

SHEELA LEVY AT HOME IN MALLORCA

THE GLOBAL INTERIORS DOYEN WITH A COMPULSIVE PASSION FOR DESIGNING HAVENS FOR HOMES WELCOMES HELLO! INTO HER PRIVATE RETREAT IN MALLORCA FOR AN INTIMATE TÊTE-À-TÊTE



The lady of the house, and the creative spirit behind it, Sheela stands at the entrance – always smiling, always happy to welcome guests

PHOTO: NATYO BASSOLS



A view of the swimming pool and yoga/pilates/meditation room at Son Naava, where the family starts their mornings – “You’re only one swim away from a good mood as they say,” says Sheela

PHOTO: RETO GUNTHER

Thank you for welcoming us into your stunning home... This is truly an inspired project – what were your inspirations at the beginning of designing the entire project?

“My home, Son Naava (Naava means beautiful in Hebrew), aptly named as it’s set in the most beautiful, breathtaking countryside in Mallorca, was built in 2004 and completed in 2007 by the Swarovski family. I bought this house in Montuiri, which is about 20 minutes away from Palma, in 2010 and then set about expanding, extending, renovating and making it mine! Some call this area, the middle of nowhere, I call it the center of my world. Son Naava is a 500 square metres, five bedroom Finca, built in the local style. It sits in over 20 acres of land, filled with over 3,000 olive trees. We make our own bio dynamic olive oil and sell 10,000 bottles to Switzerland annually. As far as the building goes – in the farming area of Mallorca, the Town Council is pretty strict on everyone adhering to the rules and everything from the kind of stone you use, to the colour, size of windows, the amount of covered space, terraces etc, everything is strictly coded and controlled. So renovating it was not a simple exercise.

What strikes everyone the most about Son Naava, is that the second you enter the driveway, there is a sense of ‘wow’ and ‘ah!’ The peace, tranquility and serene energy ▶

