

Theme Restaurants: Latest Trends in Indian Interiors



Sweta D. Mesaria
Research Scholar,
Dept. of Family and Community
Resource Management,
Faculty of Family And
Community Sciences,
The Maharaja Sayajirao
University of Baroda, Vadodara.



Neerja Jaiswal
Associate Professor,
Dept. of Family and Community
Resource management,
Faculty of Family And
Community Sciences,
The Maharaja Sayajirao
University of Baroda, Vadodara.

Abstract

The restaurants have become a common feature for an outing or a social gathering in the metropolitan and large cities. These restaurants mainly focus not only on food but also an overall ambience, looks and interiors. It is quite natural that the human mind changes. This has led to noticeable changes in the restaurant industry and the emergence of theme restaurants which is a revolutionary trend in the interior of the restaurants. Today, the restaurant industry is developing very rapidly. Theme restaurants have an instantly recognizable, easily articulate concept that can be summed up in a few words as an exaggeration of an idea in their interiors reflecting a specific culture or environment. The literature reviewed on the topic has highlighted some of the well renowned theme restaurants prevalent in different parts of the world. The highlighting characteristics of each of them are presented in the present review paper. The electronic media was used to find out the restaurants with the existing themes within and outside India with specific reference to Colonial theme as required in designing the selected restaurant at Vadodara. The secondary data on the theme restaurants highlighted that their existed theme restaurants in India as well as outside India too. In India the trend of theme restaurants is still in infancy stage, initiated since the last decade only, whereas outside India their existence was marked since 1950's, almost six decades earlier than India. Their was mixture of themes found in the restaurants designed outside India from "Horror" to "Devil", "Cartoons" to "Film characters", "Village" to "Contemporary themes", "Colonial themes" and "Nature loving themes". In Indian restaurants "Folk themes" of different communities and traditions were more prevalent. The "Motorcycle" theme and "Chor bazaar" theme one of a kind was not found in the restaurants situated outside India. The implications of the study would assist the designers to broaden their vision and scope in designing similar projects.

Keywords: Interiors, Restaurants, Theme.

Introduction

Cooking has been basic to human life. Any cooking ultimately requires eating. So kitchen also required a serving or dining area beside it. When such areas were used commercially, the restaurant and café originated. These were broadly divided into two types: Restaurant and cafeteria. Restaurants provided waiters for service whereas cafeterias were self-serviced establishments (Kasu, 2005). Restaurant is a place where people pay to sit and eat meals that are cooked on the premises" (Oxford Dictionary, 2004).

Restaurants vary greatly in appearance, offerings, including a wide variety of cuisines and service models. Restaurants industry may include waiter staff, counter service staff and some buffet style service staff in the restaurant (www.wikipedia.org/definition/restaurant, 2009.) Restaurant design always starts with a "bright idea." These bright restaurant design ideas come from varied sources. Successful restaurant design ideas are bred with an understanding of the types of experiences the customer is looking for, and the type of menu items the consumer craved. The restaurant design ideas create an atmosphere that welcomes the consumer time and time again. Implementing restaurant design trends concept of the restaurant takes priority over everything else, influencing the architecture, food, music and overall 'feel' of the restaurant. The food usually takes a backseat to the presentation of the theme and the restaurant attracts customers solely on the premise of the theme itself. (www.quantifiedmarketing.com/restaurant-ideas, 2009)

The restaurants have become a common feature for an outing or a social gathering in the metropolitan and large cities. These restaurants

mainly focus not only on food but also an overall ambience, looks and interiors. It is quite natural that the human mind changes. This has led to noticeable changes in the restaurant industry and the emergence of theme restaurants which is a revolutionary trend in the interior of the restaurants. Today, the restaurant industry is developing very rapidly. Theme restaurants have an instantly recognizable, easily articulate concept that can be summed up in a few words as an exaggeration of an idea in their interiors reflecting a specific culture or environment. Most successful restaurants are designed around a theme. The design is worked out from architectural features and interior design point of view to furniture, to layout, to materials employed, to cutlery and crockery used, to graphic design (like sign board, signage, interior graphics, menu cards, visiting cards, table cards and cash memo, etc). For successful accomplishment in this direction, color and light are very significant factors (Kasu, 2005).

