miles travelled on the occasion of the family venture's 24th anniversary, talking of illustrious times in the past and the plans for the future

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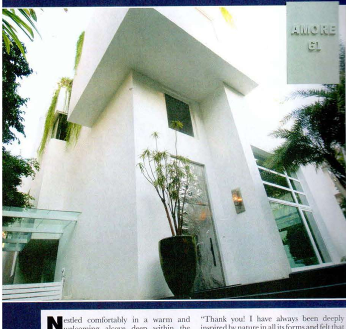
SIMONE ARORA

THE GLAMOUROUS HOME DÉCOR DESIGNER WELCOMES HELLO! INTO HER PRIVATE HAVEN FOR A FREEWHEELING TÊTE-À-TÊTE ON HER NEWLY LAUNCHED STORE, HER DESIGN PHILOSOPHY, HER FAMILY AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...



Nestled comfortably in a warm and welcoming alcove deep within the leafy suburbs of the bustling metropolis of Mumbai, is Simone Arora's stunning home, 'Amore.'

Wide-open expanses of monochrome blend seamlessly with the vast garden and pool areas outdoors and sleek lines perfectly complement the crisp and natural surroundings as muted yet striking tones softly flow across the wide expanses of the home… a true representative of the inhabitants of this remarkable abode.

On a balmy winter's day, HELLO! explored the incredible outdoor promenades as well as the remarkably lush interiors with Amore's gracious hostess, Simone.

Congratulations on the launch of your beautiful luxury concept store, SIMONE! Tell us more...

"Thank you! I have always been deeply inspired by nature in all its forms and felt that it was the right time to present an expression of my design and creative sensibilities. And 'SIMONE' is a complete reflection of all that and more! Each corner echoes my individuality and persona in every way. Located in one of Mumbai's oldest heritage properties, Amerchand Mansion (built in 1908), and spread over 8,000 square feet across two levels, is India's first luxury home concept store inspired by the textures and elements of nature and showcases carefully curated furniture, artefacts, fine fabrics, bed, bath and table linen, tableware, lights and outdoor from international brands across the world.

I have kept the colour palettes neutral and matte in texture with hints of sheen and have curated room concepts with a fusion of contemporary-styled furniture, ▶

Simone is über chic in a formal shirt and a flouncy skirt from Anne Fontaine paired with metallic sandals from Prada as she reclines in the living area in front of the striking dining hall of her home

'I have always worked with natural palettes and been inspired by nature in all its forms. I love working with natural colours and go every year to Como, Italy... a place that inspires me the most, giving my thoughts the right direction'

artefacts and home accessories. Each aspect, including the packaging, stationery, brand logo and product inventory is subtly coordinated in the SIMONE brand colours. As you enter, a signature store fragrance greets you in a stylish and sophisticated environment with an understated old-world charm.

The high ceilings, arch windows, external stone façade and restored wood and glass windows further add to it and sets the atmosphere and concept quite apart. SIMONE is a culmination of my vision, hard work and perseverance. It's a labour of love that took three years to complete."

Why were you inspired to launch SIMONE and what do you believe is its USP?

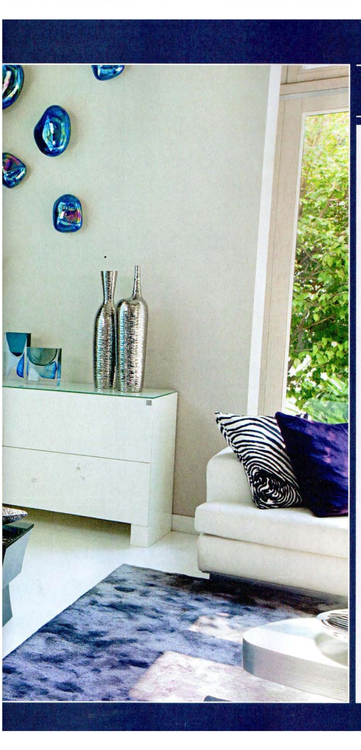
"As the Creative Director at D'Decor for 20 years, I have been a 'behind-the-scenes' contributor. It had become important for me to express my individuality and vision, thus creating my own identity. My home store, SIMONE is an expression of Simone, the woman. Classic, contemporary and timeless in style, it reflects me in many respects. The USP of the store is the fusion of its contemporary interiors, with the old-world heritage charm of its exteriors."

You have a beautiful home... what were your inspirations for its design?

