



the indian review of  
world furniture,  
interiors and design

94

volume 17 . issue 05 . september - october 2020



Where does sheer luxury fit into India?  
Is a stoic person with a Fakir's inborn denial of excess, a winner?  
Or is an unabashed epicurean consuming till the senses  
are sick, the hero of our luxury market?

AMAN NATH

Founder and Chairman, Neemrana Hotels



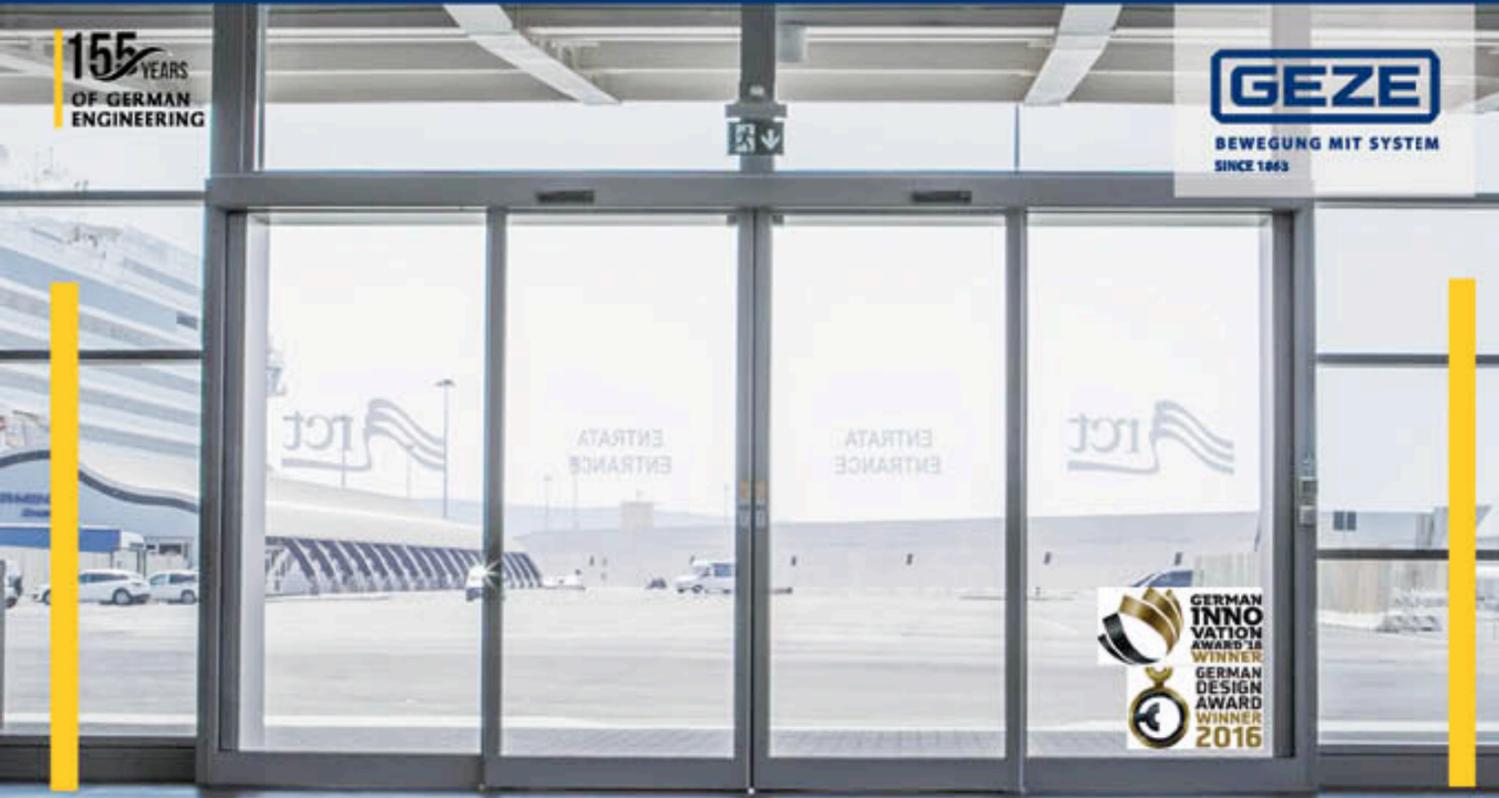
INSIDE:

ir FOCUS : LUXURY HOTELS | ir INDUSTRY FORUM : BESPOKE FURNITURE | ir EXCLUSIVE : WATG

ir PERSONALITY : AR. VINU DANIEL | ir GENNEXT : ABHISHEK AND AASHITA CHADHA

155 YEARS OF GERMAN ENGINEERING

**GEZE**  
BEWEGUNG MIT SYSTEM  
SINCE 1863



## GEZE EC Drive AUTOMATIC SLIDING DOOR SYSTEM

Automatic sliding door systems are often the focus of above-average demands concerning functionality and economic efficiency. The GEZE ECdrive linear sliding door drive offers many convincing advantages at a superior price-performance ratio. The ECdrive is able to move doors up to 120 kg leaf weight and the system is uncompromisingly reliable in all details. High-quality material and the latest actuation technology guarantee a premium performance. Owing to the self-cleaning roller carriage the system operates extremely quiet and the maintenance requirements are substantially reduced.



Combined Detectors



Wired/Wireless Actuation



6 Mode Operation



Quick Response on Emergency Situations



GEZE Connect

Automatic Door Systems | Door Control Systems | All Glass Systems | Revolving Door | Sliding Doors  
Ventilation Systems | Swing Doors | Manual Sliding Systems | Safety Technology

**GEZE India Private Ltd.**  
MF2 & 3, Guindy Industrial Estate,  
Ekkatuthangal | Chennai 600 032  
(T) +91 44 4061 6900  
(E) office-india@geze.com

**GEZE**  
www.geze.in



www.kaff.in

**KAFF**

## Kitchen Accessories & Hardware

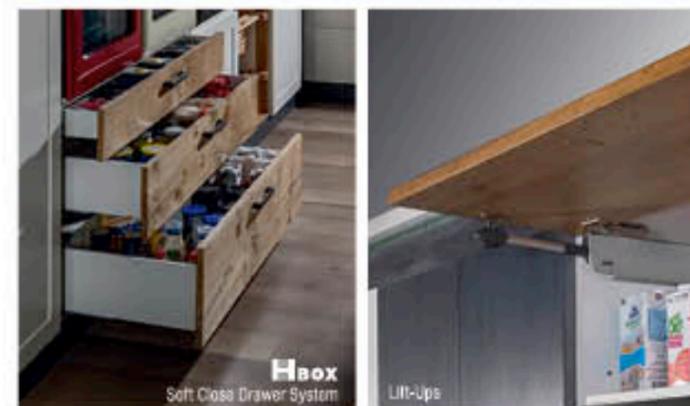
Revolutionary Technology Innovative Design



Double Pantry System



Corner Storage System



**Hbox**  
Soft Close Drawer System



Lift-Ups



Large Ladder system

Customer Care: 1800-180-2221 (Toll Free) or sms KAFF at 56677 KAFF CARE: [customercare@kaff.in](mailto:customercare@kaff.in)

Available at all leading countries: Delhi: 9811-424818, Rajasthan: 999983081 Faridkot & Gurgaon: 982666252, Chandigarh: 999954437, Punjab: 999915680, Jammu and Kashmir: 922173215, Mizoram: 994851001, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh: 9811-404818, Bihar & Jharkhand: 9871256218, West Bengal & North East: 985197781, Chhattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh: 982001948, Orissa: 9179-488217, Manipal: 922933201, West of Maharashtra & Goa: 981997776, Gujarat: 918833305, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh: 999101508, 999300688 Tamil Nadu: 999180673 Kerala: 996626427, Karnataka: 989973110. Visit us at [www.kaff.in](http://www.kaff.in). Follow us:

Registered office: 14/05, ODA Complex, Nargal Road, New Delhi. CIN Number: U28910DL2007PTC189229 \*Conditions apply



"I trust Ebco Hardware and Accessories. For smooth and effortless performance!"

Jasprit Bumrah

Truly Indian and world-class!



- Ebco makes almost all products under 7 verticals at its plants here in India and embodies the drive to Make in India.
- Widest range – Drawer Slides, Hinges, Furniture Locks, Retail Display, Window-Door & Glass Fittings and more.
- Stringent quality standards and tested /certified as per international norms.



Scan with Smartphone to view Ebco brochures

Reach us at [info@ebco.in](mailto:info@ebco.in) or call +91-22-6783 7777 | Toll free 180001 201122 | Web [ebco.in](http://ebco.in)

**National Display Centres:** Ahmedabad: 079-26880478, Bangalore: 080-25503372, Chennai: 044-24611937, Cochin: 0484-2333394, Coimbatore: 0422-2548316, Delhi: (Moti Nagar) 011-49843306, (Okhla) 011-29634285 Guwahati: 09435111409, Hyderabad: 040-23557252, Indore: 06262875491, Jaipur: 0141-2390773, Kolkata: 033-46034171/72, Lucknow: 09506464066, Mumbai: 022-67837700, Nagpur: 0712-2221637, Pune: 020-26456787, Surat: 0261-2234677 **City Display Centres:** Bhopal: 09691171147, Ghazalabad: (Sahibabad) 09643300730/2, Madurai: 0452-4208072, Mumbai (Malad) 09326774528, Tiruchirappalli: 09176612337



00 GEZE	
01 KAFF APPLIANCES	
02 EBEO	
03 CONTENT	
04 AHEC	
05 AHEC	
BCHTON	06
HAFELE	07
KLITE	08
KLITE	09
EUROTECH DESIGN	10

11 ifj editorial

12 ifj likes!  
12 THE HOUSE OF HUNGARIAN MUSIC  
14 MOTHERHOOD HOSPITAL  
16 THE BREATHING OFFICE  
18 KALRAY FARM  
20 SIS SCHOOL

22 ifj transformation  
22 1AQ  
24 PLLUM LEGNO EXPERIENCE CENTER  
26 1, EC  
28 THE LOUNGE AT ESSEX FARMS

30 ifj product watch

32 ifj caught in the web

36 ifj focus  
LUXURY HOTELS

78 ifj exclusive  
WATG (WINBERLY ALLISON TONG & GOO)

82 ifj conversation  
AMAN NATH

84 ifj essay  
ARZAN KHAMBATTA

86 ifj company profile  
MARUNI

90 ifj industry forum  
BESPOKE FURNITURE

96 ifj craft  
EMBROIDERING A STORY OF SURVIVAL

98 ifj art pages  
RAMESH GORJALA

100 ifj news

104 ifj personality  
AR. VINU DANIEL

110 ifj gennext  
ABHISHEK AND AASHITA CHADHA

115 IFJ

116 ifj wanderlust  
AR. BRIJESH SHAIJAL

118 FEATHERLITE  
inside backcover CANADIAN WOOD  
backcover UMG DIGITAL



photo courtesy:  
athenea-a luxury floating  
suite pod, france  
jean-michel ducancelle, france



ifj : the indian review of world  
furniture, interiors and design

editor & creative head  
sylvia khan  
sylvia@ifj.co.in

assistant editor  
mignonne dsouza  
mignonne@ifj.co.in

editorial consultant  
shailendra mehta  
shailendra@ifj.co.in

ifj writetank

editorial correspondents  
aadrita chatterji  
aadrita@ifj.co.in

danielle britto  
danielle@ifj.co.in

studio head  
harish raut  
harish@ifj.co.in

graphic designer  
praful prasannakumar  
praful@ifj.co.in

to contribute editorial matter  
edit@ifj.co.in

to advertise  
jasmeet kaur  
jasmeet@ifj.co.in  
+91 98338 05467

available online at:



published by

Printed and published by Sylvia Khan on behalf of  
Lijalax All India.  
Published by Indus Media Pvt. Ltd.  
705, 7th Floor, Sakas Business Park,  
Paper Box Road, Off Mankhadi Cross Road, Andheri (East),  
Mumbai 400093, India.  
Tel : +91 822 2687 9081-88, 822 2687 0050 / 51

Editor: Sylvia Khan  
While all constructive inputs and editorial material are welcome,  
the editorial team does not undertake responsibility for either  
printing or return of unsolicited material or printing of responses  
in an edited form. While every attempt is made to ensure  
veracity of material, the editors are not responsible for verification  
of the accuracy of information which is accepted in good faith from  
contributors and shall not be held liable to any extent. All rights  
of printing and publication reserved by the publishers. No part of  
this publication may be reproduced elsewhere, without the written  
permission of the publishers.



corporate office  
Indus Media Pvt. Ltd.  
705, 7th Floor, Sakas Business Park, Paper Box Road,  
Off Mankhadi Cross Road, Andheri (East),  
Mumbai 400093, India.  
Tel : +91 822 2687 9081-88



# FROM FOREST TO FINISH

T.ZED Architects have wrapped KOA Canvas - a unique new residential community in Dubai representing a new era in modernized urban property development - with thermally-modified American tulipwood. Over 750 square meters of tulipwood have been used to create the cladding element which shades and prevents overheating of the double-height co-working and closed office spaces, and which also transforms into an outdoor shaded walkway and elevated public balcony. This is the first time that thermally-modified tulipwood has been specified in these quantities in the region and the architects are confident that the material will weather and stand the test of time in this arid desert climate.

For more information visit [www.americanhardwood.org](http://www.americanhardwood.org)

# Innovative Institutional Furniture Solution from **bonton**

## Classroom Furniture



## Lab Furniture



## Library Furniture



## Pre-Primary Furniture



**bonton** Institutional Furniture, which are specifically designed for classrooms, Libraries and Laboratories etc. are most unique, and one of its kind in the country. They are modular in nature; hence, can be installed as per varied customised requirements. These furniture are synchronised in design and high in aesthetics. Its vibrant and distinguished colours impart a bright impact on the environment of the establishments.

**bonton** manufactures Wooden & Steel Modular Institutional /Office furniture comprising :

- Office Tables ■ Chairs ■ Partitions ■ Storage Systems

**bonton**  
FURNITURE SOLUTIONS  
for those who believe in quality!

BONTON TECHNOMAKE PVT. LTD.  
7-A, Scheme No. 71, Near Chandan Nagar Police Station, Dhar Road, INDORE - 452 009  
Tel. / Fax : 0091-731-2383157, 2388769 E-mail : info@bontonfurniture.net  
Website : www.bontonfurniture.net



Channel Partners : Ahmedabad : 99786 71280, Bangalore : 96328 66668, Bhopal : 99260 00291, 94250 64260, Bhubaneswar : 78944 23365, Chennai : 98409 43022, Coimbatore : 98430 20018, Gwalior : 98277 68526, Hyderabad : 93475 01848, Jabalpur : 98931 20886, Kolkata : 97485 57710, Mumbai : 98204 29335, Nagpur : 70204 53796, New Delhi : 98111 22922, 99714 68459, Palanpur (Gujarat) : 94145 46077, Patna : 94310 25276, Pune : 98810 94771, 95034 06715, 98224 38290, Raipur : 97529 99695, Vizag : 96528 49749, Wardha : 98222 32842, Yavatmal : 94221 65476

For Dealership Enquiry : Amit Dubey - 98260 38315, Vinod Bapna - 98260 62313

Dealer's Enquiry Solicited

# HÄFELE

## APPLIANCES

❖• *Shagun Offer* •❖

UP TO

# 40

%  
OFF

ON  
**HÄFELE**  
APPLIANCES  
Offer valid till 10<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020



\*T&C Apply



This festive season, *bring home luxury.*

Customer Care Toll Free: 1800 266 6667  
Customer Care WhatsApp: +91 97691 11122  
Email ID: customercare@hafeleindia.com  
SMS: 'HAFELE' TO 56070

Architectural  
Series

India's Lighting Company



Dixon Mega

Zucchini

Helia - Curoff

Keshav

Ani

Juno

Juno Midi

Ornamental  
Series

The New **K-LITE**  
Post Top Luminaires



Magudam

Gadai

Imperial

Dynasty

Genesis

Ring Fort Arc Mini

Oriental



D-10, Ambattur Industrial Estate, Chennai - 600 058. Tel : 26257710, 48581950. Fax : 26257866  
Cell : 95000 79797, 95000 85511 | Email : info@klite.in Website : www.klite.in

# Trust. Purpose. Tello.

We put motivation into our chair...  
to move, energise, support, conquer.  
Remember the name.  
Tello. No better name, no better chair.  
Now there's no stopping you.

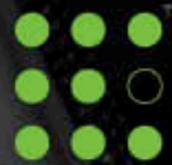


5 Years  
Warranty

Eurotech Design Systems Pvt. Ltd.  
A-179, MIDC, Khairane, Navi Mumbai 400 705  
Tel: (+9122) 2778 0866, 77188 70017, 2444 9005  
showroom@eurotechin.com | info@eurotechworld.com  
www.eurotechworld.com

 **BIFMA APPROVED**

MUMBAI | AHMEDASAD | BENGALURU | DELHI | HYDERABAD | PUNE

  
DESIGN  
EUROTECH  
SINCE 1988



**We've had quite a conversation** about the topic of the 'IFJ Focus' section of this edition. Did a focus on luxury hotel suites seem inappropriate in these strange covidacious days? Or was it a happy escape for a community that loved travel and design? We decided it was the latter, first, because it would never be 'IFJ' to do something in poor taste and second, because we all need some light at the end of this tunnel to inspire us to keep marching.



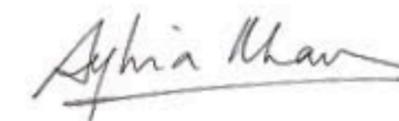
So, we take a magical tour to places afar, and some not so far, except in that we have such limited opportunities to travel and to stay at hotels. While some aspects of luxury blast the top off OTT, others pull us down to the more earthly, the more grounded and minimal. But luxury it all is, in some or other form. What all the projects we've looked at have in common is high design concept and an intricate design sensibility, coupled with interesting, innovative material use.

I have always enjoyed a conversation with the nawab of the experiential, luxury hospitality space, Aman Nath, for his unusual perspective and thinking. Of course, despite the indulgence of the Neemrana properties, Aman has quite another perspective on what luxury is, in the 'IFJ Conversation', leaving us with a question mark, and the option to make our own minds up, rather than the usual 'God speaking for eternity' tone that most persons of a certain level of accomplishment seem to take.

Complementing the tone of the luxury hotel suites is the 'IFJ Spotlight' on bespoke furniture, documenting and appreciating the work of design entrepreneurs who work under quite unsupportive circumstances, and non-existent government or institutional support, to create beautiful objects for our spaces.

This really is IFJ's nod to the other world out there, a world which though seen as uber-lux and indulgent also creates jobs, offers employment to artisans and creates points of aspiration, encouraging us to live for better times, tomorrow.

We feel this is especially true and relevant in these trying times, where businesses across the board are struggling, but are gritting their teeth and continuing on, in the hope of better days ahead. IFJ salutes all these heroes, unsung, but heroes nonetheless.



I look forward to hearing from you.  
Please send your thoughts to me at [edit@ifj.co.in](mailto:edit@ifj.co.in)

# THE HOUSE OF HUNGARIAN MUSIC

budapest, hungary

commission : sou fujimoto architects



**Located in the heart** of the City Park of Budapest, the House of Hungarian Music is a museum with a larger vision encompassing the past and future, people and culture, nature and the sciences of music.



It is also the vision of a 21st-century museum, highly integrated into the environment. The architects were inspired by the trees, how their dense and generous foliage covers and protects, letting sun rays reach the ground, sometimes. The project, therefore, found its shape naturally among the trees' crowns. Its circular volume levitates gently, turned to every direction, freeing out the ground floor to welcome people from all around, while its perforations let the natural light through, just like the sun rays breaching the leaves of a forest.



Activities such as concerts or various events take place under the floating volume, for everyone to see and listen, attracting large crowds to meet and share music.

This open ground floor was conceived as the continuity of the landscape, whose green areas radiate away, as do the waves of sound. Visitors can wander freely about the museum; between the trees, along the curves of the walls, up and down the large spiral staircase, cradled by the vibrations of the spaces and by the soft variations of the sunlight.

