

# CONSCIOUS LUXURY

As sustainability becomes a buzzword that is impossible to ignore, affordability is also coming into the picture to make this a package that cannot be missed.

By Bindu Gopal Rao



At Cocoon, sustainability and luxury coexist. Their Pret collection makes eco-conscious rugs affordable without compromising on design or craftsmanship.

PHOTO COURTESY: COCOON FINE RUGS

**T** rue luxury lies in creating homes that are not only beautiful and comfortable but also responsible and sustainable. And it is exactly this ethos that is driving the affordable sustainability space. Experts weigh in.

#### MAKING IT MATTER

Luxury today is no longer about excess; it's about comfort, longevity, and mindful choices. Creating a luxurious yet affordable home means designing smart layouts that make every square foot count, selecting durable, locally available materials, and adding refined detailing that elevates the space. "This matters because homeowners today want their spaces to not only look elegant but also feel responsible and authentic. A home designed this way nurtures both the residents and the planet; it's a true reflection of modern luxury, where sustainability and sophistication go hand in hand," says Neha Bhasin, Founder & Creative Director, Neha Bhasin Interior Design. At her studio, sustainability is about layering thoughtful choices across every stage of design. "We focus on using locally sourced and recycled materials to reduce carbon footprint while celebrating regional craftsmanship. Natural light and ventilation are maximised to cut down on artificial energy needs, while water and energy-saving systems are integrated into the planning. Just as importantly, we design for long-term durability, spaces that don't need constant renovation or replacement, which is one of the most sustainable design decisions you can make," she avers.



Sustainability is about layering thoughtful choices across every stage of design. Courtesy Neha Bhasin.

PHOTO COURTESY: COCOON FINE RUGS



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By using locally available natural fibres, by-products, and reclaimed elements, the studio reduces reliance on expensive, imported inputs. Courtesy Oorjaa



CHOOSE WELL

Affordable sustainability is about small, meaningful choices: a sculptural tray on a console, a marble planter on the balcony, or a simple stone accent in a corner. These handcrafted pieces bring elegance and responsibility together. Brijesh Bansal, Founder of Stone Art, says, "Affordability comes from smart material use, often working with offcuts of stone or marble that would otherwise go to waste. The designs remain simple yet functional, serving both utility and beauty. Sustainability is achieved using natural stone, marble, and ceramics, carefully handcrafted by artisans. Each piece is designed for longevity, avoiding disposables or mass-produced alternatives. By relying on natural materials and traditional craft, we ensure minimal environmental impact while preserving heritage techniques."



Smriti Choudhary, Founder & Brand Director, Cocoon Fine Rugs



Neha Bhasin, Founder & Creative Director, Neha Bhasin Interior Design



PHOTO COURTESY: DASH SQUARE

Technology is playing a transformative role in making sustainable luxury more accessible.



PHOTO COURTESY: STONEART.

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PHOTO COURTESY: NEHA BHASIN

Design for long-term durability spaces that don't need constant renovation or replacement, is one of the most sustainable design decisions you can make.



Jenny Pinto, Founder of Oorjaa



Amruth Sampige, Co-Founder of Dash Square



Brijesh Bansal, Founder of Stone Art,

### WALLET FACTOR

Sustainability often comes with a higher cost because the entire value chain—from raw material sourcing to manufacturing and distribution—requires more care, technology, and compliance than conventional practices. By sourcing smartly, partnering with artisans, and using materials that grow back quickly (like bamboo and rattan), conscientious organisations are helping bridge the gap between cost and being sustainable. “Affordability at Oorjaa comes from rethinking both materials and the making. By using locally available natural fibres, by-products, and reclaimed elements, the studio reduces reliance on expensive, imported inputs. Working directly with artisans also keeps production rooted in the community rather than mass manufacturing — creating efficiencies while maintaining quality. The aim is to balance sustainability with accessibility, ensuring that eco-conscious design is not positioned as luxury alone,” says Jenny Pinto, Founder of Oorjaa.

