

Design musings

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Architect Rakesh Sharma, interiors of Niall Sadhs home, Mumbai

Designs for interiors have evolved to such sophisticated levels and with a wide variety of design selections; the customer today is spoilt for choice.

Quite simply, we have never had it so good. And what's more, it's getting even better. Interiors of homes and commercial spaces in India, having found a niche which has been elusive for a long time, are now in tandem with global trends and are getting more sophisticated. With the easy availability of a wide variety of design options, buyers are getting spoilt for choice. Besides, clients demand more from their designers. Exposure to international trends is leading to an increased awareness of what constitutes good design. Changes in lifestyle and the work environment demand facilities that are flexible, supportive of newer and more varied ways of working, cost effective and

pleasing to a well educated clientele—as well as those interested primarily in a more enriched surrounding.

FUSION IN DESIGN

The large metros like Mumbai and Delhi have become a shopping Mecca for people from all over India and even other parts of the world where labour is very expensive. With so many veneers, laminates, bathroom fittings, tiles, fabric and every conceivable requirement flooding the market, even those who have done up their interiors as recently as a few months back, feel that they didn't have as many choices as are currently available. Having to compete with imports from the world over is forcing local manufacturers



Profilo Worli, Mumbai

to improve. Design has become a self assured blend of technological innovation, artistic genius and skilled workmanship, connecting the past with the future. Different materials, such as wood, metal, stone and glass may be used in combination to create a single piece of furniture. Ideas have to be good in conception, even better in execution.

CONVERGENCE

Global environmental issues dictate that we alter ecologically destructive behaviour. Conservation of resources in the architectural and interior design context, means balancing the utilisation and replenishment of environmental resources and being able to recycle, at

low cost. What personally affects the end user on a day-to-day basis is conservation of energy. How many of us would be cavalier about rising utility bills? Along with the usual requirements of improved image and lifestyle, enhanced workplace performance and quality of life, the most dedicated designers create sustainable design, use non-toxic finishes, conserve resources for future generations and reduce operating costs. The concerns are safety and health, and the approach is holistic. It is design done right.

What I am personally particularly delighted about, is the narrowing of

the gap between those old enemies, form and function. For long, I have vociferously supported 'art for art's sake' and maintained that a thing of beauty justifies its own existence. (What! You mean to say it has to be useful as well?) After years of arguments at home about how my aesthetic preferences were simply not 'practical', I finally have the weight of public opinion on my side, and can hold forth about my pet peeve. Gone are the days when practical meant ugly and anything beautiful was seen with narrow-eyed suspicion as being necessarily useless.

CONTEMPORARY DESIGN TRENDS

Of course, the diktat rules, that form has to follow function, but there is also a realisation that some thing useful, which is not simultaneously pleasing to the eye, may simply be bad design, like that hideous trunk your grand aunt handed down to you. Aesthetic appeal is not a luxury today, but a necessity. Utility and beauty have to now march hand in hand. Much research has been conducted on how the physical environment impacts behaviour (such as depression and crime

rates), health, and even the proverbial libido.

Clean, contemporary lines are here to stay for some time. The design imperative is minimal, without being monotonous or brutal. It does not indiscriminately eschew all ornamentation. The supporters of the 'less is more' credo would say that an interior is complete, when there is nothing more that you can throw out. Not necessarily. The 'more is more' brigade has a voice too and don't make the mistake of confusing it with clutter. Discerning collectors don't need to feel that they have to put a lifetime of collected art into storage because it doesn't fit in with the 'look'. As for the 'look', "it is eclectic, but with an updated, modern feel, which favours straight lines over curved ones.



Minda house, Delhi

Staid and boring is thrown out of the window". There are delicious meanderings from the fragile borders of the straight and narrow, experiments which are not for the faint hearted. Interiors are now surprising, fun, provocative and exciting, all results of jimmying the lock just a little bit.

A CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

An idea which is fast gaining

ground and finding new subscribers is the one that an interior, more so a residential one, is never entirely complete. Even though few can afford the luxury of re-doing their spaces every few years, a home changes and evolves with its residents, according to their needs and current trends. Consequently, designs are created to lend themselves to adaptation and modification, to permit transformation.

There is also the realisation that a home can be an expression of one's personality and hence oneself. We are at liberty to dress our personal spaces in much the same way that we dress ourselves.

Contemporary design liberates the imagination. The mood created can be flamboyant, boisterous or in-your-face. It is charged with expressiveness in a manner which is eloquent and articulate; or calm, serene and timeless, but with a distinct presence. It can have casual neutrality, which serves as a backdrop for other accents. Iconic styles of the past may be redefined, in a vocabulary that is thoughtful, inspired. Whatever you choose, your spaces are addressed in the best possible manner! ☺



Mexx farmhouse, Delhi

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