Surprising encounters punctuate the route, just as the unexpected notes of a melody, following an uninterrupted movement, up, down, around, inside, outside, the same flow binding softly together museum, park, people and music. ff



# MOTHERHOOD HOSPITAL

sarjapur, bengaluru

commission : studio osmosis

**Creating a healing** and therapeutic environment for expectant mothers, their families and staff was the main aim when designing the 40,000 square feet Motherhood maternity hospital in Bengaluru.

The planning of the hospital was done in collaboration with the people who would be running the place and through the integration of research-based design to produce an efficient, productive and positive space. The premium birthing boutique was awarded the 'Healthcare Excellence Award' as the best single speciality hospital in obstetrics and gynaecology.



The family-centred single speciality facility provides state-of-the-art luxury and comfort from prenatal, post-natal, paediatrics, consultation to counselling. Healthcare standards were taken into consideration when planning the NICU/PICU. Each international-standard suite room in the hospital offers best-in-class facilities and were planned so that labour, delivery and recovery (LDRs) can happen in one private room to ensure the experience is hassle-free and comfortable.

The design of the hospital was strategically planned to allow the direct entrance of natural light in order to provide good indoor air quality to improve productivity, reduce recovery time and cut down utility costs. Materials for this project were also carefully chosen to reduce cleaning and maintenance costs. Graphics and soothing colours were incorporated in the rooms to create tranquillity and harmony.

Designers also made it a point to make the flow and movement in and around the building easy so that the nurses and doctors who work there can spend more time tending to their patients. The overall result is not just aesthetically pleasing, but it also helps to foster positive energy for patients and staff who work there. ifj



# THE BREATHING OFFICE

## kerala

commission : tropical architecture bureau



**Offices are rooted** in the interaction of the employees; communication, coordination, conversation, etc, and the users must be consciously aware of their spatial context while engaging in these functions.

To that end, the architects at Tropical Architecture Bureau trusted in the power of the unconventional and varied use of local materials and skilled labour to design The Breathing Office, creating physical proof of the joy taken in beautifying a space for another.



The technical details lie within simple, achievable and economical limits such that it serves as a prototype which maximises human energy and efficiency in the workplace. The architectural elements harmonise in warm tones of the exposed finish of metal, cement and wood without being monotonous or visually strenuous. Vibrant spots of bright colours, large-leafed plants, glass partitions and graphic signage add relief to the interiors.

The generous placement of greenery creates the oneness with nature which is absent in the centre of the city, and is a necessary requirement when advocating sustainability. The use of glass admits ample daylight and creates a sense of large spatial scale and volumes. Since the staff are young, it keeps with modern themes unlike the conventional workstations in other offices.

There is a certain sense of transparency and personal connection between the users and the spaces, induced by the use of exposed raw materials. Brick and concrete are the two main materials used, and are not covered up with cladding or plaster, portraying the building in its skeletal form.

The variation in textures, brought about by the diversity in materials, makes for an enriching spatial experience for all the sensory organs. One can see a range of colours in a unified palette but also run a hand on the cool hard concrete, the ridged bricks, the granular mortar in-between, the smooth leathery leaves, the ribbed wooden surfaces, satiny metals, and soft upholstery. The architects have, thus, painstakingly incorporated elements in the material spectrum, creating a unique and varied experience each time. if



# KALRAV FARM

ahmedabad

commission : vpa architects



**Kalrav is an open avian haven**

located near Thol lake, Ahmedabad, next to an existing weekend home. Initially, this was a flat piece of land, with a few trees on the periphery. The owner was fond of birds and had various exotic bird species from different parts of the world. This sparked a basic concept for the design and the name, 'Kalrav' which means 'the chirping of birds'.



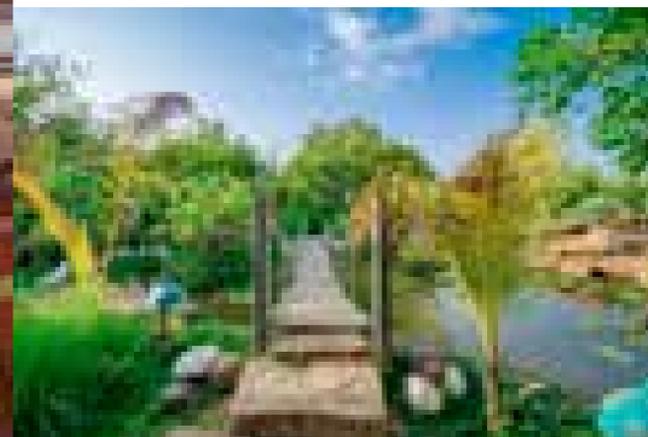
The aim was to create a raw and organic environment for the clients to relax and be close to nature. The entrance is done using a traditionally carved door and theme wall with mud plaster. Visitors are welcomed by an aviary which acts as a backdrop for the existing Neem tree that stands as a sculpture in the centre of the courtyard. The use of bird motifs in niches and screens also reinforces the theme.

The walking trail and cable bridge were created between the greenscapes and waterscapes, letting visitors be a part of the space. Light poles were custom-made to function as bird feeders too.

The elevated deck, facing east, is a perfect spot for yoga and breakfast and to see the entire waterscape. The mist fountain enhances the pool experience, at the topmost level.

A large part of the site is waterscapes, so as to attract migratory and other bird species. The sound of the waterfall makes the place come alive. The tiered waterscapes and plantation with spaces for engagement, create a relaxing ambience. The periphery was planted with over 250 bird-friendly trees and is still growing.

The built area has been kept minimalist and subtle. The upper floor becomes a lounge, while the lower floor is the activity area, which remains shaded and cosy throughout the day. Kalrav is seen as a paradise not only for the human visitors but also for the birds, insects and many other living creatures. ifj



# SIS SCHOOL gurugram

commission : urbanspace architects

**The SIS School,** Gurugram, is a primary institution that aims to promote the holistic development of the child. The school seeks to immerse children in a creative milieu, building new relationships and ways of engaging with the external environment.

The formal development of the building counters the natural angle of the site - sharp angles are moulded to carve out a fluid, turning form, representing a soothing and seamless fostering environment. Light, colour and pattern are developed as educational tools, extending the classroom curriculum into the spatial environment. Balconies are extruded across the children's areas to extend physical access to the wide views.

As a response to the climate, the south façade is entirely closed, while the west façade is strategically designed with all the services, screened by louvres. A sunken open-air theatre towards the east facilitates the process of evaporative cooling. A juxtaposed central atrium brings in natural light, ventilation and visibility.

The raw material palette applied remains consistent to the idea of user-

centricity. Built for a peer group that perceives openly, free from worldly constructs – the spaces provide an experiential environment in soft, earthy, natural tones with green terraces alternating along the implied 'front' to induce an organic character and 'soften' the form's edges. The interior spaces are a consequence of the adaptable and fluid form as the spatial organization conforms to the needs and movements of the children. if



text : aadrita chatterji  
 photography : saurabh suryan and lokesh dang

# 1AQ mehrauli

commission : ravish mehra deepak kalra architects, new delhi

**Nestled in the old-world** charm of the green heritage hub in Mehrauli, New Delhi-based RMDK had received a brief to refurbish the 1AQ, a dilapidated residence that had been reduced into a rundown garage for vintage cars. An art enthusiast, the client wanted to protect his ancestral property while conserving resources and its historic value. He had envisaged an amalgamated space for creative individuals to present their ideas on an Indian and international level. Today, 1AQ stands as an art venue that has become a lucrative tourist hub for local and international tourists alike.



## BEFORE



The firm had to create a design that followed the stringent heritage by-laws, yet maintained an avant-garde innovation. As both demolition and new construction were prohibited, the existing structure spread over 19,200 sq. ft. was strengthened into a flexible, functional and transformative space that mimicked the dynamism of its targeted audience. Original artifacts that brought a sense of heritage and culture were retained, despite the area being visualized as a modern space. A large sundial laid on the floor comprises the entrance, flanked by four original Lutyens'-era columns on either side symbolizing time and restoration.

Special attention was paid to the landscape for easy usage and functionality, with foliage and a century-old banyan tree forming a focal point of the landscape. The existing trees within the property were preserved and some replantation done. Free-flowing flexible spaces expand the possibility of outdoor and indoor displays, which attest to a seamless and functional transformation.

Minimalistic interiors with movable partitions facilitate a diverse range of exhibition displays, easily transforming the character of the gallery with slight changes in lighting, layout, and colors.

Modern amenities were integrated while restoring the original structure, without affecting its aesthetic integrity. To combat the lack of volume of a gallery, the site was strengthened with additional girders and structural members, along with the creation of a vaulted ceiling to achieve maximum height and space. Today, the gallery holds national and international conventions and events across several art genres such as fine arts, photography, fashion, design, and music. ifj

Due to reconstruction constraints, cubical glass bay windows were built around the structure to connect the interior gallery out into the exterior garden, and used for strategic exhibit placement as per global standards.



# PLLUM LEGNO EXPERIENCE CENTER new delhi

commission : design by meta  
 graphics and art installations : gulabo design  
 interiors fit-out : paras timber

**Located in Lado Sarai,** the Pllum Legno Experience Centre aims to be a street showstopper for a veneer brand. Before the transformation, the site was a *sarai* (medieval city) for visitors to the Bakhtiyar Dargah in Mehrauli. A purple façade symbolizes the brand, enticing customers to enter. The use of wood is demonstrated with a series of artworks that display the textures of color tones of veneer envisioned by Gulabo Design. For example, the Pixel Wave at the entrance welcomes viewers to examine its wooden color and textural movement.



BEFORE



Upon entering, a discussion table brings together the seller and customer, surrounded by wall art and paneling. Premium veneer products are stored in rotatory panels that feature artwork from the Faces series, which is inspired by the Cubist painter Pablo Picasso. A jet waterfall allows the water to cascade on a polished table tennis table made from a premium veneer. A light illuminates the lines of poetry on this table, along with a display of rolled paper veneers on a textured white wall for customers to make an informed decision.

A lounge and seating area resemble a wooden log hut with panels, which is blended with soft tones of fabric. The second artwork, Impressions, explores the paradoxical relationship between human beings and wood in terms of origin and identity. Precise paper veneer strips in various shades and textures resembling a thumb impression create a magnified installation. The concluding artwork, Mountain Landscape, creates an expression of mountains from an aerial perspective. The movement of lines and the transition of colors blend into a visual harmony. if

# 1, EC gurugram

commission : amit khanna design associates



## Demonstrating the core values

of adaptive reuse, sustainability, and recycling, the project breaks away from the conventions of corporate office design. With natural textures and raw materials, a flexible and collaborative space was needed for Milaan, an NGO that works for the development and well-being of adolescent rural girls.



BEFORE



The existing structure was stripped down to the basics, as the wall, ceiling plaster and heavy mud-based roof were removed. A climate-responsive façade was created using sun shading for windows, reflective exterior paint and recycled terrazzo flooring for the terrace.



Locally-sourced Kota stone supplements the exposed concrete and brickwork, and the openings are framed using recycled wood and metal. Hard flooring in the open space is converted into a breakout zone with a garden. Sensor-activated lights and faucets contribute to energy efficiency, and desktops are made from recycled wood. A workspace was designed on a lower level with separate cabins that have glass partitions for visual openness. In all, the project highlights the conservation of resources through recycling, upcycling, and responsive architecture. ifj



# THE LOUNGE AT ESSEX FARMS new delhi

commission : design ethics architecture studio



BEFORE



**A dilapidated industrial shed,** ageing for almost 50 years at Essex Farms in New Delhi, was transformed into an uber-luxe formal lounge space that evokes vintage European charm.



Instead of a clichéd banquet hall, the 1,000 square feet space was turned into a kind of gigantic living room to showcase the eclectic sense of luxury and comfort.

The space is segregated into two areas by a row of elegant pendant lights to have a more inclusive environment. The floor plan was resolved by creating clusters of seating with an elaborate fireplace as its backdrop. This break-up tucks the formal buffet counter away in a dedicated space. The fireplace adorned with vintage hand-made ceramic artwork was introduced to add a sense of warmth and homeliness.

Classic European style and sophistication were the inspiration behind the choice of elements,

finishes and colour. The highlight of the space is the distinctive take on French panels that was evolved by abstract cohesion of multiple reflective surfaces. A series of art collections and frames were handpicked to dress the walls of the hall, in keeping with the theme and feel of the design.

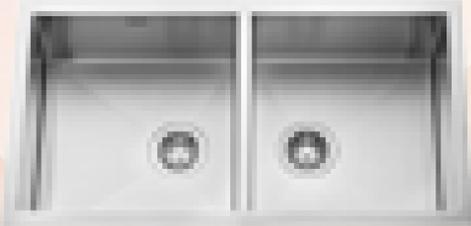
Massive chandeliers and wall lights brighten the space and conceal the industrial metal sections in the ceiling above. The combination of taupe paint and running traditional wainscoting work well together to give the space a complete and polished look. if



**kitchen sink: jaynasinks**

This kitchen sink, part of the handmade noble square series, is made from High-Grade AISI-304 (18/8) – 18% Chrome, 8% Nickel in 1.0 mm thickness. The double bowl composite sink is made with a unique satin finish. It is popular for its durability and longevity.

Website: [www.jaynasinks.com](http://www.jaynasinks.com)



**gramophone: anemos**

The classic gramophone includes Bluetooth wireless audio streaming receiver, USB recorder, 3.5mm phone jack, 3.5mm aux input for MP3 players and an external device, metal horn, remote control for CD/USB. This vintage product comes with a radio, CD player, cassette player and USB recorder.

Website: [www.anemos.in](http://www.anemos.in)



**amalfi collection: rena germany**

Inspired by the vivid hues, rugged cliffs and cubic houses of the Amalfi coast, Rena Germany's new collection, made with porcelain, also includes single-serving tableware that doubles up as options to store dips and condiments. All the products in this collection are dishwasher, oven and microwave safe.

Website: [www.rena-germany.com](http://www.rena-germany.com)



**peacock minakari: baaya design**

These peacock feather inspired T-light holders add the essence of nature to your space. It is part of a series of copper enamelled products to add a shimmer to your space during the festival season.

Website: [www.baayadesign.com](http://www.baayadesign.com)



**crystal chandelier: tpstarlite lighting**

The shape of the leaf of this crystal chandelier is shell-like. It is designed to add a piece of artwork to the home and make people feel relaxed. It is available in three different sizes.

Website: [www.tpstarlite.com](http://www.tpstarlite.com)



**Inverted jug / kashmiri kunja: sr artefacts**

This pure silver jug with an inverted glass for your bedside is made with intricate Kashmiri nakashi work. Silver has medicinal and anti-bacterial properties which help boost immunity and the metal also keeps the water cool.

Website: [www.srartefacts.com](http://www.srartefacts.com)



**stackable coco chair: oeo studio**

OEO Studio, the multidisciplinary Copenhagen based design practice has collaborated with Danish design company GUBI to create the new Stackable Coco Chair. It is highly functional due to its lightweight, airy design and its open structure means it can be easily lifted and cleaned.

Website: [www.shop.gubi.com](http://www.shop.gubi.com)

IFJ  
BRINGS  
YOU

*new*  
the best design  
products from  
across the world.



**writing desk: the great eastern home**

The Great Eastern Home Italian vintage writing desk, made of hardwood, is perfect for the classic home office setting. The graceful curves of the legs of this beautiful solid wood desk are cleverly designed to help lighten the look of the piece. The desk features four small drawers in front for ease of operation and one below the desk.

Website: [www.thegreateasternhome.com](http://www.thegreateasternhome.com)



**dishwasher: häfele's premium dishwashers**

The dishwashers come with built-in programs, which provide you with the flexibility of washing your dishes depending on their material and how soiled they are. There is a glass care program designed for your delicate glassware and an intensive program to take care of the toughest stains on your pots and kadhais.

Website: [www.hafeleindia.com](http://www.hafeleindia.com)



**wall art decor: evolve india**

Inspired by the topography of sand dunes, this wall art piece can create a warm and majestic ambience in your home almost instantly. While the gleaming gold resembles radiant rays of sunlight, the abstract texture gives the space a scintillating and authentic desert-like vibe.

Website: [www.evolveindia.co](http://www.evolveindia.co)

### Purani Dilli flavor for New Delhi restaurant and boutique store

New Delhi-based RMDK has designed Anand Sweets, a restaurant and boutique store spread over 4,800 sq. ft, featuring a black, white, and gold color palette. A green wall at the entrance welcomes visitors with a luxe marble-textured frame and backlit golden-toned signage. A black-and-white chequered floor further complements the wooden ceiling and contemporary colonial chandelier. Wooden ceiling rafters are flanked by a series of minimal and curvilinear skeleton arches imagined in glass and matte black metallic elements.

An artistic poster of 'Purani Dilli' is an important element of the restaurant, with neutral shades, wooden textures, colorfully patterned walls, and floor tiles.

### Haveli design for Kolkata apartment

Kolkata-based Arredatore Design Studio has designed the Palatial Living in High-Rise, a residential project spread over 5,205 sq ft for a multi-generational home. Inspired by the Havelis of Rajasthan where the client hails from, a neutral color palette with golden finishes maintains fluidity. Mahogany and veneer furniture with a high-gloss PU finish and semi-precious stones, ornamented Batali, and carving work in the living and dining area gives the home a traditional charm. Italian marble is clad on the living and dining room walls, along with marble inlay and a statement-carved console to enhance the space's aesthetics. A den spread over 1,200 sq ft, and a sliding partition portrays a wooden perforated screen from the living room and a sandblasted glass design from the den.

### Vertical green wall for Mumbai fitness center

Mumbai-based Upasana Jain Designs has designed the Element Fitness Studio, a fitness center spread over 7,500 sq. ft. A neutral color scheme gives visitors a refreshing change, with a central black curved flooring for better impact and minimal fatigue during workout sessions. Tan wooden floors and a grunge-inspired ceiling add character, while bright lights replicate natural daylight in the evenings.

Conventionally-used decals and other artwork are avoided to enhance general health and fitness goals with an emphasis on workouts. Tinted reflective glass replaces traditional mirrors, which visually expands the space. A 46 ft. green wall and a vertical hanging indoor garden balances the black and keeps the environment fresh and lively.

### Neutral design for Ahmedabad apartment

Ahmedabad-based Designer's Circle has designed the 42 Parkview, a 3BHK apartment spread over 115 sq. m. A neutral color palette and maximum windows for natural light and ventilation are chosen for the residence. Six-seater leather furniture is used for the living room, shared with the dining area that has a stone table and dark-polished chairs. A wooden ceiling runs throughout the space, punctuated by a lighting fixture over the table.

A long balcony with pebbled flooring, weaved chairs and greenery make for the perfect chai spot. White tiles in a herringbone pattern are used all over the house, while vertical surfaces have textures of traditional lime-washed walls complemented by the wooden ceiling.

### White figure-ground map for Bhilwara travel office

Bhilwara-based Project 1505 has designed Mehul Tours and Travels, a Vaastu-compliant office that would cater to critical site conditions and optimum space utilization. The L-shaped site is divided into two rectangles as per Vaastu compliances, which are connected by an archway further branching out into a series of cabins.

A series of open doorways welcome the visitor into a pristine white space and a red oak reception desk. The white element doubles up as a lantern as it reflects its light, and the flooring material and pattern corresponds to that as well. Directors' cabins are designed to ensure a clear view of the workstation for surveillance. A white figure-ground map on glass prevents direct visibility into the dark conference room while allowing a clear view of the workstations from the inside.

### Restored material palette for Mumbai lounge and resto-bar

Mumbai-based Umesh Desai and Associates have designed the Mitron, a lounge and resto-bar project spread across 7,000 sq. ft. The two sections are divided with a fine-dine lounge on one side with a high-energy resto-bar on the other. Metal jaali shutters, bar seating, and neon signage defined the brand's modernity in its laser-cut entry panel in different languages. The nostalgic element is retained through the use of restored glass panel doors and windows, a vintage liquor cabinet sourced from rural North India, colored glass chandeliers, antique carved brass hanging, wall bracket lights with black Marquina marble for the flooring and bar counter. Exposed brick walls, rough hand-textured painted walls, and a vibrant color palette of teal, blue, purple, and green is used. Tiles and wooden flooring with vinyl chequered flooring are used in the resto-bar with classical concrete balusters that separate it from the adjoining lounge.

