

All SET for **SUCCESS**

Danish Khatri dabbles in all forms of architecture, but his real love is set designing, which he now teaches to young and upcoming set designers

Divya Mangwani

What forms the scene for a film and takes it from mediocrity to magic are the sets and its designs. One such film that made elaborate use of sets was *Devdas*, where 20th century Kolkata was recreated at the Film City in Mumbai.

Pune-based architect Danish Khatri, who contributed on the sets under the direction of famous set designer Nitin Desai, believes it was an eye-opening experience for his career. He recalls the sets in detail. "Chandramukhi's *kotha* was constructed next to an artificial lake, to make it look like a set in Benaras by the Ganges. A temple city surrounded the set; the inspiration taken from the Dilwara Temples in Rajasthan. For the creation of Paro's room in a *haveli*, 12,200 pieces of stained glass were used."

The six sets cost about Rs200 million and took Khatri to the world of set design.

And so the architect, interior designer, landscape designer and Vaastu consultant added another feather to his cap—set designing.

"Set designing involves creating sets for films, TV serials, live concerts, fashion shows and even weddings. You have to understand the concept fully and create a set that will not only be realistic, but also will represent it aesthetically", defines Khatri. The sets he has worked on have been large scale and lavish, which need creativity and vision but, the set designer rues, some of them have to be disassembled after the shooting is complete.

His other projects, however have withstood time and this includes the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), which he designed in association with architect Prashant Deshmukh. He also won the Single Stage Open Design Competition in 2004. "It gave me an opportunity to design the prestigious building that would represent India's chemical power," he says. Semi-circular domes and use of space helped create the institutional building located in Pashan.

Khatri is also an interior designer and believes in harmonising climatology with interior spaces. His style co-relates with his advocacy of Vaastu Shastra as he stresses,



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"Vaastu is pure science based on climatology concepts. To dispel their misconceptions, I give my clients reasons and authentications behind the belief."

As a landscape designer, the project he is proud of is a work in progress at the behest of the Daman government, to give a boost to fishery. His design

involves a mergence of two concepts, the stipulated fishery and global warming. "The rhombus-shaped land has an elevated hill in the centre with a 10 ft high and 15 ft wide human hand-filled with water and emerging dolphins. I have used indigenous trees like Cycas and Palm and paving stones since the climate does not favour the growth of grass," he describes. Currently, he is a guest lecturer on set designing in a few event management and design institutes in Pune. The architect was the first in the country to start a one-year specialised course in set design in 2008.

