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CELEBRATING THE PAST

KHOSLA ASSOCIATES DESIGN A BANGALORE RESTAURANT HIGHLIGHTING ITS RETRO AESTHETIC

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CELEBRATING THE PAST



Khosla Associates have designed a restaurant and bar in Bengaluru which is housed in an old structure. Employing an Art Deco vocabulary, the firm has cleverly added a contemporary functionality to the space which does not clash with its retro aesthetic but actually celebrates it.

When Sandeep Khosla and Amaresh Anand of Khosla Associates were approached to create a restaurant and bar in what used to be the 8200 sq ft warehouse for a newspaper - located, however, in prime real estate in Bengaluru - they were quite taken aback. The space had a grand 20 ft high ceiling and was wonderfully infused with natural light from the tall windows on the periphery.

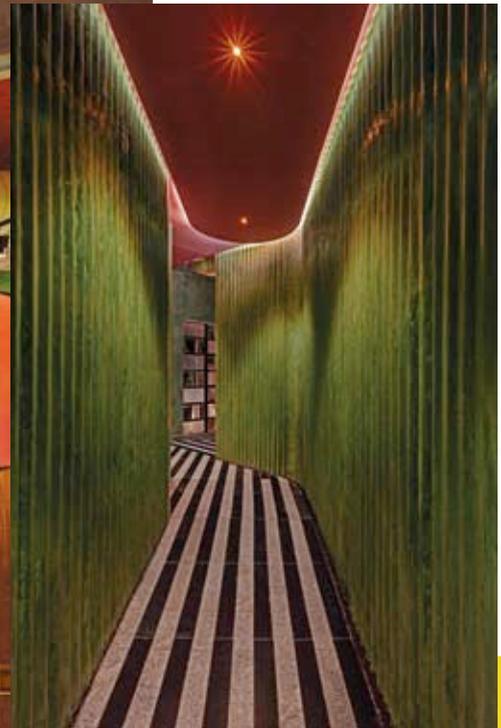
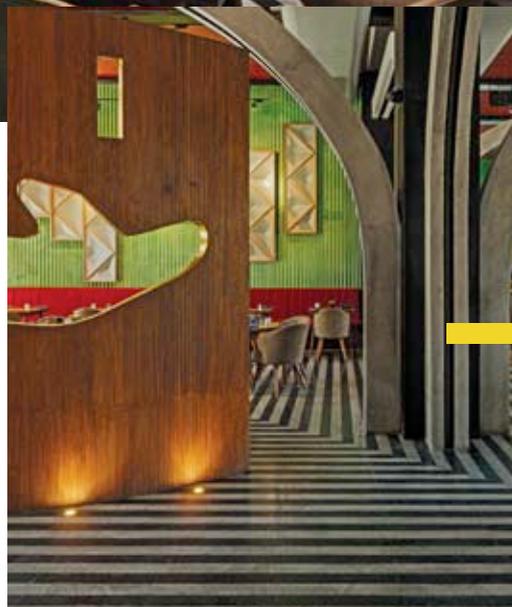
Text By Devyani Jayakar
Photographs Courtesy Shamanth Patil J.

"The owner was an old friend who had promised that he would approach us when he found a property worthy of our design interventions," says Amaresh. Located within the arms of two roads which lie at right angles to each other, the plot is a triangular one. The name of restaurant, '1Q1' is derived from the road number and pin code of its address - No.1 Queens Road, Bangalore 1.

"We were cognisant of the contextual reference, since this building was in the vicinity of the High Court of Karnataka, an imposing red building. So we didn't want to just slap things together thoughtlessly," says Sandeep. The duo instantly decided that their design for the space should echo the Art Deco influence of this building and recall the bygone era evoked by the arched colonnade which wraps itself around the structure. Accordingly, they created vaults, arches and a colonnade around this structure, integrating it into the existing fenestrations on the street level.



