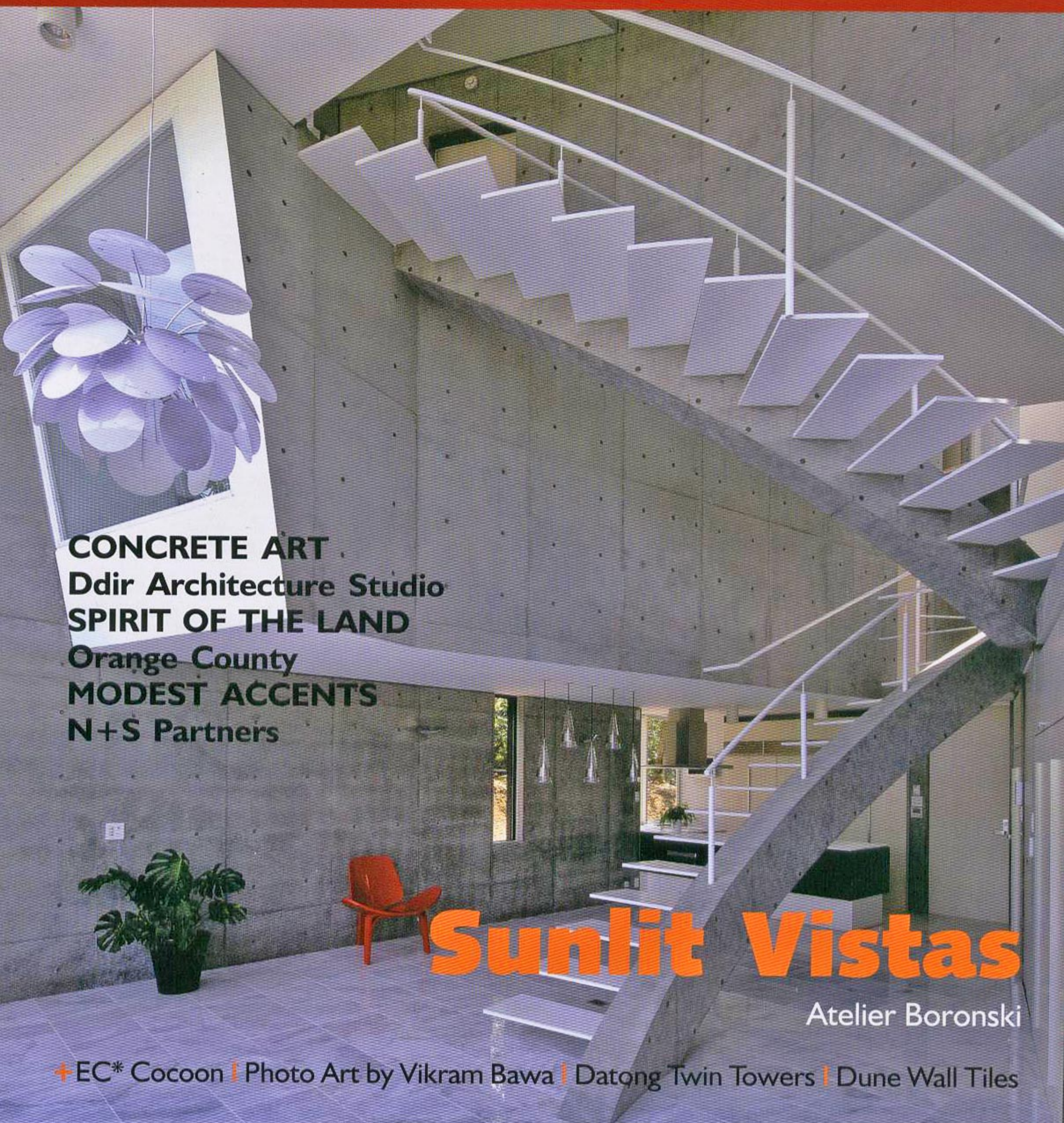


# home review

OCTOBER 2010

Rs 75



**CONCRETE ART**  
**Ddir Architecture Studio**  
**SPIRIT OF THE LAND**  
**Orange County**  
**MODEST ACCENTS**  
**N+S Partners**

**Sunlit Vistas**

Atelier Boronski

+ EC\* Cocoon | Photo Art by Vikram Bawa | Datong Twin Towers | Dune Wall Tiles



#### ORANGE COUNTY COORG

A cobble path interspersed with informative signage and maps, connects all the different areas. Walking on it is a pleasurable experience by itself.

## SPIRIT OF THE LAND

Two one-of-a-kind guest retreats in Karnataka in the South of India are holistically outfitted for interaction with nature and the ultimate pleasure of detachment and total relaxation.

