



COVER FEATURE

SIMRAN BOPARAI:
**Reigning
in
Opulence**

Celebrated for her bespoke, aspirational designs that blend grandeur with cultural heritage, Simran Boparai is the visionary architect sculpting opulent architectural marvels. From lavish residential estates to awe-inspiring commercial spaces, she discusses her neoclassical design philosophy, the pursuit of seamlessly integrating luxury with functionality, and her trailblazing vision for reshaping skylines across the globe

INTERVIEW: **KASHISH KAUSHAL** PORTRAITS: **ARYA ARORA**

While modern architecture has made inroads, Punjab's affluent sections still exhibit a penchant for lavish, ornate residences and commercial spaces that exude grandeur and royalty. This cultural predilection for opulence and status symbolism stems from Punjab's rich history, where the aristocracy and landed gentry have long embraced a regal, ostentatious lifestyle. Architects working in Punjab often need to cater to these tastes for luxury and bling.

Simran Boparai, the visionary founder of her eponymous practice **Simran Boparai Archtelier**, has deftly tapped into this market, crafting bespoke architectural marvels that cater to the discerning tastes of Punjab's elite. Her forte lies in the Neoclassical design style, which pays homage to the classical architecture of ancient Greece and Rome while incorporating modern elements and sensibilities. Simran's residential projects are a study in opulence, with her Neoclassical designs featuring grandiose elements such as stately columns, pediments, and sinuous mouldings. From sprawling mansions adorned with intricate stone carvings and ornamental motifs, to palatial estates replete with grand entrances, sweeping courtyards, and lavish interiors, her designs seamlessly blend the grandeur of the past with contemporary luxury.

The Neoclassical interior style championed by Simran is characterized by its symmetry, proportions, and elegant detailing. Her expertise lies in curating these elements into cohesive, awe-inspiring environments that resonate with the region's cultural sensibilities. "I have a unique way of working as a process where we bring concepts and then derive them into practical design. The process is the key to my unique perspective," explains Simran, emphasising the importance of her design methodology in translating grand visions into tangible, functional spaces.

The firm's commercial endeavours are equally impressive, with Simran and her team creating awe-inspiring spaces that exude a sense of exclusivity and prestige through the Neoclassical lens. Opulent lobbies, grandiose facades, and meticulously curated interiors featuring exquisite materials and bespoke furnishings are hallmarks of their work.

Since its inception, Simran Boparai Archtelier has carved a niche for itself, becoming a torchbearer for architectural excellence. In this exclusive interview, we sit down with Simran Boparai to gain a comprehensive understanding of her remarkable journey, her inspirations, and her firm's multidisciplinary approach that has garnered international acclaim. Whether you're an architecture

enthusiast, a design aficionado, or someone who appreciates the art of spatial brilliance, this interview promises to be an engaging and enlightening read! Step into the realm of pulchre and innovation as the excerpts below reveal the mind and mastery of Simran Boparai:

Kashish Kaushal (KK): Can you tell us a bit about your background and what inspired you to pursue a career in architecture and design?

Simran Boparai (SB): What inspired me to pursue a career in architecture and design is a combination of passion, creativity, and a desire to make a positive impact on the built environment. Since my early years, I've been fascinated by the idea of shaping spaces that not only serve functional purposes but also evoke emotions and enrich lives. This passion led me to pursue my education in architecture. I completed my schooling at Sacred Heart Senior Secondary School Amritsar, where I first began to explore my interest in design. Following that, I pursued my bachelor's degree in architecture from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. It was during my time at university that I realized the potential of architecture to create meaningful change in the world. My first residential project of 20,000 square feet, though a bit daunting initially, became my best memory and fortified my love for this craft. It was a pivotal moment where I witnessed the transformation of ideas into tangible spaces, sparking a deep sense of fulfilment and purpose in me.

KK: Are there any architects, designers, or artists whose work has significantly influenced or inspired you?

