

Inside Outside

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Projects by:

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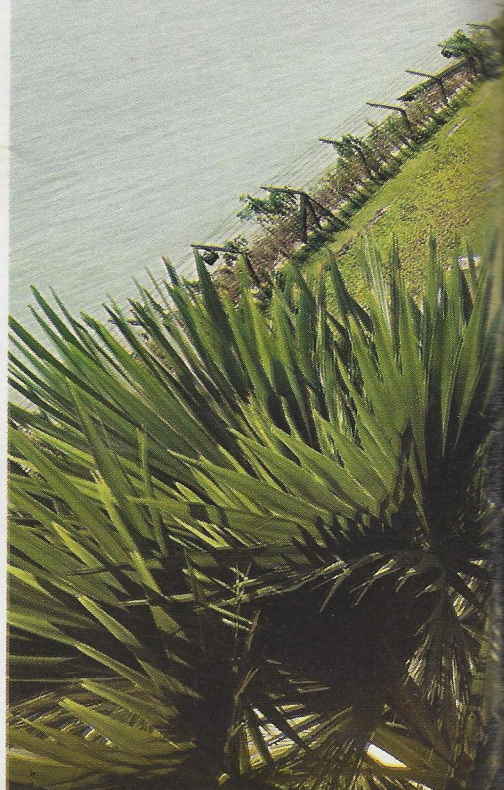
A cafe in Delhi
A fashionable store in Sweden
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Yatin Pandya's architectural inspirations



by the ganges

TEXT: KIRAN GROVER
PHOTOGRAPHS: SALIM PAUL,
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RESORT



The resort Ganga Kutir breathes and celebrates the beauty of nature. Launched by Harsh Neotia's Ambuja Realty, it lies along the very edge of the holy river as it flows by the pastoral hamlet of Raichak-On-Ganges.





The 'Mahawasala' or the 'great house' with its two suites.



The location of Ganga Kutir is so spectacular that the symbiosis between nature and man seems to have almost orchestrated the setting. Designed by Channa Daswatte, one of Sri Lanka's leading architects, the resort is inspired by the structure of a small village or ashram community where the spaces in between the buildings become almost more important than the buildings themselves. The entry walkway frames an area between the 'Mahawasala' or great house on one side and the kitchens on the other, leading up to the 'Magul Maduwa' or the space of celebration. This second space culminates in an

infinity edge swimming pool, which seems to be one with the great river and binds the core spaces, where all the key public activities take place. An awesome feel and look of limitless space and inexplicable calm prevails.

The architecture of the buildings is one that is shared by all tropical cultures in monsoon Asia. The steep tiled roofs let the rain-water slope off, while allowing the insides to stay cool in the tropics. The materials used are mainly the ones prevalent in the Gangetic delta of Bengal: terracotta tiles, timber and plaster. The terracotta-tiled roof's shape comes from western Spain via the Arabs through southern India and Sri Lanka, a legacy of the

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The formal dining room again brings in the outdoors through full-sized windows all along the side walls.

The ceiling has a dramatic and colourful batik and appliquéd canopy which lends a focal point to the stylised interiors.



trade and exchange that has been a hallmark of the region.

Most of the art is from Santiniketan, while some was specially commissioned from Indian and Sri Lankan artists. The dining room has an eye-catching and colourful canopy on the ceiling – it is a batik on Bengal jute done by the craftswomen of the Matale Heritage Centre, under the direction of Ena de Silva, the doyenne of batik art in Sri Lanka.

The guest rooms in clean and simple lines, exude style and comfort, with light, air and nature creeping in from tall glassed doors and windows. All rooms have daybeds ensconced in the open-to-nature bay windows, overlooking the ever-changing drama of the river and the outside.





