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The Architect's Gaze

Designers are creating spaces using human sensibilities and modern technology. And they keep environmental impact in mind while staying true to their artistic vision

New Ideas, New Concepts: Every Building Tells a Story

Kedar Kulkarni and Ashok Patel, friends since their student days at Sir JJ College of Architecture, co-founded Abhikalpan Architects & Planners in 1997, and built it on the foundation of 'new ideas, new concepts'. For the duo, architecture isn't just a profession, but a passion shaped by a deep curiosity about how spaces influence human experiences. Since its inception, the firm has helped shape India's architectural landscape with designs that blend aesthetics, functionality, and technology.

Kulkarni was first exposed to architecture during his senior school year, when he came across architectural drawings, models and design concepts through an architecture student's college project. This sparked his curiosity about architecture, the problem-solving aspect of design, and how creativity merges with technical knowledge, inspiring him to pursue architecture as a career. For Patel, it was a visit to Sir JJ School of Fine Arts that opened up the world of design and architecture. Captivated by the campus environment, where he saw students working on intricate building models, he felt an instant connection and realised that architecture was the career for him. After their graduation, they gained



Ashok Patel (left) and Kedar Kulkarni

Kedar Kulkarni, Ashok Patel

Founders & partners, Abhikalpan Architects & Planners

valuable experience under the mentorship of legendary architects like BV Doshi and Uttam C Jain.

"At Abhikalpan, we believe every building should tell a story: One of innovation, sustainability, and user-centric design," says Kulkarni. The partners aim to create spaces that inspire, enhance well-being, function effectively, and contribute meaningfully to the community. They begin their creative process by understanding the site's physical, cultural and social elements to ensure the designs are connected

to the surroundings. They prioritise innovation in materials and technology, sustainability, and integrating nature seamlessly into their work.

Abhikalpan has completed more than 300 projects, including residential, commercial, institutional and cultural ones. Pride World City, a 400-acre, mixed-use, integrated township is an ambitious project where the firm conducted the master planning, architecture, landscape, and interior design to create a global city in

harmony with nature. The design includes expansive green spaces, vehicle-free zones, a walk-to-work-and-school concept.

Another project that provides an immersive and historically rooted experience is Shivrushthi, India's first historical theme park dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. As master planners and architects, they have recreated the 16th and 17th century architecture to offer an immersive historical experience.

"Architecture is not just about designing for today—it's about building for the future," says Patel. Kulkarni and Patel recognise that the future lies in smart, sustainable, and regenerative designs that reduce environmental impact.

● KAMAYNI

Formed by Aesthetics, Utility and Mindfulness

Creation is a consequence of passionate understanding of the elements and their co-existence with humanity,” is the mantra Anand Vasant Rao Bhagat lives by. Bhagat, with his partner the late Amala Sheth, founded Metaphors in 1989. Over the last three decades, the firm has created numerous landmark projects across India, winning accolades.

Growing up in a family deeply rooted in the field of design sparked Bhagat’s passion for architecture. Since both his father and uncle were architects, he was immersed in design and architecture from an early age. The love for design and the built environment was ingrained in his DNA.

For every project Metaphors undertakes, Bhagat’s creative process is guided by a philosophy encapsulated in the concept of ‘AUM’, which stands for aesthetics, utility and mindfulness. Every space he designs reflects these guiding principles, ensuring that the architecture is not only visually appealing and functional but also well considered.

Metaphors’ landmark project, The Corinthians Club and Resort, perfectly embodies the design philosophy of AUM, creating a timeless structure that blends history with modern luxury. Drawing inspiration from Greek and Egyptian architecture, the resort blends timeless grandeur with contemporary luxury. Every room is meticulously designed to balance utility, comfort, opulence and functionality. The use of high-quality, durable materials ensures longevity, reinforcing Bhagat’s commitment



Anand Vasant Rao Bhagat
Founder, Metaphors

to sustainable luxury. This fusion elevates the overall experience of customers, offering a sanctuary of relaxation and sophistication.