### NEW TRENDS

There is a noticeable shift towards biophilic design, bringing nature into homes through plants, textures, and organic layouts. Adaptive reuse of materials is another exciting trend, where old doors, reclaimed wood, or antique tiles are given a new life. Manoj Kumar Nair, Country Head - Brands, HTL Group of Companies (that operates brands like Domicil Germany, Corium Italia and Fabbrica Germany), explains, “Sustainability is not a choice but a responsibility. Affluent consumers are not just buying products; they’re investing in lifestyle choices that align with their values. Sustainability has become a marker of sophistication and responsibility, making eco-conscious solutions a defining aspect of modern luxury living.”

Customers want products that can be reused, refurbished, or recycled at the end of their lifecycle, reinforcing the idea that true luxury is timeless, responsible, and waste-free. Premium buyers are choosing modular, adaptable furniture and designs that last, shifting away from ‘fast furniture’ to pieces that remain relevant and durable. “Use of reclaimed wood, recycled metals, eco-certified leather/fabrics, and low-VOC finishes is rising. These materials reduce environmental impact while giving homes a unique theme/story. Modern consumers seek brands that reflect their values and aspirations, offering products that are desirable yet not easily accessible, creating



PHOTO COURTESY: OORJAA.

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PHOTO COURTESY: DASH SQUARE.



Prefabrication and modular building methods reduce waste and shorten construction timelines.



PHOTO COURTESY: STONE ART

Sustainability is achieved using natural stone, marble, and ceramics, carefully handcrafted by artisans.

a sense of exclusivity and pride in ownership,” adds Manoj.

#### TECH TALK

Technology is playing a transformative role in making sustainable luxury more accessible. Smart automation allows homes to save energy by optimising lighting, cooling, and appliances. Prefabrication and modular building methods reduce waste and shorten construction timelines. Amruth Sampige, Co-Founder of Dash Square, says, “Technology is making green living easier. Today, energy-saving LED lights are paired with eco-friendly lamp designs. Smarter supply chains result in less waste during transportation, keeping the final cost low. Even finishes on furniture are being improved so they last longer without harming the environment.” Manoj adds, “We are the only organisation in the furniture industry with a complete backward integration. From the wet blue leather process to the design, craftsmanship, assembly, and packaging of the final product, everything is done in-house. By eliminating third-party involvement, we not only maintain strict quality control but also optimise costs—allowing our customers to enjoy premium products at truly affordable prices, without any compromise on quality.”

#### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

One of the biggest challenges is perception; many still equate luxury with imported or rare materials, and it takes time to change that mindset. Some sustainable technologies, such as solar or advanced insulation, have high upfront costs, even though they ultimately save money in the long run. Smriti Choudhary, Founder & Brand Director of Cocoon Fine Rugs, says, “High raw material costs, scaling artisan work affordably, and competing with ‘fast décor’ brands set unrealistic price expectations. At Cocoon, sustainability and luxury coexist. Pret (is it one of their brands?) makes eco-conscious rugs affordable without compromising on design or craftsmanship, supporting artisans and modern homes alike.”

Traditional, non-sustainable manufacturing benefits from decades of established global supply chains and mass production, which drive down costs. Sustainable methods, however, are still evolving and are not yet adopted at the same scale, making them more expensive to implement and maintain. Jenny adds, “For Oorjaa, the challenge is mainly in consumer mindsets and mass market trends. Cheap, mass-produced goods that have flooded the marketplace in recent years undermine the value of handcrafted durability and care. They also create unwanted waste that is destroying the environment.”

#### RIGHT INTENT

When design, materials, and craftsmanship come together with intention, the result is elegance that feels effortless. Through smart planning, modular design, and clever material selection, sustainability becomes accessible. For instance, locally available Kota stone can be recommended instead of imported marble, or bamboo as a renewable alternative to hardwood. “When you bring home a rattan light, a handwoven mirror, or a clay vase, you’re not just decorating; you’re making a choice to live more thoughtfully. And the best part? You don’t have to spend a fortune to do it,” says Amruth. These options carry the same refined elegance but at a fraction of the environmental and financial cost. By aligning design intent with practical choices, designers are creating luxurious interiors without overspending. **AS**