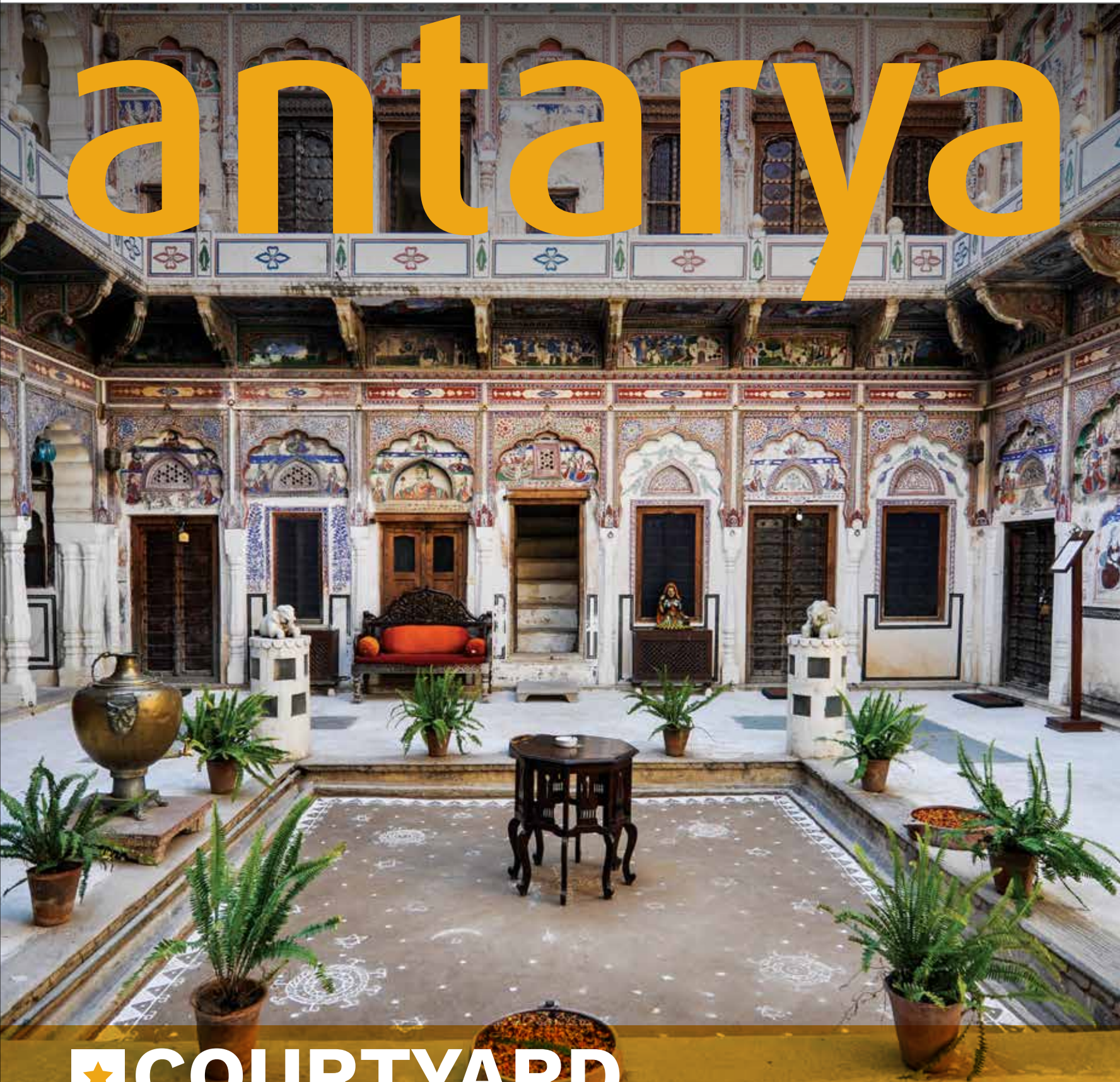


antarya



★ COURTYARD YOUR SPACE



MASTER STROKES
P K VENKATARAMANAN



IIID BANGALORE REGIONAL CHAPTER



INSTITUTE
OF INDIAN
INTERIOR
DESIGNERS

Bangalore Regional Chapter

exterior

The original shows its true colours.

Primary school Sassenburg Westerbeck, Photo credit: thysenkrupp Plastics GmbH, Architect: Augustin und Frank Architekten

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From the Chairman and
Managing Editor's Desk



DINESH VERMA

Dear Members,

Being elected as Chairperson with such a cohesive and energetic team is indeed an honour. IIID- BRC has a legacy, the professionalism brought in by the past chairpersons and the programs generated have set a benchmark which is of the highest order in the profession.

Over the next two years, our team will raise this benchmark further. We have worked out an agenda for the members, which include eminent speakers, Designuru - the Design Festival of Bangalore, product launches and interactive leadership programs.

Our CoDe Studio and SWAP is doing more for the society with greater help from Trade partners. The hiccups of Antarya's regularity in publication have also been resolved.

On taking over as Chairperson as well as the Managing Editor of Antarya, after discussions with the editorial team, it was decided to tweak the forthcoming issues further to make reading more interesting. We plan to increase our digital circulation base to 8000-10,000 copies and also make Antarya interactive over the digital media.

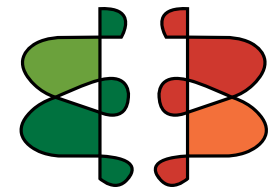
Courtyards have always been an inspiring element for designers. They are functional and aesthetic. They bring in the energies of light and air deep into the building. From time immemorial, courtyards are found not only in palaces but also in ordinary houses.

This issue of Antarya captures this spirit of courtyards.

We do look forward to hearing your comments and responses to improve Antarya.

Dinesh Verma

verma@acegrouparchitects.com

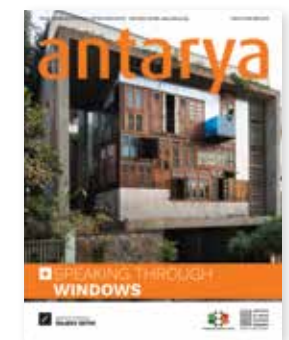


IIID BANGALORE REGIONAL CHAPTER

**IIID Bangalore
Regional Chapter Emblem**

The letter form B and its mirrored version together form this symbol. The idea is inspired by the forms of Rangoli. Bangalore as a city is a unique combination of the traditional and the contemporary. This coexistence of dual cultures is iconic of Bangalore as it is present in arts/ architecture and the general landscape of the city and its culture. Using Rangoli (Traditional) as the basis, we have created letter form B (Modern) and reflected this form to enclose the space in between (Interiors). The colour palette is also representative of the traditional and modern.

ISSUE 21 JAN-MAR 2019



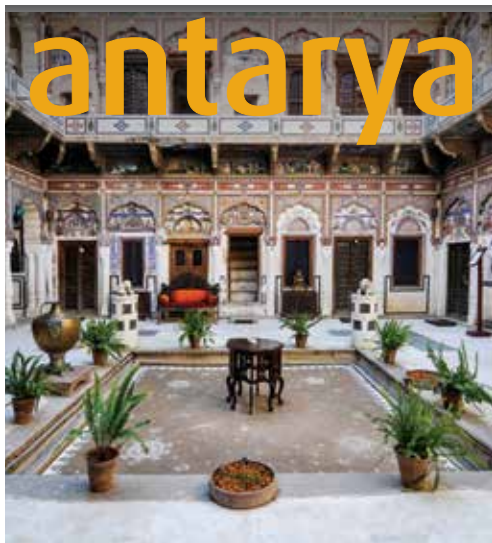
REVIEWS

"Antarya manages to consistently publish projects of a high standard. That allows designers to benchmark their own work against the best projects across the country..it raises the bar in many ways."

**SUJIT NAIR
PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT SDeG**

"Antarya is a delightfully 'diverse' coverage of Architectural information. The publication provides an opportunity to explore creative possibilities designed by the grandmasters of the community themselves. Every issue is helping members of IIID BRC discover their next great Read !!"

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COVER IMAGE

Marwari's Grand Courtyard in Shekhawati region.
Photograph by *Mahesh Chadaga*

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SATHYA CONSULTANTS



GAYATHRI & NAMITH ARCHITECTS



ARCHITECTURE PARADIGM

PUBLISHED BY

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IIID BRC



COURTYARD YOUR SPACE

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR



Courtyard at Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh. Photograph by Mahesh Chadaga



Typical courtyard seen in Kerala. Photograph by Mahesh Chadaga

It dates back to as far as the Indus Valley Civilization, serving as the soul of the built structure. The open to sky area surrounded by the built structure has been an integral part of ancient residences as well as public spaces, not just in India, but in Europe as well as the Far East. Be it Britain, Spain, Egypt, Russia, China, Japan and of course India, courtyards prevailed as an essential component of a built space, with only the functionality and use varying as defined by individual requirements. When it comes to traditional Indian architecture, starting from 3000-1300 BC in the era of Indus Valley Civilisation, the ancient temples to palaces, residences to public

spaces, courtyards served as a primary element sans which literally no structure prevailed. These courtyards act as a thermostat, regulating the temperature by letting in ample natural light and ventilation, screening the interiors from the harsh exterior weather conditions. Summers find the courtyards ushering in cool air, flushing out heat from within while in winters they do the reverse, letting in the much needed sunlight to warm the chilly spaces within. Besides the obvious energy saving as a consequence and the positive impact on the carbon footprint, these courtyards have also served as excellent repositories for collecting and storing rainwater.



Courtyard of Coastal Karnataka. Photograph by Mahesh Chadaga

TRADITIONAL INDIAN COURTYARDS

Traditional Indian residences have invariably featured a courtyard, serving both as a private space, as well as an area to be used for family gatherings and festivities. Typically these courtyards manifested as an open to sky large space surrounded by a large veranda that opened on to it on all four sides. The free flowing veranda served as the common path to individual rooms that were structured around the sunlit courtyard. Stone or wooden columns prevailed around this veranda, holding up the mostly tiled roof that sloped into the courtyard. Based on the opulence of the residence, these columns displayed exquisite carving or exotic timber, serving as aesthetic elements in the open to sky space.

Depending on individual inclinations, the courtyards commonly referred to as the Brahma Sthal, also doubled up as mini-gardens, an area of worship, with the sacred Tulsi plant finding its place, a space for family interaction between two generations where the old had a safe space to interact in peace with the very young. With women mostly confined to the household, these courtyards also served as cheerful outdoors where they could interact, connect with the open sky. In large houses, the courtyards also served the function of connecting to multiple areas of the residence with ease.



*A contemporaray urban courtyard. Photograph by Mahesh Chadaga
Source Kumar Consultants*

Modern Indian homes are fast discovering the value of the traditional courtyards, incorporating them into residences in whatever form the available space permits, keeping contemporary lifestyles in perspective. These courtyards, while keeping the open to sky concept intact, however manifest in a different form as compared to the past, incorporating elements that serve as the highlight of the residence and prevailing as an exclusive relaxation zone for the family to assemble and interact.



*Top Left: Tower block and courtyard in Dunedin Chinese Garden. Source: commons.wikimedia.org Credit: Pseudopanax
Top Right: Casa històrica de Tabatabaeis, Kashan, Irán. Source: commons.wikimedia.org Credit: Diego Delso
Bottom: Ph.Patmos Monastery. Source: commons.wikimedia.org Credit: Thanasis Christodoulou*

THE EARLY COURTYARDS

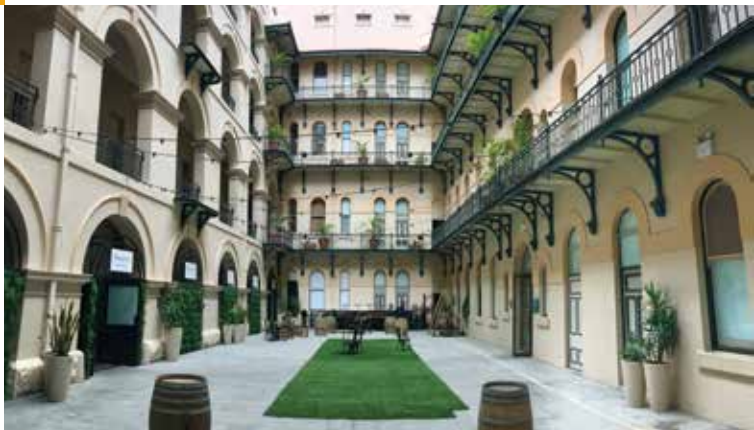
Some of the earliest courtyards in history date as far back as 3000 BC where they served as the kitchen, permitting the smoke from the open fire to escape unhindered. They doubled up as sleeping areas at night, as a space for children to play during the day, besides offering a space for other household chores. Notable examples of the earliest courtyards in history are the Court of Lions in Andalusia and the Mosque of Uqba in Tunisia's city of Kairouan. Around 2000 BC, Ur, an important city in ancient Mesopotamia, revealed the presence of towns with a series of two storey buildings set around an open courtyard that featured in the middle. The open courtyards served as public spaces for the occupants of the two storeys to congregate.