Bhagat believes that technologies like AI (artificial intelligence) are a crucial tool in shaping the future of architecture worldwide, pushing the boundaries of design possibilities. AI can revolutionise architecture by enhancing design efficiency, sustainability and innovation. It can be used as a tool to streamline

complex tasks, analyse vast data sets, and provide creative solutions to address global problems like climate change and urbanisation. From resource management to elevating user experience, architects can utilise AI to create smarter, more sustainable and adaptable spaces.

Bhagat envisions the future of architecture as centred around sustainability, technology and human-centric design, where innovation meets environmental responsibility. His advice to young architects is to stay curious, embrace new technologies, and design with purpose and empathy.

• KAMAYNI

Design: Fostering Meaningful Connections



Snehal Suthar (left) and Bhadri Suthar

Bhadri Suthar and Snehal Suthar founded The Grid Architects, a multi-disciplinary design studio, in 2002. With more than 100 national and international awards, the studio has gained global recognition for its innovative and sustainable approach, with work spanning architecture, interiors, landscapes and furniture design.

The couple's journey in architecture and design is a testament to their shared passion for creating timeless, functional and creative spaces. Snehal, inspired by his roots in a carpenter's family, developed a passion for transforming ideas into meaningful designs that led him to pursue a master's in sustainable architecture. From an

Bhadri Suthar & Snehal Suthar

Co-founders & principal designers,
 The Grid Architects

early age, Bhadri's inclination towards art and design inspired her to pursue a degree in interior design from APIED, Gujarat.

At the heart of Suthars' creative process lies a profound understanding of the context, location and unique needs of the project. For them, design is a medium that fosters meaningful connections between people, spaces and environments. This perspective allows them to design with empathy, prioritising social impact and long-term well-being of communities.

"The essence of design lies in creating spaces that connect with nature, respect context and prioritise human well-being," says Bhadri.

Their groundbreaking concept of 'agri-tecture' aims to provide a futuristic model for sustainability through greenhouse living. It combines advanced agricultural techniques with modern architectural design to create spaces that are not only environmentally friendly but also accessible to people of all income levels. By integrating vertical farming, renewable energy sources, and efficient water management systems, these structures significantly reduce the environmental footprint while ensuring a high quality of life.

The Suthars perceive technology as an enabler, integrated to address sustainability, comfort, and functionality, optimise space planning, and data analysis, and increase efficiency. New and upcoming technologies such as AI can be used as a supportive tool for architecture, and can enhance processes and complement thoughtful designs while keeping humanity and functionality at the core.

For the Suthars, "Good architecture is always about relationships, between buildings, the context, and the society they serve." AI would help to enhance this vision, helping create spaces that are functional, meaningful and rooted in humanity. By using AI, one can better collaborate with natural elements like sunlight, natural textures and greenery, improving functionality, stimulating emotions and promoting well-being.

The Suthars envision the future of architecture in the hands of architects who design selflessly, focusing on purpose, tradition, and context. They advise young architects to design with empathy and focus on humanity, preservation and innovation.

● KAMAYNI

Integrating Functionality and Sustainability



World-renowned architect and urban planner Dikshu C Kukreja's CP Kukreja Architects is one of the most revered architectural firms in the country, with a portfolio of more than 1,000 projects that spans over 30 countries.

Growing up in an environment where discussions centred around creativity and design fuelled Kukreja's passion for architecture and design. His perspective on the potential social impact of design was significantly influenced by witnessing his architect father, CP Kukreja, help shape India's architectural landscape with his innovative efforts. This early exposure gave him a unique insight into architecture as a discipline that blends art, science and societal needs.

An alumnus of the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, and Harvard University, US, Kukreja's work is influenced by icons such as Frank Lloyd Wright,

Dikshu C Kukreja

Managing principal,
CP Kukreja Architects

Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn, and his designs often reflect a balance between modernist principles and indigenous traditions.

"Architecture is a synthesis of the past, present and future; an opportunity to create spaces that blend functionality with aesthetics while addressing societal and environmental needs," says Kukreja.

His architectural philosophy emphasises the integration of functionality, aesthetics and sustainability. His creative process emphasises a user-centric approach, incorporating cultural, social and environmental contexts into every design. Technology plays an indispensable role, whether through parametric design or energy modelling to enhance both

precision and sustainability. He believes in combining cutting-edge technology with timeless design to achieve a balance of beauty, utility and resilience.

