

pac buzz

Magazine of Pacifica Companies

ROYALTY PERSONIFIED

UMAID BHAWAN PALACE

THE MAGNIFICENT PALACE IN JODHPUR IS A TRIBUTE TO ART DECO

In This Issue

ICE Awards

For Pacifica's excellence in in-house communication

Home Decor

Smart design ideas to create the ultimate living room

Quality of Construction

Interview with quality auditor Dipan Shah

USA Projects

Three new properties in Las Vegas



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MD's Insight



The last three months have been quite exciting and rewarding. I am thrilled to share that Pac Buzz — April 2014, our quarterly periodical, has received the coveted Inhouse Communication Excellence Award 2014 consecutively for the second time. A Shailaja Nair Foundation initiative, we won the first runner up in the category of Best International Magazine.

This is a proud moment for us at Pacifica, and I would like to thank our readers who have encouraged us to make the magazine better and rich in content.

"The secret to a rich life is to have more beginnings than endings," was rightly said by Dave Weinbaum. We too, believe in new beginnings. With 3 million sq ft of total area developed and another 8 million sq ft being developed, Pacifica has come a long way to achieve its mission to fulfill housing needs

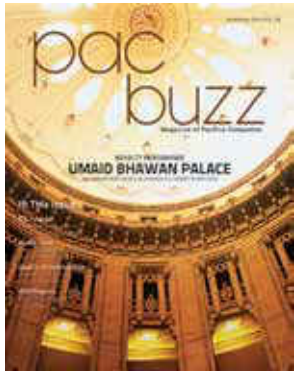
by developing world-class residential projects across India. Recently, we completed our Ahmedabad Luxury Villa project (Phase 1), and have almost finished Vadodara's Lifestyle Villas. Our happy patrons have begun a new life in their new homes while we are sailing to make some more souls happy. In the next few months, we will be launching a high-end residential project in Ahmedabad, which is a limited-edition lifestyle homes with very few units. We are also starting a new affordable project at Muraiya with 2600+ units.

Continuing our mission to contribute towards economic growth, our latest offering is an industrial park at Ankleshwar, which will fulfil the growing demands of the industrial area. In addition to this, we are also coming up with our ambitious commercial project, the Deesa Mall, which will have 1080 retail outlets and a multiplex.

To give you a brief about the construction quality of our homes, we have featured an interview with our quality auditor in this issue. Keeping in mind your interest and preferences we have added two new sections — Home Décor and Gadgets. Enjoy the read!

RAKESH (ROCKY) ISRANI

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CONTENTS

MAGAZINE OF PACIFICA COMPANIES

September 2014, VOL. XIII

UPDATE



24 Architecture
Umaid Bhawan Palace is a stunning example of royal grandeur

28 Under construction
Spacious villas and modern apartments at Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Chennai

32 Tech buzz
New innovations to make your smart home, smarter!

34 Home Décor
Ideas for smaller spaces that will change your view — and that of your little living room



30 Inspiration story
The story of a professor who turned his last speech into the biggest game changer

03 Update
Pacifica's latest offering is an ambitious industrial park at Ankleshwar

04 Citizens
The Madrid County Carnival had an exclusive property show as a bonus

06 Awards
Felicitation of those behind the employee and employer relationship

08 Innovations
An introduction to the process of quality auditing at Pacifica Companies

12 People
At the recent Open House, employees were given a fair chance to voice their opinion

14 Connect
Glimpses of Women's Day celebration at our offices

16 Display
Our new projects featured at various international and Indian property exhibitions

22 Spotlight
Pacifica Companies is purchasing three prime properties in Las Vegas

23 Senior citizen
Pacifica Senior Citizen Living Community's three properties in the US

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A NEW BEGINNING

Continuing their mission to contribute towards economic growth by bringing international standards, Pacifica's latest offering is an ambitious industrial park at Ankleshwar

Popular as a major Chemical Zone of the Gujarat state, Ankleshwar is the hub of industrial activity with more than 1200 industrial units functioning. Starting a new line of vertical, Pacifica Companies introduces its very first state-of-the-art industrial park at Naldhari, Ankleshwar with a vision to unlock the value of the underutilised assets and to create value by developing right assets as per the market dynamics e.g. SEZs, IT Parks, Hospitality and Townships.

The site will be a 154 acres high-tech industrial park targeting to the Chemical Zone and at the same time fulfil growing demands of IT infrastructure in the industrial area. It will not only have basic amenities like road, water, electricity but also key infrastructure like telephone lines and optic fibre cable, fuel pipelines, waste disposal with SCADA, ETP, signage and landscaping. The site will be a right fit for SMEs who cannot build high end infrastructure on their own and want to move to south of Gujarat, preferably in chemical or allied sector.

The park is conveniently located from Surat, which is only 75 minutes away by drive (62 KM) bypassing the traffic area of Ankleshwar. Further, the travel time to reach the site is lesser than the time taken in reaching Jagadia from Ankleshwar. Keeping these factors in mind, the project for an industrial park was conceptualised. ■



CITIZENS

The Madrid County Carnival had all the razzmatazz of a carnival with an exclusive property show as bonus!



The one thing that Pacifica does better than its peers is to find intimate ways of staying connected with its customers by ensuring that they are a part of every celebration. Take the Madrid Country Carnival held on the sprawling lawns of the Madrid County, Bhayli-Vasna Road in Vadodara. The occasion: showcasing and promotion of Pacifica's two new prime projects, Madrid County and Casa Lakeside township.

Over 10,000 invites were sent out via SMS, email and social media campaign to prospective clients for this two-day 'own your new home' bonanza. Organised in the style of a fun-filled carnival, complete with food, fun activities, games and prizes, the two-day event, held on May 1 and 2; was used as a platform to not just present 238 new luxurious villas that are part of the Madrid County project, but also the high rise apartments of San Martin and San Lucas.