The ancient Roman courtyards that were an integral part of the built structure, incorporated enchanting water features along with large wells explicitly brought in to catch rainwater. While these courtyards served the common household functions, they also

doubled up as entertainment zones to accommodate travelling musicians who stopped by to perform.

The traditional Chinese courtyards revealed similar structural elements as the Roman courtyards, featuring in the centre of a collection of houses that featured around. The houses surrounding the courtyard essentially were part of a single family, permitting the extended family to gather in the common space to interact. These courtyards came with a significant presence of green as well as a water feature, infusing a tranquil aura to the ambience. While the smaller residences were built around a single courtyard, larger estates came with multiple courtyards amidst a large collection of interlinked houses.

The Middle Eastern courtyards came with religious markers, the wells and water features incorporating religious symbols. In the places where Islam was practiced, these courtyards proved to be the only space where women would be permitted to venture out alone.



Courtyard at former Land Administration Building, Brisbane.
Source: [commons.wikimedia.org](#) Credit: *Kgbo*

THE ENGLISH COURTYARDS

Courtyards in medieval Britain prevailed chiefly in the monasteries, providing a quiet sanctuary for the monks. Not surprisingly, these courtyards were minus the rich trappings of their Roman or Middle Eastern counterparts. In Stuart Britain courtyards, these open to sky spaces accommodated large seating areas to enable community interaction. However, these courtyards were the privilege of only the higher classes who introduced them into their residences.

The Georgian British courtyards reveal a significant degree of opulence that marked this period. Serving mostly as a private space for guests to interact, the courtyards featured large water features and decorative statues. The Victorian era went further, introducing exquisitely carved stone pillars into the courtyards, complementing the stunning architecture that marked this period. Exotic gardens were structured around these elements, the Hampton Court Palace standing as a fine example of the beautiful gardens that came up during this period. Many grand estates had courtyards, both within the built structure as well as outside the built structure where they featured as courtyard gardens.

The 20th Century courtyards of Britain reveal strong inspiration from the courtyards of the past. Contemporary British architecture continues to feature courtyards in modern open plan residences and public buildings. The spaces are built around these courtyards, invoking an open relaxed feel though lately these prevail mostly outside the building rather than within the built structure.

CLASSIC COURTYARD HOUSES OF INDIA

Courtyards have been an integral part of traditional houses across India. Be it the Havelis in Rajasthan, Wadas of Maharashtra, the traditional houses in Central India, Nalukettu in Kerala, Guthu Mane of South Karnataka, Ainemane of Kodagu, traditional residences across India integrated a courtyard into the structure. These courtyards featured not just as an architectural style but as part of a lifestyle that marked these traditional joint family households. While all these courtyards featured in the



Courtyard amidst the ruins of Hampi in Karnataka.



A Courtyard in Rajasthan.



Courtyard in Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu.
Above Photographs by *Mahesh Chadaga*

central part of the inward looking house, the rooms built around this space, the design style and elements used varied based on the region the courtyard prevailed.

The typical Guthu house for instance has a steeply pitched roof with single or double storeyed structure built around it. The principal material used here for the columns and beams is wood. The Ainemane in Kodagu, typically built on a hillock surrounded by paddy fields and coffee plantations, likewise has an open to sky central courtyard while a narrow corridor runs around this



Amber Fort-Jaipur-India. Source: [commons.wikimedia.org](#) Credit: *Diego Delso.*



Courtyards of Rajasthan. Photograph by *Mahesh Chadaga*

courtyard, connecting to the rooms. The sloped tiled roof, adopted to handle the torrential rains, tilt into the central courtyard.

The traditional Nalukettu houses of Kerala came as a rectangular structure where four halls are joined together around a central courtyard. The simple layout was designed to cater to a large joint family which shared the common facilities of the household. Larger residences also prevailed with two central courtyards and eight halls, referred to as Ettukettu and four central courtyards with sixteen halls, referred to as Pathinarukettu.

The Havelis of Rajasthan were essentially architecture that evolved as a response to climate, lifestyle as well as available material. The Havelis, which are large mansions, were closed from

all sides with one large main gate and typically came with two courtyards, the outer one for men and the inner one for women.

The Wadas, traditional homes of Maharashtra, reflect the aesthetic elements of Maratha architecture and are based on the square grid pattern. The thick walled structure with its few openings is built around a central courtyard, referred to as the Chowk. Most Wadas had two courtyards while the larger and elaborate mansions had six to eight courtyards. Based on the placement of the courtyard, be it main, inner or rear region, the verandas around the courtyards were used for various household activities such as dining, storing, milling, sorting, bathing, dressing etc as well as used by clerks and accountants to fulfil financial and other functions.



Sringeri Patashala



Home on the waterfront

ALTERING THE LANGUAGE THROUGH COURTYARDS

The language of a space, interior or exterior, alters when a courtyard is introduced in its midst.

Architects Gayathri Shetty and Namith Varma of Gayathri & Namith Architects introduce courtyards into the built spaces to create drama and a differential experience.

Left top: This external courtyard in the Narasimhavana, Sringeri, is designed around a cluster of blocks amidst the prevailing clump of trees. The buildings are placed organically around the trees, creating the courtyard.

Left bottom: The internal sky lit courtyard in the Water Front residence comes with its contemporary expression while using a traditional concept. The presence of water in the courtyard connects to the expanse of water in lake the residence overlooks. The life size bronze sculpture lazily lounging in the water along with the black slate backdrop, make a dramatic feature in the interior space.

Right top: The internal sky lit courtyard prevails in the heart of the interiors in the Shangrila residence, ushering in a differential experience, the customised seating around the large tree lending an outdoor feel within indoors. The courtyard also acts as a hot air vent, with its openable roof.

Right bottom: The Wood and White Villa has its internal courtyard serving as a dining space, the tall tree reaching up to the first level, lending the feel of dining under a tree. The railing of the staircase becomes one of the bench seats for the dining while the tree in the sky lit space brings an interesting play of light and shadow.



Shangrila



White and wood villa



INTEGRATING THE UNBUILT WITH THE BUILT

Courtyards serve as a spectacular connect between the built and unbuilt environment. **Architect Sathya Prakash Varanashi of Sathya Consultants** effectively integrates the built and unbuilt spaces by introducing courtyards in the interior as well as exterior spaces.



Top Left: The large sun lit courtyard serves as a continuous extension of the indoor living space through the use of sliding foldable doors. The courtyard created within the setback limits brings in the greens, with the plants featuring on the hollow clay block ledges, the unbuilt court complimenting the built interior spaces.

Bottom Left: The external courtyard has been created by staggering the external walls to offer the experience of an indoor courtyard. The collapsible doors permit a seamless connect with the interior spaces and external courtyard.

Bottom right: A view of the internal courtyard from above, capturing the curved plaster boxes and breakfast counter set on glass with pebbles beneath. The space opening from the kitchen, serves as an attractive breakfast and coffee nook, the fluid forms of the space contrasting with the straight lines of the family space adjacent to it.

Above left: The large sky lit courtyard with indoor shrubs, serves as an extension of the living area as well as private family space that opens on to it through sliding screens.

Above right: The sky lit square courtyard with its accompanying cantilevered stone slabs, features as the central space around which the external garden, the living area, dining and puja are organised, ushering in a multi- dimensional quality.

Next page: The internal courtyard with its antique columns and large planters, serves as a passage between the living and dining space, the puja area featuring opposite. The sunlight flowing into the sky lit area cheerfully floods the living and dining spaces built around it.





A SEAMLESS BLEND THROUGH COURTYARDS

Architects Sandeep J and Manoj Ladh of Architecture Paradigm use courtyards to merge the interior spaces with the exterior landscape, the ensuing perfect unification making it hard to decipher the beginning and end of each space.



Top Left: The Courtyard House, built on a sloping terrain, has the slope appropriated to create three open spaces that envelope the entire residence. The expansive central courtyard unifies the residence, combining the public and private spaces effectively.

Middle and right: The Bysani House is bound by buildings on all sides with a 20,000 Sq ft thick wooded area on one side, which is home to trees over a century old. The objective was to connect to nature and water, where the residence sans its doors, has the built environment blending seamlessly with the exterior landscape through the courtyards. Pergolas prevail in one, resulting in an exotic shadow play while the other overlooks the wooded space, integrating with it from its elevated level.

Left bottom: This Pe'te' Mane' has a courtyard that retains the traditional pattern of living while keeping in perspective contemporary sensitivities. The hardscape opted here addresses this sensitivity.

Above: The institutional campus, Myra, is situated in an industrial development area, the chosen site bare of any vegetation or individual character. The internal courtyard with its steps creates a sense of scale and internal environment that exudes informality and sense of identity.



The Brick House comes with three courtyards. The central courtyard, featuring as a surprise element, is articulated as an outdoor living area, connecting to the interior spaces seamlessly where the water element demarcates it into two sections, the privacy of each section preserved.





A SAGA OF HALF A CENTURY

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

It is a practice that dates back 50 years, to a time when the city was witness to architectural practices that could be counted on fingers. It is about structure and design of a period where not many paid heed to the nuances of the evolving edifice, the focus being on the quantum of space offered and the functionality that ensued. It is about designing in an era where technology was negligible, the drafting table omnipresent in the few architect firms that prevailed, the unending scrolls of paper serving as the sole source of relating the drawings. It is about going back in time to an age where architects and their irreplaceable role in emerging structures were just beginning to get recognised and acknowledged.

Year 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of **Venkataramanan Associates, with Architect P K**