The entrance court, peppered with palm trees, is located in the bottom corner of the plot, where the two roads converge. Within, the palette of materials is clearly local. Red and green oxides as well as granite cover various surfaces within the free standing vaults, which define different spaces within the structure.



Two curved screens at the entrance made of ribbed timber juxtaposed with brass, flank the walkway into the restaurant, creating an intimate entrance foyer. They also assist in creating zones in the layout, functioning as a device to create different bays of seating - thus effectively dividing the large space. Irregular cut-outs within them, some in an organic, fluid shape, offer glimpses into the larger space beyond as one walks past.

"These shapes have been inspired by Corbusier's paintings from the 1930s, representing the influence of the Modernist movements," says Sandeep. An imposing custom chandelier takes inspiration from the branches of a tree bearing fruit, hand crafted with mild steel pipes ending in rings of amber coloured resin.

The flooring is in dramatic black and white stripes created with local grey sadharhalli granite and black cuduppah stone, discreetly signifying different areas by the direction in which they run. The pattern thus created is never visible in its entirety, requiring a bird's eye view for the whole to be seen, as it sharply turns corners.

At the entrance, the stripes guide the visitor in, whereas on the two sides of the screens they form a concentric pattern. At floor level, this grounds the segregation of spaces, even as the stark linearity of the stripes offers a contrast to the voluptuous curves of the vaults above.

Perpendicular to the axis of the entry and foyer is a linear bay with a large island bar on one end and a stage for live music performances on the other, its backdrop used for video projections. The space between is interspersed with high seating on the ground level and low lounge seating on a raised wooden platform.

A horizontal version of the chandelier at the entrance spreads over the bar. The furniture is a mix of fixed booth style seating, low and high restaurant tables and low sofas for lounging. The use of colour is bold and deliberate. "We could afford the exuberance because of the sheer size of the space," says Sandeep.



"A distinctive feature that we introduced into the interior space was the series of lofty freestanding cement arches. These arches, positioned between the existing grids, create visual movement and fluidity in the space while reinforcing its vault and arch vocabulary. The arches have LED light integrated within them, capturing and framing the energy encompassed within," says Amaresh.



The walls have a corrugated surface crafted in concrete and cast on site. Coloured with green oxide pigment, they offer a dramatic contrast to the black and white flooring. Columns have been clad in sheets of mild steel and then lacquered. No paint has been used in the restaurant, the distressed look of oxides finding favour. Two murals have been customised in MDF, reminiscent of the layered and zigzag architectural detailing on the facades of Art Deco buildings. "The result is a 3D one," says Amaresh "its aesthetic particularly suited to the space it inhabits."

