



**NIGHT FEVER**  
**interior design for**  
**bars and clubs**

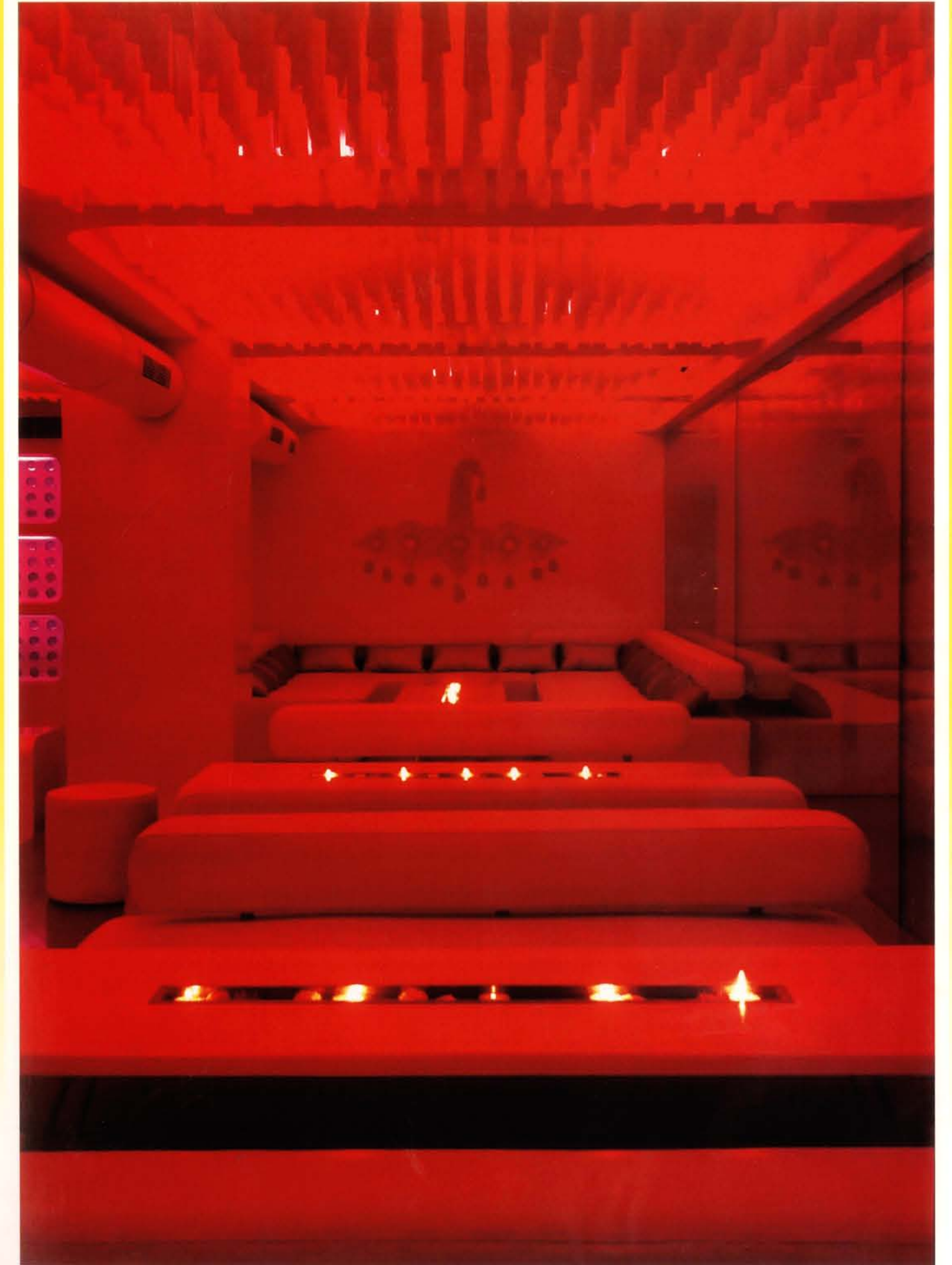
**Frame**  
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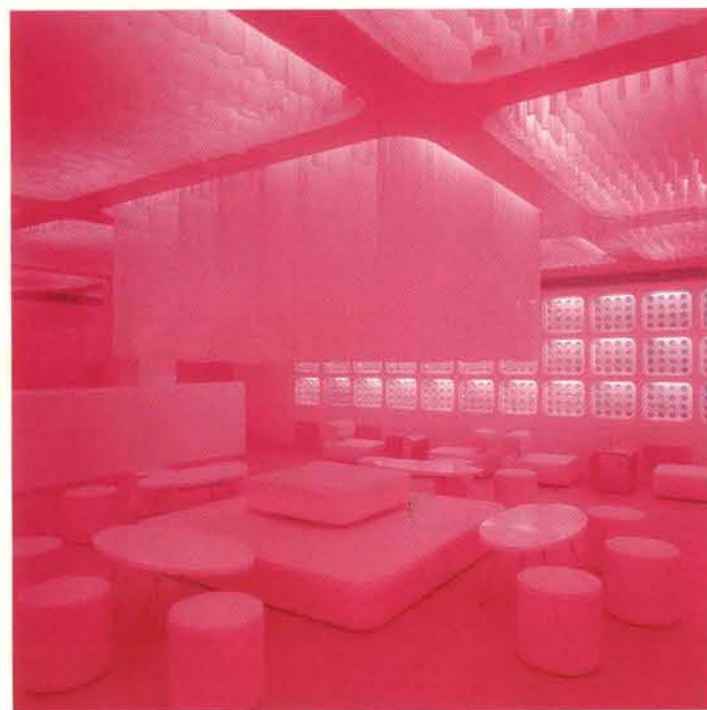
Using decorative prints and masses of chiffon, Khosla Associates craft a princely environment for **Touch**, a 'restobar' in the Indian city of Hyderabad.