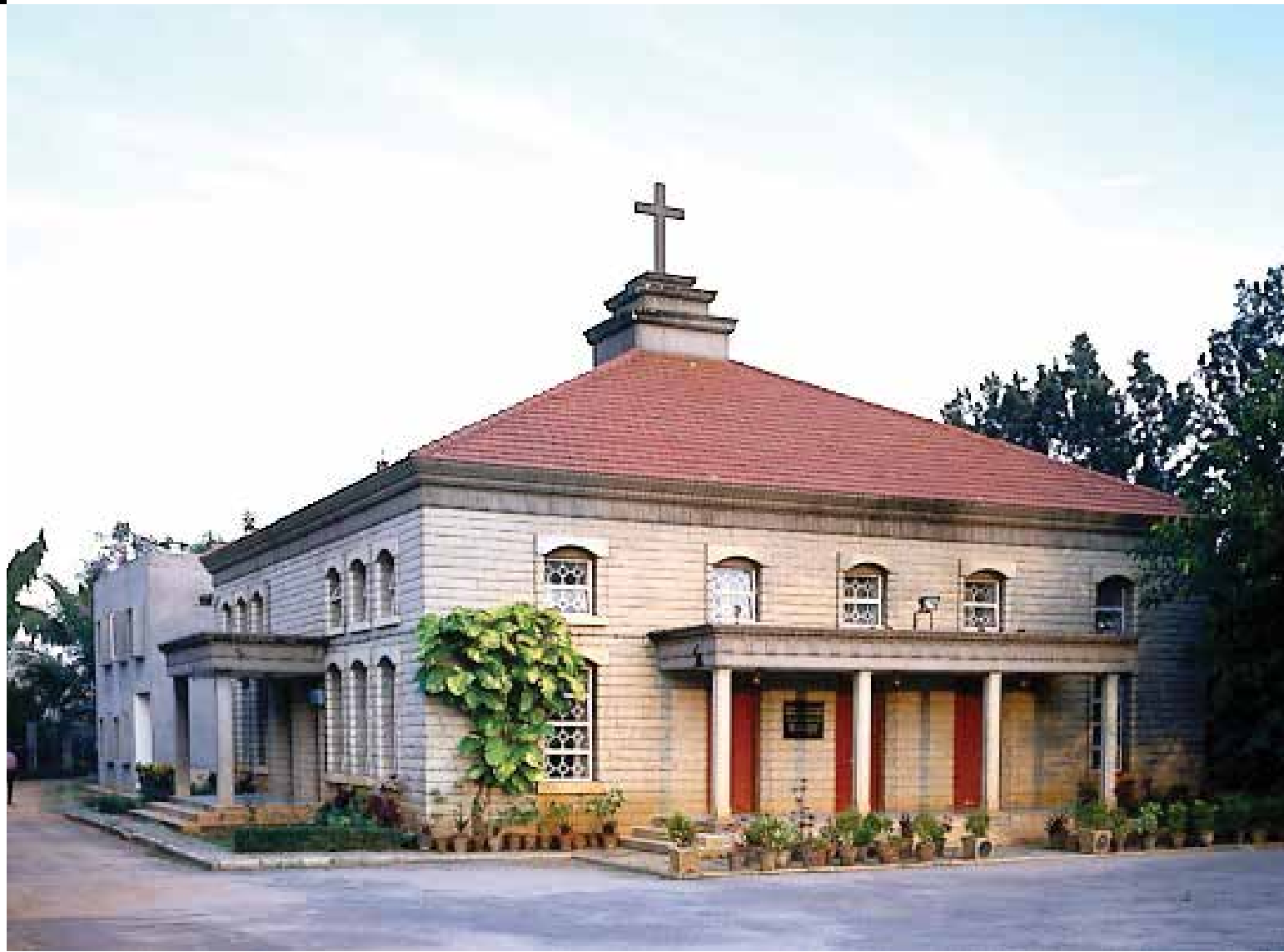
Venkataramanan choosing to step away from his well settled job in Chandavarkar & Thackar (CnT) in 1969 to start his own practice thence forth. “It was way back in 1952 when my father, a structural engineer, asked me if I would like to pursue architecture. I knew nothing about architecture then and hence was given an option to work in his office to help make an informed decision”, says Venkataramanan, tracing the very beginning of his foray into architecture.



Raman Research Institute (RRI)

“My tenure as an apprentice in Prynne, Abbot & Davis gave me an insight into structures and design, permitting me to draw, trace, participate in the drafting, plans, elevation and sections, whereby, when I joined architecture school in 1954 in Delhi, I already had a fair idea of the procedures.” Young Venkataramanan, chose to join the Delhi Polytechnic “as this permitted working during the day and practical experience while studying.” But he is quick to add that combining work with school

was back breaking, as “there was barely any time to rest, each day coming with a 16 hour work schedule.” Looking back on the 7 year gruelling schedule before he received his diploma, Venkataramanan contends, “Free thinking is to an extent blocked when you combine school with work as you then know what works practically. Out of the box thinking gets hindered as you do not permit your thoughts to flow freely as you would when you study full time sans practical experience.”



Baptist Mission

BEGINNINGS IN THE GARDEN CITY

His tryst with Bangalore came about when he had to undertake a study tour during the fourth year of his architectural course. “This was in 1958 and after my visit I wanted to make Bangalore my home, seeing its ample greenery.” Interestingly, his wish was fulfilled when he joined Chandavarkar & Thacker after working initially with Chithale in Chennai and later with Master, Sathe & Kothari in Chennai. “This was in 1966, after an interview with Thacker. This was the turning point as it cemented my stay in Bangalore. I worked here for three years before starting my own practice in end 1969.”

Recalling the initial years of his practice, Venkataramanan says, “It required a lot of guts to quit a well-paying job in CnT and start a practice where I had nothing to fall back on, yet had a young family to support.”

He further adds with a smile, “I had Rs 12000 in my account that time and I knew I could survive a year even if the earnings were nil. I started at home by taking up small projects that came by, a far cry from the mega projects I had designed and coordinated in CnT.”

While the going was indeed tough, being not someone who would buckle under pressure, Venkataramanan persisted, “handling enough number of such small projects that came by to ensure the Rs 12000 in my account remained untouched.” Six months after starting his practice, Venkataramanan realised he had enough work to move into a formal, albeit small office space on Infantry Road, paying Rs 300 as rent, with an assistant to aid him. “At this point, my brother, who is also an architect, joined my practice along with two draftsmen. In the coming months the practice picked up

though in the initial stages there were not too many projects”, he adds.

BREAKING CONVENTIONS

His first major project was Raman Research Institute, “but even this large job, during those years had a budget of only Rs 50 lakhs.” The institute had its theoretical physics laboratory and the library designed by Venkataramanan. “The structure was built in exposed concrete, the very first building in the city to have been done in exposed concrete.”

What prompted him to opt for exposed concrete when it was not a norm in the structures that prevailed during that time?

“It was the colour of the eucalyptus trees that abounded in the site, the grey shades prompting me to match the building to the



Husain Sankalana

flora on site. The main structure built by C V Raman is in granite and also in the same shade, grey. Opting for exposed concrete thus not only blended with what existed in the site but also seamlessly merged with the existing structure. I could have of course opted for stone in the new structure but each building has a time and context. This difference needs to be respected and brought in and exposed concrete did just that. The vertical expanse of the eucalyptus trees further complemented this choice”, Venkataramanan explains.

His second major structure was the multi-purpose hall for Baptist Mission Church. “This multi-purpose hall, which also doubles up as a youth centre, was a part of the church building.” Incidentally, Venkataramanan wanted the multi-purpose hall too in exposed concrete, similar to

Raman Research Institute building, “but the client’s choice was different and I had to restrict my design to suit their needs.”

Given the lifestyle and economy as well as technology that prevailed during his practice, Venkataramanan states that mega projects of the size currently handled by his firm, never physically existed during his tenure. “The projects were more in the form of residences, apartment complexes, commercial buildings, laboratories which were fairly large, yet were no comparison to the scale that is being built today.” The technology and design opted too were a far cry from what is being offered today, he further adds.

“The first five years of my practice were mostly confined to designing individual residences where the journey was beautiful



Husain house

as it entailed a fine interaction with the client on his needs and aspirations. This branched on later to taking up institutional projects and apartment complexes which had become popular during this period, with the city growing at a faster pace than envisaged. The large projects handled during the next decade were commercial and residential complexes.”

DESIGN STYLE

Talking about his design style and inclination, Venkataramanan says, “you have to first respect the context, the locally available materials and style and using these, the client’s aspirations and requirements need to be met. A good design should keep these in perspective and incorporate them into the spaces.” He further adds, “The design offered should be such that the spaces are organised



aesthetically. Once the building is completed, how the spaces are used is not in my control but as the designer it is my job to organise and integrate aesthetically.”

He firmly believes that any design solution offered should be unique. “The approach should be out of the box instead of conventional as this makes the difference to the final evolution of the space or product that is designed.” The design offered should however be one that is in tune with the technology available in that period and in that location, he points. “The design challenges we faced during my practice were far more than now. Even simple things

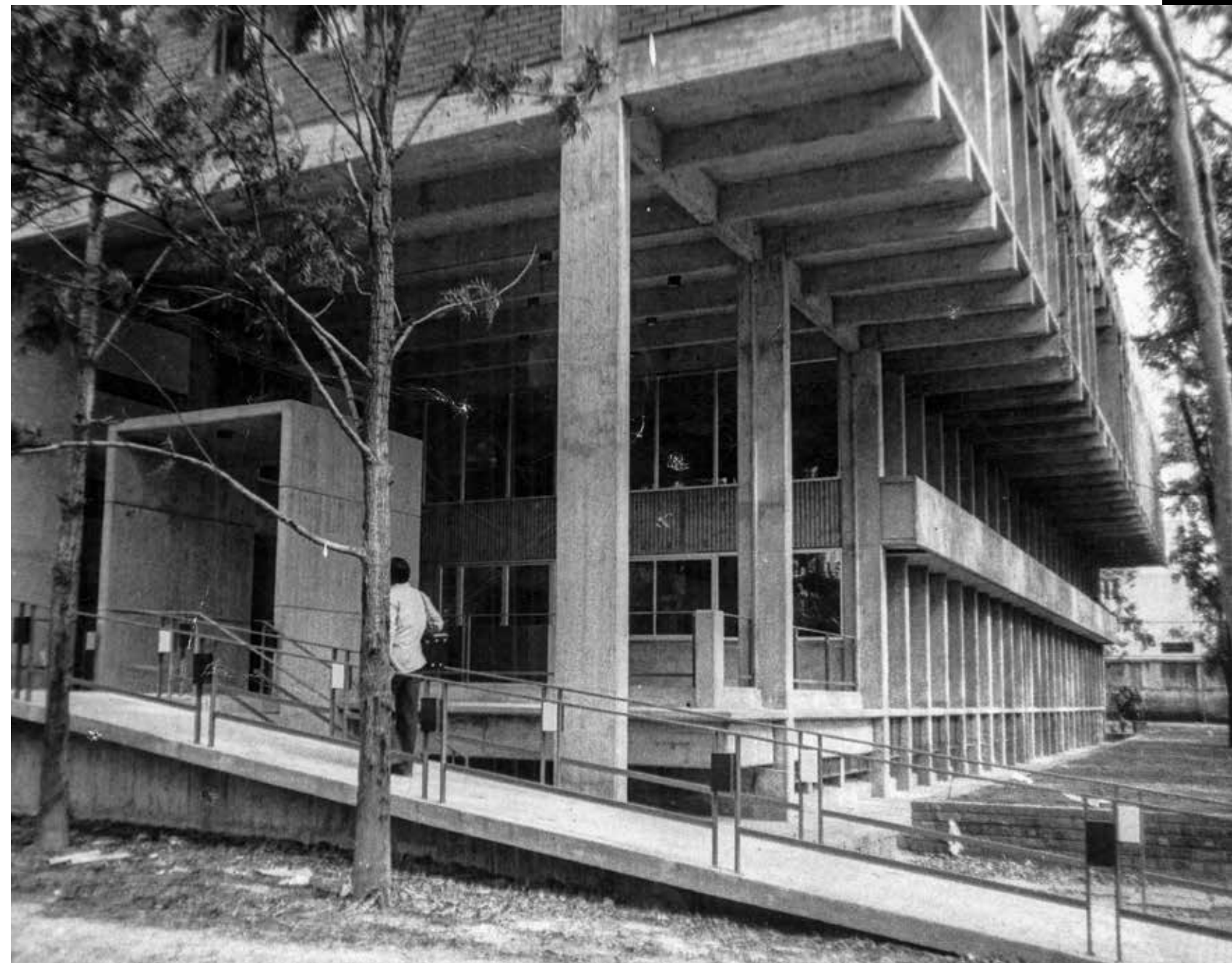
such as door knobs had to be designed and fabricated as the hardware available in the market was far from aesthetic.”

A stickler for detail, Venkataramanan adds, “Detailing is the most important part of architecture as this determines the functionality of the designed spaces. The focus needs to be on essential functional needs of each individual space, where every detail is observed and addressed effectively.”

He opines that an architect “is a jack of all trades where he has a fair knowledge of all things that form part of the structure, be it

plumbing, electricity, landscape etc, keeping aesthetics as the focus.” During construction, one should be open to accept detailing ideas from anyone, even a worker at the site, he stresses.

There are times when even the best of designs may fail to be implemented if the client is not convinced to have it executed. Venkataramanan recognises this fully and contends that the first hurdle to cross is the client’s thought process. “You have to convince the client to opt for your design which may be totally different from what he envisaged. This is the first battle to win to venture forward.”



CALLING IT A DAY

Five years after starting his practice, Venkataramanan realised his practice had become fairly large, with a 15 member staff to house and it was hence time to shift his office to a larger space. “This new 2000 Sq ft office space was used from 1975-88 after which the staff strength grew to 35, making this space too cramped. The office was again shifted to a larger space where we have now over 100 staff working”, he states, referring to the meteoric rise in his practice over the last 30 years. “In 1998 I decided to call it a day, stepping out of office and handing the reins over to the next generation.” Twenty years into his

retirement, Venkataramanan, besides playing his favourite golf and indulging in sketching and painting, stills keeps busy, though not designing structures but making a difference in society through his services that range from addressing the civic needs in his locality to forming a forum for senior citizens where they meet and exchange ideas.

