



SHAANA LEVY BAHL

LET'S HELLO! INTO HER STYLISH SOBO APARTMENT, WHERE HUSBAND URAAZ AND SHE ARE ACCUMULATING AN IMPRESSIVE BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO COLLECTION ALONG WITH OBJETS D'ART FROM AROUND THE WORLD. HERE'S A PEEK...

Shaana lounges elegantly on her sofa in an embellished dress by Matthew Williamson

There's a lot about Shaana Levy Bahl that her friends probably don't know... she loves Pinterest, was bridezilla personified when it came to her wedding, was born in Kenya, all her towels are from Switzerland and she can cook a loaf of bread made almost entirely out of nuts. All that and the fact that she had once acted in a film called *Namaste London* make Shaana a bag full of surprises. The recently married woman of the world, (cause that's what she really is, having lived in Zurich, London, New York and now finally Mumbai) is a stickler for perfection. This becomes abundantly clear when you enter her three-bedroom pied-à-terre on Altamount Road, in a building constructed by the Tatas, one where getting in is a feat on its own, as Shaana confesses to us while our photographer sets up his lights.

The couple's home is contemporary, but not the stark, glass and steel variety. It's got touches of colour, warmth and an inviting air. There are oodles of sophisticated touches thanks to Shaana's husband Uraaz's fascination with all things classic Hollywood. A giant picture of Brigitte Bardot stands proudly in the living room, a few feet away from a framed picture of Roger Moore in a tuxedo and bow-tie, billowing smoke from a lit cigarette. "As you can tell, my husband and I both like black and white photography," says Shaana, pointing to the half dozen portraits on the walls. "I've been collecting for three years. Art is something aspirational and lovely, but since we're newly married and want to take some time amassing an art collection, black and white photography made a better substitute. It also goes well with the house. Over there you have two Rohit Chawla pieces from his Wanderlust collection, this is a Mario Testino print of Kate Moss right here, we loved how it blew up in size, those are Victoria Beckham's portraits by Bryan Adams near the entrance and the Roger Moore we bought in a store in Zurich called Red Box," she says flaying her arms in the direction of each piece she refers to.

The photos make for a great *mise-en-scène* for the Bahls to begin life as a new couple, think of a scene right out of a Fellini movie, that's the world they inhabit. With three bedrooms (one that they've converted to a study), two large balconies and a sizeable dining and drawing room, Shaana had plenty of nooks and corners to spruce up and add little personal touches to. "I bought most of the things from Mumbai. We used the help of Farida Hussain Ali a lot, she did the dining table and restored old pieces that I'd found here and there," says Shaana. "Some of the furniture is from Zurich while other pieces are from the store, Eastern Treasures. Renu Chainani is a friend and she helped add the more modern elements to the home."

Many of the other pieces in Shaana's home are from The Charcoal Project, where the couple had set-up their wedding registry. A wooden horse she had spotted in a flea market in Goa sits proudly near a window, while a giant inverted question ►



Shaana is a striking vision in a bodycon dress by Yigel Azrouel, pumps from Casadei and a leather strap watch from Audemars Piguet along with a LOVE bracelet by Cartier. Seen in the background is a portrait of Kate Moss shot by Mario Testino

AD



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A view of the Bahl's living room (left), where Shaana intends to add a rug from Le Mill, the guest bedroom (below) is clean and contemporary like the rest of the house, seen (bottom, left) is a nook from the living room again, the side tables for which Shaana picked up from Zurich

mark hangs on a wall nearby. "That's a piece made by my grandmother; she's an artist," says Shaana, "It's called 'the wrong question,' and is made entirely out of the *Financial Times* newspaper, which she rolled up and put together to make the piece." A pair of hands on a side table in her dining room are also by her grandmother, "Those are also hers," proclaims Shaana proudly, "they're made out of newspapers too, one is from an Israeli newspaper and the other is from a Palestinian one."

Art and design seem to abound in the lives of the Levy women. "My mother, Sheela, is an interior designer," explains Shaana, about the other major influence on her aesthetic sense, "Our homes are usually very comfortable and functional while having a modern contemporary feel to them. What I love about a home is keeping it clean and modern but not too stark and uncomfortable. This place isn't ready yet, it needs some additional touches, we've been here only five months and a home has to organically grow over several years. High on my priority list is a rug for the living room! It's things like that which add layers to a home over time. The most beautiful ones are



when you travel and pick up more and more. My aesthetics come from my mother, who has done up homes around the world. She came and helped us do up the flat."

