

LIFE &amp; STYLE

## Curious Cape Kamoryn

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**This bohemian space brings together an unusual blend of designer clothes, handmade jewellery and repurposed handmade furniture**

When I visited Cape Kamoryn on ECR a few days ago, I was not looking to write a store review. I was out to solve a mystery that had intrigued me ever since I received the invite from founder Shekar Sitaraman. Here was a shop that sells art, furniture, artefacts, handmade jewellery, garden embellishments and designer clothes. Yet it was neither a furniture shop, nor an art gallery, nor a handicrafts emporium, nor a clothing store.

On the surface, these varied merchandise had nothing in common with each other, but on digging a bit deeper and chatting with the various partners, a common thread began to emerge. The whole shop exudes a warm, bohemian vibe. Interiors are spacious and open, so that one can browse through art while checking out the “repurposed” handmade furniture right next to it, at the same time.

Sharan Apparao partners with Cape Kamoryn for the art. “At Apparao Gallery, we are always putting together curated shows, but here it’s more one off and we can have a variety of art

from one end of the spectrum to the other. Here, we are going to have a floating population, so the art displayed is easy on the pocket, easy on the eye and easy on the mind,” she says.

Rajesh Bajaj of Kairasi, a partner for Cape Kamoryn’s furniture, explains, “ ‘Kairasi’ translates in English to ‘hands that are blessed’. He says, “We’ve made a commitment of using only re-purposed wood that otherwise would have ended up in a junkyard. Some pieces we have restored have outlived three generations of owners!”

Vivek Karunakaran will be soon launching VK Spirit for the first time here. “Shekar and I have been talking for a long time about making fashion accessible, and to be able to do it at fabulous pricing and great quality,” he says, adding, “My ready to wear line, VK Spirit, will be launching for the first time here.”

The NGO Inklink, run by NIFT’s Professor Sengupta, is another partner. They train former women convicts to collect recycled plastic, convert them into threads and sew them into artistic and useful items like vases, coasters, cushion covers and the like. “These are on sale here for the first time,” says Professor Sengupta.

The story of Cape Kamoryn began 10 years ago, when Sitaraman started taking an avid interest in collecting and supporting art. Over the last many years, he’s given scholarships to young artists of the Chandra Ilango Art Foundation. He also sponsors an art camp at Cholamandalam and supports the education of children of artisans through Inklink. All the partners, and some of the craftsmen whose products are exhibited, have known Shekar for years. And that is the link that holds this space with its seemingly unconnected pieces of merchandise together. The Buddha statuette, the repurposed furniture, the art, the clothing, the cushion covers sewn with recycled plastic, the handmade jewellery – they are the fruition of a web of relationships.

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