

THE GUIDE TO LUXURY LIFESTYLES IN THE TRISTATE AREA

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Ochs Design: Inspiration from India



by Lalita Khosla
Photographs by Paul Ochs

Color is the eye candy of India. Saffron, hot pink, chartreuse, tangerine, turquoise and cherry red pop up everywhere, from women's clothing to religious decoration to food packaging. This vibrant rainbow sets a bewitching scene for most Westerners, but not for one interior designer from New York.

"Sure it's captivating," says Paul Ochs of Ochs Design. "But it's also a cacophony, it's too much."

Instead, Ochs is drawn to India's handicrafts. He recently returned from a third trip, visiting rug makers in Varanasi, furniture makers in Jodhpur, and hundreds of showrooms in New Delhi.

"I love the simple earthy materials and organic textures, from the super delicate to the ultra chunky. It's the obvious involvement of the human hand and human patience that forms the true aesthetic of India for me. Entire rooms of intricately carved marble, table linens and draperies covered with incredibly fine embroidery and bead work seem more and more appealing to me in a world whose pace is careening out of control. The interiors I create for New Yorkers use elements like these to achieve a sense of calm, balance and depth."



“Every surface in this project received thorough attention, from the voluptuous moldings to the silver leaf on the ceiling. The shutters add warmth and fantasy, and mask typical aluminum-framed windows. Adding elements of hand-carved wood recalls a journey beyond the room to a more simple place, a place with a different sense of time.” — *Paul Ochs*

Photo by Andrew Bordwin

To create a peaceful environment for a client who sought refuge from her high-powered special events career, Ochs designed hand-carved wood shutters.

“Every surface in this project received thorough attention, from the voluptuous moldings to the silver leaf on the ceiling. The shutters add warmth and fantasy, and mask typical aluminum-framed windows. Adding elements of hand-carved wood recalls a journey beyond the room to a more simple place, a place with a different sense of time.

“I like to keep that ‘place’ mysterious by creating decorative motifs of my own that fall within the parameters of the skills and materials that I observe. I do not necessarily want one to recognize that something I have custom designed and had fabricated in India is Indian. Rather, the objects are seen for being skillfully crafted by patient hands far from here, offering a glimpse to another way of being, even if subliminally.”

Ochs custom ordered the shutters from a woodworking shop in Jodhpur, India’s version of High Point, North Carolina.

“There’s a time-honored tradition of woodworking in Jodhpur,” he says. “I visited to see what their craftsmen can do. That way I can design custom pieces that capitalize on their skills.”

Similarly, Ochs brings the same level of detail to the rugs he designs. He visited several workshops just outside the 5000-year-old city of Varanasi to observe how wool is hand dyed, hand spun and how rugs are then hand knotted.

“The key draw to working directly with these craftsmen is customization. The fact that I can specify a rug today of practically any size and design, made of hand-spun wool, dyed any colors I choose, and then hand-knotted with a hundred plus knots per square inch, is a profound luxury, a total boon for my clients. We can easily transform any room with this ancient art form.”

Ochs plans to return to India every year to continue providing his clients with artistic, original pieces that celebrate the elegance of the handmade. ■

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