

in conversation with INGO MAURER, BIMAL PATEL

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ELLE DECOR

NEW TRENDS

GEOMETRY
OF COLOUR

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PATCHING

CALL OF
THE WILD

DECEMBER 2011 - JANUARY 2012, ₹100

living room special
casual chic, triptych tales
and budget makeovers

cheers!
raise a toast
to the
EDIDA
winners

celebrating xmas...

12 FUN HOME
COMMANDMENTS,
COLLECTIBLES &
FESTIVE TABLE
SETTINGS

11TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

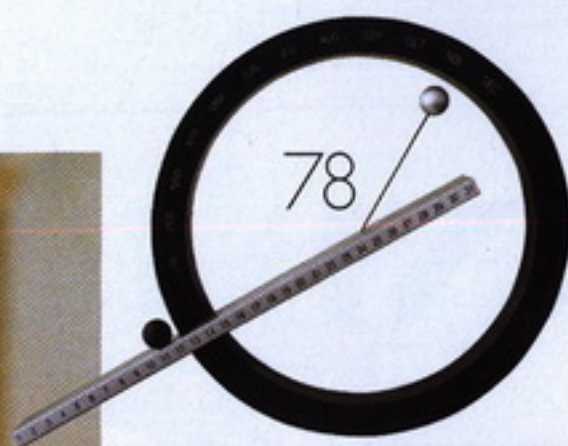
HOT PICKS FROM
AROUND THE WORLD

REPORTING LIVE LONDON, BOLOGNA,
ISTANBUL, WISCONSIN, PARIS, EINDHOVEN

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DEC 2011 – JAN 2012

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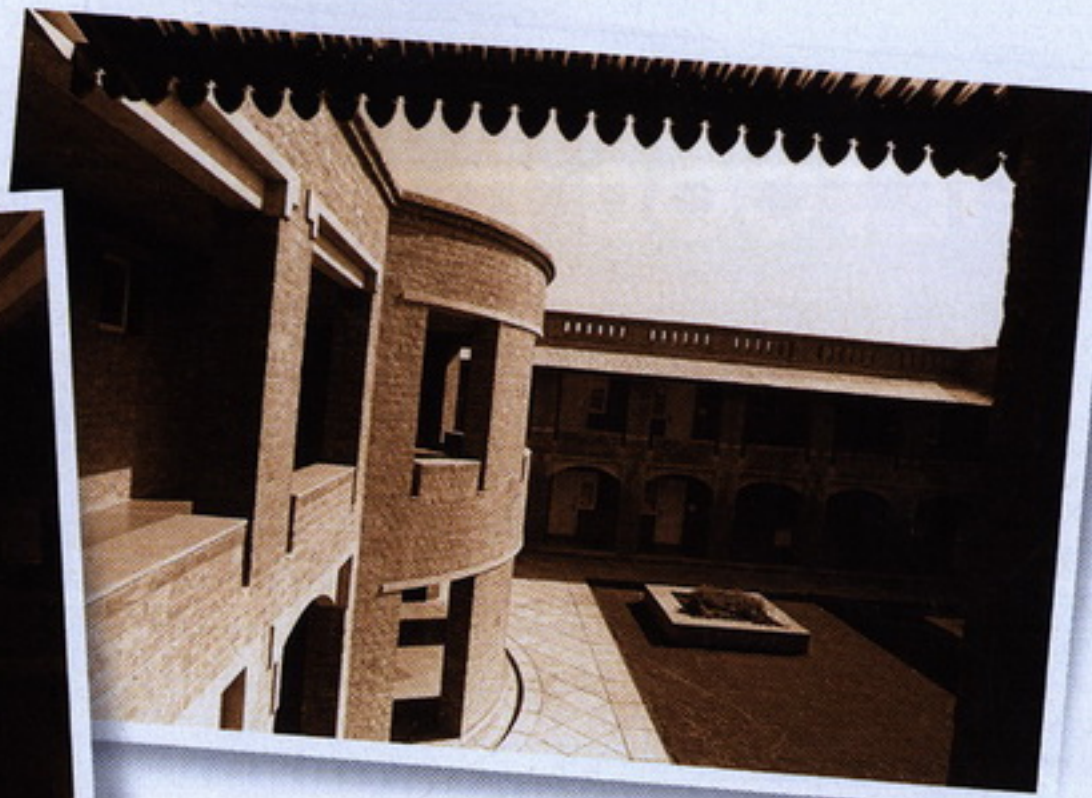
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MY FIRST PROJECT...