Diptyque candles are scattered around the house along with several coffee table books, one on Marilyn Monroe propped up on an easel, and several others by Assouline and Taschen piled up on a book shelf. Pictures from the Bahl wedding that took place in Jodhpur are framed and put up on the walls. "The frames are actually made from wooden train tracks from South Africa," says Shaana pointing to the aged wood that surrounds the black and white pictures from her wedding. "The fun part is finding things on Pinterest, and from places you wouldn't normally go to," says Shaana looking at a dark wooden bench that sits near the entrance to her home, "that I saw on Pinterest and got Farida to recreate ►

AD

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Roger Moore looks on in this monochrome corner of the house (above). The Bahls' dining room (below), with portraits of Rohit Chawla's Wanderlust collection seen on the walls. The space is in keeping with their choice of colour combinations, making it understatedly elegant



Shaana personifies casual chic in drawstring palazzo pants by Zara teamed with a woolen crop top

here in Mumbai," she adds.

Hidden cleverly is a giant projector screen that comes down when Uraaz and Shaana are back home after a long day at work. "We're big movie buffs and this is our happy place at night. We watch a lot of shows, *House of Cards*, *Game of Thrones*, *Fargo* and *Scandal*. They're way too many, it's embarrassing," she confesses.

Forever the fashionista, Shaana puts on a wide array of ensembles for our shoot along with red-soled shoes (the kind our style team goes gaga over), reaffirming the fact that style and fashion are but two sides of the same coin. "I think again it all ties into

what I consider to be beautiful," says Shaana adding, "What I consider fashionable isn't what I see in magazines but what suits my body, what I'm comfortable with. Some of it is aspirational, but all very much my aesthetic. I prefer wearing one colour or going in for block colours. I always liked to dress up in costumes and when I came to your HELLO! HALL OF FAME awards I said 'Oh! I don't wanna wear another dress,' so I put on a suit and grabbed Uraaz's Tom Ford bow-tie. To me that's fun. I was an actor; I dress up and play characters without thinking so

much." Getting into character is what Shaana did last year when the Bahls decided to tie the knot in a small, but by no means less grand wedding at the Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur. Transforming into the model Indian princess she left guests breathless with her exuberance and elegance; jiving on the dance floor with as much joie de vivre as she did walking down the grand staircase of the palace with her father to meet her husband-to-be. "I was one of those girls," she says, "I wanted it to be a fairytale. I'm a very girly

girl that way, so for me it was a passion project. Every detail from flowers to sparklers, literally every little detail... in-room welcome cards, I wanted to design and create specially for the wedding. I think the vision came about when we decided about Umaid Bhawan and Jodhpur. Wanting to keep it small and inviting only 200 people was tough and I'm sure we upset people, but it was clear to me that I wanted to have the people I loved the most around, it was meant to be about this love story and our marriage, not about pomp and show."

The Audermas Piguet that Uraaz proposed to Shaana with ('Marry Me,' inscribed on the back of the dial, along with the date of her birthday), sits proudly on her wrist. "He unravelled the whole proposal beautifully using his iPhone on which he showed me a picture of the watch before actually taking it out. We were in a tent in a safari park in Kenya and it was after midnight on my birthday," she narrates, explaining to us that Uraaz was the man she'd always wished to end up with. Stylishly spirited, the Bahls are the quintessential South ▶



Shaana is radiant in an embroidered *chikkankari lehenga* by Tarun Tahiliani and a necklace by Mawi

Clearly in a mood for fun, Shaana strikes playful poses for the camera



Mumbai society couple, that is to say they could be part of any urbane culture around the world. The two have million dollar smiles which could be used to light up any room, no need for candles and mood lighting at all. But what's all the more endearing is the fact that they are extremely grounded, *sel de la terre* or salt of the earth as the Francaise would call them. And it is on the realisation of that note that we bid them adieu as the couple ready themselves to watch the latest episode of *Game of Thrones*, probably with a glass of wine by their sides and Shaana making mental notes about which new piece she can add to her already striking home.

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