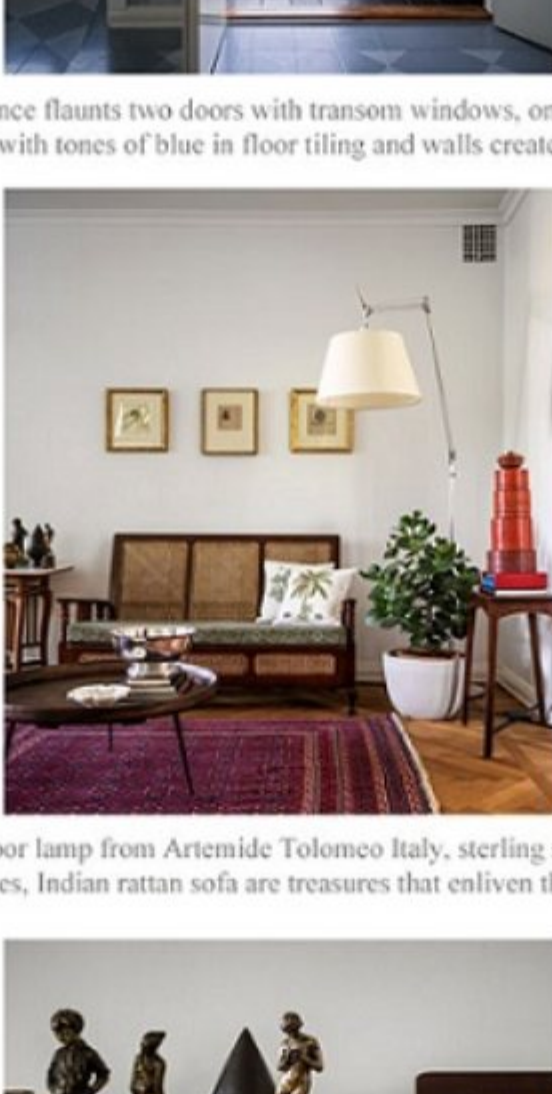


A sumptuous Italian-inspired villa in Sweden exudes Indianness without sacrificing its contemporary side

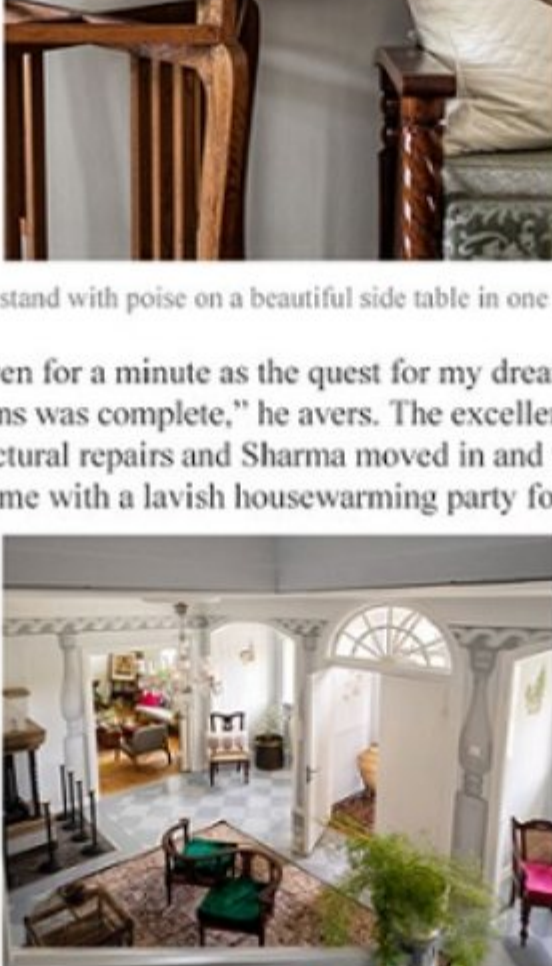
JAN 7, 2022 | By Fareeda Kanga

In a corner of Southern Sweden, close to the IKEA headquarters lies the 100-year-old home of Ankush Sharma, a native of Chandigarh. "Sweden's progressive attitude and its emphasis on sustainability and the environment was what enticed me to live here," says Sharma, whose background in corporate finance and stints with American Express and IKEA have taken him across the globe on work assignments.