SB: In exploring the question of influences in my work, I find myself tracing a rich lineage of architects, designers, and artists whose creations have deeply resonated with me. Rooted in the grandeur of neoclassical architecture, my creative journey echoes the elegance and sophistication of the French era of the 17th Century. From the visionary designs of Architect Louis Le Vau and Architect Jacques-Germain Soufflot to the timeless innovations of Architect Robert Adam in the 18th century, each luminary has left an indelible mark on my architectural sensibilities. Drawing inspiration not only from the structural marvels but also from the meticulously crafted landscapes of André Le Nôtre, I am captivated by the seamless integration of form and function. Transitioning through the centuries, the influence of architects like Louis Combes in the 19th century continues to shape my perspective, culminating in a profound appreciation for the contemporary brilliance of figures like Architect Zaha Hadid. However, it is the epoch spanning from the reign of King Louis XIV to King Louis XVI that holds a particularly special place in my heart, encapsulating an era of unparalleled artistic ingenuity and architectural splendour.

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I draw immense inspiration from the masterful work of Le Corbusier and his iconic designs that adorn Chandigarh. Witnessing the seamless integration of architecture and urban planning in this city fueled our ambition to establish a strong presence here. Transitioning from such modern influences, I find myself equally enchanted by the architectural marvels of the French era spanning from the reign of King Louis XIV to King Louis XVI.”

—SIMRAN BOPARAI, Founder, Simran Boparai Archtelier

The Classical Nouveau project is infused with a playful spirit, a bold stroke of colour, and a touch of modern ingenuity. Enter the realm of neoclassical design, where the timeless elegance of classical architecture meets the vibrant energy of contemporary aesthetics



Gone are the days of muted palettes; here at the Classical Nouveau project, vibrant hues adorn furniture and accents, injecting life and personality into every corner. From lush upholstery to striking drapery, each element serves as a canvas for self-expression, inviting inhabitants to revel in the richness of their surroundings



The drawing room exudes the timeless charm of classical design, where the ceiling serves as a masterpiece adorned with intricate brushwork reminiscent of ancient frescoes. Beyond the captivating ceiling, meticulous attention to detail brings the space to life, with classical architectural elements seamlessly blending with modern touches. This delicate balance between tradition and innovation creates a space that is both timeless and contemporary, embodying the essence of elegance and sophistication.

In the dining area designed by Simran, elegant furnishings complement the design, creating an atmosphere of refined luxury. The space is adorned with tasteful accents and lighting fixtures that add warmth and ambiance, inviting guests to indulge in culinary delights while surrounded by contemporary elegance



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KK: What was the driving force behind expanding your operations to Chandigarh and establishing a pan-India presence? How has the growth of your firm impacted your approach to design and project management, and what challenges have you faced in scaling your operations?

SB: The driving force behind expanding our operations to Chandigarh and establishing a pan-India presence stems from the city's pivotal role as a centre for monumental projects. Chandigarh, often regarded as the heart or the focal point for significant architectural endeavours, resonated deeply with our vision for growth and innovation. Personally, I draw immense inspiration from the masterful work of Le Corbusier and his iconic designs that adorn Chandigarh. Witnessing the seamless integration of architecture and urban planning in this city fuelled our ambition to establish a strong presence here.

The growth of our firm has significantly impacted our approach to design and project management. With an expanded reach and increased scale of operations, we've had to adapt our methodologies to ensure efficiency and excellence across diverse projects. Collaboration and communication have become paramount as we navigate larger teams and more complex endeavours. Scaling our operations has presented its share of challenges, including resource management, talent acquisition, and maintaining quality standards. Balancing rapid expansion with maintaining our commitment to excellence has required strategic planning and meticulous attention to detail. However, these challenges have also propelled us to refine our processes, foster innovation, and strengthen our capabilities as a multidisciplinary architectural firm.

KK: What unique perspectives or experiences have shaped your approach to design and architecture?

