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DESIGN TALES

Jimmy Mistry, Della Group



driven *by* passion

Interior designer, Entrepreneur & Hospitality Expert – Jimmy Mistry of Della Group shares interesting anecdotes of his journey and upcoming projects in an interview with Nisha Shukla



Camp Della Resort Exterior view



Jimmy Mistry, Principal Designer & MD, Della Group

What was the turning point in your life that served as a stepping stone into the world of design?

At Della, it all begins and ends with a smile. For every customer is important, providing exceptional service and quality, consistently, is the key at Della Adventure & Resort. Whether it is the shock value of a unique welcome drink, availability of 24-hour gourmet food at an adventure park, a functional kitchen and pool even at night, signature cocktails, or minute hints like humorous anecdotes in the washrooms, having the patron pleasantly surprised is what makes Della smile. From furniture imports to manufacturing to turn-key interior design, the turning point came in when I visited Italy for the first time way back in 1996. I was exposed to the world of Italian as well as Global design as I found myself representing Olivetti Synthesis as one single company which was Europe's 2nd largest office furniture manufacturer. Getting to know their massive, mammoth

manufacturing capabilities and the design studios that were feeding these designs to Olivetti was an eye-opener. As I further interacted with the design studios like Charles Pollock, Ettore Stossas and others, I grew in my understanding of what they are so professionally delivering as value and how the whole business works at a macro, global platform. Then subsequently I selectively started adding-in residential furniture manufacturing companies like Frezza Caimibrevetti, DSP Italia, etc. I followed up with a foray into seeding systems and having designers such as Serrature Merroni, Corcini, being added to our overall list of the companies that we were representing in India gave us an amazing exposure.

Further to that, we started getting in large hardware manufacturers into our bouquet of companies that we would represent in India. Subsequently, in the coming years, we were representing 27 Italian companies, some of them very big and

“The journey began in 2007 when I identified a piece of land to create a home for myself in Lonavala and from there on I fell in love with the property and I decided to build a few villas”

“Today in our organisation, when we design at a mass scale, we ensure that design processes are on paper and their applications are evaluated”

some of them boutique small firms. On a daily interaction basis, I was able to comprehend their manufacturing capabilities, their methods of designs, and decode their marketing and sales strategies. This taught me and gave me a global exposure to design and manufacturing which was my foundation stone in the world of interior and design.

Today, 20 years down the line, I am re-doing the same global sourcing and manufacturing by launching our new business Della by Jimmy Mistry. This venture will be dealing in threadbare interior supplies for homes to high-end interior supplies for homes, offices and hotels. We are consciously focusing our energy more on product development and design rather than interior jobs and its execution which we are leaving it to the professionals. Our concerted efforts are fixated on collecting more than 2,500 SKUs across various verticals and manufacturing them in the highest standards. This is to establish and vigorously grow brand Della, not only in the furniture realm but also in lighting, sanitary-ware, fixtures, carpets, rugs, home objects and décor and various other products lines.

Tell us about 'Della' and its journey so far?

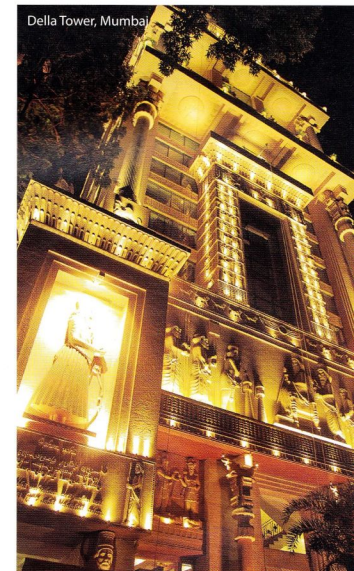
The journey began in 2007 when I identified a piece of land to create a home for myself in Lonavala and from there on I fell in love with the property and I decided to build a few villas. That's where the real journey of Della Adventure & Resorts started. We expanded into Della adventure which was more of passion that turned into



MYK Kalizma Yacht -living room

a profession. I have always been very fond of bikes, ATV's, horses and dogs and wanted a place where all these could have been enjoyed in a clean, wholesome environment. That's where the concept and idea was born and we set up Della Adventure Park in 2009. In 2010 we set up the Camp Della resort which was the first 30 rooms, followed by the luxury resort which added our inventory to 80 rooms and we got into full fledge hospitality. We set up 5 unique restaurants, 1 after the other and a whopping 7 banquet facilities.

So, with a total of practically 4 stay experiences plus the designer suites, Della stands at 170 rooms on a 46-acre property and we are now adding another 50 rooms. To be able to create 4 properties with distinct touch and feel unique concept within the same piece of land is the benchmark we have brought on the table in the Indian hospitality landscape. All of these are commonly tied up with meticulous design at the heart of it. We have



Della Tower, Mumbai



The Presidential Suite

“At Della we create very unconventional, research oriented and inspirational designs, which are extremely process oriented and also it aims at improving the lives of people and the environment they occupy”

tried to demonstrate design thinking at its best and come up with solution that has almost always plagued the hospitality, entertainment, recreation and adventure park verticals. The same has been extended to second home owners at Della Villas so that we could give an out-of-the-box experience for them too.

