

HOME / TRAVEL

# Dispatches From Rajasthan



For Deepali Pareek, owner of [De-cor](#), biannual shopping expeditions to India mean absorbing everything she can to inspire her creatively. “My first impression of shopping in India was overwhelming, but in a good way,” says Deepali. “There is so much to look at, and so much history if you look in the right places.”



Deepali Pareek, owner of De-cor.

De-cor is an airy 10,000 square foot gallery-style showroom in Pasadena, California that specializes in globally inspired interiors, including their own line of rustic furniture. The showroom is masterfully arranged in vignettes that transport us all the way to Rajasthan; we could spend hours milling around the space (you might catch us sprawled out on a pile of vibrant, saffron yellow and cobalt blue textiles, or ogling all of the perfect bone-inlay wooden case pieces on display).

Read on to learn more about how Deepali started De-cor, as well as tips from the field for your own shopping expedition to India!

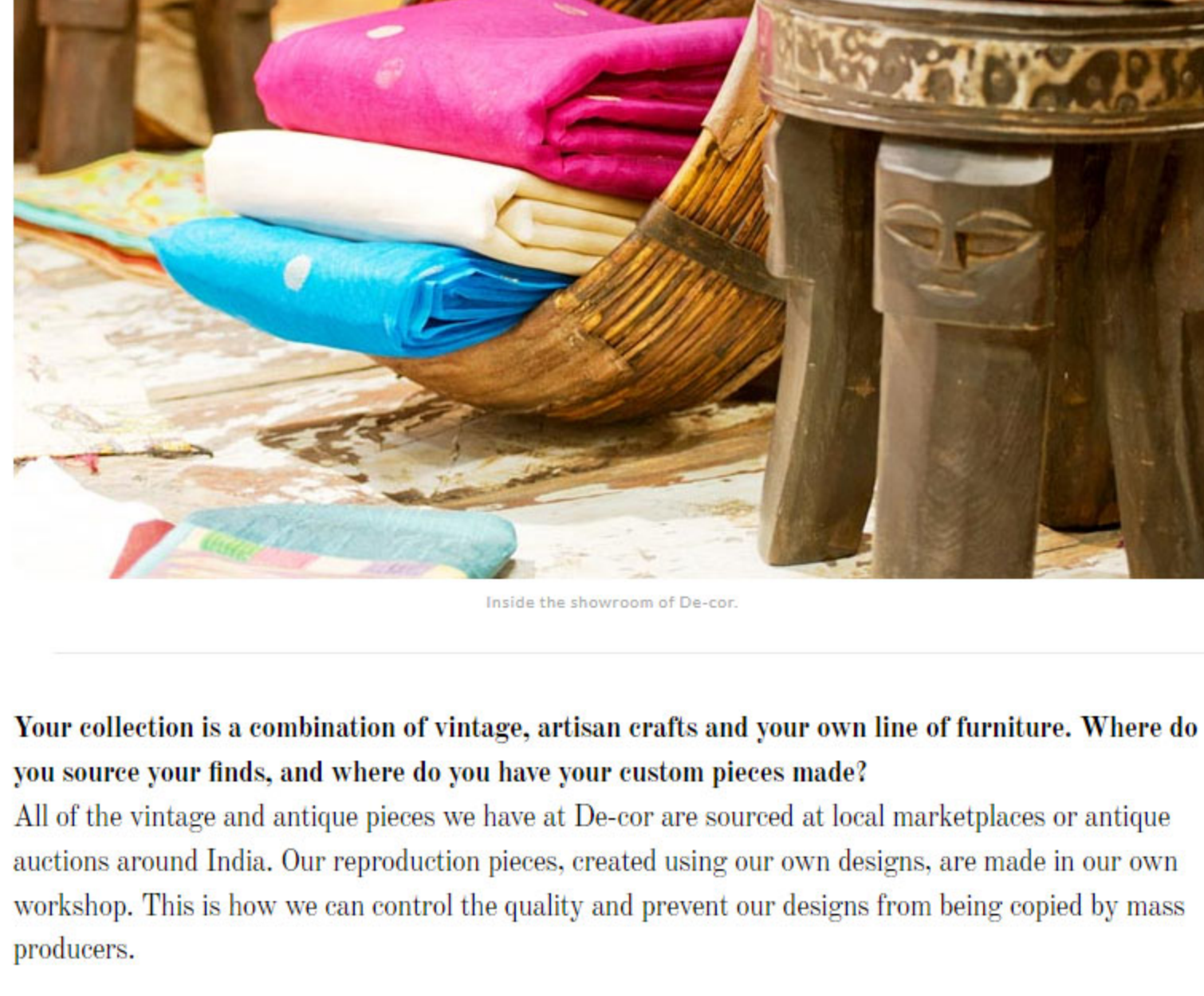


### How did you end up starting De-cor, and what was your vision?

There was something stirring inside of me that pushed me to leave my position at a consulting company – though it was a pleasant position, I did not feel as happy as I had expected to. Later that year and fly to India, without any business plans to draw from. All I knew was that I had a strong desire within me to design and create, it was just a matter of finding a way to channel those feelings outwards into my work. In my travels, I had begun to dip into the idea of working with silver jewelry, but a close friend of mine suggested I try and channel my passion into furnishing instead. That’s when it all began to click, and I dove headfirst into creating what would lead to the beginning of De-cor.