When the house hunt began it was love at first sight—on a sprawling 44,000-sq-ft estate, Sharma was shown a historic home, built by the son of the famous handmade 'Brio' toys empire which was up for sale.



Overlooking the garden, the entrance flaunts two doors with transom windows, one in wood and another in pious white. An earthen pot juxtaposed with tones of blue in floor tiling and walls creates a nostalgic vibe; Photographs by Stellan Herner



Paintings by M V Dhurandhar, floor lamp from Artemide Tolomeo Italy, sterling silver Tiffany's bowl from New York, old Burmese lacquered boxes, Indian rattan sofa are treasures that enliven the living room; Photographs by Stellan Herner



A troupe of decorative sculptures stand with poise on a beautiful side table in one corner of the living room; Photographs by Stellan Herner

"I didn't blink or hesitate even for a minute as the quest for my dream home replete with orchards, rolling front and back gardens was complete," he avers. The excellent condition of the home obliterated the need for structural repairs and Sharma moved in and within a record seven to eight days and inaugurated the home with a lavish housewarming party for 70 guests.



The grand foyer is bedecked with a silk Kashmiri carpet and a dramatic brass cage. Playing camouflage with white ceiling, a bohemian crystal chandelier hangs overhead whilst a Greek amphora and an old love chair in teak enthralls. Century-old wall murals radiate graceful essence of the space; Photographs by Stellan Herner

Commenting on the exterior, Sharma points out that the home is designed to resemble an Italian villa as the owner lived in Italy whilst convalescing from a severe lung ailment and was inspired by the local architecture. The orangery made it possible to enjoy long Swedish summer days, a perfect spot to connect with nature and experience the 100 tones of green in the lush back garden.



Previously used as a mortar in olden times, the Naga table serves as a contemporary coffee table in the current day. An ornate brass thali from India belonging to Ankush's maternal grandmother is repurposed as a side table in the orangery; Photographs by Stellan Herner

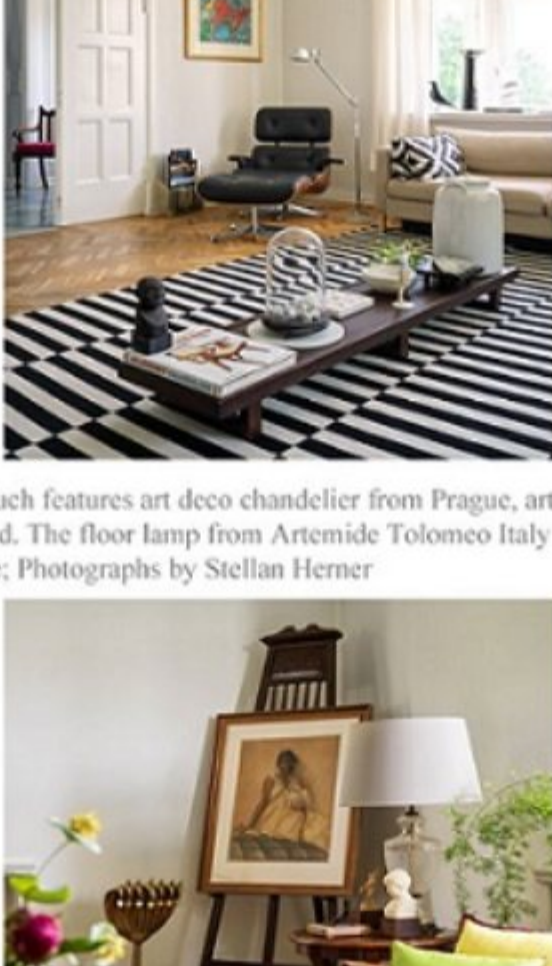


French pharmacy bottles and period mirror from Delhi and a kilim from Iran add a quaint touch; Photographs by Stellan Herner

The Italian-style villa in Sweden has received its fair share of attention in the past with its traditional tiled roof, green awnings and arched doorway. But the real star of the show is undoubtedly the interior decorating style and flair of the owner who prides himself on his keen decorating sensibility to the point that he is considering a full-time switch from the corporate world to that of interior decoration and design!