### Locally-sourced materials for Mumbai café and bar

Mumbai-based Umesh Desai and Associates has designed The Food Foundry, a café and bar that serves a multipurpose venue that would entertain guests. Spread over 4,200 sq. ft., huge metal-framed and glass window panels invite natural light into the stone-clad walls with classic oak paneling. Local artisans designed jute-stitched fabric and cane weaving for the chairs, and papier mache décor elements for display. Three seating divisions offer different experiences for the visitors, such as a wooden back booth seating aligned alongside the façade windows. A single column in the center of the layout is developed to form a brick archway, with a community-style seating table underneath. Two-toned paint and customized metal truss on the ceiling finished in concrete paint, lend the aesthetics of a foundry. Custom-designed chandeliers by local metal craftsmen are designed alongside the façade gate and compound wall. Dark river-washed granite and white marble add positivity and inclusion for homegrown and local craftsmanship, while customized metal and glass light fixtures add light.

For more on these stories, log on to [www.ifj.co.in](http://www.ifj.co.in)

### Indigenous design for Gurugram office

Gurugram-based RSDA has designed Trilegal, an office project that blends the workplace with indigenous art nestled in an industrial interior style. Spread over 8,000 sq. ft., conference rooms and private zones are located on the periphery, which renders the office with natural views and light. The foldable sliding door in the conference room divides the space into two individual blocks, accentuating its functionality. The open ceiling exposes the ducts and service lines adding to the workplace's industrial ethos, breaking its monotony in the process. Composed of suspended white circular boxes, the false ceiling is highlighted by contemporary lighting. A concrete imitation wallpaper juxtaposes with the wood-clad wall of the reception area, which flows out the transparent workstations with glass dividers and veneer tables.

### Geometric partition for New Delhi home

New Delhi-based ArcKala Design Studio has designed the Urban Biome in Gurugram, a 3BHK project located on the ninth floor of a high-rise building. Spread over 1,600 sq ft, the site looks over neighboring farmlands and the Aravalli hills. An entrance lobby introduces the occupant into the living and dining space backed by a huge window-door that provides a panoramic view. Light grey walls visually expand the space, with blue and pink sofas breaking its monotony. A geometric partition in golden metal and tinted blue glass makes up the dining room, adding a blue shade to the adjacent living area as well. A neutral beige and grey theme in the parents' bedroom has a minimalistic backlit bed back that adds comfort and character to the space. A quirky design palette is chosen for the daughter's room with a raspberry-pink accent wall and a distressed green chest of drawers. The bed and bed back replicate the green shade with a tropical-patterned wallpaper as the backdrop. Smartly-designed furniture increases storage space in the room measuring only 10 ft x 9 ft. Clean forms and a four-poster bed add compact simplicity to the couple's room, with sleek gold accents and low lighting.

photography : : rohan dayal

photography : : shades studio photography by asmita khodankar

### Adaptive design for New Delhi retail project

New Delhi-based Sync Design Studio has refurbished the Optics Express, an adaptive retail project composed of different materials. Spread over 250 sq. ft., cantilevered solid acacia shelves are a change from the conventional bulky floor and wall display units. A metal display unit and an icon of quirky black spectacles on the wall create an interesting shadow effect, while large mirrors and artwork frames made of reclaimed wood make the space look larger. A bar signage framework helps people to identify the store from a distance, and the slate color of the façade lends a youthful character to the same. Clear glass on the façade brings in natural light and generates curiosity among the passers-by to visit the store. ifj

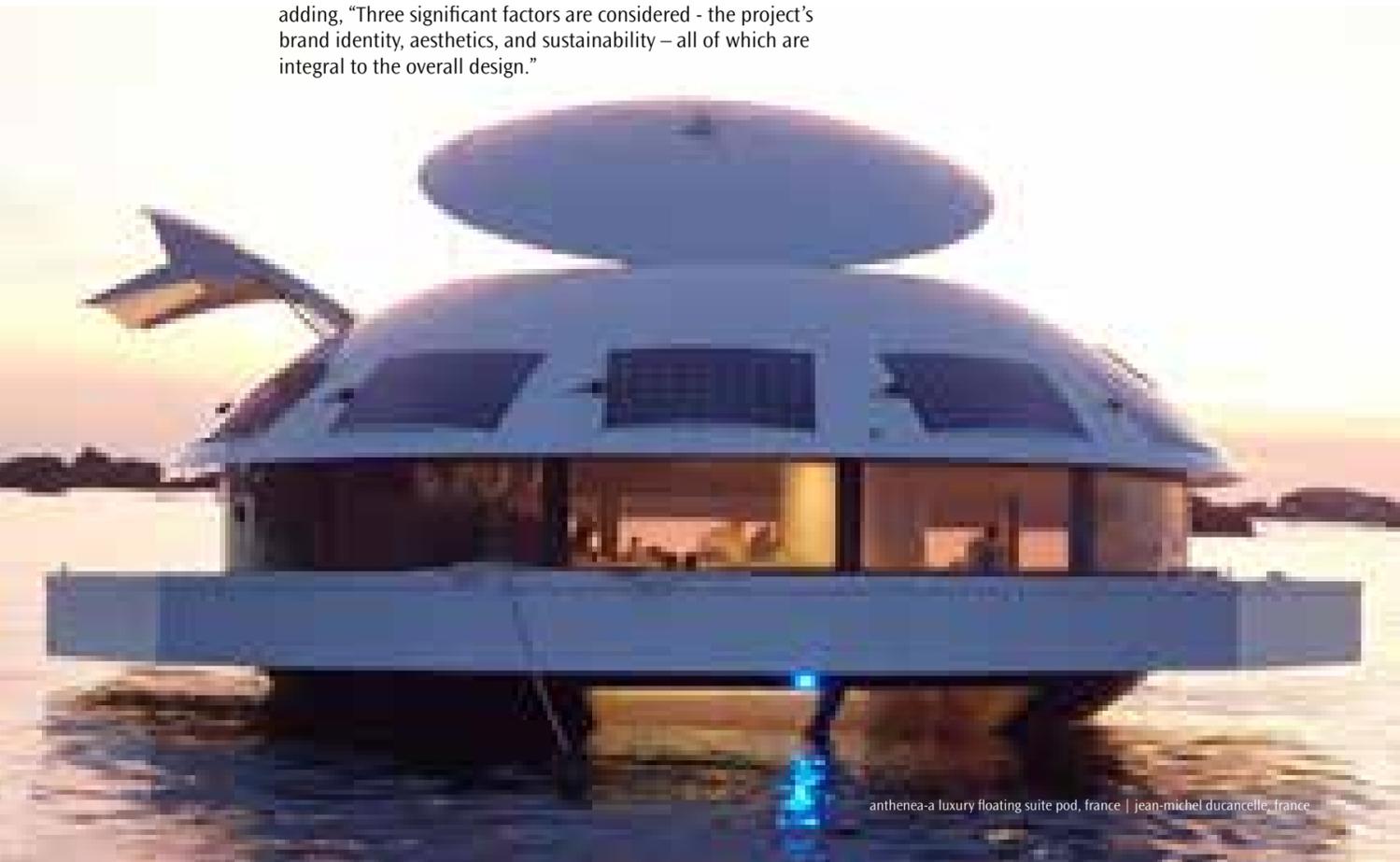
# SUITE DREAMS ARE MADE OF THESE....

a luxury suite must combine luxury, functionality, beauty and have a little something extra to stand out

## Keats said “A thing of beauty is a joy forever”;

a thought that could well be extended to luxury hotels, which are often gorgeous from the inside out. This applies equally to their accommodations, with hotel groups pushing the envelope to make their suites as opulent, tech-heavy and breath-taking as possible.

With architects and designers eager to meet the high expectations of their clients, a great deal of conceptual thinking, intelligent designing, and innovative building techniques go into creating such suites. Baskaran Kolathu, Vertical Head, Hospitality Architecture, Edifice Consultants Pvt Ltd, Mumbai, agrees. “We involve several bespoke strategies within an integrated design approach, especially when designing for luxury hotels,” he says, adding, “Three significant factors are considered - the project’s brand identity, aesthetics, and sustainability – all of which are integral to the overall design.”



anthea-a luxury floating suite pod, france | jean-michel ducancelle, france



photography :: frederik vercrusse, slym vanderdeelen, and kato peeters

chateau de vigne, belgium | we want more, belgium

“As space is a luxury, there should be larger spaces for guest rooms,” he says, adding, “The suite should be designed keeping families and young children in mind also.”

Chris Cho, Managing Director, TheeAe, Hong Kong, thinks that it’s all about priorities. “In a luxury hotel space, there should be more space for a king-size bed, ensuite bathroom, and extra storage. Fixed furniture should be decorated with high-end finishes, especially on the edges and corners. There should be a jacuzzi, sauna, private swimming pool, wine bar and games area with simple colors such as bronze and gold reflecting luxury.”

Bethany Gale, Interiors Associate, Stonehill Taylor, New York, believes in a strong sense of identity that must attach to the experience. “When designing luxury hotels, we must encourage timeless technology and finishes. For international travelers, we layer accessories that are specifically curated to connect them to their origins,” she explains.

Liang Chen, Project Director, and Kendall Thompson, Project Designer, Wilson Associates’ Dallas Studio, believe that luxury is also about adding special touches. They say, “For the presidential suite at Sofitel Mexico City, we maximized the amazing views overlooking the city. An exclusive balcony off the master bedroom, floor-to-ceiling windows in every room, and furniture layouts facing the views are several solutions that we used to achieve this. Some windows are even framed out with the intent of featuring the view as a piece of art.”

Bill Bensley of Bill Bensley Designs has a more radical concept of luxury. “In my eyes, luxury is dead!” he says, with emphasis. “It’s been done and done and done and now people are so blasé about it. Luxury is experiencing something for the very first time - at the Capella Ubud (in Bali) it is comfortably enjoying a jungle environment all by yourself, and waking up to the roar of birds of the jungle.”

## the idea of luxury

Everybody has a different idea of the concept of luxury in the context of hotel projects. For some, it could be a display of maximalism with extravagant colors and materials in a palatial setup. Ar. Khozema Chitalwala, Chief Architect, Designer’s Group, Mumbai, says, “It is key to integrate a specific ambiance that makes a statement. Everything is outlined as per the guests’ comfort in a luxury hotel with top-notch material, furniture and upholstery. A holistic guest experience is further created by minor details, as they must feel the difference when they are in a luxury space.”

Luxury and minimalism seem to be paradoxical ideologies, but even such a combination is possible as Des. Francesc Rife, Founder, Francesc Rife Studio, Barcelona, Spain, attests. “In a luxury hotel, space is the main protagonist. Visitors must have a good awareness of space, which can be made more intimate using materials, light, furniture, and colors.”

Luxury hotels don’t simply cater to dignitaries and business executives, but to families as well. Ar. T.M. Cyriac, Founder, Environmental Creations, Thiruvananthapuram, talks about making luxury designs more family-friendly,

casa grande hotel, spain | francesc rife studio, spain



capella ubud, the lodge, bali | bensley architecture, bangkok and bali



grand pavilion suites, the berkeley, london | also, hong kong





grand pavilion suites, the berkeley, london | also, hong kong



hotel devi ratn, jaipur | designers group, new delhi



creセント pavilion suites, the berkeley, london | also, hong kong



elixir hills, munnar | environmental creations, trivandrum



## luxury: begins at home?

Has luxury evolved through the decades? Ar. Chitalwala says, "We haven't seen a drastic evolution in suites in terms of size, but they now include a library, working area, pantry and two bedrooms. Today, brands look for contemporary and user-interactive solutions for clients." Des. Rife agrees, "Earlier, luxury hotels used to look like impersonal showpieces; they are much more homely today."

However, Ar. T.M. Cyriac thinks that is all about breaking the mould. "Most hotels follow a pattern, but it is essential to break convention. On the other hand, using the latest trends (often short-lived) could prove to be a disaster. One must be simple, sophisticated, and timeless."

Designers Chen and Thompson say, "The design world is constantly evolving, but one of the main design features that has always remained popular is indoor-outdoor living. Private balconies or terraces provide an exclusive retreat, especially if these spaces are equipped with incredible views, a firepit, or a water feature."

## technology is the key

The 21st century ensures that the guest is sure to experience out-of-the-world technological advancements in a luxury hotel, with access to state-of-the-art facilities that the architecture and design community must further exceed. Baskaran Kolathu agrees, saying, "While luxury suites are designed for a particular kind of audience, it all comes down to the user experience. Presidential suites usually offer state-of-the-art technology and planning, that offers privacy, security, and convenience."

However, that's not always the case as Ar. Chitalwala believes, "The idea is to confer a home-away-from-home feeling to the space, working upon the elements of snugness and tranquility. In other words, a congenial design scheme is outlined for presidential/luxury suites so that the guest can savor a luxurious homely spirit."

Ar. Akshat Bhatt, Principal Architect, Architecture Discipline, New Delhi, however says. "A luxury hotel suite is not a home, and hotels tend to innovate too much with technological experiences. I believe that glamour is not about fancy things, but the constant pursuit of refinement and excellence."

Architects Ayush and Geetanjali Kasliwal, Founder, Ayush Kasliwal Design Pvt. Ltd, Jaipur, take a different view. "We must simplify project design drawing upon memories and fantasies, with more space and privacy – simply because clients are used to such experiences," they say.

koi resort presidential suite, da nang, vietnam (under construction) | theeae, hong kong



narendra bhawan, bikaner | ayush kasliwal design pvt. ltd, jaipur



niraamaya retreat backwaters and beyond, kumarakom | edifice consultants pvt. ltd., mumbai



## sustainability provides the edge

Using natural materials that age well creates sustainable design for luxury hotels, regardless of typology. Ar. Chitalwala believes, "Sustainability is important for both a luxury and budget hotel, as we need to balance out the carbon footprint." Gale adds, "Sustainable luxury doesn't mean to compromise on glamour; we choose products and designs that support renewable, recycled, and reclaimed initiatives." According to Ar. Bhatt, sustainable luxury does not have to be synonymous with frugality. "With thoughtful planning, material use, and consumption patterns, it is possible to achieve minimal energy use without resorting to a multitude of mechanized systems," he explains.

Designers Chen and Thompson believe that sustainable luxury

is intricately connected, making the understanding of materials important. They say, "There are different opinions about how some luxury goods use controversial materials while others may see luxury goods as durable and long-lasting. For hospitality design, we believe the most important thing is understanding the materials and manufacturers while utilizing sustainable products as much as possible."

They add, "We also like to source finishes locally, when possible, and work with everyone on the project to reduce the carbon footprint. Some examples include incorporating certain plumbing fixtures to reduce water usage and specifying smart outlets and fixtures to reduce power consumption."

one tokyo, tokyo | kengo kuma & associates, japan



penthouse, vals therme hotel,switzerland | kengo kuma & associates, japan



photography :: ingo rasp photography



the conrad new york midtown, new york | stonehill taylor, new york



sofitel mexico city reforma-imperial suite,mexico | wilson associates, dallas

## the challenges ahead

Designing luxury hotel suites come with their specific challenges. Speaking of heritage hotels, Des. Rife says, "History is an important factor when working with luxury hotels. We had to recover those elements and make them part of the new design as well."

Ar. Chitalwala recalls, "In the initial years of our career, a client wanted us to design a six-bay suite with an extensive area. Part of an ultra-luxury project, it included a living room, dining area, office, and two attached bedrooms. The sixth bay, the highlighting feature, was incorporated as an interconnecting room. Today, brands understand that such suites are better suited for the brochure."

However, Kolathu takes up outrageous demands as a challenge. "We take up such requests as our focal point, around which our planning principles are drawn. For example, at Niraamaya Retreats, we enabled the inflow of backwater into the property that renders a unique factor. It turns out to be a memorable learning experience by adopting local building practices and vernacular knowledge." Designers Chen and Thompson agree, "It's a challenge to design unique layouts and experiences for guests, but it is equally rewarding. As designers, it is



anthea-a luxury floating suite pod, france | jean-michel ducancelle, france

important to constantly research and understand perspectives to have an exclusive identity for each project."

Gale is quite experienced with client specifications, as she says, "We have been requested to design a bathroom vanity to suit a particular Hollywood celebrity who frequented the hotel, a suite that had connecting rooms for Secret Service dignitaries and California king beds for NBA players."

the oberoi suites (art deco),new delhi | architecture discipline, new delhi



the oberoi suites (victorian), new delhi | architecture discipline, new delhi

lighting :: akid studio, jaipur



lighting :: akid studio, jaipur

## in the future zone

What is the future of luxury hotels and suites in a post-Covid world? Ar. Chitalwala says, "Looking at the ongoing pandemic, we predict a work-from-home environment even in hotel suites. Technology will be an important factor as we plan to incorporate strong WiFi networks and other accessories required for video conferencing and virtual meets."

Continuing with the need for advanced technology, Kolathu says, "The hotel experience will now include contactless screening automated systems, multifunctional spaces and social spaces connected to the outdoors. There will be significant changes in the planning, architecture, and design of hospitality spaces. For example, suites might accommodate common zones such as gyms with in-room fitness equipment and high-caliber air infiltration systems." Gale agrees. "In the light of Covid-19, we see more integrated hands-free technology and fewer touchpoints, yet without looking clinical," she says.

From a non-Covid perspective, Ar. Kasliwal says, "We predict deeper character in larger entertainment spaces and smaller private spaces. Technology should be simple and self-sufficient but not overwhelm the space." Ar. Bhatt says, "I would like to see more real architectural techniques and innovation such as bio-material, carbon fiber composites and glass along with expressive heat and light control mechanism."

Finally, Greg Keffer, Partner & Studio Leader, Rockwell Group, feels we will have to study the solution in depth. He says, "We've always been obsessed with mapping the different 'touchpoints' along the user journey, but never has this idea been so literal in the current health crisis and looking to the near future. Now more than ever we're thinking on a micro level about every step of the guest's journey and how they might be feeling - the fears as well as the excitement." if

FOCUS



# ANTHENEA—A LUXURY FLOATING SUITE POD, FRANCE

Jean-Michel Ducancelle, France

## Design brief and aim

To create the world's first eco-luxe floating hotel suite.

## How this was accomplished

Inspired by a James Bond movie, the Anthenea is equipped with solar powered electric motors, and can stay afloat indefinitely thanks to five solar panels and two electric propulsion pods. Its domed shape is designed to blend seamlessly into the environment, and its central well serves as a natural air-conditioning system. One version of the pod can even incorporate a desalination system and wood-burning stove.



The 50m capsule has three living spaces – the day space features a sofa, minibar, curved furniture covered with waxed concrete and a 3m underwater window. The night space comprises a circular bed and freshwater bathtub. The relaxation area is defined by a 360-degree solarium on its rooftop that can accommodate 12 people. All interior features are entirely made from sustainable materials.





# CAPELLA UBUD, THE LODGE, BALI

Bensley Architecture, Bangkok and Bali

## Design brief and aim

The key aim of the project was to keep the footprint small, fit the plan in between the trees - and never cut one down, while not compromising on the luxury accommodation and other facilities.

## How this was accomplished

Instead of standing tall on an overbuilt island, this resort and its rooms hunker down and are essentially invisible to the outside world. The signature theme of the over 2,000 sq ft. lodge is its exotic, oriental color scheme and whimsical



design. The architect conceptualized the two-bedroom accommodation based on the history of the owners of the property, who are of Chinese descent.

The lodge features a master bedroom with a king-sized bed, a twin second bedroom, two bathrooms (one featuring a Japanese bath tub and one with a hand-hammered copper bath).

The al fresco living room with its private refreshment bar leads to a large outdoor deck with two large daybeds – the perfect spot to spend time amidst the serene rainforest landscape with great views of the Was river. The lodge has a 19 sqm private salt water pool as well.