### We imagine there are many, many things you want to bring back from your travels. How do you make the decision on what makes the cut?

I don’t have any particular criteria for pieces I source. How I usually decide on an item is very simple. If a piece catches my eye, and I can connect with it in some way, then it is something I would bring back to display for sale in the store. Pieces that have their own stories, and speak to me, are pieces I tend to lean towards making each piece special in their own way.



Inside the showroom of De-cor.

### Your collection is a combination of vintage, artisan crafts and your own line of furniture. Where do you source your finds, and where do you have your custom pieces made?

All of the vintage and antique pieces we have at De-cor are sourced at local marketplaces or antique auctions around India. Our reproduction pieces, created using our own designs, are made in our own workshop. This is how we can control the quality and prevent our designs from being copied by mass producers.

### Do you have any signature items you’ve become known for?

Throughout the years, we have become known for our personally designed and developed line of handcrafted furniture. This line includes our intricately carved daybeds, and ottomans such as our Raj carved products. Our daybeds are always in high demand since they are not just appealing to the eye, but also practical and are always positively received by our clients.



Courtesy of De-cor

### Is there one item that you had a difficult time parting with?

Honestly, it has been difficult to part with many items we source because I know how rare these pieces can be. On one occasion, we had found an impressive 18th Century courtyard facade in Rajasthan that measured to be almost 20 ft long. It was beautifully decorated with arched beams and floral motif carvings. We restored it and added large mirror panels, resulting in this magical and breath-taking piece that I adored. However, when I was considering keeping it, a very good client of ours also fell in love with it and purchased it. While I was so happy for her, I still miss seeing this architectural gem of a piece.

### What’s a “pinch me” moment you’ve had as a business?

My “pinch me” moment had come to me early as I came to this realization that De-cor was not only a home furnishing business, but also an excellent opportunity to help Indian artisans by creating a market that showcases their traditional craft. We source and carry a vast collection of handcrafted furniture and textiles where the techniques used for these pieces are passed down from artisan to artisan through the generations. It’s a nice feeling to know that their craft and artistry will live on and is also available not just in India, but here as well.



De-cor’s showroom

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD: 5 TIPS TO SHOPPING IN INDIA

Deepali gives us her pro tips for getting the most out of your own shopping expedition to India.

#### 1. Visit the top design hubs

A couple of the places I visit are Rajasthan and Gujrat – both places are renowned for their beautiful architectural palaces and forts. In Rajasthan, you’ll find lots of antique architectural elements carved windows and doors. In Gujrat, you’ll find beautiful tribal carved furniture like dowry trunks and traditional Damachyas (cabinets).

#### 2. Look high and low for the rarest finds

When I shop, not only do I peruse street markets for my finds, but I also attend auctions, and visit furniture and antique hubs.

#### 3. Get to know local artisans

While I was visiting a fort in Mahir, I ended up stumbling upon a beautiful Haveli displaying original glazed Jaipur Blue pottery. These pottery pieces, not only gorgeous, but have won presidential awards! I had the opportunity to meet with the artist named Ashok, and he shared with me the time consuming process it took to create this vast assortment of pots and vases. Blue pottery is a recognized and traditional handicraft, and being handmade, his stunning vases were truly unique and one of a kind.



Courtesy of Stockxy

#### 4. Keep an eye on your favorite trends

Making decisions about what you want to bring back can be difficult – it can help to think about which trends you like best. A few of our favorite trends that we’re seeing in the items we’re bringing back from India lie in our carved case good pieces. Geometric, floral, and foliage carvings upon reclaimed and organic wood are becoming increasingly popular as more and more pieces come in.

#### 5. It’s in the details

If you see textiles or reclaimed wood that you love, think about what you can repurpose and create! De-cor is very aware of its social responsibility, and we’re committed to a sustainable business practice. We repurposed antique architectural elements or artifacts and make them into unique pieces of furniture. We also use reclaimed wood for most of our pieces and we love making vintage fabrics into one-of-a-kind pillows.

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Featured photo courtesy of De-cor: a master carver in Rajasthan works on block printed pillows and bedcovers for De-cor.

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