

# spotlight

The third edition of Times Property Archlights recognised the invaluable contribution of Architect Vivek Bhole

## FAST FACT

ONE OF THE KEY STRENGTHS OF SUCCESS IS FORGING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS, ACCORDING TO AR. VIVEK BHOLE

# GLOBAL EXCELLENCE IN INDIA

Mumbai-based architect Vivek Bhole proves that Indian architects can do as well as, and even better, than their foreign counterparts; Times Property Archlights celebrates his astonishing success from humble beginnings

### QUICK BYTE

AR. VIVEK BHOLE BELIEVES FIRMLY IN LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS AND A STRONG CLIENT FOCUS

When Vivek Bhole was an eighth standard student from a modest farmer's family in Jalgaon, he joined architect Arun Bhole on the insistence of his elder brother and gained his first exposure to the world of architectural drawings. By 15, he had already achieved his first line-out on site.

Ar. Bhole formally studied architecture at Sir J J College of Architecture, and in 1996, he established his own firm, Neo Modern Architects in Mumbai, starting with a two-member team in rented premises. Less than two decades later—and with some of the country's most spectacular projects behind him—he is all set to move into a 50,000 sq ft workspace, with his 225-member team, whom he sees as extended family. Through this amazing growth trajectory, his wife Ar. Yogita Bhole, has provided firm and unstinting support.

On July 30, 2012, when a huge number of clients and other associates congregated at The Lalit hotel in Mumbai to felicitate him at the third Times Property Archlights event, there was no doubt that Vivek Bhole was a truly well loved and respected architect, friend,

and creator of some of India's most magnificent structures.

There were developers who had stayed with him throughout his architectural career, building landmarks from malls to IT parks, residential towers to townships. As a client remarked during the event, Ar. Bhole has also designed 18 skywalks in Mumbai and even an underwater platform for a hovercraft project in the city. SEZs like Swarnabhoomi at Chennai and SDF IV at Hyderabad Gems SEZ Ltd. are also his, and Ar. Vivek Bhole's wide-ranging portfolio includes projects in the commercial, retail, residential, infrastructure, and hospitality industries. From Kolhapur to Kerala, Chennai to China, to Africa, the Middle East and Spain, Ar. Bhole has left his mark in 60 Indian cities and elsewhere across the globe, with offices in Mumbai, Jaipur, Delhi, Jalgaon and China.

In Mumbai, as Chief Guest Prakash D'Souza, Vice-President, The Times of India, pointed out, residents will recognise projects such as Dreams Mall in Bhandup, DLH Park in Goregaon, Supreme Signature in Chembur, Satra Park in Borivali and Satra Plaza in Vashi, Rustomjee Summit

near S V Road and many more. International accolades have naturally come his way; One Avighna at Currey Road, for instance, has been recognised as Best Residential High-Rise Development, Asia Pacific.

On Monday night, it was his team members and clients that Ar. Bhole acknowledged for his success. "We were told that great architecture requires great clients," he said, adding that satisfying the clients always provided great opportunities to learn.

He also pointed out that he preferred to personally spend time with clients, understanding their needs, and then "time is no limit". There was one time when he left someone's office at 11.30 p.m. and returned at 9 a.m. with a solution for FSI utilisation that saved the client a great deal of money.

There were many challenges along the way, of course; certainly there were clients who came with pre-conceived notions, or showed him drawings by foreign architects. With patience and persistence, Ar. Bhole made them recognize that foreign architects asked for huge advances, charged extra for every small change they made, and they did not necessarily connect their work with

municipal approvals. The relationships with clients were built slowly and, over the years, were turned into long-term friendships.

Ar. Bhole's value for his team also came through when he said: "Only if I have good staff can I retain good clients. And I believe good staff does not come ready-made; they have to be trained, taught and moulded."

One of the highlights of the evening was when the emcee Lekha Rochh actually went out into the audience to ask for views on Ar. Bhole. Real estate developer and film-maker Vashu Bhagnani was full of praise, stating he had worked with Ar. Bhole for a decade; Ashok Mohanani, Chairman and Managing Director, Ekta World stated that he and his son Vivek had been associated with him for one-and-a-half decades. Film-maker N Chandra said that his project, a small theatre in Mumbai, would have been "one of the tiniest" for Ar. Bhole but he was always given service like it was the biggest they were doing. More than one client pointed out that Ar. Bhole did not work for money. By the time a client who had known him for just 15 days presented him with a poem, Ar. Bhole was clearly overwhelmed. A surprise audio-visual prepared by his staff added to the emotion. 'Unstoppable'. 'Fantastic'. 'Genius'. 'Humble'... these were among the words used to describe him.

One of the most touching moments of the evening came when Ar. Vivek Bhole's mother Sunanda Bhole was led to the dais to release her son's book, *The Power of Design*. A new logo and website were also unveiled on the occasion, and so was the four-page Archlights special feature that was distributed with The Times of India the following day.

While Ar. Vivek Bhole reached a milestone in his career when he was felicitated by Times Property Archlights, he will certainly not be resting on his laurels. With 700 ongoing projects and a targeted 21 crore sq. ft to be built there will be no time to rest.

As Wilfred Fernandes, Founder and Director, Young Media, which had conceived and executed Archlights said, "The first time we interacted with Vivek Bhole and his team, we knew this initiative would go a long way." Clearly, everyone who was present on July 30, 2012, agreed.



>> PRAKASH D'SOUZA, VICE-PRESIDENT, THE TIMES OF INDIA, FELICITATES AR. VIVEK BHOLE



>> FROM LEFT, AR. YOGITA BHOLE, AR. VIVEK BHOLE AND HIREN PATEL, MD, ARIISTO REALTORS



>> MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATE ENTHUSIASTICALLY IN THE DISCUSSION



>> AR. VIVEK BHOLE WITH MEMBERS OF HIS TEAM, HIS 'EXTENDED FAMILY'