

DESIGNMATRIX

PEOPLE • LIFESTYLE • DESIGN • INTERIORS

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Ashish
Gupta

"I believe in doing thing better
rather than different."

There are yachts and there are Feadships



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EDITOR'S NOTE

I have always been a mountain person – perhaps been born and brought up in the Himalayas has something to do with it. But the sea has also become a fascinating lure and I guess that is why Mumbai is home. So when the one-year-old *Design Matrix* decided to venture into uncharted waters, we did it quite literally – by wanting to feature the young and dynamic Ashish Gupta (a Yacht Designer) on the cover. To say that I was completely “at sea” during our conversation won’t be wrong (especially when he started describing “her” beauty and classic features!). But as the day wore off, I got my “sea legs” and then it was all sailing with fair winds, as the seamen would say. Maybe discovering the fact that we both have a common mentor and guide in Ar. Sen Kapadia helped reinforce the connect as well. We had great fun shooting off the Mumbai coast and I was impressed to see the vigilant Naval patrol on duty.

Continuing the fun element, we decided to share the serious thought process behind the design of fun and joy-filled office spaces, homes and toys. We changed our logo with the anniversary issue and that inspired us to share some insights on logo design amongst other stories.

I would like to thank all the invitees of the Design Matrix-Ultratech Paints Excellence Awards for confirming their participation and sending us their entries. The team has the daunting task of shortlisting them for the Jury which is probably happening now even as you read this! We wanted to start the New Year with a bang and your support added just that extra verve to our party. Watch the next issue for all the details and information about the competition and much more.

Before signing off, I would like to wish all of you a very happy and satisfying year ahead. May 2012 surpass all your expectations. The New Year resolution at *Design Matrix*.....better ourselves, compete with ourselves and come out tops in 2012 ☺

Do keep us on our toes via your emails, phone calls and comments.

Babita Krishnan



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TWIZZLE, 2010



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● **Cover featuring:** Ar. Ashish Gupta
● **Photograph by:** Tanvi Madkaiker



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WITH THE **FAIR WIND!**

Words: Babita Krishnan; Images: Tanvi Madkaiker

From creating buildings to designing yachts, we journey with Ashish Gupta to discover his passion that also happens to be his profession – that of being probably the youngest yacht designer in India.



Babita Krishnan: What is a yacht design(er)? I didn't know there was a profession like this!

Ashish Gupta: In India there isn't, but it is very big abroad. In fact it is a field dominated by the British – Andrew Winch, Bannenberg. John Bannenberg is the father of yacht design as he started the trend and though he is no more, his son is taking the legacy ahead.

BK: In our initial conversation, you had mentioned that you are trained in design.

AG: Anyone can have a sense of design, but to translate them on to paper, you need training. I'm the first-batch architecture graduate from Kamala Raheja (KRVIA), Mumbai. My dad and wife are also architects and my mom is a commercial artist.

BK: A very creative family...

AG: yes, I have a very creative background (smiles). This is worth sharing with you, I had this great passion for cars and wanted to become an automotive engineer, but became an architect instead and now started designing yachts which has become a passion. Designing Yachts fulfils the desires of both, Automotive Engineering and Lifestyle Architecture.

BK: So tell me about architecture.

AG: I had my own ideas about the kind of architecture I wanted to do, develop my own style, and I worked with Nitin Killawala and Kiran Kapadia.

BK: And then what happened?

AG: In 2000 I participated in an international competition for redesigning a club for which Ar. Nozer Wadia was the critic and judge. The journey actually started from there.

BK: Was it a yacht club or something that after designing it, you moved on to designing yachts?

AG: (Laughs) It wasn't that easy and no it was just a club like any other. I founded BEYOND DESIGN in 2001 and focused on lifestyle architecture. Over the years my personal landscape has also changed in terms of scale and range of projects. The highlight, of course, is the designing of yachts as having built them, everything else is put into perspective.

BK: But how did that happen, I can't see the connect between lifestyle architecture and yacht designing.

AG: Traveling to Dubai and London in the year 2002 was a great learning curve towards exposure to lifestyle architecture and a wish to design cars continued. In September 2002, while in Dubai, I got a call from Ar. Nozer Wadia to work on a special project with him for an Indian industrialist. After discussing the project for over an hour, I committed to work with him and got to work researching the Yacht industry. It is all thanks to him that I was introduced to the







yacht industry as he believed in my ability to design and build the first yacht with him.