Hyderabad and Bangalore: With their booming technology industries and growing ranks of local and foreign millionaires, both cities have assumed the mantle of 'Silicon Valley of India'. Yet in recent years Hyderabad, the capital of the South Indian state Andhra Pradesh, had watched passively as the cultural and aesthetic trappings of this new success – high-end shopping, fine dining and hip nightlife – accumulated in flashier Bangalore. Thanks to ambitious and cosmopolitan locals such as Nagarjuna, however, Hyderabad is slowly building up a bank of its own hot spots, which cater to the increasingly cosmopolitan tastes of the city's arrivistes. A South Indian film star, Nagarjuna

recently launched Touch, a restaurant and bar combo designed by Khosla Associates, the firm behind several of the trendy establishments currently leading the charge in Bangalore.

Excited at the prospect of bringing his nouveau glamour know-how to another city, principal Sandeep Khosla and associate Amaresh Anand dug into the project by working through some of the common pitfalls of restaurant-bar combinations. 'The "restobar" concept has been very popular here, but there are very few that work,' Khosla says. 'They're too smoky, the food is not good, or the spaces are not segregated enough.' The simple fact is that a bar is not

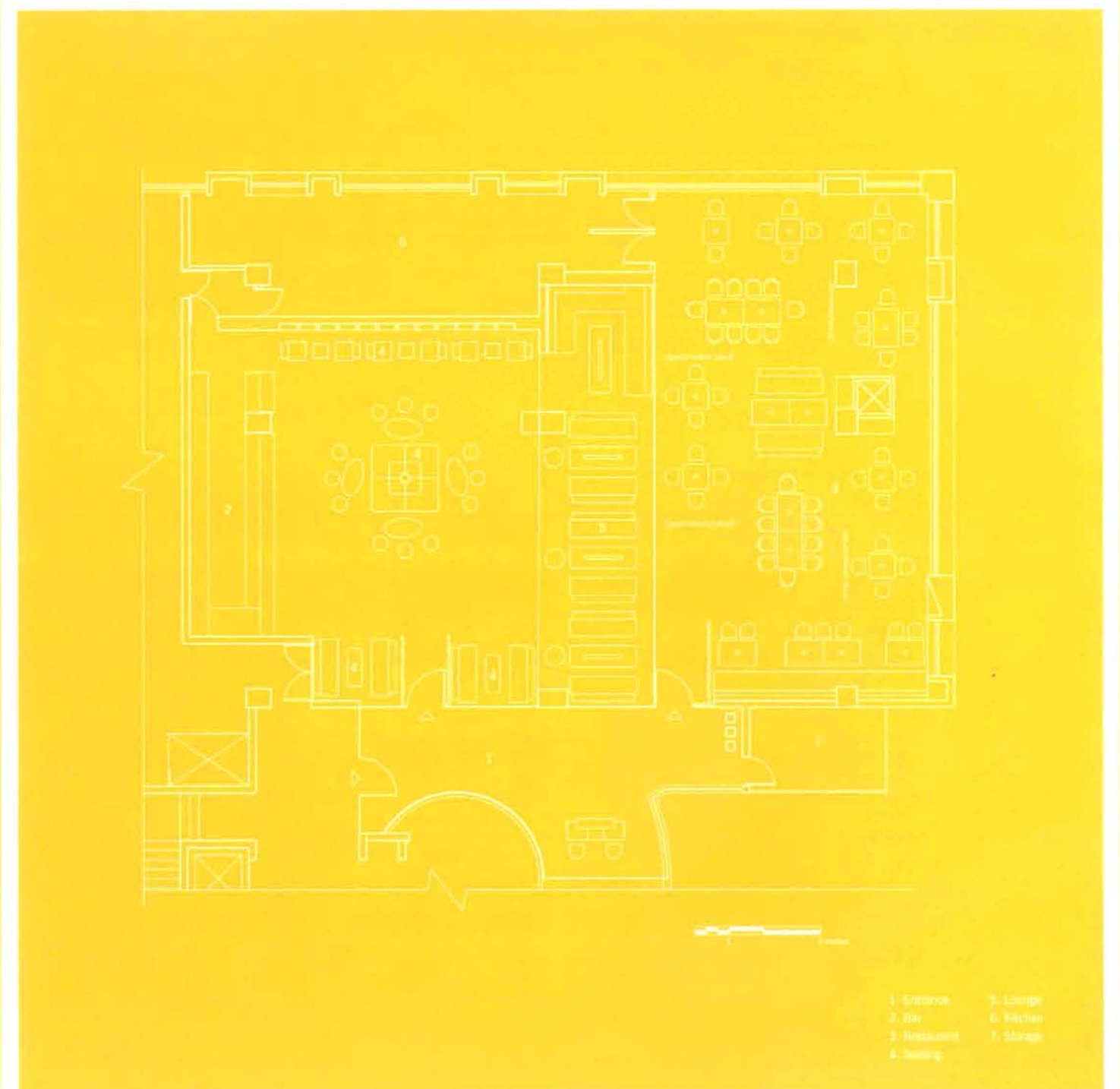




Previous page: For the lounge, Khosla Associates designed tables with built-in steel troughs – water-filled basins filled with floating candles and flower petals. In the background, a silver silk-screened print of the jewels of the wealthy Nizam of Hyderabad gives Touch the right amount, and style, of Indian identity. Top left: A glass wall with translucent curtains divides the restaurant from the lounge and bar areas, keeping the functions separate enough to allow

always the most pleasant environment in which to eat. Khosla offers the example of a Saturday afternoon following a wild Friday night, when, as he puts it, 'the space itself suffers from a hangover'. Khosla's solution physically splits the restaurant and bar functions, giving each separate ventilation and sound systems, while maintaining a visual link between the two. To do this, he inserted a glass dividing wall that cleaves the interior into twin sections of roughly the same size. One houses the restaurant, the other the lounge. The synergy created by bringing restaurant and lounge functions under a single roof is preserved by the visual linkage. The slightly older and more mature