SB: Our approach to design and architecture is influenced by a diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and cultural backgrounds within our team. With members hailing from various cultural heritages, we are enriched by a plethora of traditions and viewpoints that contribute to our design ethos. This cultural diversity fosters a dynamic environment where ideas are exchanged, and creativity flourishes.

Our commitment to client-centered design further shapes our approach. Through close collaboration with our clients, we gain insight into their aspirations, needs, and values, treating them as integral partners in the design journey. By prioritising their input, we tailor our solutions to exceed expectations, ensuring a personalised and meaningful outcome.

In addition, my specialisation in Neo-classical design adds a distinctive dimension to our practice. By infusing classical elements into contemporary projects, we offer a unique perspective that blends tradition with innovation.





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Our process involves translating conceptual ideas into practical designs, emphasising the importance of methodical planning and execution in achieving our signature style.

KK: How would you describe your design philosophy and the core principles that guide your work? Can you walk us through your typical design process, from conceptualisation to execution?

SB: Our design philosophy revolves around a deep appreciation for the transformative power of architecture to shape experiences, enrich lives, and inspire positive change. Rooted in our collective aspirations and cultural identity, our core principles guide every aspect of our work. Here's a walkthrough of our typical design process as an architectural firm—In our typical design process, we commence with a thorough understanding of the client's needs, project goals, and site context. This involves initial meetings and discussions to gather relevant information, including site conditions, regulatory constraints, and budgetary considerations. We delve into research and analysis to gain insights into the project's context, drawing inspiration from architectural precedents, case studies, and emerging trends. Based on this groundwork, we embark on conceptual design, generating initial design concepts that creatively respond to the client's vision and functional requirements.

Through iterative feedback and collaboration with the client and project team, we refine and develop the design, translating conceptual ideas into detailed architectural drawings, 3D renderings, and digital models. This meticulous process ensures that spatial relationships, materiality, and form are articulated with precision and clarity. Comprehensive technical documentation is prepared to communicate design intent and ensure regulatory compliance. We work closely with consultants and specialists to integrate technical systems seamlessly into the design. Throughout the presentation and review stages, we engage with clients and stakeholders, incorporating feedback and making revisions as necessary to align with project goals and expectations. Upon approval of the design, we navigate the permitting process and proceed with construction administration, providing oversight, quality control, and coordination to ensure that the design is implemented according to specifications and standards. Upon completion, we conduct final inspections and walkthroughs to verify that the built environment meets design expectations and quality standards. We facilitate the transition to occupancy, conducting post-occupancy evaluations to assess performance and gather feedback for future improvements. Throughout this entire process, we uphold principles of originality, integrity, and ethical conduct, ensuring that our work reflects authenticity, innovation, and respect for intellectual property rights.

KK: You're renowned for creating bespoke, aspirational designs, particularly in the residential sector. What is your philosophy when it comes to designing

luxurious residential estates and mansions?

SB: Our commitment to excellence drives us to pursue the highest standards of craftsmanship, attention to detail, and aesthetic refinement in every project we undertake. We strive to create spaces that not only meet but exceed the expectations of our clients, elevating their living experiences to unparalleled levels of luxury and sophistication. Innovation is at the heart of our design ethos, fuelling our quest to push the boundaries of creativity and explore new possibilities in architecture. Whether it's experimenting with cutting-edge materials, pioneering sustainable design solutions, or reimagining traditional architectural forms, we constantly seek innovative approaches to enriching the built environment. Central to our philosophy is our client-centric approach, which places the needs, desires, and aspirations of our clients at the forefront of the design process. We believe that truly exceptional architecture is born from a deep understanding of our clients' lifestyles, preferences, and values. By forging collaborative partnerships with our clients, we ensure that each design is not only a reflection of their unique identity but also a realization of their dreams and aspirations.

KK: Can you highlight a project where your firm's multidisciplinary expertise truly shined, and how did you integrate the various elements seamlessly?