Objective

The present study was undertaken to find out the restaurants with the existing themes within and outside India with specific reference to colonial theme.

Delimitation

The proposed study was limited on the available information derived from case studies of the theme restaurants in India and Abroad.

Methodology

The present case study was included the identification of famous selected Theme Restaurants existing in India and Abroad. The electronic media was used in listing the existing Theme Restaurants. Case studies were developed on the selected restaurants to collect the information for the present project. The data gathered from the primary and secondary sources were meaningfully organized. The data were then utilized for developing the design on colonial theme of British Era for the selected restaurant in Vadodara city.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The literature reviewed has highlighted some of the well renowned theme restaurants prevalent in different parts of the world. The highlighting characteristics of each of them alone with their name and location are presented.

Abroad

1. Name of the Restaurant: "Medieval Times Restaurant Theater"

Location: California, America.

Style used: "Medieval Theme"

This restaurant on the Medieval Times dinner theater is part of a chain restaurants. The structure of the restaurant is like a "castle". The historical time period and Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament stages tournaments in the old original style used in the High Middle Ages. The original Medieval Times Restaurant was opened in Spain, and was a huge success. A typical meal served in the restaurant.

The visitor customers pay for the dinner only. The venue is at a "castle". The consumers sit around the tables encircling a large indoor arena. The restaurant is divided into six sections, each assigned a different colour, and the audience consumers are encouraged to cheer for knights who wear the same colour. The

audience has to eat with their hands as prevalent in "medieval times". The dinner and show together is designed to last for two hours.

2. Name of the Restaurant: "The Jekyll & Hyde Club"

Location: Manhattan, New York.

Style used: "Spooky horror" with an emphasis on "English Gothic theme."

The restaurant's theme is spooky horror, with detailed decorations, set pieces, and actors who roam the restaurant and entertain consumers. All the characters belonging to horror movie with their presence scare and thrill the consumers. In addition to the live characters, there are a number of audio-animatronics props, sounds, and special effects, which contribute to the overall atmosphere of the club. The animatronics creatures visit from the "spirit world" to clever respond and thrill the consumers. The whole theme makes the consumer thrilled, scared and screamed at the same time.



Illustration 1 : View of the restaurant with "Spooky horror" theme

3. Name of the Restaurant: "Rainforest Cafe"

Location: Houston, Texas.

Style used: "Cartoonish Rainforest Theme"

Rainforest Cafe is a themed restaurant chain owned by Landry's Restaurants, Inc. of Houston, Texas. The restaurant is decorated to depict some features of a generic rainforest including plant growth, mist, waterfalls, robotic animals and insects. Large marine aquariums are the part of the restaurants. Automated water sprinklers, with specific patterns are utilized to depict the rain to the consumers. In harmony to this synchronized lights are also featured in the restaurant. A simulated thunderstorm occurs in every thirty minutes. It not only simulates rain, but also lightning and thunder by flashing lights and thunder effects played through high-powered subwoofers.

The consumers can hear all the robotic animals panic in the forest. The restaurant is partitioned into

several rooms by means of rain curtains, which fall into basins running along the top of partition walls and booths. The flow rate of these rain curtains intensifies during the simulated thunderstorms. The restaurant presents a perfect rain forest storm for their consumers to enjoy.



Illustration 2,3 : Name plate of “Rainforest Café” and The Dining area with animal’s statue

4. Name of the Restaurant: “Colonial Tramcar”
Location: Melbourne, Australia.
Style used: “Colonial Theme”

The Colonial Tramcar Mobile Restaurant operates from a converted fleet of three vintage trams in Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. The Colonial Tramcar Restaurant Company limited was formed in 1981 to operate restaurant trams; with 1927 W2 class tram number 442 was acquired for conversion after 55 years of service. It had single entry door provided on one side of the tram. Two areas are provided on either side of a central kitchen and washroom, one saloon seating accommodate 12 consumers while the other side accommodate 24 consumers. The whole interior design reflects colonial environment. The restaurant services started in August 1983 with the single tram. The consumers in the restaurant feel as if they are in another era.