Left and Above: Raman Research Institute (RRI)



A CENTURY IN WOOD

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR



MANAGING DIRECTOR
VINAY GUPTA

S.L.V. SAW MILLS & WOOD INDUSTRIES

It was in Hunsur, District of Mysore, way back in 1908 that S.L.V. Saw Mills & Wood Industries was established by Venkataramana Setty. A century later, the mills continue to churn the high quality timber for structural use as well as interior solutions such as flooring, wall, ceiling, doors, windows, cabinets and furniture. Its core activity continues to be sourcing timber from close to twenty countries besides India, subjecting the same to rigorous processing in the factory before it is ready for use.

Carrying over the century old legacy where the core function of logs and slicing has been preserved while expanding operations to cover other segments that relate and cater to the ever altering new demands of the market is the current Managing Director, Vinay Gupta, who took over the mantle from his father Nagendra Gupta in 1991. Vinay Gupta belongs to the fourth generation that is taking the legacy forward.



- 1. A view of the office and round logs at the stockyard.
- 2: Conventional Seasoning Kiln.
- 3: 6 Spindle Moulder
- 4: Profile Sanding machine.
- 5: Double-end Tennonner
- 6: Vacuum Drying Seasoning Plant
- 7: Tennonner machine for Window and door making.
- 8: Auto-copy shaper for making chair components.

A CLASS APART IN WOOD SOLUTIONS

When there are multiple options for sourcing wood, the question that arises is why SLV Saw Mills & Wood Industries? What makes their product a class apart to induce the customer to reach and source? With 111 years of experience in dealing with wood varieties, both Indian and imported timber, the quality and range offered by SLV not only meets the highest standards but also anticipates and meets the exacting requirements of the most discerning customer.

Not only are the varieties on offer wide ranged but the timber seasoning and processing too is done in-house, meeting uncompromised

quality standards. The seasoned, finished timber comes in smooth surfaces, totally free of cracks, not to mention being termite and weather proof.

Besides trading in raw timber, SLV has expanded its portfolio by branching into manufacturing furniture under its brand, Furnitech. Apart from the in-house designed furniture, individual pieces are also custom designed to meet unique individual requirements. The range of wood solutions offered by SLV, besides the raw timber which it offers in the form of round logs and cut sections, include solid wood furniture, doors and window shutters, solid wood kitchen shutters, wooden pre-fab

kits, wood flooring and panelling for both indoors and outdoors.

Currently most of the timber used in the country is imported. Not surprisingly 95 per cent of the timber offered by SLV is sourced from various countries that include Canada, United States, Europe, Africa, Malaysia, South America, Burma. The timber species imported range from Teak, Ash, Oak, Beech, Cedar (yellow and red), Douglas fir, Merbau, Sal, Meranti, Rosewood, to Mahogany, among others. “All the varieties of timber sourced come with the sustainability tag, being FSC timber, PEFC timber”, states Gupta. The local timber sourced from states like Uttarakhand, Karnataka and various regions from the Western Ghats are all legal timber, he adds.



SEASONED TO PERFECTION

Timber effuses its best qualities when seasoned right and sliced right to not just reveal the glorious grains and textures but also last generations without cracking or splitting. SLV has a state of the art wood seasoning unit where the lumber is treated to the highest degree of durability, the emerging seasoned wood sturdy and capable of passing the toughest endurance test during its lifetime. The factory has two seasoning plants, one being the conventional kiln while the other is the vacuum drying seasoning plant. The 1200 Cft capacity conventional European kiln is used for mass seasoning of timber. “The European kiln is preferred by many as direct heat is not used here and instead moisture and air are used. This is a longer process compared to the vacuum drying and seasoning plant which we use for seasoning smaller quantities of lumber typically set aside for making furniture”, says Gupta.

According to him, the conventional European kiln, though a longer more laborious process, offers a higher quality of wood than the vacuum drying plant. “Here, since direct heat is absent, the core moisture is targeted



with the process of air drying which prevents the surface from cracking while seasoning. In the regular kiln the use of direct heat makes the surface crack. The conventional seasoning is also done based on the individual moisture content in the wood, ranging from 12 to 14 days, resulting in high quality timber that remains sturdy for an elongated lifetime.” Controlled air is passed over every piece of wood stacked in the kiln and this prevents the syndrome of over drying or under drying, thus ensuring all the stacked pieces of timber are dried uniformly. The vacuum drying seasoning plant, with its capacity of 150 Cft, targets the seasoning

of smaller sections of wood where the seasoning is completed in four to five days. “Here too the direct heat is consciously kept lower to prevent the chapping of the surface and yield higher quality seasoned wood. The objective is to ensure, whatever be the method of seasoning opted, the heat used is never intense.”

EXECUTING TO EXACTING STANDARDS

The saw mill, allied wood industries and wood yard of SLV, equipped with the most advanced and sophisticated Indian and imported machinery, assisted by highly

trained and experienced professionals, ensures the timber delivered meets the exacting requirements of customers. Be it cut sections, round logs, profiles, furniture, window frames, doors or specially customised products, the design and execution of the final product is accomplished with minimum wastage and maximum accuracy.



Photographs by **Mahesh Chadaga**

KOCHI MUZIRIS BIENNALE

KOCHI EXTRAVAGANZA

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

The location is Fort Kochi and it is the fourth edition of art extravaganza that the city is hosting. We are talking about the Kochi Muziris Biennale 2018-19 that ended in last week of March, after making a splash that left the visitor with an unforgettable experience. Spread across 12 venues including student exhibits and hosting 76 artists, the four month contemporary art exhibition showcased a mindboggling array of modern art forms that came in as paintings, installations, sculptures, films, exhibits and much more.

With the theme, Possibilities of a Non-Alienated Life, and curated by Anita Dube, co-founder of KHOJ International Artists' Association, the Biennale had a spellbinding spread of art exhibits, the major portion concentrated in Aspinwall House. While it was a hard pick deciding on which exhibits to elaborate on from the stunning range on show, a few are listed below along with the statement that the rest were equally incredible in concept and display.





Photographs by **Mahesh Chadaga**

RESILIENT BODIES IN THE ERA OF RESISTANCE

Artist from Chandrapur, Prabhakar Pachpute's work draws attention to the scarred landscapes and the underground arenas that coal miners inhabit, essentially a leaf taken out of his childhood and his growing years, having hailed from a family of former farmers. Drawing from his childhood memories, Pachpute illustrates the life of miners in an almost poetic rendition, opting for an axe head or lamp in place of a human head, the body proportions ranging from oversized to miniature.

In his current work titled 'Resilient Bodies in the era of Resistance', Pachpute highlights the grievances of farmers across the country. His art installation particularly strikes resonance with the history of his exhibition space, the Anand Warehouse, which at one time was a thriving centre trading food grains. The space now lies derelict, used as a godown. Pachpute brings in the elements of the past history of the space successfully into his exhibit through the walls that are layered with his drawings, the sculpturally arranged canvases, the plywood cut-outs, overwriting its history with

the contemporary narrative on what the space once represented.

METROPOLIS

It was an assembly of 1000 brightly coloured ceramic sculptures to celebrate architectural ornamentation in Middle Eastern and South Asian art and design, taking inspiration from the concept of horror vacui or the fear of empty space. Lubna Chowdhury's brightly coloured table top sized three dimensional edifices and two dimensional tiles merge to resemble cityscapes that cannot be pinned down as belonging to a particular locale. Incidentally Chowdhury began Metropolis in 1991 and completed the installation of 1000 sculptures only in 2017 when she first exhibited the work in its entirety at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The installation comes in a range of abstract towers, monuments, and less definable forms where some resemble handheld electronics or toys.

Be it a single work or a group of sculptures, the Metropolis offers infinite possibilities of engagement for the viewer, by walking

around, exploring the objects from different vantage points, bringing forth a multitude range of perspectives. Through her fragile forms, the artist explores how we can be uniquely shaped by the same environment.

ECOCIDE AND THE RISE OF FREE FALL

It is an installation made from the household materials collected during the devastating August 2018 floods in Kerala that floated freely in the deluge in affected areas. The countless household materials ranging from furniture, to books, clothes, utensils that were destroyed in the floods speak their story through Marzia Farhana's exhibit, Ecocide and the Rise of Free Fall. Through her exhibit, Farhana points how the floods reiterate that we are in the middle of an extensive eco-catastrophe triggered by human exploitation, commercialisation, industrialised destruction of nature. Her work features as an urgent call to reconceptualise and restructure man's relationship with nature. Her exhibits, in their slanted, poised in mid-air state represent the transitional phase in history where we are 'trapped within an irresistible fall.'





MESSAGES FROM THE ATLANTIC PASSAGE

It is an exhibit of glass, metal, water, wood and fishing nets, the message carrying the story of the forced human trafficking, of slaves across the ocean between the 16th and 19th century. The scant available records on the human trafficking give the names for some while others merely have their age and sex mentioned.

Sue Williamson has imprinted these distorted and dehumanising representations onto bottles where each bottle replicates the handwriting of the clerks who would have written the documents, the baggage of that history floating above the waters that facilitated this inhumanity. Williamson's exhibit liberates these records from their dusty archives onto the empty bottles, highlighting the iconic incongruence between the actual tortuous passage in history and its callous documentation. The exhibit leaves the viewer to silently contemplate on the horrors that prevailed, the cold practice and acceptance of slavery during that era.

Photographs by Mahesh Chadaga



ORGANIC AND UNCONVENTIONAL

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

He is certainly not the conventional type of architect one encounters. And certainly not one who believes in operating from a structured office environment, where the designs evolve after poring over a computer to cater to the specific needs of the client. As for his design and material use, the term conformist would feature on the opposite side if one chooses to describe it. When it comes to his structures, they, not surprisingly appear far different from even the most sustainable constructions.



AR. VINU DANIEL

When we took that flight to Cochin and thence to Pala by road, we had definitely not bargained for the design we encountered in the residence tucked amidst thick greens of the Kerala village. Neither did we expect to meet someone with such passion and conviction about sustainability and green construction, where he was willing to work along with the masons, getting his hands and feet soiled to ensure the unconventional structure came up the way he visualised.

Architect Vinu Daniel of Wallmakers is definitely not someone you come across ordinarily. And his structures reflect similar sentiments. Built predominantly using mud blocks, rammed earth techniques and burnt bricks, his structures flow to his tunes, the surfaces left in their glorious natural state, revealing the raw beauty of the materials used.

THE BAKER INSPIRATION

His tough, almost uncharacteristic approach to design and execution perhaps stems from his not so easy childhood in Dubai where he did his schooling before returning to Kerala to do his under graduation.



Photographs by **Mahesh Chadaga**

“Yielding to family pressure, I joined College of Engineering, Trivandrum to do architecture, assuming that I will drop out after the second or third year and pursue music which was my passion. But a chance meeting with Laurie Baker changed my perspective of architecture and I stayed on to complete my course. Baker made me understand that a building can co-exist with nature and can be built with minimal wastage.”

Not surprisingly, young Vinu, on completing his graduation, decided his approach to design and construction will be totally different from the normal. Given the overpowering influence of Baker on his approach to design and later working in Auroville on the post tsunami houses, it is not surprising that his structures lean totally towards earth architecture. “My thesis in final year too reflected this inclination, picking the topic on the Bhunga huts in Kutch.”

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

However, on his return to Kerala, given his strong ideals and orientation, projects were not easily forthcoming. “At that time the concept of eco-friendly design and construction was still nascent. My first construction was a compound wall! And we continued with compound wall projects for a while longer and the name Wallmakers came about, as a sarcastic allusion to our work”, he laughs.

Given the lack of work and the need to showcase his design and inclination to attract work, Vinu built his own residence using the techniques of his choice. The residence had a double storeyed vault built in mud. “However, this brought only clients who were looking to build mud houses”, he adds. His first was the Elloor residence for cancer victims and this was followed by Vatsala Cottage. “But the real

break in work came with the Mattancherry Church in Fort Kochi in 2012.”