SB: We strive to be the vanguards of transformative architecture, leaving an enduring legacy of unparalleled creativity and spatial brilliance. Some of our most notable projects include the Mali Ram Jewelers in Amritsar, The Cove House, Sadhika's Mansion, GS Chema House, Shubham Dream City, and the Bhutani House. These projects have been particularly meaningful because they have allowed us to create designs that have a tangible impact on people's lives, communities, and the built environment, while also providing a platform for creative expression and innovation. They have also been challenging in terms of navigating various project constraints, meeting client expectations, managing multidisciplinary teams, and addressing regulatory requirements, all while maintaining design integrity and upholding professional responsibility.

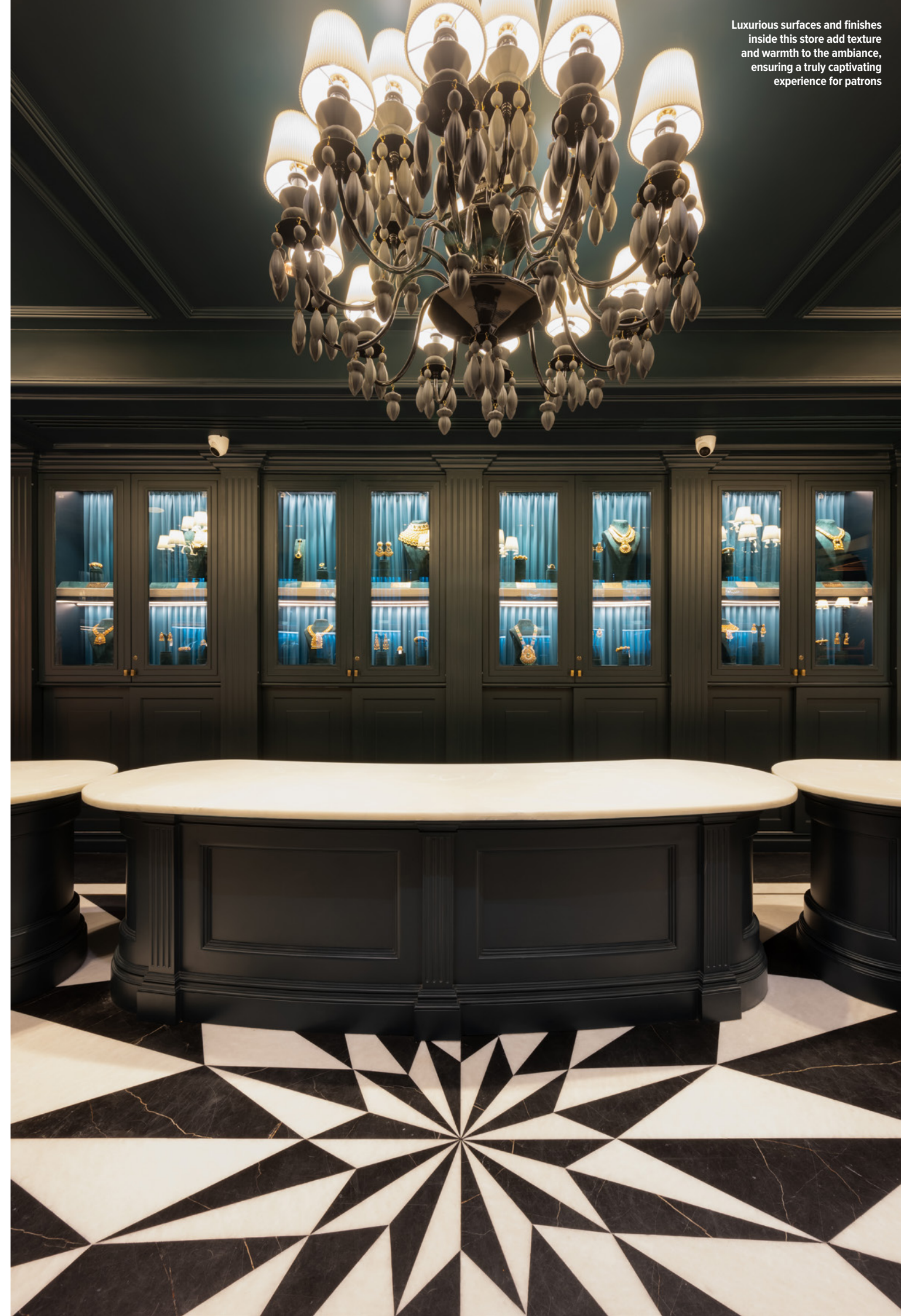
KK: How do you approach balancing functionality and aesthetics in your designs?