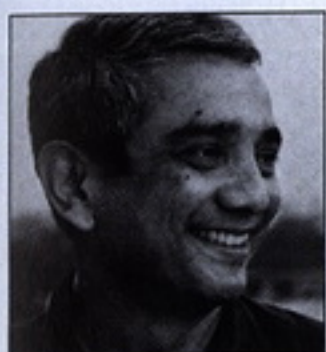
Edgy nerves, anxious moments and the anticipation of a jumpstart – a beginning of any kind is characterised by all this and more. Each issue, we get our favourite architects to recount musings from their launch pad

TEXT BY **SONAL SHAH**





My professional start can serve as a great example of how well fathers and sons can work together...



BIMAL PATEL

Director, HCP Design and Project Management, Ahmedabad. Founder (1997) and head of the non-profit Environmental Planning Collaborative that works with local governments on city planning

How many architects are lucky enough to be able to choose their first project at the tender age of 24 and win a prestigious award for it? Wait, there's even more – and have a father who is encouraging, yet wise enough not to interfere, while being in the same profession? Bimal Patel belongs to that rarefied strata, whose parent, Hasmukh Patel, is among the leading lights of Ahmedabad. One of the most charming aspects of my conversation with Bimal was listening to the well-known, 50-year-old acknowledging and appreciating his good fortune and wondering if he could be as supportive and generous as his pa. Not one to sit on his laurels or his inheritance, he has expanded the family firm which he now heads, made it a greater force to reckon with, and simultaneously founded Environmental Planning Collaborative, a not-for-profit agency to work with local governments on city planning.

When young Bimal, fresh out of CEPT School of Architecture (Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology) joined the practice – HCP Design – he wasn't willing to work on any of the ongoing buildings, but wanted to develop something of his own. "There were many competitions for various public institutions that my dad was invited to participate in, but often he would turn them down as he was too busy. So I asked him if I could attempt one. I submitted a conceptual plan for the Entrepreneurship Development Institute in the village of Bhat, close to Ahmedabad airport.

The design for the EDI education campus called for academic facilities, hostels, cafes.... While the jury was out deliberating the winning entry, I got admission to do my master's at Berkeley. Three months into my first semester I came to know I had won. My father wrote me, (slow mail and long distance trunk calls were the only means of communication) asking me to return, develop the designs further and draft detailed drawings. He was willing to support my ideas and provide back-end help, but was very clear that it was my building and I had to take responsibility for it. So over the next two and a half years I flew back at the end of each term and worked on it. I got a lot of mileage from this, of the frequent flyer variety too! If you see the structure you will realise it is not what a 20-something could have built unless he had solid, experienced backing. Also it was very different from anything the office had ever done. Kudos to my parent for believing in me...my professional start can serve as a great example of how well fathers and sons can work together." In 1992 the campus won the Aga Khan Award.

After completing his doctorate, Bimal returned to India. He has gone on to create a significant body of work – homes, institutions, industrial complexes, redevelopment projects and won several accolades. And what makes a great building for him? "A structure in which design addresses the problems and client requirements in the most aesthetic way possible. Where packaging and practicalness blend seamlessly." ♦

Above, from Left The main corridor of the institute with galvanised sheet roofing; A view of the hostel facilities around the central courtyard

Left The Entrepreneurship Development Institute on the outskirts of Ahmedabad

Website: www.hcp.com.in