

The master bedroom and the dining room have been opened up with large teak wood doors to allow plenty of natural light to stream into the spaces and allow easy access to the courtyard

SITTING ON THE SOPO

This home in Saligao by Rochelle Santimano is a nod to traditional, Goan architecture while embracing a contemporary aesthetic

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A large antique chandelier, rotação chairs, pastel hued soft furnishings and tropical indoor plants add a contemporary flair to the living room while the Manglorean tiles add to its heritage feel



As you go further into the village, the noise fades away making way for the melodious sounds of nature. A quietude takes over as you walk through the reclaimed wooden doors that lead to this century-old bungalow, fronted by a verandah. At the far end is the sopo, an in-situ bench, traditionally found in all Goan homes — a hallmark of the now famous susegad way of life that encourages lazy afternoons morphing into quiet evenings watching the world pass by.

This century-old bungalow is today home to Shraddha Sawant and her family. Shraddha was keen to preserve its history while updating it, and roped in Rochelle Santimano of Studio Praia to bring it together, “Restoring old homes is not just about sustainability but it’s also a personal journey for me, to be able to bring these beautiful, uniquely Goan homes back to life,” says Rochelle. The Mumbai-born and raised Rochelle, spent most of her holidays growing up in Colva, where her family is from, eventually making Goa her base more than a decade ago. It is her ancestry and her commitment to stay true to it that reflects in her sensitive approach to projects, making her a sought-after name in the susegad state.

Originally built in the 1900s, the structure had seen its share of seasons, and for the last few years was unoccupied adding to its state of disrepair. It was in definite need of TLC, one that Rochelle has mastered over the years, revitalising heritage structures in Goa, giving them a new lease of life and purpose. “The home catered to a different era — the roof, walls and red oxide floors were damaged in certain places, the bathrooms and kitchen were outdated, the old wooden windows were replaced by metal windows with RCC chajjas, the electrical wiring was exposed, the garden in the front and backyard were barren and the outhouse was dilapidated,” laughs Rochelle while listing out

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the problems she faced during the initial stages of the transformation of the home.

Rochelle was keen on creating a space that was calming and peaceful, something that was true to its history yet contemporary, rustic yet modern, nostalgic yet practical. “We consciously decided to hold on to elements of architectural or heritage value, and let go of interventions that didn’t align,” she says. The team at Studio Praia redesigned certain elements that felt dated or obsolete; replaced metal windows with teak ones. The new doors and windows allowed for plenty of natural light and ventilation while the removal of grills made way for unobstructed views of the fields, the garden and the pool.

This lovely rendition in a palette of natural and handmade materials in soft shades of dusty rose and ivory for the exterior and warm teak wood for the doors and windows, natural honey kota and salmon cement oxide in the bathrooms and warm patterned cement tiles creates a perfect canvas for a symphony of the old and the new. The home is built along a spine, a common passageway — starting with the living room to the right and a guest bedroom on the left. As you move along, you will find the master bedroom opening out to a large courtyard that overlooks the pool and the tropical back garden. Further down the passage is a corridor to the rear balcão which has been redesigned to accommodate dining space. As with most tropical homes, this lovely space opens out to the courtyard, where on most days you’ll hear the sound of laughter, music and tapping feet merrily in sync with the aroma of delicious food wafting in. ♦

Instagram: @studio_praia

The original red oxide flooring, antique light fixtures and live edge dining table complete the dining space. The dining room overlooks the courtyard and makes the perfect in-between space for entertaining guests



Rochelle retained most of the architectural elements of value while revitalising this 100-year old home. She introduced a swimming pool and created a stepped garden as the site had a gradual contour to make it more relevant to Shraddha and her family. During the process of addition and alteration to the property, the team Studio Praia ensured that not a single tree was cut, and all plans were in cohesion with the existing foliage on site

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The master bedroom opens out to the courtyard and is done up in shades of ivory while the red oxide flooring has been retained and restored from its previous life (OPPOSITE PAGE) The verandah has been extended across the front facade of the bungalow. At the far end is a sopo, which is a traditional, built-in bench. On the floor are customised patterned cement tiles designed to mimic the red oxide flooring seen in the rest of the home





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Clockwise from top left: The rear *balcão* is a perfect space for a Sunday afternoon with friends, given that it is connected with the dining and the courtyard; The salmon oxide cement finish on the wall in the bathroom makes for a perfect backdrop for the dainty, antique scones, while the rustic stone-finish basin add to the charm; The guest bedroom is furnished with furniture made in teak wood and *rotação*



This kitchen is a masterclass in bare essentials. The shutters hide away all extras while the old school windows and the pickle *barris* are a nod to the past



STUDIO PRAIA IS A DESIGN FIRM based in Goa that focuses on restoration and culture sensitive architecture and interior design. Their projects are designed to respect the heritage, culture, climatology, materials and architecture of the land, while introducing much needed elements of functionality and modernism.

WHAT DOES HOME MEAN TO YOU?
Home is a space where you can just be. A relaxed space to unwind and enjoy life's simple pleasures with the people you love.

DESCRIBE THIS HOME IN 3 WORDS.
Calm, Nostalgic, Goan.

WHAT IS YOUR DECOR STYLE LIKE?
I like to use decor that's a fun mix of the old, the found and the new. Local antique shops in the villages of Goa are where I tend to find the most exciting pieces.

IF THIS HOME WAS A MOOD, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
Peaceful.

THE HOME IS BEST ENJOYED DURING...
The monsoons in Goa would be the perfect season to sit in the *balcão* or the living room and watch as the fields transform into a shade of neon green.