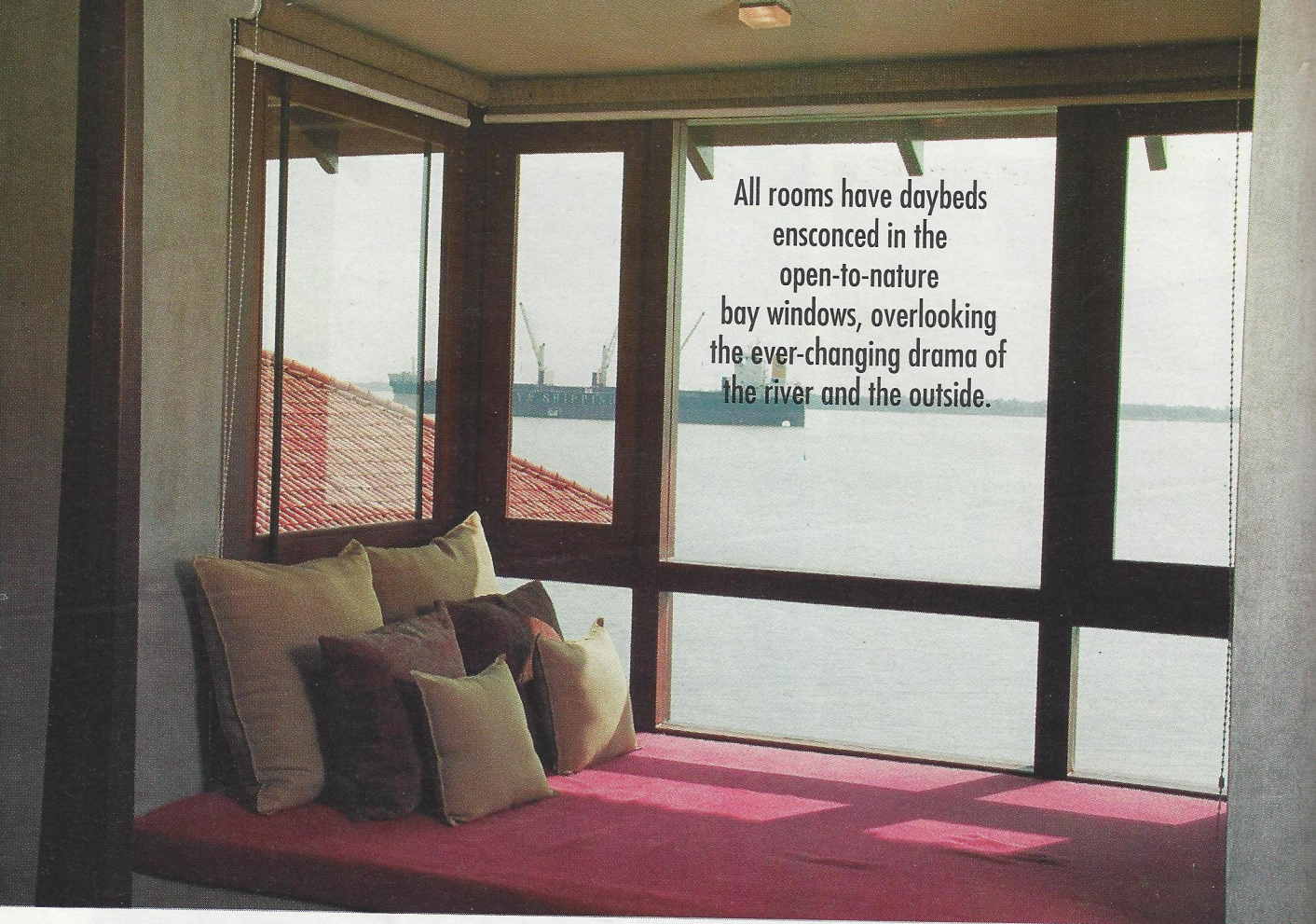
For those lazy days...




The portico sit-out creates a perfect ambience for a pleasant evening.



Intricate 'kanthas' on the walls add colour and warmth in the cosy library.



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ensconced in the
open-to-nature
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The luxurious bathroom in the Presidential
Suite is nestled in greenery.



The sunny deck of the Mahawasala provides a picture perfect view of the Ganges.






Very vernacular and very basic, Ganga Kutir is more like a hermitage, but with no compromise on comfort.



Another building houses the Library and Bar. The Library is clad with artwork and handcrafted 'kanthas' by Shamlu Dudeja. Here too, fully glazed doors let the river and the outdoors into the interiors. The colonial-style Bar, elegant in dark wood and designer chandeliers, also opens out to the river – and at night the outdoors take on a new magical dimension.

The landscapists have used as many local and native plants as possible, which will, with time, make the buildings blend in seamlessly with the rural environment.

At the very edge of the river, standing in serene solitude, is a 'Bhavana Madua' or Meditation Centre. A 'goshala' at one end, and a large lily pond at the other enhance the tranquil atmosphere. The 'goshala' built in the typical rural style, is very much in sync with its surroundings.

'Very vernacular and very basic, Ganga Kutir is more like a hermitage, but with no compromise on comfort. It is a resort, which you can use as an envelope to simply be yourself,' says Harsh Neotia. 

**Interesting
lamps made out of milk
cans in the foyer
of the Mahawasala.**

FACT FILE

Project: 'Ganga Kutir', Resort by Ambuja Realty.
Site: Raichak-On-Ganges.
Architect: Channa Daswatte.
Landscape Artist: Krishan C Singal.
Property Stylist: Christopher Gonsalves.
Civil Contractors: Astha.

