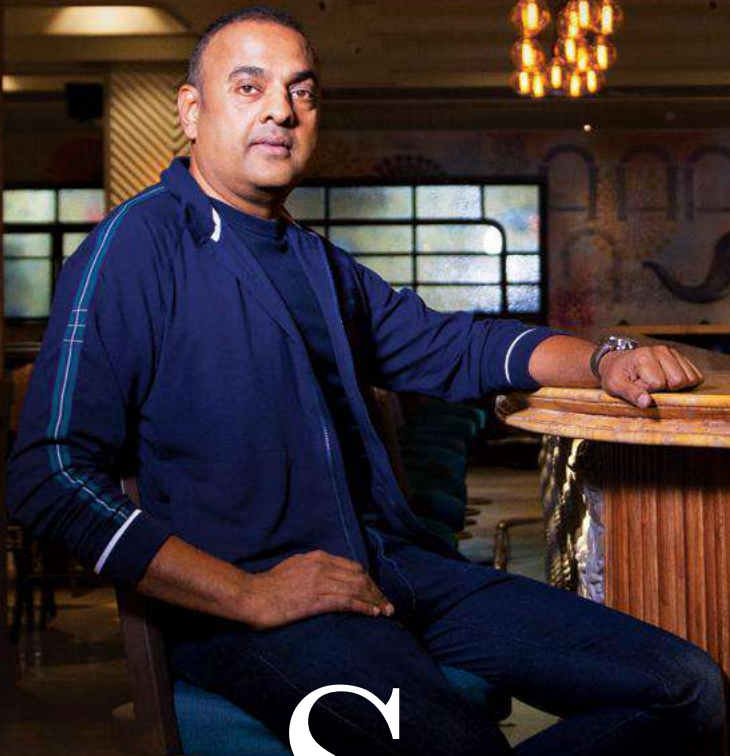


HOME & DESIGN

A TIMES OF INDIA PUBLICATION

TRENDS

VOLUME 6 NO 8 ₹250



Sumessh Menon

ON REDEFINING
THE DESIGN
PALATE

ANAND MENON
ANURADHA JAIN
JATIN HUKKERI
KHUSHBOO SANGHAVI
KUNAL KHANDLWAL
MUKUL ARORA
SANJYT SINGH
SHOBHAN KOTHARI
VEERAM SHAH
VIBHOR SOGANI
AND MORE...

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MW88190101

TEXT: TINA THAKRAR
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 PROJECT IMAGES: INDRAJIT SATHE

HOSPITABLE INTERVENTIONS

Architect and interior designer Sumesh Menon flips through his portfolio of restaurant projects, peppered with designs that create a sensorial experience

The F&B industry is constantly changing; recent trends show that restaurants and bars open as quickly as they shut down. But in some cases, they stick around for years, sometimes decades, and begin to be recognised for not only the items on their menu, but also for their ambience. In many cases, it's the design that makes the restaurant identifiable, more distinct, transporting visitors to a place that bodes well with the food.

In India, hospitality design has been gaining ground for a few years now and Mumbai based architect and interior designer Sumesh Menon understands this better than anyone. His firm, Sumesh Menon Associates has been at the forefront of high-end hospitality design for over a decade now, taking raw spaces and transforming them into a sensorial experience for patrons.

Largely, Menon is a self-taught architect. It was a short design stint in New York that landed him his first restaurant project. His design aesthetic is rooted in this city, eventually influencing his projects in India. "Creative design has intrigued me right from the start, so making a career of it was natural. Preparation for this industry came only through actual hands-on experience of

site work. It was my set of early projects in New York, like Hole in the Wall and Plan B, that became some major landmarks in my design journey." From then on, the transition from residential and commercial design to primarily restaurant design was, in his opinion, inevitable.

Ask him to list his projects, and he brims with enthusiasm as he takes us through each one — the Asian-inspired Foo and Koko, the soulful and fresh Candy & Green, the progressive Trilogy SuperClub and the France-inspired Mustard. His ongoing projects span an equally long list, covering everything from the rustic Mabula Game Lodge in South Africa to the intricate Dragonfly in New Delhi; from the modern Silver Beach Café in Dubai to the open-air Playboy club in Pune.

At any time, Sumesh is often juggling multiple projects across the globe, each of which brings with it a complexity he revels in. "There is a sense of exclusivity in each project I work on. I try to avoid a design overlay between any two projects and at the same time deliver seamless design in terms of smooth functioning of the restaurant while creating new, cutting-edge design concepts and adhering to project restraints."



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"The primary role of restaurant design is to nurture the customers' palette by creating a tastefully done physical environment that complements the food and dining experience. Any restaurant today is primarily driven by its worldly cuisine and thus, it becomes the basic framework for the entire design concept. Key elements like lighting design, acoustical design, efficient zoning and functioning of the restaurant must be considered right from the conceptual stage," he states, as we settle into Talli Turmeric, his newest project in Mumbai.

The design of Talli Turmeric abides by its name — it's a heady concoction of everything Indian, from the colours to the creativity. He's seamlessly blended a semi-rustic, industrial-urban aesthetic with natural materials like custom terracotta bricks, wood with knots, vibrant fabrics and artworks that represent Indian culture.

