

THE MATTER OF



DESIGN

In Oman, the interior designing and decorating industry is cashing in on the Sultanate's booming property market. OER Dossier takes an overview of some of the major players in the interior designing industry in Oman

Oman is rapidly emerging as a key real estate investment destination for regional and foreign investors. According to market analysts, the real estate boom bodes well for the construction sector as well as the interior designing industry. Studies also confirm that the property boom has triggered high demand for interior furnishings and decorations and that the market for interior products is growing steadily with the construction of new hotels, luxury villas

Khuwair for 80 staff (2,200 square metres), Salman Stores at CCC, and office of Daleel Petroleum for 100 staff. Design Consultants has also done a few interior designing projects in the villas and houses at north Ghubra.

Commenting on the interior designing trend in Oman's residential segment, S. R. Ranade, Technical Director, Design Consultants, said, "There is a growing preference for the traditional Omani cultural theme and people want their

Workstations are getting more open and airy and emphasis on lighting, ventilation (air-conditioning) is increasing, he adds. Provision for prayer rooms in offices is essential along with pantry room, apart from utilising space for adequate electrical points and points for data networking. In offices, gypsum board partition and glass doors with part visibility are trendy, he says.

In showroom designing, emphasis on adequate lighting provision is very im-



and apartments, modern industrial facilities, and prestigious properties in various parts of the Sultanate.

Given the present property boom across all sectors in Oman, there is huge potential for interior designing and decorating firms. Among the leaders of the interior designing industry are Design Consultants, one of the leading architects, engineers and planners in Oman. Set up in 1980, Design Consultant is mainly in architecture and planning and organising interior decoration, focussing on commercial interior design. The recent notable office interior designing projects accomplished by Design Consultants include MB Petroleum's office at Al Athaiba (4,500 square metre area); office of Electricity Holding Company at Al

building to blend with Oman's culture. Very few people like western style and the trend is towards oriental style. They like to display their antique pieces and furniture in their homes. In residences, direct access to any room of the house is generally discouraged and entrance should only be from the main door to maintain privacy. Secondly, the latest fashion is that people like multi-coloured walls in the same room. Further, use of spotlights, gypsum false ceilings, decorative lighting, etc in interiors is also growing. There is also a growing demand for central air-conditioning away from split ACs or duct ACs."

In office architecture, low partition and workstations are more common than cabin structure, he says, as it is not cost effective and occupies more space.

portant to highlight the product. Generally, he says, wall washer, spotlights and overall lights are the three types of lights used in showrooms. Secondly, display area and storage area have to be balanced in showrooms. Flooring tiles have to be heavy-duty, and false ceiling with acoustical properties is essential to absorb sound, Ranade adds.

Fareeda Design is another major firm that specialises in interior decoration and design. Established in 1994, Fareeda Design has carved a niche for interior and architectural consultancy in Oman. As Fareeda Al Battashy, Managing Director, says, "Interior design is no longer just about the art of decorating settings and bedrooms, but has evolved into an art, which also involves the science of utilising the space

available at its best efficiency, and securing the productivity of those using its environment.”

Having projects ranging from major hospitals to hotels, commercial and residential, Fareeda Design has in its portfolio clients including four of Oman’s leading banks and prominent national and international companies. For instance, it has completed a number of branches and ATM outlets for BankMuscat having seated service desks combined with traditional cashiers and open tellers. From BOBK merger with Combank (Commercial Bank of Oman) to eventual merger of Combank with BankMuscat, Fareeda Design undertook all new and refurb-

ishment projects. The first task set was design of a ‘model branch’ to be implemented throughout the network. The brief called for clearly defined areas within branches for each major function including welcome desk, individual customer service desks, cash and ATM with night lobby. This concept had not been implemented previously in Oman and was welcomed by all.

office, Phillips Petroleum, Sheraton Beach Resort’s Oriental Restaurant, Ice Cream Parlour at Al Araiimi Shopping Centre, Qurum, Golden Gate Restaurant at Al Araiimi Shopping Centre, Infiniti car showroom at Darsait, General Electric Showroom at Qurum, Learning Zone for British Council, car showroom for Oman Trading Establishment, interiors of Crowne Plaza Hotel at Salalah. Some of the recent projects are Oiltanking Odfjell Terminals, interior design of Safeer International Hotel and Safeer Continental Hotel at Al Khuwair, Omantel office refurbishment at Al Khuwair, various branches of Bank Dhofar, BankMuscat, NBO, Standard Chartered Bank’s Oman premises, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic

Club interiors at Al Khuwair, Occidental Oman office interiors, PDO control room interior, RAFO Defence Studies Centre interiors, office interiors of Gulf Air Worldwide Call Centre at IT Park, Rusayl, and many more. Fareeda Design has also completed a number of private villa interiors at Athaiba, Madinat Al Illam, etc, combining traditional and contemporary styles.

nis M. Baulk as partner and CEO, IDC works with its UK-registered international partners – Traer-Clark architects.

The two partners in the Sultanate have extensive knowledge of working within the capital area and wilayats of Oman since 1976, both in the private and public sectors.

IDC provides a design and supervision package for interiors and furnishings including fitted furniture and its knowledge of specialist decorating, stained glass, marble and granites, etc has been applied extensively on behalf of its clients. IDC has undertaken a variety of residential projects throughout the Sultanate including villas, town-



Another prominent firm Image Design Consultants (IDC) is a locally registered partnership of consultants, specialising in architecture, interior design, planning, project management and support. With Hassan Khamis Alzudjali as partner and Managing Director and Den-

houses and garden villages.

Projects by IDC principals also include

The Hilton Hotel Salalah, Grand Hyatt, Muscat, Sohar Beach Hotel, tourist village, Salalah, (leisure projects); Jawaharat Al Shatti shopping complex at Shatti Al-Qurum, corporate headquarters for Towell Group at Azaiba, corporate headquarter facades of MB Petroleum, Oman Refinery Company headquarters (commercial projects), and Bait Al-Zubair, Oman Heritage Village, Barr Al-Jissa (heritage projects).

IDC’s Bait Al-Zubair museum at Muscat also won the inaugural HM Sultan Qaboos’ Architectural Excellence award.