The highlight of the entertaining evening (which included activities like putt golf, zorby ball and bungee jumping among others), were the limited schemes on offer. While an early bird booking for an apartment in San Martin earned a discount of ₹200 per square feet and a 4-star rated air conditioner per room, a house in Casa Lakeside came with complimentary modular kitchen. The offer was valid on all bookings done at ₹11,000 and above for the carnival period only. ■



AWARDS

The WRITE choice

An award ceremony especially for those who are behind the scenes of employee and employer relationship

This year, Pacifica was bestowed with the ICE award for its excellence in in-house communications. A Shailaja Nair Foundation initiative powered by FEI Cargo Ltd, ICE (In-house Communication Excellence) Awards is a competition for in-house magazines and newsletters. This is an effort by the foundation to honour unsung heroes who create the best tools in promoting relationships between the employer and employees.

On its sixth year, the awards were held at IES Manik Sabhagriha in Bandra. The 12-member strong governing council worked relentlessly towards the success of this event. They selected a proficient jury to evaluate 600 plus magazines received for this competition from various organisations. The jury was headed by Inderpal Singh, consultant and former president of Industrial Products Division at Godrej & Boyce. The guests of honour for the evening were celebrities like actor John Abraham and singer Padmashree Anup Jalota, and eminent personalities like Lila Poonawalla, businesswoman and humanitarian; D Sivanandhan, former DGP, Maharashtra Police; and Dr Radhakrishnan Pillai, author of the bestselling book *Corporate Chanakya*. ■



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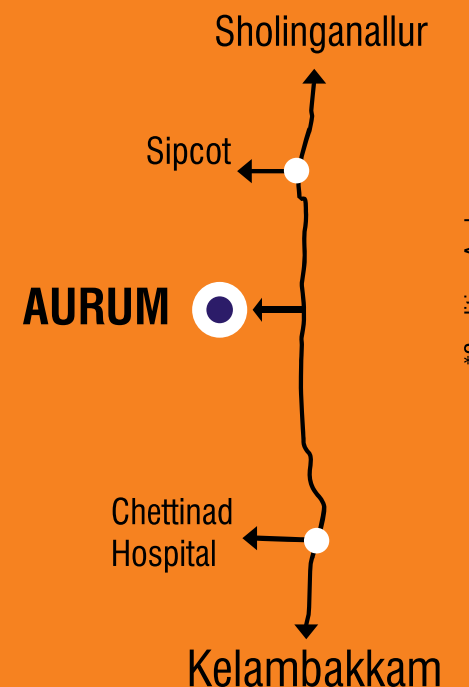
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WHEN QUALITY COMES FIRST



An introduction to the quality auditing and control functions of Pacifica Company

At Pacifica, quality auditing is taken very seriously. In fact, it is an inseparable ingredient of every project, and its success. Designed after a thorough study of the industry practices, projects and various case studies, Pacifica Three-Step quality check is considered one of the most advanced systems in the world; and is part of each of its project right from the conceptual stage. The idea behind is to develop a process that can negate any discrepancies, curb wastage and minimise room for error, at least human error, and yet give a product that is on par with the best in the business.

Referred to as 'Quality Function', which is a term used to identify properties that have gone through the necessary quality checks made by a qualified team of auditors, trainers, engineers and top management, the program includes surprise checks throughout the execution of the project till the official handover to the customer is made.

Divided into three definitive action chapters, Quality Function begins at the conceptualisation phase of any project, where sustainable and cost-efficient designs are chosen that can deliver quality-based products. A certain

amount of the total project cost is also allocated for quality assurance practices.

The second level of the program begins at the Project Design phase, which follows the selection of systems, finishes and fittings that follow the three principles of Design Quality, namely, functionality (how useful the facility is in achieving its purpose), impact (how well the facility creates a sense of place) and build quality (performance of the completed facility). It's during this stage of the project cycle that a list of suppliers and contractors are drawn for delegation of work.

This process helps create a maze of suppliers who can deliver quality goods consistently, thus ensuring uninterrupted flow of work. The selection of agencies is done by reviewing quality of their previous works. Specific work methodologies are put down for the selection of contractors and other suppliers. This process helps create a better communication nexus among the various departments that are required for a project's successful completion.

The execution stage of any project is the longest phase of a project cycle. And includes a number of Quality Function

processes. First in line is the creation of an integrated team of designers, CPP team and construction team. The goal of this team is to work in sync to ensure that the designs are implemented as expected.

Construction and CPP team adopts the best methodology, best practice and innovations from construction industry to deliver quality works. To ensure this, a team of Pacifica's senior engineers alongside quality managers from an international Project Management Consultants (PMC) and a team of Independent Quality Trainer Consultant work round the clock to ensure that there are no slips at work. In fact, each member of this specialised team is designated to carry out surprise checks during the construction to ensure best materials are used and best practices are followed. Any



Former Dean at Anna University and professor emeritus at IIT Madras, Santhakumar has been the advisor to Government of Tamil Nadu and United Nations Development Programme. He trains and provides advisory support to various organisations

Prof. A R Santhakumar

irregularities found during this first audit are addressed before a second audit is conducted. The quality heads also conduct Monthly Quality Audits on-site, which is presented to the Internal Quality Audit Team comprising of a Project Head, Architect, Planning Manager and MEP Manager. This report along with the quarterly audits is sent for review to the top management at Pacifica. Once the top management approves the report, the second phase of work begins. This cycle of audits and approvals continues until all form of design errors and discrepancies are ironed out.

In addition to above, Pacifica also organises training sessions and programmers for construction and CPP team to help polish their skills, improve their work methodology and introduce them to newer innovation in construction industry. Such workshops also help in minimising wastage, which in turn helps keep the construction cost in control.

In the end, it is this system of quality audits, surprise checks and approvals that ensure that the final product is exactly as per the design and of good quality. And it's quality product that has been Pacifica's benchmark. ■

“THE AUDIT HELPS INSTITUTIONALISE PROCEDURES”

A gold medalist, Dipan Shah completed his BTech from the Center for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He is currently the director of Sustainable Habitat Services Private Limited — a company specifically working on the backdrop of sustainability and feasibility design of construction processes. He is a consultant to Pacifica involved with quality audits and capacity building processes so as to institutionalise quality as a system.



