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Home & AWAY

Born and raised in Kuwait and of Indian origin, Los Angeles-based interior designer Rydhima Brar translates her personal story through her home's decor

Words **KARINE MONIÉ**

Living in a new country offers the opportunity to reinvent yourself. That doesn't mean, however, forgetting the past. On the contrary, this transformation often makes the past even more vivid and important, as memories and personal history become the starting elements for everything new. "Growing up in Kuwait, my childhood was immersed in breathtaking design and architecture," reminisces interior designer Rydhima Brar. "My father had uprooted himself from his native India to start his career in construction and finishing materials. From the opulent artwork and fabrics of cultures dating back centuries, to the simple luxury of our own home, I was always fascinated and excited by the feelings that beautiful, creative decor inspired in me."

Due to the Gulf War, her family fled their home in 1990 under the cover of night, to India. "Returning to Kuwait after the war, I experienced the rebuilding of our home and the rebirth of a nation," Brar recalls. "My dad restored his business, too, and I fondly recall helping him organize his building materials and libraries, always complaining but loving every minute of it. Through spending those long (and extremely hot) summers with him, what I remember most vividly is admiring textures and colors and figuring out ways to repurpose them. I was bitten by the design bug at an early age."

After moving to New York to study business and finance and then starting a career in marketing, Brar moved to California. Today, she is settled in Los Angeles with her husband and their young daughter. It was here she started to use their home as a canvas for her design dreams, discovering her aesthetic along the way, which she describes as "a balanced combination of functional and luxe." This is reflected through her design projects



“Growing up in Kuwait, my childhood was *immersed* in BREATHTAKING DESIGN and *architecture*”

and everyday work at the helm of her R/terior Studio.

"Recounting the joyful memories made with my family, I understand why I am so heavily influenced by color, opulence, texture, and bold designs," she confesses.

In the heart of West Los Angeles, the 125 sqm, two-bedroom home is ideally located only a few kilometers from the beach and close to the hiking trails of Malibu as well as the glitz of Beverly Hills. "The complex was originally built in the early 70s before the open concept trend," Brar explains. "Yet, there was something about this space, especially the



LEFT THE DINING ROOM IS KID-FRIENDLY, FUNCTIONAL, AND COMFORTABLE. **ABOVE** PILLOWS FROM A KUWAITI SOUJ. **RIGHT** A MINIATURE VERSION OF A MANUAL KUWAITI RUG LOOM. **BELOW** A SPACE IN THE LIVING ROOM FOR RYDHIMA BRAR'S DAUGHTER, WITH A CHAIR AND A MINIATURE GRAND PIANO. **BELOW LEFT** THE MASTER BEDROOM. **OPPOSITE BRAR** IN THE LIVING ROOM.



RIGHT RICH COLORS AND TEXTURES THROUGHOUT COMPLEMENT THE GALLERY WALL SEAMLESSLY BELOW THE TROPICAL-INSPIRED NURSERY



closed-in kitchen, that reminded me of my home in Kuwait. Back there, I grew up in condos and have always felt a sense of comfort, security, and community.”

Captivated by the abundance of natural light through large windows, Brar also liked the high ceilings that made her feel at home from the first visit, even if the pentagon shape of the living room presented some design challenges. “I had to strike the right balance between style and functionality to allow our daughter space to run around and grow,” she says. “There was also an oddly placed nook with no shelving that essentially served no purpose. I harnessed my love for wallpaper and turned the nook into a brilliant statement backdrop for the curio cabinet. It’s an added element of surprise as you look around the corner.”

Honoring Brar’s fascination for color, patterns and art, the home tells the designer’s story. “I love connecting with people, hosting, and entertaining – all reminiscent of my childhood in Kuwait – and it has been translated into the design of my space,” she says. “The narrative was weaving together a kid-friendly, imaginative space into a grown-up contemporary space, without allowing my daughter’s toys to take over the entire house!”

The color palette of black, burgundy, mustard, blush pink, and emerald green contrasts with the off-white walls and beige carpeting. “I picked a gorgeous velvet black chesterfield sofa as my bold statement piece in the living room,” remarks the designer. In the spa-like master bedroom, neutrals, sky blue, and wood tones with a touch of emerald prevail, while the fun and playful girl’s room has an enchanted tropical theme.

In this home – with its layered textures of velvet, linens, faux fur, leather, wood, and brass – every room was created

“I had to strike the right **BALANCE** between *style* and *functionality* to allow our daughter space to run around and **GROW**”

from a specific piece, whether it is art, a rug, or a pattern. “The space is approachable yet editorial,” Brar says. “This juxtaposition in the home is something I have been surrounded by for as long as I can remember. My mother raised us in a two-bedroom house for most of our lives, but she always knew how to make it look impeccable despite having children, and I feel like I have expressed that in my own way, now, with my own family. Our lives are busy, but we always make time to entertain and celebrate all the various occasions and milestones from birthdays and anniversaries to all our cultural festivities. In Kuwait, that is exactly how we lived. We embodied a sense of community and made the most of our sacred space, our home. This aspect of my childhood has stayed true to my heart and has been incorporated into my design process.” □

PHOTOGRAPHS MELISSA GOODMAN, JESS ISAAC



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