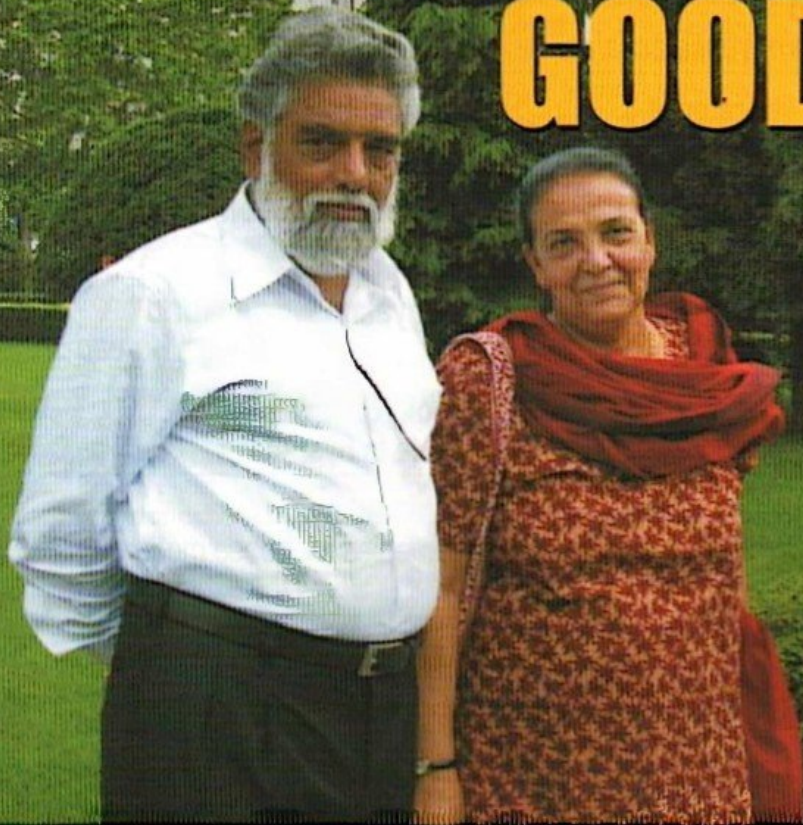


Abraham John And Family

ARCHITECTS OF GOOD LIVING



Abraham John, reputed Mumbai based architect and father of Bollywood Film star John Abraham speaks about his life and his family. Recently along with his other son Alan, Abraham's firm Abraham John Architects won an international competition in Urban Planning and Design Velo City 2013 at Austria for their Bombay Greenway Project.



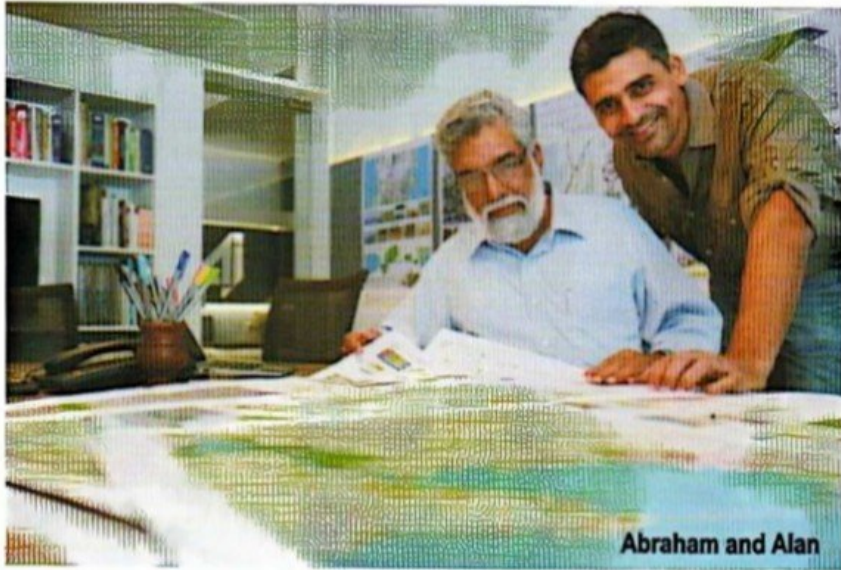
Sriprakash Menon

Abraham John is the founder of Abraham John Architects, an architecture, interior design, landscaping and urban planning firm based in Mumbai specializing in luxury villas, high end residences, unique offices and hospitality projects. One of their significant approach is, to re-connect architecture with nature, make optimum use of space, natural materials and customized furniture, lighting and landscape, to reinvent and transform spaces. Abraham believes that architecture has a unique power to influence lifestyle and society. The firm has projects under construction in Goa, Payna, Khandala, Kochi, including exclusive villas with landscaped

gardens, swimming pools, outdoor entertaining area, etc. But Abraham John is a simple down-to-earth man and likes to keep a low profile.