Dipan Shah

What is the role of a Quality Auditor in the construction business?

General popular definition of audit is systematic examination, investigation and evaluation for compliance with adopted benchmarks of the sector and for adequacy and effectiveness against established/articulated procedures. Audit can be done for various purpose. It is popularly done by financial sector, which most of us are aware of. The similar audit when done for construction sector, with focus to quality; it is known as quality audit and the person who does that is the Quality Auditor. The role of a quality auditor is important and is subject to the boundary conditions defined for the audit. It can stretch from design, tendering to execution, over the complete gamete of business. As for running a business, one can't do without a financial auditor, similarly too for construction sector, quality auditor is a must. Their role can be broadly stated as below :

- Design audit
- Bidder finalisation audits

- Internal audit of implementation systems and procedures which includes audit of quality control and quality assurance systems and MIS.
- Material and third party certification audit

Apart from the above there could be need based specific audits too like focus audit of a product or technology.

How has the key function area changed over the past few years?

Major shift in the past few years is the paradigm shift from economy to quality. The construction sector has been traditionally tagged for bad quality. But if one observes recent projects and draws inferences from the same, it's clear that a subtle shift has occurred. The recent products in the market have become quality conscious. In fact, the whole USP of the business has started hinging on quality. Also, with the advances in the newer construction technologies and innovative design solutions, the quality audits have become all the more important and necessary so as to ensure appropriate end product.

Tell us about your experience as Pacifica's quality auditor?

My experience has been wonderful. We too have had tough times in ensuring quality, but it was enlightening to observe that in all decision-making processes quality took a front seat to economy. Being in the industry for more than a decade, I have come across very few players in the industry, who at the point of finally choosing between economy and quality; opt for Quality. We too had tough times like others, where we had stopped the construction or had contractors break the work already finished. But, what was enriching for all of us was the way we matured as a team at the end of such interventions. What I remember is that such incidences generally leave you with negative vibes but in our case at the end of the storm, it left us with positive vibes. That too me is a wonderful experience and worth an environment to sustain in any project/company.

What are the quality audit practices that Pacifica follows for its properties? And how different are they from other construction companies?

At Pacifica, we have in place quite a stringent Quality Management system. It is an appropriate mix of quality control procedures and quality assurance systems, backed with MIS and audits. I will take an example from typical site component to answer the same.

- Firstly, we have SoP i.e. Standard operating Procedures for all our projects and works. It contains methodology and required check points for quality control.
- All materials are tested regularly at a stipulated frequency to ensure quality. We have on site testing lab.
- An exhaustive MIS i.e. Management Information system, to track quality and also specific engineers (at each site office) tracking the same for consistency, quality and progress. All the MIS is tailored made for each site and we keep them refining constantly as a part of our quality audit practices.
- We have quality control engineers in place at all sites as a part of the core team implementing the site.
- Apart from that, all sites have third party quality audit in place. That is done at periodic frequencies by prominent agencies from the sector.
- Also, I do comprehensive audits of all the above systems along with regular site quality audits.
- We have an internal audit team, which includes members from CPP, me and one of the project manager from another site who carry out bimonthly audits.

The purpose of such a comprehensive system is quite simple, it leads to Zero Quality Tolerance.



At Pacifica, we too have had tough times in ensuring quality. But it was enlightening to observe that in all decision making processes, Quality took a front seat to Economy

Our quality audit practices are different from those followed by other companies because our approach is different. Most quality audits look for faults but what we've been working on Pacifica's is a unique arrangement. It is to find lapses and evolve systems and procedures so as to attend to it. To make it more clear, my role itself in Pacifica is a bridge between quality audit i.e. CPP and quality improvement and systems (HR). What we do, is constantly work on quality institutionalising systems and procedures. To make it more explicit and clear, we work on a unique combination of HR

development, MIS and Quality Management system for site. Just to put it in still more simpler words, our work begins from quality audit, goes to analysis why a particular lapse has occurred and then work towards addressing the issue in order to institutionalise quality procedures around it, and also back it up with training and sensitising of the whole team. It also works on building/maintaining synergy in the team. We also bring in various experts from the field to our sites to get suggestions and also provide site team with an opportunity to interact with field experts and clarify their basics. This whole approach is the future (of Quality Audits) and it goes much beyond the normal regime of quality audit largely followed in the sector. It's an integrated approach to quality institutionalising process.



Considering the growing awareness among consumers, it is important to upgrade your construction quality. Because in this modern IT age, if you have dissatisfied customers, they will spread the word in the market in one form or the other

Most believe that once the audit report of the construction materials is submitted and the contractor certificates are checked, an auditor role is over. Is this the case with you or quality auditors are a part of the project from start till completion?

For me, as part of my role, quality audit is the starting point. The purpose of the audit is not to find faults/lapses but to work on systems, institutionalising procedures, training, one on one — counseling with all capacity building tools, so as to deliver quality as an end product. The process is slow, but gives beautiful results. Giving an example from one of our projects were after audits and personal counseling, we did rounds of training with the project staff and motivated and enabled them to take charge of the project for the zero tolerance quality. The team now themselves think constantly of ways

to improve quality. They once guided, now do regular training of the field artisans and supervisors of the contractor so as to upgrade them with our SoP, ensure clear communication and quality. Now we are in the process of formulating incentive systems too around it.

Thus, for me at Pacifica, my role begins from starting of the project but does not end at all. The project does end but our HR and systems continues for better quality. Also, when the project is about to finish, it gets even more hectic, since it is then we consolidate our learnings, for achieving higher milestones of implementation in the next project.

It's a given that no matter how many new rules are introduced, India has the worst construction quality practice. Has this changed? What are the newer rules that make the contractor and the construction company more accountable to the customers?

Yes, it was very unfortunate that we were forced to hear such things in the past. Now things have changed. Quality is now in the forefront for most of the projects. Although it is still debatable what one calls a good quality practice. The sector still needs to know the difference between and build in ways to make not only a strong structure but also a durable structure.