EXPERIMENTATION IS THE KEY

The next few years saw a flurry of activity, fetching his firm 11 awards, including 3 international awards during the period 2014 to 2018. “The recognition received permitted us to explore and do further research on alternative techniques, materials and construction modes.” While experimenting with different materials and techniques, Vinu insists that the focus is on aesthetics of the finished structure as it is as important as the strength. “Both cannot be compromised. The problems encountered in earlier structures and their eventual solving, enables us to improvise and come up with finer structures in the forthcoming projects.”

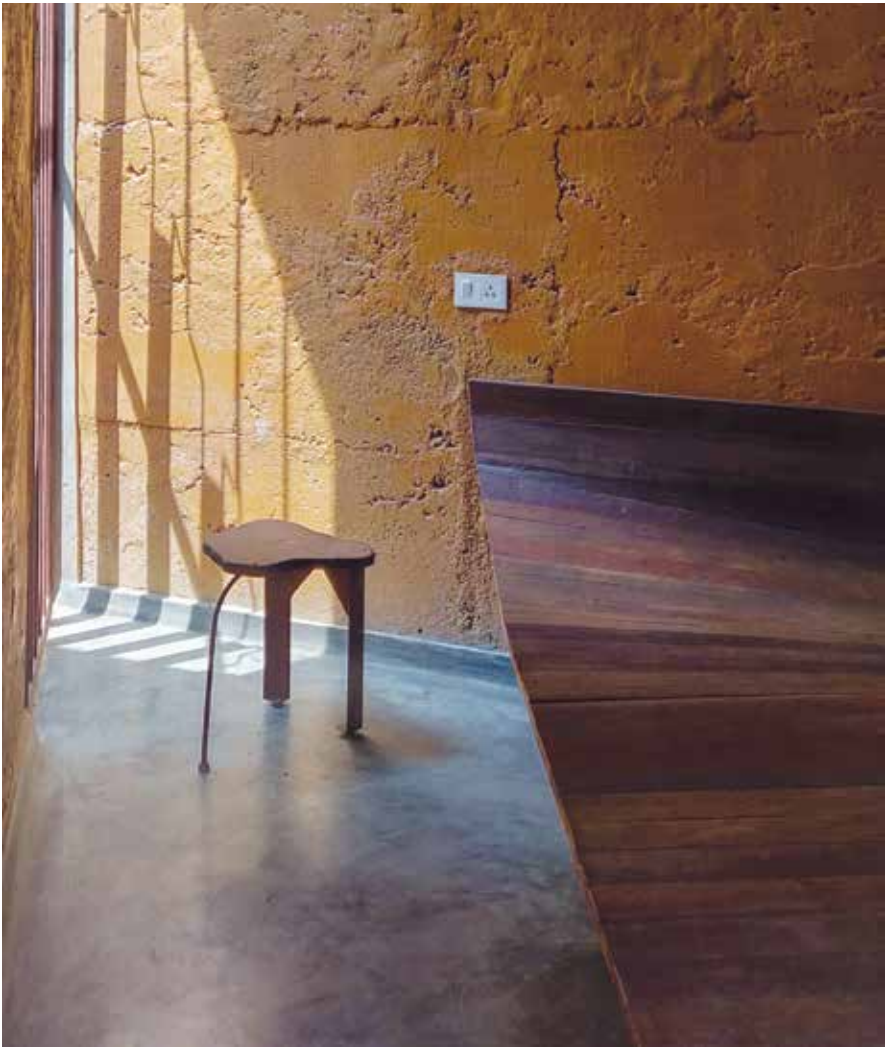
Vinu is currently involved in experimenting with a 13 cm brick panel built on corrugated sheet which is later removed. “We have tried it three times so far and have failed but we are persisting to get it right. These brick panels can be used for roofing, walls. It has a small amount of concrete inside with bricks outside where the bricks bring in thermal insulation”, he explains.

His Mattancherry Church project uses CSEB and sweeping expansive mud vaults and arches that capture the eye. “The Nubian technology which is an ancient Egyptian technique of making arches and vaults is used here.” The Church of Light, which is a cross made of light, is part of the structure. “Architect Tadao Ando made it earlier using concrete while we have used bricks.”

All of Vinu’s structures use rammed earth as the foundation, while many of his buildings opt for Ferro cement shell for the roof where the interlocking of the Ferro cement shells is done by masons working at the site. “Depending on the site, we develop techniques that are best suited for each”, he states.

The shuttered debris walls that feature in the Chirath Residence in Pala are patented by him. “These walls are made of construction debris combined with mud excavated from the site and mixed with 8 per cent cement.” Interestingly, while in rammed earth, only 30 per cent of the fine sand can be used with the rest needing to be discarded, in shuttering, 90 per cent of the mud is used, with the remaining used for filling the plinth.

Vinu is currently working on perfecting few more such techniques, notable of these being the brick panels and wattle-daub combined with waste pet bottles. “One of the projects was to come up in a swamp area which meant the foundation can sink over a period. So we came up with the idea of filling the waste plastic bottles with soil and arranging them over the swamp. Cement was then poured over this pile where the bottles take up three fourths of volume of this thick layering. Given that plastic comes with a buoyancy factor, the pillars raised over this layer will ensure the structure does not sink over a period.”



CHIRATH RESIDENCE

ADDRESSING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Besides developing his own innovative techniques in material use and construction, Vinu also uses a sizeable amount of local and waste wood in his structures. All his buildings are designed to usher in maximum natural light and ventilation besides ensuring the carbon footprint is least. “The carbon footprint of the Chirath Residence is even less than an earth building, the 2500 Sq ft structure built using 450 bags of cement”, points Vinu.

As striking as the low carbon footprint is the design of the Chirath Residence, the cantilevered triangular roof standing out, the angled sides serving as wings, the Ferro cement slabs stacked across to create a broken patterned roof through which natural light gaily filters in. The dramatic entry with its combination of bricks, stone and grey oxide, culminates in a hexagon shaped portico that covers an uncommonly tall front double door made from angled strips of waste wood.

The interiors are equally dramatic, the living area enclosed by a sheer glass wall, connecting seamlessly to lush green wilderness that lies beyond the lotus pond nestling softly against the building. An arresting play of light and shadow prevails in this living space, through vents in the Ferro cement roof.

Complementing the angled roof and entrance porch, the interiors reveal angular walls and spaces, the furniture too similarly angled to fit in. Rustic stone window seats, grey oxide cement cots, jaalis made from discarded iron rods, doors built out of waste pinewood, dining table structured from roots discarded by wooden mills, are some of the elements that stand out to capture the eye.

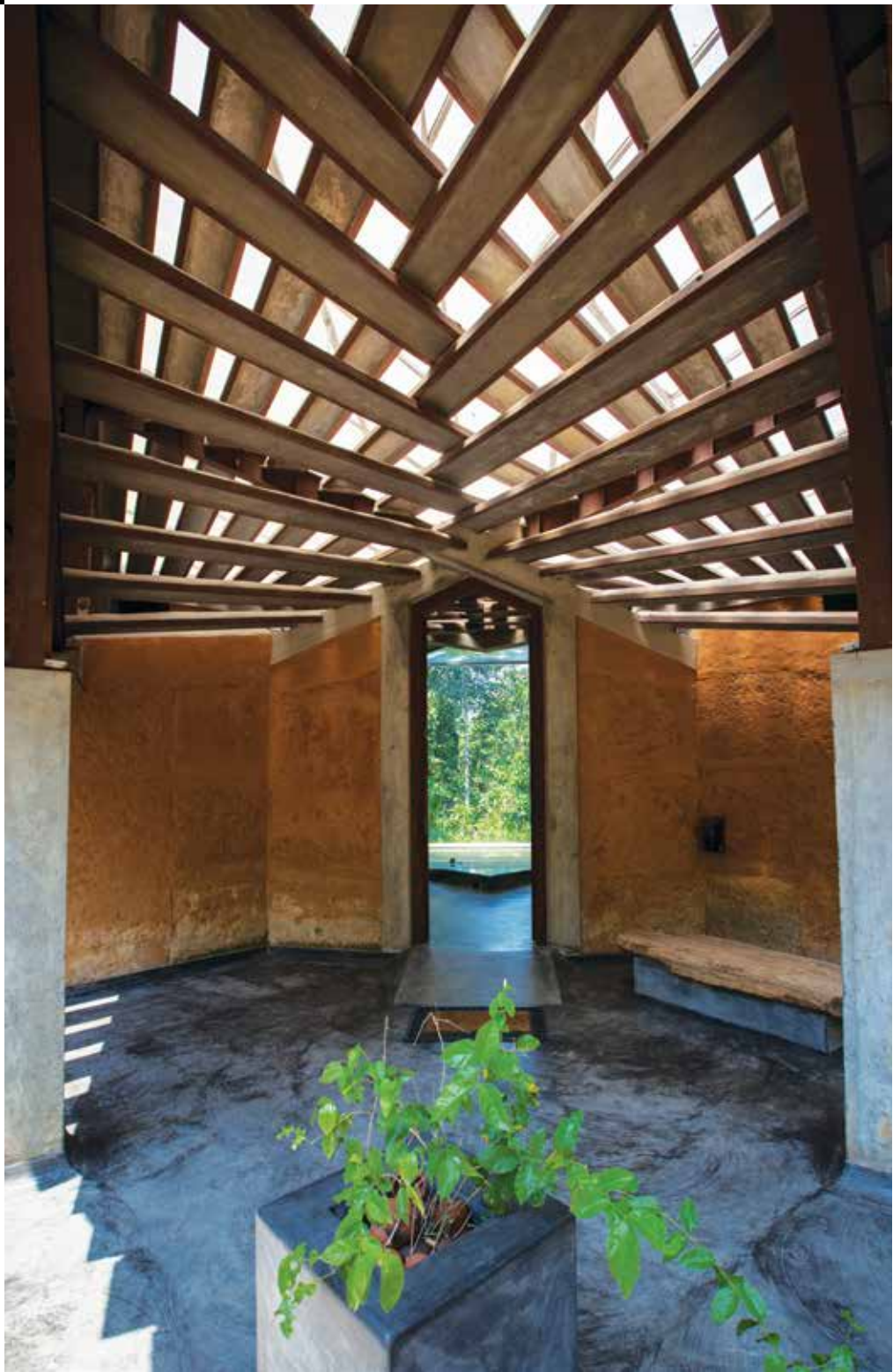


Photo Credit:
CHIRATH RESIDENCE – **Mahesh Chadaga**
IHA RESIDENCE – **Wallmakers**

SPECIAL FEATURES

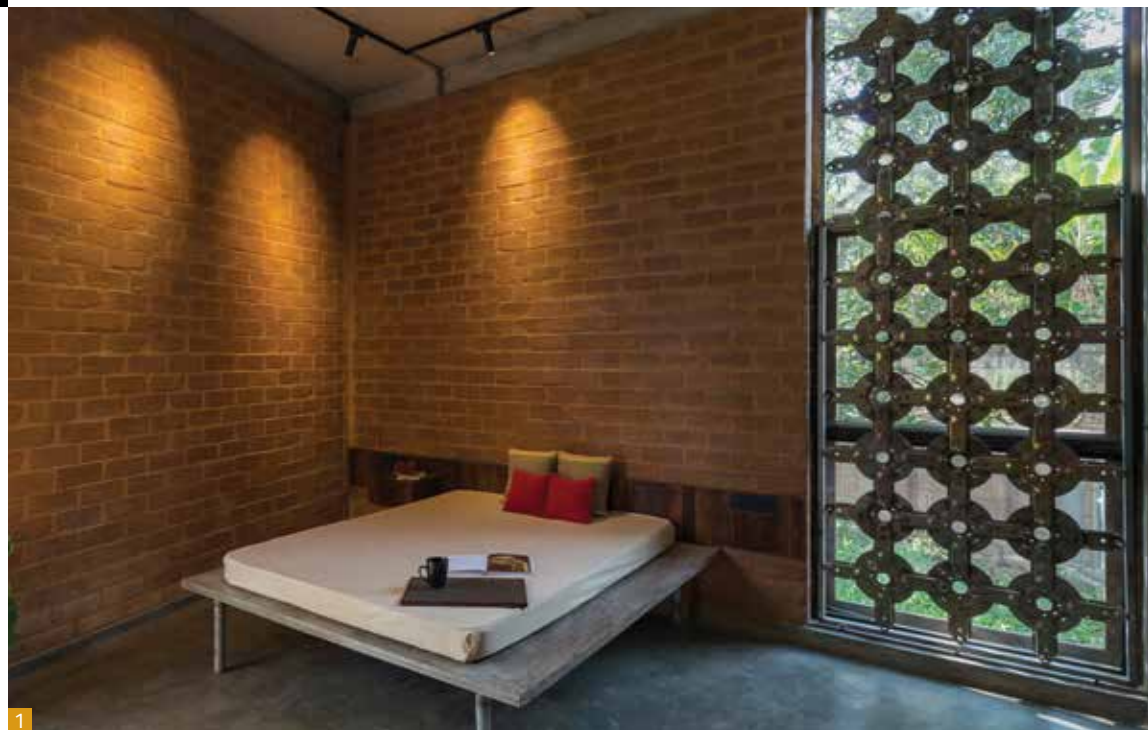
- Pond – The pond in the living area aids in evapo-transpiration and helps in passive cooling.
- Rainwater Harvesting Tank as an extension to the pond serves as a collection pit for the flow of stormwater from the sloping roofs. With a capacity of 35m3, this stored water is recycled for all domestic purposes.
- Innovative ferrocement shell roof leaving pockets of light which enter the building and change the mood every hour.
- Reinventing the use of terracotta tiles as jaali on the exterior walls.
- Landscape that comprises of only indigenous plants and grass present in that area.
- Well amalgamated interiors and exteriors, which allow peaceful transition into spaces.
- Amidst all the other pitched roof buildings in the locality, this pitched roof residence, stands out due to its unique choice of materials and form. The rammed earth pathway, flanked by mud-rendered retaining walls ushers one into the house through the wild landscape.