Abraham, even at 75, looks handsome and dignified. After his schooling and college at Aluva, this young lad then, with a BSc. (Chemistry) Degree, came to Mumbai in 1969 for a job but instead he got admitted in to J J School of Arts. To cope up with his studies and expenditure he worked part time and came up the ladder with sheer hard work and determination.

"Luckily, my brother who was in the Income Tax was staying at Marine Drive. He later shifted to Peddar Road. I was staying with



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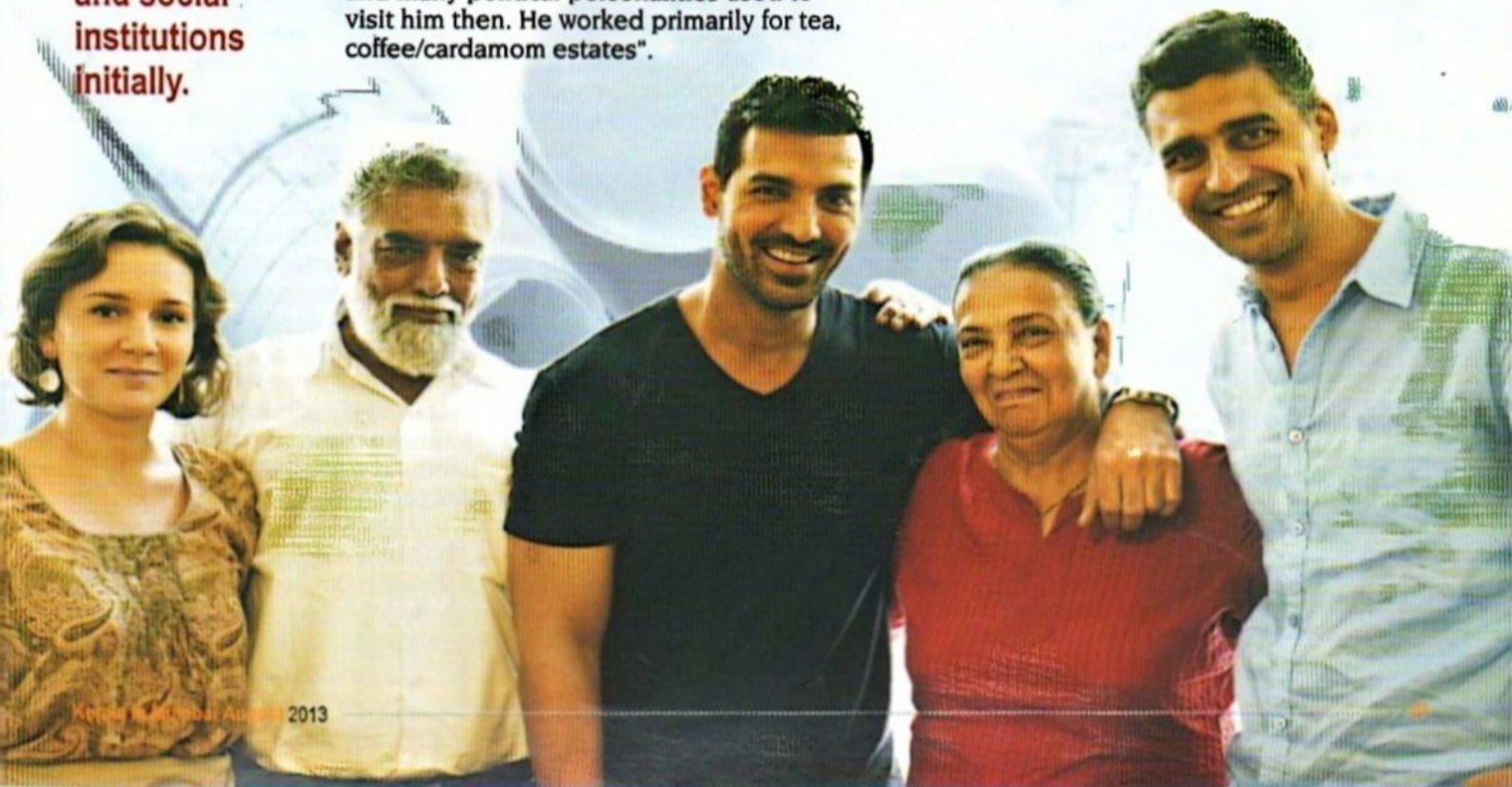
him initially. After my college, I started my career as an interior designing person and stayed at the YMCA. To get work in Mumbai was not easy even then but I never influenced people nor did I bribe anyone to get work. Things were not easy, so I started working for charitable and social institutions initially. I worked in many rebuilding projects whether it was Latur or Gujarat earthquake," he recounted.

