

RPRISE

Power couple

Meher Castelino meets Minal Thacker and Sujay Jairaj, a couple that believes in the new age mantra — work hard and play harder!





MINAL THACKER and Sujay Jairaj are the quintessential 21st century couple — hard working, sporty, enthusiastic and full of life. Though they have totally diverse professions, their mutual respect for each other's career is what has kept them united in mind and marriage.

Minal, a graduate of the Swiss hotel management school Ecole Leysin, is an integral part of the Thacker family that runs the over two-century-old Hotel Sea Princess in Mumbai. Sujay is a trustee of the 42-year-old Mambai Narsee School.

Spa and Hospitality expert

When I graduated in commerce, I did a one-year-course in hotel management in Switzerland. The first assignment my father gave me was the care of the renovation of the rooms on two floors of the hotel 15 years ago. I succeeded in convincing my father and elder sister Neha about the changes that were needed in the décor along with useful inputs and best relations and services," reveals Minal dressed in a chic mini that complements her sleek figure.

Her suggestions proved invaluable and when the newly-appointed manager of the hotel recommended the need for a night club the family opted for what it was — a brilliant idea.

Trilogy, the elite night spot, was started in 2011 and has earned an formidable reputation of being one of the most happening places in Mumbai, often called the Lady Gaga of night clubs. Spread over 4000 sq. ft. Trilogy has two levels starting with a lounge with gold walls and ruby décor where guests can enjoy their drinks. The second level is the rooftop floor. Added to this, are the sea view and the throbbing state-of-the-art lights that cover the ceiling offering a Las Vegas-like atmosphere to the guests. "After creating Trilogy a year ago and enjoying its immediate success, we outsourced it to a management concern," states Minal.

Minal is quite satisfied with having merely added to the hotel's services, her next project was the Suara (that translates as Sound of Soul) Spa for back and facial treatments. The beautifully decorated spa covers 2000

"Twenty different treatments are offered to our clients that cater to every need. The spa is adjacent to the health club which makes its location very convenient. A small health drinks counter serving refreshing coolers has been greatly appreciated," adds Minal.

There are a choice of six body massages, a relaxing Foot Reflexology Treatment, an Oriental Head Massage, a Deep Back Treatment, a Face Massage and a range of Body Scrubs with pomegranate, green apple, coffee, jasmine and frangipani. The spa also offers Body Cocoons with green tea, vanilla, sandalwood and a cooling herbal mix.

When it comes to facial packs there is the Gold Radiance Face Pack, Deep Ablutionary Face Pack, Damp Enhancing Face Pack and the Cutis Toning Face Pack.

The Infused Baths are very luxurious with a Rose 'n Milk Douse, Champagne Drench or Redolent Infuse.

For an even greater dose of luxury, the Continuance Spa Package offers the Vivid Princess, Opulent Prince, Suara Spellbinding Delight and Bespoke-At-Ease packages comprising four to five treatments at a slightly higher price.

The value of education

Sujay is, of course, very proud of his young wife's achievements, even though his interests lie in a completely different direction. His love for education prompted him to take a keen interest in academics.

"The K-12 section from nursery to the 12th standard is very good in India. There is, of course, unfortunately a certain amount of mandatory mugging of subjects but Indian students score very well all over the world because of our teaching systems," he states proudly.

"Today there are international courses coming into the country so there will soon be no difference between an Indian and a foreign education. Indians are so intelligent that today nearly 41 per cent of the staff in NASA is Indian."

"Indian students do very well when they go to the USA and UK for higher studies. Though the K-12 is very strong in India, the higher and post-grad

