

WANDERLUST
RESORT, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Top of the World

*Text by Vaishnavi Nayel Talarwadekar
Images by Khoogj*

Master planned by Bijoy Jain of Studio Mumbai and opened in late 2022, the mountain resort of Amaya now has a series of new villas by Voon Wong of London's Viewport Studio that complement the property's idyllic, enduring character.



A decade from now, 10 hours away from the nearest town, a private forest in the Himalayas — will be a resort. The resort, to the patinated cohesiveness of the forest, among the treetops, the resort may well be a sustainable property. Bijoy Jain of Studio Jain, a London-based architect, will be an unobtrusive presence in the forest, an assemblage of paths and water-holes, of pristine, reforested

No sooner had the resort than a decade ago, inspired by Balinese architecture, a pair of eyes overlooked the architectural approach, one that wouldn't rather revitalise it, deforestation. 'Even built entirely by hand,' Gupta of the construction was led by Jain and the second phase was after another three

Jain's remit included as five villas, Finnish-shaped swimming, including reclaimed and stone walls in native to Himachal, carried forward by creating luxury through

The narrow farm track architecture, leading a sum of distinct paths and a fully equipped on one terrace, a house, another, and a studio, internal doorways.

now, Amaya — a resort situated two from Chandigarh on a ten-hectare the Himalayan state of Himachal imperceptible from the sky thanks copper roofing that will camouflage it. Centuries from now, if left unused, disappear into the earth. The self-, first designed by Indian architect to Mumbai with interiors by Voon based Viewport Studio, appears to outgrowth of the surrounding pine age of villas, farmlands, walking harvesting systems spread over acres ed terraces.

Jain set foot on the site more o than he imagined an entrance ese temples, and each villa as a ooking the valley. Jain espoused an ach rooted in vernacular wisdom, deface the mountain ecology, but , reversing the damage caused by ything was brought by mule and and,' says Amaya founder Deepak struction, the first phase of which d took ten years to complete. The completed by Wong just last year, years.

d the master plan for Amaya as well sh saunas, a library and a teardrop-pool. He privileged local materials, d timber for the doors and windows, nspired by the mountain masonry al Pradesh. The architecture, later Wong, was guided by the idea of ough restraint.

terraces provided vital clues for the ng the design of each villa to be a ts. While a living and dining room d kitchen might be accommodated edroom suite would be set up on dy on a third, often without any

To spotlight the mountain views, the design team eschewed curtains in favour of pearlescent marble shutters, shoji screen-inspired panels that evoke the glow of lanterns. The build became a study in manual artistry: each structure was built entirely by hand and without any cement; French designer Jean Marc Mareno handcrafted copper roofs; Swiss architect Ruedi Kerbs worked with artisans from West Bengal to develop a lime plaster technique that gives walls and floors a rich, evolving patina that will eventually harden to a marble-like texture.

Viewport Studio was entrusted with the interior design of this first phase, and now, three years after the property's opening, Wong has designed six one-bedroom cottages and three cottage suites. His approach echoes Jain's original intent — and like the first set, these structures are also hand-built — but introduces key changes: copper roofing gives way to locally quarried slate, multi-bedroom villas become compact single-bedroom suites with verandas for smaller groups, and lime floors are swapped for stone to enhance durability. 'The phase one villas were multi-bedroom holiday homes for larger groups, while the phase two villas have shifted to single-bedroom cottages for couples and small families, prompting us to choose materials not just for beauty and provenance, but also for high traffic durability,' Wong explains.

When furnishing the new villas, Wong opted for minimalist pieces inspired by Nordic sensibilities. The beds, wardrobes and dining consoles are of his own design, while the remaining furniture, including Sibast Furniture's No. 7 lounge chair, Carl Hansen & Søn chairs and sofas, Thonet's bent-wood chairs, the Knoll Butterfly chair, consoles by Mahendra Doshi and Samuel Wilkinson's Vessel mouth-blown glass lamps, was selected and sourced in collaboration with Gupta. Together, the architecture, craft and design combine to create a landscape of quiet luxury rooted in place and built to endure both time and memory.

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First designed by Bijoy Jain with interiors by Voon Wong of Viewport Studio, and now with a set of new cottages and suites by Wong, Amaya is a poetic assemblage of villas, farmlands, walking paths and water-harvesting systems set on acres of pristine forest

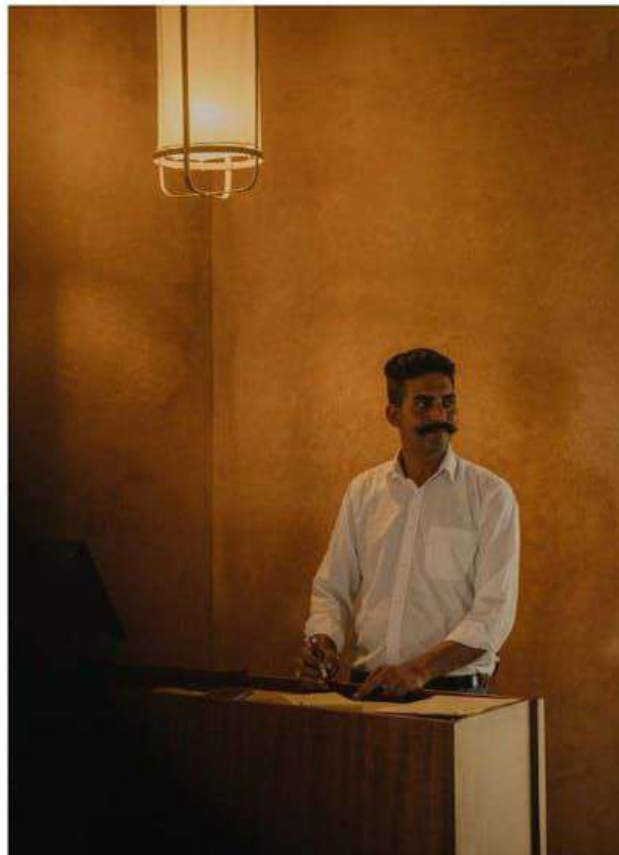
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Wong's design of the new hand-built cottages echoes Jain's original intent, while interiors are a blend of Nordic-inspired minimalism and Wong's own designs

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In Amaya's restaurant (top right), the dining philosophy is based on local ingredients, and a 'mountain food sensibility' combines with elements of international cuisine





The stone and lime swimming pool promises rejuvenation after a trek in the hills

design anthology



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