

UP CLOSE  
WITH...

# Ashley REBELLO



*Food, films and fashion define designer Ashley Rebello's life. The man behind Malaika's Munni Badnaam look and Salman Khan's fashion statements on Bigg Boss, makes a few of his own in his cosy home*

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**I**t's just past Christmas and Ashley welcomes us warmly with sumptuous cake and juice, and later, a pile of sandwiches for lunch. This talented designer who lives in his family home, ripped and redesigned his house after a recent visit to Greece, where the décor inspired him. There's white, there's light and everything from the taps in the bathroom to the mirror in the bedroom is well thought of.

**What does your home mean to you?**

I've been living here for the past 40 years; it's a home my father bought and attaches a lot of sentimental value to. That's the reason I have never thought of buying a bigger place elsewhere. I recently re-modelled and shopped all over like Chor Bazar, Bali, and the US for furniture. The stone flooring is partly from Rajasthan. In the bedroom I've used this black stone which absorbs heat and apparently, negative energy too.

**What are your prized possessions?**

There are two paintings of the Virgin and Child done by Dimple Kapadia, which I adore and my dear friend Salman Khan's painting of Christ

which I'm very attached to. I'm sentimental about the Rajasthani rug gifted to me during shoot there. We had given these ladies a lot of work and in turn they gifted me this intricate designed handmade rug. It truly touched me.

**How many people are you comfortable entertaining in your home?**

Maybe four to six people at a time. Space is a big constraint but still friends are welcome if they can make room for themselves. Once there were 25 people here and I really don't know how they all fit in. I do go all out to welcome people: I set the table, light candles, play lounge music, serve good wine, starters and some novel food.

**Do you get into the kitchen at all?**

At least once a month. I make excellent Thai food and fairly good Chinese food, so my friends like to come over to eat.

**How much time do you spend at home?**

I am usually at home during the evenings. I enjoy listening to music, reading and watching television. I read anything from Dr Brian Weiss to Sydney Sheldon to Shobhaa Dé!



a month. I share a good foodie rapport with Vidya Balan too. She's vegetarian but simply loves desserts and recently turned up with a whole tub of *rosogullas* at my house.

**Do you enjoy clubbing?**

Not really unless someone drags me. I like a few places like Poison but prefer lounge bars like Aurus and Vie Lounge.

**Do you enjoy a good song and dance?**

I love dancing. Right from the *tapori* kind to Bollywood music to jiving. I enjoy singing and earlier trained in western classical music. But in India there isn't much scope for that.

**Who are you currently designing for?**

Alvira and I have a company called Ax2 Designs and we design all of Salman's clothes. I also design for Imran Khan, Shahid Kapoor, Genelia D'Souza, Sushmita Sen, Vidya Balan, Asin... I also designed for Sonali Bendre; she had the perfect body and looked good in anything. Malaika is fantastically proportioned too. I like dressing Tabu in Indian outfits because she looks fabulous. And I'm changing Vidya's look with these longish shirts (kameez-like) which she carries well. Right now I am working on Imran Khan and all

of his family's outfits for his wedding. I'm also doing Lara Dutta's bridesmaids outfits. I really enjoy designing for weddings.

**Did you expect *Munni Badnaam* to be such a rage?**

I always knew it would do well but I did not expect it to be this kind of a rage. I'm glad to have been a part of it and it's thrilling to hear that people have 'Munni' parties now!

**Your favourite holiday destination is...**

Bangkok is like second home to me. I go there at least thrice a year. Prague is another place I love to visit.

**How particular are you about your own wardrobe?**

I am very comfortable in jeans and casuals. But I do have a fetish for shoes. Gucci in particular. For formal clothes I love Armani and casuals from Zara. But I'm not that brand conscious and would pick up non-branded clothes if they caught my fancy.



**What do you like collecting?**

I collect a lot of books on fashion, ancient Indian styles, sari styles, and have a whole collection of the Indian *Vogue* from the time it started.

**Do you go out often?**

My textured walls are an inspiration from my Greece trip; so when I get home and look at them I feel like I'm in Greece. I do go out to watch films and dine out since I'm a big foodie! I'm a regular at Barista, restaurants like Basilico, Pali Village Café and Candles are among my favourites. I also love the Thai restaurant at the JW Marriott.

**Who do you go out for dinner with usually?**

Tabu and I often go to Moshé's; though vegetarian, she's fantastic company. I love going to Salman's house. His mother makes the most amazing chicken biryani. I also go with Amrita, Malaika and Alvira at least once