BK: So then did you take any training or some special course for this?

AG: No, I haven't studied marine architecture and designing. I was, however, selected by IED in 2007 to study yacht design and went for an interview to Venice. Sir Sebastian (the Dean) at IED was amazed looking at my portfolio with the built yacht project (I got a special 40% scholarship for that as well). Finally, I did not study yacht design as it wasn't viable for me to leave my ongoing practice and study for 15 months out of India.

BK: Which was the first boat you designed?

AG: It was the 45-metre Superyacht, built of teak and *babul* by traditional craftsmen with Ar. Nozer Wadia as the Principal Architect. Indian entrepreneur and prominent industrialist, CMD Raymond is the yacht owner.

BK: What are your favoured projects to date?

AG: Maharaja 150 and the award-winning Feadship SL39 Villa.

BK: Tell us something about Maharaja. How did that happen?

AG: It is a very futuristic design. Everywhere you see just

monotonous white yachts. I thought why not do something better. I believe in doing things better not different – anyone can be different but few strive to be better. I made the model myself and the design was really appreciated by one and all. After designing, I realized that the project has to be engineered and so got talking to different people.

BK: Are you planning to sell the design?

AG: No, we are not planning to sell it but we will execute the design ourselves.

BK: You have a partner in this enterprise?

AG: Stolk Marimecs is a Naval Architecture/engineering firm who has partnered with us for this. It is always a good mix of engineering and design to collaborate from scratch and create a spectacular product.

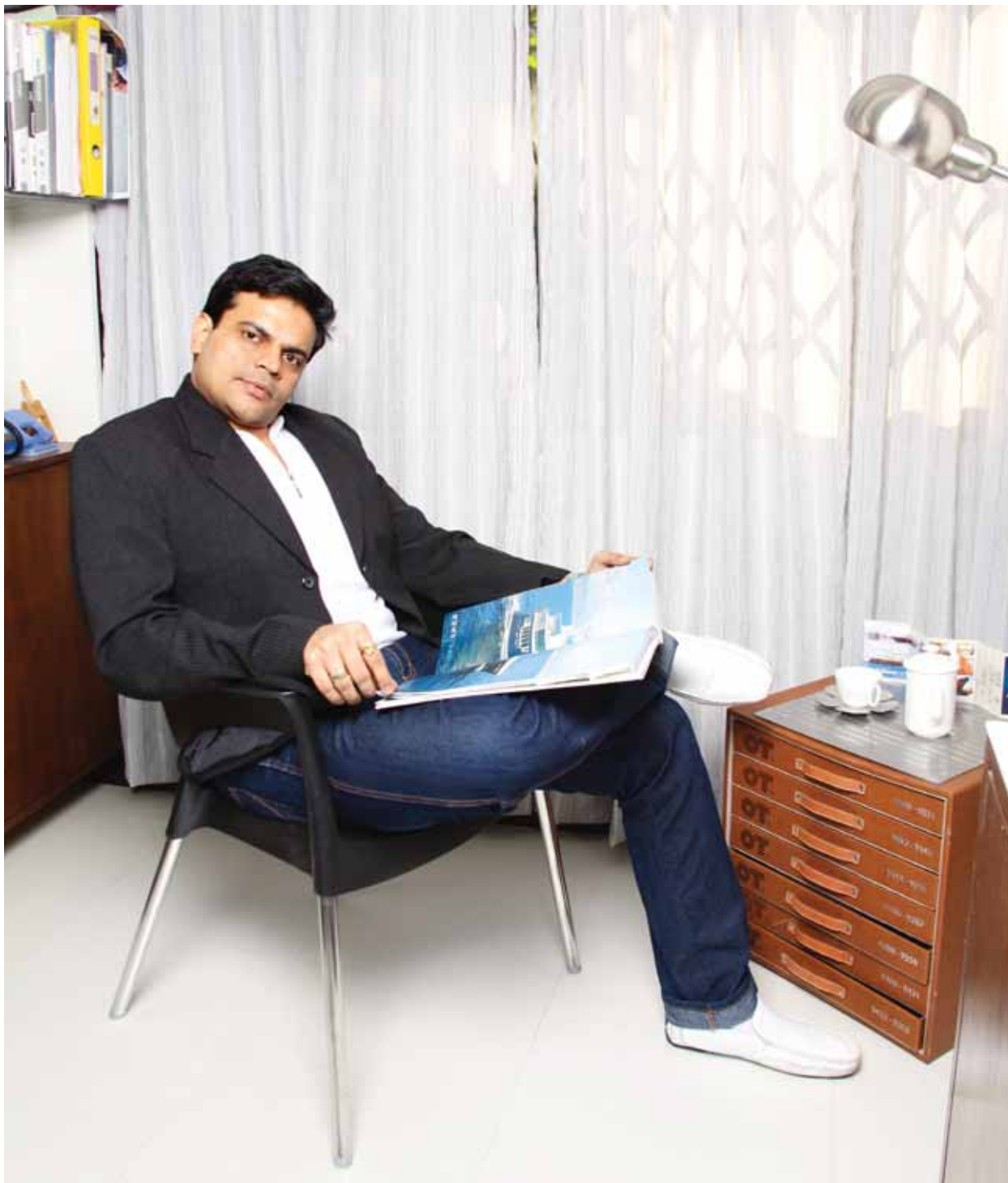
BK: Naval architects?

