

**CHRISTO**

**SURFACE**

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# Contributors



## FRANCISCO NOGUEIRA

Photographer, “Castles Made of Sand” (page 96)

**The best view you’ve ever seen?** “Seeing my son Bart being born was the most memorable thing I’ve ever seen. I got to photograph it with happy tears. In a few weeks I’m having a daughter, so I can’t wait for the same spectacular view!”

*Nogueira is a Lisbon-based photographer with a background in architecture, documenting the appropriation of space and the man-made landscape. He has published two books about the architectural heritage of former Portuguese colonies in Africa: Bijagós: Património Arquitectónico and As Roças de São Tomé e Príncipe.*

## SARAH KHAN

Writer, “Force of Nature” (page 102) and “Destination: Mumbai” (page 59)

**The happiest mistake you made while traveling?** “Road-tripping through Namibia, we were warned to make it to our destinations by nightfall—the roads are treacherous enough by day. Once, we made too many stops and wound up in complete darkness. As we drove along nervously, a pair of elephants suddenly appeared in the headlights.”

*Sarah Khan has lived in five countries on three continents, and has crisscrossed the globe to report for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Conde Nast Traveler, and others.*

## GISELA WILLIAMS

Writer, “Castles Made of Sand” (page 96)

**Where in the world do you wish you were right now?** “I am almost always happy to be in the place I am at any given moment. Currently, that’s on a wooden deck overlooking the Baltic Sea on Blidö—one of thousands of islands that make up the Swedish Archipelago.”

*Gisela Williams has lived in Bali, Bermuda, and Brooklyn, before settling down in Berlin with her husband and three children. She covers culture, design, and travel as a European correspondent for The New York Times T Magazine and Departures, and in a monthly column for Elle Decor.*

## AART-JAN VENEMA

Illustrator, “Force of Nature” (page 102)

**Your favorite location to sketch?** “The best place to sketch is outside in nature, where I can draw what I see or whatever I’m thinking about, without distractions. In the end though, I always end up behind my computer, looking up all kind of reference images for the job.”

*Venema is a Dutch illustrator whose work has appeared in the Guardian and The New Yorker. He loves to set a scene with lots of little stories and details for the observant reader to discover. Cicada Books is releasing his first children’s book at the end of 2018.*



(FROM TOP) An outtake from Francisco Nogueira’s shoot in Comporta, Portugal for “Castles Made of Sand.” A sketch by Aart-Jan Venema for “Force of Nature.”



# Mumbai



**In the spiritual home of Bollywood, a swirl of tradition and innovation puts the creative capital on the cutting edge.**

**BY SARAH KHAN**

Some cities are coquettes, slowly seducing you with new reveals over time. Others are slaps in the face, leaving you begging for more. Mumbai—or Bombay, as you’ll usually hear it called once you arrive—is unequivocally the latter, a seething mass of concrete and humanity, perpetually hung with sweat. It’s also glamorous and addictive, and I can never get enough.

I fell hard for Mumbai on my first trip there as an adult, nearly two decades after my last visit to see family. For an avowed Bollywood disciple like myself, watching a city immortalized on celluloid come to life has a dissonant quality of novelty and familiarity. The gentle curve of Marine Drive, the whitewashed churches of Bandra, the crumbling mansions of Colaba, and Indo-Saracenic buildings all jostle for space against the backdrop of the Arabian Sea: I knew its motley skyline intimately even as I took it in properly for the first time. I found myself swept up in the energy pulsing through the streets, with a torrent of people flowing by car, bus, cycle, rickshaw, and on foot. Since then, I’ve been looking for excuses to binge on Mumbai’s particular brand of magic meets madness, at the intersection of noise pollution and stardust.

The only other place that evokes such visceral emotions is New York. Each requires endurance to navigate and brain-numbing mental gymnastics to render palatable; after a few days inhaling the air of either city, devoting the rest of your life to New York traffic or all your income to Mumbai rent—for what in a lesser city could be mistaken for a gym locker—might sound like perfectly reasonable propositions.

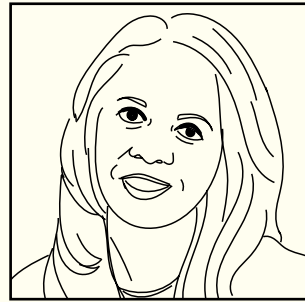
I’m hardly the first person to note the similarities between the two, each a hub known for its commerce, media, fashion, and design. “A city like Bombay, like New York, that is a recent creation and does not have a substantial indigenous population, is full of restless people,” Suketu Mehta wrote in *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*, his definitive biography of the city. “Those who have come here have not been at ease somewhere else.”

