

Zestful Designs

Interior designer JIMMY MISTRY has carved a niche in the interior design field with his fast and professional approach.



PROGRESS is a way of life. Assimilating expertise and gathering experience, one tries to achieve excellence in their chosen career — like Jimmy Mistry, who, having embarked on his professional journey by contracting for interior sites 11 years ago, today looks excitedly forward to setting up a one-stop shop that will answer all design needs. Though Jimmy passed out as a mechanical engineer, he attributes his company Della Tecnica's diverse portfolio to wide interaction and exposure to the international market. "I have had a sort of hands-on training on international quality and standards while manufacturing furniture, which I probably would not have learnt in the regular architecture curriculum," he remarks.

Today, the hard work has paid off: Jimmy's innate sense of design and insistence on aesthetic excellence has transformed the company that was started in 1992 with a

staff of six, to a 450-member ISO 9001-certified organization with offices in Mumbai, Pune, Delhi and Daman. Recognition in the form of Indian Institute of Interior Designers' *Young Designer of The Year Award* for 2001 and Institute of Economic Studies' *Udyog Rattan* award in the field of interior design has put



(left) The AC Nielsen ORG-Marg office in Baroda finds the use of bright colours. (below) Columns painted in bright colours add to the vibrancy of the general work area. Well-designed workstations make the optimum use of space.



(doublespread picture) The office of RNA Saranga sees a lot of glass: as furniture, in product display and as partitions. (inset) The dark furniture of RNA Saranga's reception area offsets the lightness of the Italian marble flooring.



predominantly seen in her work, it's the diverse 'textures' of nature, like the surface of leaves or tree trunks, that inspire her to experiment. "In 3-D art, the artist has to focus on light and shade patterns for highlighting the difference in surfaces and textures — a key ingredient to get the dramatic visual effect," says the artist. Celebrating textures, Ravi recently created a new range of 'leather-skin' finish pottery. Equally appealing is her oxidized metal-finish pottery studded with semi-precious stones. She calls it Diamond Pottery as it is inspired from the current rage of *kundan* in jewellery design. For yet another range, she uses royal Oriental and Egyptian motifs in metal effect on pottery and murals.



Ravi was always been drawn to the fine arts and discovered her flair for mural art quite by chance.

She designed a few pots and glass paintings, which a friend displayed at an exhibition and Ravi

Kriti was born. Since then Ravi hasn't looked back, and now her son Jugpreet, who has received formal training in fine arts, assists her in her artistic endeavour, while husband MPS Chawla handles the administrative side of the enterprise.

"We do not create the same design again since we focus on exclusivity," says Ravi, who plans to go full throttle with her art by opening a second showroom in Chandigarh.



Feeling ready for a crossover, she has been working on functional pieces and even trying her hand at glass for bathroom partitions. Her latest collection includes utility products like mural art sofas, beds, plant holders and bathroom partitions that can be custom-made

to match existing tile designs. "Art should reflect in utility products too," she says. With prices that fit everyone's budget — masks, candlestands and wall brackets are well within Rs. 1,000; murals come for Rs. 4,850; mirrors cost Rs. 6,850; while pots range from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 16,850 — and creativity in full flow, Ravi is happy to churn out new pieces from her Chandigarh haven.

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Text: Indu S Bedi
Photographs: courtesy Ravi Chawla



A close-up of the executive cabins at RNA Saranga. Tilted glass sheets infuse dynamism.





(above) With its steel and glass table and wooden flooring, the reception area of Rhodia Chemicals Pvt. Ltd. extends a warm welcome. (right) The wooden rafters placed in between beams add an element of design to the otherwise plain ceiling of the general work area.

the proverbial icing on the cake. The company has notched up quite an impressive line-up of clients and has executed a formidable array of projects — which includes corporate houses and multinationals like Star TV, AC Nielsen ORG-Marg, Bajaj Allianz, BPL Mobile, Coca Cola, Goodlass Nerolac, RNA Builders and Percept D Mark, to name a few.

His interactive and systematic approach to designing has ensured that Della Tecnica has garnered enough goodwill by completing projects well within time and budget — giving rise to repeat business. "Our clients are very self-assured and educated about design and style. They challenge our creativity to the limits and drive us to deliver our best again and again — that's our winning formula!" Given the fact that Jimmy and his team are geared to handle 24 to 25 projects at a time (anywhere in India), the resulting lower material rates (owing to bulk orders) are also passed on to the clients, adding to the cost-effectiveness of the project.