TEXT BY MALA BAJAJ • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY ORANGE COUNTY

**O**blivious of your presence the creatures of nature, tropical birds, animals and butterflies go about their daily lives even as you are enraptured by the lush beauty of a coffee and spice plantation in Coorg or the serene charm of the riverside in Kabini.

A plantation in Coorg was bought by Emmanuel Ramapuram in the year 1926 from a British company; it subsequently passed down from generation to generation, right down to the present Ramapuram Group. Orange County Coorg the resort was established about 15 years ago and built right in the middle of it. Designed by one of the partners of the group namely George Ramapuram, the superlative success of the resort led the group to establish a resort in Kabini as well. It was completed three years ago

and was superbly planned by the same sensitive and eco-compassionate architect, proving with its architecture that there is nothing apocryphal about this hospitality group's tag line that being 'Spirit of the Land'!

The Orange County Coorg resort is developed on the basis of a collaborative policy as it is situated plum in the middle of 300 acres of a coffee and spice plantation. The bewitching tropical cocktail straddles the line between outdoors and indoors and is situated in Karnataka in its Western Ghats at a height of 800 metres above sea level.

Through a variety of simple observable strategies the unique character of the region, is respected, native landscape restored whenever required and biodiversity fostered. Abutting this magical safari destination are ▶

**ORANGE COUNTY COORG THIS PAGE TOP**

A Private Pool Villa in the Kodava style has its own sit-out equipped with a garden, deck chairs and private pool cum Jacuzzi.

**BOTTOM** The sky garden patch is en suite to every Private Pool Villa, keeping the charm of nature at hand.

**OPPOSITE PAGE TOP** A blend of plantation and cutting-edge fittings and sanitary ware are juxtaposed in this Private Pool Villa Bathroom.

**BOTTOM** The room interior is equipped with every 'de rigueur' amenity. The warmth of the wood is offset with a terracotta floor.





**ORANGE COUNTY COORG THIS PAGE**

The 'Peppercorn' is specialty restaurant. The heady mix of a cosy ambience, a la carte cuisine and the surrounding greenery makes it a celebratory destination for the guests.



the Cauvery River and the Dubare Reserve Forest; an artificial lake in the middle of it not only adds to the charm but also takes care of rainwater harvesting.

Sixty nine cottages are divided into categories like private pool villas, presidential villas, county cottages and king courts.

The architecture is the brainchild of the in-house master architect George Ramapuram; the look is simple and functional yet steeped in colonial culture and the scale royally generous. The interiors of the rooms have thatched ceilings and terracotta tiled floors; walls constructed out of laterite are finished in white plaster on the inside and the roofs are capped with Mangalore tiles. Open to sky garden patches en suite to the rooms add a huge quotient of allure.

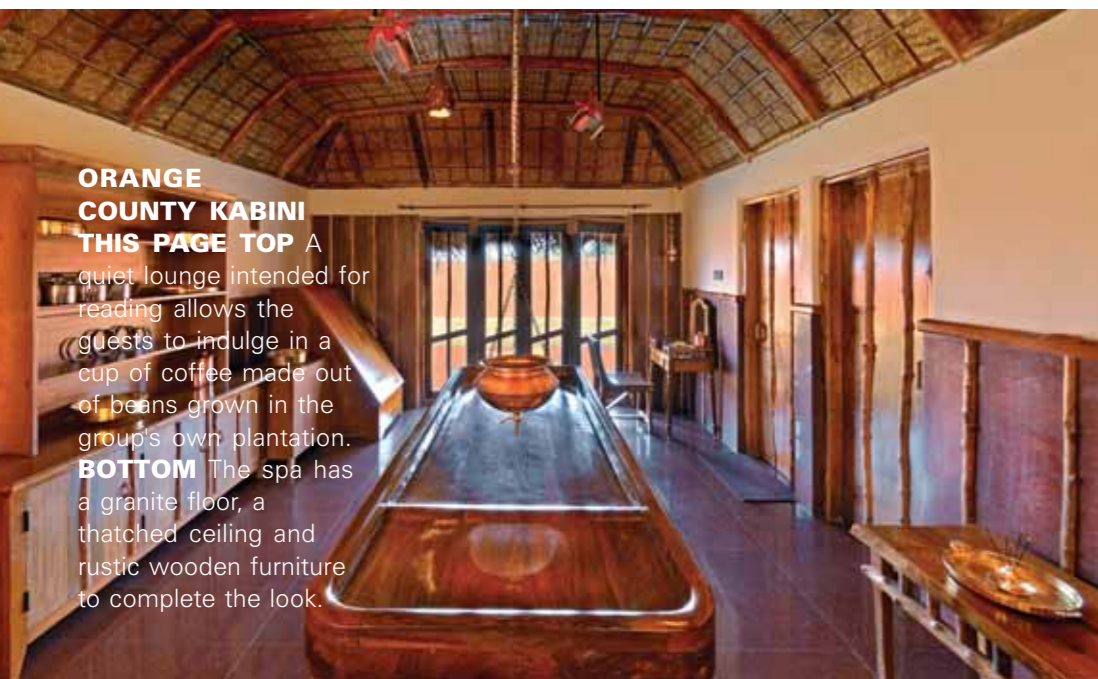
The furniture is of the colonial genre and is made out of rich rosewood; the four poster beds in the rooms are finished with valances completing the overall design sensibility. It is seen that all around 'old' is valued and showcased rather than replaced, an example being the antique electric switches which are quaint in look but work more than efficiently. It is hard not to be impressed by the superlative level of maintenance which is exemplified by not only the cleanliness of the different areas but also the polish on the antique brass fittings on the doors, which gleam like nothing short of gold.