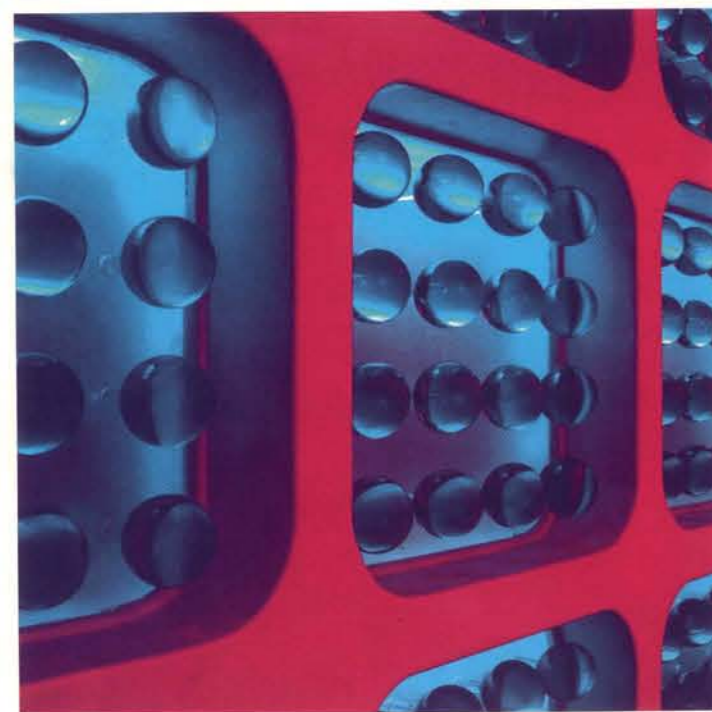
crowd patronizing the restaurant adds panache to the venue, while younger, hipper bar patrons make it feel like a scene. Nagarjuna and partner Preetam Reddy commissioned Khosla to create a white context, believing, as Khosla recounts, that 'people like dressing up and entering a white space, and white is a flattering colour'. Khosla, who imagined a sensuous, engaging atmosphere unlike the cold white associated with minimalist interiors, employed several devices to emphasize what he had in mind. This is most pronounced in the generous use of curtains throughout. Faced with a low grid ceiling, Khosla opted for drapery as a means of integrating the lighting without building in a



serious diners to enjoy their meals and serious socializers to chat and mingle. The visual link creates synergy between the two spaces. Opposite page, bottom left: Colour-changing lights concealed within the folds of the fabric wash the space in shifting shades of illumination. Opposite page, right: Khosla installed thousands of metres of chiffon curtains between the low ceiling beams: a device for integrating lighting without installing a dropped ceiling.

'We used the low ceiling beams to our advantage, making a design feature out of them.'

Sandeep Khosla



Top: The restaurant features the same ceiling and niche treatment as the lounge, but here the furniture white Panton chairs and marble-topped tables, as well as white Rexine chairs on custom stainless-steel legs is better suited to dining. Bottom left: The round-cornered grid of the ceiling is repeated on the walls in a series of niches. Each niche contains 16 orbs crafted from a moulded resin compound and set against a frosted-acrylic background.

dropped ceiling, which would have produced an even greater sense of confinement. 'We used the low ceiling beams to our advantage, making a design feature out of them,' he says. 'We installed curtains made of thousands of metres of chiffon, which drop from the true ceilings to the beam bottoms. All lighting is concealed within the folds of the fabric. The entire ceiling glows and acts as a unifying element between the restaurant and the lounge bar.' Radiating from the vast expanses of fabric are the shifting saturated colours of a programmed LED lighting system. The rounded grid of the ceiling is repeated in a series of niches that adorn the walls of both areas.

Each niche contains 16 floating orbs fashioned from a moulded resin compound and set against a frosted-acrylic backing. The orbs playfully refract light emitted by LED lamps tucked behind the niches. The round-cornered rectilinear forms of the seating – low and relaxed in the lounge, a little more upright in the restaurant – are canvases for the light show, as well as for the stylish patrons perched upon it. Having completed both lighting and furnishing in such a pure and international style, Khosla felt a 'need to contextualize the space – to acknowledge that this space is within Hyderabad'. He commissioned Tania Khosla of TSK design, his wife's graphic design firm, and



Opposite page, bottom right: In addition to the screen-printed wallpapers, Tania Khosla developed the name and logo for the space, putting an important face to concepts originating in the minds of Sandeep Khosla and his clients. Above and next spread: In the lounge, one section of curtains hangs lower, producing an area of focus around a central banquette. White curtains and furniture allow for an extremely versatile, constantly changing colour programme.

they in turn proposed silver screen-printed wallpapers featuring abstracted prints of the jewels of the Nizam of Hyderabad, wealthy ruler of India's largest princely estate. At first the clients were sceptical, viewing the designs as possibly too decorative, and hence too traditional, for Touch, but after seeing the prints, they agreed that here was a perfect flourish for a venue embodying not just contemporary design, but the newly refashioned face of India itself.

