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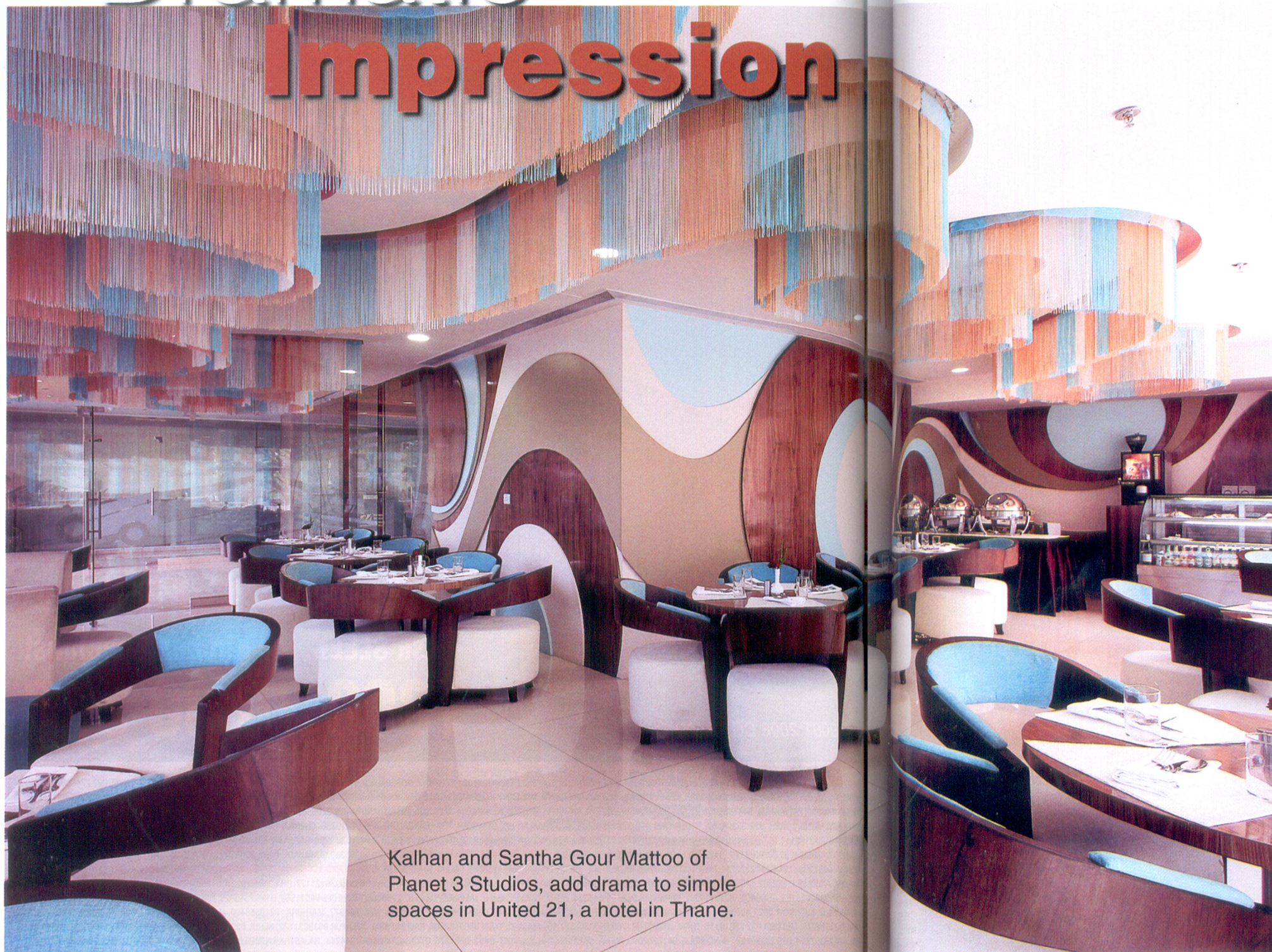
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Inside



Creative visions of Vidur Bharadwaj, Vinoo Chadha,
Planet 3 Studios, Meera Gandhi and Bose Krishnamachari

Dramatic Impression



Kalhan and Santha Gour Mattoo of Planet 3 Studios, add drama to simple spaces in United 21, a hotel in Thane.



Planet 3 Studios, a young, internationally award winning practice represents the vanguard of future-forward design. Founded and led by Kalhan Mattoo and Santha Gour Mattoo, the studio has evolved as a multidisciplinary practice with a rapidly growing eclectic portfolio of projects comprising institutional buildings, mixed use developments, high rise buildings, adaptive-reuse projects, housing complexes, colleges, schools, training centers, business process outsourcing facilities, corporate offices, banks, malls, retail outlets, resorts, spas, hotels, restaurants, lounges, nightclubs, furniture and even industrial products. The firm creates designs that maximize the positive impact of design on the environment, use appropriate technologies and materials and source labour locally.