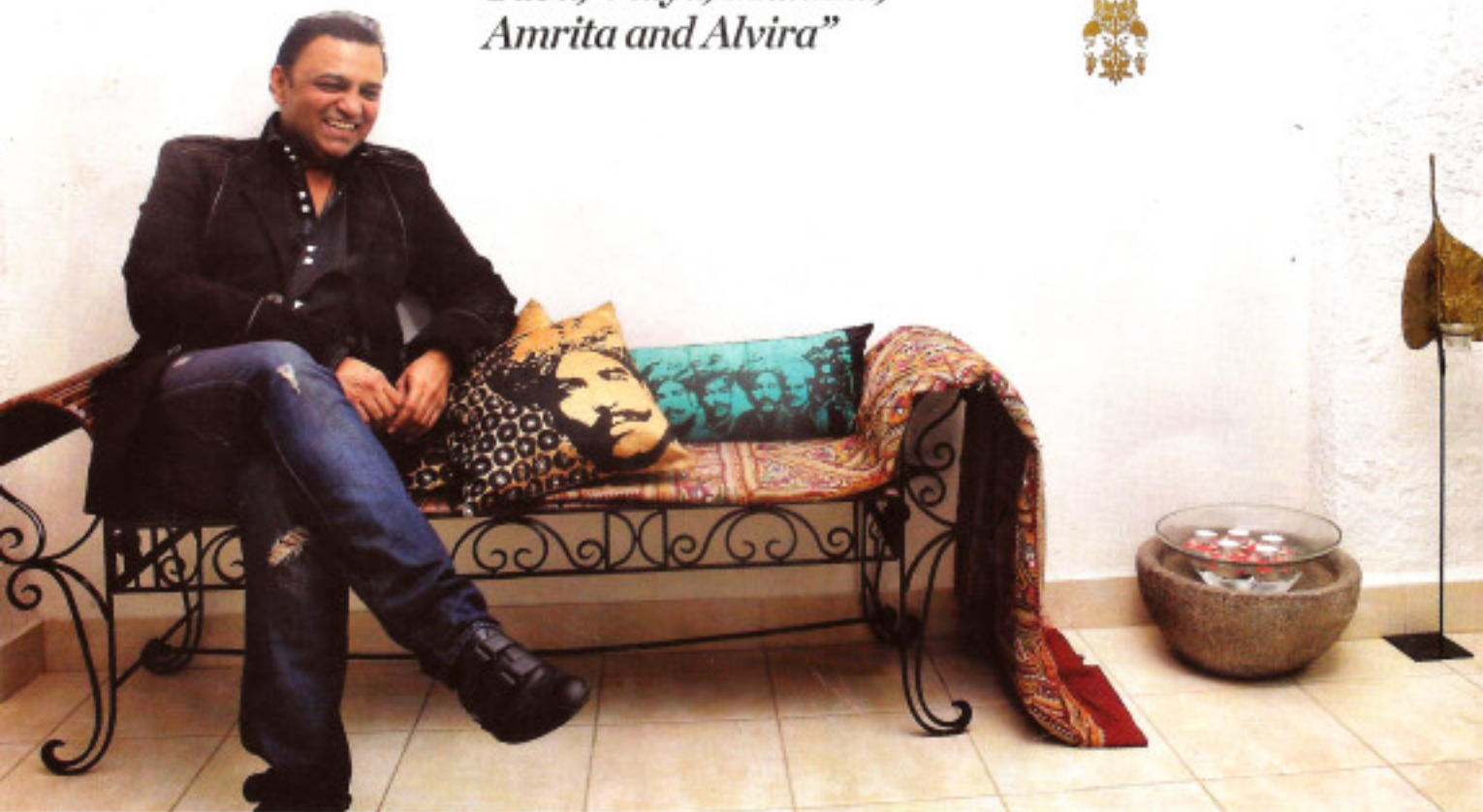


*"When I come home I feel like I am in Greece"*

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*"I dine regularly with  
Tabu, Vidya, Malaika,  
Amrita and Alvira"*



#### Does Dubai figure on your list?

Shopping in Dubai is a whole different experience. I like the Dubai Mall, Ibn Batuta Mall and Mercato. I can actually go there, shop all day and take the evening flight back home – it's a day well spent.

#### You fave Dubai hotspots

I like eating at Ravi's and I love the amazing food at my friend Kumud Raney's house. I like the atmosphere at Shakespeare & Co and the Lime Tree Café. I also love the Cavalli Club at the Fairmont and Boudoir at the Dubai Marine Club.

#### What's going to be your next big professional move?

I'm currently working on two Salman films – *Ready* and *Bodyguard* – with Alvira. I also want to open up an exclusive café and a home store. Interior decoration is also something I'm looking at. I will soon feature on a show called *Eat, Love And Fashion*,

where we take a celebrity through three different aspects of their lives. Food and fashion are my passion. And everybody likes talking about love.

#### Who according to you are the stylish people in B'wood?

I like Preity Zinta. She knows what looks good on her and carries herself well. Kareena is casual yet innovative. Among the guys without a doubt, it's Salman. Be it T-shirts, belts, jeans or jackets; everything he wears becomes a huge hit.

#### When did you start designing for films?

It was with *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar*. I had a flair for designing but never thought I would make a career of it. Mansoor Khan, the director of the film, trusted and encouraged me. It was a path-breaking film and I think I contributed to it because the look was very natural. The college kids dressed like they did in real life. That film remains truly sentimental.

#### Describe life in one sentence...

I live life king size. I like doing everything with style and panache; and enjoy just being myself. □