A chandelier by Erik Hoglund for Kosta Boda, a signed rug from Iran and statement walnut dining table from Denmark render the room a plush appeal. Complemented by black leather chairs from Philippe Starck they are accentuated by 18th-century chaise pieces on wall from South India and Baccarat crystal candelabras from France. The table setting has 19th-century English sterling silverware and dainty china from Gustavsberg and Good Earth, India; Photographs by Stellan Herner

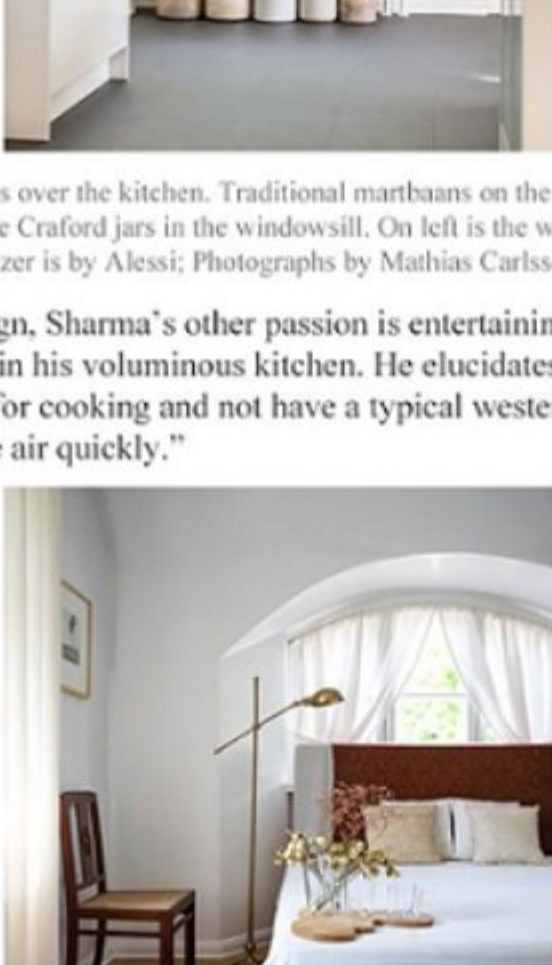


Antique English sterling silver from New York, Tommy crystal stemware from Saint Louis France and bone china from Gustavsberg Sweden and Good Earth make entertaining fun; Photographs by Stellan Herner

"I was drawn to my roots and Indianness, that is my personal style and design aesthetic and I wanted to stay true to this," says Sharma. The colours, richness and warmth that exude from the three salons and bedrooms are testament to his design philosophy.



This soothing bedroom regales with an Iranian kilim, art deco chair and ceiling lamp. Old pickle jars used as vases and 19th-century company school paintings from Phillips Antiques Mumbai hanging on the walls reinstate old world charm; Photographs by Stellan Herner



19th-century company school paintings from Phillips Antiques Mumbai decorate the walls of majestic primary bedroom. A spectacular Indian rosewood bed dressed in Good Earth bed linen with a touch of extravagance of kilims from Iran and Afghanistan, wooden sculpture from Tamil Nadu, old kalamkari textile framed on right side of the wall and a flower pot lamp by Verner Pantone; Photographs by Stellan Herner

The house is furnished with Sharma's many decorative pieces, priceless carpets from Kashmir and Iran interspersed with statement furniture. A chandelier for rosewood furniture is evident as is his love for Baccarat crystal as seen in the chandeliers and the 19th-century candelabras, that occupy pride of place on the dining table.



A striking brass chandelier that belonged to the house hangs formidably over an antique French floor lamp, illuminating the native wall murals. A delightful Indian wooden swing coupled with Good Earth cushions serves as a low seating on the landing of the house while the Iranian carpets add much-needed colour pop to surroundings; Photographs by Stellan Herner

The home has come together without any deliberate planning but rather built around the collection of art deco and mid-century pieces that have been curated mainly from antique stores all over the world.