# CASA GRANDE HOTEL, SPAIN

Francesc Rife Studio, Spain

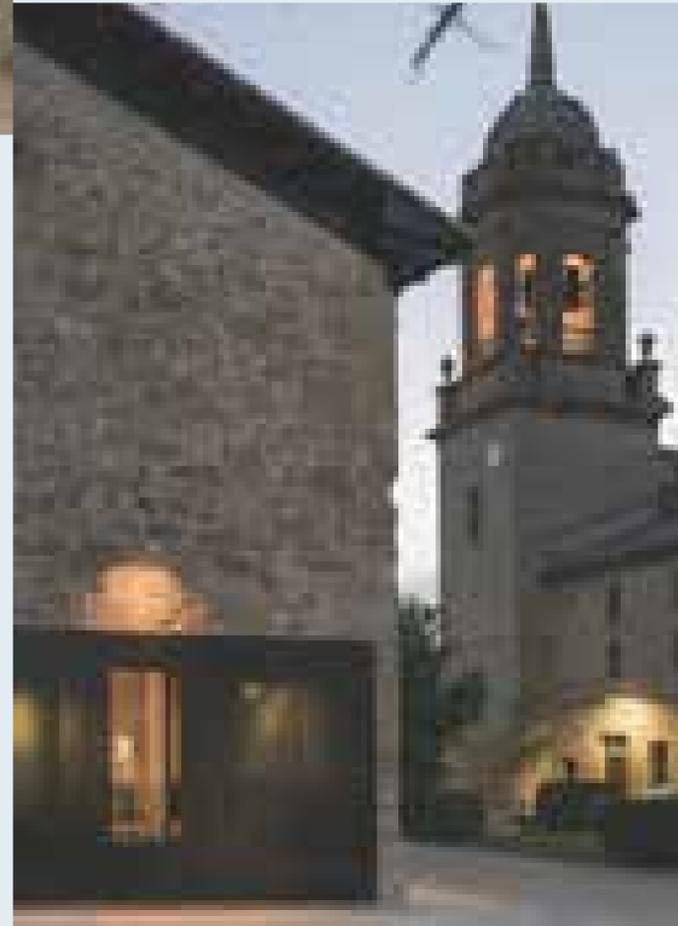
### Design brief and aims

To refurbish the 18th century manor house into a luxury hotel with 11 rooms.

### How this was accomplished

Located in Granon, a tiny village passing through the Camino de Santiago, the Casa Grande hotel blends the original heritage with modern design. Ashlar walls with a light grey monochrome layer add brightness to the rooms, whose thick walls do not allow the entry of natural light. This contrasts with stone and natural oak floors, and black poplar wood that integrates the lighting and hides technical devices.

Spread across two floors, the first floor has five rooms with a similar monochromatic aesthetic with ashlar walls, exposed brick or concrete to rehabilitate the building. The second floor has six suites distinguished by an increased height, with a large bed and some with a sofa that doubles as a single bed. Customized black poplar furniture was designed with small slats to mark specific elements of each room such as the headboard or the openings where the minibar is hidden. A semi-open wardrobe allows for storage, and the lower staircase is covered with black-stained wood to lose the feeling of height.





# CHATEAU DE VIGNEE, BELGIUM

We Want More, Belgium



### Design brief and aim

To create a sensory experience in a high-end boutique hotel inspired by nature's fluid beauty.

### How this was accomplished

Tasked with maintaining the hotel's original heritage, this was achieved in the Royal Suites, by retaining the oak beam structure and utilizing understated textures. There are two individual bedrooms, a lounge with a fireplace and two bathrooms with a standalone bath topped with a private office that overlooks the estate. State-of-the-art facilities such as a fully-stocked minibar and a walk-in rain shower amongst others are included.

Classical elegance was chosen for the Junior Suites with a super-king-size bed, washroom with a double washbasin, and dedicated dressing area. The Superior Rooms channel

the fluid beauty of the Ardennes, as they look over the Lesse river. A dog-friendly suite, permits the users to enjoy the stunning natural view of the surrounding courtyard entrance and garden terrace.



photography : Frederik vercrusse, sijn vanderdeelen, and kato peeters





at one end with a 12-seater dining table at the other. An intricate feature screen in stained oak segments with interlocking brushed brass brackets evoke understated modernity, along with a custom-made hexagonal rock glass pendant suspended above the dining table. An L-shaped island bar counter in quartzite aqua marble evokes the modern British spirit, and the entire glasshouse is surrounded by a seasonal garden and sculptural topiary.

The master bedroom has a similar oak screen with a gradation of timber blocks and brushed brass brackets and a sketch by the French artist Jean Michel Othoniel. A pale racing green color palette with mineral grey and champagne gold accents is played against the honed white Carrara marble.

# CRESCENT PAVILION SUITES, THE BERKELEY, LONDON

AFSO, Hong Kong

## Design brief and aim

To present a modernist glass house escape, looking over London's Knightsbridge skyline.

## How this was accomplished

The design starts with a freestanding glass pavilion installation on the vast roof adjoining the existing hotel. Embracing the spirit of a modern English manor, the experience begins with an intimate living salon lined with English wood paneling accented with a gold patina infill and soft fabric shades. Guests can enjoy the visually mesmerizing installation of canvas artwork by the Lebanese artist Etel Adnan and lithograph prints by Agnes Martin.

At the end of the living salon, a curved portal sculpted entirely in solid Volakas white marble introduces the suite's highlighting design feature – a glasshouse spanning over 800 sq. ft. designed as a contemporary sunroom. It offers 270-degree views of the London cityscape ending with a terrace bordered by seasonal English flowers and topiary. Sliding glass walls connect the indoors with the outdoors, and a hand-tufted carpet in mint-green and mineral grey echoes the design of the terrace.

Spread over 2,300 sq. ft., the suite is dedicated to the theme of 'retreat', complete with the glasshouse and an alfresco lounge





# HOTEL DEVI RATN, JAIPUR

Designers Group, New Delhi

### Design brief and aim

To renovate a heritage-rich boutique hotel set against the Aravalli hills, greatly inspired by the culture of Jaipur. The team were mandated to design around the theme of 'ratn' or gem in the project itself, while heroing the parent brand.

### How this was accomplished

A complete suite property, the rooms are divided into four categories, where the smallest room measures around 550 sq. ft.. A mosaic chevron pattern devised with charcoal-grey and white flooring lends a strong basic characteristic. The headboard walls are envisaged



with digital Indian art wall coverings replicating the Ratn motif, and other items of jewelry highlighting Jaipur's heritage. Bedside lamps are studded with semi-precious stones set in antique brass-finish, inspired by jewelry manufactured in Jaipur.

Large wooden windows inspired by the strong geometry and filigree work of the building envelope the suites in a parametric format. One can also find accessories inspired by the *pheta* and *kalgi* of the Maharaja of Jaipur. Indigenous small-scale wooden accessories such as trucks and rickshaws reflect Indian art and culture, while a basic bedside table tray breaks the monotony of luxury.



# ELIXIR HILLS, MUNNAR

Environmental Creations, Trivandrum

## Design brief and aim

To design an all-suite resort while preserving the trees to locate the facilities.

## How this was accomplished

Located in an abandoned cardamom plantation between two tea estates, care was taken to retain the natural greenery in this project. A compact design minimizes carbon footprint, as independent villas and cottages would cover an expansive



area. The building is planned around a central circulation core that efficiently connects all the rooms and facilities thus reducing the built-up area.

The living rooms have a dedicated dining space, an extra single bed, and a lounge opening into a balcony overlooking the lush rainforest. Spread over 750 sq. ft., the deluxe rooms include a four-poster king-size bed and an ensuite bathroom with modern facilities. The Honeymoon Suite has a king-size bed and jacuzzi, and blends wooden furnishings with natural colors.





# EQUINOX HOTEL, HUDSON YARDS, NEW YORK

Rockwell Group, New York

## Design brief and aim

The Rockwell Group's concept for the hotel was inspired by a seamless transition between travel, work, play and a healthy lifestyle, built on the pillars of movement, nutrition, and regeneration.

## How this was accomplished

To deliver a truly humanistic experience, Rockwell Group's concepts for the guest rooms celebrate the rhythms of the transitions of the body (from active to restful), transformations (from day to night) and acknowledge fundamental human qualities such as the need for both intimacy and community.



The entry channels a sumptuous residential loft, where the color palette balances de-saturated neutrals with dark moments of contrast. Hints of saturated bold indigo reference the Hudson River and signify the brand.

The design of the guest rooms creates a cool, dark, quiet oasis, with soft lighting throughout. Lights were eliminated on outlets and electronics; blackout shades were included and walls have super-high STC (sound transmission class) ratings. The room is divided into a generous, open entry foyer and dressing room/bathroom, with a calming sleep chamber, adjacent. Its multi-functionality creates space for yoga, exercise, and meditation and it also has an integrated work/dine sofa.



photography :: equinox hotel



# GRAND PAVILION SUITES, THE BERKELEY, LONDON

AFSO (Andre Fu Studio), Hong Kong

## Design brief and aim

To offer a two-bedroom sanctuary that provides guests with the ultimate urban escape.

## How this was accomplished

Guests enter through a hallway decked with gloss-lacquered warm grey English paneling and upholstery in emerald green silk. They are introduced to an open-fire pit contrasting with a series of stone plinths doubling as an extensive outdoor seating area against a sculptural but tranquil landscape. This is followed by the eight-seater dining room illuminated by natural light, adjoining the outdoor terrace. The dining room is decorated with hand-embroidered wallcovering that follows the rhythm of raindrops in grey, mauve and ivory, inspired by the late Jean-Michel Frank.

Adjoining the dining room is the main living room, which is housed within a glass pavilion. Continuous floor-to-ceiling glazing frames the space, with a modern color palette of dusty burgundy, pale emerald, and mineral grey for the furniture. A handcrafted collection of antique brass pendant lights reminiscent of London's iconic street lamps light up the room. A highly decorative glass screen hand-gilded with champagne-gold teardrops is a statement piece in the living room, further accentuated with an open cocktail bar and garden terrace.

A freestanding cast stone bathtub before a sculptural stone backdrop, with solid Baltic grey marble carved into a series of full-height petals fold into each other – set off with antique brass bathroom fixtures.

Set at the other end of the glass pavilion is the master bedroom, with three-sided full-height glazing and a private terrace offering London and Belgravia views. The room features a king-size bed, a bespoke dressing area with timber paneling, walk-in wardrobes and an open whisky bar. At the other end of the corridor is the ensuite guest bedroom, with high-gloss dusty burgundy lacquer panels and brushed bronze.



# KOI RESORT PRESIDENTIAL SUITE, DA NANG, VIETNAM (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

Theeae, Hong Kong

## Design brief and aim

To create a cascading form resembling the Marble Mountain situated nearby, forming a gateway from the street side and maximizing views for the hotel and condotel residents alike.

## How this was accomplished

Comprising two 15-storeyed buildings, the Koi Resort is a 300-bed five-star condotel spread over 37,000 sq. m. within the development of the Hoang Cuong Tourism Resort. The façade resembles the Marble Mountain with stone walls and vertical fins with more fluid elements for the inner side of the towers.



With 214 superior rooms and 71 deluxe units, there are 18 suites and one presidential suite at the end of each floor with a large terrace to enjoy the seascape. The hotel is equipped with a 1,000 sq. m. retail store, a gymnasium, an outdoor swimming pool, a spa center and a 1,000-seater conference center with a separate entrance room. There is a luxury clubhouse and a sky bar on the top of the tower with express lifts in the main lobby. There are condotels of different sizes with double-height penthouses.

The presidential suites are conceptualized in a bronze, yellow marble, dark brown marble and white paint palette. The suites have a large dining area, kitchen, grand piano, massage area, sauna, jacuzzi, media room and games room, aimed at giving guests a truly luxurious experience.





A large hall with columns in a geometrical pattern to ease the functionality, visual character, and operational simplicity, is situated at ground level. A range of accommodations include Residence Rooms, Regimental Rooms, Prince Rooms, India Rooms and Republic Rooms. All of these are influenced by the Art Deco movement and the regimental lifestyle inspired by the royal family's interaction with the Royal Military Academy. More research was done with the help of Maharaja Narendra Singh's old letters and photographs to create a home-like ambiance.

Hand-embroidered tribal art, Chinese urns, bulbous chandeliers, and customized furniture in the *diwan-e-aam* and *diwan-e-khaas* evoke the Maharaja's personality. The Prince rooms reflect his flamboyant youth, while the Regimental rooms recall his prestigious military career. The Republic and Indian suites represent the ruler reclaiming his heritage in the post-Independence era.

# NARENDRA BHAWAN, BIKANER

Ayush Kasliwal Design Pvt. Ltd, Jaipur

### Design brief and aim

To create a suite that retained the signature magnificence of the erstwhile Maharaja of Bikaner.

### How this was accomplished

The existing structure has been retained as committed to the Maharaja, yet extended seamlessly. While the main building is constructed in RCC, the elevation and internal courtyards are inspired by the stone 'havelis' of Bikaner, designed by local craftsmen. Locally-sourced cement terrazzo tiles comprise the flooring, while local *Usta* art, Portuguese tiles, and Bikaner tiles make up the traditional elements. A bright color palette of red, blue, green, and yellow add an Indian vibrance to the walls.



# NIRAAMAYA RETREAT BACKWATERS AND BEYOND, KUMARAKOM

Edifice Consultants Pvt Ltd., Mumbai

## Design brief and aim

To create an opulent boutique experience that connects strongly with the surrounding landscape through balancing traditional and contemporary elements.

## How this was accomplished

The 27-key luxury resort consists of independent cottages, a spa, and wellness center, yoga pavilions, treatment rooms, meeting rooms, an amphitheater, bar, pool and gym. The firm also needed to address an unusually high water table, heavy rainfall and water stagnation while designing the project.

The 27 villas spread over seven acres of land, were neatly arranged in a spine along the lakeshore. A secluded landscaped foreground was created for each villa at ground level, which achieves privacy through a careful arrangement of fenestration and landscaped visual barriers. Two-storied premium villas enjoy a landscaped foreground as well as a lake view, with privacy emphasized through the manicured greenery, of shrubs, grass, and trees. The upper-level villas follow a similar orientation to the lake, while the family



suites have multiple terraces and covered verandahs that tie together a set of private rooms.

The degree of luxury manifests itself in the material palette, with large ensuite bathrooms with stunning views of Vembanad Lake. Akin to classical Kerala architecture, the design expresses traditional elements such as *mogappus* (highly-ornamented jewellery piece), *charupadis* (a wooden structure placed in the verandah to let in natural light and air) and sloping roofs through locally-sourced materials such as clay tiles for roofing, granite pavilions and dados, laterite and local timber. A natural palette of beige and green is reminiscent of the colors of Kerala, which brings in the spatial experience while meditative spaces were created with minimalistic furniture. With large covered verandahs and personal pools in the forecourt, a premium hospitality experience is achieved without disconnecting visitors from the verdant setting.





# ONE @ TOKYO, TOKYO

Kengo Kuma & Associates, Japan

## Design brief and aim

To construct a hotel that reflects its rough but approachable quality.

## How this was accomplished

Cement panels with a wooden screen constitute the façade, symbolizing the former small factories in Oshiage. The use of natural wood with an industrial theme retains an element of the bygone Edo era while exemplifying downtown Tokyo. Spread over 10 storeys, the 142 guest rooms have the same minimalistic design with industrial materials such as structural plywood and an exposed ceiling. The hotel lobby and corridor are accessed through a wooden screen at ground level.



The rooms range from minimalistic studios to lofts on the upper levels that feature natural wood walls, square metal showers and sinks lit up with angular lighting. The Library Suite on the 10th floor has a wall dedicated to design and art books with an iMac device. On the next door, the Atelier Suite has angular dark wood panels with a large table and a 100 cm TV screen, ideal for art-lovers. They are the only suites with bathtubs, which are white enamel-coated cast-iron structures. The plant-filled rooftop opens up to magnificent views of Tokyo's Skytree, an iconic broadcasting and observation tower.





# SOFITEL MEXICO CITY REFORMA-IMPERIAL SUITE, MEXICO

Wilson Associates, Dallas

## Design brief and aim

To design the imperial suites of the first luxury hotel in Paseo de la Reforma.

## How this was accomplished

Guests are welcomed by stunning views of Mexico City at the lobby level on the 14th floor, on ascending the Sofitel Mexico City Reforma. They may then proceed to the upper level through a sculptural staircase, inspired by a 35-millimeter film reel for its geometric look.

Within an expansive open-ceiling living and dining room space, guests can celebrate events against the backdrop of floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Mexico City skyline. The 56 Suites are located on the 15th through the 37th floors. Guest rooms are done in cool colors with playful touches of pink and blue, and use contrasting materials such as textured walls, wood paneling, and marble finish.



Located on the 37th floor of the Sofitel Mexico City Reforma, the Imperial Suite is spread over 3,300 sq. ft. and features both functionality and comfort. Done with French sophistication within the Mexican context, the interiors are inspired by the French architect Le Corbusier and the Mexican architect Luis Barragan.

Some of the luxurious amenities in the suite include a king-size bed, a self-serving Nespresso coffee machine, jacuzzi on a private terrace, a large soaking tub and a shower with Hermes amenities. Bluetooth connectivity and automated curtains that reveal a view of Mexico City's Angel of Independence monument at the touch of a button, all add to the luxurious space.





# THE OBEROI SUITES, (VICTORIAN), NEW DELHI

Architecture Discipline, New Delhi

### Design brief and aim

To refurbish 12 luxury suites in six months, intended to host Head of States and other dignitaries. Victorian and Art Deco themes were chosen to resonate with the brand's overall design expression.

### How this was accomplished

Inspired by the Indo-Saracenic style and the architecture of Delhi, the Victorian theme features a lavish, timeless design. A gold-leaf screen at the entrance welcomes visitors, which forms a captivating backdrop to the study. Embroidered fabric panels, Lutyens-style armchairs, an intricately designed coffee table and an oak writing desk with ebony inlay furnish the expansive living room.



Two large picture windows and a king-size bed form the main elements of the bedroom, along with heavy brass and real teak elements. Bespoke upholstered furniture in luxury fabrics, hand-knotted silk carpets, handcrafted lights, geometrically-designed cornices and motifs are all inspired by the Victorian era. Aged bronze, brass, leather, teak and oak add warmth to the suite. Designed in collaboration with Jaipur-based AKFD Studio, the lighting fixtures are inspired by Lutyens architecture.

Exclusive art pieces belonging to the owner, Mr. P.R.S. Oberoi's private collection, are used for an engaging touch. The rooms also feature magnificent views of Humayun's Tomb or the Delhi Golf Course.

lighting :: akfd studio, jaipur



**How this was accomplished**

Vibrant colors, bold geometry and ornate details reflect the Art Deco theme which echoes opulence in its symmetrical designs. Rich leather panels, luxurious armchairs, a modern brass coffee table and an oak writing desk with brass accents are set against the wall done in fabric paneling. The artwork in the suites is inspired by artists dating back to the Art Deco period, such as George Barbier and Tamara de Lempicka. The study has a writing desk with milled brass accents, bookshelves and seating for visitors.

Two large picture windows in the bedroom open onto a private balcony complete with custom-made velvet-upholstered brass furniture.

# THE OBEROI SUITES, (ART DECO), NEW DELHI

Architecture Discipline, New Delhi

**Design brief and aim**

To choose a contemporary design that reflects the brand's heritage, progress and nostalgia in their decoration. These suites cover an area of 1,800 sq. ft., which includes a living area, dining room, study, pantry, powder room, bedroom, and a bathroom furnished with Italian marble.



Lighting :: akid studio, jaipur



# THE CONRAD NEW YORK MIDTOWN, NEW YORK

Stonehill Taylor, New York

## Design brief and aim

To fashion a 562-suite luxury hotel in the heart of New York city.

## How this was accomplished

The Conrad, New York Midtown features a collection of premium accommodations such as four Apartment suites, six Sky suites, an Atrium suite and one Penthouse suite.

The Guest suites evoke the luxury of a private pied-a-terre, consisting of separate living and sleeping zones. Herringbone wood floors, hand-tufted wool rugs and floor-to-ceiling cream-colored drapery make up the design against a neutral grey and caramel palette. Luxurious materials such as leather dining chairs, a sleek coffee table with sculptured brass legs and a soft woven sofa, add dimension to the space.

