



# DESIGNERS DOWN

NINE YEARS IN THE MAKING, NOMITA AND SHAMMI GUPTA'S UPTOWN HOME HAS BEEN A DESIGN LAB FOR SOME OF NOMITA'S FAVORITE IDEAS

It's not unusual for a designer's surroundings to be beautiful — and Nomita Joshi Gupta's are no exception. Since Nomita and her husband Shammi (a physician) first purchased their 1920s house in 2011, it has been the place for Nomita to put some of her favorite ideas to work.

"I love the access to everything that I have as a designer," says Nomita who owns the Magazine Street store Spruce and the eponymous design business Nomita Joshi Interior Design. "On the one hand, you can be crippled by that, but at the same time, I kind of use my house as a lab. I'm always trying things out, experimenting on myself."

The Guptas first made an offer on the Victorian, craftsman-style house in 2004. The house was in a state of neglect and divided into apartments, but Nomita fell in love with its 10-foot solid cypress doors, high ceilings, tall windows and natural light. The offer was rejected and the Guptas bought another house, but in 2011, they had a second opportunity to buy the property and this time everything fell into place. The owner, who was remodeling the house to flip it, had done much needed structural work, including shoring, and had renovated the kitchen. Still, construction on the Uptown avenue where the house is located was just beginning and that meant deferring much of the work the couple wanted to do. Instead of doing everything at once, they turned the concrete parking area into a backyard for their two children and began slowly renovating the house bit by bit.

The advantage of the lengthy remodel is that Nomita was able to take her time with space planning, sourcing ideas and materials, and letting the house evolve to reflect the Guptas' personalities and lifestyle.

"As an architect, space planning and designing around the architecture are important to me," says Nomita. "You have to frame views from every angle. I don't want to throw a look together in a month or two months and say it's done," she adds. "Interior design has a lot to do with the personality of the people who are living there. There is no one formula that is universal. Even for clients, you can do the bones of the house, but the layering takes a while."

The first stage of the interior renovation was the remodeling of the downstairs bathrooms and reconfiguration of the downstairs floorplan. The Guptas eliminated a bedroom and turned the space into a family room overlooking the backyard. Next, they put in a swimming pool. Finally, they reconfigured the upstairs, which had been a separate apartment. Nomita worked tirelessly on the floorplan until it allowed for the master suite she envisioned. That meant designing a large master bath with a tub set against a feature wall.

"The goal was to create a spacious bath with a sense of lavishness," says Nomita.

**BY LEE CUTRONE  
PHOTOS BY SARA  
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Facing page: Rather than fight the off-center placement of the original ceiling medallion, Nomita made the rest of the rear parlor asymmetrical as well. Globe light fixture, Aerin Lauder for Circa Lighting; Jonathan Adler sofa, through Nomita Joshi Interior Design; vintage chinoiserie cabinet and black console from Renaissance Interiors. Above mantel, sculpture by David Borgerding from Callan Contemporary and geometrical work by local artist Courtney Simon de Montfort represented by Nomita Joshi Interior Design.



This page: The previous owner remodeled the kitchen, but Nomita designed a new plaster hood and countertops and added new appliances. Facing page: Top: The dining room's vintage cabinet and lamps were found locally. The dining table and rose gold light fixture are Jonathan Adler through Nomita Joshi Interior Design. Nomita recovered the chairs bought at auction with a chartreuse patterned velvet. Bottom, left: A tropical Cole & Sons wallpaper from Spruce Wallpaper adds interest to the dining room bookshelves. Bottom, right: A Saarinen tulip table and chairs in the breakfast nook. Custom paper shades through Nomita Joshi Interior Design. The banquettes are covered with an Amanda Talley fabric.





Nomita re-covered the sofa in the front parlor with an indigo velvet and paired it with vintage wire Bertoua chairs from Chairish. The rattan coffee table is a thrift store find. Custom shades made with handmade Japanese wallpaper, through Nomita Joshi Interior Design. Uncovered French doors flood the downstairs living room with light. Sconces from Heirloom Furnishings.





With 6,500 square feet on three floors, she had plenty of room to flex her design muscle and use some of the furniture she'd acquired through the years.

"I have a furniture addiction," confesses the designer who has started representing local furniture designers and artists at her Magazine Street studio.

True to her preference for what she calls "organic modern," she contrasted the beauty of the massive cypress doors with sleek white minimalism, a combination of vintage and modernist furniture and shots of saturated color (indigo being one of her favorites at the moment). In the downstairs living room, a cypress door that is not used between rooms became a panel-like highlight next to a plaster-over-wood mantel Nomita designed to replace the ornate one that was original to the room. In the master bath, she put the same juxtaposition into play by placing a pair of matching reclaimed doors found at the Green Project on either side of a sculptural egg-shaped tub.

Wallpapers were already one of her signature design elements, but she put them to use in creative ways. The showstopping master bath is designed around a cubist wallpaper mural that she found at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair and had framed as a stunning work of art. She also used wallpaper as window coverings (designing double shades so that the rear shade could be raised to allow light while the top shade can remain closed for privacy), and as an added layer behind bookshelves.

"I don't like heavy drapery," says Nomita. "I started using wallpaper for window coverings at my house and then I started doing it for clients after."

Her experience as an architect prompted her to listen to the house rather than force it into compliance. When moving the delicate off-center medallion of the downstairs living room was not an option, she made the rest of the room asymmetrical, effectively striking a balance so that it's not even noticed until pointed out.

"I decided to play on the asymmetry," she says. "I had been eyeing the Jonathan Adler sofa for a while and I used all asymmetrical things in the room. I thought 'let's just make it a thing.'"

Nomita's love of geometry is repeated throughout: in fabric patterns, light fixtures and even works of art, many of which the couple have given as gifts to one another on birthdays and anniversaries. Diverse cultural influences are also part of the mix.

"I have been lucky to travel and experience many countries, people, cultures and continents and I love bringing cultural and global references into a modern vision," says Nomita, who immigrated to New Orleans from India in 1989 to attend LSU's School of Architecture and became a citizen in 2007. My latest obsession is Buenos Aires, Argentina."

"You can mix it all," she says. "It has to do with shapes, colors and textures no matter what culture they are from. But at the end of the day, you have to be in love with it. Finally, after nine years, it all came together. It's a comfortable happy house."



Top, left: Geometric shapes appear in the master bedroom's headboard, art, rug and pillows. Custom drapery and bedding through Nomita Joshi Interior Design. Bottom, left: Shades of orange and sky blue are mixed with natural woods in the guest room. Side chair found at the Green Project's annual Salvation auction. Painting by Louisiana artist Anne Cooper. Bottom, right: Nomita designed the master bath's vanity, made by Legend Interiors. The paint color (Benjamin Moore Dragonfly) was inspired by the wallpaper mural that is the centerpiece of the room. Italian modernist chair from Renaissance Interiors. Mirror and sconces, through Nomita Joshi Interior Design. Facing page: The wallpaper mural behind the tub, made from an abstract work by L.A. artist Jessalyn Brooks, was the inspiration for the Deco modern master bath. Black terrazzo flooring by Emser through ProSource, black terrazzo countertops made by Legend Interiors, Jonathan Adler light fixture.