"As a young girl, I was fascinated by the Godrej family's Juhu beach house, which we visited on weekends with the family. The modern architecture of the white structure set amidst the lush green landscape around a blue pool inspired me to eventually build my own home. A larger-than-life modern contemporary styled white house, with large glass windows overlooking greenery and an aqua pool was my initial brief to architect Hafeez Contractor, who then realised my dream by designing Amore. I sourced the furniture and home accessories for Amore from European interior related exhibitions. My mother was extremely supportive in the selection of these pieces. Amore ▶

The beautiful home includes two incredible seating areas over two levels (above and below) in monochromatic tones with pops of vivid colours and lively prints; an alcove for the family (below, right)

Ever gracious and congenial, Simone, is an elegant and glamourous vision in an embellished cut-out gown from Roberto Cavalli and an emerald ring from Farah Khan Fine Jewellery as she strikes a pose before the imposing glass windows of the living room, which overlooks the crystal clear waters of the pool



'I prefer matte colours with a touch of sheen metallic to add the glamour quotient'

was built in three years."

How does it reflect all of your personalities?

"My husband and I prefer a clean and contemporary style of interiors without too much clutter. Amore is classic and timeless in style. Yet, it is functional, spacious, and comfortable for our family of five and our two dogs. It's modern in style… warm and luxurious in feel."

What do you believe are the cornerstone principles for home décor?

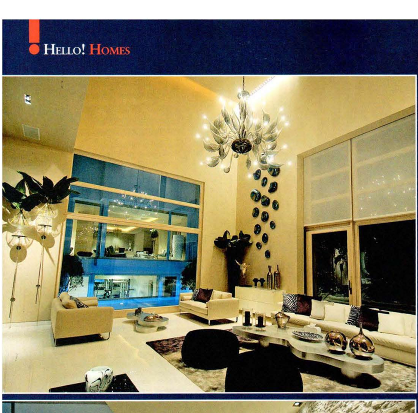
"Adequate light and ventilation are extremely important. A balanced combination of coordinated colours, furniture and home accessories that are placed aesthetically is essential, along with an appropriate density between the furniture and overall available space. The furniture pieces should be visually beautiful yet comfortable and functional. I prefer matte colours with a touch of sheen metallic to add the glamour quotient. I also like using textures of natural wood and stone."

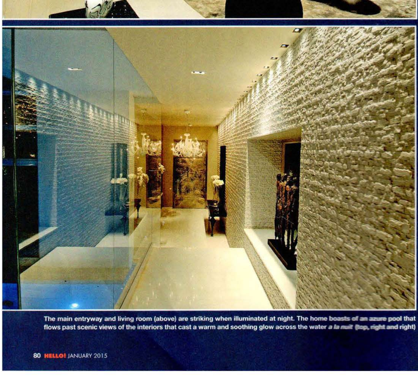
Which are some of the great homes from across the globe that you admire?

"My family home, 'Sanjay house,' is a home built over the years by my parents who procured home accessories and furniture from across the globe. It's a home with character… with a lived-in feel and plenty of positive energy that surrounds it. It has hosted dinners for numerous celebrities and VIP guests over the years. The warmth and welcoming ambience is what makes 'Sanjay House' so special and unique.

You hail from an extremely creative family. How do your family members sway your style choices?

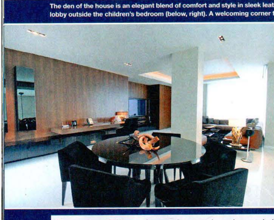
"As a child, I grew up in a beautiful home. My father, as a film director, had a larger-than-life scale of thinking; my mother was always house-proud and therefore always maintained a neat, well organised and beautiful home all through the years. My sister, Sussanne has a unique style of combining different objects, both old world and new and harmoniously blending the two together. My sister, Farah is creative and designs jewellery drawing inspiration from beautiful and interesting objects. My bother Zayed, is athletic and is health and fitness oriented. All of the above are different aspects of my own personality. I am also extremely health and fitness conscious and begin my day with a swim, yoga twice a week and a well-balanced diet." ▶

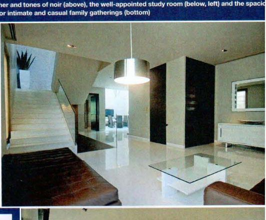




The main entryway and living room (above) are striking when illuminated at night. The home boasts of an azure pool that flows past scenic views of the interiors that cast a warm and soothing glow across the water *a la nuit* (top, right and right)

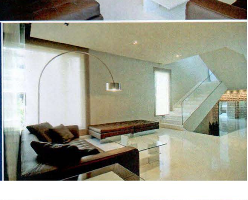
The den of the house is an elegant blend of comfort and style in sleek leather and tones of noir (above), the well-appointed study room (below, left) and the spacious lobby outside the children's bedroom (below, right). A welcoming corner for intimate and casual family gatherings (bottom)

