

✱ ARCHITECTURE Organic Design Workshop

Following Frank

As working professionals in India and Japan respectively, Gustad Irani and Yumi Doi were already successful architects in their home countries. Yet in the early 1990's, both left their practices and came to the Valley—each unaware of the other—to study at Taliesin, the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

Although the two had only minimal experience with Wright's work, they had similar plans to spend one year studying the great organic architect's principles. "After one year [at Taliesin], we both knew that we knew nothing," Irani says.

The Wright Way

So they stayed on and delved further into Wright's architectural legacy. During one summer, Doi went so far as to study and

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catalog all of Wright's unbuilt designs—nearly 300 in all. "It was a very interesting experience," she says. "Reading the drawings was like learning a new language." Similarly, Irani explored the Taliesin West archives, where he listened to recordings of Wright's discussions with former students and dissected his drawings. "That was the closest I could get to his thought process," he says.

After finishing their apprenticeships, Irani and Doi melded their separate research experiences together when they both took positions with Taliesin Architects and worked on the 125-foot Spire project on the corner of Frank Lloyd Wright Boulevard and Scottsdale Road and the yet-to-be-built adjoining visitor's center.

On Their Own

It wasn't until three years ago that Irani and Doi stepped out of Wright's shadow a bit. When the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation changed the makeup of Taliesin Architects and asked all of its design professionals to form their own business entities, Irani and Doi combined their complementary abilities and styles to create Organic Design Workshop—a two-person architectural firm that relies on Wright's principles to create new designs.

While still based out of Taliesin West, the duo has created a name for themselves throughout the architecture world, completing residential projects as close as Paradise Valley and as far away as Japan. Their firm was also selected to create a complete line of Wright-inspired furnishings for the giant Japanese furniture maker Kokuyo.

Nonetheless, Irani and Doi are just as comfortable creating residential spaces that look nothing like what most people associate with the late architect. "We don't want any of our homes to look like imitations of Wright's work," Irani says. "He adapted so well to change that none of the homes he did back then would look anything like what he would be doing now. That makes it easy for us to make homes that look different, but employ the same principles." —J.K.

GUSTAD IRANI (LEFT) AND YUMI DOI
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