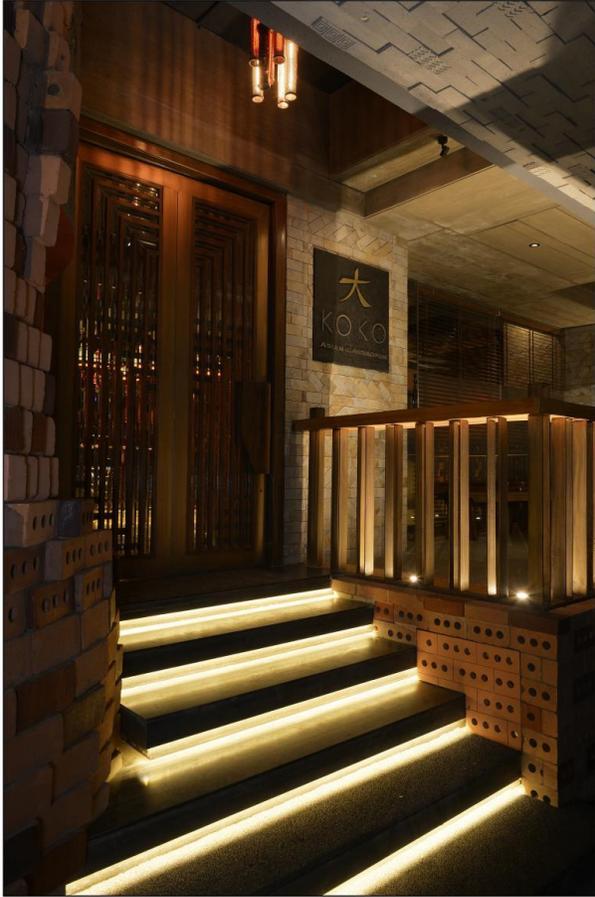


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Discern Chats with Sumesh Menon and Ryan Tham



It is not easy to stand out of the crowd these days. In a city where there is a new restaurant at every corner, it is notable that Henry Tham's latest venture, [KOKO](#) has taken Mumbai's gastronomes and design lovers by storm. Translated to mean *elder brother* in Cantonese, the Thams (Henry and his two sons Ryan and Keenan) conceptualized KOKO as an Asian gastropub which is big on food and even bigger on experience. "We wanted to introduce an Asian restaurant with a broader range of Asian delicacies that have not been seen in the city before. We then paired this menu with eclectic cocktails, a high-energy bar and Sumesh Menon's stellar design" says co-founder Ryan Tham. [Sumesh Menon](#) of Sumesh Menon Associates was brought on board to turn the Thams dreams into reality. "While the restaurant is pan-Asian, we consciously stayed away from introducing too many typical southeast Asian elements or artifacts" Sumesh tells us, which is something new for an Asian restaurant. The team introduced [Asian inspiration](#) through hints of color rails like [terracotta](#) and fly-ash and natural forms resulting in a dramatic, seductive and elegantly designed space.

