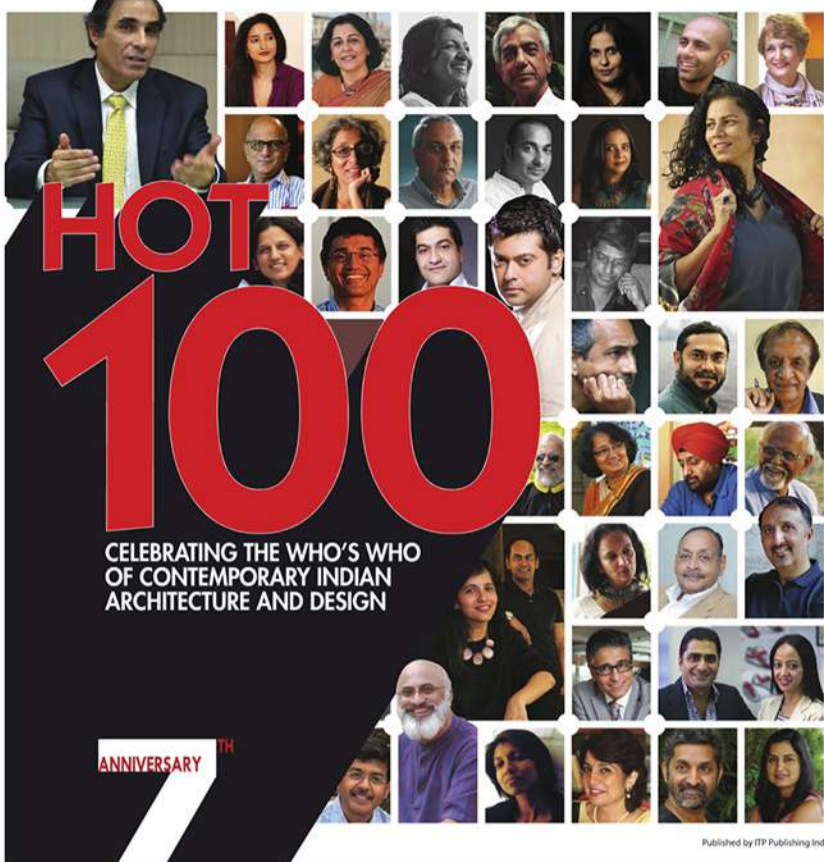


ARCHITECT and INTERIORS INDIA

Inspiration and insight for architects and interior designers

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HOT 100

Rahul Kadri IM KADRI ARCHITECTS



THE ROOTS

Rahul Kadri spent his formative years amidst lush landscapes of the Kumaon Himalayas while studying at Sherwood College, Nainital. This early relationship with nature infused within him a deep passion to create buildings and spaces which are in harmony with their natural context. Architecture was something that was familiar to the college student – his father IM Kadri, is one of India's design icons, with an enriching career pieced together over five decades.

THE NURTURING

After completing his diploma in architecture from the Academy of Architecture, Mumbai, Kadri went on to pursue his Master's degree in Urban Planning from University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (1988). He garnered valuable

experience through his stints with Gillis Judson Wade Architects and the Centre for Environmental Structure, Berkeley, California. Moving back to India, he worked with PK Das and contributed to the office building for the Handloom Association of the State Government of Orissa. While dismissing

the constant of any "one" person as inspiration, Kadri acknowledges his father's influence in shaping him. "He had the ability to zero down only on what is important or valuable and focus on that; to engage with people and have them own their projects; to know who to involve in certain projects..." He also respects Christopher Alexander for his research on patterned language and geometry of behaviour; and Charles Moore for his memorable spaces and demonstrating the importance of incorporating social spaces in architecture and urban design.

THE FRUITS

In 1995, he assumed directorship of IM Kadri Architects, a pioneering architectural and urban planning firm established by his father in 1960. Based in Mumbai with branches in Bengaluru and Muscat, the firm's work extends from healthcare, hospitality to educational campuses, institutions, industrial townships and more.

