

Herald Cafe

Preserving Goa's heritage homes in modern times

Goa is home to a unique collection of heritage houses that are a blend of Eastern and Western cultures. The responsibility of preserving these homes often falls on their owners, who play a crucial role in maintaining these structures for future generations

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Heritage houses in Goa, built during the Portuguese colonial era, are recognized for their intricate woodwork, tall windows, elaborate facades, spacious courtyards, and colorful tiles. These homes serve as historical treasures, reflecting Goa's cultural and architectural heritage. Owners play a key role in preserving the historical integrity of these homes. They often use traditional materials like lime plaster, red-tiled roofs, and wooden beams instead of modern alternatives, ensuring that their homes retain their original charm and authenticity.

UP-KEEPING THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

The role of heritage house owners in Goa is vital to the preservation of these architectural gems. Their efforts ensure that Goa's rich history is preserved, allowing these homes to remain living testimonies of the region's past for future generations.

"The balcão, balconies, windows and furniture are some of the important features of Goan homes. As far as maintaining the historical integrity of my property is concerned, we follow the traditional ways of preservation, like our ancestors did," says Irwin Antão, owner of an ancestral house in Chandor. Most old homes do not meet modern functional requirements like attached toilets, A/cs etc, and thus residents have to often compromise on their comforts. There is a big problem to source materials and craftsmen for restoring heritage houses, he says. "We follow simple procedures of yearly maintenance of the roof



CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING HERITAGE HOMES

"Most heritage houses in Goa are built out of mud and plastered in lime. Goa being a land of heavy rainfall these walls have to be well protected, which means the roof has to be maintained very well to avoid leakage to prevent the mud walls from getting wet. Now maintaining the roof is an extremely expensive affair given the high cost of timber and labor now a days," says Glenn Rodrigues, owner of a century-old-house in Utorda. Further, he explains that the second danger is termite. "Since the roof structure, false ceiling and all doors, windows, wardrobes and wall cupboards are of wood, these have to be protected by regularly carrying out pest control treatments, which is again an expensive affair," he adds. Glenn personally removes

cobwebs and regularly cleans everything in the fear of damaging the antiques if given to laborers. "Varnishing the furniture from time to time, cleaning the antique curios, rearranging them and making sure that any damage to any part of the house is immediately repaired, is something I keep my watchful eye on," says Glenn.



HOMEOWNERS' ROLE IN MAINTAINING HOMES FOR TOURISM



- Homeowners are responsible for maintaining the architecture, antique furniture, and cultural elements of their homes.
- Traditionally, tenants and servants took care of home upkeep, but today, owners are often involved in the physical work themselves.
- Passed down through generations, these homes represent familial pride and are vital to Goa's tourism industry.
- Well-maintained homes attract visitors, helping preserve Goa's history and promoting local and global interest.

by spraying insecticides and also exposing it to the sun without the tiles. All I hope is that the government someday creates a separate fund for maintaining old traditional houses like ours," mentions Irwin with optimism.

DIY MAINTENANCE: THE DIGNITY OF LABOR

With a shortage of domestic help, heritage home owners, like Ranjeev Fernandes from Cotta, Chandor, often take on the responsibility of maintaining their properties themselves. "I personally fixes roof leaks, ensuring the home remains intact, especially during the monsoon," says Ranjeev, who has opened his house to public viewing.

Many families practice adaptive reuse of these heritage homes to generate financial support needed for ongoing maintenance. This helps them to preserve the homes while adapting to modern needs.

ENGAGEMENT WITH HERITAGE CONSERVATION BODIES

Heritage house owners often collaborate with local heritage conservation organizations, government agencies, and NGOs to ensure that laws and policies are in place to protect these homes. These efforts help raise awareness about heritage conservation in the community.



FULL MOON RITUALS: ANCIENT PRACTICES THAT HELP YOU REFLECT AND RESET



BRAVING THE COVID LOCKDOWN AWAY FROM HOME

SWIPE RIGHT

The Rock and Emily Blunt to reunite in Scorsese's next film

Martin Scorsese-directed untitled drama will star Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, Leonardo DiCaprio and Emily Blunt. The story will be based on a ruthless Hawaiian crime boss, based on a real figure, who battled encroaching rivals for control of organized crime in Hawaii. It was a bloody battle, the kind of terrain Scorsese covered in both 'Goodfellas' and 'The Departed'. In 1960s and 70s Hawaii, this formidable and charismatic mob boss rises to build the islands' most powerful criminal empire, waging a brutal war against mainland corporations and rival syndicates while fighting to preserve his ancestral land.



New FBI chief Kash Patel welcomed in 'Bollywood' style



US President Donald Trump congratulated Indian-origin Kash Patel after his confirmation as Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation with a Bollywood reference. White House deputy chief of staff Dan Scavino congratulated Kash Patel, with a Ranveer Singh song. The Trump aide shared a dance clip on X of the song 'Malhari' from the movie 'Bajirao Mastani' featuring actor Ranveer Singh. In the video, Ranveer Singh's face had been edited and replaced with Kash Patel. Sharing a post on X, Dan Scavino, assistant to the President and White House Deputy Chief of Staff, wrote, "Moments ago in the Oval Office. Congratulations to the Ninth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Kash Patel. President Trump has officially signed the commission."