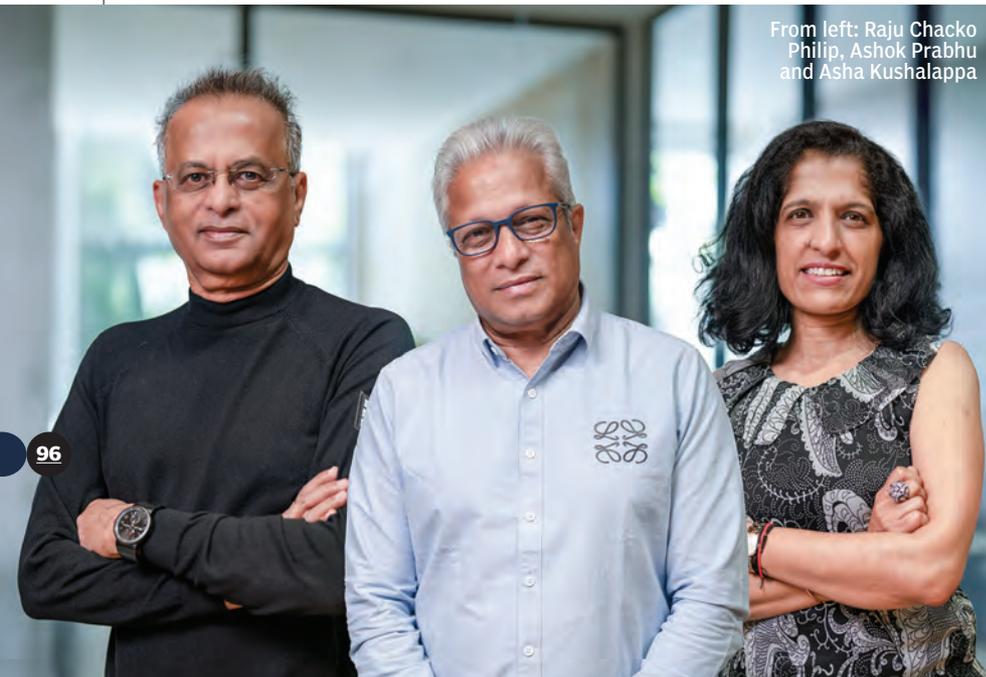
Among his acclaimed projects, The East India Hub, India's largest transportation-oriented development, exemplifies this vision. It tackles urban issues, including density, mobility and sustainability by combining residential, commercial and recreational spaces into a seamless ecosystem. Vertical landscaping, green roofs, and energy-efficient technologies reduce carbon footprints and redefine sustainable urban living by emphasising walkability and seamless public transportation. This initiative exemplifies how creative architecture can transform not only buildings but entire communities.

Kukreja believes that AI has transformative potential in architecture and design, enhancing efficiency through automation, material optimisation and predictive analysis. It is a tool facilitating efficiency and decision-making but cannot replace creativity, empathy and accountability. Kukreja advises architects to ensure that technology enhances the design process to create human-centric spaces that foster connections, represent culture and address environmental issues.

Kukreja feels that the future of architecture lies in adapting to global issues like resource scarcity, urbanisation and climatic change. His advice to young architects is: "Embrace curiosity, learn from the past, innovate for the future, prioritise your vision, empathy and integrity while designing spaces."

● KAMAYNI

Balancing Creativity, Technology and Clients' Needs



From left: Raju Chacko Philip, Ashok Prabhu and Asha Kushalappa

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Raju Chacko Philip and Ashok Prabhu founded DWP Interics Pvt Ltd in 1984 in Dubai. Over the past 40 years, the firm has grown in terms of professional expertise and business volumes to become one of the premier interior design firms in India. It has over 150 employees in five offices across India, works with 700 corporate brands, and has 10 international collaborations.

