



the indian review of  
world furniture,  
interiors and design

66

volume 13 . issue 01 . january - february 2016

The battle for a  
better built  
environment is  
neither a tantrum  
nor a romantic  
crusade. It is  
nothing more – but  
also nothing less –  
than the disciplined  
construction of the  
spaces in which life  
takes place.

AR. ALEJANDRO ARAVENA  
PRITZKER LAUREATE, 2016



INSIDE :

if FOCUS : THE SALON AND SPA INDUSTRY if SALUTES : AR. ALEJANDRO ARAVENA  
if INDUSTRY FORUM : OFFICE FURNITURE if TECH+DESIGN : HOME APPLIANCES



# i feel good: THE SALON AND SPA INDUSTRY

though james brown wasn't singing of the spa and wellness industry, this is the industry that's making much of middle and upper end india feel good, in good times and bad, making it the clear winner over other, less consistent fies !

**Commercial spaces** do not exist without profitability and the galloping proliferation of spas and salons is a clear pointer to the boom in the segment. Despite the recent downturn in the economy, the wellness industry grew 16.9% in 2011 driven by the salon segment and the increasingly affluent 25-49 age population. The growth was seen mostly in Tier 1 towns and metros such as Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune and the NCR (New Delhi region) and the trend has carried down to Tier 2 cities such as Nashik, Dehradun and Baroda. The Indian wellness market stood at an estimated market size of ₹ 700 billion in 2012, a growth of more than 18% over the previous year.

kut express salon, mumbai | sumesh menon associates, mumbai





style & scissors, jaipur | shantanu garg designs, jaipur



a degree salon, vadodara | usine studio, vadodara

Companies have commonly gone the franchising route to achieve scale while keeping options open via hybrid models and increasing the reach of the network of their own outlets to reduce loss of control and brand dilution.

In order to access the vast range of the Indian consumer profile, companies create a multi-brand portfolio of salon and spa offerings to target distinct customer segments and penetrate deeper into existing and newer markets, while investing in building consumer awareness and trust.

The Indian salon, spa and wellness industry has seen a drastic change in the design of interior spaces in the last few decades. Design has moved from the functional to the experiential. Equipment was bulky and spaces were large, with a lack of any sort of special differentiation.

Ar. Manish Gulati, Principal Architect and Director, M:OFA Studio, New Delhi, says spas date back to historical times. "If we look back at the Great Bath from the Harappan Civilization and in recent memory and influence the *hammams* introduced by the Mughals brought the culture of the community bath or spa. Subsequently the advent of the British, the French and the Portuguese and their 200-year rule largely ended up defining a generic aesthetic sensibility of a colony that India was till 1947. It bore no apparent connection to its locational context or necessarily climate or skill sets available in India." He says they now "consciously weave local skill sets, elements, crafts and materials which may have otherwise gone into a deep freeze in our combined consciousness into the design. This is not just happening in salons or interiors, it is happening across the country and across various fields. It has just dawned on us how culturally and intellectually gifted we still are as a nation."

Architects see spas and salons evolving in the direction of being more niche but "big on design and experience as an ambience and identity. They will be very specific catering to specific customer groups, typologies, services and paying segments. The interiors too would exude the identity of the brand and the chemistry it shares with its users. We will see more customized spaces, be it nail spas, bridal sections, hair pampering zones, sauna and spas in resonance with the local culture and aesthetics."

Shantanu Garg, Owner, Architect, Interior & Product Designer, Shantanu Garg Design, Jaipur, says, "Salons were initially small spaces meant primarily for women users, but later evolved as a necessity for all and eventually became a big industry. Now people want to indulge in luxury in all aspects of their lifestyle and want to visit high end salons for grooming services. We expect to see holistic salon spaces that are not devoid of aesthetics and design. Emphasis on design is what we suggest to take the salon industry to the next level."

Technology, the proven game changer has changed this game too, as Rahoul B Singh,

Architect, RLDA Design Studio, New Delhi, says, "From nondescript functional spaces, salons have come a long way in becoming extremely glamorous. Technology has greatly influenced material palettes than can be used. 2D and 3D printing, materials like FRPs and Corian can be used to completely transform an empty cuboid of space."