AG: They are like the civil engineers in the building industry – naval architects build these huge beauties to sail the seas.

BK: And your client base?

AG: India, NRIs and of course, international owners. I also want to educate people about yachts and all the different ways the head honchos could use them.





BK: What is the biggest challenge you face in every project, and is India really open to becoming a leisure boating industry?

AG: The owner's desires – their likes and dislikes, all need to be understood and then developed from concept to reality. India's leisure boating industry is very entrepreneurial at the moment. While there is a desire to build a custom yacht, two very important questions arise – what about chartering and where is the marina?

BK: So how do you answer these questions?

AG: This is where Aashim Mongia comes in. His company West Coast Marine Yacht Services handles yacht sales, charters, fractional ownership, management and maintenance, etc.

BK: What would be the yacht design trends for 2011/12?

AG: Trends are very momentary. Owner's requirement sets the trend for a revolutionary concept.

BK: Have you had any particular obscure design requests?

AG: Waiting for one..... otherwise yachts are particularly obscure. (Laughs)

BK: What are your long-term aspirations for Beyond Design?

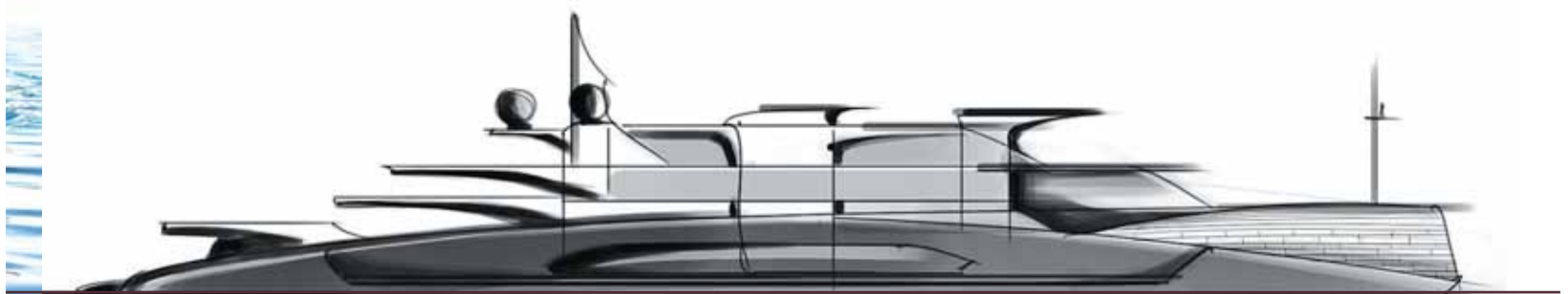
AG: We are an award winning firm but we would like to establish ourselves as an internationally-acclaimed Design studio.