Considering the growing awareness among consumers, the new rule in the market is to upgrade your construction quality as soon as possible. Customer these days are smarter and they know that 'all that glitters is not gold', so they come up with the right set of queries. In this modern IT age, the golden rule is that if you have dissatisfied customers, they will spread the word in the market in one form or the other. This itself, to me, is a golden understanding which a contractor and the construction company should keep in mind, if he/she wants to remain in the business for long.

On the technical front, the IS codes have become more stringent post 2001 Gujarat Earthquake. Lot of them have been updated in last decade. Just like doctors are made accountable, the vision is to make the engineers accountable. There is a whole lobby of movement, which is now talking about certified man power and Government of India is working on systems to certify construction artisans.

Thus, in my opinion, the overall construction quality scenario has been improved quite a bit from what it used to be five years ago. Yes, we have miles to go, but it's the positive criticism and correct approach which will help us make safer and long lasting constructions. ■

PEOPLE



The value of employees as the company's communication assets can never be underestimated, especially in today's social media era when employees possess numerous tools to initiate conversations about the company in the public domain. How the employees feel about the company determines what they say publicly.

At the recent Open House held at Ahmedabad Management Association, employees were given an opportunity to ask questions to the management related to the business. It was organised by the HR department in order to build a good reputation with employees and the management of the company. The aim of the initiative was to strengthen communication between the employees and the management.

Various topics related to the industry, the business and quality of construction were discussed. Talking about company's future plans, managing director, Rakesh Israni said, "We are acquiring new projects – plotting, residential complexes, industrial park, etc. We have almost completed our new project Aurum - Phase I and Meadows - Phase I. The company is headed towards a bright and successful future."

The event ended with a prize distribution ceremony for the Super Heroes — Best Employees of the Year category, which were elected by fellow colleagues. Employees were also rewarded for their punctuality. The event ended on a cheerful note with the unveiling of the Pacifica Corporate T-Shirt. ■

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONS

At the recent Open House, employees were given a fair chance to voice their opinion



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Glimpses of Women's Day celebration at our
Chennai and Ahmedabad offices



ABOVE & FACING PAGE:
Women employees come
together for a photo-op
at our Ahmedabad office.
BELOW: Cutting the cake
at our Chennai office.



It's said that behind every successful man there is a woman. We, at Pacifica, believe that behind every successful corporate house there is a group of women. And this Women's Day, we wanted to show our appreciation to these hardworking souls who have played a big role in our success. We arranged an office lunch, complete with a cake, gifts and flowers at the Ahmedabad and Chennai offices, which have the largest number of female employees. At the Ahmedabad office, the ladies were also treated to a special movie screening of *Total Siyapaa* at Ebony Lounge, Big Cinemas.

This surprise party turned into a laughter-filled picnic, with women across the board applauding each other for the work they do, swapping stories and sharing experiences that have helped them become the force they are today: confident, independent and career oriented. ■

SHOWCASE

In the last quarter, Pacifica Companies showcased their new projects in various international and prestigious Indian property exhibitions. We bring you glimpses of some exciting moments from each one of them



VISITORS'
STRENGTH:
1,500

South India Property Show - Singapore 2014

(May 24th and 25th)

WHERE: Singapore Expo Hall 5, Singapore

WHAT: This Singapore-based expo presents an excellent platform to property dealers, builders and retailers to showcase their projects in various segments ranging from apartments, row houses, lifestyle residential properties and high-end villas. Attended by some of the top builders from Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi, this expo, every year, brings together over 50 top builders and banks to cater to the demands of NRI home buyers across all property segments.



VISITORS'
STRENGTH:
1,223

Times Property Expo 2014

(April 12th and 13th)

WHERE: The Grand Bhagwati, Ahmedabad

WHAT: Organised by the event arm of India's leading newspaper, The Times Of India, the Gujarat edition of Times Property Expo plays a pivotal role in bringing the entire industry dealing with properties and the allied services under one umbrella. It's also an internationally recognised property show that attracts foreign buyers as well.

GRUHPRAVESH 2014

(March 8th and 9th)

WHERE: The Grand Bhagwati, Ahmedabad

WHAT: Organised by well-known property portal, Indiaproperty.com, GRUHPRAVESH is India's first virtual and offline property show. Put together in November 2011 with an agenda to create a marketplace where property and allied service sellers meet and interact with property seekers, the expo, in the past two years, has held over 16 large shows, including three successful events in the USA.

VISITORS'
STRENGTH:
1,700

Budget & Luxury Property Fair 2014

(March 15th and 16th)

WHERE: Chennai Trade Centre in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

WHAT: Developed by Prompt Trade Fairs, a prominent name among property show exhibitors in South India, Budget & Luxury Property Fair addresses the rising needs and desires of the extremely affluent individuals. A first of its kind in India, the two-day event enabled both buyers and investors to meet and interact with leading developers and estate agents across South India.



VISITORS'
STRENGTH:
1,753

Pudhumanai Pughuvizha 2014

(April 25th, 26th and 27th)

WHERE: Chennai Trade Centre in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

WHAT: Popular among property seekers down south, this property showcase brings together the entire property buying gamut under one roof, making buying your own home a rather pleasant experience.

VISITORS'
STRENGTH:
1,100

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| | | | | | | | | | |
|  Business Spaces, Gurgaon |  Office Spaces, Chennai |  Luxurious Villas, Chennai |  Luxurious Apartments, Chennai | CHENNAI | |  Luxurious Apartments, Hyderabad | HYDERABAD | | |
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ON THE
LINE

Our 50K Likes on Facebook page is just the beginning of our involvement with our customers via social media. A few excerpts from our Facebook page



"Congrats to all of the Pacifica family and to the strong man who heads the country's Pacifica. It shows in the unity, team work, dedication and proper planning by the management... God bless you and wish you all the success..."