Abraham narrated, "We were seven children. My father, P C John was working as an accountant in a Tea Estate while my mother Susan (Chachia Amma) was a housewife. My parents hailed from Kottayam and Aranmula respectively. My sisters are settled in Chennai, Hyderabad and Kerala. My father had a good command over English and many political personalities used to visit him then. He worked primarily for tea, coffee/cardamom estates".

"I met Phiroza Irani at Colaba and we got married in 1972. The same year on December 17, John was born. My wife was then working at Murphy in Thane. John was like the Murphy kid and Phiroza gave up her job to look after him. We were very particular that we gave personal attention to our kids. Alan was born on November 18, 1974. We were staying at Usha Nagar in Bhandup before shifting to Jumbo Darshan in Andheri (E). I literally struggled to buy this flat and stayed 26 years in Andheri," he narrated.

"As parents the best thing we could do for our kids was to give them lots of love and good values. Our boys are simple and do not smoke or drink. John in fact is into several charitable causes but he wants to keep it low profile. As a family, especially Phiroza, is keen on charity and we all try to do whatever we can for people. John will be getting married anytime to Los Angeles based economist Priya Runchal who is presently working in India as a consultant. She was working as economist with the World Bank. Alan got married to a Romanian girl Anca Florescu. She is a Post - graduate in European language and is presently helping Alan in his research for various project. Alan after doing his architecture from Mumbai went to France where he met Anca. Both our children studied in Bombay Scottish. John went to Jai Hind college and then did his Masters in Marketing from MET, Bandra", he recalled.

John started his career as a model and was working for the agency Enterprise Nexus, Abraham said emphasizing "how he shot to limelight after becoming No.2 at an



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international competition. He also made his mark in Gladrags competition. He got a lot of offers for movies since his college days but it was Mahesh Bhatt's Jism which turned around his career before which of course he was a supermodel. Alan also got offers to act in films but he refused them."

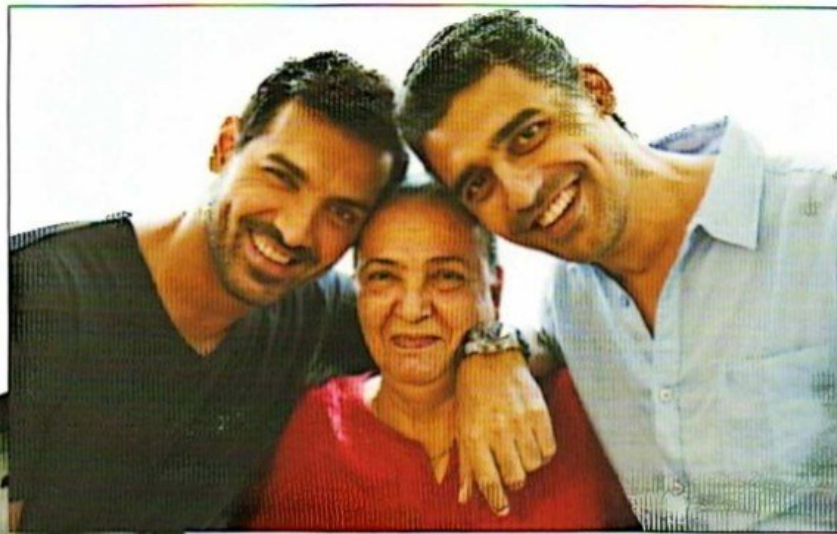
John is presently producing and acting in Madras Cafe to be released this August and his other production in pipeline is Banana. He is also acting in Welcome 2, Dostana 2 and two other untitled films of Nishikant

need to boost their morale and guide them properly", he felt.

"Kerala is the most blessed place in the world yet the people are not sufficiently productive, there is a lot of negativity. In their own state they live like rebels and once they step outside the state they are ready to even behave like a slave. Malayalees need to change their attitude to life. A Malayalee with money will build a fantastic house while any member of other community will put that money for productive purposes to earn

and share the money. The silver lining in the grim scenario is the younger generation who are a different lot. They are hard working, honest, enterprising and not corrupt. The advantage the present generation has is that they do not face economic problems which we had in our younger days", Abraham described.

As a state, Kerala has fantastic resources. "Look at



John and Alan with their mother Phiroza

Kamat and Sanjay Gupta. Abraham despite his high profile profession believes in simplicity. He may still travel by bus and is a pure vegetarian.

