



# INDIAN INSPIRATION

*A beguiling Indian element on yachts that travel to exotic foreign shores remains the forte of Ashish Gupta, Yacht Architect, Beyond Design Studio. In this exclusive, he talks about combining style and sensibility while infusing the Indian touch to yacht décor.*

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► **TELL US ABOUT THE BRAND PHILOSOPHY, MISSION AND VISION OF BEYOND DESIGN STUDIO.**

The brand philosophy is to build yachts above 30m and the commitment to make each of them an epitome of Indian heritage. For instance, we can blend Rajasthani artistry with contemporary designs. As of now, I have only designed yachts and not speedboats or cabin cruises. We want to establish Beyond Design as architects for superyachts in the coming future. We have partnered with Holland naval architect Willem Stolk of Stolk Marimecs for engineering of all our yacht designs.

**COULD YOU ELABORATE IN DETAIL ON THE INDIAN ELEMENTS IN YOUR ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS?**

Instead of going over-the-top, we have incorporated Indian elements in the finer details. For instance, as an alternative to straight lines, the furnishings have curved edges. I like



the Royal and Maharajah feel to an Indian décor and thus, in one of our designs, we placed an elephant in the bar area because these animals are an important symbol of our culture. We also use peacocks in our designs and try innovative ways to fit them in our interiors.

We were commended by the International Yacht Awards 2011. The SL39 Villa is one of our award-winning designs, which is a blend of the classic Feadship designs as well as Asian architecture. Here the Indian facet is reflected in the arched styled window openings and balconies. We have named it a Villa, but we have designed it like a traditional luxurious 'Kothi'. The owner's suite has a balcony and terrace, while the main salon, connected to the sea, has completely arched windows. The highlights of this liner include the ethnic jamawar artistry on the ceiling and carpets, low-rise stools and tables, which have the Indian character of curved edges. Even the chairs chosen are inspired by the Maharajah style. The galley/kitchen area is designed in a way that vegetarian meals can be cooked separately, since a lot of Indians are vegans.

**KINDLY TELL US ABOUT THE USE OF COLOURS, TEXTURES AND ART THAT HAVE AN INDIAN TOUCH IN THE YACHT INTERIORS.**

Indian colour palette is bright, and even the textures used in décor are different. As a rule, bright colours are not used on board, owing to some regulations we have to follow. Thus, we use a mix of light and dark shades, depending on the space.

In case a client wants dark interiors, we use darker shades on the walls only for an illusion of space and avoid using them on ceiling and floors. We also use a variety of colours on pillows, bedsheets and upholstery. As far as textures are concerned, we use the burl veneer, mahogany and walnut instead of a more European looking oak veneer, which further adds an Indian touch to the design. Using art in yachts is usually a client requirement. Since most yacht owners have huge art collections, we try to place their pieces in a manner that would flatter the spaces.

**WHAT IS THE USP OF BEYOND DESIGN?**

We work from inside out – work on the interiors first and then do the final styling. We always keep in mind that the spaces should be connected to the sea. We haven't intentionally taken any particular approach or characteristic style. We only look at the design platform, shipyard, owner's needs and aim to try making something better, if not different.

**TELL US ABOUT THE GREEN YACHTING TREND IN DESIGNING.**

The successful aspect of green yachting is conversion from petrol to diesel engines. It's green, but it doubles the expense for the engines. Some yards have come up with solar panels on board, but it is still in a trial and error stage. In the furnishings, use of wallpapers, lacquer,

granite and teak decking is considered green. To date, a completely true green yacht has not yet been built.

**BEING THE PREMIER YACHTING DESIGN STUDIO IN INDIA, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BOONS AND BANES YOU HAVE FACED?**

One of the biggest boons is—being the only yacht designer in India we get very high referrals for designs and consulting. I'm also the only representative in International Yacht shows and it's a great place to network.

On the other hand, the banes are that India is not ready for big yachts because of the infrastructure. There are lots of enquiries and interests in yachts, but most people don't understand their use and only consider it a status symbol. People don't know what leisure boating really is, but the interests have evolved and the market has grown from speedboats to cabin cruisers.

**KINDLY TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT PROJECTS.**

Right now we are working on an 87.5 m Desire Oceanco, 41 metre MY Cannes, 32m explorer yacht as well as the 150m Maharajah, which is a very futuristic yacht. Another project is a 140m yacht with duplex suites and a game-room for enjoying chess etc, in which we have tried to differentiate the rooms by different themes. This yacht will have everything including lifts, staircase, balconies, owner's gym, spa, a small beach club, hammam and the works. ■■■