SB: When approaching the balance between functionality and aesthetics, we prioritise originality, creativity, and ethical practices. We start by generating original ideas and concepts that address both functional requirements and aesthetic aspirations. We conduct thorough contextual analysis to ensure that our designs respond sensitively to the surroundings while meeting functional objectives. We then translate conceptual ideas into detailed design proposals, experimenting with various forms, materials, and spatial configurations to achieve a harmonious balance between functionality and visual appeal.

Stepping inside this jewellery showroom, visitors encounter a lavish interior that radiates opulence and refinement. The dominant colour palette, a harmonious blend of deep green and gold, evokes a sense of regal grandeur



Luxurious surfaces and finishes inside this store add texture and warmth to the ambiance, ensuring a truly captivating experience for patrons





Throughout the process, we engage in collaborative discussions with clients, design teams, and stakeholders to solicit feedback and ensure alignment with project goals. We also adhere to ethical principles, respect intellectual property rights, and prioritize sustainable design integration.

KK: Are there any specific materials, techniques, or design elements that you're particularly drawn to or enjoy working with?

SB: Absolutely. We enjoy exploring adaptive reuse techniques to creatively repurpose existing structures or materials, adding historical depth and character to our architectural narratives. We're also drawn to incorporating biophilic design elements, such as natural light, greenery, water features, and organic forms, to enhance occupant well-being and connectivity with nature. Additionally, we explore modular construction methods to streamline the building process, reduce waste, and increase efficiency, while also incorporating interactive and experiential design features that engage users and create memorable spatial experiences.

KK: What aspects of your work bring you the most passion and fulfillment?

SB: Several aspects of my work bring me passion and fulfillment. First and foremost, the opportunity to push the boundaries of creativity and innovation in architectural design ignites a sense of excitement and fulfillment. Designing spaces that positively impact people's lives and experiences, such as community gathering places or sustainable housing projects, is deeply rewarding. I also find great fulfillment in working collaboratively with talented professionals, clients, and stakeholders, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared purpose. Contributing to sustainability through integrating sustainable design principles into our projects allows me to make a meaningful contribution to environmental stewardship and resilience. Promoting social equity and inclusivity through accessible, inclusive, and responsive designs contributes to a more equitable built environment and fosters social cohesion and justice, which is incredibly fulfilling. Finally, inspiring and educating others about the power of design to shape the world around us through publications, exhibitions, and public engagements provides an opportunity to spark curiosity, dialogue, and positive change within the broader community.

KK: Where do you find inspiration for your designs, and how do you keep your creativity fresh?

SB: I find inspiration from a diverse range of sources, including art, nature, literature, travel, history, technology, and cultural traditions.

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The interior design of this residence maintains a classical aesthetic with clean lines and minimal embellishments



Neo-Classical design reigns supreme in this kitchen, exuding timeless elegance. A coffered ceiling, adorned with geometric patterns and recessed lighting, adds drama and sophistication, creating a sensory delight. Designed in Collaboration with Simran Boparai and Magppie Kitchens