About their style of working, Jimmy explains: "The firm does not have a particular 'company philosophy.' Instead, it lays equal emphasis on each step of the design process — right from the evaluation of the sites and the conceptual planning to cost estimation. Selection of materials and specialized designs for electrical, air conditioning,



Simple but striking, the conference room at Rhodia Chemicals has an innovatively designed glass-topped table and black chairs.

structured cabling and telecommunication services are handled efficiently. Though a turnkey operator's job ends here, Della Tecnica goes one step ahead by providing maintenance and management services to its clients," says the enterprising individual. He further elaborates on the changing trends of the industry. "As concepts of space and dimension keep changing, the 21st century will call for optimum space utilization, besides dictating the usage of cost-effective, eco-friendly and maintenance-free materials. These factors would therefore necessitate a designer to evolve modules that make optimum usage of space bringing about maximum harmony in any working environment."

Repeat business, the most obvious indication of client satisfaction, can be seen in the case of AC Nielsen ORG-Marg, for whom Jimmy designed an office in Mumbai and then another one in Baroda. The latter is spread over a large area of 26,000 sq. ft., on two and a half floors and has five wings. To achieve the right blend of transparency (for an open, interactive working environment) and privacy, the design team played with a mix of black-grain veneer and frosted glass. Additionally, low-level partitions facilitate interaction and communication. Intense colours like blue, green and red used in the right amount, without an in-the-face effect, animate the space, while the neutral background with careful lighting design reinforces the placement of elements. Diffused lights on the ceiling make the entire area look bright and vibrant.

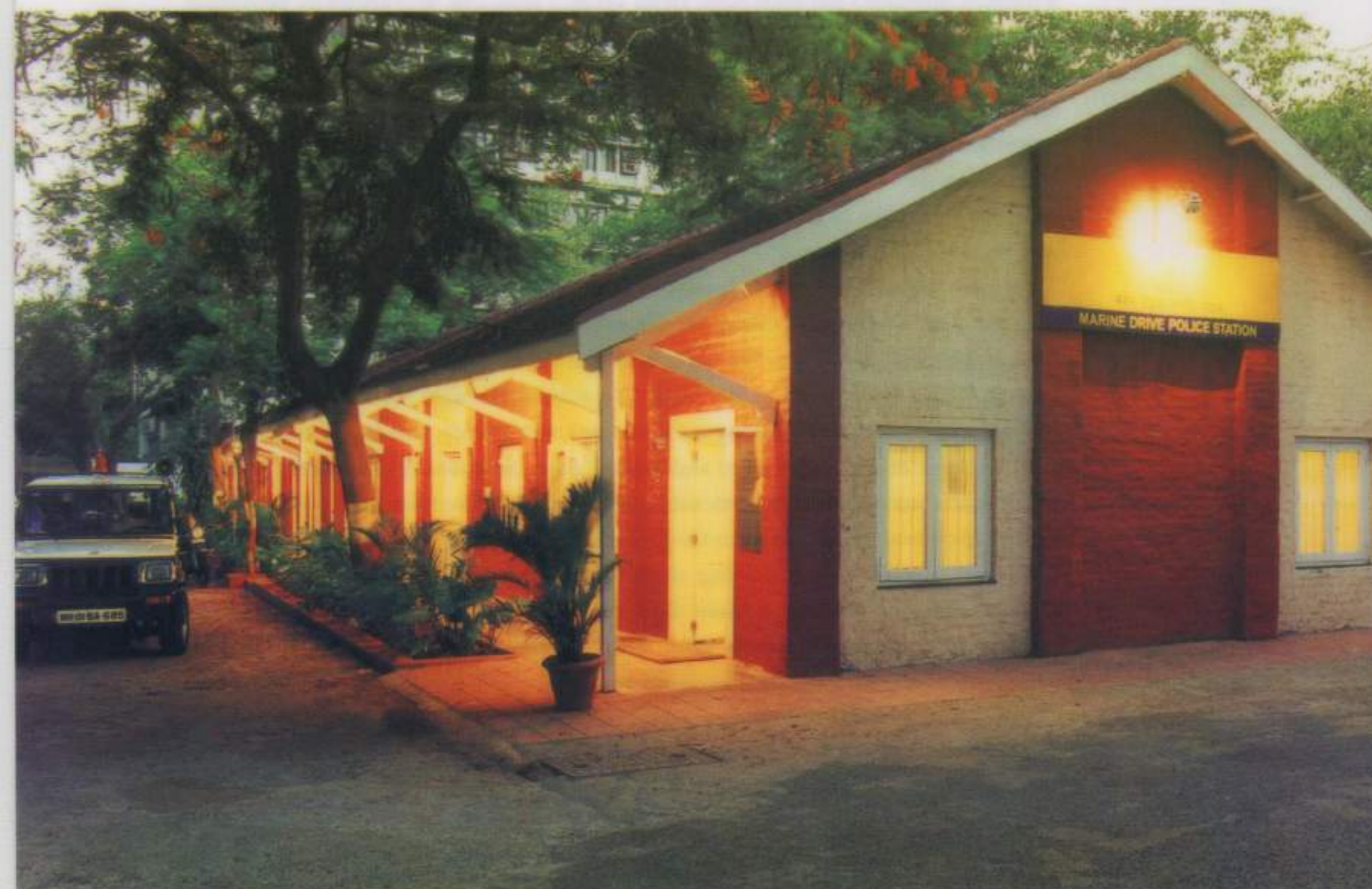
The office for construction giant RNA Saranga is another proof of Jimmy's versatility. The client Anubhav Aggarwal wanted the office to be something like that of EMAAR Properties, a leading property developer of UAE. The design team had to integrate the following client requirements: easy accessibility to potential buyers, a high degree of transparency to project a clean image and a corporate look. The task

