

# Challenging the Limits



Ar. Bankim Dave of Surat is a multi-faceted and brilliant personality with a sharp sense of humour and an innate ability to use words well. His design ideology stems out of sincerity and commitment; which also reflect in the creative output seen from his studio.

Practicing as an architect-interior designer, Dave is registered with the Council of Architecture, New Delhi and is also registered as a government-approved valuer. He is a partner in the firm of M/s. Ramanlal Dave & Sons - the first architectural firm in Surat. His father Tarun Dave, also an architect, is the Principal Architect of the firm.

Ar. Bankim Dave has been actively involved with the activities of the IIID and has just finished his term as the National Vice-President of the IIID.

Here, he discusses his work philosophy; through two recently completed interior design assignments - a home and a hospital. The diverse briefs and needs of the projects are seen to be sensitively addressed to achieve interesting and functional design solutions.



"The reality of a house is not in the exterior forms, as it is in sculpture, but in the space within, in the space enclosed, within which man walks and lives," believes Surat-based architect Bankim Dave, quoting the legendary master architect Frank Lloyd Wright. "Aesthetically beautiful, practically convenient and also keeping fidelity to the user's need are the prime factors we use as our design tools. We try to achieve design excellence, creating distinctive and imaginative solutions for our clients - integrating our skills," he explains. Further elaborating his design philosophy, Bankim says he and his associates follow the maxim - *Let's not limit our challenges, instead let's challenge our limits.*

**Residence:**

This work ideology comes in handy particularly when one comes across highly intellectual or demanding clients. The same philosophy helped in this home; when the client had a very clear idea about his family's requirements and expectations from their five-bedroom apartment.

"God gave me nothing I wanted, he gave me everything I needed - these were the first few words of the brief given by my client, which kept me

thinking about what he exactly meant. He added, "I dreamt of a bungalow but now I have a 5 bedroom apartment of 4750 sq. ft. area; I wished to have one son and one daughter, instead I have three sons; I wanted to be financial expert may be a C.A. but I am today a successful businessman dealing in textiles..." I looked at him with curious eyes - wondering what would come next... something like.../ *wished to have an international designer to design my home but now I have you.* But, fortunately, it didn't come; thank God," quips Bankim - with his trademark wit - explaining his client's specific brief for a large home for a large, joint family.

The idea was to give each son (and his family) a distinct space, according to his own sensibilities; and yet give a feeling of oneness to the home.

"So we began challenging our own limits. On our first visit we decided not to dismantle toilet walls or to shift the positions as plumbing and drainage are key issues in an apartment. The second decision was not to cover any balconies to extend the rooms and the third decision was that we decided a completion date!! The ball was then set rolling for this spacious apartment in a high-rise building on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor overlooking the newly developed Citilight area of Surat.





"Our design palette is a fusion of effective detailing used to enhance the quality of design, appropriate use of materials and innovative style backed by completion within time frame and budget" informs Associate Designer Ami Merchant. "Thus, we decided to blend the entire home in one colour tone and with the use of same kind of wood, to lend the feeling of oneness, while also keeping the individual requirements and distinct taste of four brains." The concept of straight clean lines is seen in the wooden flooring pattern, and also in the wall paper, reaching the false ceiling; which also complements the same.

The two elder sons wanted a rustic look in their bedrooms; so we used rustic stone tile on walls but kept straight lines as we designed the furniture and the ceiling. Both the rooms include a full-length, armless sofa; with the idea that it can be used as a bed by a child too, whenever needed.

The bedrooms have the same colour tone and wood used, to give the home the feel of oneness. The use of natural wood and veneer in its original form, and finished in natural P.U. coat lends a lovely look.

#### Hospital:

A hospital has a typical design brief; but each of the items needs careful monitoring and meticulous attention to detail. There is never an excuse for an error - and no functional flaw can ever go unnoticed!!

The ENT hospital designed by Ar. Bankim Dave is located on the second and third floor of a building while the audiometric consulting is on the first floor; and the greatest challenge was

to link all the three together - giving the whole outfit a homogeneous effect.

The hospital was for a father-son duo, so we required two consulting rooms, a large waiting room, a doctors' rest room-cum-VIP consulting room, a 15-bed hospital, two operation theatres - for major and minor surgeries, a recovery room and connecting internally the second and third floor. The doctors' love for natural materials and dark polished wood was known to







the architect, as they had already done their bungalow interiors before.

In this building, however, practical structural problems too were many and severe. The architect had to deal with leakages, damp walls, and a weak structure, too. "This was tedious but the real challenge was to provide a toilet to each ward. To fit in an attached toilet was a task but it was shocking to find that existing toilets had sunk up to 1 meter!! So we started finding the leakage source - waterproofed; changed the entire plumbing and drainage lines and still to avoid any possibility of damp we clad all the walls of the entire hospital excepting the consulting area and the doctors' rest room with very light grey ceramic tile up to 2.13 m and the entire flooring of 1m x 1m vitrified tile to blend the entire area.

Overcoming such practical constraints and resolving such issues leaves less opportunity for dramatic design. However, such sites test a designer's skills and challenge his understanding of design - to the optimum. 