

INDANA PALACE HOTEL JODHPUR



A property that strives to preserve the past without disturbing the ecology, the Indana Palace Hotel is a visual treat; a truly harmonious blend of ancient Rajasthani architecture, Marwari culture and modern amenities

Heritage retrofits can be an expensive proposition. The process is not simple. In fact, the challenges are many. Not only do the architects have to work within certain restrictions, they cannot innovate freely. However, Indana Palace Hotel, was created by individuals who chose to take up the challenge of creating a building that breathed the essence of Marwar, fused into the culture-rich surroundings of Rajasthan, and could combat the extreme climate of the region. The end result was an eco-friendly dream facility that was capable of providing a memorable, comfortable, luxurious and regal stay.

Project Overview

The conceptual design of the hotel reflects the Rajasthani architecture, which was prevalent in the 16th century. This type of architecture is characterized by the use of intricate column designs, arches, domes, carvings, *jaali* (lattice) work, massive open courtyards and elemental *chattries*. The basic idea was to showcase the essence of Marwar through the architecture of the building and create an astonishing structure resembling a heritage hotel. The design is so conceptualized by the architects that whoever sets eyes on the structure is transported to the grand era of the rulers of Marwar.

Design Objectives

The challenge faced by the architects was to retro-fit an ancient piece of art, which would preserve a slice of the grand heritage while maintaining the post-modern urban fabric. The project was to be spread over a total built-up area of 1,24,000 sq.ft and estimated to cost Rs 60 crores (INR).

The objectives were:

- To create an iconic or ground breaking design that people can relate to, that would provide a sense of space, and also help people relate to the past
- To add a distinctive identity to the new built fabric and urban design

scheme while recreating the magic and grandeur of the past

- To enhance the townscape and the overall quality of the built environment
- To make an eco-friendly state-of-the-art structure by introducing new, compatible technologies without losing the architectural integrity of the hotel
- To create a simple, sustainable environment using eco-friendly ideas that would make the most of the bright, sunny weather and extreme temperatures of the 'Sun City' of Jodhpur (most modern day requirements of eco-friendly architecture were fulfilled using



Figure 1: The Dome



Figure 2: The stage within the courtyard



Figure 3: The jaaliwork and sit-out

the concepts of 16th century architectural designs.)

- To ensure that the main building is strategically designed to facilitate perfect cross-ventilation, with the internal courtyard maintaining a soothing environment, centrally, within the building.
- To ensure that the massive expanse of the building project does not lead to guests being tired and frustrated while crossing from end to end. (As a result, passages were created at the ground level, alongside the internal courtyard so that the guests are taken in by the beauty of the building and the landscape. The upper level passages were wisely designed so as to keep the guests occupied one moment with views of the outer building, and the next instance with views of the internal courtyard.



Figure 4a & 4b: The passages / corridors

There are sit-outs at specific points of the passages, some facing the internal courtyard and some embracing the subtle outside view.)

- To create a sense of balance, internally, within the building. (As a result, the central stage was conceptualized within the courtyard, with channelled water bodies creating the perfect setting for performances that balanced the landscaping and designing from the inside. Refer Figure 2)
- To create an attractive entrance that would mesmerize guests by its very presence. (The dome helped meet this architectural challenge. Not only is it an architecturally sound feature, but it brings a comprehensive finish to the entire structure. Being a separate entity from the building, it possesses a stable and sound structure as well as its own grand identity)



Figure 4c: The corridors

Striking Features

The distinctive aspects of the architecture of the property that strike a visitor are:

- i) The massive entry porch with a huge dome, giving a feeling of might and a distinguished presence in the vicinity (Refer Figure 1).
- ii) The intricate designs of the *jaalis* and the patterns taken from Rajasthani architecture (Refer Figure 3).
- iii) The intricately designed capitals of the columns and the carved *chattries* giving the building a stable and balanced appearance and a luxurious, royal look.
- iv) The internal courtyard designed to create a calm and soothing environment within the building.
- v) The passages around the internal courtyard designed to draw and hold the attention of the guests, through their sheer beauty so that the time spent strolling is overlooked (Refer Figure 4a & b).
- vi) Strategically designed sit-outs from where the guests can relish the beauty of the building and its elements.
- vii) The intricate details adopted from Rajasthani architecture, such as the carved *chajjas* and mouldings around the building that add to its heritage appearance.
- viii) The intricately carved bracket details that render finesse to the entire design.
- ix) The dome resting separately from the building, showing off its

intricate carvings, reflects its own sense of power and stability.

- x) The intricately carved *jarokhas*, so characteristic of Rajasthani architecture, add to the beauty of the property. ■

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Kunal Pakhar is an architect who holds a Bachelor's degree in architecture, from the University of Mumbai. He won the Green Design Urban Space award in 2009 and the Ecological Hotel Design award at 'Transperence', in 2009. He is a specialist in green building designing, parametric architecture, architectural designing, interior designing and landscaping. He is Design Architect of the firm Designers.

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