

Rich in Detail

Armed with a simple material palette and several clever ideas, architect Kanan Modi has created a warm, bright and welcoming workspace for TGV Group of Companies in Hyderabad.

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The foyer comprises the reception, waiting area and a small meeting room. Light comes in plenty from the central courtyard covered by frosted-glass.



ARCHITECT

Kanan Modi

Workspaces are of varied natures. They can be fun, quirky, serious, staid, boring and antiseptic. And then there are those that don't look like a workspace. Like the Hyderabad office which architect Kanan Modi (of EL+D Architecture + Interior Design) created for the TGV Group of Companies. "The idea was that it had to look like a home; warm and welcoming," she says. "The brief was to create an office that would promote collaboration and openness; a work environment which would be bright and spacious, welcoming and comfortable not only to its teams but also its visitors."

The space, before it donned its current avatar, was a project stuck in limbo for several years: partially finished, sporting materials that had long disappeared from the trends list. "This was the challenge in taking up the site: it was partly done up and unfinished. However, once we made some key space-planning decisions and knocked down a few walls, it was easy to visualize the next steps. We decided to open up the space as much as we could to bring in plenty of space to move around and for daylight to reach even the remotest cabin in the office. With the client's immense support and encouragement at every step, it has been a wonderful journey seeing the project through completion," enthuses Kanan. Of the "key

9 To 5



CONCEPT: To design an office space that would be spacious, with a global appeal, compatible with the company's values and provide plenty of collaborative opportunities to its teams.

space-planning decisions”, one was to optimize the proportions of the MD's cabin and adjacent boardroom; another was to ‘erase’ the dated redwood panelling with white paint.

The spatial configuration revolves a central building duct that has been fashioned into a frosted-glass box to “act as a dominant natural light source that assures sufficient light through the entire work day. Taking advantage of a central court, the layout has been planned in such a way that the controlled daylight reaches out to every corner of the large office floor plate,” discloses the architect. Around this ‘courtyard’ are arranged a reception space with a meeting room, two work zones (organized in an L) for different disciplines within the organization, and the management zone with a large boardroom. Spacious hallways also ring the courtyard. Always flooded with natural light, these connect all the zones together.



The reception area is defined by oak wood panelling for its entire length, with the desk itself being made with wooden slats. Hot-rolled steel planters have been embedded into the reception counter and also into the wall defining the main hallway, to add a dash of greenery and warmth. Workstations are clean-lined on a beige palette to create a

TOP The reception seating. A comfortable couch peppered with multiple soft cushions and fresh plants create a home-like setting. Terrazzo unfurls its creamy charm on the floor.

ABOVE Surrounding the courtyard is a corridor-like transition space that acts as a break-out area for informal collaboration.



TOP Flos' 'Aim Suspension' light installation ensures warm and consistent lighting along the entire length of the boardroom table.

ABOVE The glass-walled boardroom overlooks the internal courtyard. On the wall are customized light fixtures that contribute a gentle glow to the space.

MATERIALS

Flooring Terrazzo (main areas) and oak wood (conference room and boardroom)
Reception table Slatted teak wood, black glass and hot rolled steel planter
bed terrazzo Wall panelling American Oak Wood
Washrooms Granite and vitrified tiles (general washroom) and Coffee Travertine and Antique Beige (MD's washroom)
MD's work desk Armani Bronze marble

clutter-free and work-focused environment. A large hallway that culminates into a waiting area, leads into the boardroom and the MD's cabin. A custom-designed lighting feature embedded into the wood panelled walls, is the highlight of these spaces. "These gentle back-lit niches are deceptively simple; a lot of trial has gone into making them functional and decorative at the same time," says Kanan. "LED lighting has been inserted into the wall panels and covered with frosted-glass panels of varying sizes. Maintenance doors are provided for accessing each light and these are detailed to be a part of the varying wood panels on the same wall, concealing all hardware."



Staying away from rich materials and fancy textures — elements that would detract from the comfortable, warm feel — the design focused on fine detailing to conceal and appear minimalistic. Terrazzo flooring with white marble chips, white oak and glass are the three main materials. The canvas has been retained in white and beige (predominantly white walls and a beige terrazzo floor). Wood panelling across the length of areas such as the reception area, MD's cabin and boardroom add the sophistication and warmth to the neutral palette. The hot-rolled steel planter boxes embedded in the wall across the courtyard is another such detail, which is a minimalistic addition that breaks the monotony and adds a touch of colour to the large white wall. The planter box and glass insertion also filters in the courtyard light into the workspaces.

1, 2 & 3 Long tables, small ones arranged in a file, private cubicles... workstations have different configurations and privacies. The common denominator is the subdued colour scheme and the clean lines.

4 Breaking the monotony of a large partition wall are the linear planter boxes that screen the workspace and also infuse freshness into the internal environment.

5 Collaboration space: Predominantly white with a dash of dark colours makes for an inviting corner.

Furniture has been picked up from across the country; some of it has been custom-made on





In addition to daylighting, three more lighting strategies elevate practical comfort, task lighting and an ambient glow. Architectural lighting on the ceiling provides consistent lighting through space. The aforementioned light installation in the walls of the MD's cabin and boardroom creates a warm sophisticated glow against the wooden backdrop of the section. Decorative lamps such as a brass floor lamp from Charcoal Project by the MD's seating lounge and a Michael Anastassiades ceiling hung lamp next to the MD's desk, add a glow of sophistication. The boardroom is dominated by the Aim Suspension light installation from Flos that provides a beautiful light quality at the large table.

Understated yet making a statement, neutral yet sophisticated, minimal and yet richly detailed, the TGV office reconciles several disparate qualities with ease... creating an environment that is comfortable, warm and a pleasure to work in! **BI**

TOP Sophisticated and understated, the MD's cabin is divided into three zones: a work area with a desk against the wall, a formal section with a large table, and a lounge for informal meetings.

ABOVE The custom-made light installation embedded in the walls adds a gentle glow and sophistication to the seating space of the MD's cabin.

site. The white upholstered and walnut base armchairs and the round table by their side in the hallways for open collaboration are from Anantaya, Jaipur. The lounge chair, the architect's favourite, in the MD's cabin is a Fritz Hansen masterpiece — the Space Chair. While the MD's desk chair is from Bo Concept, the sofas and coffee tables have been custom-made.

FACT FILE: Project Office for TGV Group Location Hyderabad Area 8,000 sq ft Principal architect Kanan Modi