HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

Pantone's Colour of the Year heralds Indian interiors' soft luxury era

BINDU GOPAL RAO

Courtesy **Essentia Home**
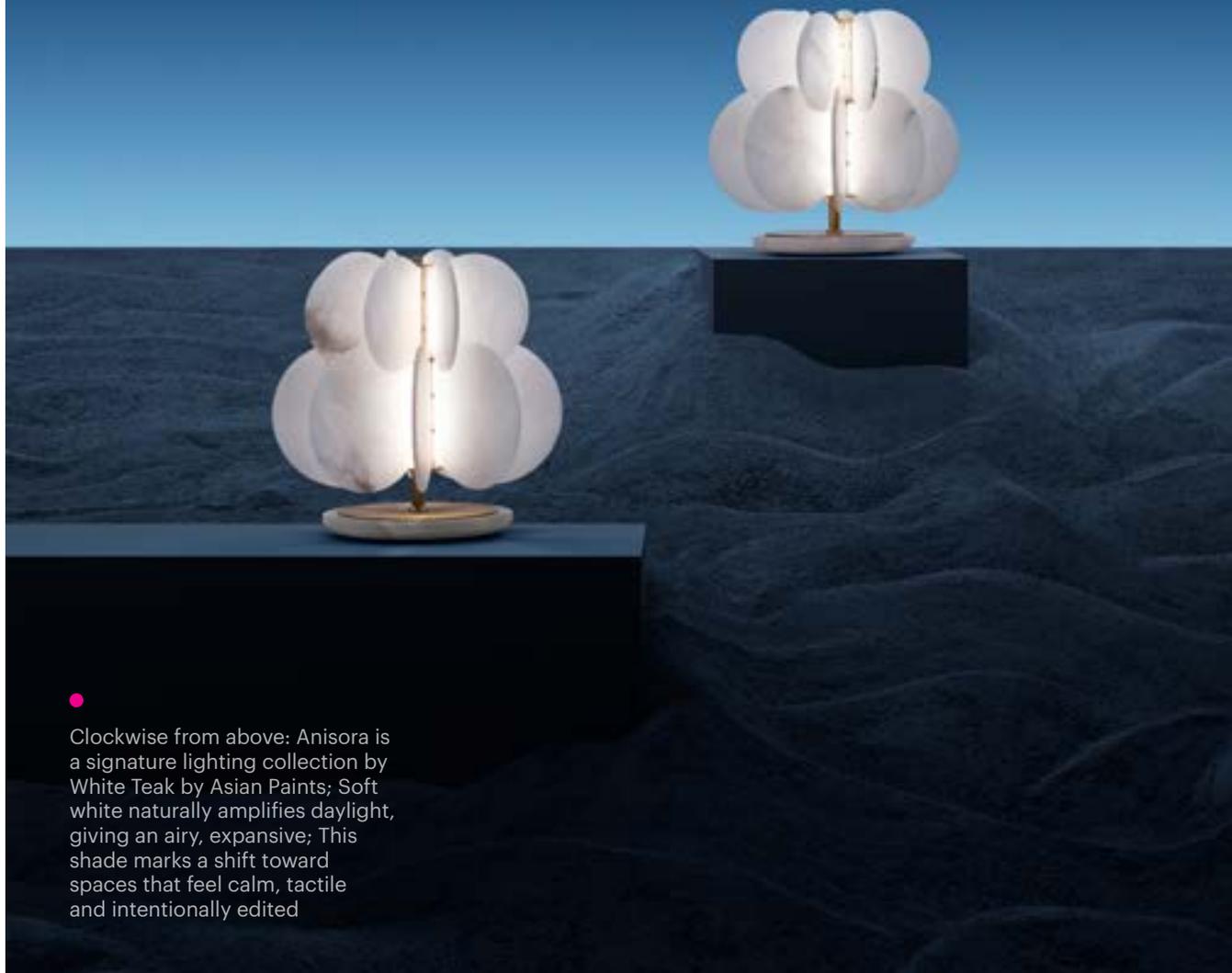
● Clockwise from above: Anisora is a signature lighting collection by White Teak by Asian Paints; Soft white naturally amplifies daylight, giving an airy, expansive; This shade marks a shift toward spaces that feel calm, tactile and intentionally edited

