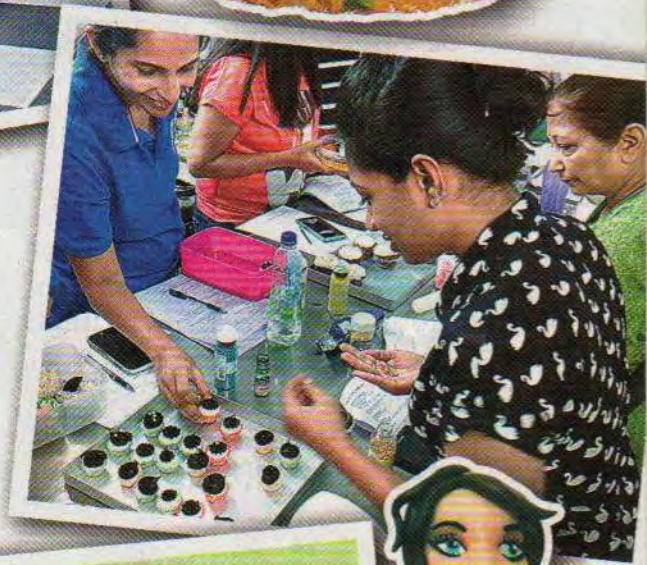
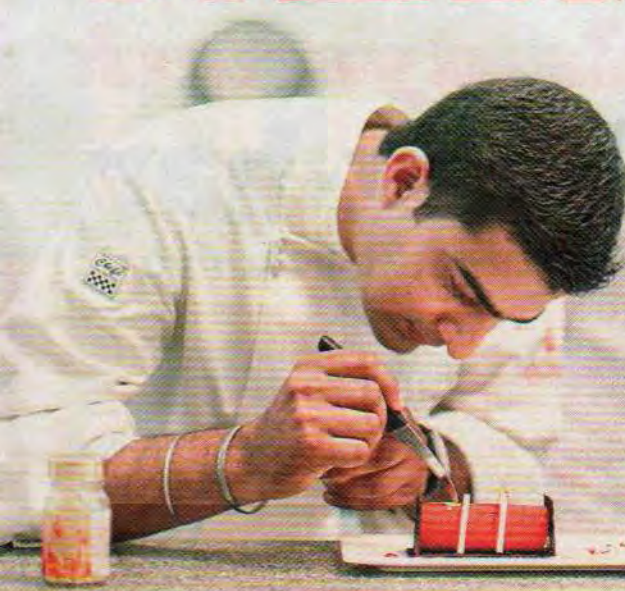


GRAPHITI

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SWEET DREAMS



It's all about cakes and pastries as teaching would-be bakers becomes a booming business



Baking classes at Wisk (top) and 32 Degree Studio (centre); (Left) Vinesh Johnny, co-founder, Lavonne Academy of Baking Science and Pastry Arts



A serene haven

Gopika Nath's apartment is a clutter-free zone that's brought alive by her own art, says **Saimi Sattar**

Artist-craftsperson Gopika Nath's flat in Palam Vihar in Gurgaon is a bright, well-lit and cheerful space. The no-clutter, clean lines apartment is all about muted walls, unusual art and large glass windows that overlook greenery.

The 1,950sqft flat on the eighth floor of the residential complex, Celebrity Homes, is located off the main road which makes its location peaceful. That's perfect for Nath, who works from home.

Nath moved to the flat from her family home in tony New Friends Colony in south Delhi nine years ago. "I was used to open spaces and thankfully this flat was spacious," says the 56-year-old Nath, who lives alone, but has close friends in the vicinity.

The house has been done up with her own art all around. Nath works on fab-

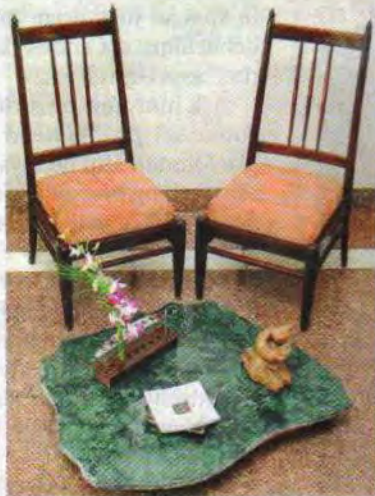
Nath has designed an unusual, low coffee table using an irregular-shaped granite top fixed on a flat wooden slab

rics to create embroidered wall art. She sometimes also stains the fabrics with tea to create some unique works. Perhaps it's not surprising then that Nath is an avid tea drinker who stocks her kitchen with 10 to 15 exotic varieties of tea!

Of the two bedrooms, Nath has converted one into a study. A Yoga room and kitchen flank the lobby at the entrance. A door in the lobby opens into the living-cum-dining room which is large and has two balconies on either side.

One overlooks the Gurgaon skyline while the other faces Delhi. The brown granite floor of the living room teams well with its off-white walls. "Unlike white this colour doesn't appear dull over time," she says.

On one side of the living room is a sitting area with sofas and floor cushions. A lot of the furniture and curios are from her family home. "I'm not much of a shopper and just changed the upholstery of these sofas when I transferred them here," says Nath. But she's



A striking sofa and vibrant floor cushions lend a cheerful look to the living area that's separated from the dining space by a cane partition

INNER SPACES



The walls of Gopika Nath's study-cum-library come alive with fabric artwork from her *Chai Collection* that's been designed with tea-stains (centre)

particular about using only hand-looms and natural fabrics.

The eye-catching cushions on the sofa — a mix of pastel blue, yellow, orange and green — were bought when she was doing a project with the weavers of Pochampalli and Koyalagudem.

A huge artwork by Nath adds charm to the wall behind the sofa. It comes with a story: soon after Nath shifted here, people in the nearby area were celebrating Janamashtami and playing loud music late into the night. "When I complained, the residents and even the cops were shocked as they felt that I was interfering with a religious celebration. This work depicts the disturbance that was created that night," says Nath.

Comfortable floor cushions in orange, black and white in this section look inviting. The artist has designed an unusual low-table with an irregular-shaped, large granite top fixed on a flat wooden slab which serves as a coffee table. There's also a Kashmiri rug here, a collectible, that her father gave her 19 years ago and which she's very fond of.

A gleaming piano is placed against another wall. Nath explains with a laugh: "This piano is so out of tune that now the tuner refuses to repair it."

The dining area lies at the opposite end of the living room. A four-seater, round cane dining table with chairs to match and a cane partition that

segregates the dining area from the living room, are the only pieces of furniture that Nath purchased for this flat. "I like cane furniture as it's natural and is aesthetic," she says.

A corridor from the living room connects to Nath's study-cum-library and bedroom. Painted in rust its walls again have more of her artworks.

There are other intriguing pieces on the study walls and this time from her *Chai Collection* that's been designed with tea-stains. And then there are books and more books. "I'm an avid reader and read six to seven books simultaneously," says Nath. *Almirahs* in this room are stuffed with knick-knacks crucial for her work — buttons, spools of thread, beads and needles.

A study table in the centre of the room doubles as Nath's workspace. "For bigger pieces I move to the bedroom, where I have enough space to spread the fabrics," she says.

Nath's bedroom is as tidy as the rest of the flat with her collection of books and CDs stacked high neatly. She's gone for a low bed and seating arrangement here while the colour scheme is muted. The balcony, here too, brings in a splash of green inside.

She says: "A feeling of serenity pervades the entire house and this is what I had aimed for." ◆

Photographs by Jagan Negi

