

# For The Love of It

Laalee by Shan and Devyani Bhatnagar is a boutique retreat in Jaipur, where Indian traditions inspire artful, contemporary design

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Singh Dwar at Laalee, the main entrance, features hand-painted tigers symbolising strength and power, with nearby seating areas offering spaces to relax (OPPOSITE PAGE). The lobby greets guests with hand-painted walls of gopis, peacocks, and Krishna, reflecting the spirit of Nathdwara. A glowing globe light symbolises the autumn full moon overhead.



The name Laalee comes from the Hindustani word laal, meaning red—a colour that symbolises love across cultures. At this boutique hotel in Jaipur’s Gopal Bari neighbourhood, love takes many forms: love for Indian craftsmanship, for storytelling, for art, and for the traditions of Nathdwara (a temple town in Rajasthan, famed for its devotion to Krishna and Pichwai art). Created by designer and artist Shan Bhatnagar and his wife, Devyani, Laalee is an exploration of luxury, where the design influences are indigenously Indian, but done in a way that feels fresh and contemporary. “This was a dream we’d nurtured for years,” says Shan. “Laalee is about creating an experience where guests feel embraced by warmth and character.” The nine-room retreat, spread across 9,400 sq.ft, was completed in just eight months. With a plunge pool, library lounge, terraces, and lush gardens, it’s designed to be an oasis of calm in the bustling city of Jaipur.

The design at Laalee revolves around three guiding pillars drawn from Nathdwara’s traditions: Raag (music), Bhog (food), and Shringar (decoration). Soft strains of Indian classical music set the tone in the common areas, the vegetarian cuisine mirrors the ethos of balance and care, and the interiors are a visual celebration of Shringar—through hand-painted walls, intricate motifs, and luxurious detailing. “Shringar is the heart of Laalee,” says Shan. “It’s about elevating the space with beauty and meaning while staying connected to its roots.”

The hotel’s interiors embody the duality of couture and comfort. While deeply inspired by Pichwai art, Shan steers away from the heavy-handedness often associated with traditional design. The result is an interpretation that feels bespoke and accessible. In the lobby, gopis adorned with offerings, dancing peacocks, and Krishna himself are painted across the walls, while a glowing globe light overhead symbolises the autumn full moon. It’s a striking space that is both grand and intimate, a perfect introduction to what Laalee represents.

Each room continues the narrative, offering its own thematic expression. Mayur is a tranquil ode to peacocks, rendered in sage green tones with delicate plaster garlands, while Padma honours the lotus with soft grey walls and floating

*“Created by designer and artist Shan Bhatnagar and his wife, Devyani, Laalee is an exploration of luxury, where the design influences are indigenously Indian, but done in a way that feels fresh and contemporary”*

floral motifs. Then there’s Utsav, where marigolds and festive reds bring vibrant energy, and Jal, where cranes painted with single-hair brushstrokes evoke loyal love. “Every room is designed to tell a story—an emotion, a connection, or a moment of joy,” explains Shan.

What sets Laalee apart is its ability to bridge India’s deep-rooted design traditions with a contemporary sensibility that never feels alienating. It’s the kind of space where handcrafted details—from block-printed curtains to custom brass lamps—coexist effortlessly with modern comforts. Sustainability plays a key role too, with Shan repurposing materials from the original house, including salvaged marble flooring and reclaimed wood for furniture. “I hate waste,” he says. “For me, working with what’s already there is part of the story.” Laalee’s ability to balance the vernacular and the contemporary, the luxurious and the welcoming, is what makes it so special. — a timeless retreat that invites guests to connect with Jaipur’s heritage in a way that’s fresh, immersive, and personal. ♦ [laalee.in](http://laalee.in)

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Clockwise from top left: Indian classical music plays gently through the shared spaces at Laalee; Inspired by peacocks, the Mayur room features soft green hues and delicate plaster details; The walls of Laalee come alive with hand-painted frescoes through the hotel; The garden is a tranquil retreat offering open-air spaces to pause in the calm of nature

