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A straight line concept flows through the interiors of the lobby.



The room with a view...

Swiss Chic



SIRAJ AND RENU ARCHITECTS
DESIGNED THE MÖVENPICK HOTEL AND
SPA BANGALORE BUILDING AN INTEL-
LIGENT AND CONTEMPORARY
DESIGN.

*T*he building of the new Mövenpick Hotel and Spa Bangalore blends easily with the ever-expanding skyline of the city; just as easily, its contemporary design sets it apart from other buildings that crowd the urban landscape. “The operators, Mövenpick Hotels, wanted a contemporary look and

feel, and at the same time, they wanted an intelligent building,” relates the building’s creator, **Siraj Hasan**, Principal Architect, Siraj and Renu Architects.

Glass was the uncontested choice for the exteriors. Considering the sophistication and heat-insulating properties of this material, Hasan used it in its original, transparent form and combined it with steel to envelop a part of the building. The greenish tinge of the glass keeps out heat, yet maintains the aesthetics of the building.

CLASS REDEFINED

The stylish, upscale hotel is set to cater to India’s fast growing business travel market with five-star hospitality. It features 182 well-appointed rooms that include eight executive suites and one presidential suite. It also offers its guests a fourfold dining and design experience, with restaurants serving exotic Italian and Japanese cuisines. The Obsidian Bar is a cosy space highlighted by niches that cover the expanse of two walls – a feature that is strikingly reminiscent of the 1920s. A straight line concept flows through the interiors of the hotel, including the lobby, which is a wide expanse of beige and white.

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ELABORATE ENGINEERING

A dedicated entry into the banquet area adds to the sense of arrival of the guest. Hasan has created a 'flyover' within the premises of the hotel, probably a first in the hotel industry. "This takes the guest directly to the lobby at the first level, while the banquet is located on the level below. In a nutshell, the hotel starts from the first floor and not the ground floor," he explains.

Another 'architectural and engineering feat', continues Hasan, was to make the ballroom column-free. He elaborates, "Normally, when a hotel requires a large banquet area without columns, one can create a podium that juts out, with the tower of the hotel somewhere at the back. This takes the weight off of the banquet hall and creates a space on the top that is usable for a lawn or a terrace."

At Mövenpick however, space was a constraint, and the rooms were resting atop the banquet hall. In a massive engineering effort, Hasan brought down the columns from the guest rooms above and terminated them on a service floor that floats on a beam stretching across the breadth of the floor. This beam, made of structural steel, is almost 10 ft high. With this, the design team cleverly circumvented the need for columns in the banquet hall, which can now cater to almost 700 people at a time. The idea comes with a downside though – a slightly lower ceiling height, which could have been almost 6 ft higher.

INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

To add a sense of novelty to the hotel, Hasan has installed a 20 m long swimming pool with an infinity edge on the second floor. The water from the pool cascades down, creating a backdrop for the coffee shop on the lower floor. This not only adds to the aesthetics of the coffee shop but also envelops

Warm hues in the restaurant add to the cosy ambience.

Meet the architect

Siraj and Renu



FIRM: Siraj and Renu Architects, started in 1977.

FIRM SPECIALISATION: Hospitality interior design and architecture.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY: The three major factors that are woven into an architectural solution are aesthetics, function and economics. Once you get

a good mix of this, voila! You have an excellent design.

PHILOSOPHY TOWARDS LIFE: I always believe that the meaning of true knowledge is to know that you know nothing.

FAVOURITE DESIGNER/ARCHITECT: Frank Lloyd Wright



The banquet hall is a columnless expanse that can house 700 people at a time.



The exterior façade of the hotel is clad in transparent glass with a greenish tinge.

the guests with a more soothing ambience and a cooler atmosphere. Talking about the challenges in designing the hotel, Hasan says, "The plot was all of 72,000 sq ft, and we had to fit in 200 rooms, with all the other amenities."

THE UNIQUE FACTOR

Every hotel has to adhere to the National Building Code, which defines the parameters of designing and constructing a building; one of the most important is fire safety. Hasan had to provide the hotel with an open staircase for the fire escape. Seeing an opportunity in the challenge, Hasan has made this staircase a design element of the hotel's architecture – the staircase is actually at the front of the façade and blends well with the general sense of arrival that has been created by the flyover, especially when the hotel is lit at night.

"I have always believed that architecture and building design should serve the purpose of those who utilise it and not that of the designer," says Hasan. And he definitely seems to have achieved this in the Mövenpick's Hotel and Spa! i

PHOTOS | HYWELL WATERS

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