Being a self-trained architect, how have your learnings influenced Della Adventure and resorts?

My turning point in design came way earlier when I started my career as a contractor. Working for the super successful architects across India, doing everything from house painting

furniture supplies for architects in Gurgaon and Kolkata way back in 1996-97 and then the international exposure. Having the experience of many design practices across India and gaining insight of their methodology and design DNA to the Italian top-end design companies and their method of operating and designing, this was my foundation and learning ground starting from 1991 up till 2000. Almost 10 years that I worked and understood design from many different perspectives made me clued-in. All these learnings were then applied by me when I started my turn-key interior design practice and subsequently continued my journey, rubbing shoulders with international design firms trying to see if we can bring them to India, their methodology of designs in architecture and



P18 lounge

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townships and housing from interior design to architectural practice and mass housing. The journey has been progressive and each stage has been a learning curve. Today, I am teaching myself mass scale manufacturing and yet being sensitive to design. Also, there is an increased investment in global sourcing of various product lines in varied verticals, ranging from floorings to ceilings and applying them within the Indian context. The focus is to give ready product solutions and high-end designs to the Indian designers, architects and even end-consumers.

According to you, what is the most interesting/fascinating thing about architecture in India?

Architecture in India has woken up to a rude shock because of the global onslaught of international architects and design firms who have come in rampant into our country in about the last 10 years. Most of our Indian design firms with large practices have



UB group office Executive Cabin



Della Adventure & Resort



Della Adventure & Resort overview



Dr. Vijay Mallya's Yacht M.Y. Kalizma

turned into drafting studios for these international firms. Hence, when you look at large scale developments especially upmarket development in the cities, developers are choosing only to use international design firms and not domestic. And yet it's a very interesting time as the magnitude of development is very high in terms of high-rises and mix-use projects. Hence, I think it's become important for architects and design firms to get their acts together, scale up their operations and design processes and try and go out there to create something unique that would give our architectural landscape a flavour of its own, even with the onslaught of these highly professional international firms.

In the world of hospitality, in my view, Indian architecture is going through a learning phase, still. While international design firms have been rolling out these multi-national hospitality brands, there is a lot of scope for the Indian architects to add local flavours and yet keep their designs global in terms of luxury.



Della Adventure & Resort - Reception

Tell us something about your recently completed or undergoing projects?

Della currently has 5 business verticals with the 6th one launching in the coming year. So I'd like to say we've got our plate pretty full for a while! Propelling its growth, Della Resort & Adventure Park is now its next phase of further developing this unique property. The luxury resort will soon see an addition of 50 Villa resort rooms to the existing rooms, which will offer the best of luxury and comfort for a lavish stay to adventure lovers. Two new banquet halls, equipped to accommodate a high capacity of 250 people each, will soon be added.

DATA (Della Adventure and Training Academy) being the latest addition, has generated a great response especially to the idea of military style training with luxury amenities available for civilians. Modules span across Counter-terrorism for Civilians, Real-life Survival and Jungle Survival, each of which features different progressive levels to be achieved. I believe there will be opportunities coming up very shortly to expand into other cities as well.



Della Suite - Avan



Swimming Pool

“Architecture in India has woken up to a rude shock because of the global onslaught of international architects and design firms who have come in rampant into our country in about the last 10 years”

Della by Jimmy Mistry will look at the launch of its Flagship Store in Lonavala along with the online store later this year. Della Villa's latest phase is currently undergoing development, the designs of which are personally my favourite out of the 4 phases. Once ready we're looking at 50 new high end resort rooms that are nearly at par in terms of design with the Della Suites.

Any particular artist/architect/innovator whose works you most admire?

There are quite few of them but globally I admire Thomas Heatherwick for his innovative approach. Ar. Bergen Kingsley for innovation in architecture in contemporary sense. In India definitely Noshir Talati remains in the forefront of design specifically interior design. For architecture I admire Mr. Hafeez Contractor's works as he is one architect in India who has done a global scale of work and continues to do even today.

Any historical monument/building that has impressed you and inspired you?

Akshardham in Noida has truly been inspirational for me. The entire structure was done in a period of 4.5 years and this structure has been truly remarkable and an inspiration for me.

What advice would you give to young Architects and Designers?

My simple advice is that once you are qualified, get out of the well! Look at the world around, try and meet architects and designers who are commercially successful, understand their method of working and learn fast. Then allow your thought process to be inclined towards whichever form or style of architects you can relate to. Do not allow your education to curb your way of thinking or to negate you from thinking in certain direction or from questioning a why? Don't doubt your skill but better it. 