A small dining area at the projecting bay window looks out to Midtown Manhattan, and is set with blackwood double doors leading to the bedroom. The beds are backed with a panel with moldings, giving a classic interior luxe setting, in a neutral white and cream palette with jewel accents.

The Sky suites are modern and sleek as they complement the nearby Ivy League clubs with a scholarly resident in mind. An open-concept suite, there is a study, dining area, and living room along with a full-size bathroom, powder room, wet bar and king-size bedroom. Natural earthy tones decorate the suite, with cognac-hued herringbone floors, porcelain countertops, stone accents and brass finishes.



photography :: mark weinberg, david mitchell

The Atrium suite is inspired by nearby Central Park, where the living house is housed within a greenhouse-like space with glass surroundings looking over Manhattan. A Serge Mouille pendant hangs above a block-marble coffee table surrounded by eclectic seating. The dining room has a marble-topped tulip table with a bespoke chandelier above. Pale pink, dark green, blue, and grey-toned furniture symbolize the change of the seasons in Central Park set off with light oak wood. The bedroom has a floral upholstered headboard with integrated brass shelving.

A split-level Penthouse Suite is situated on the 53rd and 54th floors, houses the living space at the lower level,

with seating by Lewis Mittman and Quality and Co, case goods by The New Traditionalists, rugs by Loloey, an original Eames chair and a ceiling-height brass shelving unit. Artwork by Joan Miro, Alexander Calder and Francoise Gilot add to the visual beauty of the space.

A central staircase leads to dark walls with brass-framed artwork, and a mobile-inspired chandelier of blown frosted glass orbs on delicate brass arms by Preciosa. On the second floor, seven-foot-high windows provide views of downtown Manhattan from the bedroom. Linen wall coverings and a ceiling-height dimensional headboard bookended by brass and hand blown glass sconces comprise the design palette.





# PENTHOUSE, VALS THERME HOTEL, SWITZERLAND

Kengo Kuma & Associates, Japan

## Design brief and aim

To rebuild a penthouse on the Vals Therme Hotel, a four-storied building.

## How this was accomplished

Spread over 500 sq. ft., the site comprises three suites and one meeting room. The existing building (from the ground floor to the third floor) is manufactured out of concrete, while the new fourth floor is built of steel. The firm has designed the wooden houses on stone flooring, and the gaps between the units are secured, to maintain privacy.



These exclusive suites on the top floor are designed as independent units. Warm wooden panels with an oak design render a cozy warmth, which gives the ambiance of a private villa. ifj

photography : : ingo rasp photography

# RESILIENCE IS AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF LUXURY DESIGN

rachel johnson, senior vice president and studio director, wimberly interiors, on luxury hotel design

**Since 1945**, when it was founded in Hawaii, WATG (Winberly Allison Tong & Goo), has been at the forefront of luxury hotel design, spearheading such iconic projects as Sun City in South Africa, the Venetian in Las Vegas and the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi, amongst many others. According to Rachel Johnson, Senior Vice President and Studio Director, Wimberly Interiors, the firm's in-house interior design studio, the first step when approaching the interior design of any kind of property is to ask a lot of questions. "Once we have established an understanding of the aspects, the design process commences with the creation of a narrative – a collection of interrelated ideas that are woven together to form the story of the design," she says, adding, "These stories are drawn from the location, the history, and local references."



Suite design has evolved in many ways over the years. Johnson explains, "From traditional city hotels and luxury lodges in remote locations, to the emergence of barefoot luxury, today, there is truly an experience to meet all expectations – and, as designers, this only makes our world even more exciting," explains Johnson. Technology has also become more important over time, adding to the seamless experience and anticipating guests' needs. Also, says Johnson, "The bathroom often now equates to almost half of the area of the suite, allowing for large soaking tubs, double rain showers and other amenities. We are also seeing the introduction of private movie theatres and treatment rooms, among other private experiences."

Sustainability has also begun to increasingly dominate the conversation. Johnson says, "Resilience is an increasingly important aspect of luxury design and is considered at many points of the process – including when it comes to understanding a project's life cycle. Our parent company, WATG, was founded in Honolulu in 1945, seventy-five years ago, pioneering destination design in many new and unvisited locations. For this reason, considering a project's environmental, social and economic impact is always at the forefront of our minds."

Finally, though, it all comes down to the client. "The possibilities are endless. This is where the dreamers – our clients – drive us forward, creating new opportunities to push the envelope and enabling us to continue delivering exceptional suite designs," she sums up.



## Abu Dhabi Edition

The guest rooms and suites benefit from impressive Marina views, drawing inspiration from local basket weaving, a neutral colour palette, and grey oak timber flooring, is paired with pale khaki rugs, elegant off-white marble bathroom flooring and drapery, and beautiful timber panelling. Black and white frames by twentieth-century photographer Brett Weston feature in each room. The Royal Penthouse features two bedrooms, two living rooms, a kitchen, balcony with marina views and a private VIP lift.

### Bentley suite, St Regis Istanbul

Inspired by the iconic Bentley Continental GT, this suite shares the vehicle's hallmarks of craftsmanship and quality. Walls of curved veneer evoke the automobile at the same time as they highlight the suite's corner location and showcase views of the city and the Bosphorus.

The Bentley suite comprises a living room, bedroom, one and a half baths, a dressing room and powder room. In the bedroom, an expansive work desk stands alongside a 40-inch pop-up television. A bed base, tailor-made from burgundy hide and bright engine spin, houses an oversized bed while an entry touch panel and portable iPad place room controls at guests' fingertips. The master bathroom features a dual-basin sink, glass-enclosed rainforest shower and freestanding bathtub, along with a 19-inch mirror television and an adjacent dressing area boasting a makeup vanity with his and her Bentley jewel boxes. Items from the Bentley home collection feature throughout the suite, including the chaise in the bedroom.



### Taj Faluknama, Hyderabad

Perched 2,000 feet above the city of Hyderabad and uninhabited for 50 years, the property was brought back to life in a luxury hotel exuding the romance and grandeur of another age. New guest rooms were integrated into the existing structure including the original Zenana (harem) and along the arcaded palace courtyard, all with marvelous views including of the 400 year old city itself.



### Belmond Venice Simplon Orient Express

This was a one-of-a-kind restoration creating three exceptional suites with extravagance, history and tradition inspired by the train's key destinations. The exotic richness of the Ottoman Empire and the rich patterning of the Topkapi Palace are realized in the sumptuous Istanbul Suite. Amber crystal ware, embossed leather and paneled borders accented with mother of pearl evoke an authentic sense of the destination.

The Venice Suite with its use of damask silk, Murano chandeliers, and blue and silver hues connect it authentically with the city. The luxury of local craftsmanship is evident in the Venetian mirrors, and antique tapestry reflecting the baroque and renaissance heritage.

A love affair with the Art Deco movement unfolds in the Paris Suite, whose decorative touches and light crisp color palette pay homage to the city's haute couture and gastronomy channeled through delicate fabrics, and Lalique crystal panels.



IFJ shares the views of thinking people, throwing them open for discussion, dissection and analysis. In short, for you to think about and send in your own thoughts and responses. In this conversation, we share Aman Nath's thoughts

# “DESTINY HAS TWO WAYS TO RUIN YOU: BY DENYING YOU WHAT YOU WANT, OR GIVING IT TO YOU!”

## A Philosophical look at Luxury and Consumption Without its Intrinsic Need.

So where does sheer luxury fit into this in India? Is a stoic person with an inborn fakir's denial of excess, a winner? Or is it an unabashed epicurean consuming till the senses are sick, the hero of our luxury market?

Both can be losers too.

The context is most important, after which comes the protagonist. One may believe at a certain point in one's life that the living out of a certain experience is utterly vital to one's existence. So one takes the most expensive cruise in the world. Or one may reason that a certain precious object is more important than the simple joys of the planet. So one buys the largest rock one can afford and places it on the ring finger of a beloved – of the moment.

But are both these truly intrinsic to human life, without which one can simply not exist? Why do millionaires land up in ashrams, seeking 'the big quest beyond the material' if their answers had come from these just temporarily necessary to make a certain point at one's current state of evolution or to the circle of society in which one rises in the ladder of Maya – the illusion of possession and escalation?

Being an Indian also always means consulting the soul, not just the hungers of the body or the fantasies of the mind. A buoyancy in one's current state of love and compassion against the lingering lust and greed, demands a civilisational balance. But if one is born on a bed shuffling with petro-dollars in the Middle East, that cannot be excuse enough for wasting a life in the lowest forms of consumption: buying without a need, hoarding without sharing, and so on. There is the extreme example of Buddha's reaction to a life of royal comfort by an instant renunciation. But that could be reasoned to be selfish and irresponsible. Should one marry and abandon the family for a hypothetical quest?

Brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, sanyasa. To turn your back to materialism in the fourth ashram of your life, is no sacrifice. That is evolution. To live the second stage of life with the mind of a detached vanaprasthi is being evolved. When the celibacy of a student-*brahmacharin* is forsaken for a *grihasthi's* attachment to a partner and progeny, luxury is bound to change and grow its definition from the simplicity of white pages inscribed with wisdom and bound between the two covers of books. The change of an ashram to a householder is meant to move to active karma, the fulfilment of physical desires, of the joys of parenthood. Here

silken bedsheets, ribbed contraceptives with strawberry flavours, a car that announces your arrival, before you step out, different soaps for washing the different parts of the body, toe creams and other luxuries scream their redundancy for a semi-ascetic in the next stage of *vanaprastha*.

The same constants cannot retain their importance and fill one's thoughts and spaces at home, work and at other places of social exchange where only the pointers of physical success exist. Only price and glitter become crucial measures. But try giving a jewelled Mughal box of Shah Jahan from a museum to a Sufi fakir. Even before he smiles with the contentment which denies its utility to him, you may yourself see how ridiculous or pointless this offer of yours was!

Context is important, and the state of mental evolution of those who seek or offer the gift of luxury. You don't have to be seventy-five to know that you cannot extract any joy from the Koh-i-Noor. Philosophically, even the Queen cannot feel like the cat's whiskers when the load of the crown is put on her head. She talked of its sheer weight in an interview, when she is compelled to become one with the symbol of what her context demands of her. But there was no thrill of wearing it. If she cannot step out of herself and laugh mildly at how seriously



Aman Nath, Founder and Chairman, Neemrana Hotels

such medievalisms still impress a majority of the world, she wouldn't be that evolved soul that one is bound to become when comes in contact with that excess in the material world of luxury that its perpetrators want us to make-believe. The 'divine right to rule' slips under the carpet. Who gave it to whom?

Last night, at Neemrana's spectacular open-air amphitheatre, lit as much with flickering fire-flamed torches as with the moon and sky above, some two hundred people sat with their Covid masks, watching a spellbinding performance of Bharatanatyam. This two-thousand-year dance form structured, refined and now used by our great classical dancers to play out themes that are relevant to society caught the attention of a very diverse audience. The exponent, Dr Himanshu Srivastava, chose to present his thought-provoking performance Shikhandi - the search within. He talked of our yin/yang where the maternity of a father manifested itself as much as the paternity of the mother plays out its urge to protect and provide a child in a purely material world. The audience consisted of a medley of people: the mesmerised young just called it "Awesome". A group of senior doctors and surgeons were so deeply moved by the androgynous Shikhandi, that their emotions had no words. The dancer had not just sanctified the space where he performed, but had evoked the greatest luxury of a cosmic connect with the cosmos. The spaces within the mind had been entered and sanitised. For many it was their finest evolutionary moment out of the cosmic Covid labyrinth.

The guests rose from the theatre after an unusually long applause. Then kebabs and pasta with olives brought their standard of luxury to the gullet. Chocolate mousse was the new quicksand of Maya, of their essence of gourmet luxury. A very elegant couple dressed in rustling silk walked up to me and said "We have been postponing coming to Neemrana for 25 years. But we are glad we saved it for our silver anniversary which finally brought us here! It is such an extraordinary experience. Our daughters learn Bharatanatyam, so we got every nuance of it." This was the greatest moment of

their life - to have occupied a red sandstone baithak-throne on Mukut Bagh. They were in their own heaven of luxury, running the film of their finest moments together, backwards.

The Neemrana team, which multi-tasks like a family, wound up by the gala dinner set up on Uncha Bagh and enjoyed their own last moment of the day's karma with relief and contentment. For them a good night's sleep, without popping any pills, was the great luxury of which they were not even aware!

The honeymoon couple in their (Kama)Sutra Mahal, anointed their bodies in what their family and friends had educated them in. They wandered the room half-clad because their immodesty about their nudity wasn't yet ruined to become a blasé habit. They faintly tried to enact the erotic gymnastics the rather visual paintings suggested in their postures, and they laughed. They admired a Nawab's collection of Kamasutra miniatures and Khajuraho sculptures where a king is seen making love to his mistress who lies under the bed, piercing his lust through the rope cot as the queen sleeps unawares on his side. Oh! The luxury of two women – or a harem perhaps? Where does this escalation end?

But who decides if the faqir who lived in the grove of Neem trees in the 15th Century, and had blessed the Chauhan rulers to choose this spot for their fort-palace, still watches from the sky above, still in his loincloth? He knows that after any cycle of escalation in consumption – **Less finally becomes More.** He has seen this play over and over again. Till that full cycle of growth and evolution happens for us all, everyone is entitled to enjoy their private luxury from a child's lollipop, to a fountain of polki diamonds dripping into the gorge of the bosom – or even a secret lover for an ageing dowager who visits her chamber at night.

**Who decides? Who can sit in judgement on the luxury of another? ifj**

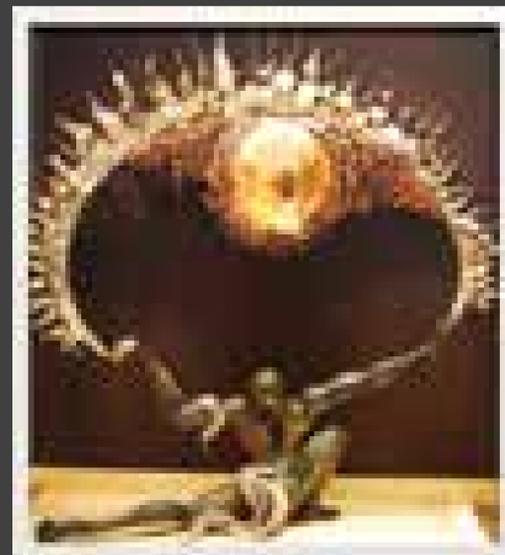
# MEMORY SCULPTED

noted sculpturist arzan khambatta shares his thoughts on a selected pieces of his work.

**The Ganesha** has been a frequently sculpted subject for its sheer divinity and presence. This three foot tall Ganesha crafted from carved teakwood, stainless steel and copper, is encased in circular swirls made from maritime iron.



**The Sun God Yaazd** is located at an office called Helios in Singapore and is crafted entirely out of stainless steel and copper in three different finishes: high buffed, burnished and blue-green patina in copper sulphate. The sculpture shows the human heralding the rising sun as a source of light and energy.



I usually never colour my sculptures like I have done with this **footballer** which is installed at the Fravashi Academy in Nashik. The reason was that the campus is so vast and widespread that I required the bright yellow and blue to grab attention from afar. The figure standing on one toe is my forte, and gives a sense of tremendous movement.

**The Orb**, located in the atrium of Om Chambers in Pimpri Pune, depicts the earth composed of a matrix of computerised silicon chips.

The sculpture is proportioned and suspended in a manner that it seems to float in the centre of the atrium and can be seen from the ground, through all the floors, right to the top. It is 25 foot in diameter, weighs 3.5 tons and is suspended with the help of around 500 thin steel cables.



**Off to Work**, is a sculpture designed and created for Avana in Bangalore. The 15 feet cantilevered sculpture shows a man in a full corporate gear stepping towards the right. Details like the laptop bag, the cell phone and his suit & tie add to the imagery.



This is one of the sculptures from the **Micropolis series**, depicting humans and their reaction to various environments. This is the first time I used laser cutting as a tool to create the delicate cellular effect that I required. The human form is crafted from chrome-plated forged copper.

As an artist, one has the freedom to put common phases into visuals. This 3 foot-long carved wood sculpture is called **On the Same Wavelength**, and it shows two humans bonding together via similar thoughts and brain waves.



## the japanese way: MARUNI

‘the rich are different’; companies rich in design, certainly are. they invest their trust and resources into creating products imbued with the value that only great design can add. ifj does a deep dive into the path that makes these companies different. we start in the far east, with maruni, japan.

**Growing up in Miyajima,** Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, Takeo Yamanaka, was surrounded by the rich heritage of traditional, wood-based crafts. He was fascinated by the mysterious properties of wood and the way in which it had the magical capacity to assume any shape. The young Yamanaka went to university, where he specialized in mechanical engineering and became enthusiastic about applying the theory that he had studied, to wood as a material. Upon graduation, he formed the Yamanaka Research Institute with five other crafts specialists and later set up the precursor to Maruni Wood Industry, Showa Mageki Kojo (Showa Bentwood Factory), in 1928; focused to the technique of bentwood that was considered extremely difficult at the time.



**Takeshi Yamanaka,**  
President, Maruni



The name of the company was changed to Maruni Wood Industry, Inc. in 1933, and with this came a new focus to the introduction of industrial methods to traditional Japanese artisan methods of furniture production, making Maruni a pioneer in the area. Continual R&D and learning saw the company developing their own machines and processes in the 1960s, finally producing high-class, classic Western-style furniture on a fully automated assembly line. The company achieved a production output of 2,500 items per month, something of a record at the time.

Maruni’s aim was to convey to as many people as possible in Japan, the beauty of classic Western furniture, at prices that ordinary people could afford. With the collapse of the Japanese bubble economy, a sense of impending crisis motivated the company to return to the point of departure and to explore once again what chairs are really all about. It was in this context that designer Masayuki Kurokawa said, “Surely it is necessary for us to project chairs as products of Japanese ideas and of the Japanese aesthetic, out into the global arena.”

This launched the “nextmaruni” project in 2004, with twelve designers from all over the world being invited to design, so that Maruni could concentrate exclusively on the manufacturing process. The collaboration resulted in the creation of beautiful new forms and a fusion between

culture and industry that gave serious consideration to the physical form of chairs both as art works and as commodities.

The ‘Hiroshima’ series, designed by Naoto Fukasawa in 2008, was a landmark in the timeline of Maruni. Fukasawa says, “Chairs that have hitherto come to be regarded as standard internationally have been imbued with that distinctive sense of warmth of the hand-made that characterizes crafts products rather than emphasizing design qualities. What this collection is aiming at is the realization of a highly detailed and clean image, while retaining this sense of human warmth.”

Naoto Fukasawa took over as art director in 2010, and Jasper Morrison added his design sense to the company the next year, establishing Maruni Wood Industry and the Maruni Collection as a brand of distinctively Japanese furniture, worldwide.



**Jasper Morrison,**  
Designer, Maruni



**Naoto Fukasawa,**  
Design Director, Maruni





**IFJ had the opportunity to sit down with Takeshi Yamanaka, President, Maruni, for an interesting conversation on the path of the company.**

**IFJ : May we start with a look at Miyajima and the heritage of woodcraft. Tell us a bit about this fascination with wood and how it has impacted Maruni.**

We have many places in Japan including Kyoto which has beautiful and historical shrines and temples, and Miyajima is one of them, known for the beautiful Itsukushima shrine, which was built about 850 years ago. When the shrine was built, many skilled carpenters came to Miyajima Island and the woodworking technique flourished since then.

I think the founder was obsessed with the beauty of wood, like we are obsessed with its beauty as well, now. Wood and woodworking have had a close relationship with the founder as he grew up in Miyajima island, he lived surrounded by the world heritage shrine and beautiful scenery and wood working all around him. We think it was natural that he was attracted to wood and his thoughts connect with what we are now.

