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## THE HOME FRONT

### A Globe-Trotter's New York Pad

The larger-than-life SoHo duplex of a hotelier and fixture on the party circuit

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*New York*

**WHEN HE'S NOT** vacationing on his yacht, partying with celebrities like Kim Kardashian or traveling between his so-hip-it-hurts hotels in Miami, Bangkok and India, hotelier and socialite Vikram Chatwal can be found in his grown-up SoHo bachelor pad.

On the second floor of his two-story, 4,000-square-foot condominium, purchased in 2010 for just under \$6 million and designed and furnished for roughly \$2 million, is his "wall of self-realization," featuring framed magazine articles of himself as well as photographs with him and his father with heads of state like Bill Clinton.

On a recent afternoon, housekeepers clad in tan tunics shuffled around as Mr. Chatwal, 40, hung out between meetings and a fashion party. Earlier that week, he'd attended a Kanye West and Jay-Z concert. "I have also been playing a lot of chess and Scrabble," he said.

Located on a quiet side street, Mr. Chatwal's four-bedroom, 4½-bath-room townhouse with its own street entrance is housed in Soho Mews. Completed in 2009, the Gwathmey Siegel-designed complex has large



Clockwise from above: The sitting area; the dining room and patio; the living room with the kitchen behind; Vikram Chatwal; the master bedroom.

windows and residents like Justin Timberlake. While the building has a modern, metal-paneled facade, Mr. Chatwal's home's interiors have incorporated more traditional elements and are darker and decidedly guy-like, with a slightly more classic atmosphere than Mr. Chatwal's sleek-looking hotels.

Mark Zeff, a designer who collaborated with Mr. Chatwal on some of his hotels, said the townhouse was originally "just a big white box. It had very little character." To give the contemporary-feeling space more of a "turn-of-the-century feel," he incorporated darker colors like brown hardwood floors and wall paneling.

In the living room, there's an antique-looking trunk coffee table with an elaborately designed chess set on top, flanked by dark leather couches. The bedroom walls of the master bedroom are upholstered in dark leather. In the dining room there's a long rectangular table with burgundy upholstered chairs and benches. The main living space has a glass wall overlooking a backyard patio lined with bamboo trees.

Inspiration also came from Mr. Chatwal's 150-foot yacht, *Fathom*, which he said he spent a year and a half designing with Mr. Zeff. Some of the shiny surfaces, including a mirrored wall in the living room with an invisible, built-in television screen, are reminiscent of the boat's sleek design.

The art is contemporary and eclectic. There are neon red light bulbs in the shape of the word "Vicious" in the sitting room, next to large nude photo of a seductively posed Pamela Anderson, by the fashion photographer Sante D'Orazio. Upstairs, a surfboard leans against the wall, with the word "Gratitude" painted on it. Hanging near a wall-size frosted glass pivoting front door is a large painting comprised of rows of colored dots, by Ross Bleckner. In the upstairs hallway and near the main entry are pieces by M.F. Husain, an artist often described as the "Picasso of India."

"The collection is very much like Vikram; from one minute to the next you don't know what he's going to do or say," said Mr. Zeff.

Born in Ethiopia, Mr. Chatwal is the son of Sant Singh Chatwal, the India-born founder of Hampshire Hotels & Resorts, which owns and oper-



ates hotels around the world. In 1999, with his father's backing, he opened the *Time*, his first hotel in New York, known for its futuristic design. He subsequently opened nine hotels through his father's company under several different brands, including the moderately priced *Night* brand.

The higher-end *Dream Hotels*, with their velvet-roped lounges, high-tech touches and elaborate design elements like a swimming pool with a clear bottom visible from the lobby, have attracted high-profile parties thrown by designers like Marc Jacobs. (Rates at the *Dream Downtown* start around \$425 a night.) Over the next few years, in a partnership with Wyndham Hotels, his company will roll out nearly 50 more *Night* and *Dream* hotels world-wide.

A former model who has acted in a handful of films, Mr. Chatwal is as known for his social life as his professional doings. He befriended celebrities like model Gisele Bündchen and, in 2006, was married in a lavish ceremony spread across three Indian cities to Priya Sachdev, a former model and investment banker, with guests like P. Diddy, Deepak Chopra



and Mr. Clinton in attendance. (Now separated, Mr. Chatwal said his wife stays with him when she visits with their daughter.) Last year, he hit the tabloids when he was linked to actress Lindsay Lohan (a representative for the actress said they never dated).



Mr. Chatwal, who also owns a home in London and frequently visits India for business and to see his daughter, said he spends about seven or eight months out of the year in New York. A 3,200-square-foot unit with three bedrooms and three bathrooms in Soho Mews is currently on the market for just under \$5 million.

Though he said he has slowed down his partying a little as he has gotten older, Mr. Chatwal said when he's at home, he is rarely alone. He likes to have gatherings at his house every couple of weeks and have friends or relatives over most days.

His father recalled he once chastised his son for spending too much money on a hotel's design, pointing out that the design bill was nearly as much as he'd spent buying hotels. The elder Mr. Chatwal said he told his son at the time, "You don't know the value of money."

The *Time* hotel eventually gained widespread recognition for its design, and Mr. Chatwal said he generally no longer questions his son's expensive tastes. The elder Mr. Chatwal said his son's home has a homey feel that "doesn't make you feel like you're in Manhattan."