Nandankumar Mannil, Sr. Manager Purchase at DIL, Ahmedabad

The Meadows

@ Gokuldham

Luxurious Villas, Ahmedabad

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ENTERTAINMENT CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Hampton Inn & Suites Las Vegas-Red Rock/Summerlin in Las Vegas, Nevada

Pacifica Companies is purchasing three prime properties in Las Vegas

The Courtyard by Marriott Las Vegas Henderson-Green Valley with 155-guestrooms and the Residence Inn Las Vegas Henderson-Green Valley with 126-guestrooms, are the perfect destination for both business and leisure. Nestled among three of the world's most renowned man-made attractions — the Las Vegas Strip, the Hoover Dam and Lake Mead, the hotels were constructed by the same developer in 1998. These hotels will soon be acquired together by Pacifica due to their proximity to one another (directly across the street). Guests can enjoy spacious rooms featuring luxury bedding, custom comforters, crisp linens and fluffy pillows. Those here on business will have a large work space, ergonomic chair and free high-speed internet access. Also, you can unwind by the outdoor pool,

relax in the whirlpool or get a brisk workout at the on-site fitness centre.

Another addition to Pacifica's ever-growing list of US properties is the Hampton Inn & Suites Las Vegas-Red Rock/Summerlin in Las Vegas, Nevada, which has 106 rooms and suites. It provides a relaxing getaway just 12km from the Las Vegas Strip and 19 km from McCarran International Airport (LAS). Enjoy majestic views and a prime location 4 miles from the wonder of Red Rock Canyon, a landscape of desert and mountain ranges with petroglyphs to explore. Hike or ski at Mount Charleston, or discover Lake Mead Recreation Area. You could also plunge into the pool or keep active in the modern fitness centre. Their versatile function room can host a meeting or event for up to 35 guests. ■

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): Courtyard by Marriott Las Vegas Henderson-Green Valley; A view of the restaurant inside Courtyard by Marriott



A SILVER LINING

Pacifica Senior Citizen Living Community's three properties in the US specialise in providing assisted living, Alzheimer's and memory care services for senior citizens

As we age, our need for assistance in everyday life may increase. Pacifica Senior Citizen Living acknowledges, however, that we all vary in our level of service needed. Many develop special needs — physical or cognitive — that will clearly exceed what family and friends can reasonably provide at home. This is why we offer a varying range of senior care services.

Specifically designed to provide complete care and accommodations for seniors with Alzheimer's or other dementias, Mission Villa — Daly City is a peaceful and home-like senior community. Accommodations are available in a selection of private and shared apartments in both studio and one-bedroom floor plans. Each room is equipped with emergency call systems that are monitored around the clock.

The second property, Salem Lutheran Home, is located at a short distance from Oakland's commercial business district. Reminiscent of a Scandinavian village, the home provides a family-focused, homelike atmosphere for almost 200 residents. It offers independent living options, four levels of assisted living care, two levels of memory care, and skilled nursing programs. Also, their homes are pet friendly, meaning dogs and cats can move in too.

Last but not the least, a defunct Clarion Hotel in midtown Sacramento will soon be redeveloped into a mixed-use project centred on art and intended for seniors, equipped with a community art centre. The project is called Senior Artist Community @ Mansion Flats. Pacifica Companies will raze the existing Clarion and replace it with a four-story, 156,481 square foot project that would include 160 living units and ground-level commercial spaces at the corners. The finished project will have a commercial kitchen, and the art centre will be available for lease. ■



ROYALTY PERSONIFIED

Umaid Bhawan Palace isn't just a remarkable structure but a stunning example of royal grandeur

Circa 1928. The year of the famine in India. A year when lakhs on the verge of death, food was scarce and locked away in many princely godowns. A year that even a creative mind couldn't associate with architectural renaissance, albeit for one progressive royal — Maharaja Hanwant Singh.

The idea behind building the palace was to provide relief to the drought-affected farmers. The other, of course, was more self-indulgent: like his ancestors, Singh too wanted to add something truly stunning to his heritage.

Incidentally it wasn't the first time such an initiative was undertaken. In 1784, Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula built Bada Imambara, also called *bhulbhulayah* for its 489 doorways, to help the poor and needy during the 1783 famine.

While the motive may have been the same, the architecture and the execution was world apart. Bada Imambara is a stunning example of the Mughal architecture and a homage to maze-like Egyptian design, while Umaid Bhawan is an art deco palace built at a cost of ₹94,051,561 (\$1.88 million today).

However, none of this played on Singh's mind when he summoned renowned Edwardian architect Henry Lanchester to design the palace. His brief was a curt order: Design a palace that would be a sign of hope, royalty and a modern structure that would awe people across centuries.

It took several renditions in clay before Singh sat down to choose his favourites. It is said that every evening, for at least an hour, the Maharaja would sit and choose designs that represented the era and those that will be the beacon of the future. In spite the fact that he was well-

travelled and well-read, it took several months of finding, rejecting and understanding for the real image of Umaid Bhawan to emerge.

Perched high above the desert capital of Jodhpur, Umaid Bhawan Palace is set amidst 26 acres of lush gardens. Named after Maharaja Umaid Singh, grandfather of the present Maharaja, Gaj Singh, this golden-yellow sandstone monument is not only among the last great surviving palaces of India, but also one of the largest private residences in the world. It took nearly 15 plus years before the 347-room palace came to life!

Umaid Bhawan, in its luxurious fold, boasts of 64 rooms and suites, a private museum, white marbled squash courts, and a British style billiard room. Its majestic 105-foot high cupola is influenced by the Renaissance, while the towers draw inspiration from Rajput tradition. The lavish interiors with gilt furniture and elegant artwork complement the exotic murals and embellishment executed by the self-exiled Polish

THE LAST OF GRAND PALACES: Umaid Bhawan Palace is a perfect marriage of royal styles and modern-day thinking

artist Stefan Norblin. It is said that the ship getting the interior accessories was attacked by the Germans and Norblin had to recreate each and every mural by hand, and through memory. No wonder similarities are drawn with The White House and the Buckingham Palace. Like for the 110-feet high dome that is said to be inspired by renaissance architecture.