Philip's journey into architecture and design was influenced by his family, with his brother being an architect and his father having worked in drafting and design for the armed forces. After finishing his studies in Pune, Philip moved to Dubai in 1979, where he worked

Raju Chacko Philip, Ashok Prabhu
 principal founders
Asha Kushalappa
 principal partner,
 DWP Interics Pvt Ltd

for a British firm and transitioned from architecture to corporate interiors. Philip and Prabhu co-founded DWP in Dubai, and have expanded its presence in Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Pune and Chennai. Growing up in Bengaluru, Asha Kushalappa was deeply influenced by the city's colonial architecture and the natural beauty of Coorg. Her inclination towards music, art and her college experience fuelled

her passion and channeled her energies into studying architecture.

Starting with small interior design projects, the firm has grown exponentially, doing large projects, handling million square feet projects with efficiency and innovation. The partners recognise how their journey has been shaped by working with diverse clients, many of whom have inspired their personal and professional growth.

For the trio, understanding clients' needs and requirements forms the foundation of any project. They ensure there is a balance between creativity, technology and these requirements. They uphold the principle of 'form follows function', ensuring that no space is wasted while maintaining a balance between aesthetics and technicality. Longevity in design is important, with the use of sustainable materials, especially in a fast-evolving technological landscape.

AI is an exciting tool that has percolated into all fields of design. It enhances technical knowledge, making the design process more efficient. Using AI in their processes has significantly improved precision by detecting and correcting mistakes. AI enhances the imagination of designers to produce their designs and works in a much better format. However, they remain a strong advocate for the human brain's unique ability to conceptualise and deliver original designs, believing AI should complement rather than replace human creativity.

Looking ahead, the future of architecture is poised to be more climate-friendly, sustainable and technology-driven. As technology evolves, architects must integrate it into their designs while staying true to their artistic vision. Their collective advice to young architects is to embrace sustainability, stay adaptable, and walk the talk in creating impactful designs.

● KAMAYNI

A Dialogue Between Context, Culture and Innovation

Zafar Choudhary and Monika Choudhary co-founded Habitat Architects in 1994, a multi-disciplinary design practice dedicated to creating responsible luxury and sustainable sophistication in architecture, interior design, master planning, landscape design and product design.

For Zafar, architecture represents the ultimate synthesis of art and science. Growing up in a family that valued design and engineering, he was drawn to meticulous planning, precision and creativity, which went into shaping spaces that are not only functional but also evoke emotional connections. Monika views design as a medium to bridge the tangible and the intangible. Growing up immersed in the world of textiles, colour and craftsmanship, she realised designing is crafting spaces that resonate with people, honouring heritage while embracing the future and shaping

the world with intent and meaning.

The Choudharys' creative process is spatial planning, where functionality coexists with aesthetics. The design process is a dialogue between context, culture, and innovation. It is about a deep understanding of space, those who inhabit it and its timeless and functional essence. Technology sharpens precision.

Of their many projects, The Courtyard House is a true reflection of Zafar's architectural philosophy where simplicity in form meets complexity in function. With an expansive central courtyard

Zafar Masud Choudhary

founder & principal architect

Monika Choudhary

co-founder & CDO,
Habitat Architects

offering natural light and ventilation, and using materials like exposed concrete, stone and timber, the project embodies efficiency, aesthetic restraint and environmental sensitivity. For Monika, Kutub Boulevard, a haute couture designer hub, embodies her design ethos, as it integrates cultural respect with modern sensibilities. The architectural language celebrates elegance, blending natural light, earthy materials and intricate craftsmanship, balancing conservation and innovation.

The Choudharys recognise AI's potential in refining and elevating the design process, and offering new possibilities. AI provides tools to analyse complex data and site conditions, enhance sustainability measures, and personalise designs to meet individual needs. They view AI as an aid and not a substitute for human intuition, ensuring that the heart of design remains rooted in storytelling, empathy and cultural significance. AI can amplify purpose-driven design, aligning functionality with deeper meaning.

The Choudharys envision the future of architecture defined by its ability to stay rooted in fundamental principles and harmonise sustainability, technology and cultural storytelling. With challenges like climate change and urbanisation, architects need to be innovative and responsible while creating spaces that are conscious, inclusive and forward-thinking. They advise young designers to honour their roots while embracing innovation and strive to design with courage and clarity, creating spaces that uplift lives, inspire emotions and leave a meaningful legacy.