The Cinema Courtyard, where the family spends summer evenings

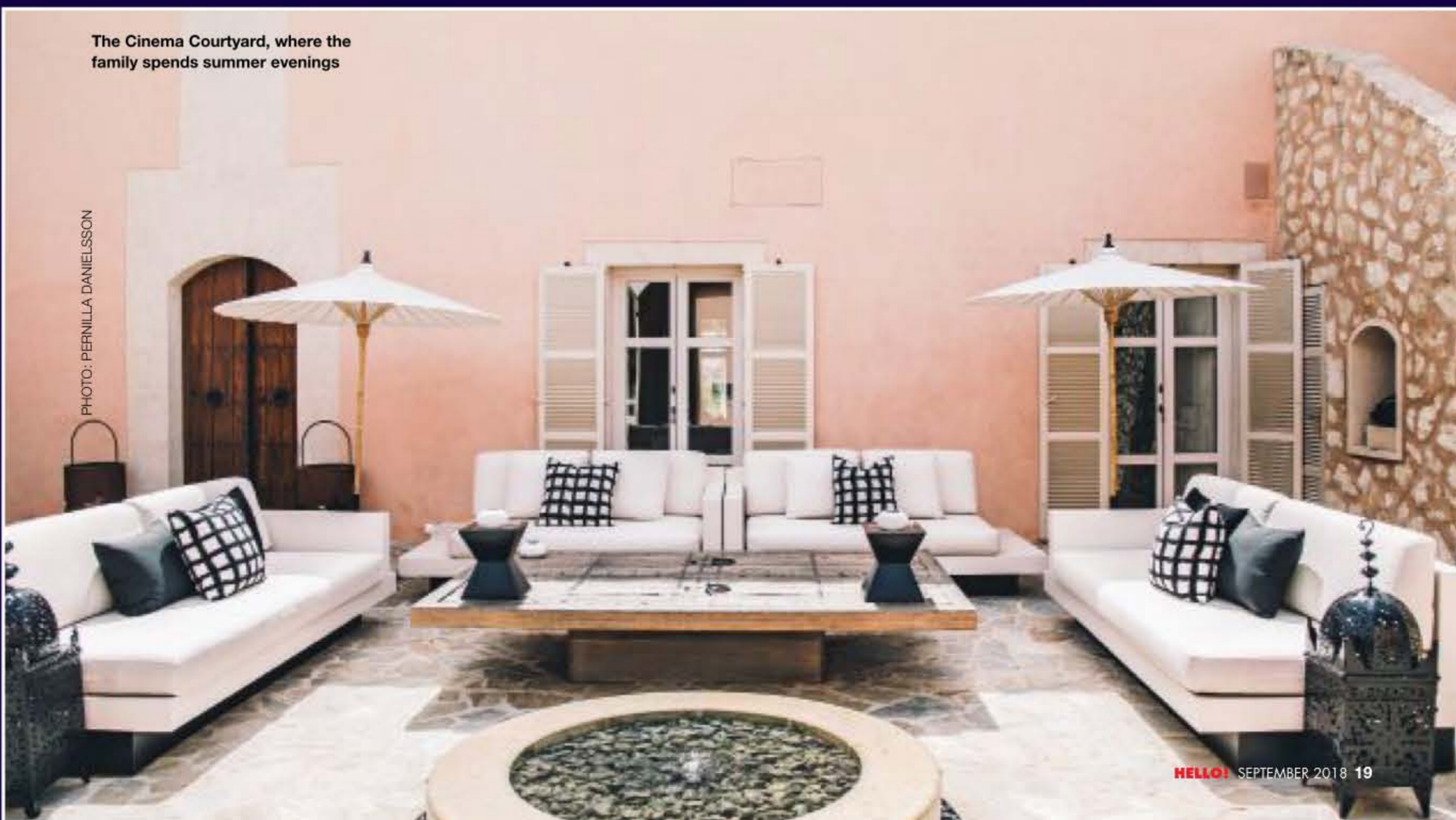


PHOTO: PERINILLA DANIELSSON

The long outdoor terrace where the family spends all their time in the summer – dining, reading, listening to music, chatting with friends, watching the sunrise and the absolutely stunning sunsets



PHOTO: JULIO F. JIMENEZ

The family dining room is a sacred space, bringing everyone together. Sheela shares a favourite quote: "One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating," said Luciano Pavarotti



PHOTO: PERNILLA DANIELSSON

engulfs you the second you step within. You are surrounded by lots of green (thousands of olive trees), the constant sound of birds chattering and chirping... it's heaven on earth! Being a certified Feng Shui practitioner, I worked with my Master and Architect on how we could change the Feng Shui of the space and make the home more grounded and conducive to our needs. The house had 'stuck energy' as it was on a NE-SW axis and as it had been empty for four years, a lot of work needed to be done on that front. On the design front, I had very clear ideas on what I wanted, both in terms of the refurbishing and decor, so it was simply a matter of making it work. We also planted 3,000 Alberquina olive trees and lots of white flowers everywhere after we acquired the house."

What was your design brief at the onset of this project?

"To begin with, a courtyard. We created a large, front courtyard, built a wall to close it in and I found a 200-year-old door, that was four metres high, in a reclamation yard. I placed these majestic doors in front of the house, with beautiful door knobs that I found in Marrakech. I put a fountain in the middle, placed some extra-large pots from Thailand, lanterns from Morocco and turned the space into our outdoor cinema. We spend all

our summer evenings there, stargazing and watching films and TV series, till late into the night, with umpteen glasses of local organic wine and endless cups of cha; not forgetting the hot organic popcorn and dark Sprungli chocolates that get consumed by the dozen.

Then, a large terrace – I covered the long open terrace in the front of the house with painted bamboo and turned it into an outdoor living and dining room. By doing this, I added another 120 square metres to the house. We spend all our Summers outside – breakfast, lunch and dinner takes place on this front terrace that overlooks the olive grove. The best part of this side is that we have the most amazing sunsets on the island!

And lastly, a yoga/pilates/meditation studio – I turned the original pool house into my Zen space. We all practice yoga and pilates and we spend our early mornings or evenings religiously in this wonderfully quiet abode, overlooking the pool and the grand expanse of olive trees."

How did you combine your creative instincts and the technical know-how required to complete the project?

"In terms of interior design, due to the Feng Shui, the house ended up becoming a black and white home, and so everything got sprayed or bought to match the scheme. It was so much fun doing it up! I even sprayed the chandeliers and Chinese chests that I inherited with the house in black. For me, the most important thing was to ensure that the house became a comfortable cocoon and home for my family and friends who now all come and spend the whole summer with us."

Please share some of your stand-out memories during the process of completing the home?

"We have an ancient heritage/archaeological site next to the house – the largest Talayot site next to the house – that dates back to 850 BC. When we first bought the house, I invited the archaeologist in charge of the site, to the house for lunch and she told me that only 15 per cent of the treasures buried underneath had been uncovered and the other 85 per cent was still under the ground! I will never forget that conversation and intuitively understood that day, how blessed we were to have found this home, how fertile, protected and magical the land truly is and that every seed planted there, will always thrive. We have deep wells and more water than most people on the island. As a result, we grow all our own vegetables and rarely have to go to the market in the Summer for anything."

Which aspects of the home are you most drawn to?