**IFJ : Maruni was already a groundbreaker in manufacturing, in the 1930s. What are your thoughts on the success of offering high level products to a broader audience ?**

The founder wanted to improve the housing culture of Japan, and that was his aim for founding the company. Long ago, Japanese interior environment was quite different from what we have now. We used to sit on the floors with no chairs, and perhaps a small table to dine together and that's what we had. The founder travelled to Europe and saw with his own eyes the beautiful European lifestyle and that inspired him and wanted to bring in that idea to the Japanese market. Our motto, "Industrialized craftsmanship" is the idea to provide furniture at a reasonable price. That's why we focus on the balance between machining and handcrafting so that broader audience can afford beautiful furniture.

**IFJ : NEXTMARUNI which became something of a step away from the traditions in place for Maruni at the time, how did this change the path of the company ?**

Before the project, we had been manufacturing only classic-style furniture, only for the Japanese market, with only in-house designers. But nextmaruni was a very challenging project and we asked professional designers to design for us. We also went to the Salone del Mobile for the first time. We borrowed a small gallery to hold an exhibition; made 12 chairs and brought them to Milan and showcased them to the world. I thought at that time, no one would come to our gallery because nobody knew about us but thanks to the renowned designers and Japanese skilled manufacturing, many people came to our gallery. I was very surprised and felt the possibility that a Japanese wooden furniture manufacturer can go abroad. However, the sales of nextmaruni was really bad. I asked our technicians to make the furniture that the designers wanted. It was very difficult to mass produce and was ignoring our motto of "Industrialized Craftsmanship". It was more like creating an art piece. Although the design was appreciated, it became very expensive. As a matter of fact, the price was too high and to sell the products was tough. Then I asked myself, "what is 'industrialized craftsmanship?'". We met Naoto Fukasawa through this project, and we thought he is the one who can design and make good use of our technique. Therefore, this was a huge experience and turning point for us.

**IFJ : Share some thoughts on some of the most noteworthy projects of Maruni over the years ....**

**The ones that changed your image, your path or the way the company was viewed.**

Since we delivered thousands of Hiroshima Armchairs to the Apple Headquarters, AKA Apple Park, our reputation in Japan and overseas has risen at a stretch. It was a challenging approach in terms of quantity, delivery time, and quality. In order to double the production capacity, we have strengthened the mechanical equipment and established a dedicated production line for this project. On the other hand, we didn't increase the numbers of craftspeople for each person raised their skills, came up with ideas, and improved the productivity. Overcoming many challenges was a wonderful experience, and we are all happy seeing the image of our chairs in the installation image.

**IFJ : What about the next steps for Maruni ? What do you plan for the product offerings ahead ?**

We are constantly developing new products with our art director Naoto Fukasawa and designer Jasper Morrison, so that we can produce furniture that is called the "Global Standard". Please look forward to it.



**IFJ : Few people are fortunate to have a passion for a material, and then actually see it through production and dissemination across the world, tell me how this feels ?**

There are two characteristics of wood: One is you never meet the same grain expression again, the second is everyone knows how comfortable it is. I think it can be summarized in these words. Although wooden furniture is an industrial product, each piece has a different expression because having a different grain of wood. Because of this uniqueness, each piece becomes rather personal and has a strong attachment to the owner. As a result, I think it is a product that will be loved for a long time.

In addition, to take our Hiroshima Armchair as an example, people sitting on it just cannot help but stroke the smooth touch of the chair arms. Everyone knows how comfortable wood is, and it seems that people's hands are moving unconsciously before even thinking about it. I feel happy to be able to convey the characteristics of such wood through furniture.

Our dream is still on the way. Looking out to the world, still, few people know about us and our products. My dream is to be loved by the people from all over the world and to be called the "Global Standard".

**IFJ : What do you think the Founder, Takeo Yamanaka-San would say today ?**

I think Takeo Yamanaka is pleased with our company after what we have accomplished with Hiroshima. Our company explored the business to the Korean Peninsula immediately after its establishment. In 1950s, we successfully exported to the United States for the first time. However, Yen appreciation and soaring labor costs resulted in losing the price competitiveness overseas and we stopped exporting in 1970s. Expanding our business overseas has always been a dream.

Now I am grateful for the fact that it is not the price but the beauty of Japanese furniture that is striking a chord with so many people around the world. Takeo should be happy to know that we are now expanding our exports in 30 countries, especially in Europe, which Takeo longed for. ifj



# SITTING PRETTY

The recent pandemic has seen consumers invest more in their homes, creating bespoke and elegant spaces that benefit the players in the luxury high end furniture segment



chesters handcrafted luxury seating | bengaluru

text : darielle britto

**High-end furniture** has been redefined in recent years. No longer is it exclusively synonymous with opulence and maximum maximalism. It is a new kind of luxury that is individual-specific, and combines beauty, quality and functionality. "I think people are moving towards comfort and elegance combined," says Prateek Kapoor, Founder, Giovanni Boutique Furniture Pvt. Ltd., Bhopal. "I believe luxury for every person is different. Some people find an ergonomically sound piece to be the most luxurious thing," he adds. Echoing similar sentiments, Minjal Jhaveri, Founder/ Creative Director, Bespoke Home Jewels, Delhi, says it has now become more about "creating a space which makes you feel good and so creating products for that kind of a place." For Shivani Anand, Director, Khazana Group, Hyderabad, an upscale product today has to be bespoke rather than come with a hefty price tag. "It has to be something that's not so easy to find, and it doesn't necessarily have to be the most expensive thing in the room."

## the personal touch

Selecting a well-crafted, high-end design product that is unique to the personal taste and preference of the occupant can bring personality to a space. This kind of product, according to Tarak Shah, Director, Minotti, Ahmedabad, must be able to fulfil the individual's functions, visual appeal, beauty aspects and sensor tactility. "It can transform the space instantly, but the value of that transformation can only be understood by the person for whom it has been made," says Shah. He adds that high-end furniture can awaken one's senses if the look, touch, feel and smell work well together for the individual.

"Finding the right pieces for your space is an experience, a feeling and an expression. For the most part, it is about the little things that leave a vast imprint," says Shweta Mewara, Co-Founder, Gulmohar Lane, Jaipur.



alf dafre | bengaluru

diffurniture spaces pvt. ltd. | delhi



khazana group / elevate x | hyderabad



baro design | mumbai



Personal touches in the home can do more than just be aesthetically pleasing. "The moment you see an extension of yourself in your space, you resonate just so much more; and the more you start to resonate with your own space, you immediately quieten down, because everything is in alignment. Everything is in sync," says Siddharth Sirohi, Founder, Baro Design, Mumbai. "Thus

something tailor-made to your specifications, which is made with the intention of it being long-lasting, will not only show off a richer, more thought-through space, compared to something picked up online, it will also give your space a unique, one of a kind look that you can use for years to come," says Aakriti Kumar, Founder, Diffurniture Spaces Pvt Ltd, Delhi.

## works of art

Businesses are designing high-end furniture pieces in artistic ways to add beauty to a space, while ensuring functionality. "Our pieces are not designed to just blend into the wall or a home," says Suman Kanodia, Co-Founder, Scarlet Splendour Designs Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata. "Our pieces are designed to evoke conversation and interest and stand out. We are looking at very, very exceptional forms instead of doing just a plain cabinet."

For example, we are doing cabinets in the shape of animals. We take Indian crafts, age-old traditional craft, and we give it this contemporary look and feel."

Kumar adds, "Having an interesting coffee table or a sculptural light above your dining table is an instant conversation starter in any space. It becomes the focal point of the room and other elements can be left subtle with this one loud statement."



gulmohar lane | jaipur



naqaashi- luxury living | mumbai



giovanni boutique furniture pvt. ltd. | bhopal



alf dafre | bengaluru



bèspoke home jewels | delhi

## it's in the details

Creating upmarket products, from design to form, that are durable, unique, stylish and practical requires the use of the best materials, fine traditional craftsmanship and exemplary processes, both old and new. "We draw from the past to produce designs which we know are not only comfortable and long-lasting, but have a legacy that has already stood the test of time and which brings with it its own unique narrative in a given space," says Ramaswamy.

"Finishes like leafing, high gloss lamination, PVD coating are commonly used in creating luxury furniture. The unique amalgamation of hand-drawn sketches, intricate detailing, skilled

differniture spaces pvt. ltd. | delhi



baro design | mumbai

carpentry and brilliance of technology makes the product exclusive," says Nikita Manwani, Founder, Naqaashi-Luxury Living, Mumbai. Kapoor's company has adopted an Italian technique to produce quality furniture. "It's basically a machine that we imported from Italy, and it allows us to give the same luxury experience to our clients at a fraction of the cost," he says.

Handcrafted products made by skilled artisans, also add a unique value that cannot be mass-produced or reconstructed in the same way. "By design, you set out an intention to create something, through the process of the human endeavour of designing, of craftsmanship, of raw materials; that serves a purpose and brings joy and happiness to life," says Sirohi.

Providing the client with the tools they need to express their vision helps provide them with their ideal product. "We try to draw out the designer in our clients," says Keith Rebello, Founder, The Keith Store, Country Agent, India and Sri Lanka, ALF Dafre, Bangalore. "We offer a variety of finishes, colours, textures which make great compositions, and give people the breadth of choice," he adds.

Some popular materials used today to construct these fine pieces are metal, teak wood, Brazilian wood called camwood, man-made wood, glass, wood, leaf, mirror, lacquer, marble, semi-precious stone slabs, and other natural finishes. "There is a shift towards more organic and free-flowing styles in terms of form. We are also seeing more natural fabrics for upholstery such as textured linens and woollen bouclés," says Ramaswamy.

khazana group / elevate x | hyderabad



minotti | ahemdabad

## enhancing spaces

What you choose to add to your home can make or break a space, says Anand. "So often what happens is we walk into a space and instantly, we feel the warmth, or we feel the style in the space. And sometimes, a space can have everything, but it can feel incomplete. I would say luxury or high-end products will elevate the space. A home which is done tastefully will bring happiness and peace to the

people living in it. A good piece of furniture can really be a big asset," she says.

"Every piece of furniture is thoughtfully designed and handcrafted by Chester's skilled craftspeople. While each piece is standardised in its quality, there is a certain uniqueness and personality that is derived from the care and attention that goes into making it that has the ability to transform spaces," M V Ramaswamy, Managing Partner, Chesters India, Bangalore.





giovanni boutique furniture pvt. ltd. | bhopal

## trends to watch

Investing in high-end furniture during the pandemic has gained traction because people want value for money, says Shah. "People want to have less story and more substance. People are more interested to know more of a concrete value statement. Those manufacturers and brands which are delivering that, they will win," he says.

Utility-based products are in demand to make life during COVID-19 a little easier and structured. "Due to COVID-19, the whole work-from-home culture is booming and people have been

made to carve out niches for themselves to work from within the home. Thus, office-related products, like desks, lamps, chairs, are an important addition to a home that will provide comfort and result in an efficient workday," says Kumar. Anand adds that people are looking for comfortable study chairs and desks made of quality materials. "I think people are really gearing more towards aesthetically pleasing but more functional furniture." Saurabh Ailawadi, Co-Founder, Gulmohar Lane, Jaipur, explains, "Making the move from office to home both practicable and motivating demands a beautiful, bespoke workspace that lets you reach your style statement and also offers comfort."

naqaashi- luxury living | mumbai



minotti | ahemdabad



## the market expands

While most players agree that the recent pandemic hasn't impacted the high-end furniture market in a big way, they are reluctant to enumerate how exactly this niche market will keep growing, and to what extent. Since March 2020, according to Kapoor, the high-end furniture market has grown between 32 per cent to 38 per cent. "The pandemic has made us re-strategise our business model. We are now a luxury furniture e-commerce brand offering luxury furniture to Indian homes and global audiences," says Nikita Manwani, Founder, Naqaashi- Luxury Living, Mumbai.

According to a research report by 'Market Growth Insight', the high-end furniture market is expected to grow by 2026. In the last four years, Shivani Anand, Director, Khazana Group, Hyderabad, says her company has expanded from one to 12 stores across the country. "Our five-year plan is to open 30 stores by 2025 to keep up with the growing market," she says. Both Prateek Kapoor and Tarak Shah say they see their businesses growing by 120 per cent every year. "I expect to achieve a 120-crore turnover in two years and hope to attain 150 crores in 5 years," adds Shah.



scarlet splendour designs pvt. ltd. | kolkata



alf dafre | bengaluru



baro design | mumbai

Spending more time at home under these strange circumstances has also forced people to pay more attention to the space they are living in and what they surround themselves with. "This is what is driving people to still look at luxury goods," says Shivani. "The pandemic has made them choose above the chaos - clean and easy-to-use-and-maintain furniture. They have had time to deliberate, and since they also haven't had time to make major purchases during this time, are now willing to go out and make robust decisions about their living spaces," says Cheryl Rebello, Principal Associate, The Keith Store, Bangalore.

Another major trend is the demand for more sustainable products as an increasing number of people become more conscious of environmental issues. "Clients also want to see sustainability in their purchases. So, they prefer to spend well once and not repeat purchase by making impulsive spends," says Cheryl Rebello. "No company can ignore the sensitivity towards sustainability," says Shah. "After five years people will have adopted sustainability measures to save forests or maybe to adopt right practices of production."

## the road ahead

Most expect the high-end furniture market to grow as consumer behaviour has changed and companies have found ways to adapt to the current scenario to meet the demand. "The luxury market is more relevant than ever. Over the past year, it has grown by 5 per cent worldwide. People are more mindful now. They're willing to spend more if they feel that the product is worth it," says Saurabh Ailawadi. "I think it is definitely growing faster. I also feel that the Indian consumer is a lot more well-

travelled and more exposed than we were 10 years ago. And as the world shrinks because of globalization, I see that the demand is going to go higher. There are so many brands that are just doing spectacular work. So, it's just a matter of time before people start understanding and take notice of it," says Anand.

"Looking at the current scenario, the pandemic has made us pivot our business models and make them more agile. Digital and e-commerce have really picked up to enable the current demand and expand the reach in India and globally," says Manwani. if

# EMBROIDERING A STORY OF SURVIVAL

The artisans of aham bhumika have been busy even during the pandemic, working their magic on bags, sarees and cushion covers

**For the past four years,** the women and teenage girls of the villages of Borda and Mahabadia, on the outskirts of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, have been creating magic with thread and cloth. Working under the guidance of a few socially-minded citizens, these artisans have embroidered panels that are made into cushion covers, tote bags and zipper pouches, which are sold via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and word-of-mouth marketing, enabling them to earn a livelihood and support their families.



The NGO, Aham Bhumika, was founded in 2008, and is also involved in other initiatives, like the art and craft education of rural children. But it's the works produced by the livelihood initiative that are so eye-catching. The embroidery designs of these rural artisans go well beyond the mundane - whimsical animals, Christmas trees, flowers, zodiac signs, a funky pattern of bananas and even Mexican painter Frida Kahlo make an appearance, to the delight of customers.

Subrat Goswami of Aham Bhumika, explains how they made a foray into hand embroidery. "Initially the focus of the NGO was to provide basic education to rural children in after-school classes and also to

teach them basic arts and crafts," he explains, "But later on, it was realized that we need to do something for the rural women too. Most of them have studied only up to the pre-primary level and they could not do anything other than manual work."

Keeping this in mind, Goswami and his colleagues explored many options, finally settling on instructing the women in hand embroidery. "We have trained more than 40 rural women and girls," he says. The women were trained in basic stitches initially, and later, once they mastered the basic stitches like Kantha chain stitch, they were taught feather stitch, Kashmiri stitch, back stitch etc, explains Goswami. The embroidered panels are then made



into cushion covers, tote bags and zipper pouches in the stitching unit, composed of another small group of rural women.

This work has been empowering to the rural women because it fits into their way of life. "The women belong to marginalized communities and their husbands or parents are mostly daily wage laborers," explains Goswami; "The women work on the embroidery after completing their household chores." Though the ongoing pandemic has affected orders, Goswami is hopeful that business will pick up soon. To that end, Aham Bhumika has set up an independent entity - Astitva - which is a social enterprise. "We are also developing a range of dupattas and blouse pieces, all hand embroidered," says Goswami. "Besides this, we have recently started a project - #peoplepoweredcraftproject

- where we encourage parents to send a drawing or sketch made by their children, which we will then adapt to hand embroidery, stitch this into a bag and send to the parent. The main aim of this initiative is to involve children in a social cause, and generate more work for our women artisans."

For the long term, the NGO would like to make the villages where they work into a craft village. "We desire to train most of the women of the village to be proficient in hand embroidery and be well versed with almost every stitch which can be of use. The idea is to support the upcoming designers from various design schools, who can get their designs developed in the village and can experiment with their ideas," explains Goswami. These lofty goals with their long term vision bode well for this previously disadvantaged village community. if



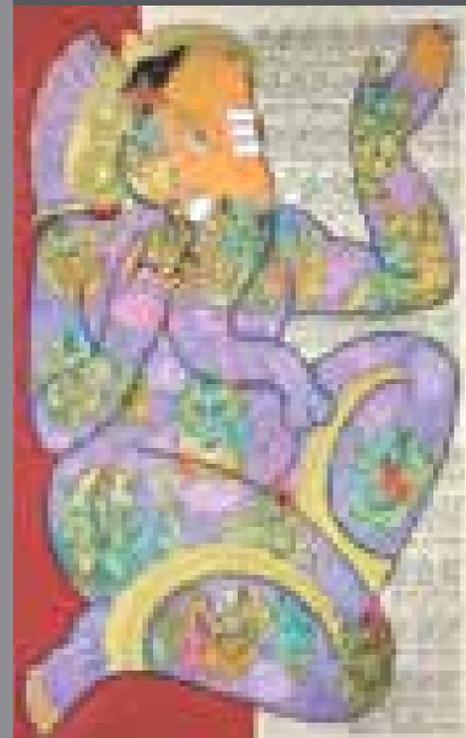
## REVIVING A FADING TRADITION

artist ramesh gorjala's works reflect his unique take on the srikalahasti style of kalamkari drawing

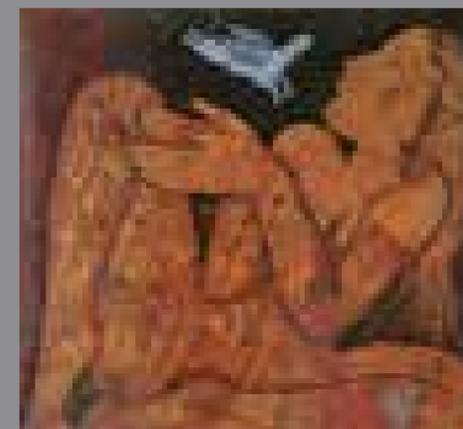
**Artist Ramesh Gorjala** has been a leading proponent of resuscitating the fading traditional Kalamkari tradition, in recent times. He has brought out, with his own imaginative verve, an array of exquisite visuals to engage with viewers of different age groups.

The Srikalahasti style of Kalamkari drawing with pen or brush has returned with a contemporary look, in his work. Gorjala chooses to create stories from mythology and scriptures and embellishes them with his unique outlook on the deity and the narrative being depicted.

Like miniature artists who bring the whole story into one pictorial space, Gorjala, in his work, showcases the deity's body on which their own fables and tales are pictorially depicted and can be easily understood. These illustrations offer a kind of depth to the image and the documentation of the numerous tales associated with the deity, which become like a book within a single image.



**Acrylic on canvas, 57.5 x 34.5 inches, 2012**  
In this beautiful work, artist Ramesh Gorjala brings out the divinity and the innocence of this favorite of all deities, Lord Ganesha, in his own style of contemporary pattachitra, that exudes devotional essence.



**Acrylic on canvas, 26 x 28 inches, 2004**  
The artist brings to the fore the narrative elements of separation and the sensuality of the woman who pines for the company of a beloved. The work illustrates the freedom from a romantic era of Indian history, where sexuality was never deemed a guilty pleasure; but was respected and seen as an art form.



