Dreamer, hotelier and entrepreneur Jimmy Mistry set up Della Tecnica, now known as Della Group, in 1991, designing mass townships and architecture projects. Slowly and steadily, the company expanded into multiple verticals like luxury resorts, adventure parks, holiday villas and the Della Adventure Training Academy (D.A.T.A.), India’s first counter-terrorism training academy for civilians. Over the years, Mistry has also dabbled in furniture manufacturing and interior design.

**Barcelona**

The city of colourful contrasts
It is often said that if one is in Barcelona, master architect Antoni Gaudí’s eccentric creations are impossible to miss. However, my first visit to Barcelona was a purposeful one, purely to see his work. His creations, undoubtedly, lived up to the hype. But before diving into these design marvels scattered across Barcelona, the master planning of the city needs special mention. I have been to Spain on more than a few occasions, and certain things about the well-thought-out city really appeal to me and can only be experienced first-hand. A simple bird’s eye view of Barcelona can reveal how neatly defined its grid planning is.

La Rambla is one of the most memorable sights; a pedestrian street demarcated only by trees despite being in the heart of the city. It can get slightly crowded, but the smaller connecting lanes make up for it with quaint cafes and restaurants serving great Paella, a popular Valencian rice dish. The street also serves as a barricade between the old and the new. The Barceloneta beach is a must-see to experience the newer and more vibrant side of the city. It houses some of the best restaurants and nightlif. While at Barceloneta, keep an eye out for Frank Gehry’s sculpture of the Golden Fish.

The buildings of Barcelona can be starkly different in their architecture. On one hand, Gaudí’s creations evoke a sense of nostalgia, while on the other, the modern glass facades and structures look like they’ve been picked straight out of a sci-fi movie.
Here are some of my personal favourites:

1. *Sagrada Familia*
   The highlight of my visits, undoubtedly, has always been the unfinished yet baffling Sagrada Familia basilica towering above the city. Unsurprisingly, a lot has been written about this mammoth edifice that evokes mixed feelings. For me, as a designer longing to see it in person, my admiration grew manifold. It was amusing to see how a heritage structure is still under construction; the scene of unusual spires against a heritage design with cranes as backdrops is mesmerising. Gaudi had his very own living quarters within the premise of the basilica. To see and understand how the maestro truly immersed himself into the project by living on site was an experience in itself.

2. *Casa Batllo*
   This is a beauty one can gaze at for hours. The colours used in patches, the dreamy windows and balconies, the roof that resembles fish skin; everything about this building speaks to me.

3. *Casa Mila*
   Another interesting design by Gaudi, Casa Mila is known for its peculiar rooftop and twirled fireplaces. My favourite aspect of the building is the set of delicate and intricate wrought iron balconies that give so much character to the residential building.

4. *W Hotel*
   In complete contrast to Gaudi’s creations, this hotel is a modern-day design marvel. The stunning seafront property looks like the sail of a ship when seen from the beach and draws a close parallel to the Burj Al Arab in Dubai. The rooftop bar of the hotel offers the perfect view of the city.

5. *The Forum Building*
   For an architecture student, design enthusiast or photographer, this structure is most certainly a favourite. The triangle-shaped building, designed by Herzog & de Meuron with sensitivity towards materials, was built at an exorbitant price and has been at the receiving end of numerous controversies. But the end result is a treat for the eyes and always gives me one more reason to return to Barcelona.