"I am most drawn to my yoga room! It has the most peaceful, tranquil, Zen energy and it's nourishing in every way. In the Summers, I also love sitting in the courtyard watching a film or lying on my daybed outside reading. The other part of the house we are all drawn to is the large kitchen where invariably everyone ends up at some stage around midnight."

There are so many highlights to the project...

"The biggest highlight (not directly connected to the project) for me is totally personal – my ▶



The family, "The centrer of my universe," smiles Sheela. From left to right, we see her son-in-law, Uraaz, daughter, Shaana, Sheela and her husband, Ivan

PHOTO: RETO QUINTU

A view of the minimalist yet grand living room. "My winters are spent curled up here," confesses Sheela. The space continues the home's monochrome colour scheme





'Son Naava has now become one of the most photographed homes in Mallorca'

The outdoor living room – "This is where all wonderful evenings begin!" says Sheela



"This console lamp by D&B Italia and the fabulous books were a gift from my daughter Shaana and son-in-law Uraaz for my birthday," shares Sheela

daughter, Shaana, got engaged in this house six years ago. We had one long table and a formal sit-down dinner in the front garden for 80 people, a bar, a band, a DJ, and white flowers everywhere – it was the best night ever! The other constant highlight is that Son Naava has now become one of the most photographed homes in Mallorca."

Tell us about the exciting projects on the anvil for Sheela Levy...

"I have bought a bunch of beautiful old 'noblemen's homes' in Palma and am busy working on restoring them for sale. They are stunning old, listed buildings about 500/1000 square metres plus in size, with multiple courtyards, gardens and terraces. They have 360-degree views to the city, the ancient Cathedrals and the sea from the rooftop. They are truly a joy to restore as we uncover wonderful

old ceilings and walls, every time we remove anything I can't wait to see them finished! I am building four houses in the countryside not far from us and a house along the East Coast of Mallorca. These projects will take another couple of years to complete. I have also designed and opened two gorgeous restaurants in Palma. One is a fine dining restaurant called Fera Palma, and the other one, which is more casual, is called The Kitchen. Fera is situated in a beautiful old listed building in the middle of town and the food and decor is divine, to say the least. The restaurant also has a large garden and we hope to open that in the coming weeks. In addition to that, I am working on a couple of homes in India for private clients."

TEXT: FARAH PALIA



Sunbeds by the pool, which overlook olive groves. As the host says, "I love the saying by RW Emerson, 'The happiest man is he who learns from nature, the lesson of worship'"



This guest room is often called 'The Garden Room' as it overlooks the garden

CYRUS POONAWALLA NOMINATED FOR NOBEL

Business icon Cyrus Poonawalla has been nominated for the prestigious Nobel Prize. The founder of the Serum Institute of India, which happens to be the biggest manufacturer of vaccines, was also recently conferred with the an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters by the Massachusetts Medical School, in Boston. While Nobel federation choose to keep its list of nominees strictly confidential, the business legend's son, Adar Poonawalla has confirmed the news. However, Adar has admitted that they are not aware of the category in which the senior Poonawalla has been nominated.



PHOTOGRAPHER - JULIO J. JIMENEZ



SCARLETT JOHANSSON IS THE WORLD'S HIGHEST-PAID ACTRESS

Scarlett Johansson has been named the highest-paid actress in the world by *Forbes* magazine. Apparently, the actress made US\$40.5 million in pre-tax earnings from June 1, 2017, to June 1, 2018 – a four-fold increase from her salary the previous year. Angelina Jolie ranked second in the list while Jennifer Aniston grabbed the third spot. Incidentally, last year's highest-paid actress, Emma Stone, did not make it to the Top 10, this year.

VIDYA TO PLAY JAYALALITHA IN THE FORMER TN CM'S BIOPIC?

Vidya Balan is a veteran when it comes to portraying pivotal roles in biopics. Vidya, who has played actresses Silk Smitha and Geeta Bali in the past, is likely to essay the role of J Jayalalitha, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, in an upcoming biopic on the late AIADMK leader. Incidentally in her next venture, the biopic *MTR*, Vidya is playing Basavatarakam, legendary actor-politician and former Andhra Chief Minister NT Rama Rao's wife



PHOTO: JULIO J. JIMENEZ

BRYAN ADAMS TO BRING 'ULTIMATE TOUR' TO INDIA THIS OCTOBER

It's official. Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Bryan Adams is visiting India this October as part of his multi-city music fest, *The Ultimate Tour*. This is the fifth time that Adams will be in India and he is likely to have gigs in five cities, across the country. Announcing his India tour, the iconic singer added, "India is one of my favourite places in the whole world. The love and generosity that I have experienced here is immense." The concerts are expected take place in Ahmedabad on October 9, Hyderabad on October 11, Mumbai on October 12, Bengaluru on October 13 and Delhi on October 14.