● KAMAYNI



Zafar Masud Choudhary (left) and Monika Choudhary

Rooted in Human Needs and Design Principles



Kaif Faquih is a partner at Faquih & Associates (FAA), an architecture, interior planning and design firm, founded in 1968 by his father, Farooq Faquih.

“Architecture chose me more than me choosing architecture,” says Faquih. Growing up, design was not just an academic pursuit but a way of life. Being surrounded by design discussions shaped his perspective on the built environment.

Faquih believes that the idea behind designing spaces is to enable

Kaif Faquih

partner, Faquih & Associates

interactions and experiences of humans or living beings, facilitated by technology and functionality. His creative process is driven by a desire to create environments that elevate and enrich lives. He strives to create innovative and responsible designs rooted in a deep understanding of the built environment, human needs, and cutting-edge design principles.

FAA has worked on several iconic projects. A recent one is Faquih’s countryside villa, whose design means “to not be there”. The architecture and interior spaces have a slow and evolving quality that impacts the subconscious in a calming and meaningful way. Faquih does not want visitors to have any objectified memory of the architecture but rather an experience that invites contemplation. The design has been influenced by the writings of Riza Shirazi, Norberg Schulz and Juhani Pallasmaa.

Faquih foresees AI playing a major role in projects that are strongly aligned with archetypal design patterns, shifting the architect’s role from “inventor, creator to organiser, co-creator”. This transformation will be particularly evident in projects that address formulaic expectations. Faquih’s second claim is more subtle and inconspicuous: AI will enable designers to easily create image- and impression-based design thinking.

“Architecture moves along with society,” believes Faquih, and that the future of architecture is intrinsically linked to the cultural and economic trajectories of various societies. With globalisation, the isolated and unique built styles of various cultures and societies have been absorbed and co-opted by a rapidly networked planet. The next significant shift in architecture is unlikely to stem from technology alone but from cultural transformation.

He advises young designers to develop their minds and sensibilities in the direction of culture and technology. In balancing these two, the architects will shape spaces that are both meaningful and innovative.

● KAMAYNI

The Power of Collaboration

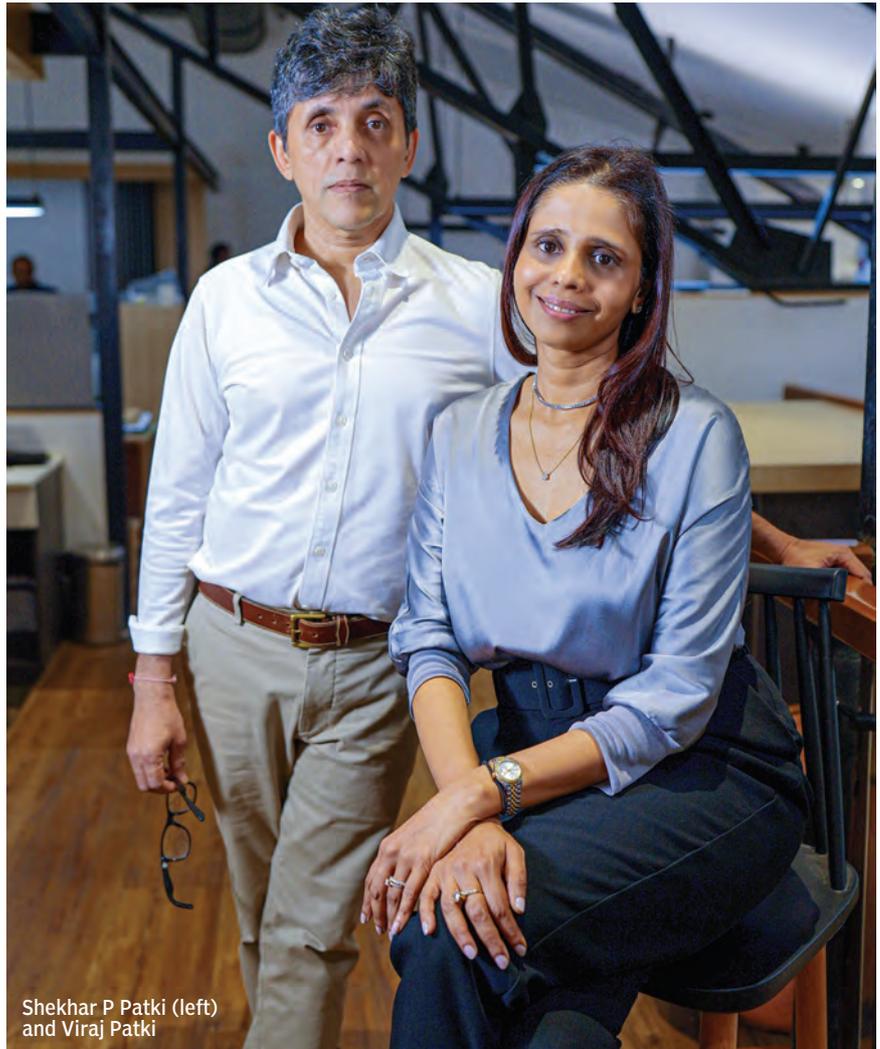
PG Patki Architects, established five decades ago, is currently headed by Shekhar P Patki and Viraj Patki.