SB: Yes, we're currently designing a mansion in Lucknow with French chateau architecture at 50,000 square feet, incorporating sloped designs and unique elements of openness. The mansion's exterior features hallmark French chateau elements like steeply pitched roofs, intricate stonework, and arched windows. Inside, the layout prioritises openness and airiness, with high ceilings, large windows, and seamless transitions between spaces. Throughout, meticulous attention to detail with custom millwork, imported marble, and handcrafted finishes elevate the mansion's charm and luxury. Overall, it is a breathtaking blend of the old world charm and modern luxury. Another project in our pipeline is a 1-lakh-square-foot (5-acre) project for the Royalty group that seamlessly blends classical and Rajasthani architecture with modern technology. Luxurious amenities including a grand central plaza, swimming pools, spas, fitness centres, and recreational facilities blend seamlessly with the architectural theme, offering residents modern comforts and conveniences. Inside, heritage-inspired interiors adorned with rich fabrics, intricate woodwork, and handcrafted furnishings pay homage to Rajasthani craftsmanship, while modern amenities discreetly incorporated into the design ensure contemporary living standards.

KK: How do you see the field of architecture and design evolving in the coming years, and how are you positioning yourself to stay ahead of the curve?

SB: The field of architecture and design is undergoing rapid transformation driven by technological advancements, demographic shifts, environmental concerns, and evolving societal needs. To stay ahead of the curve, architectural firms and renowned architects must embrace innovation, adaptability, and forward-thinking strategies. We are positioning ourselves to stay at the forefront by embracing emerging technologies, studying demographic shifts, and responding to evolving societal needs. We're also committed to continuous learning, exploring new materials and construction techniques, and fostering a culture of curiosity and experimentation within our firm.

KK: What is your long-term vision or dream for your practice, and what impact do you hope your work will have on the built environment and the communities you serve?

SB: My long-term vision and dream for my practice are to expand our reach worldwide and establish offices globally, allowing us to serve a broader audience and leave an enduring legacy through our work. Ultimately, I hope our work will have a profound impact on the built environment and the communities we serve by reshaping skylines with designs that provoke awe and inspire generations. I aspire to create architectural marvels that celebrate the art of spatial brilliance, redefine luxury and elegance, and contribute to a more sustainable, equitable, and aesthetically rich world. Through our commitment to excellence, innovation, and our ability to seamlessly blend tradition and modernity, I envision our firm as a trailblazer in the world of design and architecture, sculpting spaces that resonate with cultural sensibilities while remaining firmly rooted in the principles of functionality, sustainability, and client-centric design. ✚

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Engaging in activities that stimulate creativity, such as visiting museums, attending lectures, exploring new environments, and participating in interdisciplinary collaborations, helps me stay inspired. I invest time in research and exploration to deepen my understanding and uncover new insights relevant to the project's context, program, and aspirations. Exploring precedents, case studies, and emerging trends in architecture, design, and related fields also inform and inspire my design process. I cultivate

a curious and open-minded approach to design, embracing experimentation and a willingness to explore unconventional ideas and perspectives. Staying receptive to feedback, critique, and diverse viewpoints nurtures a culture of continuous learning and growth. Nature serves as an abundant source of inspiration, offering rich patterns, forms, textures, and systems to emulate and adapt through the principles of biophilia and biomimicry. Additionally, reflecting on personal values, passions, and

aspirations helps me infuse projects with authenticity, purpose, and meaning, while establishing a design ritual or routine that promotes creativity and focus is also crucial.

KK: What have been some of the biggest challenges or struggles you've faced in your career, and how did you overcome them?

SB: I take my challenges optimistically and try to focus on the positives and learn from them. While there have been various obstacles and hurdles along the way, I've approached them with a growth mindset, seeking opportunities for improvement and personal development.

KK: Have you faced any unique challenges or obstacles as a woman in a traditionally male-dominated field?

SB: No, I haven't faced any significant challenges or obstacles as a woman in the field of architecture. In fact, being a woman in this field can be seen as a blessing, bringing unique perspectives, strengths, and contributions to the profession.

KK: Can you tell us about any exciting new projects or endeavors you're currently working on or have in the pipeline?