When in town, I’m both completely at ease, knowing the city is lying in wait at my doorstep, yet also restless, afraid of missing a Mumbai moment—a run-in with a Bollywood star at a hair salon; a sprint through a thundershower to hop into a rickshaw; drinks with friends at historic members-only clubs unchanged since their colonial heydays. Traffic notwithstanding, I’m on the go from the second I touch down, careening from the galleries and boutiques reviving heritage mansions in South Mumbai to the trendy restaurants and bars of Bandra, the posh suburb that’s now synonymous with India’s behemoth film industry. With each return, I discover something new: art foundations like G5 Foundation for

Contemporary Culture and Bombay Art Society, stylish emporiums like Nicobar that always end up forcing me to pony up baggage fees, and a greater concentration of restaurants I’d happily board a plane to revisit than any other city in the world—with homegrown chefs and restaurateurs like Thomas Zacharias, Zorawar Kalra, and Rahul Akerkar and expats like Kelvin Cheung and Alex Sanchez. Mumbai also hosts festivals and events catering to every conceivable creative interest: The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival draws thousands each February to theater performances, gallery openings, and author talks; Lakme India Fashion Week is where you’ll find both up-and-coming and established couturiers to the stars on display; the Design Fabric Festival, which launched this March to begin a much-needed conversation on India’s vibrant design vernacular; and St+Art Mumbai Urban Art Festival, which brings together global and Indian street artists to revamp public spaces.

One chef who’s blazed a cross-continental restaurant empire for himself is Mumbai-born, New York-based chef Floyd Cardoz. He opened the peppy Bombay Bread Bar in Manhattan’s SoHo this year, but he spends a significant portion of time going back and forth to Mumbai, where he’s opened two restaurants with cult followings: O Pedro and Bombay Canteen. “I think Bombay and New York are very very similar—Bombay is a city that doesn’t sleep, a city that has multiple cultures, where everyone is welcome and you can get anything anytime,” he says. “It’s like an oyster that’s just waiting to be taken.”





**ANITA DONGRE**  
DESIGNER

“Bandra is home in more ways than one. My mornings begin with a seaside walk down **Pali Hill** and **Carter Road**. I love popping by **Olive** for amazing meals and warm welcomes. Chef Rishim makes the best vegan cheeses in town, and Neelam, the restaurant’s ever-smiling hostess, spoils me with her company. For a nice sit-down dinner with my family, I go to **The Chambers** at the Taj Land’s End, a private, members-only club. The view is spectacular, and the service is flawless. I spend Sunday mornings at the **Farmers’ Market** in Bandra Gymkhana, buying fresh organic produce. But when *chaats* are a must-have, the go-to place is **Ram and Shyam**, in Santacruz. It has been there for over twenty-five years, and the second generation now runs it.”

(FROM TOP) The Club Room at the Taj Mahal Palace. A sleek rooftop pool embodies the new-school vibe at the Four Seasons. Oberoi’s atrium lobby, a model of sophistication. (OPPOSITE) More from the Taj, where lovely detailing abounds—even in the corridors.

PHOTO: COURTESY THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE/FOUR SEASONS MUMBAI/OBEROI



**HOTELS**

So much of modern Indian hospitality borrows from the **Taj Mahal Palace Hotel** that it’s hard to overstate the landmark’s stature in Mumbai. According to legend, wealthy industrialist Jamsetji Tata was refused entry to the whites-only Watson’s Hotel in Colaba, which bore a sign declaring “Dogs and Indians Not Allowed”—so he flouted them by opening a much grander hotel down the road. While the story comes with plenty of drama and intrigue, it’s more likely that Tata saw an opportunity for an opulent waterfront hotel worthy of the booming city and seized it. Either way, the Taj Mahal Palace has been Mumbai’s most fabulous address since it opened, in 1903, in an Indo-Saracenic structure with a now-iconic silhouette: Think Gothic domes meet Indian arches.

PHOTO: COURTESY THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE

The old-world grande dame also happens to house some of Mumbai’s most cutting-edge restaurants—from Wasabi by Morimoto to the rooftop Souk. The Taj’s most worthy rival is the venerable 287-room **Oberoi Mumbai**, in the heart of the city’s business district at Nariman Point. The gleaming lobby atrium is clad in dark granite and blinding white Greek marble, anchored by a bold red-lacquer piano, and gives way to vast water views framed by a wall of soaring windows. The standouts here are Michelin-starred chef Vineet Bhatia’s modern-Indian restaurant Ziya and Oberoi’s legendary approach to service—before you think it, it’s ready for you, no matter what “it” may be.

If the Taj Mahal Palace epitomizes the city’s old guard, the **Four Seasons Hotel**

**Mumbai** is representative of the new. The global giant nods to local traditions in the design, from the *banarasi* throw pillows in the rooms to the layout itself: The glass tower was built in accordance with Vastu architectural principles. While you’re likely to spy moguls closing deals over platters of Cantonese crab and prawn *har gao* in the intimate corners of the pan-Asian restaurant San-Qi, Aer is where the city’s glam set congregates—the sexy rooftop bar is India’s highest, which translates to unparalleled sea and skyline views.