**Mixed media on canvas, 56.5 x 35 inches, 2013**  
The artist finds the origin of his art in Kalamkari techniques, which he takes ahead in his contemporary works. Spiritual, yet modern in visual, this work traces stories connected to Lord Krishna over the outlined form of the Krishna protagonist in the work. Dimensions are created and space is demarcated with this technique, giving it vividity. if

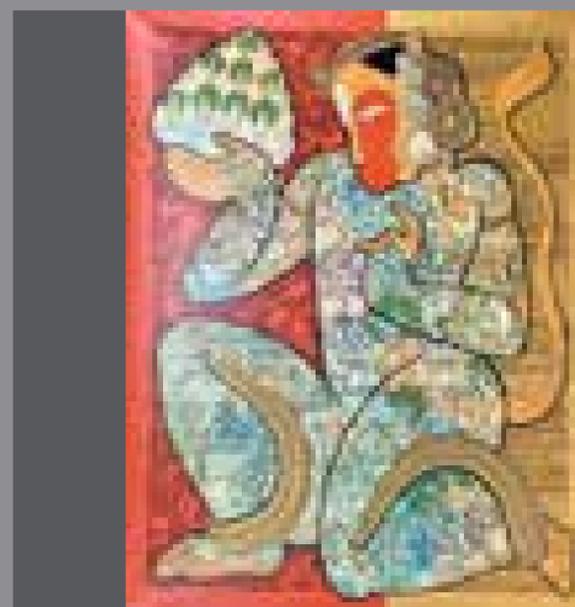
Note : His works are available for viewing or purchase at  
Aura Art +91 93288 77000  
harmeet@auraart.in, www.auraart.in



**Mixed media on canvas, 24 x 36 inches, 2015**  
Kamadhenu, is shown beautifully by the artist, where he brings forth the life story of the divine cow, her tales and her strengths, in the drawings embedded in the main form. The work shows a calmness and beauty which is reminiscent of early illustrations on temple walls and pillars.



**Mixed media on canvas, 79 x 35 inches, 2013**  
There is a long-standing traditional narrative which encompasses the life of Lord Vishnu, of which the Dashavatar is the main element. In this unique and holy work, the artist depicts the 10 avatars of Lord Vishnu where each avatar is unique and perfectly rendered by the artist's brilliant brushwork and drawings.



**Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 inches**  
This work brings forth the story of Lord Hanuman as the epitome of devotion, strength, intelligence, kindness and generosity. The artist in his quintessential style depicts narratives of valor and devotion of the deity.

**RSDA wins CWAB Noteworthy Project Award**

RSDA has won the CWAB Noteworthy Project Award in the Interiors Retail Category at the 15th edition of the Construction World Architect Builder Awards (CWAB) for their project Vurve ECR. Held on 28th August 2020, they have used innovative materials, techniques, and amenities to sustain efficiency, improve performance and save costs. The theme of India's Noteworthy Projects was Fusion, Futuristic Vision. Located in Chennai, the two-storeyed space to radiate opulence and breaks the monotony of cuboidal spaces.



**A-Class Marble completes 50 years**

Kishangarh-based A-Class Marble is celebrating its 50th year in the marble industry. Founded by Mr. Roopchand Bhandari in 2005, they are one of the largest importers of 450+ stones and marble by amalgamating technology, innovation, and sustainable techniques. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they have launched ACTIVE, a porcelain slab collection by Fiandre and 1st Tile. For the future, they aim to upgrade themselves for greater accessibility and digital presence.



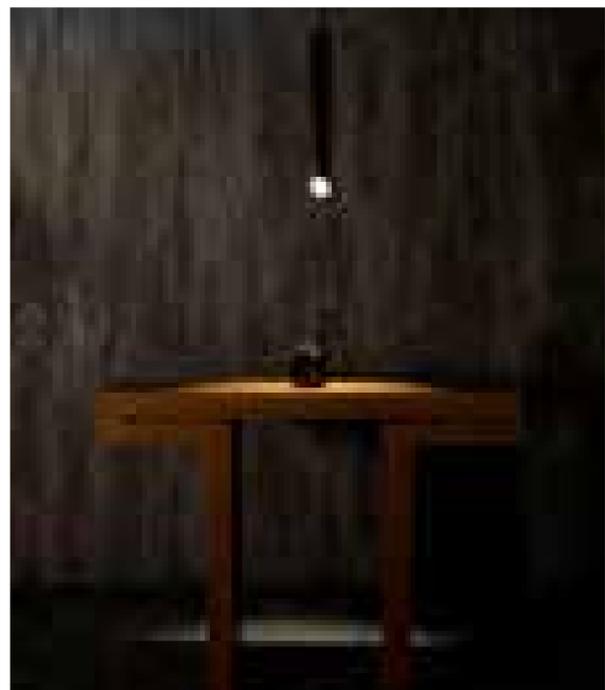
**Trezi expands immersive platform for architects, building product manufacturers, and students**

Trezi has expanded its platform with segment-specific products for the Architecture, Engineering and Construction (AEC) industry: Trezi Lens for architects and designers, Trezi Showcase for building product manufacturers, and Trezi Academy for architecture and design students. It facilitates a real-time and interactive design that helps architects and clients collaborate on informed decisions. Trezi Academy is an academic platform to prepare design aspirants for a technology-enabled architectural practice.



**Vizion Lights. Pvt. Ltd. celebrates 14 years**

The year 2020 marks 14 years of the founding of Vizion Lights Pvt. Ltd., Noida, which aims to create a signature style in Indian architectural lighting. They aim to become India's leading luxury lighting design and manufacturing company with advanced infrastructure, catering to architects, interior and lighting designers.



**Hafele launches Digital Home Security Solutions**

Hafele has launched an integrated range of Digital Home Security Solutions, which allows you to control security through a single locking device as per your lifestyle and leisure. The RE-VEAL Digital Lock is a fully-loaded face-recognition lock with five direct access modes. The RE-DESIGN Digital Lock is a digital rim lock that fits onto wooden doors and can be accessed anywhere. The RE-TRO Digital Lock is suited for glass doors, which resolves no pre-work such as cut-outs and fixing grooves – which makes it a secure option for areas that need limited access.



**Hafele launches Countertop Appliances**

Hafele has launched Countertop Appliances that cater to pre-cooking chores such as chopping, grating, blending, grinding, and mixing. Klara and Viola Kitchen machines work as a dough kneader, whisker, beater, chopper, grater, sausage maker, juicer, mixer and blender. The Oktablend Vacuum Blender maintains the food's nutrition level, while the Melange Professional blender has titanium-coated blades to grind dried Indian spices. The Magnus Cold-pressed Juicer keeps juices fresh and nutritious, while the Amber Electric Toaster machine has seven heating levels to make perfect toast.



**Art, music, and comedy festival to celebrate Mumbai's ecosystem**

Organized by the Ministry of Mumbai's Magic and DeadAnt, Biodiversity by the Bay was a music, art, and comedy festival to raise awareness around climate issues and celebrate Mumbai's diverse ecosystem. The festival was held from 5th October to 25th October 2020, across Instagram and YouTube. In the first segment, it included renditions by Parekh + Singh, Anushka Manchanda, Blot! and Nikhil D'Souza.

The festival also featured works by Priyanka Paul, Smith Designs, Aaquib Wani, Pia Alize, Shilo Shiv Suleman, and Shweta Malhotra. The comedy segment included live performances by Kunal Rao, JoséCovaco, Daniel Fernandes, Prashasti Singh, Anu Menon, and the hosts of the weekly comedy podcast – Varun Thakur, Neville Shah, Kautuk Srivastava, and Aadar Malik.



**'Everest Boards hosts Reimagine Spaces' with IFJ & UMG Digital**

UMG Digital and Everest Boards hosted a webinar titled 'Reimagine Spaces: A New Perspective on Materials and Design' on 21st October 2020. The discussion was held around the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown that posed several challenges to space planners and designers. The discussion panel included **Ar. Shamit Manchanda**, Partner, Manchanda Associates, on Hospital Spaces; **Asha Sairam**, Principal, Studio Lotus, on Hospitality Spaces; **Ar. Puneet Sethi**, Principal Architect, IAD Studio, on Residential Spaces, and **Ar. Sabeena Khanna**, Creative Head, Studio KIA, on Office Spaces; while **Rahul Chopra**, CEO (Boards & Panels), Everest Industries Ltd., spoke on new materials.

These discussions were held focusing on physical distancing, sustainable materials and technology. Anand Vivarekar, VP, UMG Digital, introduced the theme, while Shailendra Mehta, Head Communications, IFJ and M+, moderated the webinar. The webinar received over 1,700 live views.

# MADE TOGETHER, APART.

## ‘connected’ at the design museum, london

a material-driven project pushes the boundaries of what is possible with american hardwoods and explores how designers and craftspeople adapted their working practices during lockdown.



**Last month**, nine imaginative and original tables and seating designs, were created by nine leading international designers and made beautifully in one of Europe’s top craft workshops. These were unveiled as part an installation entitled ‘Connected’, at the Design Museum in London. The resulting pieces, on display at the Design Museum, which re-opened to the public, celebrate the act of physically coming back together or reconnecting, after lockdown. Covid-19 has changed the way people live, interact and work, as a result, creatives and makers had to adjust their processes using new technologies to work together at a distance and often operate from new, improvised, home offices. For this project, the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), Benchmark Furniture and the Design Museum challenged the designers to create a table and seating for their personal use, to suit their new ways of living and working from home. The designers had a choice of three American hardwoods to work with - red oak, maple or cherry. They were also invited to record their creative journeys to demonstrate how they approached the brief and developed their designs at a time of limited physical contact.

### The designers

“This extraordinary exhibition showcases the results of a unique experiment that sets out to push the boundaries of what is possible with these timbers and to explore how designers and craftspeople adapted their working practices during lockdown,” said Roderick Wiles, AHEC Regional Director. “The project demanded that both the designers and craftspeople at Benchmark work innovatively, by relying solely on digital communication and video conferencing, to bring the designers’ visions to life. This approach required a new level of trust in the makers, since the designers had no physical contact with their pieces whilst they were being made at Benchmark’s Berkshire workshop during the summer.”

According to AHEC, this material-driven project is all about three underused hardwoods - red oak, maple and cherry - which combined, account for more than 40 percent of all standing hardwoods in the American forests. All three are beautiful woods and the aim was to allow the designers to discover their aesthetic and performance potential. The emphasis was also on the environmental merits of making more use of what nature is growing. The resulting responses to the brief are incredibly diverse and personal, with a bold array of natural and stained finishes that bring these sustainable timbers to life in a new way. Each of the designs have challenged the makers with their complexity and attention to detail.

“I am blown away by how each designer was given the same brief and we ended up with nine completely different - and incredible - creative interpretations. The performance of these three hardwoods has been exceptional, and craftspeople at



Benchmark have risen to the challenges presented by some complex designs and the results are extraordinary,” said David Venables, AHEC’s European Director. “This is a genuine evolution in how we work: the craftspeople have worked tirelessly with the designers over video conferencing to ensure the exact details are met. And it proves that lockdown doesn’t get in the way of creativity and creation.”

“Commissioning nine designers to make furniture from wood doesn’t sound like a particularly original brief. But these are not ordinary times. We are all being over-exposed to our homes and having to adapt to new



patterns of working. The pandemic has forced each designer to approach their home-working set-up with a completely fresh perspective - what do they really need? The Connected project has been a rare opportunity for them to design for themselves, but the key challenge has been that they have had to rely entirely on digital communication. It couldn’t be more relevant, and we are delighted with the results,” added Justin McGuirk, Chief Curator at the Design Museum.

documentary-style film that will narrate their individual journeys. “As we near the end of the making it has been fascinating to see how creating at distance has worked,” said Sean Sutcliffe, Co-founder of Benchmark Furniture. “The progression of trust by the designers in our team has been notable and rewarding. As we’ve gone from design and development through to production we have remained in close contact by phone, video link and photos - each designer has learned to put their faith in the look, touch and judgement of our craftsmen. There have been challenges around the communication of color in the woods as screen settings all vary, and texture is really hard to convey digitally, but the hardest thing to explain has been the sense of physical presence of a piece...the scale and weight as we feel it when we stand with it.” ifj

Each designer was paired with a craftsman at Benchmark’s workshop in Berkshire, with whom they developed their pieces. Benchmark collated all the production data for each design to enable AHEC to model its environmental life cycle impact (LCA). The designers also recorded the design process and product development throughout the summer, producing a series of video diaries, which are on the project website ([www.connectedbydesign.online](http://www.connectedbydesign.online)) and social media, using the project hashtag (#connectedbydesign). These diaries also feed into a

IFJ will run a series showcasing each of these designs in depth, showing the thinking and the process of from ideation to creation. Do follow us on **Instagram #ifjjournal** or go to the website [www.ifj.co.in](http://www.ifj.co.in) for all the details and design.

# ar. vinu daniel: WALLMAKERS, ERNAKULAM, KERALA

he's built his reputation constructing structures from natural materials and waste, and become a pioneer of sustainable architecture along the way

**Ar. Vinu Daniel** admits quite freely that his entry into architecture was an accident. "My parents, typically middle-class people, wanted me to study medicine or engineering, and I wanted to pursue music or arts," explains the founder of Wallmakers. "So in an attempt to run away from engineering, I ended up in architecture, even though I didn't really know what it was."

Matters didn't improve once Daniel actually began his course at the College of Engineering Trivandrum. "I hated it and wanted to get out right away," he explains. "I feel architecture is the single most egoistic thing humans can do, and that feeling was reinforced when I did my internship in Dubai in my fourth year. I came back determined to quit the course, and the only thing that stopped me was a chance meeting with Laurie Baker." The legendary architect conducted a session that Ar Daniel refers to as a "life-altering experience". "Our instructors were not sympathetic to Baker's concepts," he explains. "But once I had listened to Baker, I felt that maybe some art was left in the field. He gave elaborate sessions of how one can really push oneself."

Ar Daniel's desire to forge a new path had a temporary roadblock with the death of his father at the end of his course. He eventually moved to Auroville, Puducherry, where he worked under Satprem Maini, Director, Auroville Earth Institute. After a stint there, Ar Daniel decided to strike out on his own and founded Wallmakers in 2007 with his brother Pravin, a few friends and a small group of local workers. His purpose then – as it is now – was to further the cause of mud and waste as the chief building components, to make structures that are both utilitarian and alluring.

Ar Daniel's first commission was to build a compound wall, (which is partly how the firm got its name), of which he says, "I wasn't trusted enough to build the house," adding that that first job was an immense learning experience. Other projects soon followed, but "it was a struggle at first, because whoever put their confidence in me was shaken". Buildings are subject to popular opinion, explains Ar Daniel, and that was not in my favor for at least a decade. But I won a national award when I was 25, and then gradually, people started noticing me on social media. The media was also very kind to me."

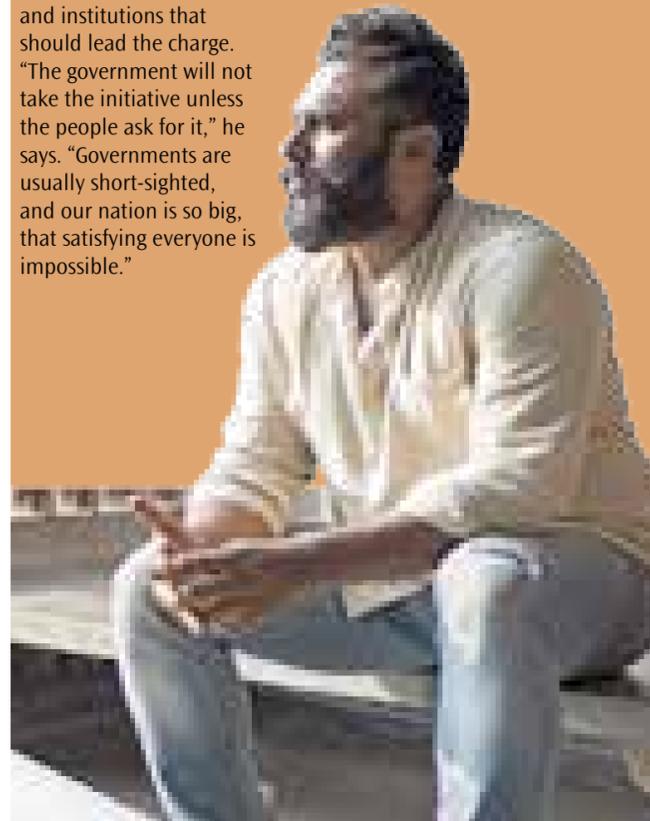
Slowly, Ar Daniel says, as he kept doing things his own way, "our name started popping up in the right circles. I finally found a niche where people liked what I did. Even now, I don't take on a project unless I am happy with it, and I relish challenging projects. Rather than have fixed goals for the future, I see myself as a dragonfly, flying around."

This unconventional style of functioning is Ar Daniel's signature. Even now, in the middle of the pandemic, he is in Shoolagiri village on the border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, pursuing a new project. Says Ar Daniel, "This region is full of quarries, and there's one area that was abandoned after a decade because

the raw material was not of the desired quality. The villagers have been left with one large pit and a huge mountain, which I am trying to repurpose into a hospitality concept – either that of a resort or a farmstay."

A strong proponent of sustainable architecture, Ar Daniel is of the opinion that it is private individuals and institutions that should lead the charge. "The government will not take the initiative unless the people ask for it," he says. "Governments are usually short-sighted, and our nation is so big, that satisfying everyone is impossible."

But in order for that to happen, a lot must change. "Young architects are not trained for what I do," reflects Ar Daniel. "They are trained to sit at desks, and evaluate from afar. How many of them have actually worked on a site, getting their hands dirty? They can draw an airport on paper, but they don't know what to do with a brick."



photography :: jimo sam

## Pirouette House

**Location:**  
Thiruvananthapuram

This site was a small plot in the city that was being suffocated by other residential projects from all four sides. The idea of this residence was to have an inward facing house with all its spaces opening onto a funnelling central courtyard. The house is aligned in the East-West direction with openings facilitating for maximum cross-ventilation.

In the context of the city of Thiruvananthapuram, that stands as a testimonial to many of Ar. Laurie Baker's masterpieces, it seemed fit to modify one of his own introductions, the Rat trap bond masonry technique in this site which didn't offer the opportunity for soil excavation

or for making mud blocks. This was also an attempt to promote this local agriculture-based industry that is on the brink of extinction. The Rat trap bond is a brick masonry method in which bricks are placed in vertical position instead of conventional horizontal position and thus creating a cavity within the wall that increases thermal efficiency, cuts down on the total volume of bricks used and is ideal for concealing structural members and service ducts.

The idea was further developed to form a series of slanting walls that danced left and right, converging only to support the ferrocement shell roof. Each staggered wall has been tailor-made to suit the issue of deficiency in space that this residence posed, aiming to

create larger volumes and a feeling of privacy.

Scaffolding pipes left behind from the construction stage were reused to form the central staircase and the grillwork. The wooden planks were also pieced together to form part of the flooring in the living areas. Cane was acquired from the neighborhood, treated and wound around the grillwork to create subtle screens for privacy and for various furniture.

The Pirouette House features the "Last of the Mohicans" fired bricks as an ode to the stellar practice of Laurie Baker with spaces that are made beautiful by the pure geometry and patterns created by the walls that seem to be coming alive and pirouetting around.





### Tease Me Café

**Location:**  
Kottayam, Kerala

The project was to renovate a godown and convert it into a café in the heart of the city, and the challenge lay in designing in the cramped, area-deficient space flanked by shops on all sides, which also meant that there was no ventilation.

The solution pointed towards a material that was wafer-thin, could be used as partitions ensuring optimum space utilisation. The perfect answer rose in the form of using cloth as an incongruous partition that gave privacy, became a comfortable seating and was also aesthetically pleasing.

An open kitchen was created, inspired from the sushi bar layout, with the seats of the diners diverging from the kitchen slab such that both the serving and conversations with the chefs would be free-flowing over the counter. The appetising flavors would waft right over to the customers and the entire process of cooking would be interactive and visible.

Repeated experimentation with Kora cloth (waste cloth) finished with a layer of ferrocement and then grey oxide, with further waxing and polishing led to the making of the Clothcrete partitions that were only an inch thick, but still retained all the undulations and beautiful folds of falling drapes. The end product is an eye-teasing array of tousled drapes tumbling down to become organic seats for diners.