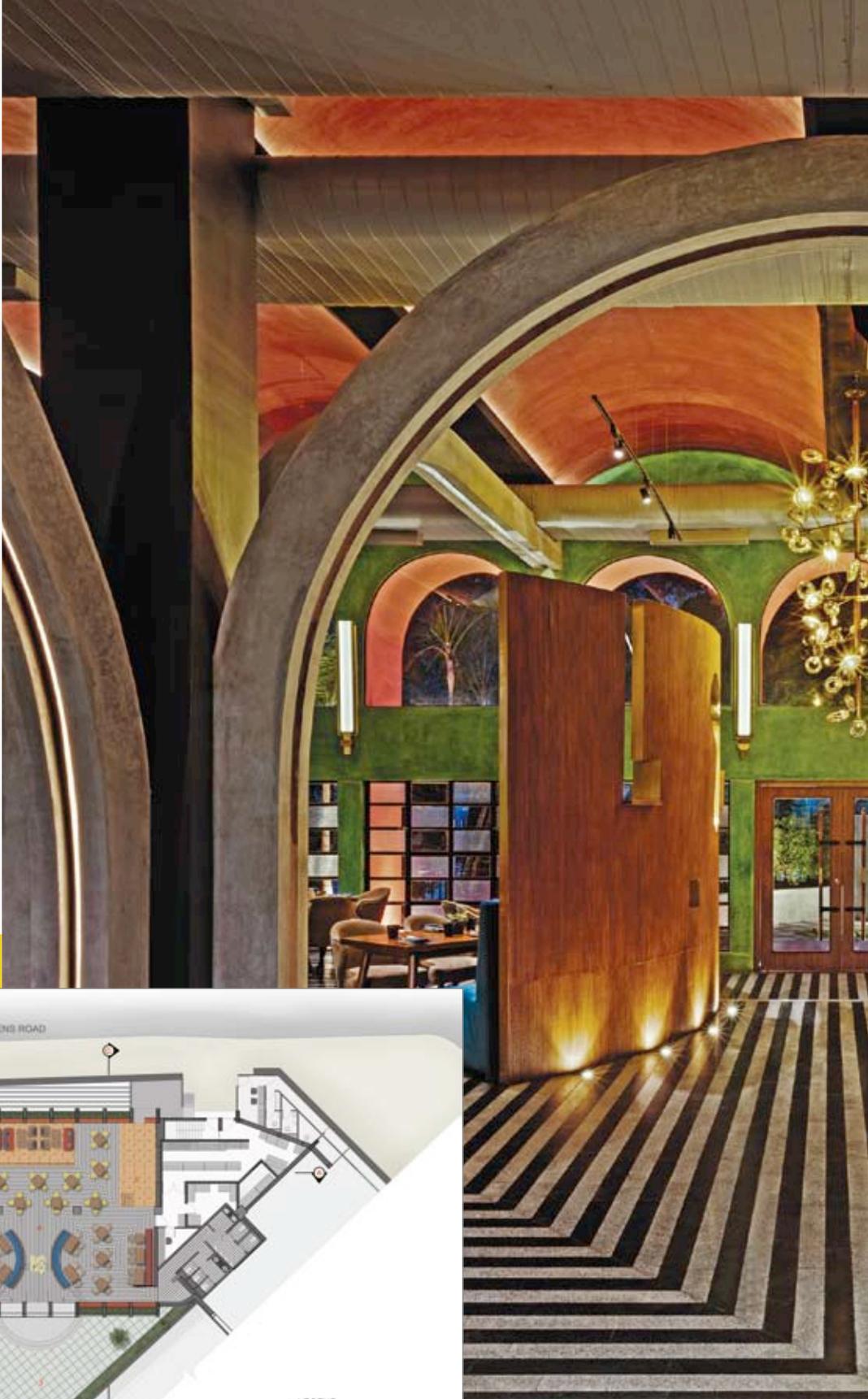
"The challenge lay in dividing the 150-170 seater restaurant into three zones. Additionally, the space had to work during the day as well as night," says Amaresh. During the day, the restaurant is a calm, casual dining space for office goers in the vicinity as well as families. Suffused with comfortable natural light from the tall windows, no artificial light is required during the day.

The colour scheme
of a **DEEP RED**,
peacock green,
BLUE AND OLIVE
complement the
GREEN AND RED
oxides of the
SNELL.



At night and weekends, however, it metamorphoses into a high voltage stomping ground for the hip crowd of the city, replete with music, bands, DJs and performances. "The high energy levels are almost palpable and LED lights transform the space," says Sandeep. "The tables get moved out and the crowd surges to 300 people. The food, cocktails, music and ambience are a heady combination."

"The tall wall brackets in brass and fluted glass between the windows are tipped forward at the top in the manner of a scone and emit a diffused glow after sunset," says Amaresh. Inspired by a trip to Berlin, they contribute to the old world ambience of the space, even as they emphasise its verticality.





The aesthetic in this restaurant is a contemporary take on an Art Deco time warp, its sensibilities rooted in times gone by. "Our design recalls an era when people cared about the dining experience," says Sandeep. Celebrating the past, this design combines all the conveniences of the present, enriched by its thoughtful take on colour, pattern and architectural detailing. The resultant offering may be visually complex but is an extravaganza all the same.

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