One of the highlights of the palace is the throne room, which is exquisitely decked up with murals from the Hindu epic Ramayana. It is said that each mural was first drawn on a sand slab before being copied on to the walls. The palace also houses a magnificent wood-panelled library. The palace post its transformation as a heritage hotel has been divided into three sections: A private residence, a luxury hotel, and a museum displaying a wide range of stuffed leopards, pictures, arms and swords of Jodhpur's royal heritage.

Unlike many buildings of that era, all the pieces here are carved in a fashion that they fit together by a system of carving and interlocking.

Another design beauty of the palace is the structure, which ensures that irrespective of the season, the inside



THE GREAT DOME: One of the architectural masterpieces that is a blend of East and West!

All the pieces
were carved in a
fashion that they
fit together by a
system of carving
and interlocking

temperature is always maintained at approximately 23°C — making it a perfect example of modern-day, self sustaining eco palaces.

Yet another interesting facet of the palace is that it abides by the architectural guidelines formulated by the temple-mountain palaces of ancient South-East Asian god-kings. Lanchester's sound understanding and familiarity with Hindu rituals and symbolism and his eagerness to incorporate them into his plan, unlike his famous peer Edwin Lutyens, who, while designing New Delhi's Viceroy's House, disdained anything Indian, has impressed many historians and architects alike.

A part of the modern palace today is leased out to the Taj Group Of Hotels and yet very little has altered as far as its grandeur is concerned. The long columns and countless corridors still hold within 100 years of Rajput history and the glorious raj of the royalty in India.

Many believe that Umaid Bhawan Palace was designed to surpass the beauty of Buckingham Palace, and in many ways, it has! ■

HANDCRAFTED INTERIORS: The interiors have murals handcrafted by Stefan Norblin



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Baroda



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Madrid County
— 4BHK Villas,
Vadodara



The
Meadows
(Phase II),
Ahmedabad



The story of a professor who turned his last speech into the biggest game changer, not just for his life, but also for over 10 million others

Professor Randy Pausch is not like most people. In September of 2008, till then little known computer science expert delivered a remarkable lecture to students at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. The hour-long lecture changed everything. Delivered in inimitable Randy style, the lecture — aptly called The Last Lecture because it was for the author, diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer, indeed the last — thanks to modern technology was heard by millions. It has since spawned a never-seen revolution among people, young and old.

Unlike the philosophy-heavy speeches people near to death often deliver, Randy's was an emotional talk on the idea of "really achieving your childhood dreams" punctuated with both laughter and tears. It is said that a day before his lecture Randy joked with friends that no more than 50 people would attend. He got a standing ovation from over 500 people!

A LIFE ORDINARY

Randy aka Randall Frederick Pausch was born in Baltimore, Maryland on October 23, 1960, and raised in Columbia in a middle-class home. He graduated from Oakland Mills High School in Columbia and received his bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. In August 1988 he earned his Ph.D. in computer science from Carnegie Mellon University.

In 1997, Randy became a Professor of Computer Science, Human-Computer Interaction and Design at Carnegie Mellon University. He co-founded Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment

A LIFE CALLED RANDY PAUSCH



Randy with his family at Disneyland

Technology Center. During this time, he also authored and co-authored five books and over 70 articles, and is known for his virtual reality research with Walt Disney Imagineering. In 2007, he was awarded by the Association for Computing Machinery for his achievements in computing education.

SILVER LINE IN THE DARK CLOUD

While Randy continued to fuel envy among peers with his achievements, health-wise the professor's life had already turned the page to a darker phase. On September 19, 2006, thinner-looking Randy was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The prognosis: he had about six months to live. Little is known about he broke the sad news to his family, but most known to him say that the 'news breaking' moment came during his Last Lecture titled 'Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams' on September 18, 2007, exactly a month after learning that his illness was terminal.

'I'm speaking only to them,' he said about his lecture. 'I didn't set out to tell the world about how to live life'.

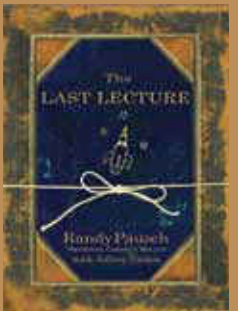
The lecture emphasised on the need to have fun. He spoke of the importance of childlike wonder. Randy spoke of his love for his wife, Jai, and had a birthday cake for her wheeled on stage. He spoke of their three young children, saying he had made his decision to speak so that he could leave them a video memory — to put himself in a metaphorical bottle that they might someday discover on a beach.

He praised his parents for letting him paint pictures on the walls of his room. Using images on a giant screen, he began by showing a slide of CT scans revealing 10 tumors on his liver. He then said he never felt better, and dropped to the floor to do push-ups, some one-handed.

He showed photos of himself as a boy, then listed his youthful dreams: to win giant stuffed animals at carnivals, to walk in zero gravity, to design Disney rides, to write a World Book entry (on virtual reality). With his lecture, he had accomplished them all.

Some of the millions who saw Randy on YouTube and elsewhere wrote letters and e-mail to The Journal and many blogs. Some said he inspired them to quit feeling sorry for themselves, or to move on from divorces, or to pay more attention to their families. A woman said the video gave her

'His decision to speak was to put himself in a metaphorical bottle that his kids might someday discover on a beach.'



the strength to escape an abusive relationship; others said they decided not to commit suicide because of it.

LIFE EXTRAORDINAIRE

His speech became a New York Times best-selling book, The Last Lecture that he co-wrote with Jeffrey Zaslow of the Wall Street Journal. Randy's lecture drew the attention of such programs as ABC's World News with Diane Sawyer (1953) with Charles Gibson, which named him their "Person of the Week" that year. He was also a special guest lecturer at The Oprah Winfrey Show (1986), where Randy discussed his situation and recapped his "Last Lecture" for millions of television viewers. In May 2008, Randy was listed by Time as one of the World's Top 100 Most Influential People.