The lighting of the café posed the next dilemma as it had to be dramatic yet subtle. The idea was to have exhaust pipes extruding out of the back wall, folding down towards the kitchen counter. These function as both exhausts that solved the issue of excess smoke and as light spots directed towards the cooking counter. Similarly, old press panel boxes screwed together along with old wooden windows adroitly form the tables that stand in stark contrast to the drapes.

The café is a poetic expression of the beauty of free-falling cloth manipulated cleverly to be of use, with an added sculptural quality to it.



photography :: prasanth moham



### IHA residence

**Location:**  
Thiruvananthapuram

The client wanted an eco-friendly abode that also retains an atmosphere of peace and quiet in the busy city. The residence depicts an atmosphere that is an oxymoron in nature - serene and warm, with minimalistic decors, at the same time adventurous and wild in design.

The distinctive form of CSEB bricks (Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks) was used to create a rotating jali work to ensure privacy for the bedrooms. Apart from the marvel the light creates; the consecutive polar arrangement allows uninterrupted flow of air.

The site was on a low-lying terrain with issues of water-logging, which was the primary obstacle. The primary idea was to ensure that the building wasn't creating a hindrance in the flow of water, and could be harvested.

The use of the base plate of washing machines as scrap grills is an imperative part of the residence, propagating the idea of upcycling, encouraging sustainable living and reuse and adding to the beauty of the residence.

Using bamboo for the façade had a downside— which is that it is precarious and cannot support an entire edifice of an enormous size. This is the barrier that was proved wrong by dint of this project. The bamboo façade is created and conserved in a stable position by reinforcing the bamboo with steel rods.

What set the home apart from usual residences is its simplistic and minimalist interiors. Uprooted trees and waste wood from sawmills was retooled into furniture for the residence. Finally, the structure connects closely to nature in terms of terrain, design and materials.



photography :: anand jiju





photography : wallmakers , kochi muziris biennale foundation



### Umbrella Pavilion

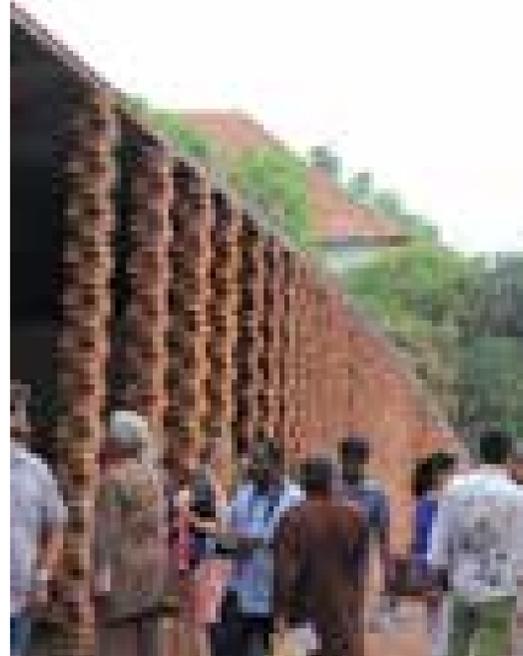
**Location:**  
Kochi, Kerala

The Umbrella Pavilion with its unconventional looks and structure reflected the experimental spirit of the 2014 Kochi Muziris Biennale. Amidst the artworks from around the world that were sprucing up for the Biennale, Wallmakers had won a closed competition and chipped in with a pavilion that was the venue for Artists Cinema and Heritage and also became the World's largest Ferrocement Conoid.

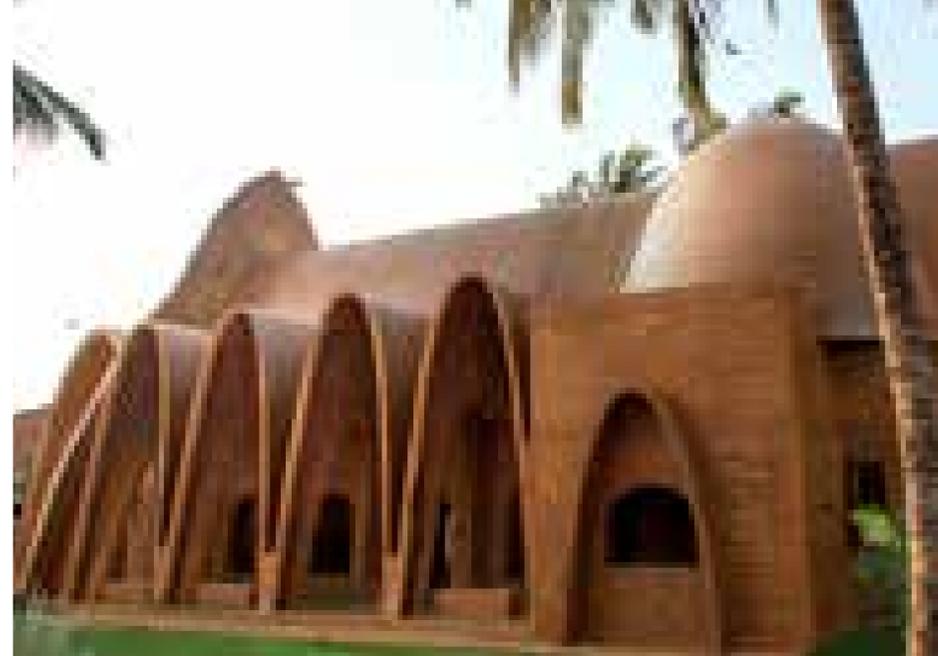
The design of the pavilion drew inspiration from the philosophies and works of Eladio Dieste, Eduardo Torroja and Felix Candela with his Floral Conoid at Los Manantiales as they all vouched for tight-walking on the fine line between design philosophy and engineering. The 3,000 sqft structure situated at the

Aspinwall in Fort Kochi was shaped out using materials considered unorthodox by the local architecture fraternity. Jute sacks, with steel ribs and concrete comprised the formwork; the form being inspired by an origami concept.

The twisted shape of the Pavilion promotes natural cross ventilation, and was walled on the sides by brick jalis. The 5m high jali that resembles moving cracks was a tribute to Architect Laurie Baker. The challenge was for the ferrocement roof to stand unsupported for 28m, which was unheard of. The structure folds down as steps that blend in with the roof and gives level spaces below, to accommodate a significant part of the audience. With a seating capacity of 350 and the addition of gallery seats, the idea was to cater to a floating crowd who could traverse without disturbing the programs.



Completed in 45 days with a team of 35 assistants and 80 helpers and students from various colleges pitching in for the construction, the Pavilion was an eye-opener of sorts in terms of the coalescence of design and engineering.



### St George Orthodox Church

**Location:**  
Kochi

St George Orthodox Church at Mattanchery was the first church of the Christians in Kerala, dating from 1615. Years of negligence and encroachment left this historic monument in shambles. The head of the Christian sect of Kerala (His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Marthoma Paulose-II) took the brave step to rebuild this monument, while keeping the foundation intact.

Wallmakers, trained by Ar. Satprem Maiini from Auroville Earth Institute, Pondicherry, explained to the client the possibilities of earth architecture and the historic importance of arches and vaults in religious edifices. The resulting partnership produced magic aimed at reinstating earth architecture in south India.

The concept of domes, vaults and arches rose from early symbols of eastern Christianity like the Marthoma cross, finally ending in an altar blessed by a 'cross of light' (a concept by Ar. Tadao Ando). The masons received training by Ar. Daniel in building with compressed stabilized earth block, using the ancient Nubian technology of arch and vault building without extensive shuttering (revitalized in the early 20th century by Ar. Hassan Fathy).

The project led to training of various students of architecture who have come to understand the importance of building with earth to have a better future. ifj



# abhishek and aashita chadha: THE KHARIGHARS, BENGALURU

**Ask Abhishek Chadha,** founder of the KhariGhars, what is most satisfying about his profession, and he is quick to tell you that it is the fact that most of his clients are his close friends. “My favorite achievement is the feedback I get from them,” he says, adding, “When they write positive reviews about their experience, when they refer us to their friends and family, and when they come back to us for the interiors of their new home, that is what makes each day worthwhile for me.”



Founded in 2009, the firm's forte is completing turnkey projects for villas and apartments. According to CFO Aashita Chadha, it all started more than a decade ago when she and Abhishek designed the interiors of their own home. “The whole experience left us exasperated and motivated us with a desire to start our own design firm,” explains Abhishek. “Aashita came up with the distinctive name and contributes inherently to the design ideology. When I realized the firm's tremendous potential, I asked my brother, Vinayak Chadha, to come onboard. Together, we are a force to reckon with.”

The KhariGhars pride themselves on seeing every project as a challenge and try always to out-do the client's expectations. “We recently finished a project named Sobha Palladian in record time and maintained our reputation of always adhering to the deadline,” says Abhishek, adding, “We promised the client he would have his house ready by June 30, 2020. Due to the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, we had to halt operations; but as soon as the restrictions were lifted, we worked day in and out to complete it on time.”

The KhariGhars design philosophy is that interiors should make a “bold statement, but at the same time be simple, and uncluttered”. Abhishek Chadha says, “That's

why I play a lot with glass, mirrors, and lights,” adding, “While trends come and go, style is what has endured the test of time. While there are many styles in interior design, the fluidity of contemporary interior design is particularly exciting for us. We enjoy combining a few elements of minimalist and mid-century modern styles along with contemporary styling.”

The Chadhas also don't stress out about evolving design trends. “I believe that trends are defined by customers and not by the industry,” explains Abhishek. “We incorporate a lot of popular contemporary materials like metal, glass and steel. We work on keeping our furniture generic and neutral, and instead, customize the other aspects which won't go out of style and are easy to update. Our interiors are not focused on furniture; they are focused on the lights, artifacts, textiles, accessories and colors. This also makes sure that your rooms evolve with you and are easy to upgrade.”

In a stark contrast to firms struggling with a post-Covid world, the KhariGhars see the pandemic as an opportunity. “We have actually increased our staff capacity 200 per cent as we see a real boom for the luxury home segment,” explains Aashita. Homes, at this time, have become more important, serving dual functions as residences, offices,

recreation spaces and areas in which to practice social distancing. “There is also a need to upgrade to contactless tech, from automatic doors, voice-activated elevators, cell phone-controlled home entry, and more,” says Abhishek.

Even as the firm looks towards a brighter future, it is conscious of the challenges that lie ahead, recognizing that they are working in an extensively unorganized industry. “The biggest challenge is to find the right people,” they say. Another drawback is the lack of transparency, as pricing is never standardized. “While customers tend to expect materials to be in a certain price range, the decorators struggle with bargaining, negotiating, and arriving at a reasonable cost of customization. In addition, there is a constant pressure of price comparison from clients which often becomes the bone of contention and a sense of mistrust,” explains Abhishek.

Finally, though, the duo say they are keeping spirits up and hoping for the best. “We need to make the most of it by continuously evolving and becoming the better version of ourselves,” says Abhishek, adding, “Also, we must spare some thought to climate change, try switching to more sustainable practices, implement small steps and move towards a brighter future.”



photography :: dark studio

## Sobha Palladian

**Location:**  
HAL, Bangalore

Spread across a sprawling 3,400 square feet, this home is a celebration of modernity. The foyer of this 4 BHK house, serves as an interesting play of space with a unique seating arrangement for visitors that also provides for storage.

The living room is an eclectic style that transcribes the coming together of disparate styles, juxtaposing textures and contrasting colors. The highlight of the living room is the accent color wingback chairs next to an ultra-modern coffee table. The bar area just by the dining table is aesthetically pleasing and adds to the impressive expanse.

The furniture used throughout the residence is a fusion of mid-century modern and contemporary styles. The master bedroom being a space for multiple activities, boasts ample provision of artificial as well as natural light during the day.

A subtle color palette was chosen for the bedroom with cove lighting on the ceiling offsetting the colors of the room. Storage consists of a floor-to-ceiling mirrored wardrobe with touches of veneer and multiple side drawers.

The children's bedroom uses a cheerful yellow and blue color scheme with bunk beds referencing the shape of a hut. The pendant light atop the wooden structure creates a play of shadows.

The home office of this luxurious abode marries texture, material and different finishes for a distinctive style.





## Zonasha Paradiso

### Location:

Marathahalli, Bangalore

This Marathahalli residence embodies a peaceful, contemporary design housing a nuclear family that calls for pragmatic design. Thus 'form follows function' advises the design throughout. The client envisioned a space that was a perfect blend of contemporary sophistication and quiet luxury. The living room is envisioned in shades of earthy brown and grey, in a concoction of luxury and subtle accents; a no-frills design language that offers a sense of calm.

The team created an elevated platform near the dead space close to the staircase, added accent chairs, and dropped the ceiling lights to make it the USP of the living room. Ample

ceiling lights and a chandelier suspended down the stairwell, create a space that balances artificial and natural lighting.

From the crisp material palette to the bespoke furniture pieces, the residence remains loyal to its design theme. Corners in this home are transformed into a color-infused leisure space with the addition of wall art, fresh greens and vibrant furniture. A meticulously designed open modular kitchen serves as a place that can bring together the entire family, and comprises all the required amenities making it aesthetically pleasing and highly functional.



photography : : dark studio



## Prestige Bougainvillea

### Location:

Whitefield, Bangalore

Rooted in sound architectural principles and a love for the environment, this luxurious space depicts a contemporary design style seamlessly blurring the boundaries of exterior and interior by retaining the natural aspects of the site. Spread over a sprawling 7,000 square feet, the scale of the project accentuates the interiors and the spectacular exterior space, while the chic material palette captivates.

The client was looking for an uber-luxurious, future-ready home inspiring the use of a material palette which included fabric panels, solid wood flooring, and wooden panels for false ceilings.

The lighting was as eclectic. Sensor lighting was used in the kitchen and staircase area, fiber optic lights in the children's room were implemented to reference the night sky. The color

scheme included neutrals and pastels, except for the children's room which was made bright with orange, white, and green. The furniture used Italian marble and Corian tops and veneer. Innovations included an electric fireplace, home automation and fabric panels to give the double-height wall a unique look, and sensor lighting. Another key feature was the garden that comprised a lawn, flowers, fruit trees, vegetable patch, herb patch, gazebo and sandpit for the kids.



photography : : dark studio



## Adarsh Palm Retreat Villas

### Location:

Devarabisanahalli, Bangalore

This residence follows a contemporary design style offset by neutral colors and accents. The blended colors, textures and materials used manifest the design to reach 'the exact point between hot and cold, between modern and bucolic'.

The client had quirky taste and wanted his home to come alive with color, despite the team being apprehensive about using bold colors.

The bedrooms have a subtle color palette and unique bifurcation of spaces that conceals some functionality making them a contemporary

amalgamation of design styles. The basement was converted into a media room with acoustics to give it the theatre experience.

A blend of luxurious detail and lavish finish and texture, this project makes a grand final statement. ifj



photography :: dark studio



Stay abreast with the hottest developments of the industry  
with the IFJ website  
[www.ifj.co.in](http://www.ifj.co.in)  
at your fingertips. anytime. anywhere

- See the latest architecture and interiors trends from around the world
- Read the stories of industry leaders
- Observe hot new product trends

[WWW.IFJ.CO.IN](http://WWW.IFJ.CO.IN)

On your desk & accessible.  
Any time you want it.

Early bird offers for advertisers!

CALL / REACH US NOW:

Jasmeet Kaur : +91 98338 05467 | [jasmeet@ifj.co.in](mailto:jasmeet@ifj.co.in)

# AR. BRIJESH SHAIJAL

architects do the talking, as they wander through the world, pointing to architectural and design features they have loved along the way



**Ar. Brijesh Shaijal**  
 Founder, World Architecture Travel  
 Principal Architect, DAC



**Roc Von Restaurant, Vietnam**  
 Vo Trong Nghia Architects completed a restaurant in a rural Vietnamese setting formed from 12 bamboo columns. The project is located 30 km from the bustling city of Hanoi in an area popular with day-trippers, and those traveling to and from Hoa Binh - another large city in the region. Named 'Roc Von Restaurant', the structure is situated at the roadside, protecting guests from the busy passing street with its curving crescent form.

**Ba Dinh Square, Vietnam**  
 Ba Đình Square is the name of a square in Hanoi where president Ho Chi Minh read the Proclamation of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. It is named after the Ba Đình Uprising, an anti-French rebellion that occurred in Vietnam in 1886–1887 as part of the Can Vuong movement. When Ho Chi Minh died, the granite Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum was built here to display his embalmed body.



**Havana, Cuba**  
 Havana is the capital city, largest city, province, major port, and leading commercial center of Cuba. Old Havana was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. The city is also noted for its history, culture, architecture and monuments. As typical of Cuba, Havana experiences a tropical climate.



**Angkor Wat, Cambodia**  
 Angkor Wat is a temple complex in Cambodia and is the largest religious monument in the world. As the best-preserved temple at the site, it is the only one to have remained a significant religious center since its foundation. The temple is at the top of the high classical style of Khmer architecture. It has become a symbol of Cambodia, appearing on its national flag, and it is the country's prime attraction for visitors.



**Puebla, Mexico**  
 Puebla is a city in east-central Mexico, southeast of Mexico City. It's known for its culinary history, colonial architecture and pottery. The painted Talavera tiles adorning numerous buildings are locally produced. The Renaissance-era Puebla Cathedral has tall bell towers and overlooks the central square, the Zócalo. Museo Amparo offers an extensive display of pre-Hispanic art, such as ceramics and mural fragments.



**Tulum Ruins, Mexico**  
 Tulum is a resort town on Mexico's Caribbean coast, around 130 km south of Cancún. The 13th-century walled Mayan archaeological site at Tulum National Park overlooks the sea. It incorporates the cliff-top Castillo, built as a watchtower, and the Templo de las Pinturas, with a partially restored mural. Inland, the Cobá archaeological site has pyramid-shaped temples with views over the surrounding jungle.



**Teotihuacan, Mexico**  
 Teotihuacan is a vast Mexican archaeological complex northeast of Mexico City. Running down the middle of the site, which was once a flourishing pre-Columbian city, is the Avenue of the Dead. It links the Temple of Quetzalcoatl, the Pyramid of the Moon and the Pyramid of the Sun, the latter two with panoramic views from their summits. Artifacts in the Museum of Teotihuacan Culture include pottery and bones.



**Plaza Mayor, Cuba**  
 The Plaza Mayor in Trinidad, Cuba, is the historic center of the town, and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. The small sloping Plaza Mayor has gardens on a raised platform, with paths dividing it in quarters. The resulting four small garden beds are fenced off by white wrought-iron fences. Cobble streets surround the square, separating it from the surrounding buildings. Wrought-iron lamp-posts, statues of English greyhounds and columns with large terra-cotta finials decorate the Plaza. ifj



# SILENT SPACE

## THE BOOTH

The Genesis Telephone Booth can turn any space into a private enclosure. It captures an insulated bubble of peace without the burden of difficult installation or renovation. Built in with plug and play electrical connections it allows office workers to stay within their work space and attend phone calls with the desired level of privacy.



☎ 1800 11 2424 ✉ Email: [sales@featherlitefurniture.com](mailto:sales@featherlitefurniture.com)

Present in 66 locations across India, also in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and U.A.E.  
For more details visit our website [www.featherlitefurniture.com](http://www.featherlitefurniture.com)

Dealers enquiry solicited: +91 951 3555 233 | [tallapak@featherlitefurniture.com](mailto:tallapak@featherlitefurniture.com)



Born in Canada. Made in India.



### Western Hemlock

**Recommended uses:** Furniture, interior panelling, doors, door frames and windows

- Ready-to-use lumber • Seasoned • Standard grades and sizes
- 100% PEFC/FSC certified wood • Sourced from sustainably managed forests

Stained examples of Western hemlock



Natural



Teak



Walnut



Venge

Try Canadian Wood

Call: +91 22 49221600

[@canadianwoodindia](https://www.facebook.com/canadianwoodindia) [Canadianwoodindia](https://www.instagram.com/canadianwoodindia)



# UMG DIGITAL

Driving business success with digital expertise.

Total Digital Marketing

Website Designing

Webinar Management

Emailer Marketing

Social Media Marketing

UMG Show Place



For details on our services  
Call : +91 99206 82767 OR  
Email : [marketing@ueindia.com](mailto:marketing@ueindia.com)