The comedian Awkwafina wore a quirky outfit as she was shooting on the sets of her new Christmas movie 'The Man with the Bag' in New York.

Eye to Eye with António Xavier Trindade

Vivek Meneses

Great art has a life of its own, and the very best artworks continue their trajectories far beyond the life and limitations of the artists who first brought them into being. It is, of course, also true that most of what is created in one time doesn't usually carry its intended impact to future generations – and that is perfectly fine, even to be expected. Nonetheless, there are exceptions – what we recognize as greatness – that resist becoming dated, and instead continue to grow in meaning and importance. We are seeing exactly that in action in the highly welcome new presentation of the stunning – and creditably constantly improved – collection of 100-year-old paintings by the Sanguem-born proto-modernist António Xavier Trindade that has been on free display to all for years at the Fundação Oriente premises in Fontainhas. A few additions and some crucial new positioning with better light has significantly improved the viewing experience, and our collective understanding of this true master's capacities and compulsions. Rather intriguingly, shifting its location just a few feet made all the difference to the enigmatic 1912 self-portrait you see reproduced on this page. Up close in the way it is now on

the wall, it becomes amply clear this masterpiece is the most important 20th century artwork on display in Goa, and a milestone achievement in Indian art history.

Lots can and should be said about the sorry fact that António Xavier Trindade is the only exemplar from the truly extraordinary 20th century lineup of Goan artists – Chimulkar, Fonseca, Gaitonde, Souza, on and on – whose work is easily seen in their own homeland, and that is courtesy an organization based in Lisbon. In this regard, it cannot be acknowledged and appreciated enough that Fundação Oriente has not merely kept its promise to the artist's descendants to maintain the works on display, but in fits and starts – and with more purposeful energy under the current delegate Paulo Gomes and his predecessor Inês Figueira – kept studying the archive, kept adding new artworks, and ensured this invaluable treasure trove is at the centre of all its activities in Goa. Here, the new museum catalogue by Fatima da Silva Gracias and Paulo Gomes is yet another positive step forward, by considerably raising the bar for scholarship



about Trindade and his milieu, in a valuable re-weighting to the man on the other side of the easel of all his lively, lovely, super-

sensitively rendered portraits. The bare facts of Trindade's life have long been familiar: his father was from Assonora but he was born in Sanguem in 1870. At 17, he enrolled at the Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art in Bombay – where many Goans studied in the latter decades of the 19th century – and won many prizes and distinctions throughout his undergraduate and master's degrees. In 1898, he became one of the first Indian faculty members at the JJ School, and in 1920 became Superintendent of its reputed Reay Workshop. All the while, he gained increasing fame as the pre-eminent salon artist of his time, winning the Mayo Silver Medal (1898) and Gold Medal of the Bombay Art Society (1920) and many commissions from the colonial high society. In those years, he and his family were a prominent presence in their home city, when Casa Bianca (which still stands) in Mahim spilling over with eight musically and artistically talented children, including five famously feisty daughters.

It is that Trindade – secure pater familias with confidently tousled hair – whom we are suddenly eye-to-eye with in the new Fundação Oriente gallery set-up. This self-portrait was always there, but in one corner, and consistently poorly lit from the very beginning. Thus, previously, your attention was very quickly drawn in other directions: to the intimate family scene on an adjacent wall, to the spectacular series of portraits of women directly opposite: his wife Florentina, his daughter Esthar, a benevolent-looking Annie Besant, the beauteous Miss Ferns (who calls herself a writer, and is my favourite). All that is changed now, because it is the artist himself who commands the room from his magnificent near-monochrome self-portrait, looking directly into your eyes as though sitting across the table, with a distinct twinkling behind his exquisitely rendered thin-rimmed gold glasses. What a formidable presence, what gentle power. This is an indelible, authorial energy radiating its influence to refocus all the other works in the room. Paintings don't talk, but this one certainly speaks volumes in the eloquent voice of António Xavier Trindade. It is important to note that this artist left Goa in the 19th century, and it wasn't until the 21st century that his paintings arrived here for the first time, as bequeathed by the Esther

Trindade Trust (after an unfortunate sojourn in the USA where this self-portrait and some other works were incompetently "restored"). Since they have been in Fontainhas, one of the best aspects of their journey into our consciousness has been the devoted attention of Dr. Fatima da Silva Gracias, who has devotedly learned more and more about the artist and his family, and substantially added to our understanding of the subjects of these paintings as well. Here is a short excerpt from her introduction to the new catalogue: "The paintings in Fundação Oriente's Trindade Collection are just a small part of the vast body of Trindade's works. His paintings are scattered all over the globe: the United States of America (USA), Canada, England, Brazil, Switzerland, Australia and various parts of India. They are in the possession of erstwhile princely rulers of India, art dealers, churches, convents, museums and perhaps even in the drawers of ordinary folks, since at one time, he traded his paintings for commodities such as sugar and tea which were scarce during WWI... Around thirty-three paintings of António Xavier Trindade are on permanent display at the Galeria de Arte. They display his versatility and genius. Trindade's paintings on offer here bear witness to his minute attention to detail and the ability to capture these details with authenticity."