"We both husband and wife have several demands in life. We shifted to Pali Hill, Bandra in 2002 but

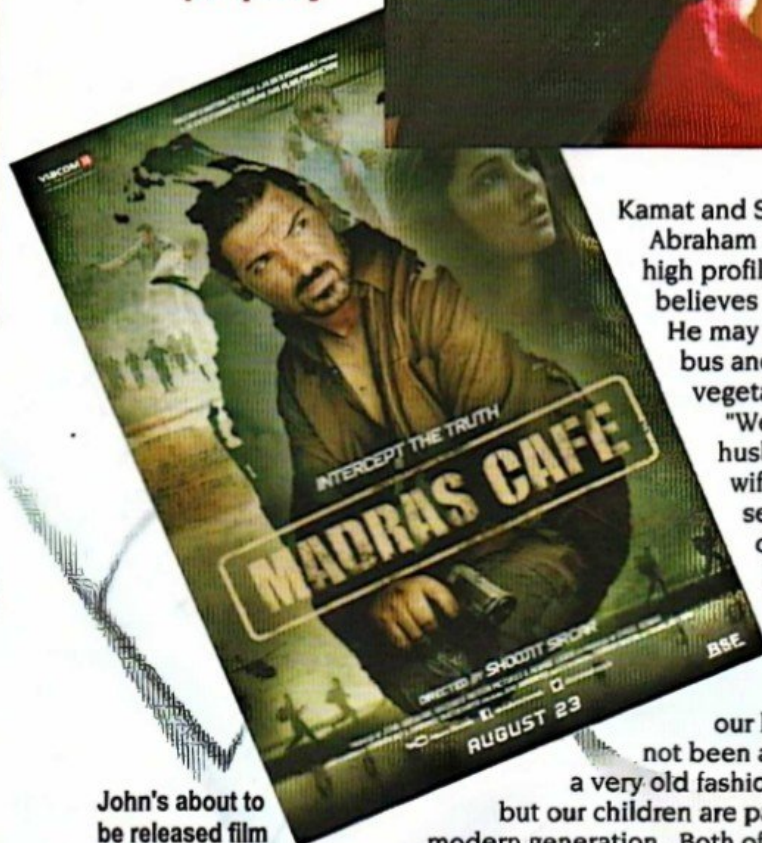
our lifestyle has not been affected. I am a very old fashioned person

but our children are part of the modern generation. Both of them are talented and are very passionate about what they do. Anca has adjusted to our household well. She is a very smart and loving person. I think it is the enthusiasm and integrity of our children that keep us happy. I feel we need to encourage our young people. They are the ones who will take this country ahead and we

our back waters. People talk about Venice etc but I think the scenic and natural beauty that Kerala offers, a tourist would not get anywhere in the world. The government in Kerala should provide enough opportunity for people to take the state ahead. At present development is stunted. The state is surviving on tourism and expats remittances. I am sure things would change in the near future", he wished.

"We used to go regularly during Onam and Christmas time to my brother's place in Kochi. I miss Periyar and Chalakudy river near Aluva. Sometimes I think I should settle down on the banks of Chalakudy. I was also fond of boats and boating. In Mumbai when I landed up for job, I found architects had immense opportunity but I did not want to be very rich and make money. I chose to help out people who needed professional help from an architect and hence stayed away from big builders and promoters then. I am happy that I could contribute to the society with my knowledge and experience", he emphasized.

"Both my wife and I like to be very simple without any demand in life", he said smilingly "we are happy that our children are doing well".



John's about to be released film Madras Cafe.

A visionary marvel for Mumbai

Alan Abraham along with his architect father Abraham John representing Abraham John Architects recently won an international competition in Urban Planning and Design Velo City 2013, at Austria for The Bombay Greenway Project.

According to Alan "Mumbai can be a better place to live with green spaces like walking track, cycling track where people can walk, run and cycle. When health is becoming a major issue in urban centres like Mumbai - having a green environment and walking have become essential in our life. Now, Mumbai has a huge railway network from Chhatrapathi Shivaji Terminal to Thane and from Churchgate to Virar - this 114 km stretch over the existing railway line will be a continuous, traffic free, greenway which will also facilitate the citizens to use the space for their local cultural or social needs".

The other advantages of Greenway Projects are, "the railway station areas can be turned into green space by indigenous trees, carbon footprint can be reduced, floods can be avoided during the monsoons, rail crossing accidents can be avoided, east west connectivity can be seamless. The redesigned stations can have revenue generating enterprises. It can also carry Mumbai's major services like electrical, gas, water supply and communication lines. This Greenway will also reduce traffic congestion and air pollution", Alan explained.

Abraham John Architects want to give this city and its citizens a livable, dynamic and better public destination which addresses elements of health, culture, leisure and education in a sustainable green design. The Bombay Greenway Project is a spectacular architectural dream for Mumbai. Will it be made to happen? A lot depends upon the municipal authorities, state government, railways and elected representatives of this metropolis.

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