On that note we decided to go for a spin in the sea and talk a bit about some of his projects with the hum of the engine and the sea breeze for company 🚤



MAHARAJA

The 150 meter Maharaja is designed to the ultimate degree of owner's desires ready for creative investment with an evolutionary idea demanding a combination of simplicity and intelligence to deliver an awe-inspiring example of yacht design into an even more interesting creative stratosphere. Maharaja 150 is an inventive concept with individuality and style that unquestionably will build up to think beyond one of the world's most extraordinary yacht. Unique shape of hull and translucent glass superstructure create both wider decks and sleeker profile with series of aft and foredecks adjust to the whims of both the sea and guests. When light meets elegance, you are sure to enjoy a new spirit of openness. Equipped with a grand swim platform, corporate deck, 30-metre golf course, open-air beach lounge, sky entertainment lounge, owner's deck, observation tower and stand-alone helipad, Maharaja is not yacht design, it is Yacht Architecture.



FEADSHIP VILLA

The Feadship "Villa" is designed on the unique synergy of semi series custom production SL39 platform. The exterior design, as the name suggests "Villa", is based on traditions with timeless arched window openings and balconies as an important feature on each deck. It is designed as a "family yacht" with a balance of indoor and outdoor spaces which combine with business meetings on the go. At any given time the no one is disconnected from the sea. The Feadship Villa has a private owner's deck with a pool and private balconies for extravagant panoramic views. The main deck comprises of outdoor entertainment/corporate deck with alfresco dining, formal dining and main saloon which doubles up as a theatre room with a 100" LCD screen. The main saloon features terraces on port side as well as starboard side with a skylight. The lower deck is a guest deck with VIP stateroom and children's room plus a dedicated gymnasium. The relax deck provides for jacuzzi and sunbathing.



OCEANCO DESIRE

Y700 DESIRE's exterior design is based on a combination of simplicity and intelligence to deliver an awe-inspiring example of yacht architecture. It is an owner specific yacht designed with an idea of freedom, independence and imagination to express luxury values with beach club, panoramic window openings, balconies and owner's duplex suite as an important feature. This innovative yacht is ideal to unwind and welcome large number of guests, hosting cocktail parties which combine with business meetings. Y700 Desire houses a large, full beam private owner's deck with lap pool on port and starboard side and owner's gym and spa connected with private duplex elevator. 300 sq. mts. duplex suite is loaded with double height forward open deck, full beam bath linked to sun deck and skylight which adds natural light with the help panoramic windows. This 87.5 metre yacht was unveiled at the Monaco Yacht Show 2011.





25 METRE LINSE YACHT

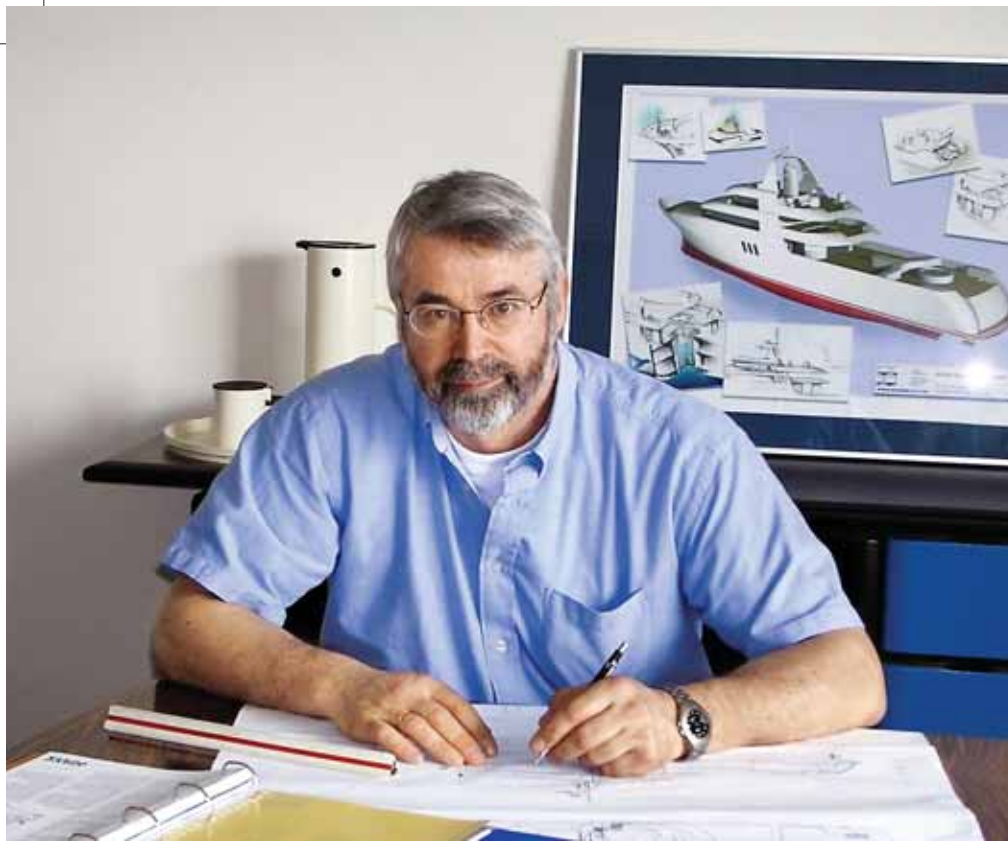
The yacht was imported from USA, Florida and then UB Group contacted Beyond Design to carry out the refit. The first visit onboard was very challenging as it was stuffed with lot of damaged furniture and the exterior was also falling apart. It was a daunting task to change the look and feel of the entire yacht to a contemporary one that the owner wanted. The yacht was meant to sail a lot between Mumbai, Alibaug and Goa for small parties, so a dance floor had to be recreated and also a complete bar with music system. Fly-bridge had to be appraised and equipped because the owner himself drives the yacht from Mumbai to Alibaug. The challenge was many-fold – first the furniture had to be designed with lots of storage and the weight calculated; also FCU's were incorporated within the furniture so vents and acoustics had to be designed for pleasant cruising; waterproof carpets were imported from USA, and many such details were looked into. The delivery and execution had to be very specifically planned as it was to start her summer season. The entire yacht refit was completed in 95 days and we sailed a maiden voyage from Mumbai to Alibaug with no creaks or groans!