IHA RESIDENCE

Left: View of the extended staircase and bamboo
Right: CSEB Jaali
Bottom: Night Elevation





1



2



3



5



4



6

- 1: Bedroom
- 2: Toilet
- 3: Kitchen
- 4: Dining Area with Scrap Window Grill
- 5: Study corner
- 6: Interior View

His recently completed residential project IHA Residence in Trivandrum is a contradictory combination of serenity, warmth and wild adventure, the attributes finely blended to create a totally unique structure. Built on a site that came with issues of water logging because of its low lying terrain, the first thing Vinu had to ensure was the continued unhindered flow of water, where the water could be harnessed for household use. This came about as a pond at the lowest end of the site where the water would flow freely to be harvested and stored. "The material opted for the facade was bamboo but bamboo comes with a downside of posing difficulties in supporting an enormous structure in its entirety. Yet this predicament was successfully addressed by reinforcing the bamboo poles with steel rods", explains Vinu. A continuous string of bamboos frame the front elevation, supporting the staircase that hangs from it, creating a semi-open area in the process.

CSEB bricks create a rotating jaali in the bedrooms, ushering in natural light and ample ventilation while lending privacy. The scrapped base plate of discarded washing machines manifest as attractive grills for the windows while the minimalist interiors house furniture made from waste wood sourced from saw mills and uprooted trees. The structure sits in total harmony with the natural elements of the site's terrain, the bamboo facade, design of the building and the materials used in tune with the surrounding environment.

STANDING TALL AT 100

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR



It is a structure built in 1922, a residence not used for the purpose it was built, but turned into a warehouse for stocking batteries where the maintenance was nil. The Colonial ancestral house with its majestic stone walls and multiple symmetric windows, not surprisingly was in total disrepair when its possession was handed over to its inheritors, Pramila Venugopal and Dr Mani Venugopal. Predictably, the first reaction on taking possession was to tear down the building and replace it with a swanking modern structure. **Architect Leena Kumar of Kumar consultants** was approached precisely with this intent of demolishing the hundred year old structure and designing a brand new residence. On assessing the strength of the building, Leena realised that not only were the stone walls and the 18 inch brick interior walls plastered in lime mortar still in excellent condition, razing the building and salvaging the materials alone would take close to six months.



Photographs by Mahesh Chadaga

“The structure, with its magnificent Colonial architecture, was extremely strong. Hence, restoring it with merely functional changes to adapt to modern living seemed the right approach. The current owners too realised this even though considerable damage had been wrought on the floors with acid spills from the stored batteries and general ill maintenance”, observes Leena.

The sprawling 5000 Sq ft, ground plus one structure, built on an equally expansive 10,000 Sq ft site was thus put up for restoration, the earlier plans to demolish abandoned. Thus the 100 year old structure, with its entrance porch and thick exterior stone walls rising to over 30 feet, symmetric windows of yore complete with monkey top sunshades, was restored and redefined to accommodate the needs of a contemporary lifestyle, renewed to reflect its former glory.



“The objective was very clear, that minimal intervention would be made, the focus purely on restoring the beautiful Colonial bungalow in its entirety while making small alterations to bring in functionality in the context of a modern lifestyle”, states Leena. Interestingly, the building, recalling the glories of a bygone era, sits in an equally historic neighbourhood of Halasuru, nestling amidst its thick trees and snarling traffic.

Photographs by Mahesh Chadaga



FUNCTIONALLY UNDEFINED

Given the lifestyle of the era in which the structure was built, the residence, before restoration, came with multiple rooms where each room had no defined functionality. “The rooms reflected a flexible design, each permitting the desired use. Each room also came with multiple doors where they connected one room to another, enabling unhindered movement”, says Leena. The doors were multiple to the point of being too many, requiring some of the doorways to be sealed to lend privacy, adds Leena. “But the symmetric presence of the windows in each room brought in the unique character to the façade of the structure.”

While some of the doorways were sealed, the windows were all retained, with only a portion of their wooden shutters removed and replaced with glass to permit light to filter into the interiors. “Even though natural light was still not strong in the interiors, attempt was not made to expand the existing windows as the exterior stone walls were too strong to break”, explains Leena. As for the wooden doors, not all were retained as “they were all double doors and cumbersome to operate.”

Given the age of the structure, it is not surprising that Leena and her team found layers of paint covering the doors and windows which needed to be laboriously scraped to reveal the fine teak wood beneath. “Some of the windows came with seven coatings of thick paint while yet others came with as many as nine”, she points. “Interestingly, even though the structure is a hundred years old, there was not a single crack or leak on the lime plastered walls”, adds Leena, reiterating the excellent condition of the building.

ASSIGNING SPECIFIC FUNCTIONAL ZONES

When there is no functional definition for any of the rooms, the spaces structured to be flexible and adaptable for the purpose chosen, it comes as no surprise that a specific sleeping area or a bedroom was absent in the hundred year old structure. When a defined sleeping area is absent, it automatically



follows that attached toilets would have no place in the residence; especially so as the structure belongs to an era where such a concept did not exist. “Toilets prevailed as common elements in the rear section of the building, with an entry from the exterior to facilitate cleaning staff to access it from outside”, says Leena.

Needing to correct this anomaly, Leena converted four rooms into bedrooms with attached toilets built either by extending the room or by carving a small segment of the existing room. “Given the strong stone walls and structure, the alterations made were minimal, confining to what was essential,

focusing purely on restoring the structure and bringing in functionality.”

A point to be noted is functional reversal of the residence after restoration. “In the original plan the living area featured at the back while the kitchen was a separate unit situated on one side of the residence. After restoration, the location of the living area was reversed, bringing it to the front. An entrance lobby was created in the space that was earlier the front porch. The room behind this lobby was converted into a bedroom along with an attached bathroom, which originally served as an external cooking area. Since there was no kitchen inside the residence in the original



structure, the building was extended in the rear to accommodate a modern kitchen”, elaborates Leena.

A SPIRAL IN GRANITE

It is common to see spiral staircases made of iron in old Colonial bungalows. But how about one structured in raw granite, the stone staircase featuring in its mammoth form, spiralling above to meet the upper level, its sheer visible strength overpowering on the eye? The residence had just that, a stunning massive granite staircase that spiralled along a central column, with each step coming as a 5' x 6" thick slab to rest on the outer wall on one end and placed one over the other around the central stone pillar at the other end.

Equally overpowering is the visual feel of the 18 feet high ceiling at the ground floor where it was retained in its original form along with its rosettes in lime plaster and the 20 feet high tiled roof on the upper floor, which too was retained. “In spite of the age, the original roof tiles continued

to be in excellent condition with very few requiring to be replaced”, says Leena. Likewise, one section of the roof on the upper level is flat, made with granite slabs and supported by steel I-section. “This too being in perfect condition was retained without the need to restore.”

Since the internal vertical volume was expansive, in one of the rooms Leena created a mezzanine floor to be used as study cum library. While the roof and walls of the structure continued to be in fine condition, the same cannot be said about the floor tiles as the acid spill from the batteries had badly damaged them when the building was used as a warehouse. “We had no choice but to replace the entire flooring in the structure”, states Leena.

Photographs by Mahesh Chadaga

A CONTEMPORARY CONNECT TO THE **TRADITIONAL PAST**

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR



PROJECT: House of Renewed Hopes

DESIGN FIRM: Kochuthommen Architects

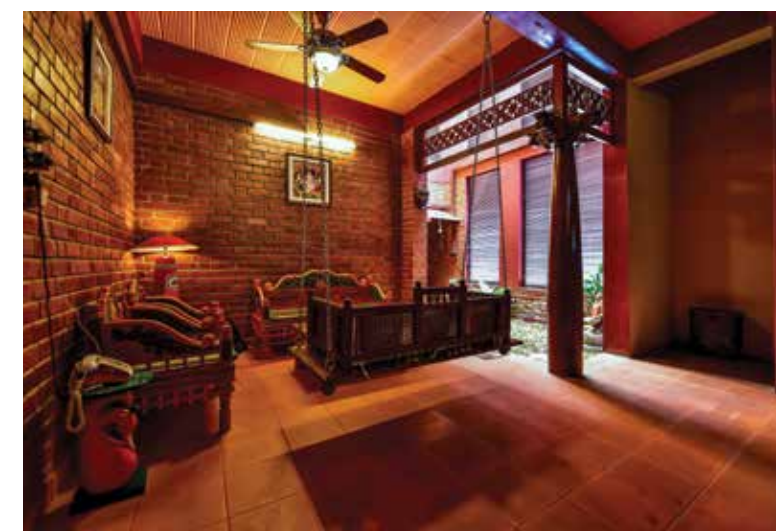
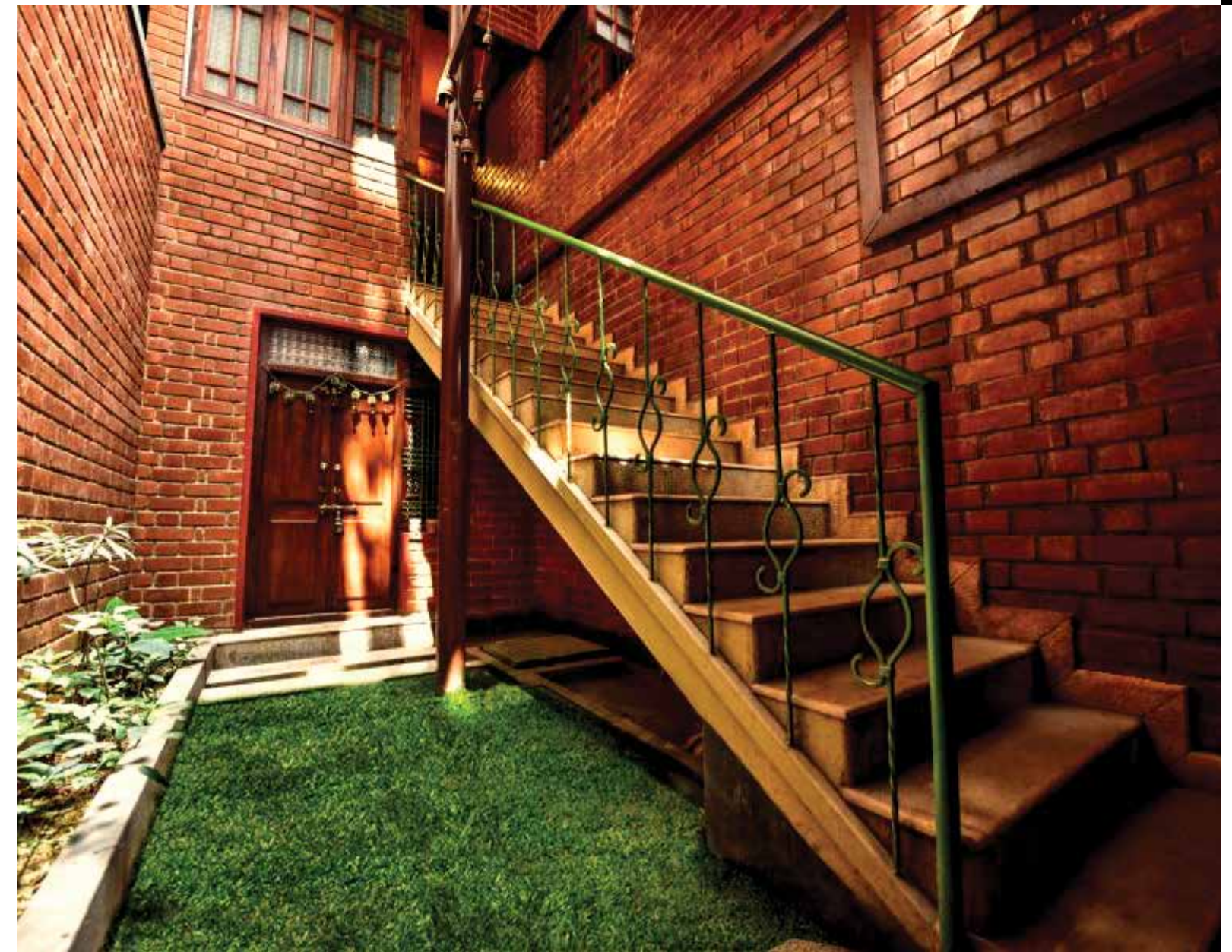
DESIGN TEAM: Architect Kochuthommen Mathew, Anand TK, Jinan KJ