"At Kadri's," says the architect, "we tailor ourselves to deeply understand how the users could thrive in the places we create. 'Form follows client's Authentic Aspiration' is what we believe in. We conduct a deep inquiry into who our customers really are, what are their aspirations and what do they value and why. We write stories for all our projects, which then translate into our architecture."

THE TURNING POINTS

Club Mahindra Resort at Kodagu Valley, Coorg, Kadri's very first project, has been a milestone. "This project really gets down the ideas built over the years on harmony with nature. The resort has been built without cutting a single tree on site and is built into the forest." He also votes for Symbiosis Knowledge Village, Lavale, a vibrant, eco-sensitive campus spread across 11 acres of partially sloping land and built at an optimal cost. "This is the first campus of this scale to use sun-dried compressed earth brick, made on site, after much research on the natural mix of different soils. No carbon is released during the manufacture of these bricks, making it environmentally friendly. There is a careful attention paid to how the campus is used from inside as well as outside."

The contoured site was sculpted into landscaped terraces and multi-level courtyards, ideal for student spill-out spaces and interaction zones. These multi-level buildings and courtyards were planned to create positive and negative pressure zones in the wind path, drawing the breeze into the buildings and outdoor spaces. "Water channels flowing through the site further added to the thermal comfort of the environment. All classrooms have glare-free north light and shaded corridors in the south with cross ventilation. Being completely day-lit and therefore electricity free, the classrooms are 10% cooler than the outside," discloses Kadri.

THE DESTINATION

While the pragmatic architect in him sees the firm making a difference to the built environment in India through the buildings, townships and urban spaces they design, he dreams of designing an interactive museum for architecture. ■



- A built structure that gets a perfect score in your opinion... and why.
Dormitory for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, India. Completed in 1942, it was the first reinforced, cast-in-place concrete building in India. The structure is one of the clearest examples of the modernist credo: architecture as the manifest union of aesthetics, technology and social reform.
- An Indian practice that you would give a perfect score... and why.
Our own firm! For the design philosophy we believe in and which our projects showcase.
- An international practice that merits a perfect score... and why.
Renzia Piana. Everything at this firm is for people, no matter what the project is. What matters to this firm is to understand what they offer to the community. Piana has focused on innovative ways to promote public spaces and democratic values.

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Rahul Kadri

IM Kadri Architects
08 Jul 2018



Almost 15 years ago, in 2003, Rahul Kadri found himself spearheading his first project at IM Kadri Architects, a practice famous for designing landmarks in Mumbai and Muscat since its inception in 1960. When he joined his father IM Kadri's practice in the late '80s, Kadri was focused on creating projects that lifted the soul – "places where people would be at home and in touch with their better self." The design community and the people who visit Club Mahindra resort in Coorg and the university campus of Symbiosis – his few first projects – will attest to the fruition of these noble aspirations.

For this alumnus of Academy of Architecture, Mumbai, who also holds a Master's in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan (USA), experiences

drawn from these early projects engendered in him a humble and collaborative view of the profession. "The entire team should be aligned with the same goals, and should share the vision and participate in the process together. Do not rely on an architect as a heroic leader," says the architect, who describes his work as "focused on the client's highest needs, sustainability, and a social focus that is deeply embedded in consciousness."

Over the years, Kadri's philosophy has been rooted in a non-pretentious approach (to projects), in which form follows the client's highest aspiration – "making real the highest potential for the emerging future." As the practice continued to evolve, he began to recognise the power of a team; good design, he says, relies on the intelligence and ownership of everyone involved. "We have processes, and we work with our clients very closely to develop intelligent design briefs. Our philosophy has remained constant. We now have more effective processes to fulfill them," shares Kadri.

Through their shared vision, Kadri and his team successfully demonstrate that sustainable design can encompass a variety of programs, ranging from urban planning, universities, resorts, commercial, cultural projects and even community development, among others. He is a firm believer in their design processes, maintaining that, if they are used more, "the country's priorities will be addressed and the design environment will blossom." Kadri wishes to work more closely with the government and a close circle of clients who deeply desire meaningful architecture.

His advice to fellow architects and designers? "Search for meaning, not just form."

