

Perfect 10

HE IS ONE OF INDIA'S FOREMOST CONSERVATION ARCHITECTS, HAS WORKED ON FANTASTIC GREEN HOMES... MEET THE ILLUSTRIOUS ARCHITECT, BENNY KURIAKOSE.



ARCHITECT

BENNY KURIAKOSE



The architecture has to be much more sustainable from an environment, economic and social point of view. Instead of looking at green architecture narrowly, the design should focus on "green living". We have a long way to go.

One project/property that you wished you had designed and why?

I had always wanted to design an old age home where the design will involve working out the finer details to suit their lifestyle. I think architecture can contribute quite a lot to make the life of the senior citizens more enjoyable and independent.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE...

The title of your autobiography would be?

My struggles with architecture to get it right.

You unwind by...

Spending time with my family.

If Benny Kuriakose was not an architect, he would be?

A cinematographer. I became an architect accidentally!

Given a choice, the country you would shift base to and why?

Indonesia. I like the country and can make a good living there.

The one thing you would save if your house was on fire?

My wife and my children.

Most of your work has been in vernacular architecture; what are the key elements in your design that can be found in every project?

I genuinely feel that there is so much to learn from traditional buildings. Therefore, I use elements such as the roofs, courtyards and verandahs as strong expressive elements in my projects. I try to adapt them in a contemporary context.

You have worked under the tutelage of the famous Laurie Baker in 1984. Do you find his influence in your design sensibilities and approach to architecture even today?

I am greatly influenced by Laurie Baker as I learnt my basics from him. Although I might have shifted away from the kind of buildings he worked on, I think there are some traces of it, albeit in a different form. I do not want any of my assistants to follow what I am doing, then, they will simply be following me rather than creating something radically new or taking what they learnt a step forward.

Given a choice, which is the one architecture firm you would love to collaborate with, and why?

That would be architect Jeevan from Chennai who is trained under architect Geoffrey Bawa. He is a very good designer, but is not ambitious and very low key.

What is your take on the state of architecture and design in India today?



ANCHORED BY: RIDHI KALE PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY THE ARCHITECT