

ASHTMUDI RESORT, CLUB MAHINDRA, KOLLAM, KERALA

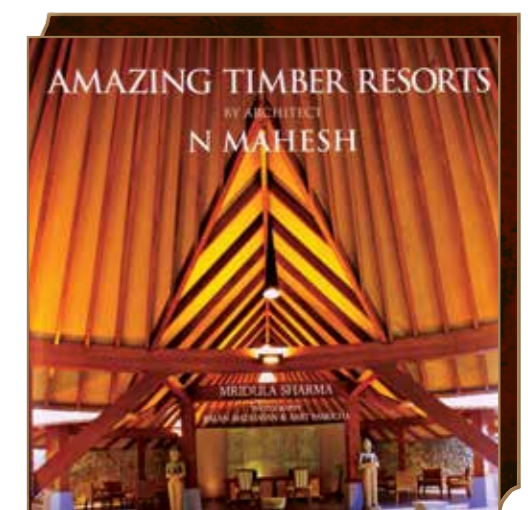
EXAGGERATED traditional forms add a twist to this compact Time Share resort of Club Mahindra. A series of floating cottages anchored along the line of rising sun, as if ready for a sun salutation, is the high point of this resort. Spread along the waterfront, these floating cottages were part of the expansion plan of the resort built with treated re-forested wood. The result was a spanking row of newly-built timber floating cottages with all the 5-star comforts. Fringing the lake like a garland of pearls sparkling under starlight, an 80-cover floating restaurant (20 of these are on the deck looking out dreamily over the lake expanse) were added to the property along with exaggerated paddipuras (traditional gateways into homes in Kerala)



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TIMBER AHOY!

KERALA AND TIMBER COULD WELL BE CONSIDERED SYNONYMOUS. THOSE WHO HAVE VISITED PADMANABHAPURAM PALACE WOULD UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION — AN ENTIRE PALACE BUILT WITH ONLY TIMBER, INCLUDING ALL THE JOINERY! ARCHITECT N. MAHESH, WHO HAD WORKED ON THE THEN ITDC KOVALAM (NOW LEELA) AND DESIGNED-BUILT SEVERAL HOTELS IN THE STATE, FOUND HIS CALLING IN WORKING WITH TIMBER FOR HOSPITALITY PROJECTS AND THUS BROUGHT THE FOCUS BACK ON THE TRADITIONAL STYLE OF BUILDING IN KERALA, WHICH AT THAT POINT WAS DWINDLING



Amazing Timber Resorts
by Architect N Mahesh

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ZURI, KUMARAKOM, KERALA

CONVERTING A swamp into a five-star property, the architect has drawn on major traditional and the not-so-traditional influences to create a unique experimental matrix. An intensive engagement with timber design is part of the arrival experience and could even become a major subject of exploration during a holiday here. Symmetry, precision and uniformity of timber panels has proportion deployed as the design spine. Several break-out zones have been created across the property such as this bridge-block, yoga huts and gazebos on the lake for guests to experience the nature from different and varied platforms





RAVIZ, KOLLAM, KERALA

IN A BUILDING built in a colonial style with brick-mortar and plaster, Mahesh infused local warmth by adding plenty of timber in traditional style. The structure was designed and built by another architect, and Mahesh came in to give it the local feel through the interiors. The guests now get a detailed peep into the life and culture of Kerala through details on pillars, ceilings and, of course, the guest rooms — a perfect blend of cultural references



TAMARA, COORG, KARNATAKA

NESTLED AMONG tree-tops, at eye level with birds' nests, the walls at Tamara Resort come up only when absolutely necessary. Needless to say, these walls are either timber or glass to maximise the forest views surrounding these cottages. With a land footprint of only 5 per cent, Tamara Resort is one of its kind in engineering feat, especially when it comes to the design of bridge block which has the restaurant, bar and the convention hall. The arrival porch and the lobby only have a conical thatched roof supported by timber-clad pillars. The cottages are held up on metal frames, each one approached by a little bridge plank. Not wanting to disturb the terrain and the flora and fauna of the site, a coffee plantation with pepper vines growing intermittently, the only way to accommodate the public areas was to build a bridge across two mountains and perch the public areas on these bridges. There are two of them



THE LALIT, BAKEL, KERALA

WITH AN OVERWHELMING sense of geometry, the roofscape coupled with dark timber of the structure indulges the guests with a hypnotic sense of endlessness. Absence of walls creates drama with natural light when slivers of early morning light turn into blocks of sunshine by noon and then by 4pm turn somber as the sun sets over the waterbodies around. The architect used four acres of the property to create an artificial lake so that all the private and public areas would look out on water. Clusters of cottages spread around the lake creates vignettes of a Kerala village. From the open-lobby, one can walk out towards the typical Kerala-style gazebos culminating in timber seating over the lake-waters. The contemporary style cottages with open-to-sky baths and luxurious private spa with jacuzzis set under the skies add to the joy of just watching the precision in patterns with timber