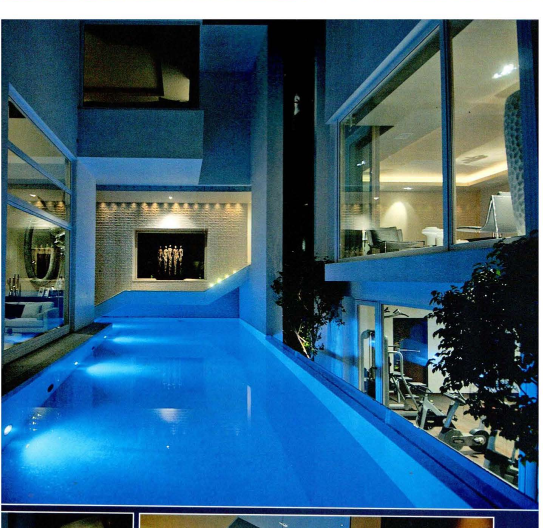


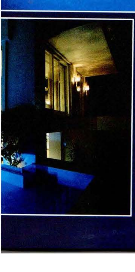


Do your children have creatively bent minds? And if so what do their tastes lean towards… is there a future for them in the family business?

"My son, Armaan is 19-years-old and is currently in college studying business at Georgetown University, Washington, US. He has an inclination towards the arts and drama. Having participated in school plays in the past, he enjoys exploring and discovering the art world by visiting museums and other historic sites. Yuraaz, my second son, is 18-years-old and is in Preparatory School in Boston. He has an effortless flair for fashion, putting things together casually and combining them tastefully. Adah, at 11-years-old, is my youngest daughter and she has a fantastic eye for selecting the best options in fashion ▶







Svelte Simone is poised gracefully in a jersey dress with statement jewellery, all from Lanvin, paired with block-heel sandals from Gucci in the entryway of her imposing yet warmth-filled home

and design – every time! I have always encouraged them to follow their dreams, work hard and be the best in whatever they choose to do. At this time, my elder boys are keen to join the family business as we, as parents, are naturally supportive."

Reflecting back on a number of projects, which has been your most exciting undertaking?

Simone cavorts in the beautiful green expanse that surrounds her magnificent home in wide-leg pants, a printed top and a chunky cuff, all from Roberto Cavalli

'I am incredibly excited... it is a dream come true for me in the true sense of the word. I am thrilled and grateful for this opportunity that has allowed me to create this incredible portfolio of the 'SIMONE.... Naturally Inspired' concept. The response has been overwhelming' - Simone on the launch of her luxury home concept store

"Both my projects – building Amore and restoring and designing SIMONE have been hard, exciting and passionate journeys. Being a perfectionist, I have put my heart and soul and looked into every detail personally. The result has been extremely gratifying."

How would you define true luxury?

"I believe spaces can be made to look luxurious by using good quality furniture and home accessories. Homes must appear visually appealing and be soothing to one's senses… rendering a sense of tranquility to the space. The simplicity of putting good quality pieces together aesthetically to blend into the space also reeks of discreet, but sumptuous, luxury."

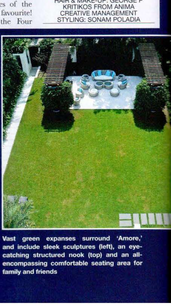
Which are some of the family's favourite luxury retreats to getaway from it all?

"The turquoise blue waters and white sand beaches of the Maldives are always a favourite! We often retreat to the Four Seasons at Landaa Giraavaru, Maldives or the sprawling estate hotel, Villa D'este in Como, Italy to relax, rewind and rejuvenate."

Whilst balancing your professional and family commitments… how do you carve out 'me' time and what are you personal favourite indulgences?

"I draw my peace, strength and energy from my early morning swim and twice a week yoga, which is extremely relaxing, and my 'think time.' I enjoy watching well-directed meaningful movies with great performances to unwind. I enjoy my time with the family at home or with my parents and siblings. And last but not the least, I love to travel… exploring and discovering new cities and places across the world!"

TEXT: FARAH PALIA
PHOTOS: TORANJ KAYVON
INTERIOR SHOTS: PARESH MEHTA
HAIR & MAKE-UP: GEORGE P KRITIKOS FROM ANIMA CREATIVE MANAGEMENT
STYLING: SONAM POLADIA



Vast green expanses surround 'Amore,' and include sleek sculptures (left), an eye-catching structured nook (top) and an all-encompassing comfortable seating area for family and friends