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Sparkling inside

PRECIOUS AND SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES ARE BEING USED TO GIVE INTERIORS A DAZZLINGLY RICH LOOK, SAYS **CHITRA PAPNAI**

Would you like to dine in luxury from a dinner set cut from amethyst or rock crystal? Or, how about sprinkling the furniture and artefacts in your home with precious and semi-precious stones? Perhaps you'd like a table top or wall panel with small, exquisitely cut semi-precious stones?



Precious and semi-precious stones are now lending opulence to the way we live. And several interior designers are adding sparkle to their interiors by playing with coloured stones and setting them in furniture or converting them into 'table jewellery'.

So you could flaunt a table-top made of onyx. And you could sprinkle any part of the house with stones like sapphires, turquoise, quartz and tiger's eye. Walk into Delhi's Graavaa, a newly launched retail store that specialises in natural stone products, and you'll be spoilt for choice. It's special range called Graavaa Limited Edition offers slabs of mother-of-pearl, agate and onyx (in slab or tile form, these are very easy to use). The price range starts from Rs 4,000 per sq ft and goes up to Rs 25,000 per sq ft.

Nisha Jamwal's collection includes carved sculptures in precious and semi-precious stone quality and clarity of the stones. Caring for them is not hard either. "Once polished, the stones cease to be porous and can be washed and wiped with a cloth," says Neelima Rao, head of design, Devi Design Studio, which designs products in a range of materials.

While you must be prepared to pay a tidy amount for this stoneware, the prices vary depending on the quality and clarity of the stones. "Once polished, the stones cease to be porous and can be washed and wiped with a cloth," says Neelima Rao, head of design, Devi Design Studio, which designs products in a range of materials.

Rao adds that the stones preferred by designers are tiger's eye, ruby and amethyst as they are very sturdy and easier to work with.

Sameer Biala, CEO, Peral Mineral (retail division) which has launched Graavaa, feels that customers always find innovative ways of using semi-precious stones. "The stone slabs can be mixed-and-matched and highlighted with interesting light effects. This way they can double as art works or paintings on the living room walls."

Lifestyle store La Sorogeeeka is also promoting the opulent look offered by these stones. "Glamour is the look for the season and semi-precious and precious stones are showing the way. They can be used as lit-up or non-lit up panels in different parts of the house or simply as accent pieces," says Anjali Goel, CEO and director, La Sorogeeeka.



Devi Design Studio has also adopted semi-precious stones in its design sensibility in a big way. Rao has just unveiled a collection called Nature & Geometry. For your dining table, Rao has cut white rock crystal, amethyst, tiger's eye and green aventurine into bowls, plates, glasses, cheese platters and more. A salt-and-pepper set will cost you Rs 7,875 while a rock crystal cheese platter will set you back by Rs 32,000. Rao is also customising the tableware for her clients.

At a different level, interior designer Nisha Jamwal has used stones to create benches, coffee tables and wall mosaics. Her collection has stones like jade, rose quartz, tiger's eyes, lapis lazuli, agate, amethyst, citrine, moonstone, onyx, sunstone and aventurine. "These stones create a natural drama," says Jamwal.

To create a painting-like-composition with stones, Jamwal has used a lot of hand-carving on stone (Pietre Dure). She has also designed table tops and wall panels using small, exquisitely cut semi-precious stones that fit into each other.



A black onyx table and a large mother-of-pearl vase are two of the eye-catchers at Casa Paradox



An amethyst bowl (top) and a rock crystal platter by Neelima Rao. Pic: Jagan negi

Colourful semi-precious stones in a vase; (Above) A tile made of 'semi-petrified wood stone' by Graavaa.
Pic: Rupinder Sharma

The stones reappear on walls and floors, inlaid almost like decorative elements along with marble (or any other stone flooring). Jamwal also uses them liberally on furniture and as large carved sculptures.

Cut to interior designer Raseel Gujral's signature store, Casa Paradox, which offers amethyst inlays on table tops. Also, black onyx, quartz, coral and crystal appear as accents on the corners of her furniture. But sometimes the entire table top is made of black onyx. "Even a small indulgence with expensive stones adds class to interiors," promises Gujral.

La Sorogeeeka has gone heavy on the use of Swarovski crystal, rock crystal, tiger's eye, amethyst, onyx, lapis lazuli, jasper and travertine. They look dramatic as brackets on wall-lights or as opulent flooring. The stones also come as counter tops, bar stands, mantelpieces of fireplaces, cabinet tops, knob/handles and even as inlays or inserts in wood and silver furniture.

La Sorogeeeka prices start at Rs 25,000 and touch Rs 2 lakh depending on the design and the quality/quantity of the stones used.

Says Rao: "Luxury is getting redefined as semi-precious stones make their way into our homes' interiors."