Being predominantly a safari destination, it draws nature loving individuals to it, who lap up the host of nature oriented activities happily. Quite so easily, ▶



**ORANGE COUNTY KABINI THIS PAGE TOP**

A shot of the exterior of the resort; the tribal sensibility based architecture is all evident. Native vegetation adorns the surroundings. **BOTTOM** The multi-cuisine restaurant Honey Comb. A tribal cuisine corner offers authentic local fare to complement the decor.



Tribal rusticity is glorified in the architecture, furniture, furnishings and other interior accessories, thus you have sleeper wood doors, rustic hand hewn furniture made out of locally sourced sustainable timber, bamboo vases, dried gourd lamps, bamboo picture frames and coconut ashtrays, to name a few. The mud walls of the structures are painted white and contoured rather than fashioned in a straight-lined format. Niches in the walls hold quaint lamps that are electrified and are fitted with CFL lamps. Tribal print accents are given to curtains and linen to help reinforce the overall design scheme. Open to sky little garden patches attached to the rooms see to it that one is never very far from nature at all times.

The Spa or Vaidyashala at the resort is done up in practical maroon granite; the locally sourced timber is used for all the furniture. At the heart of the space is an open to sky garden and a lush lotus pond provides the guests a heavenly vision all through the various treatments.

A host of forest related activities such as vehicle safaris, boat safaris, bird watching trips, elephant rides and interactions, tribal village visits and star gazing among others, more than whets the appetite of the most eager nature enthusiast. ■

**ORANGE COUNTY KABINI THIS PAGE TOP**

Wood forms the ceiling and the furniture in this pool hut bathroom. Luxurious modern day sanitary ware and fittings make it an ultimate grooming space. **MIDDLE**

A large private pool has a stone and grass deck. The overhanging thatched roof provides for a rustic accent. **THIS PAGE BOTTOM**

A pool hut room has a thatched ceiling, contoured walls and bucolic accessories and design accents.

**ORANGE COUNTY KABINI THIS PAGE TOP**

A quiet lounge intended for reading allows the guests to indulge in a cup of coffee made out of beans grown in the group's own plantation. **BOTTOM** The spa has a granite floor, a thatched ceiling and rustic wooden furniture to complete the look.

once initiated the skeptics and the un-oriented too begin to enjoy and understand nature more, sooner than later.

Both Coorg and Kabini resorts have embraced responsible tourism and have in place various features that make them eco-resorts. Water is preserved, collected and recycled through various means, bio-gas plants process kitchen waste, electric buggies are used in the resort rather than cars, wind power generators offset grid power consumption, only native varieties of trees are planted and reverse osmosis purified river water stands in for conventional bottled water. Almost 90% of the staff is sourced locally and the entire staff is housed on site to reduce travel miles.

At Orange County not only are all the five senses of the guests spoilt with generosity but their spirit too is uplifted and rejuvenated and as their guest books attest, visitors aver that is what really matters in the end.

Spread over 15 acres, the Kabini resort is situated

on one of the banks of the river Kabini which is essentially flanked by the two major forest reserves of our country, Nagarhole and Bandipur.

Composed of 8 cottages and 29 jacuzzi huts this forest retreat is redolent with tribal charm and is designed based on the culture and sensibility of the Kadu Kuruba tribe of the region. Their Hadis or huts have been used as blueprints for the several structures at the resort, be it a cottage, Jacuzzi hut, reception, spa, restaurant, boutique, library etc.

The native vegetation of the area is preserved and showcased; a lawn of the Paspalum variety forms the ground cover for the remaining area. A meandering concrete path, interspersed with gaps for the effective flow of water, runs through the entire resort and connects the different areas. All the roofs of the various structures are finished with palm leaf thatch and the floors of the interior spaces are made up of poured concrete. Handmade whorls on the wet concrete make for an effective and useful design accent.