It is said that Randy's speech attracted attention of the National Football League, which allowed him to join the Pittsburgh Steelers for a day of regular practice after the organisation learned that one of his childhood dreams mentioned in his "Last Lecture" was to play in the NFL. A devoted "Star Trek" fan, another of his childhood dreams was to be Captain Kirk. Hearing of this, director and producer J.J. Abrams sent a personal e-mail to Randy, inviting him to the set of the film Star Trek (2009) in Los Angeles. He even has a dialogue and received a \$217.06 paycheck, which was given to charity.

In May 2008, a PET scan showed that Randy's cancer had spread to his lungs and the lymph nodes in his chest. On July 24, it was revealed that the cancer had progressed further than expected. A day later, Randy died surrounded by wife, Jai Glasgow, and children, Dylan (born 2002), Logan (born 2004) and Chloe (born 2006) at his family home.

A week before he died, Randy, in an interview with USA Today, sarcastically commented: 'I didn't know there was a dying-professor section at the bookstore.' Little did he know then that there was one, and through it, he will continue to aspire people to live life differently. His book, The Last Lecture, which he helped co-write but never read in print has sold over 10 million copies. ■

To listen to The Last Lecture, log on to <http://www.cmu.edu/randyslecture/>

TECH AHEAD

New innovations to make your smart home, smarter!

You may not yet possess the food replicator from Star Trek but thanks to innovation in technology, you can have a home that will save energy, send an alert if your home is under threat, even helps you bake a pie right from your office chair! Here are a few to start with.



SMART THERMOSTAT

ACs have upped their game. They now service themselves, detect motion, and adjust the temperature to ensure the air inside is pure — or as pure as possible. However, they cannot pre-prepare a room. That's why you need a thermostat.

New Brand: Nest Thermostat

This intelligent thermostat is programmed to understand your living habits and then set the energy consumption pattern across all your home appliances. It also 'controls' your phone, iPad, iPod and WiFi, making it easy to save energy.



CHIC LIGHTING

Mood and sensor lightings aren't new to the market. Thanks to cutting-edge LED technology, people have realised the joys of clean, energy-efficient lighting. Example: The GE Reveal Bulb series was the first to introduce cost and energy efficient customised lighting. So, can it get better? Yes!

New Brand: Philips Hue

The LED technology backed lighting system has completely customisable lightbulbs. You can use your phone to change the light setting to match your mood or the occasion. Besides, they use 80 per cent less energy than the disposable systems.

THINKING APPLIANCES

While Samsung has already introduced a smart refrigerator that features Wi-Fi, an LCD touchscreen and specialised apps — you can even tweet on it, Miele has launched a modular kitchen that operates through a chip — everything from maintenance to preset cooking can be done using a chip.

New Brand: GE Brilliance

This wall oven has an app that allows you to turn on the device through a remote control, pre-heat the oven, change the temperature and check on the meat probe settings. The app also sends you an alert once the dish is ready to be taken out of the oven. Cooking doesn't get better than this!

KEEP AN EYE

Camera Security System is an essential for every smart home. While most cameras come equipped with a memory chip to store visuals for later scrutiny, Goji Smart Lock can alert you instantly.



New Brand: Goji Smart Lock

An intelligent smart lock built using the latest Bluetooth technology, Goji is designed to display your name, photograph the person knocking on your door and send you an alert via text message and email. It connects to your home Wi-Fi network from a remote location to grant you access to the lock. ■

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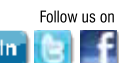
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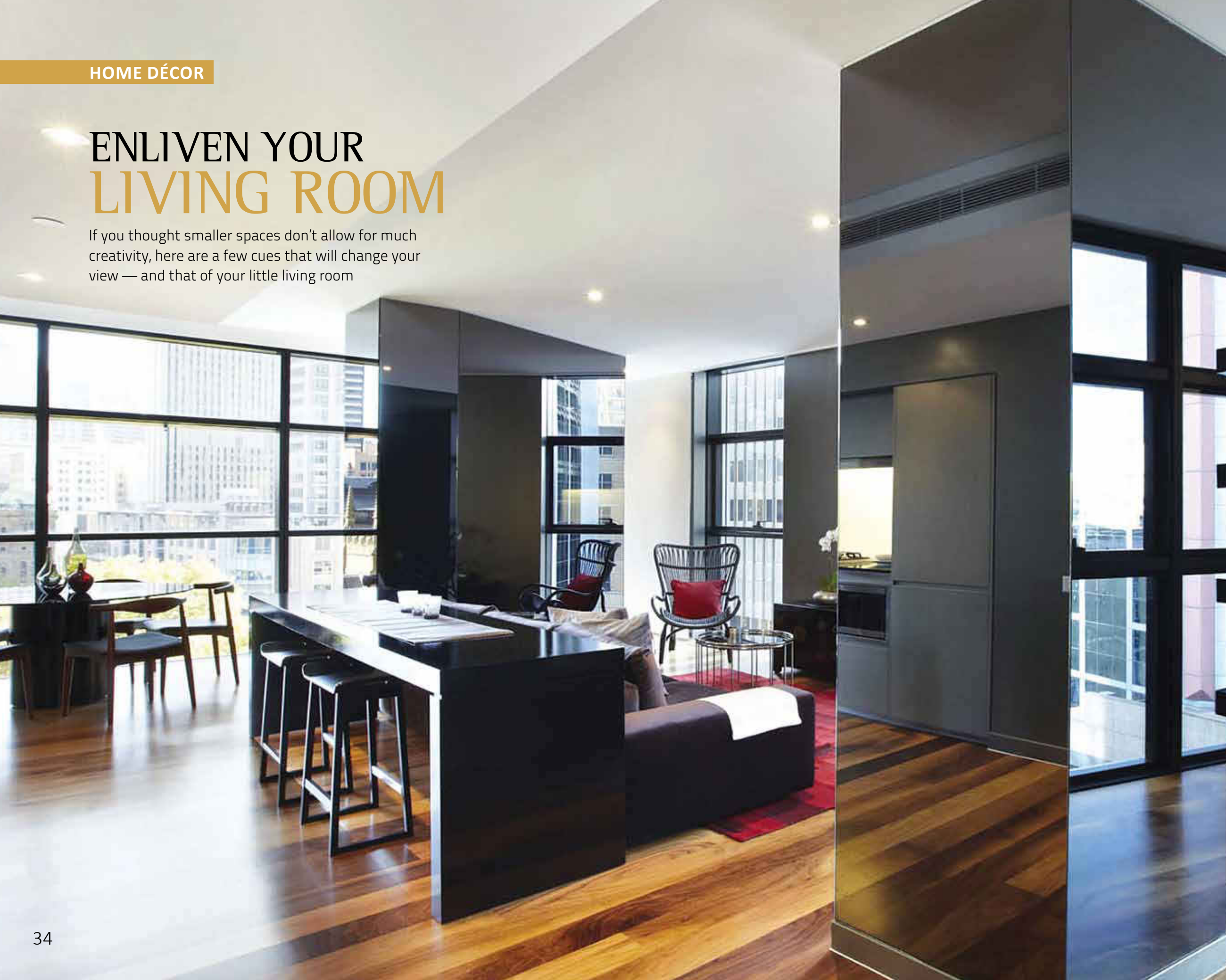


