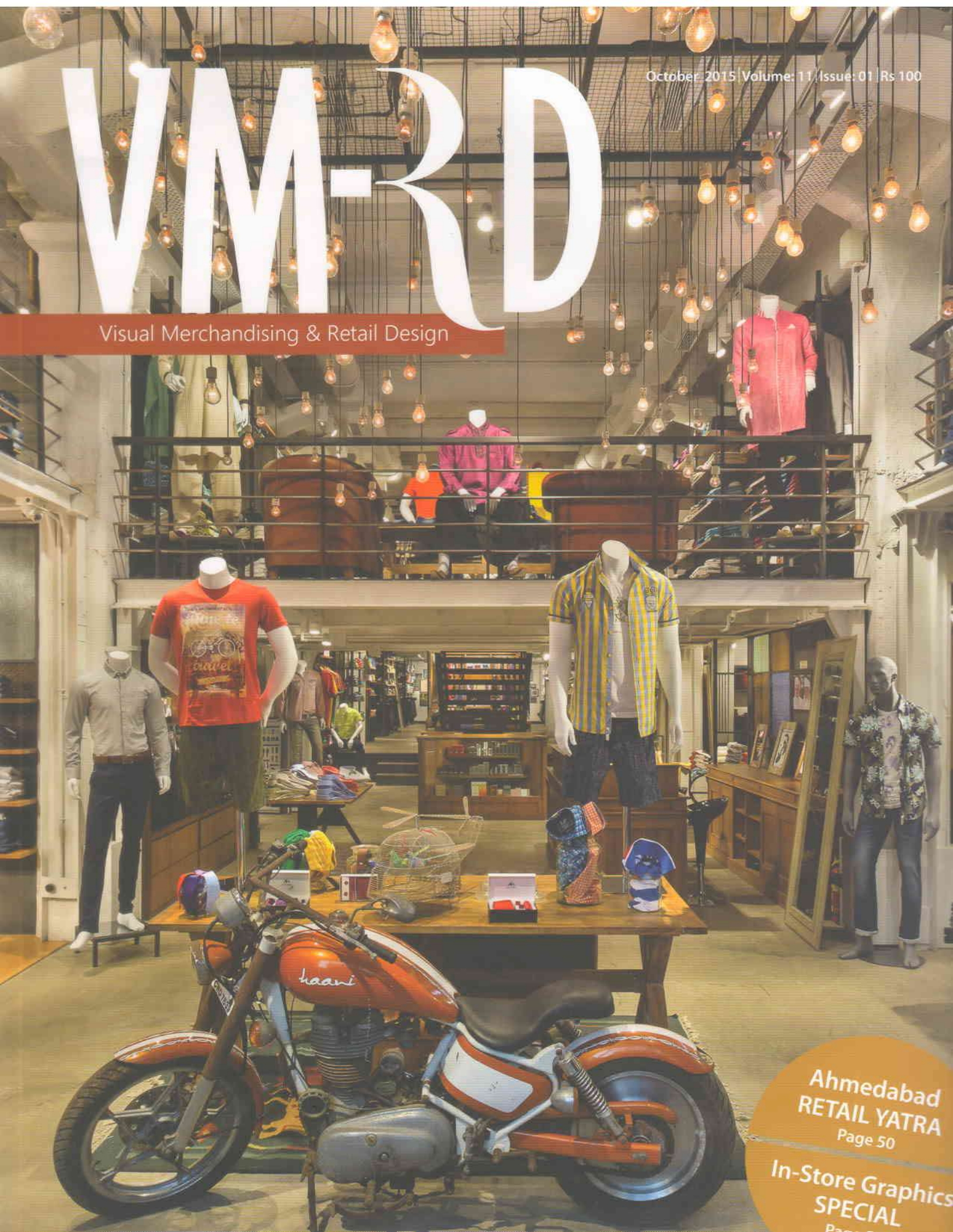


# V-M-R-D

Visual Merchandising & Retail Design



Ahmedabad  
RETAIL YATRA  
Page 50

In-Store Graphics  
SPECIAL  
Page 50



# Legacy Revived And Restored

118-year old iconic departmental store of Mumbai, Akbarally's re-invents and converts itself into 10,000 sq ft multi-branded store, Akbarally's Men. Refurbishment and the complete face-lift were executed by Delhi-based DCA Architect, where the store continues to spread its legacy of by-gone era while fitting into the modern retail design space.