XSMG SPEEDBOAT

The XSR48 Speedboat from XSMG is hailed as the “world’s fastest superboat”. It is a supercar on water, a luxury powerboat with supercar looks. With a total of no less than 1600 hp from two bi-turbo diesel engines, the XSR48 has supercar acceleration with a stabilization and propulsion system meant to handle this insane amount of power. But style has not been sacrificed for speed as it combines the DNA and high performance of a supercar with superyacht styling making it the “Bugatti Veyron” of the sea. The interior is filled with smooth, modern lines, high-grade materials, and niceties like flat-panel TVs. It manufactured in Lymington-based XSMG Marine and was launched by Prince Michael of Kent. Onboard this exotic speedboat rental, you will find all modern amenities to more than adequately entertain and be entertained. The modern and minimalist approach onboard this luxury speed vessel is refreshing, and there isn’t anything unnecessary weighing it down when getting up to speed!



STOLK MARIMECS

We spoke to Willem Stolk of Stolk Marimecs, excerpts of the conversation.

Design Matrix: How did you know about Maharaja and Ashish?

Willem Stolk: In 2008, Ashish contacted us to discuss this new concept for a 150m Giga yacht.

After meeting him, we decided to set up a co-operation and Ashish was invited to share our stand at the Monaco Yacht Show.

DM: What do you think of the Maharaja?

WS: It is a revolutionary concept, an attractive design that is thought through in the possibilities for practical use and suitability for an "exotic" owner.

DM: But is it a practical design?

WS: The design has been developed around conversations that Ashish has had with several super yacht owners, hence very practical. The idea is not to achieve the maximum number of cabins, but to create a variety of possibilities for private and company/corporate use for the owner.

DM: Do you think it is a viable project?

WS: Yes I do, although it is a concept and design development stage at this moment where more detailed develop-

"At this moment there is no building slot planned for the yacht at any yard, though we have got very positive response from clients. It is a remarkable ship at the top end of the yacht building market."

ment on the design aspects and naval architecture has to be done preferably in co-operation with an owner directly or the project team of the owner. Also, it is really a large yacht at the top echelon and Ashish is already working on a smaller concept based on similar ideas called the "Grand Sport Series" within 80-90m LOA for a wider share of the market.

DM: Did you have to make any changes or modifications to the design of the boat for making it seaworthy?

WS: We as naval architects do wish to make some modifications based on our experience in yacht and ship building and some dictated by Class Societies like Lloyd's Register of Shipping and International rules and regulations. The endeavour is to do this within the boundaries of the design concept created by Ashish.

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