

# CITADEL

PUNE CITY MAGAZINE

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**Pune University**

**FAIR WOMEN, UNFAIR DEAL**

**Generation Next**

**IN THE ARMY NOW**

**THE VISIONARIES**

## Men Who Have Made The City Proud

**Suave. Ambitious. Driven. Determined. B Venkatesh Rao, Minocher Patel and Ranjit S Chougule - are men with missions to take on the world and change it their way. Corina B Manuel and Prachi Bari delve into the men behind the personae**

# Success

to call it that) into an advantage. They believe that being their fathers' sons definitely helped more than it hurt them. Primarily, because they refused to let it pressurise them. Since they were already visualising their own paths and raring to go down it.

Patel, on the other hand, started down a course that was less travelled and unexplored. To turn it into one that was his very own. To be able to stand poised on the threshold of adulthood and hear your voice - and then not only acknowledge it but also follow your heart takes an huge amount of daring.

Just one of the many traits that runs common amongst the trio. We try and catch a glimpse of what lies beneath those charming exteriors.

This is their story...



Minocher Patel

A BOYISH, BROWN-EYED, self-amused bloke, Minocher Patel, has already made his mark in Pune. People were sitting up straight a couple of years ago when he announced the birth of the first residential finishing school in the country, L'Ecole Solitaire. The following year, people were hearing of this young corporate trainer with the gift of the gab and his incredible knack of keeping people rooted to their seats.

It's an exceptional man who hears his calling very early in life. Patel could be categorised as one such individual. For this Symbiosis Institute Business Management (SIBM) alumnus who "loves to talk" the AISEC 'Train the Trainer' programme was god sent. He was sent for the program to West Germany in 1988, where 48 countries were participating and Patel aced the course at the end of his tenure. That made him realise that he had a "skill that was of an international standard. At a very early age I realised my potential," he reveals rather matter of factly. "And as an award for acing the course, I was sent to Finland for another course where 39 countries were participating - and they were all post-graduate students and I was the only undergrad there - to sharpen my skills furthermore before returning home to India."

Again the chap walked away with the top honours and it was on his flight back that he had an epiphany: "I had found my calling in life," he smiles, "See? Like Sachin (Tendulkar) was Sachin because he was 'discovered' by his parents at a fairly young age and if had been discovered at say, age 25, he wouldn't have been the master blaster that he is today. Similarly, if Minocher Patel had been 'found' at 30 years, I guess he would have a marketing guy selling soaps."

A consciously laid-out career plan where he invested seven years - five years in India and two in Dubai - living life as if it were a "movie or rather I was a debuting filmmaker, observing people, checking out where they were going with their mistakes, where I was going wrong ...making mistakes it was like an ongoing experiment. I call it my 'austere conscious living' where you live your life consciously." After his seven-year journey of discovery, which he calls his 'Vision Quest', Patel had already conceived and fine-tuned the idea of India's first residential finishing school. Especially when in the Middle East he saw a lot of the families sending their daughters to finishing schools abroad "and I wondered why can't I offer something similar right here in India. So that all my skills meet - marketing, oratory - and come up with a package that was unique and all my own." He did, and the result was L'Ecole Solitaire.

Citadel Pune, March 2004

## Dr Feel-Good



**WHY?** Motivational speaker and management guru Minocher Patel - Pune's answer to Dr Deepak Chopra  
**WHERE?** All over the country and the globe - Switzerland, Thailand and the UAE  
**WHEN?** It's happening even as we speak

1999: Enter Patel the corporate trainer. One who travelled all over India, UAE, Switzerland, Sri Lanka and Thailand to carry out training programs for the corporate sector and the student community. His seminars and workshops, known for their high quality content, are backed by his unique and entertaining style of delivery and are highly participative.

Coming back to his workshops, we wonder aloud what is so special about his workshops and Raj Gopalan, GM, Human Resources, Sandvik Asia has his own spin: "I had seen him conducting his very first workshop when both of us were at Vadilal - more than a decade ago," "but what still sticks in my

memory in vivid clarity was his sense of humour. Being a trainer myself, I know that humour plays a vital role in holding on to the attention of your listener, especially when you are conducting a workshop for a longer duration I think your skill has to be excellent - not just as trainer but as a person as well. Secondly, I think his USP has always been to bring his personal experiences and insights to the session. He believes strongly that to be a good talker one has to be a good listener."

The dynamic Lila Poonawalla has a different take. Patel has conducted a number of workshops for her scholarship programme, Lila Poonawalla Foundation for deserving young women, who are affectionately known as Lila Fellows for the lady to be able to make her observations. The chairperson of Alfa Laval believes Patel is immensely popular because "he is able to relate to the audience - predominantly the student community, in a special way because he relates to them very well - I mean he looks like one of them, talks like one of them and even at times behaves like them. His USP, I think, apart from the fact that he is young is the fact that he is a very pleasant teacher - very easy to talk to and absolutely unflappable." Then in a thoughtful vein she adds, "The older generation may have Dr Chopra and Shiv Khera, but the youngsters have him. He is more the youngsters' person."

More power to him!

PHOTOGRAPH: MADHUKAR TEMJOIRE