But the city’s buzziest new property will also be its most exclusive. When Soho House Mumbai opens its doors this fall on **Juhu Beach**, the rooftop bar promises some A-list people watching—if you can get access, that is. >





## RESTAURANTS AND BARS

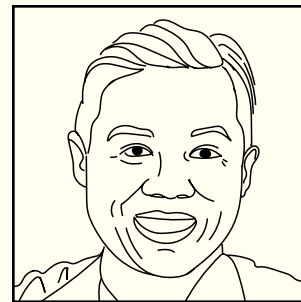
Mumbai is home to one of the most underrated culinary scenes on the planet, with restaurants as dynamic and varied as any you'll find in London, New York, or Hong Kong, but typically at a fraction of the price. Stalwart chefs constantly reinvent themselves with exciting new ventures, and upstarts set themselves apart with bold flavors and design choices. Take **Basanti & Co.**, whose vivid pops of color are jazzing up the dining scene in the suburb of Versova; the interiors are awash in chevron patterns and splashed in teal, marigold, and fuchsia, a look that pairs well with modern takes on North Indian classics from the city of Lucknow—think *bhindi nain-tara* (okra), *kulcha* (bread) stuffed with lamb, and the signature chicken or lamb biryani. Don't miss the cocktail list—masala chai bourbon, anyone?—or the *paan* stand, which serves quirky twists on the beloved Indian betel-leaf snack, ranging from butterscotch to blackcurrant-coffee combos.

In Bandra, **Arth** has all the theatricality of a Bollywood production, with good reason: Designer Gauri Khan's husband, Shah Rukh Khan, is the industry's biggest superstar. For her first foray into restaurant interiors, Khan paired gilded mirrors, patterned floors, and plush black-and-cobalt chairs with glittering pendant chandeliers and an eye-catching spiral wooden staircase. In contrast to the drama inherent in the design, the menu is a nod to traditional charcoal- and wood-fired cooking, with dishes like smoked mutton chops, charred fish with lemon caviar, and Kovalam lobster "tacos" served in *uttapam* shells.

But the biggest buzz has accompanied the debut of hotly anticipated new concepts from industry icons. To wit: Qualia, the much-anticipated modern European eatery that will open in Lower Parel later this fall from Rahul Akerkar, the mastermind behind the erstwhile (and greatly missed) Indigo,

India's first true fine-dining restaurant; **O Pedro**, the charming Goan-Portuguese second outing from the team behind **Bombay Canteen** (New York celebrity chef Floyd Cardoz is one of the partners); and **Rivers to Oceans**, a new seafood venture from restaurateur Zorawar Kalra, best known for the Indian molecular gastronomy pioneer **Masala Library** as well as the playful **Farzi Cafe** and modern Asian **Pa Pa Ya**. Meanwhile, Canadian chef Kelvin Cheung, whose Sunday brunch at **Bastian** is a fixture on Bollywood stars' Instagram feeds, has given new life to a beloved hot spot with the relocated and reopened **One Street**, featuring classic comfort fare from the States. Eleven Madison Park alum Alex Sanchez, who first came to Mumbai in 2011 to bring San Francisco-style cuisine to South Mumbai at **The Table**, has a new project in the pipeline this winter.>

PHOTO: COURTESY BASANTI & CO.



**KELVIN CHEUNG**  
CHEF

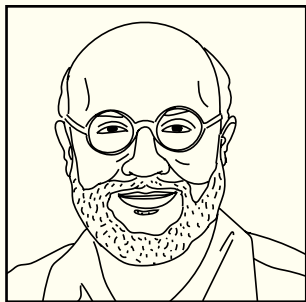
"My once-a-week coffee fix is down a narrow lane in Bandra West's Chum village at **Koinonia Coffee Roasters**. Dakshinayan has the city's best giant dosas and ghee-and-gunpowder-covered idli; for the best thali, head to **Shree Thaker Bhojanalay**, but make sure you wear loose pants. I get all of my bespoke suits hand-stitched at **NM Studio** in Bandra; I also own about twenty short-sleeve button-ups, predominantly made using one-off pieces of fabric the owner picks up during scouting trips to Rajasthan. My favorite neighborhood to walk around is **Crawford Market**, where you'll find local and seasonal fruits and vegetables as well as the most insane spices from all over India."

PHOTO: SANJAY RAMCHANDRAN

(FROM TOP) Arth is run by a Bollywood power couple, so its sparkling design is hardly surprising. The food? Also a showstopper: super-fresh ingredients in traditional techniques. (OPPOSITE) At Basanti & Co., the interior matches the cuisine—bold and colorful.