In 2011 health and wellness chain, VLCC opened 160 centres across the country, (of which 40 were franchises) indicating the potential of the industry. Despite this, the industry is not free of challenges. High costs and limited capacity to pass this on to the customer and optimize cost structures, a paucity of skilled talent resulting in high manpower costs and attrition levels, and poor perception of quality parameters necessitates the improvement of the overall quality standards within the sector, to successfully project the image of India as a high-quality wellness destination. Accreditation and quality certifications are pre-requisites that need more focus, as well before the industry can live up to its full potential which industry estimates put at well over a trillion rupees in the next financial. **ifj**

ambika pillai salon | rlda studio, new delhi







**Architect:**  
M:OFA Studio, New Delhi

**Client brief :**

A space with a distinct vocabulary, a set of exclusive requirements to establish a strong identity of the startup brand, Monsoon, and to impart it with a unique upbeat language synchronous with the label's work ethic, making it unique in the overcrowded salon and spa space.

**Translation into reality :**

The concept centers around the effect of the monsoon after the scorching summer heat, with the idea of rejuvenation via the salon services tied into the design of the interiors. The ideation for Monsoon Ambience involved the bare essentials, discarded the fuss and came out with a more abstract outlook that still exemplified the brand identity.

Material selection was kept to its purest tone and form and a neutral color palette used, despite the red of the Monsoon corporate color.

**Materials | Techniques :**

Recycled shipping pallets, exposed RCC finish, recycled railway sleeper

wooden partitions, epoxy floors, lights made of discarded old. Musical instruments, signage work created with laser cut MS, use of engraving for the word 'Monsoon over the brickwork, extensive use of wooden planks and exposed brick walls with controlled LED lighting. All furniture customized (fixed stands and trolleys) leading to 25% cost saving.

**The space :**

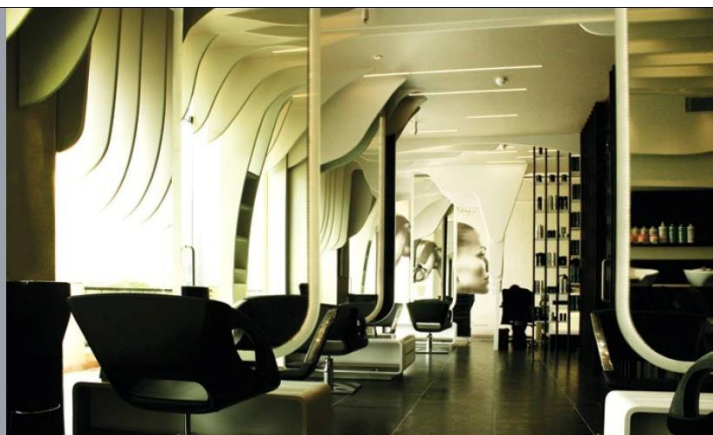
The reception is defined by the Monsoon signage created in laser cut MS with multiple typefaces at the entrance. This leads to semi-rejuvenation zones where the elements of light, clean epoxy floors with display shelves and in-lit mirrors, suspended from the ceiling make the whole space lighter, visually. They also act as partitions between the semi-rejuvenation and rejuvenation zones, permitting privacy while letting light through.

The continuous open plan is divided in two sections; dry areas for nail and hair styling and wet areas for pedicure stations and 5 beauty rooms connected by a visual linkage.

# MONSOON AMBIENCE, NEW DELHI







**Architect:**  
M:OFA Studio, New Delhi

**Client brief :**

London-based Toni & Guy with a network of 475 salons in 48 countries demanded a global language to be infused into the architecture prompting familiarity yet keeping the individuality of the spaces.

**Translation into reality :**

An energy-efficient monochromatic glass box stands apart light and sophisticated amid the cluttered brick and concrete of present day Gurgaon. Besides incorporating the trademark monochromatic palette of black and white with slivers of grey consistent with the interiors of Toni & Guy worldwide, the architects created a flow of light, unobstructed flow of planes, floating partitions to create a clean working atmosphere.

The concept shows the innate relationship of hair and comb with seamless flowing tresses formed by the ceiling, hung with laser cut MDF partitions, suspended like stalactites over a ceremonial ivory toothed comb. The salon follows an open plan with these 'tresses' making the distinction between spaces within the salon; hair styling tables separated by double-sided mirrors, pedi-spa areas, spa therapy rooms, shampoo stations and an enclosed hair coloring section. Fashion models and their hair stylists frozen into the tangential interiors of transparent glass, dark

wood, white panels and black stools sliced by double sided mirrors create the look of the interiors.

The glass façade of this monochromatic glass box was also treated with the nuances of the ceiling and comes more dramatically into play in the evening. Linear LEDs across the ceiling conceal the edges of the panels and mirrors and with the spot lighting over the booths, warm up the glass box against a dark backdrop.

A service corridor running along the edge buffers the salon and brings in day light into the salon while being a fenestration tool for the building.

**Materials | Techniques :**

Vitrified tiles, laser cut mdf panels, LED lights, glass, Corian, ply board

# TONI & GUY, GURGAON, HARYANA