Illustration 4, 5 : Outer and Inside View of the Colonial Tramcar Restaurant

5. Name of the Restaurant: “Cafe Paradiso”
Location: 199 Banks, ON K2P1W7, Ottawa, Canada.

Style used: “An intriguing mix of the luxury”

The “Cafe Paradiso” is a part of New World Bistro, part Jazz lounge, part Martini bar, and part easy eatery. All of these parts combined in the restaurant to make a unique dining experience for the consumers. The “Café Paradiso” is a charming reproduction of textures, colours, and mirrors. It is stylish but not overdone, and modern without being stark. The restaurant's art-deco interior is highlighted by large windows that are left open during warmer weather to create a patio feel to the consumers. The element of fusion in Café Paradiso's interior design was echoed by its cuisine.. The consumers who like have music with their meals, the restaurant also had venue for jazz performances. They feature a Jazz Jam Session, different jazz artist's plays and a DJ takes over after until closing time.



Illustration 6 : View of the dinning area at “Cafe Paradiso”

6. Name of the Restaurant: “Caru' Cu Bere”
Location: Stavropoulos Street, Bucharest, Romania.
Style used: “Old colonial restored restaurant”
It is an old restaurant. The restaurant reflects an “Old Colonial” theme. The Romanian restaurant stands alone with its balconies, chandeliers, stands glass, frescoes, skirted waitresses and traditional music. This is the place to learn interesting facts about the “savory” past. Caru' cu Bere, is a true living legend and one of the oldest beer house in Bucharest. The restaurant is a traditional place, where each object has its own story. This is one of the few places in Bucharest where nothing has changed. The architecture reminds the old historic beer house. The mural paintings, the stained glasses and the carved cross-beams are distinctive elements of the beer house. The consumer when enter in the restaurant get a feeling as if they had entered in an old golden era. It still feels like little Paris to the consumers.



Illustration 7, 8 : View of the dining area and close view of inside of “Caru' Cu Bere”

In India

1) Name of the Restaurant: “Samarkand”
Location: Bangalore.
Style used: “Afghanistan theme”
The tourists are bound to discover a few hidden gems in unexpected places in the most mystical and magical circumstances. One such foodie destination is the ‘Samarkand”, a theme based north-west frontier restaurant.



Illustration 9 : View of the dining area of “Samarkand” Restaurant

It is launched by the BJNI group of hotels of the Museum Inn fame. The restaurant, a first of its kind in the city, has sought to recreate the rustic ambience of Samarkand, a place known for legendary personalities, culture and lavish delicacies. Exquisitely designed by Shiraj, a renowned architect, Samarkand features 4 different divisions, which can accommodate around 140 people at any given time. The dim lit surroundings, rough stony floorings and walls, aesthetically designed low-seating tables and wooden chairs suitable insights in to the glory of the Afghan era. To add to the ethnicity of the restaurant, a portion of the roof is tastefully adorned with decorative shiny objects giving it a sparkling blue sky look. This apart, the glory of Afghan is well depicted on the rugged walls through classy paintings, ethnic paraphernalia used by men. The flame like torches mounted on the walls giving it rather a romantic look.

2) Name of the Restaurant: Serengeti
Location: Ohri's, Level 3 the Total Mall, Madivala, Koramangala, Bangalore.
Style used: “Rainforest”

Serengeti is a theme-based restaurant inspired by a “rainforest”. It houses a jungle with beautiful trees, flowers and rainforest animals. The moment the consumer enters in the restaurant place, you feel you are in a jungle amidst some waterfall and hear the chirping of birds and other animals. Walk thru inside and you would find the waiters all dressed in the Shikari Style. They could notice some kind a cave in some corners where the tables were placed and the food was served. Enjoy the sounds of the gentle rain or a far off tropical storm.





