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Check-in to **hotel design**



Think hospitality design and think Siraj and Renu Hasan. This architect duo has traversed the entire spectrum - hotels, themed restaurants,

lounge bars, pubs, and discotheques, for the biggest names in the industry.

From overall concept to interiors, architects Siraj and Renu Hasan like to leave their mark on every aspect of hospitality design. Their designs mix playful elements like a bike hanging from the ceiling at Bikes & Barrels, a pub in Chennai, with sophisticated sensibilities that create the perfect backdrop to whatever the menu of the moment calls for. Together, they create some of the most imaginative spaces, sometimes on a shoestring budget, and sometimes helping restaurateurs from concept to completion.

“Designing hotels and restaurants is inventing a new story or fantasy each time. In a hotel, every area is

a new challenge. You step out of an all-day dining restaurant and then walk into another, which could have a Chinese/ Mediterranean theme. You have to completely change the look and detailing,” says Siraj.

And it is this quest and curiosity to create something unique and interesting that defines their body of work. “Where else do you find such variety in designing a space?” asks Siraj. “Designing a hotel tickles your creativity more than any other project,” he exclaims.

Siraj says that a hotel has to exude warmth. “A great hotel is one which prioritises guest comfort. And here, rooms play a major role,” he says, adding that there is no point in dressing up the lobby if the rooms do not address comfort. “The room has to be comfortable and cozy, while communicating the design language.” He also emphasises on the ambience, which should be welcoming, making the guest feel ‘at home’. “The sense of arrival is critical to a hotel and this starts from the main porch. The entire ethos of the hotel should be projected at the moment of entry.”

So what goes into creating the perfect ambience? “The ambience depends on the client’s need; the

design brief spells out the aesthetic, functional, and financial parameters,” says Siraj. Therefore, besides the star classification, hotels constitute business, budget, or luxury hotels, and resorts. Functionality-wise, hotels can be accommodation-, F&B-, or conference-driven, or a combination of these. “If it’s a business hotel, you put in what a business traveller looks for —an efficient and elegant environment with neat, clean lines, and easy access to technology. But for a budget hotel, the mainstay is price,” he elaborates.

Siraj believes that the architect is the brand manager and the business development manager of a hotel “because what you create is what you sell”. Inspired by challenges, he says, “The most positive creative output comes when there is a challenge, and when that is converted into an opportunity.”



Having worked with big names in the industry – ITC, Mövenpick, and the BJT Group - Siraj is motivated by the ever-growing surge of creativity in this arena. “A successful design is all about the details. From the architecture and furniture selection, down to menus, creating a complete experience is key,” he says. Yet in the global realm of design, Siraj and Renu understand that they are people serving people. And having got that right is why they are in this esteemed space.

Design meets need

For decades, hotels were designed to support the most basic of needs. Today, having crossed new thresholds in comfort and creativity, hotels forge relationships — between staff and guest and between a guest and the property.

What’s so great about designing hotels/ restaurants, you ask? The challenge lies in maintaining the continuity and consistency of the message across diverse areas. It is all about an overall statement, coming from one single breath. That’s what I learnt from my conversation with Siraj Hasan, the mastermind behind some of the most well-known restaurants in Bangalore, Chennai, and Pune. He is in the spotlight this month, talking to us about his tryst with hospitality design.

On the same creative spectrum are Shubhra Chadda and Alicia Souza from Chumbak. Their venture offers an assortment of quirky stuff, to help you take back a piece of India. We also present Pantone’s colour for 2011 — honeysuckle — and offer a few tips on how you can welcome this bright hue into your home.

In the ‘Medley’ section, we go on a culinary journey to sample the healthiest cuisines of the world. Dip into the Japanese, Chinese, Mediterranean, and French platters to savour what’s tasty and healthy too!

Happy reading!

Cheers!

Shiraz Ibrahim
Managing Director