Located at the significant and prime area "Fort" in Mumbai since 1950, Akbarally's has been a trusted name as a departmental store since the bygone era. The recent revamp in its store design and visual merchandising have helped the store in continuing its old-world charm while presenting itself as a visual retail space like its contemporaries.

Celebrating the spirit of industrialization of the bygone era, salvaged old ship and machine parts were sourced from the Mumbai ship breaking yard and used cleverly as props that align with the primal theme of the store. The entrance façade of the store has been refurbished using cor-ten steel to uphold the design, offset the interiors of the

store and maintain the old structure and bequest. Space planning and enhancement has been crucial to the design intent, where most of the store has been painted white in order to visually maximise the space available and Sub-mezzanine levels are created to work around the structure in order to obtain better clearances and clear circulation patterns. Added features such as a private in-house barber shop and a shoe polish station catering to quick grooming and styling needs, have been designed within the store's in-house section, to add to the indigenous approach of the store and enhance the customer experience.

Peeling layers of interiors bestows the site with treasures of old wood, which were

reclaimed and used in some furniture and in flooring of premium sections of the store (on the mezzanine). This flooring has been complimented by the use of chequered plate on the casual section of the mezzanine, IPS on the whole of ground floor and black and white terrazzo in the barber shop. This raw, rustic and primal intent for materiality is carried forward by using coloured galeecha glasses and antique mirrors that are filled in lacquered mild steel framework to form the partitions and paneling through the store. The shelving and display system has all been designed as nuts and bolts to create a unique identity while creating a flexible display system to meet the needs of modern retail.

Augmenting the crude, yet chick aesthetics,

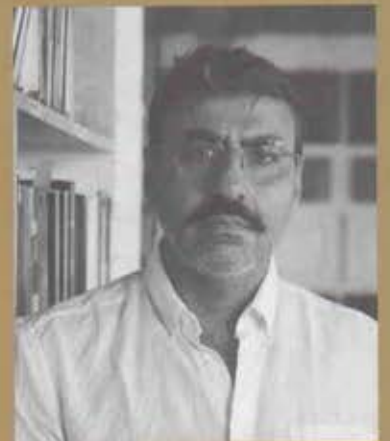


an exposed ceiling has been maintained throughout the store. Cable trays run throughout the store carrying all the services, and track lights have been used to light up the merchandise. Antique chandeliers have been used to augment the ambience of the occasion and heritage wear sections. All the double height spaces have a layer of metal grid on the top to create a layered framework, and clusters of Edison lamp to create an atmosphere of celebration whilst being a reminiscent of the bygone times.

Talking on the specifics on retail design, Aiman Khorakiwala, Director, Akbarally's, commented, "The design of the store is different from other large format stores around the country. We have consciously steered clear from conventional VM like large posters or an overload of marketing information on available wall spaces. We wanted the shopping experience to be a private one, where the customer explores the store and the various sections of the store are revealed to him as he walks around. We have used various antiquities to display our merchandize very creatively."

Restored back to its original structure, the store's interiors in shades of black and white are minimalistic and classic. The pillars continue to bear beautiful mouldings designed during its primordial days. The entire space has been embellished using curated antique furniture in leather and

"The store has been in this location since the 1950's and was renovated multiple times over, each time with layers over its original form and structure. Despite being located in a heritage zone, the structure is not bound by heritage norms, which allowed for great flexibility in the design process. Refurbishment and a complete face-lift were hence, the way forward," **Amit Aurora, Principle Architect, Group DCA**, explained while talking about executing a project as unique as this.





of Mumbai. They are used as highlights to enhance the functional and luxury quotients. Old chandeliers, rugs, antique glass and tables, carts, chesterfields, sandooks(old trunks) and vintage mirrors are either locally sourced or belong to the family inheritance. They are all carefully curated and amount to the functional elements of retail.

Going ahead, Akbarally's plans to expand its operation around the country. "We plan to look for properties and franchise inquiries seriously by the end of this year," Khorakiwala informed.

**Satarupa Chakraborty**

**Principle Architects:**

Amit Aurora, Rahul Bansal, DCA Architect