

ODE TO NAVI MUMBAI

The Taj Vivanta Vashi, designed by The BNK Group, has an architecture that reflects both the culture and context of Navi Mumbai

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



A hotel whose design keeps the ethos of the local community, the youthfulness of the new age young millennial traveller and the aura and maturity of the Taj Group, the Vivanta Vashi ensures all these aspects come together seamlessly.

DESIGN ETHOS

Located in Navi Mumbai, this greenfield property was initially planned to be a Gateway, then a Taj and eventually a Vivanta brand. The idea was to reflect a brand and a hotel that catered to the millennial traveller. Behzad Kharas, Chairman & MD, The BNK Group explains, "The first few Vivanta's that have a clearly defined a brand story and what we want it to depict; and that is when we realised that Vivanta is a hotel that needs to be designed for the new age traveller. Hence the design needed to be young. It could not be as opulent as a Taj Hotel, and needed to look trendy, young and have some contextual features of where it is built."

The design palette of this hotel is defined by its location, an area which is frequented by flamingos and also the fact that Navi Mumbai is one of the first planned cities in modern India. The third aspect that dictates the design is Vivanta's new logo, which is a

formulation of lines and dots. Inspired by the Eastern harbour, where flamingos are regular visitors, as well as the fluidity of water, each piece of art at this hotel is related in context to its surroundings. 'Sophisticated quirkiness' is how the art can be best defined here.

COLOUR CODED

Mint, blue, mauve, and ultraviolet, the branding colour of Vivanta with pops of yellow ochre, and the fluidity of water make this an art-inspired hotel. This is evident in the lobby area, where you see the reception art, which interprets the master plan Vashi in a 3D form.

The entire master plan of Navi Mumbai is converted into an artistic



impression where the round wire mesh balls depict the mangroves while the buildings are shown using building pegs, and the road network is also shown. The corridor has a fluid design scheme, as seen in the asymmetrical two-sided sofa, as well as the carpet.

The rooms have also been designed to reflect a modern and contemporary minimalist feel with clean, crisp lines and minimal furniture. The whole idea was to give a very refreshing today's millennial Instagrammable look.



ECLECTIC DINING

Inspired by the colours of the flamingos dipping into the ocean water, Mynt the all-day diner is designed to have a flamboyant dining experience. Blending with Mynt is Swirl, a deli with its own chic Parisian feel that blends beautifully into one space.

"One of the biggest challenges was blending two outlets into one as we were short on space and had to work on the look and feel of one unit and yet be different simultaneously. We cleverly managed this by changing the ceiling heights dramatically and using wall panelling that rises from the floor and curves into the ceiling. Hence, the outlets have their own identity," says Kharas.

Mynt has an open interactive kitchen with flamingo-themed curtains to separate the dining spaces and an interesting, patterned flooring with inlay patterns. The light fixture above the buffet counter covers the chimney and adds a bright spot with the dash and dot design inspired by the brand's logo. The playful restobar Wink has alfresco seating and the same colour palette of green, blue, and mauve.



OPULENT BANQUETS

The 327 sq.m of banquet space has again been designed unconventionally. While you will not find typical chandeliers here, the light fixture is a strong, colourful one that is designed like an array of colours that can be seen when flamingos dip their wings into the water. "We wanted to go offbeat in the banquet and continue the idea of fluidity seen on the carpet where we have tried to depict a modern interpretation of an ocean floor," says Kharas.

All the light fixtures have been customised and developed in India, like most of the furniture and furnishings. "This is our first hotel project designed during COVID, and the project started getting built after the first wave. It has been designed and built through challenging times. After all the adversity we faced, the outcome became even more emotional for us and new norms for F&B and logistic and health challenges made sure that this was a unique journey for us. It was a great team effort, especially from the client's project management, as their in-house project managers did a brilliant job on site. Most things were happening virtually, and the hotel was built without our physical on-ground presence, and to see it as a reality is the best thing," signs off Kharas. ■

PROJECT INFORMATION:

- Lighting consultant:** Lighting design studio
- MEP consultant:** Nat Engineering
- Structural consultant:** Hansal Parekh Consultant
- Landscape Architect:** OV Design Pvt. Ltd.
- Façade consultant:** Exteria façade Consultant
- Kitchen consultant:** ATN Consultant
- Project contractor:** DN Mistry