AWARDS: Winner 2017-IIA Awards for Excellence in Architecture

PICTURE CREDITS: Dil Johnson and Diya Johnson

It is a narrow strip of land, the site measuring 20x60, situated on an equally narrow street that is home to steep vertical extensions of residences that begin literally from the street. The site that once housed an ancestral property was to now become a home that revisited the past while adhering to contemporary needs. What emerged on the design board was not surprisingly a house that revived forgotten memories, renewing the connect that permitted a peek into a memorable past while basking in the modern present.

Christened aptly as the House of Renewed Hopes, the 3000 Sq ft residence spread over four levels, designed by **Architect Kochuthommen Mathew of Kochuthommen Architects**, brought home an award for renewing the sensitivities of yore in a contemporary context. In keeping with the facade of ancestral street houses, an old



world door replaces the conventional gate, the compound wall raised fairly high to lend the feel of the house beginning at the street level. The antique styled door opens on to a charming courtyard that is the central point of connect for the entire residence.



The residence is segmented into two, one forming the family living spaces while the other caters to festivals, music and open gatherings for guests where the activity can spill on to the central courtyard if required. “This space is designed as a flexible zone where the functionality can be altered based on the prevailing need. Since it flows freely into the courtyard, the open area too becomes part of this entertainment zone which also doubles up as a car park when the space is not in use”, explains Mathew.

The first level houses the living room which opens on to the courtyard, spilling in plenty of natural light and ventilation. The first of the four bedrooms in the residence is placed at this level, with an access that overlooks the charming courtyard. A small puja area too forms part of this level along with a separate space for a library, all of which are accessed through a corridor that connects to the courtyard.

“The courtyard acts as both vertical as well as horizontal connect in the residence”, says Mathew. A fairly large patio of 250 sq. feet dimension, structured as a mezzanine over the car park, connects to the living area and further with the street, ensuring the internal and external connect of the structure is complete.

When a narrow strip of a structure goes up three levels, it can appear as a steep vertical extension which can be visually unbecoming. Recognising this, the levels are staggered where the stepped façade ensures the scale is humane, visually blocking the steep four level extension, restricting the view to merely two levels. Thus, the second level houses a mezzanine space above the car park which becomes a large patio which thence leads to the third level where two more bedrooms are placed.

“Because of the staggering of the levels, the number of steps leading to each level are few, removing the steep multi-level feel even in the interior spaces”, points Mathew. The fourth level reveals similar staggering, the stepped back space accommodating only one room which is the master bedroom. A running corridor ensures the vertical visual link with the central courtyard below is preserved at every level in spite of the stepped back façade.

To lend an earthy feel and reiterate the connect to a former era, both the internal and external walls come in exposed brick, with a terracotta flooring to complement the same. “The bricks and terracotta address the philosophy of renewing the past, evoking the right emotions where the old world energy is physically experienced in the spaces”, elaborates Mathew. A salvaged Burma Teak pillar, Kerala style extensive wood furnishings, traditional style iron grills, further add to this reminiscence of the past. Filler slab casting with terracotta for the ceiling, while saving concrete, also ensure the interiors are a few notches cooler.



RADICAL PEDAGOGY FOR AN OSSIFIED CURRICULUM: NEED FOR CHANGE!

BY PROF. DR. JAFFER AA KHAN

(Dr Jaffer AA Khan, Now Teaches At Dar Al Hekma University In Jeddah, Saudi Arabia)

India is one of the countries with more than five hundred architecture schools in various formats, with most validated by the Council of Architecture (CoA), established under the purview of the Architects Act of 1972. Many of these schools, post-independence were based on the pedagogical structure from the West, particularly the Beaux-Arts in Paris, which by then had proliferated globally. It is indeed unfortunate that most today follow this ossified structure with very little innovation, except a few that may be trying to break away from this tradition, which is long due for change.

The architectural education in India is at crossroads and needs reformation at every level. This calls for a radical change, a radical pedagogy to revitalise the education process, making the course more vibrant and meaningful for this millennia.

My teaching career started in year 1983 as a Teaching Research Fellow at Anna University and I was given “Basic Design” to teach new students at the School. I had no experience in teaching but looking at the curriculum made me think differently. Every week was an experiment and it was about doing things, rather than just teaching theories. I had to do my homework well, innovate new ways of learning and doing.

Though the basic framework was based on principles of design advocated by the early 20th century Bauhaus, I broke out of the box and made the studio like a workshop. The school had not seen such a revolution before. This angered many senior teachers who reported I was teaching students what they should learn in higher classes. I was reprimanded and advised to teach only what was supposed to be taught. The students of that class spent more time outside the studio, learning by experience, seeing and doing things.

I was downgraded the next year and stripped from this subject so dear to me. The students were disappointed when I left the School disgusted and went to Bartlett for my post-graduation on the Aga Khan Scholarship. I met a few students after nearly two decades and

they confessed that the year I taught was the only year they enjoyed being in School. I met one of the students in 2018, who is a Dean at a well known School in the United States. She said I inspired the entire batch and none of them can forget that one year I was there, adding that rest of the years were boring for all.

Later, after nearly three decades, I was handpicked to head a school in Chennai, which was affiliated to Anna University, only to be amazed that the curriculum had not changed over the years and I had to follow the same, being an affiliated School to this so-called prominent university in South India.

Now I had a chance to do something to change and most of the studio programmes were out of the box thinking making most of the outcome on workshop based, though I had to stick to the overall framework. I faced stiff opposition from other established schools as they found a threat to their positions. I was called to be a member of the curriculum committee but was disappointed to see that this committee did no innovative work. It was just one meeting, the fate of the students decided by a few professors from the University school by just swapping subjects but nothing new.



Since I left India in year 2015, I have been teaching at several international universities and find that nothing new was happening there too. The curriculum in 500 schools in the country needs drastic change to contextualise learning and teaching, developing pedagogy to suit the aspirations of the millennials who are the products of Internet of Things (IoT). A radical approach is required even in the so-called prominent schools in the country. There must be a departure from their ossified thinking and develop a robust curriculum to embrace technology to make budding professionals more relevant to their time. This will make the graduates’ industry prepared to become leaders in their respective professions globally.

It will be interesting to see successful schools elsewhere and their dominance in the global platform of architectural education; a constant endeavour by them to research and practice, which informs their teaching and training students in becoming innovators in the field of architecture through their radical ideas. But the question is; are Schools prepared to embrace change and adopt a radical pedagogy in an ossified atmosphere?

GAMBLING ARCHITECTURE

BY PROF. K. JAISIM

Our first visit was a public space, Tiananmen Square. An amazing space, during my first visit over a decade ago only pedestrians and cycles were allowed. On my next before the present rulers took over, any amount of traffic, a total chaos prevailed. And this last visit this month was a revelation; it was filled with school children. The transformation over the decades is unbelievable. The public transport was disciplined and kept up with timings. The cabs and other drivers had a sense of being part of the place and hardly honked or overtook. The sense of discipline amazed. The children of all ages were very curious about how we appeared and were full of inquisitive queries.

From here we decided to visit and walk a mile of the infinite Great Wall. Another amazing scenario. People everywhere not a space to watch in time. But this phenomenal achievement defies imagination as to how in that time and age such an architectural wonder, visible from the moon, was achieved.

From here we took the Bullet train to Shangai, another technical wonder. From the spaces of design to service on the train are worth remembering. Kept clean, with remarkable timing and comfort. Shangai is the largest airport I have ever travelled to. Yet well managed, beyond language barriers. The city is an architectural wonder. Absolute experiments, typical repeated structures to really wonderful architecture mostly tall and many housing complexes and office and business centres.

Disciplined traffic to well managed traffic. It is an Urban Future. Fifty storeys is mid-high rise. And connectivity and communication efficient. Language barriers broken by script. They have learnt to learn. Copy, imitate and avoid mistakes in the next project. Keeping efficiency has become a mode.

No religious edifices, only a few ancient places of worship, life and the living being the religion. It is forbidden to build any new religious spaces. If you must pray, do it in your home. But do not disturb the urban spirit.

The only space of worship we visited was an ancient place filled with artistic incense sticks, walked around and in admiration of its simplicity adorning a hill side left the environment in peace. We managed to glimpse living spaces of homes and places of work. The fully dressed in western suites to the traditional were there, but all worked as per their abilities as defined and described. Appears like our ancient caste system, but works well. One can change from acquiring education and higher studies, which appeared to be open to all who desired to change life styles. Yes there were bungalows too. This reserved for those who achieved and served.

We then visited a small village with an unpronounceable name. This place had canals and walking streets, something like a Venice imitation and served the tourist well. The beer cheer was unforgettable. Lots of handwork shops and elderly people trying to keep their tradition alive and living a life style of their own, not wanting to be a part of the New Urbanisation.

From this village of canals and Shangai the highly efficient city, we took off on an exciting journey via HongKong to Macau. Macau is the city of entertainment. One could cut loose of all restraints and wander and wonder as one pleased. But it was evident that every individual was watched and ensured the tourists safety and comfort.

Bizarre entertainment at its best, the environment is totally artificial; from the



The Canal of Arts

gambling casino to the hotel bed suite is just a wonderland of indescribable grandeur. One must only have access to money to spend. There are no limits. But just walking around and looking at these spaces blows the mind off! I could buy a Rolex for thousands of dollars or for just ten. Here we spent time always within the built enclosed environment. From place to place, each designed in different styles. Modern to classical to bizarre. Fabulous theatres with huge seating amazed each and every one. Performed with great skill and finished with delightful dinners.

And all good time must come to an end and soon taking a raft, back to Hongkong and Bangalore.



COFFEE, HILLS & COTTAGES

BY NANDHINI SUNDAR

It is a sprawling 180 plus acre coffee plantation on the hills of Coorg, the picturesque valley and surrounding thickset greens forming a stunning backdrop for a tranquil sojourn in cottages that seem to totally merge into this vegetation. As we wound our way up the hilly terrain, passing endless rows of coffee plantation with no hint of a structured building, it left us wondering if we had indeed taken a wrong turn.

When we finally reached our destination, a stunning lobby awaited to greet us, its spaces totally open, blending in seamlessly the surrounding greens. The dramatic elliptical thatched roof that defined this space, held up by perfectly aligned wooden rafters and burly pillars, set the perfect tone and expectation for what was in store in the resort.

