



Neesha Alwani
and Shruti Jalan
NSA ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIORS

Partners In Practice

Circa 1999, Neesha Alwani and Shruti Jalan a seemingly innocuous first meeting during their stints at Nozer Wadia Associates.

Several conversations later, the pair discovered their many common interests and an undefinable bond came into being. Neesha shares, "Around the time, I'd begun to get project offers and so had Shruti. But since we were both working full-time, I realised it would be a tough balance to execute the independently received projects. I asked her to join hands with me and she agreed!" Little did they know that this association would last for 21 years and counting.

ALL FOR ONE

Their working relationship is nothing but symbiotic, and the duo ensure that they are both present for introductions, initial meetings and client briefings before going to the drawing board and brainstorming together. After the design, concept and material selection are locked in and work can begin on-site, either one takes the lead on the project to ensure efficient execution. "We decide based on which one of us relates more strongly to the client's personality. Of course, the other is always kept in the loop and involved in all decisions. We've been following this formula since the beginning because it works for us," reveals Shruti.



The living room in this monochromatic home is styled with an Imran Mudassar lithograph, antiques from Mahendra Doshi as well as a wooden sculpture from Nagaland

ONE MIND, TWO BODIES

A significant dose of understanding despite their having individual personalities keeps them in balance. But they agree on a lot more than their design aesthetic: They're both meticulous when it comes to designing, detailing, keeping updated on technicals and delivering. Shruti pinpoints, "So, regardless of who's at the helm of project execution, the design is followed to the T and our personal inclinations don't filter in." Neesha adds, "We sync very well, constantly completing each other's sentences, filling in the blanks. For instance, if I'm drawing something and leave it incomplete, she'll take initiative and finish it for me. That's a great thing because if one of us is travelling, work still continues seamlessly. That's why we've been work married for over two decades."

NO EGO TRIPS

When we have a difference of opinion, we sit across the table and reason out why we think differently. Ultimately the one with the strongest argument wins. Shruti says, "Our partnership works because there are no ego battles."

A DAY AT A TIME

Typically, workdays for Neesha and Shruti start and end with site visits and client meetings. The afternoons are spent together in the office, where they have lunch, brainstorm ideas and interact with the team. And after hours? Shruti discloses, "I'm up at 6-ish and complete my cross training workout in the morning. I love playing tennis and golf, and I'm often at Wellington Club, where I also go with my nine-year-old son in the evenings." Meanwhile Neesha shares, "No day is complete without my morning yoga session, spending time with my parents and looking into what they might need, and unwinding with my husband, sometimes over a TV show."

PROVING 'EM WRONG

The creatives share that among the many pearls of wisdom they've got, there's one that proved to be the worst. They say, "When we started off, people would tell us that partnerships never work and we'd be better off not wasting time by starting this because, in the end, we'll have differences and fallouts. But, look at us now. We've proved them wrong!" • www.nsarch.in

WORDS KAMAKSHEE TEWARI | STYLING SAMIR WADEKAR (MONOCHROMATIC HOME) | PHOTOS SULEIMAN MERCHANT

This or That?

Time machine or magic wand?

Neesha: Time machine.
Shruti: Magic wand.

Live without social media or never watch a movie?

Both: Live without social media.

Vacation or staycation?

Both: Vacation!

Sauce on the side or on top?

Neesha: On the side.
Shruti: On top.

Apathy or obsession?

Neesha: A bit of both.
Shruti: Apathy.

Power to fly or be invisible?

Neesha: Invisible.
Shruti: Fly!

In this Mumbai apartment, a balcony wraps around the living area, where an interactive bar makes the most of Peddar Road's lush views