**RAHUL MEHROTRA**  
ARCHITECT

"The best place to get lost in another world is **Banganga**, a sacred water tank on Malabar Hill, a labyrinth of lanes with a stunning atmosphere of peace. I could sit there for hours. It's always a favorite when I want to leave Mumbai behind in Mumbai. My best memory is interviewing Renzo Piano there for television. My lunch favorite is **Kala Ghoda Café**, close to my studio—it's abuzz with young folks and has a fabulous menu. The eggs cooked *Parsi* style—scrambled and spiced—and their fresh juices make for the most relaxing lunches. There are nooks and corners to occupy, and it feels like an extension of home. **Phillips Antiques** is the best browsing spot in town, a wonderful store dense with history. Each object is stacked with genuine and fascinating stories and the space is consistent with the centuries-old objects. My favorites are the maps, and they have stacks of them—from Bombay to Timbuktoo!"

Nicobar's new store in Bandra, situated inside the beloved Patkar Bungalow. (OPPOSITE, FROM TOP) Prime art galleries: DAG, for modern mainstream; Sakshi, the critic's darling; and G5A, which has a black-box performance space and hosts rooftop poetry.



#### SHOPPING

Global behemoths from Zegna to Zara have planted flags in Mumbai's glitzy malls and shopping districts, but fashionable locals like to pair them with high-quality *desi* labels. To gauge what's on-trend at any moment, head to either of the city's top concept shops. **Le Mill**, in Colaba, carries global favorites such as Céline, Dries van Noten, Rosie Assoulin, and Isabel Marant alongside coveted local brands Péro, Dhruv Kapoor, and Bombay Perfumery. In the unlikely setting of Mumbai's cricket stadium you'll find **Bungalow 8** (named for the address where owner Maithili Ahluwalia grew up), stocked with a lovingly edited selection of vintage finds as well as her own label's airy tunics and dhoti pants. **Obataimu** marries Japanese and Indian aesthetics in unexpected ways. Creative director Noorie Sadarangani's tucked-away space channels Tokyo's utilitarian minimalism, stocking voluminous

sweaters, structural dresses, androgynous tunics, and a selection of books and accessories alongside a working atelier. Many count having a home decorated entirely in **Good Earth** furnishings a life goal, so when the beloved interiors brand opened sister chain **Nicobar**, first in the Kala Ghoda district in 2016, then in a 1920s colonial-style villa in Bandra in 2017, everyone paid attention. It was an instant hit, not only for its contemporary Indian décor and kitchenware, but also for its stylish beach-ready pants and dresses. Not far away in Colaba is the Mumbai branch of Jaipur's generations-old **Gem Palace**, an art deco jewel box that stands amid South Bombay's heritage landmarks. Inside, Dutch designer Marie Anne Oudejans conceived a playful environment for some of the nation's finest baubles, with two levels splashed in vivid greens and corals.

PHOTO: POOJA AGHAN

#### CULTURE

A vibrant contemporary art scene has blossomed in the southern reaches of the city. In Colaba, drop in to **Project 88**, housed in a former printing press. **Sakshi Gallery** has launched careers for emerging artists and has introduced the works of El Anatsui and Gregory Crewdson to Mumbai, while **Volte** represents Indian talents like Nalini Malani and Ranbir Kaleka as well as South African icon William Kentridge, and **Jhaveri Contemporary** also has a roster of celebrated Indian artists including Shambhavi Kaul and Manisha Parekh. Walking north from Colaba, **Jehangir Art Gallery**—founded in 1952, and housing the works of Indian masters like MF Husain, Akbar Padamsee, and Anjolie Ela Menon—signals your arrival in Kala Ghoda. The city's unofficial arts district also plays host to the lively annual **Kala Ghoda Arts Festival**, drawing scores of artists, authors, and actors to the neighborhood's meandering bylanes each February. Dive into the tangle of winding streets that make up the crescent-shaped precinct's core, where you'll find an outpost of the **Delhi Art Gallery**, spanning four floors of a heritage building. The gallery's 25-year-old Delhi flagship—DAG also has an outpost in New York—is often credited with bringing modern Indian art to the mainstream.

While gallery culture is centered in the south, two major venues in other parts of the city are worth a visit. The **G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture**, in an old mill compound in Mahalaxmi, was founded by architect and filmmaker Anuradha Parikh and plays host to film screenings, art exhibitions, plays, *ghazal* concerts, and more. And the **Bombay Art Society**, founded in 1888, is now housed in a cubist building designed by architect Sanjay Puri, resembling a series of boulders stacked precariously atop one another.

PHOTO: COURTESY DAG GALLERY/SAKSHI GALLERY/G5A FOUNDATION