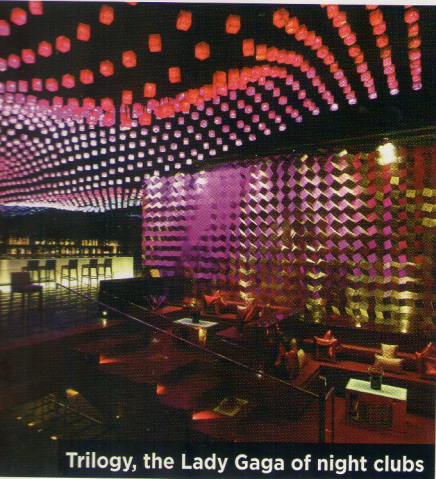


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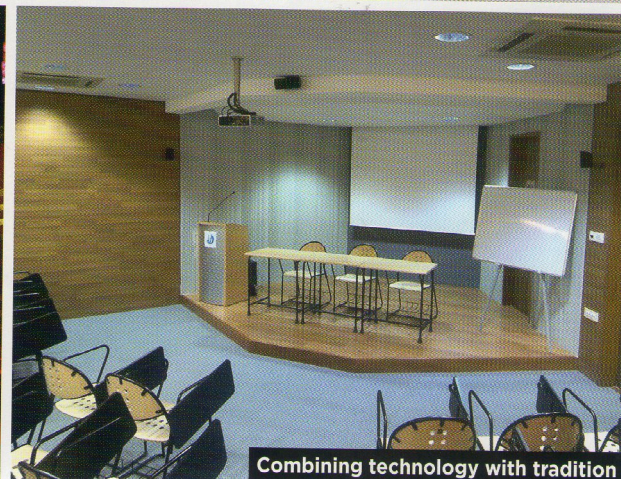
Adrenaline junkie!



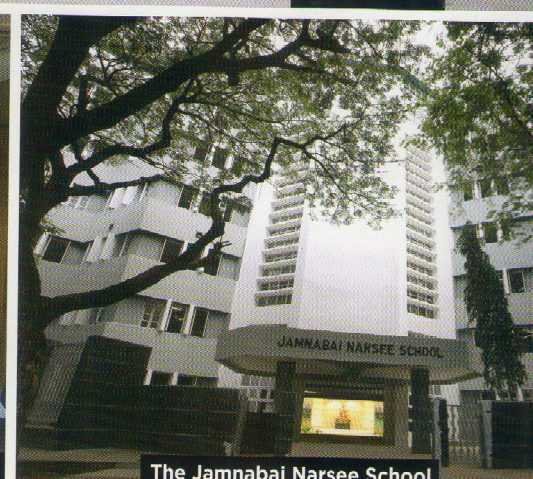
Classroom fun



Trilogy, the Lady Gaga of night clubs



Combining technology with tradition



The Jamnabai Narsee School

Jamnabai Narsee School celebrated 42 years in January this year, Sujay is proud of the technology that has been added to their education system. They have introduced AV and wi-fi facilities for students. In 2004 we were the first school in Mumbai to introduce the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. What we learn from IB schools we have integrated into the ICSE programme and vice versa.”

Regarding the classes that have no black or green boards, Sujay remarks, “I don’t believe in classes being conducted with only the use of iPads. There has to be some amount of written work. It must be a combination of technology and writing.”

Located in one of the prime areas of Mumbai, the Jamnabai Narsee School has many celebrities amongst its alumni. Famed sculptor Arzan Sabhatta, Bollywood stars Kunal Kapoor, Esha Deol, Sunny Deol and Shah Rukh Bachchan studied in the school.

Spread over 200,000 sq. ft. with 4800 students there is value education provided every morning as Sujay emphasises that a holistic touch has to be given with emphasis not just on education but on sports and extracurricular activities as well.

The new branch of the school is being set up in Kandivali which will offer a mix of Indian and international education.

Sujoy has also started his own company, Max Edusol Private Limited, which helps to start schools, set curriculums, organising recruitment, infrastructure and training etc.

They have five projects right now, one each in Nagpur, Lonavala and Dapur and two in Mumbai. We are a consultancy company where we do everything, run the institute for two years and then hand it over to the owners having put systems in place.” The family is also helping in the development of a village in Kutch by setting up a school there.

Education and health care will be booming sectors in India in the next



Lobby of Hotel Sea Princess

Outdoor buffs

The couple is also great outdoor and sports buffs. Sujay, once a national level badminton player still plays a game or two daily.

He has formed a group called the Mumbai Cycling Enthusiasts which undertakes long distance cycling trips.

“We have 800 members and cycle 50-60 kms all over Mumbai starting early in the morning at around 5 a.m.” Besides this, the couple has trekked in the Himalayas, gone sky diving and bungee jumping and are game for anything that gives them an adrenalin rush.