Planet 3 Studios, 505, Tanishka, Next to Big Bazaar, Off Western Express Highway, Akurli Road, Kandivali (E), Mumbai 400101; Tel: 66995442; Website: www.planet3studios.com

With award-winning projects such as Vidyalankar Institute to its credit, Planet 3 Studios is a name to reckon with when it comes to designing spaces and creating ambience. Among the firm's recent noteworthy projects is United 21, a residential hotel in Thane, designed for the Panoramic Group.

The designers' approach was innovative but pragmatic. For example, while designing the coffee shop, roof top area and the bar, considering the fact that each of the three areas would be used for a different purpose at a different time, they consciously ensured that the look and feel for each was different from the other.

Pleasant and subtle colours against dramatic forms play up a contrast at the coffee shop in United 21. With a lot of natural light pouring in, artificial lighting has been kept to a minimum. A curvaceous custom-designed luminaire created out of the same strings as the window dressings is the key design element that lends a unique character to the space. A similar form of whirl is seen on the walls where the wall panelling is layered in cyan-coloured paint, brown wood and beige accents.

Spread across approximately 8,000 sq. ft., the terrace has been converted into a multi-purpose banquet hall. A lofty tensile roof in the form of a pergola provides the necessary shade and



an interesting addition is the swimming pool. While pleasing colours and basic furniture define this rooftop area, baroque-inspired motifs grow on walls, floor and inside the pool, lending an eclectic character to the place. While the tent-like roof turns into an outsized lamp shade with uplighting LED luminaires, backlighting accentuates the wall motifs at night.

The design of the 1,500 sq.ft. bar draws from the many moods of water owing to the name, which unlike the usual was

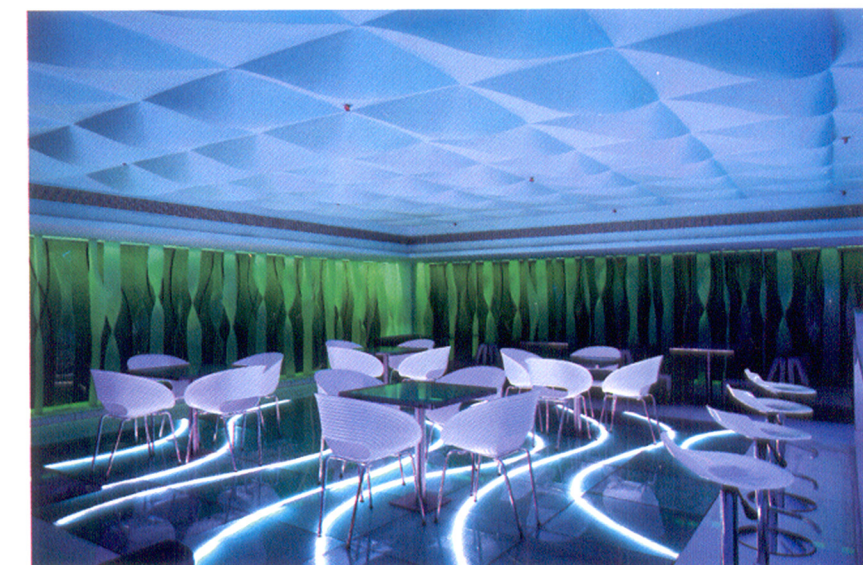




decided before the theme. This area witnesses more than one design element that belongs to the same theme showcasing the seamless, continuity and ability to find balance of water. Cast and handcrafted in plaster-of-paris, three distinct modules repeat geometrically to blanket the entire ceiling and descend on one wall, forming a backdrop for passageway leading in from the entrance.

The two sides of the area that open to the outside have a carefully articulated skin layered in glass and thermoformed Plexiglas panels. These are anchored from floor to ceiling and they twist and turn offering a subtle suggestion of a water cascade frozen in time.

The bar counter is a seamless construct with a water trough in the front that is revealed through circular punctures in the apron. The wall behind the bar is formed of ribbon-like panels that flow along the wall and



also pose as shelves. The frosted glass flooring below the central seating area has fluid lines in the form of under-lighting. The tables in this section have sandwich glass tops with lower layer of glass cracked and frosted in patterns resembling the melting of ice. LED lights in various shades, help express the smoothness of the forms in this bar.

All in all, Kalhan and Santha have successfully created an environment that is inviting and at the same time reflecting its distinct identity ✂

Text: Natasha Bohra

Photographs: Mrigank Sharma, India Sutra; courtesy Planet 3 Studios