For Shekhar, architecture is more than just a career; it is the legacy of his father, the late PG Patki, the founder of the firm, whose contributions influenced a generation of architects. This inspiration, combined with an inherent passion for design, led Shekhar to his career path. Growing up in Mumbai, Viraj was drawn to large spaces and saw architecture as a blend of art, design, and engineering, shaping the skyline. The opportunity to merge her passion for design with engineering and make a tangible impact on developing the urban landscape drew her to architecture as a career.

Shekhar believes that the creative process is intrinsic to good design in architecture. Design must integrate functionality with creativity and evolve to adapt to ever-changing technological advancements. For Viraj, understanding the needs and behaviours of users is fundamental to a functional design, which needs to adapt to different contexts and future changes, and extend their relevance and usability over time. She emphasises the crucial role of technology in making more efficient, adaptable and user-friendly environments.

For Shekhar, notable projects such as the Osho Meditation Hall, the Amar Vilas Oberoi and the Altimas represent his vision of blending aesthetics with functionality. Viraj values the collaborative nature of architecture, where every creative mind brings a fresh perspective. Currently, she is working on an immersive experience that focuses on how people feel within a built space rather than the structure itself.

Shekhar sees AI as a tool that will



Shekhar P Patki (left) and Viraj Patki

Shekhar P Patki, Viraj Patki

principal architects,
PG Patki Architects

provide new directions for design evolution, enabling architects to explore and implement previously unimaginable concepts. Viraj believes that while AI offers numerous advantages, it is essential to recognise the crucial role of architects. AI is a tool that augments human creativity and decision-making rather than replacing the nuanced judgement and contextual

understanding of architects.

Shekhar hopes future generations will approach architecture with passion and dedication, and honour its legacy while embracing innovation. Viraj envisions a future where architecture is shaped by technological advancements, sustainability imperatives, and ever-evolving human and social needs. She advises young architects to be adaptive, flexible, globally aware and culturally sensitive. Collaboration, innovation and passion are the prerequisites to achieve excellence.

• KAMAYNI

Designing Living, Breathing Systems

Raghav Patel and Ramesh Lohar founded R+R Architects in 2016 on the four principles of creativity, customer-centricity, contextual design and collaboration. Together, they have led the firm to create great spaces and win numerous awards.

For both Patel and Lohar, architecture was not just a career choice but a natural calling. Patel recalls his childhood inclination towards art and making models from his notebook hardcovers. It was a natural progression for him to pursue architecture as a career. Lohar attributes his passion to his lineage. Growing up watching his father on the drafting board inspired him to enter the field of design and follow the path of interior design.

At R+R, design is an organic process: It should come automatically and effortlessly. The emphasis is on efficiency, honest expression of materials and technological advancements. For them every design decision is intentional, ensuring that technology serves the space, like using features such as smart lighting and adaptive climate control.

