



June 20: 6,984.55 June 21: 7,076.52 June 22: 7,145.34 June 23: 7,119.76 June 24: 7,148.62 June 27: 7,151.08

ONLY
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SENSEX: 7,500 IN SIGHT

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YOUNG SUPER PERFORMERS

Kumar Mangalam Birla heads a Rs 33,000 crore global commodities giant with a footprint across 100 countries. He is just 38

Plus: YSP Ideator: Michael Foley, Titan
YSP Entrepreneur: Ashish Dhawan, ChrysCapital.

The Ambani Endgame

IDEATOR

Michael Foley

Head/Titan
Design Studio

The Man Who Made Time

Even in a country rapidly waking up to the importance of design, Foley is that rare breed: a corporate designer who enjoys a near-iconic status outside his company.

Here's why. BY RAHUL SACHITANAND



DEEPAK G. PAVAR

BIO-SKETCH

MICHAEL FOLEY

- **BORN:** December 11, 1970
- **EDUCATION: 1988:** High School (Class XII), Kendriya Vidyalaya, Mhow
- **1993-94:** NID
- **WORK:**
- **1994:** Trainee, Titan Industries
- **2000:** Head, Titan Design Studio
- **INTO:** Movies and playing pool
- **REALLY INTO:** Nature and human anatomy
- **ROLE MODELS:** Ideo, Frog Design, Phillipe Starck, Charles and Ray Eames
- **CAR:** Steel grey Fiat Palio
- **BUSINESS SPEAK:** Pushing the envelope
- **OTHER SIDE:** Outdoor sports freak; plays basketball, swims regularly; has a pool table at home for friendly contests with dad
- **AWARDS:**
- **1998:** Best bicycle design, Taiwan R&D centre
- **LIFE'S AMBITION:** Omnipresence of products he has designed
- **WORST NIGHTMARE:** Being rejected completely and forgetting how to sketch overnight
- **MARITAL STATUS:** Single

WREN'S LONDON, LUTYEN'S DELHI, LE CORBUSIER'S Brasilia (the city was based on his tenets but planned not by him, but his followers), and, someday, Foley's Bangalore. The first three were city-planners and architects; Foley is a designer; but his spoor can be found all over Bangalore: in the lights at Bal Bhavan, a children's play area in the city's Cubbon Park (he has also designed benches and fences at the park), in the signage of coffee bar chain Café Coffee Day, and in Civet, a boutique restaurant (serves Thai) at the IITP, a tech park at White Field, on the outskirts of Bangalore. Foley's hand will soon also be visible in a new hotel he is designing at Garuda Mall, the city's retail-space-to-be-seen-in circa June 2005. That's not quite the same as laying out a city but, hey, the man is only 34, and who is to say what he will and will not do in the years ahead. Then, it seems only apt that the name of a young commercial designer, in the prime of life, be associated with a young city, an IT-boomtown that is plagued by the pleasures and pains every single boomtown that came before it has experienced.

Already in Bangalore, Foley is a mini-celebrity, especially among A-listers as this most unscientific of sampling exercises will prove.

Do you know Michael Foley? If so, what do you think of him and his work?

Nandan Nilekani, CEO, Infosys Technologies, the city's best-known technology firm knows of him and speaks of his role in developing a custom-issue watch Infosys gifted employees when it crossed the \$1-billion-in-revenues (Rs 4,400-crore) mark. Incidentally, Michael's role was supervisory; the watch was designed by his younger brother Neil.

Captain G.R. Gopinath, CEO, Air Deccan, Dinesh Hinduja, Director, Gokuldas Exports, and Geetanjali Kirloskar, Chairperson, India-Japan Initiative have heard of Michael Foley too. All three believe the Café Coffee Day design rocks with Gopinath saying that "it stands out in the clutter of the city", and all three believe that Titan's watches look good with Kirloskar saying that "Michael has helped the company retain its design edge." "I must say that Titan offers a wide range of well-designed watches at reasonable prices," says Hinduja.

That's not bad going for someone who started off designing watches as an apprentice at Titan Industries.

Mhow is a small Army town in Central India (it lies 23 km to the south of Indore) that was founded in 1818 and has since enjoyed the kind of public presence reserved for significantly larger urban habitations. One reason for that could be the theory that it is located at the geographical centre of India, with co-ordinates of 22.34 N and 75.47 E (India extends from the eighth to the thirty-eighth (north) latitude and the sixty-ninth to the ninety-seventh (east) longitude, so this isn't true). Another is that the name Mhow is derived from Military Headquarters of War or Military Headquarters of Western India, both claims that ring hollow about a place that has never been more than a divisional headquarters. Still, Mhow (since renamed Dr Ambedkar Nagar, in honour of Dr B.R. Ambedkar who was born there, although the old name has stuck) has had more than its 15-minute share of the limelight. It has figured in the writings of Rudyard Kipling, Winston Churchill spent some time there as a sub-altern, India's only silver medallist in an individual event at the Olympics, Major Rajyavardhan Rathore, was based there at the time of his feat (2004, Athens), it is the most important Army training centre in India,