Illustration10, 11 : Ceiling of the Serengeti Restaurant with Rainforest Theme.

3) Name of the Restaurant: “Road Trip”
Location: Indira nagar area, Bangalore.
Style used: “Motorcycle” theme
“Road Trip is a 50+ seated restaurant located in Bangalore’s up market Indiranagar area. Road Trip is a first of its kind concept restaurant that features motorcycles as a theme. Pictures of bikers are put on walls. Table created as roads for bikes to drive on them. Silver color is the main shade of the restaurant. Road Trip started operations in July of 2003. It had become a place to go. Eating for bike Road Trip boasts an eclectic menu comprising Italian and Continental cuisine. Road Trip is stylish, elegant look interior.



Illustration 12 : Table design of Road Trip restaurant with “Motorcycle theme”.

4) Name of the Restaurant: “Village - The Soul of India”
Location: 1st Floor, Raghuleela Mall, Behind Poisar Depot, Kandivali west, Bombay.
Style used: “Traditional Village”
The consumer had the options of dining on a truck back or in rickshaw. The mud plastered walls of the restaurant reflects the characteristics of rural finery. The consumers enjoy the food with a colorful “Rajasthan folk troupe” or “a garba”, or “a vibrant Bhangra” or a traditional “lavani”. The consumers can order refreshing sugarcane juices to lassie, chaats to Amritsari kulchas, dosas to appams, chole bathure to hyderabad biryanis, kulfis etc. The consumer can join garba and dance with a colourful Rajasthani folk troupes. The Detailed interiors representing village theme gives the feel as if the consumer has entered into a mystical land. The lavish verandah is reminiscent of a “Thakur’s haveli” with a “Munimji”. The elements like the two “trucks” and “auto rickshaws” were imaginatively converted into dining

tables. The consumers can choose between a traditional chair and a princely diwan to sit for dining. There are no prior table reservations or appointments.



Illustration 13,14: View of the waiting area and Salad counter of “Village Restaurant”

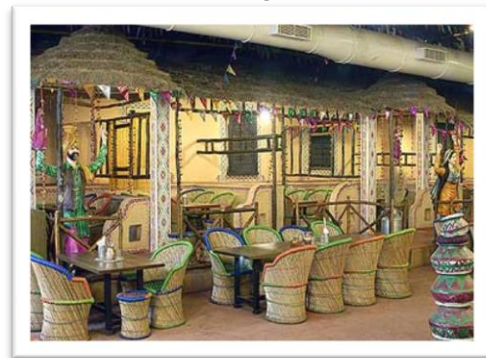


Illustration 15, 16 : View of dining area and counter design of Village Restaurant.

Conclusion

The empirical data on the theme restaurant highlighted that there existed theme restaurants in India as well as outside India too. In India the trend of theme restaurant still in infancy stage prominent since the last decade only, whereas outside India their existence was marked since 1950's, almost six decades earlier than India. There was mixture of theme found in the restaurant designed outside India from horror to devil, cartoonish to film characters, village to contemporary, colonial themes and nature loving themes. The themes found in the restaurant of India were different from the restaurants located outside India. In Indian restaurant folk themes of different communities and traditions were more prevalent. The "motorcycle theme" is one of its kind was not found in the restaurant situated outside India. The "Colonial theme reflecting the British era of Kolkata" was proposed by the designer in the present design project was unique and first of its own kind in vadodara. The designer did not come across the similar theme in any of the restaurant of India, which inspired her for undertake the present design project.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the present design project will be helpful for the designers in specific on same line will get inspired to develop similar projects or with other ethnic backgrounds of different community of India and outside India. This would also provide a base to design other new interiors. It would be useful for the students of Home Management with both the specializations i.e. Interior design and Hospitality design and other students. The academicians teaching interior courses will benefit as this project will provide them with the additional information base to be passed on their students. The findings of the present design project would serve as a valuable reference material for developing his other design projects in general.

Recommendation of the Study

The similar design project can also be undertaken for the commercial interiors as well as for residential interiors too. The similar projects can be developed for the other international and regional cultures within and outside India.

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