



**PRIMARY COLOURS**

Left: The study on the first floor has fabric wallpaper, bright blue woodwork and the painting *Appreciation* by Indian artist Paresh Maity

# A JEWEL WITH PURPOSE

An Arts and Crafts house in Hampstead has been transformed into a modern home filled with the art and vibrant colours of the owners' Indian heritage. By **Kate Salter**

**H**eath Drive in Hampstead is a wide, leafy road lined with Arts and Crafts houses. It is a place where, one assumes, behind the carefully tended rose bushes the interior décor favoured by its residents tends to fall into that category beloved of north London's most literary enclave: an eclectic mix of English antiques and bookshelves lined with Penguin Classics.

But the first thing you see as you enter Ravi and Anindita Gupta's house is an almost lifesize Buddha standing in an alcove of gold and a disc of bright mosaics set into the oak herringbone floor.

The building, designed by the architect Charles Henry Bourne

Quennell, was originally a grand home but had been split into three flats. Ravi and Anindita bought the ground-floor flat in 2006 and in 2016 bought the flat above them and began the process of turning the two flats into one home.

The Guptas grew up in Coventry and Birmingham respectively but wanted a home that celebrated their Indian heritage. "We didn't want people to walk in and feel they were walking into somewhere *in* India but you have that Indian feel," Anindita says. For Ravi, it was important "for every room to have a purpose" and to be used by the family, so no trophy dining rooms or just-for-show libraries.

To help them achieve a balance of Indian colour and exoticism

within a quintessentially British building, the Guptas enlisted the services of interior designers Callender Howorth. "One of the things we really liked about Callender Howorth was that they said nothing should match but it should blend," says Anindita. So in the main sitting room, where there is glass, marble, even tables made from 1,000-year-old petrified wood, the overall effect is soothing.

The focal point of the light-filled living room is a marble fireplace trimmed with brass, designed by the Guptas with Callender Howorth, and above it a panel of intricate plasterwork created by Stevensons of Norwich, who work in the National Trust's historic buildings. >>>



**BLOCK PARTY** Above: The music room's sofas were hand-embroidered by Susann Eschenfelder. The rug from Fashion for Floors is woven with pieces of sari



Either side of the fireplace are two paintings by the famous Indian artist Sakti Burman, whose work Ravi says isn't easy to come by. "We had been hunting these paintings for years. I managed to get them off market in the end," he says with a smile.

Through the hallway past the Burmese Buddha in his alcove of 23.5 carat gold ("24 carat is too soft," Ravi says), is the most dramatic of all the rooms, the music room. Before becoming an investment banker for Rothschild, Ravi trained as a professional musician until the age of 21. Anindita was a semi-professional Indian dancer and their two teenage children play the piano, a Steinway grand which sits in the bay window.

There are jewel-coloured sofas, a bronze statue of the Hindu lord of dance Nataraja and a rug woven from pieces of vintage saris. "We wanted to create an Indian palace without it actually being an Indian palace," Anindita says. Along one wall is a mural painted by the artist Gary Myatt, who painted

murals for Annabel's club, featuring a scene inspired by a holiday the Guptas took to Rajasthan. It is framed by three plaster 'windows' to give the sense of looking out onto the scene. These are decorated with floral plasterwork and gold leaf that Anindita says is typical of Indian palaces.

Also on the ground floor is the media room and the kitchen. Above the kitchen's hob is an immense slab of blue marble streaked with copper which at first glance could be a painting. "Blue is mine and Ravi's favourite colour. If you stand here it looks like a sea storm," Anindita says.

As well as the raised dining area with its glass chandelier and a large split-level island, there is Ravi's elegant Cellar Maison wine wall which, he says with a chuckle, is where his friends unsurprisingly tend to gravitate towards.

Because the building is Grade II listed, every door, coving and skirting board had to be approved, but the staircase could be modern.

The glass balustrade means that as you climb the stairs, you see the delicate Indian wood carving, bought in Jaipur, which stands at the top of the stairs. "We wanted this room to be like a club in India during colonial times," Anindita says. The walls are lined with a jute-like fabric while the woodwork is painted in a vibrant blue, a colour scheme influenced by another painting, *Appreciation* by Paresh Maity.

Like the ground floor, the three bedrooms here are flooded with light while in the master bedroom there are Porta Romana lights above the bed and a "Hollywood" style walk-in wardrobe.

Before I leave, Ravi shows me the backlit onyx sink and hand-painted silk Fromental wallpaper in the downstairs cloakroom. It's the most luxurious loo I've ever seen and rather sums up their design philosophy: even the most practical of spaces can contain a surprise.

[callenderhoworth.com](http://callenderhoworth.com)



**GOLD STANDARD** Above: A detail of an Indian wood carving bought in Jaipur. It is hand-painted in 24-carat gold and sits at the top of the stairs on a bespoke glass table by Tom Faulkner Top: The living room has silk wallpaper by Stereo, a Nimbus chandelier by CTO Lighting and two paintings by Sakti Burman



**ROCK STAR** Above: The Guptas' kitchen with the blue marble from Brazil and the Cellar Maison wine wall; the Buddha from Burma can be seen in the hall

**STONWORKS**

A natural stone supplier based in London who sourced most of the marble in the Guptas' house, including the striking blue marble sink in the main bathroom and the living room fireplace.  
[stoneworksuk.com](http://stoneworksuk.com)

**EXTREME DESIGN**

The kitchen design company who designed the Guptas' kitchen. Their bespoke kitchens can be suited to any interior design scheme you have in mind.  
[extreme-design.co.uk](http://extreme-design.co.uk)

**PORTA ROMANA**

An Italian company with lights for every room of the home. The Guptas have Porta Romana's lights throughout their house and a mirror above the living room fireplace.  
[portaromana.com](http://portaromana.com)

# 10 ADDRESSES TO GET THE LOOK

**STEVENSONS OF NORWICH**

The only manufacturer licensed by the National Trust to produce decorative plasterwork, they produced most of the intricate plasterwork in the Guptas' house.  
[stevensons-of-norwich.co.uk](http://stevensons-of-norwich.co.uk)

**CELLAR MAISON**

Creators of custom-made wine cellars, wine 'pods', and, as in the Guptas' kitchen, above, wine walls to fit any space. Ravi's is backed with copper which gives a warm glow.  
[cellarmaison.com](http://cellarmaison.com)

**LIBERTY**

The silk ikat cushions on the low sofas in the music room came from Liberty, which has haberdashery to die for as well as ready-made cushions and fabrics.  
[libertylondon.com](http://libertylondon.com)

**TOM FAULKNER**

Specialising in handmade metal furniture, Faulkner worked with Callender Howorth and the Guptas to create many of the bespoke pieces in their home.  
[tomfaulkner.co.uk](http://tomfaulkner.co.uk)

**THE SOFA & CHAIR COMPANY**

The sofas in the music room were especially designed for low level seating to create the effect of an Indian palace, made by The Sofa and Chair Company.  
[thesofaandchair.co.uk](http://thesofaandchair.co.uk)

**BEST AND LLOYD**

The jewel-coloured faceted glass pendant lights in the music room were bought from Best and Lloyd, a Birmingham-based company founded in 1840.  
[bestandlloyd.com](http://bestandlloyd.com)

**FASHION FOR FLOORS**

Based in Monaco, this company has beautiful rugs and can make bespoke pieces from vintage materials. The rug in the music room was made by them from vintage fragments of saris. **L**  
[fashionforfloors.com](http://fashionforfloors.com)