Among their many projects, Patel's favourite is The Russet Abode, which blends modernism and brutalism. Inspired by the Delo concept, the entryway draws from traditional elements. The house has a climate-responsive, C-shaped layout, with a central courtyard facing north that optimises sunlight and ventilation, with the southwest face blocked and the northeast open. Materials like concrete, exposed brick, and warm wood interiors are used to create a harmonious balance. With full-length windows and a grand double-height verandah, the design seamlessly



Raghav Patel (left) and Ramesh Lohar

Raghav Patel, founder, principal architect
Ramesh Lohar, founder, interior designer, R+R Architects

connects indoor and outdoor spaces.

For Lohar, Zaura, a luxury jewellery boutique, exemplifies his vision of blending naturalism with modernism. The boutique redefines luxury retail by creating a space that feels like a museum of jewellery, the design being inspired by raw stone caves. Every design element is custom-made to enhance its aesthetics. Strategic lighting accentuates the jewellery while maintaining a warm and inviting ambiance.

Patel and Lohar consider AI as a transformative tool for architecture, making designs more efficient,

creative and sustainable. At R+R, AI is a natural extension of their vision, to value efficiency, logic and honest expressions of materials and explore innovative ideas while staying true to timeless, user-centric designs. AI helps streamline workflows, automate repetitive tasks, and analyse vast data sets allowing architects to focus on creativity and strategy. AI enhances human intuition by helping to design spaces that resonate with people and evolve with their needs.

The co-founders envision the future of architecture in adaptive spaces that evolve with people, climate and technology. With AI, biometrics, and kinetic structures evolving, young architects and designers should master the fundamentals before innovation to design not just buildings but living, breathing systems.

• KAMAYNI

Balancing Human Aspirations and the Ecosystem

Architecture is a great responsibility to strike the right balance between human aspirations and our ecosystem,” says Sunil Patil, founder, principal architect, and managing director at Sunil Patil & Associates. Founded in 1994, Sunil Patil & Associates is a multi-award-winning architectural and interior design consultancy that is passionate about sustainable and environment-friendly designs. With Sunil, Sanjay Patil, and Anuja Pandit at the helm, the firm has completed a diverse range of projects, including public buildings, hotels, townships, commercial complexes, institutional blocks and villas.

With a sound background in construction (his father being a building contractor), and with a natural flair for art, Sunil chose architecture as a career. Sanjay is a civil engineer-turned-architecture consultant, bringing his technical expertise to the design process. Anuja’s early inclination towards art, and the design of her childhood home,

sparked her interest in architecture.

Sunil’s creative process is fuelled by his constant urge for innovation; he strives to create unique user experiences ensuring that every design is fresh and engaging. Anuja believes that architecture should respond to climate, context and time; she is sensitive about environmental designs and follows the philosophy “form follows climate”. Her goal is to make functional and future-proof designs by integrating technology and digital systems within the architecture.

Within their repository of projects, each has their personal favourites.

Sunil Patil

founder, principal architect,
managing director

Sanjay Patil

technical director

Anuja Pandit

design director,
Sunil Patil & Associates

Sunil takes pride in The Collector’s Office, a public building designed not only for government authorities but the public. His design transcends the client brief, and focuses on the courtyard, plazas and buffer space to create an inclusive environment. Sanjay’s notable project is the newly designed Bus Station at Baramati, which stands out for its aesthetic appeal and structural engineering. A 32-m span between columns with a long cantilever canopy and the use of zinc roofing adds a touch of elegance, creating a building that is both beautiful and functional. Anuja recently completed a project, Sarthi Head Office, a government institution providing technical education to underprivileged students. Designed to provide a serene environment, the building integrates public areas like a courtyard and an amphitheatre. Climate-responsive architecture ensures natural light and ventilation while vertical fins protect from harsh sunlight.

Sunil is optimistic about modern technologies such as AI that enhance efficiency, reduce labour work and time, and improve precision. Anuja views AI as an enabler of new design possibilities, such as generative design and creating more personalised and adaptive buildings. Sanjay believes that AI can enhance creativity and productivity, making structures more responsive to user needs and environmental factors.

They envision future architecture as an integration of sensibility, sustainability, technology and user experience. Smart buildings equipped with digital systems and data integration to improve user efficiency and comfort are imminent. 

• KAMAYNI



From left:
Anuja Pandit,
Sunil Patil and
Sanjay Patil