(Previous page)
Architect Sumesh Menon at the newly opened Talli Turmeric in Mumbai
(Right) Foo in Mumbai
(Below) 145 Cafe in Mumbai
(Facing page) Papaya in Mumbai

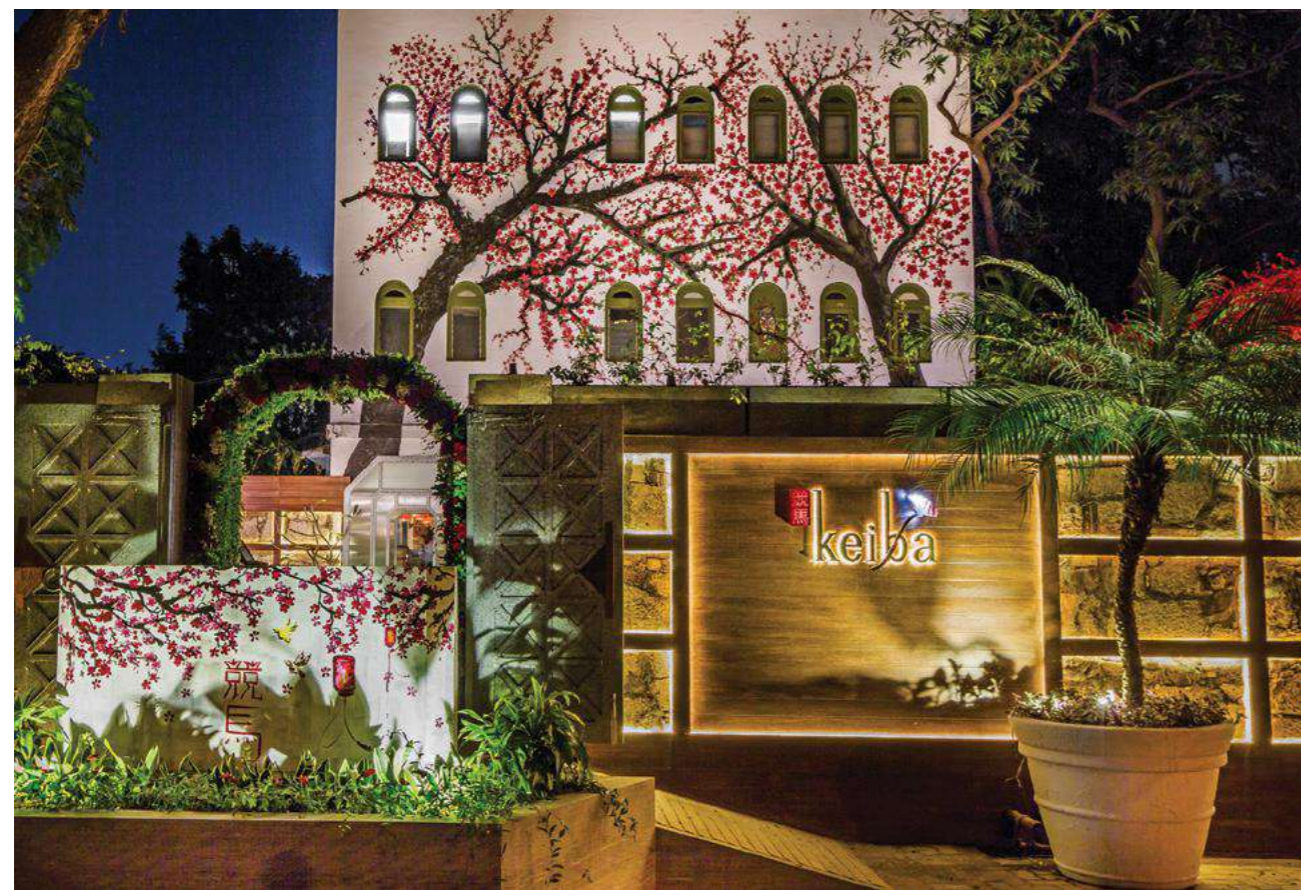




(Above) The facade of POH in Mumbai
(Below) The facade of Keiba in Mumbai
(Facing page top) Foo in Mumbai
(Facing page below) Koko 2.0 in Mumbai

Right next door is the Asian inspired Mizu, where launch preparations are on in full swing. A large ceiling mural watches over the entire space, which is replete with oriental inspired screen partitions, natural wood finishes and custom light installations. Mizu, which translates to 'water', draws heavily from its name and has been designed to look as though it's always in a state of fluidity.

As Sumessh's understanding of hospitality design has evolved, so have his sources of inspiration. He looks to the futuristic design concepts of James Law and Zaha Hadid and the proficiency of Paul Bishop, besides the minimalism and hygiene of Japanese design aesthetics.





ANY RESTAURANT DESIGN TODAY IS PRIMARILY DRIVEN BY THE WORLDLY CUISINE CONCEPT OF THE PLACE AND THUS, IT BECOMES THE BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENTIRE DESIGN CONCEPT.

"Understanding basic human needs and functional use of a space and to cater to those needs effectively is what ultimately defines the success of any design. In this modern age, it means being inevitably connected to the digital world and its tools and resources. But as we incorporate modern technology into the design process, we should keep in mind the most important aspect — the human dimension — in spatial design. Personally, I constantly encourage customised products handcrafted by artisans, which is an Indian design USP. Even in simple things like design development, I encourage hand and thematic sketches for a better understanding of actual design needs."

With a multitude of completed projects, some in the works, and bigger ones to come, Menon has positioned himself in a spot that's comfortably challenging and immensely driven by creativity. He's not sitting in the booth at the back or on the sole free stool by the bar, but at the largest table in the centre of the room.

(Above left and right) Talli Turmeric in Mumbai
(Right) Papaya in Mumbai
(Facing page top) 145 Cafe in Mumbai
(Facing page below) POH in Mumbai

