

Domus designs: Where elegance finds form

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The vibrant interiors of Domus Designs

Domus Designs is one of the best shops in the city to buy gift articles or ornaments that you otherwise wouldn't find anywhere else.

Words Archna Balakumar | **Photographs** Dilshi Thathsarani

Situated within the Galle Face Court precinct Domus Designs is a quaint little space dedicated for art and exquisite collectibles. Entering the shop is like setting foot to a drawing room of a fervent art collector's home, for there were collections of rare ornaments, gift items, furniture sculptures and paintings displayed against soothing white walls. Be it the walls decorated by stencil paint or the stash of plush throw pillows in vibrant colours, everything had a personal touch. Also, one can be assured that the exhibits are one-of-a-kind, since it is either personally handpicked or custom designed by the owners of Domus Designs themselves.

The main forte of Domus Designs is 'Decoupage', which is an ancient art form of the 17th Century. Originating from Italy and France, the decoupage painting technique involves layering of images by incorporating silver or gold leaf in order to achieve a 3D finish. The painting is done underneath glass surfaces. Decoupage was recently revived, after many took an interest in this beauteous art form. Prasad Nagendran, one of the founders of Domus Designs is a self-taught decoupage artist. "Decoupage is a unique art form, whose value is recognised only by very few in this part of the world. It is a very tedious process and requires lot of patience to make a single piece. But what you create in the end is worth the toil", he said.

Glancing through the shop, one would find several hand painted decoupage motifs, stunningly integrated into mirrors, trays, boxes, urns, vases, plates and frames all of which are specially manufactured for Domus Designs. The shop also sponsors emerging local artists.

Adjoining the shop is the Domus Café, a small yet breezy food joint with a snug ambience.

The colourful paintings that are hung in the high walls and the furniture with decoupage work would instantly catch your attention and beckon you inside. This café is an ideal place to enjoy a pleasant brunch, catch a coffee-break or when hunger pangs arise as you stroll around Galle Face Green. The menu provides a mix up of delicious all-time favourites such as fish and chips, biriyani, club sandwiches, pastas and scrumptious sea food platters. However their speciality dish is the '*Perettu* rice' (Perettu is tamil for mix or turned over), an authentic Jaffna style mixed rice made with mutton. Also, the café offers a range of beverages including nonalcoholic beer.

Domus Designs is the collaborative effort of Prasad Nagendran and Suren Samarathunga who are ardent lovers of art and interior designing. With several years of experience, they ventured into this field to redefine interior designing in the country and to cater to those who wish for artistic and creative living and work spaces. The store serves as a hub to their interior designing work. Here, customers can get a taste of the products and services offered.

If you are looking to decorate your living space or give a personalised gift to your loved ones, head here without further ado because Domus Designs offers nothing but the most singular and original works of art.

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