Photographs by Mahesh Chadaga

The luxury resort, Tamara Coorg, designed by **Architect N Mahesh of Iyer and Mahesh Architects**, nestles amidst the hills of Coorg, the individual buildings almost totally hidden unless viewed from a vantage spot. The resort built on close to 9 acres of the massive coffee plantation, reveals sensitive architectural intervention into the prevailing greens, the structures erected keeping in mind the context as well as the need to merge into the background, where the footprint is minimal, almost unseen.





Photographs by **Mahesh Chadaga**

Keeping in perspective the intense green intent of the resort, the 56 stilted wooden cottages, each overlooking the valley, are located judiciously amidst prevailing trees and thickset greens, spaced adequately across the hilly terrain of the plantation. Abounding in multiple fruit trees and exotic species of flowers, the resort also retains the coffee plantation along with the pepper and cardamom, permitting the visitor to physically experience living inside a coffee estate.

Not only were the vegetation and trees minimally cleared to accommodate the cottages and the common facility structures, the prevailing streams in the site too were sensitively integrated into the design, the flowing waters becoming part of the structure in the dining section while manifesting as picturesque features in rest of the outdoor spaces.

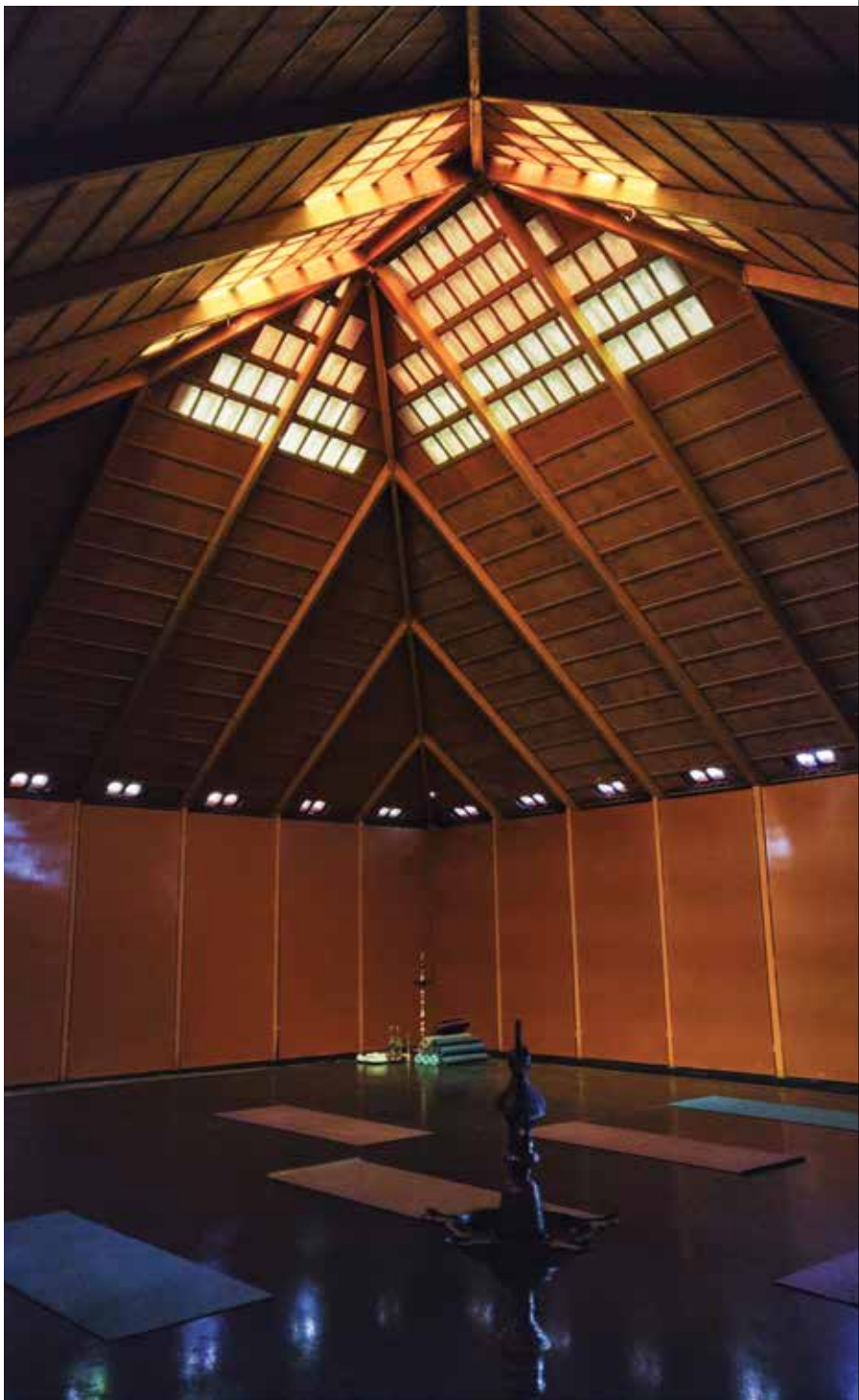
The decision to fuse in the gushing waters into the structure saw Mahesh creating a platform connecting two hills and using this as the base for the dining as well as the conference hall. The two structural bridges created on the hostile terrain, serve as a spectacular feature, the waters gushing beneath, the twin hills and the forest transforming the ambience of the dining and conference area which overlook these.

While the dining area has been left open on both sides to fill in the greens and water into the spaces, the conference block along with

its recreational space, incorporates glass walls that likewise fuse the forest and gushing waters into the interiors. A tree that existed in the space has been sensitively retained to permit its physical presence inside the recreational area. The ceiling patterns depicting the rafters and joinery further complement this overwhelming presence of water and greens.

The wooden cottages on the stilts perched on the side of the valley between thick greens, similarly open on to the expanse of greens, the woody interiors reaching out to the surrounding hills to lend the sense of being part of this unending green wilderness. The spacious woody interiors, with their step down seating area and the open patio thence, lend a regal feel through their design, enabling the resident to taste the wilderness in the lap of unblemished comfort. The elevated sleeping area enhances this experience, connecting visually into the hills beyond even as one sinks into the luxurious folds of the mattress.

Blending in a touch of history never fails to usher in nostalgia. The Coffee Experience Lounge is an 80 year old building which was used as a workers cottage in the initial history of the plantation. Now, this 'Verandah' serves as a spectacular relaxation zone where residents can help themselves to freshly brewed coffee made from coffee powder that they themselves have ground. An informative lecture



Photographs by **Mahesh Chadaga**

on coffee seeds followed by a coffee brewing session leaves the residents enthralled every evening. To be fully prepared for this brewing session, a plantation walk is organised late afternoon, which proves to be a great learning curve, walking through the coffee plants and the exotic flora and understanding in detail things that are in many ways otherwise overlooked.

The resort also packs in other attractions such as a steep three hour trek for the energetic residents, on gradients that can easily go up to 70 degrees. Those who prefer to indulge their mornings with a bout of yoga, have a yoga session in a uniquely structured Yoga Temple. Built with a skylight in the centre and punctured vents on the sides of the sloped roof, the yoga centre is lit purely by the sunlight seeping in during the day and large brass lamps in the evening. A loose stone floor surrounds the central leather finish granite floor, enabling a barefoot walk on the stones, akin to an acupuncture treatment.

A sojourn amidst thick greens is never complete without the experience of a luxurious Ayurvedic massage. Not surprisingly, Tamara Coorg offers this and more so in an ambience which packs in an authentic peek into the past. A 150 year old existing building that was part of the site has been retained and designed into an Ayurveda Spa, lending an old world charm to the treatment spaces.

Spectacular architecture, adventure and the overwhelming greens are not the only attraction of this picturesque resort. Tamara Coorg has an equally mouth-watering cuisine served in its open to wilderness restaurant, customised where need be, to suit individual palates. Chef Mahesh Ramaswamy can dish up a virtual treat, both to the eye and the tongue, the mouth-watering delicacies leaving the taste buds literally euphoric.



GHOST TOWN OF DHANUSHKODI



It is only 45 m in length on a shoal in Palk Strait, one of the smallest in the world. The town is uninhabited, having been destroyed in a cyclone that hit its coast in 1964, killing over 1800 of its inhabitants and reducing the bustling tiny town into a rubble. **Interior Designer Mahesh Chadaga** captures through his lenses the remains of this once flourishing town of Dhanushkodi that had houses, schools, temple, a church, post office and even a railway station in what was considered as one of the richest fishing belts in the country.



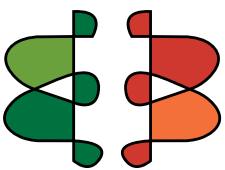
According to a scientific survey conducted by the Geological Survey of India, the southern part of Dhanushkodi facing the Gulf of Mannar, sank by almost 5m in 1948-49 due to the vertical tectonic movement of the land parallel to its coastline. When the cyclone made a landfall in the town in 1964, with wind speeds of 170 mph and tidal waves of 7m high, the entire town was ruined and declared unfit for habitation by the government of Tamil Nadu. Today there are about 500 fishermen living in about 50 thatched huts spread amidst the ruined buildings, eking out a living through fishing.

Legend has it that Dhanushkodi is the place where Lord Rama, along with his army, built the Ram Sethu, connecting Rameshwaram with Mannar, to rescue his wife Sita from the clutches of Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka. According to the legend, Lord Rama destroyed the Ram Sethu with arrows from his bow after rescuing his wife. Hence the town was christened Dhanushkodi, meaning 'end of bow'.



What remains now in this ghostly town is a sandy shoreline replete with ruins of a once happy township. The abandoned town affords some stunning views of the two oceans along its beautiful shoreline. While Dhanushkodi continues to be picturesque in its natural location, there is a sense of eeriness about the place given its tragic past.





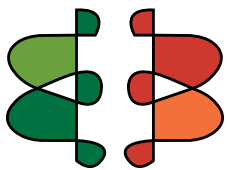
HAPPENINGS IN IIID BRC

APRIL TO JUNE 2019



SCINTILLATING POT POURRI:

Chairperson Architect Shyamala Prabhu’s term drew to a close with two scintillating Pot Pourri events, the first event hosting Architects Shivani Gaur, Studio Director, Gensler and Sabina Reddy, Director, M Moser Associates and the second event playing host to arresting presentations by IIID-Anchor National and Zonal Design Excellence Award winners. Post the electrifying presentations by Shivani Gaur and Sabina Reddy, a panel discussion was conducted where the two architects discussed the emerging trends in office design.



HAPPENINGS IN IIID BRC

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019



July drew to a close the remarkable term of Chairperson Architect Shyamala Prabhu and saw the mantle passing to Architect Dinesh Verma. The new Committee was sworn in by our esteemed President IIID Architect Jabeen Zacharias, under the new Chairman Architect Dinesh Verma, with the members given a peek into another extraordinary term waiting to unfold. S N Ramesh was the Guest of Honour. The dates for the much awaited public event in Bengaluru, Designuru was announced along with plans to publish a coffee table book to commemorate 25 years of IIID BRC.

PRESENTATION: : ARCHITECT SHANTANU GARG

It was certainly a mindboggling presentation, Architect Shantanu Garg running the gathered audience through his projects, the intense hues of the interiors of his spaces leaving the members spellbound, the structures and spaces revealing a heavy influence of various periods, cultures, styles and contexts. The projects revealed a mix of the traditional and modern, the narration of the former interpreted in a contemporary context where the contrasting elements depicted both conflict and confluence. His projects not only revealed the varied cultural, contextual influence in architecture but also in the interior spaces where the patterns, prints and colours celebrated this narration. Ranging from the Mughals, Ottoman, Bauhaus to Jaipur architecture, his projects chose a different narration based on the context and functionality of the spaces.





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NATURE’S FURY: IIID BRC EXTENDS ITS ARM

Torrential rains greeted various parts of North Karnataka and Kerala, submerging many areas with flash floods and landslides, the residents facing havoc from nature’s fury. IIID BRC, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), decided to extend help, calling for generous contributions from its members and industry associates. Rupees two lakh worth of relief material such as clothing, food grains, toiletries were collected by IIID BRC, with ACE Group Architects, Gayathri & Namith Architects and FunderMax India serving as the collection centres. CII likewise collected Rs 1.5 lakh worth relief material and the combined resources were distributed amongst 1000 families each in North Karnataka and Kerala.

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