was to make all the work areas self-sufficient, yet interlinked. Designwise, all elements have been pared down to a minimum, with furniture sporting an understated colour combination of black and silver. Soft-coloured flooring and extensive use of glass expand the relatively small 1,200 sq. ft. space. Full-height glass partitions have been given a frosted band to maintain privacy. Another important design element one comes across is in the reception area, where the curved reception table is strategically lit to create a bright and vibrant ambience. Elsewhere, reflected lighting gives a neat and modern look. Neat glass plates, some wall-mounted and others standing on the floor, display the work-in-progress and completed projects effectively.

The assignment undertaken for Rhodia Chemicals Pvt. Ltd. was slightly different: the office was already partially done-up, but the client was not happy with the colour scheme, air conditioning and lighting. "In this case, we enhanced the aesthetics of the office by modifying the entire ceiling and ducting. The second step was giving it a brand new look at a very minimal cost. The overall look was spruced up by selecting the right kind of materials like silver, glass, steel and wood-finish laminate," discloses Jimmy. A strong corporate feel comes across in the reception area with its brown parquet flooring, a sleek glass-topped steel reception table and black leather sofas. The brownish white laminate used in the entire office gives it a uniform look. Again, a combination of glass and silver has been used for the furniture in the cabins and the conference room. Transparency is further underlined by the use of glass in the base of the cabin tables. Half-height glass partitions and panels clad in corporate colours divide workstations.

A busy professional he may be, but Jimmy still makes time for social responsibilities: clearly in his case, time is not always money! For instance, he has worked on giving the beautiful Fire Temple (Agiary) at Dadar, Mumbai, a facelift, as also changing the drab and dull Marine Drive Police Station into something the law could be proud of. "I believe in the importance of community as a whole, and being able to contribute

The old building of Marine Drive Police Station, spruced up with a lot of colours, offers a healthier working environment for the law enforcement agency.



towards its betterment," says the designer. "We owe something to the society, after all we get so much from it." For the project, which was to be done in 12 days flat, Jimmy decided to retain the charming old-world air of the exteriors intact and spruce up the interiors through bright and vibrant blue and yellow (from the Mumbai Police colours). There is a curved reception with a glass top and an informal area for meetings or discussions. The furniture has been designed keeping the heavy traffic area in mind. In fact, the entire interior is very maintenance-free. By providing a healthier work atmosphere, Jimmy hopes that the police force will have an opportunity to be more productive in a happier surrounding.

(top) The reception sports blue and yellow to represent the police colours.
(above) A simple decor and minimum furniture means less maintenance.

It is not easy to slot the Della Tecnica head honcho as a professional belonging to any particular building-related field. Refusing to get fettered by one particular aspect of design, his creative acumen is always on the look-out for newer territories to explore. That's why this mechanical engineer can handle interior designing, architecture and product design with equal ease. We wish him all the best on his creative journey.

Text: Swati G Balgi
Photographs: Prashant Bhat; courtesy Della Tecnica