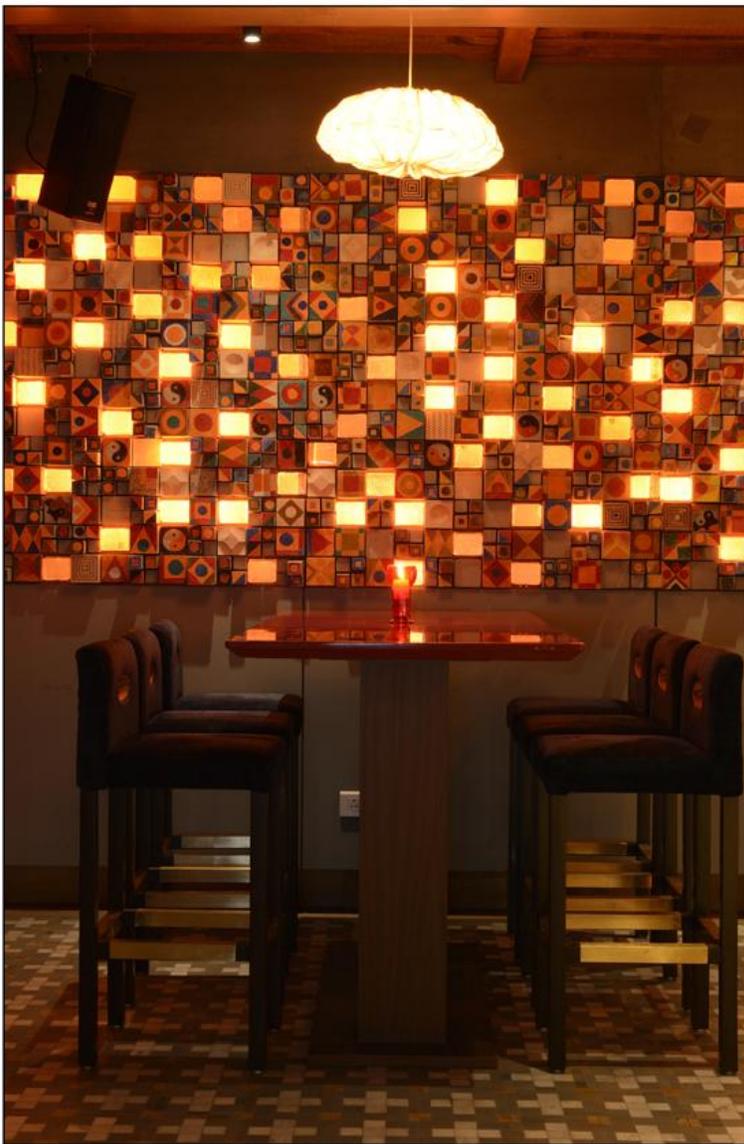


Terracotta Brick Facade at the Entrance



Mosaic Flooring and 100 ft Island Bar

“The whole look of the space was kept very [contemporary](#), upscale and sophisticated while being unique in design. The sculptural exposed perforated terracotta brick façade of the restaurant is a stunning display of rustic, yet muted elegance” says **Sumessh**. The first thing that catches your eye as you walk into the 3,500 sq. ft. space is the 100-foot-long island bar in the centre of the room. This indicates that, as serious as the **Thams** are about their food, they know how to throw a great party. The bar is made of locally sourced wood and has abstract, fluid-like resin-filled crevices that give it a distinctive texture. To impart this feeling of upscale elegance, **Sumessh** used dramatic period furniture, custom-made crushed fabric paper lighting, mosaic flooring and stunning wall features made up of fly-ash blocks, wooden blocks and solid glass blocks.



Custom-Made Crushed Fabric Paper Lighting



High Backed Sofa in the bar area

When it comes to design and food, Sumessh and Ryan definitely have their finger on the pulse. We asked them what they consider to be upcoming trends in their respective fields.

Sumessh: There has been a surge in the design world centred around exploring cutting edge materials in their raw, exposed finishes. Designers are now boldly grasping unique design trends with global influences and blending them with local inspirations. Nowadays, concepts for restaurant and bar designs are focused primarily on the design of the bars - the technicalities, functioning, and aesthetics of the bar. Lighting design is another aspect that is gaining momentum when it comes to restaurant design; lighting technology is now so thoroughly efficient that good lighting design can replace a ceiling itself entirely.



Lighting Design in the lounge area



Lighting and Accent Chairs in the lounge area

Ryan: In the food and beverage space trends change every day. The trick is either to provide the guest with something one has never experienced before, or to serve up the basic fundamental recipes as they were meant to be. According to me, though, there have been a few trends that might pick up in the upcoming year. The '*farm to fork*' concept for one is going to be around for a while. Secondly, restaurant-goers appreciate the time and skill it takes to create handmade delicacies, and demand for handmade artisan food with local ingredients is seriously starting to grow in the market. I expect to see vegetables in less common forms, where they will be the centre of innovation. Certain '*super foods*' will also be the focus of attention in the near future, and restaurant menus will gain attention for being especially nutrient-rich and healthy.

The Head Chef of KOKO hails from Malaysia, where he has mastered the art of making and plating. He has curated a menu rich in taste and versatility that will allow patrons to nibble on sumptuous Cantonese style dim sums and delicate sushi. KOKO delivers a new side of Asian cuisine to the Indian palate in the most exquisite manner.

With a keen eye for design and a great sense of what the public wants, KOKO has become one of the Mumbai's trendiest and busiest restaurants. Distinctive design has been achieved through the unique combination of materials throughout the space. Whether it is contemporary materials like metal and glass, or natural ones like stone and wood, the amalgamation of elements and influences creates a balanced and harmonious dining space.