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ENLIVEN YOUR LIVING ROOM

If you thought smaller spaces don't allow for much creativity, here are a few cues that will change your view — and that of your little living room



Keep it Simple: For smaller/narrower rooms, it's always better to pick light-weight furniture with simple design. This creates an illusion of space. In addition to this, pick your side table, bookshelves and other furniture in lighter shades and in materials like metal or glass, which allows the eye to move through the pieces consuming little visual space. Nesting furniture are a great choice for small homes.

Think Vertical: A wall-to-wall cabinet not only ensures that the room looks less cluttered but also doubles as storage space, and utilises the otherwise untapped areas of the room like the upper walls. While accessorising, vertical lines take away attention from the space and helps focus your eyes above. Think floor lamps, large vases with tall twigs, full length draperies, vertical paintings, and tables with multi-layered arrangements.

Colour Card: Neutral colours mixed with pastel shades of blue and green work beautifully in a small living area. Cooler colours offer the impression of a space, being larger than it is. Use accessories as contrast with the pastel-coloured walls. Small spaces work best with a three-colour (or less) palette. Think blue, purple and white with shades of metallic grey.

Mirror Image: Increase the appearance of the size of the room by adding wall mirrors. They reflect natural and artificial light to make a room brighter during the day and night. They bounce light deep into the room, making it appear larger. Placing a mirror near a window to reflect the outdoors is especially effective. You can also use mirrored cabinet doors. ■

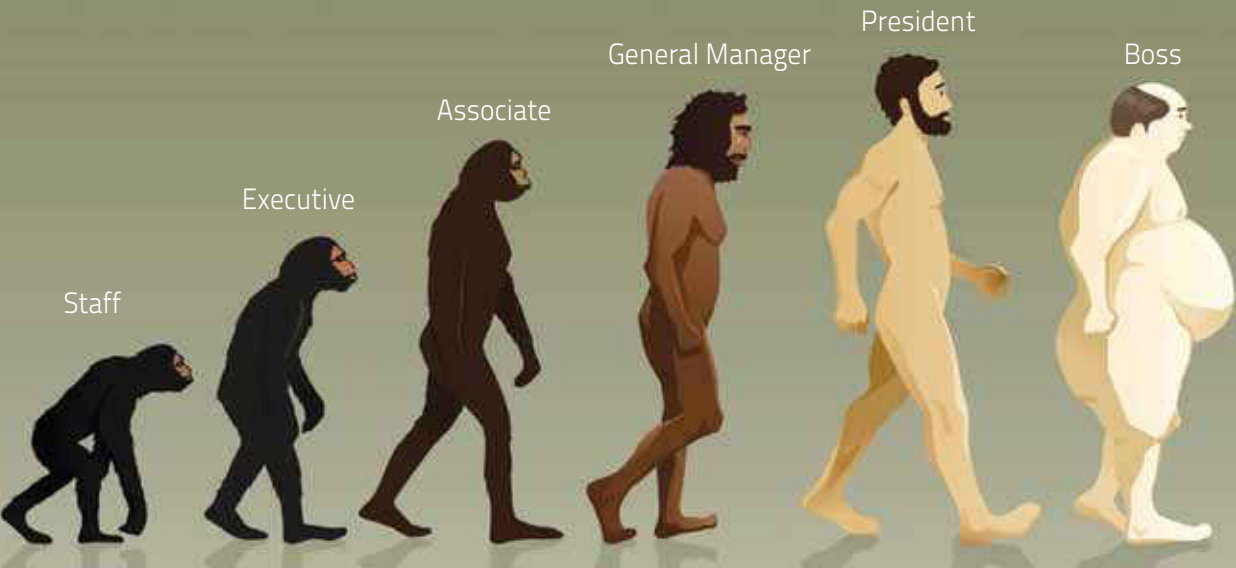
HUMOUR

JUST
DISCOVERED!
The new
corporate lexicon



- Open the Kimono**
Unlike what you think, it means 'offering inside information'.
- Move the Needle**
Or how to impress the venture capitalist to part with his money
- Drinking the Kool-Aid**
Much closer to its original use for the brutal Jonestown massacre of 1978, it is used to describe blind submission.
- Bleeding Edge**
Another way of saying 'cutting-edge'.
- Burning Platform**
When you hear that you need to bolt! In other words, it means 'big trouble' is on the way
- Make Hay**
Short of 'make hay while the sun shines' adage
- Duck in a Row**
This is a tricky one. When used by the boss, it means get to work; when used by a peer, it means let's go bowling! Reply at your own risk.
- Boil The Ocean**
Another way of telling someone that you are shooting the breeze. Usage: "I am just boiling the ocean today."
- Drill Down**
Shut up!

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