The study with a Scandinavian touch features art deco chandelier from Prague, by Comelle, Charles and Ray Eames lounge chair and house bird. The floor lamp from Artemide Tolomeo Italy and rug from IKEA Stockholm enhance functionality of the space; Photographs by Stellan Herner

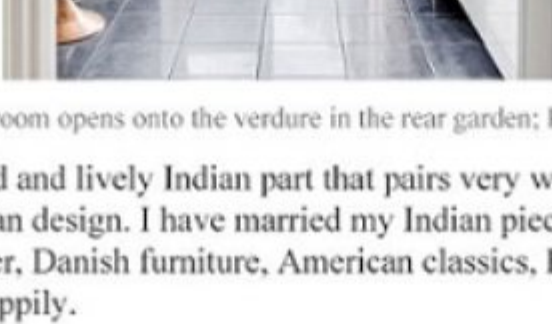


M R Achrekar's oil painting (a portrait of his wife, rests on an antique easel from Kolkata. A 19th-century marble bust from Spain, brass naag (cobra) from Mumbai atop a wooden pillar base from Kolkata. A 19th-century marbled glamour to this corner in the living room; Photographs by Stellan Herner

"Beauty can always be paired with beauty no matter if it's a classic, modern, or a mid-century design. They can always talk to each other...just like my modern dining table is dressed with classic Baccarat crystal candelabras! There are Greek, neoclassical, art nouveau and art deco pieces in the house happily co-existing with Indian antiques and sensibilities. There is a room for everything as long as it is meaningful, relevant and connects with you," he asserts.



In an antique south Indian cabinet from Pudukcherry lies a marble devi sculpture from Northern India, a bust and antique porcelain from France and Sweden, an old pedestal from Sweden and an old Kalighat artwork from Kolkata; Photographs by Stellan Herner



A sober, clutter-free layout sweeps over the kitchen. Traditional marbaans on the floor with homemade pickles beautifully harmonise with the Ise Craford jars in the windowsill. On left is the wine cooler and bonbonniere from Georg Jensen and the citrus squeezer is by Alessi; Photographs by Mathias Carlsson

Besides decorating and design, Sharma's other passion is entertaining, and he cooks elaborate Indian meals for his friends in his voluminous kitchen. He elucidates, "I was clear that I needed to demarcate a separate space for cooking and not have a typical western open plan kitchen as the smell of masala gets into the air quickly."

A classic brass floor lamp and art deco chair in rattan nestled in a cosy corner of the bedroom complements Alvar Aalto vase, adorned with dried flowers from the garden; Photographs by Stellan Herner

A cosy nook houses paintings by M V Dhurandhar, an old lota from Jodhpur lies majestically on a mid-century teak silverware cabinet from Denmark; Photographs by Stellan Herner

Heirloom floor mirror from Chennai sits grandly amidst 19th-century paintings, an old Shiva bust, Afghan kilims and a mid-19th-century Swedish silver coffee pot; Photographs by Stellan Herner

A marble bust from New York, a pair of 18th-century musicians from Pudukcherry, an antique Swedish oil painting, floor lamp from France and a textile hanging made of 19th-century silk and real zari from Varanasi blend seamlessly in a frame; Photographs by Stellan Herner

Although the home is rooted in its Indianness there are Swedish influences as seen in some of the fixtures and furniture, not to mention the den or media room. "Coming from a very colourful background in India, I was also drawn to the calm black and white Scandinavian design. I recognised the strength of each one and how they could complement one another.

A Baccarat hurricane lamp sits on this elegant table from Kashmir along with 19th-century Indian cow panels; Photographs by Stellan Herner

A Swedish antique rattan planter adds a splash of green amidst an array of an Indian mirror and 19th-century paintings from England. A teak and marble mortar by Sharma sits on the Indian antique teak grinder converted into a coffee table. An antique spittoon from Uttar Pradesh and lotas from South India are on display with an Art Deco chair upholstered in Malabar print textile from Fabindia; Photographs by Stellan Herner

An Iranian Kilim is the focus of the bedroom. A 19th-century chaise depicting Shiva quietly overlooks the room from the windowsill; Photographs by Mathias Carlsson

A space that douses you in colours of aqua and green while illustrating a fine moodboard of whites and warm wood. Towel rack by AnanTaya; Photographs by Mathias Carlsson

A little balcony adjacent the bathroom opens onto the verdure in the rear garden; Photographs by Mathias Carlsson

There is a busy, bright, vivid and lively Indian part that pairs very well with the clean lines, subtle, black and white Scandinavian design. I have married my Indian pieces with Swedish porcelain, French crystal, English silver, Danish furniture, American classics, Bohemian Art Deco to name just a few," he concludes happily.