Pantone's White, Cloud Dancer, heralds a shift toward a calmer, more mindful idea of luxury. What's beautiful about this white is how quietly it works. It does not demand attention, but elevates everything around it. It makes crafts, art, and materials look even more refined. This is the new luxury: soft, intentional, and deeply comforting. Farah Agarwal, Interior Designer Founder & Chief Designer, Chestnut Storeys, explains: "In a luxury home, light and space do a lot of the talking, and white supports both effortlessly. It opens rooms, makes them feel brighter, and lets strong furniture pieces or architectural details shine." With warm, layered lighting, white feels fresh by day and soothing by night, creating that calm, high-end atmosphere people love. And because it's so timeless, the home evolves beautifully as pieces change over the years.

Courtesy **Essentia Home**

TIPS

→ Layer the shade with tonal variations like warm ivory, chalk, and greige to avoid a flat finish.

→ Pair it with tactile materials; the colour thrives on depth created through texture.

→ Consider lighting carefully. Use warm LEDs and concealed lighting to bring out its softness.

→ Do not use it uniformly across every room without tonal breaks. It can make the home feel clinical.

→ Do not pair it with overly cool metals or stark blues that fight its warmth.

• The colour frames architecture, draws attention to materiality and invites natural light (Above); The shade creates selective contrasts so even a single sculpture gains presence against it (Opposite page)

Understated sophistication

In a context like India's, where craft, materiality, and texture resonate deeply, soft white evokes calm and clarity, providing a backdrop for traditional Indian materials and craftsmanship to shine. "In doing so, it allows subtle textures, artisanal surfaces, and architectural tactility to define luxury rather than overt decoration. This elegance speaks to a renewed appreciation for heritage, craft, and spatial serenity in contemporary Indian homes," aver Amrita Guha & Joya Nandurdikar, Founding Partners, Untitled Design & Furgonomics. In a luxury home, soft white serves as the base upon which materials, textures, and craftsmanship can take centre stage. It layers neutrality with depth, giving stone, metal, wood, and other textile elements the freedom to assert their character and materiality.

Making a statement

A luxe setting thrives on a balance between volume and detail, depth, and restraint. This shade of white works beautifully when paired with rich natural materials like marble, textured plaster, carved wood, and hand-woven textiles. "Rather than being a backdrop alone, the shade becomes part of the home's sensory experience. In double-height spaces, curved corridors, or rooms with strong symmetry, it highlights form. In intimate corners, it creates a cocooning sense of calmness," says Hridik Chawla, co-founder of Essentia Home. White brings an immediate sense of refinement. It gives space for every detail to breathe, which is key to luxury.

- This shade of white works well when paired with rich natural materials like marble, carved wood, and hand-woven textiles (Below); With this hue, textures stand out more, shapes feel sculptural, and materials like stone or brass look richer (Bottom)

Courtesy Chestnut Storeys

Colour-Coded

With this hue, textures stand out more, shapes feel sculptural, and materials like stone or brass look richer. According to Shivani Gupta Mittal, Principal Designer, House of Lalittya, "this shade signals a new age of soft luxury in Indian interiors because it shifts the focus from visual excess to calm, comfort and thoughtful design. Instead of bold statements, it celebrates light, space and subtle detailing, allowing materials, craftsmanship and proportions to define luxury in a quieter, more refined way."

Soft white naturally amplifies daylight and reflects soft ambient light, giving interiors an airy, expansive feel that elevates the spatial experience. "White materials are never truly white; the subtle variations of colour within them impart depth and vitality, making even the most perfect forms beautifully imperfect. This sensibility reflects the shift towards a softer kind of luxury in interiors, one that is quieter, more personal, and emotionally resonant. Our collaboration with White Teak by Asian Paints on Anisora mirrors this approach. Crafted in alabaster, the collection lets light glow gently through the material, bringing warmth and a sense of calm to spaces," says a spokesperson from Swiss design studio Atelier Oï. If a colour can make everyday moments feel a little more beautiful, that is real luxury, and Pantone got it right.

Courtesy House of Lalittya