

GRAND OPENINGS EXCLUSIVE NEW RETREATS FROM MALAWI TO VIETNAM

INDIA Robb Report

OCTOBER 2011

FOR THE LUXURY LIFESTYLE™

THE MIGHTY MP4-12C

BEHIND THE WHEEL OF McLAREN's 592 HP
ROAD-SCORCHING CARBON CREATION



SPECIAL SECTION

FASHION & STYLE

Seasonal trends, bespoke suits, fashion art & more...

CANALI | ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA | JIMMY CHOO | JOHN LOBB

LOUIS VUITTON | RALPH LAUREN | SALVATORE FERRAGAMO | TOM FORD

THE
INDIA
WEEKEND
TRIP



Bombay silver teapot with elephant-head handles and spout, and a band of cartouches enclosing *apsaras* along the body. It is typical of the hybrid Kutch-Lucknow style that Bombay silversmiths developed.

A 1797 hand-coloured aquatint by Englishmen Thomas and William Daniells shows the Mausoleum of Muddoom Shah Dowlat at Moneah on the River Soane. The uncle and nephew team, explains Issa, were among the first British artists to arrive in India. In 1788, they set out on a tour of Upper India and the south, and published 144 drawings of landscapes, monuments and temples in between 1795-1806. Picturesque and exotic, this body of material influenced the way a whole generation outside India perceived the country.

A tiger mask from the Konkan region dating to the early 20th century, is a dancing mask for Perni Zagor, a folk play danced by Christian Gaud tribals. Perni Zagor is unique among these as it has its roots in fertility rites and provides a unique insight into the sequence of evolution from the Neolithic period of South Indian history till the advent of Portuguese rule.

Issa has helped collectors in India and abroad build significant collections of maps and prints, Indian silver, miniatures, and 19th century Indian photography.

More recently, he has noticed a growing interest in folk and tribal art, including paintings, bronze sculptures and masks from the Konkan and Bhuta regions, and wooden sculptures from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Issa has a knack for spotting museum-worthy pieces. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, formerly the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai, has recently acquired folk paintings and sculptures from him to augment its formidable, existing collection. He has also contributed pieces to the recently opened Krishna gallery endowed by Harsha Dehejia.

Dig below that affable personality and you can sit in Phillips long after you have ceased looking at the objects around you, as Issa mines through a wealth of historic knowledge he has acquired with years of living with and searching for fine works of art. "It is a constantly evolving scenario, dictated partly by what we can find, changing tastes of our customers, and scholarship in hitherto neglected fields, followed by exhibitions and catalogues," says Issa, adding, "It all succeeds in creating interest in new areas." And a renewed eye for buyers of antiquity. —DEEPIKA SORABJEE

Phillips Antiques, 022.2202.0564, www.phillipsantiques.com

Farooq Issa's collection of antiques includes aquatints, maps, photographs, glass paintings, and Indian silver.

A Shop for all Seasons

The 150-year-old Phillips Antiques is Mumbai's finest stop for antique treasures.

IT MAY BE LOCATED on the busy Regal Circle in Colaba, Mumbai, but in the handsomely proportioned peaceful haven that Phillips Antiques offers, there is enough quiet to allow you get lost among treasures of the past. The pleasure, however, is immediate, enough to tempt one to reach for their wallet impulsively. Located in a spot that it has occupied for 150 years, Phillips Antiques has maintained its place physically and commercially as Mumbai's finest stop for collectors as well as famous personalities: Bill Clinton and John Galliano, among others, have been visitors.

Two demonic faced *vyallis*—chariot pieces from Tamil Nadu—tower above you as you enter. In antique vitrines and wooden racks, there's an eclectic selection waiting to be sifted through. At the helm of the establishment is Farooq Issa, whose great-grandfather acquired the shop in 1920. From 1860-1920, the shop was a British-owned emporium that supplied a variety of luxury goods from newly-in-fashion photography supplies and antique furniture, to silverware from the likes of Asprey and Mappin & Webb. The Issas kept the original name and continued in the same tradition. Over the years, the shop evolved with changing circumstances: In newly independent

India, for instance, importing luxury goods became prohibitively expensive.

"To a large extent, what we sold at Phillips was dictated by what was available at the time," says Issa. By the time his father joined the business, the princely states were offloading their treasures with the stoppage of the Privy Purse. If you were a buyer, then it was a fortuitous time to garner superb antiques and jewellery. By the mid-1980s, such treasures dried up. By then, Issa himself was a part of the family business, and he expanded the Phillips collection to include Daniells aquatints, maps, photographs, glass paintings, and Indian silver. Miniatures come by occasionally, as do prized aquatints. While revelling in past histories, Issa has brought a contemporary focus in the shop design and in the collection. Phillips Antiques is now a capacious open-planned space with light streaming in through large windows.

Issa helps me sift through his current stock of fine antiques. He points out a large horse *vahana* (vehicles for deities) that occupies a window. With sinuous lines and a proud head, and painted a vivid pink, this early-20th century vehicle for Lord Kubera is from Karnataka.

A more delicate piece lies in a glass cabinet. It is a



A 1797 aquatint by Thomas and William Daniells The Mausoleum of Mucdoom Shah Dawlut at Moneah on the River Soane.