

design anthology

INTERIORS / ART / ARCHITECTURE / TRAVEL

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Jungle Jive

Nestled within a betel nut plantation fringed by rainforests on Havelock Island in India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jalakara is a 740-square-metre, seven-room boutique villa hotel that encourages barefoot luxury and relaxation in the tropics.

Before Jalakara evolved to become an exclusive resort, British entrepreneur Mark Hill had planned on building the villa as a five-bedroom holiday home where he and his family could escape the English winters. Hill later decided to add two bedrooms and run the property as a boutique hotel instead, hiring Karnataka-based architect Ajith Andagere of Andagere Architects to help him bring his vision to life.

Unlike most resorts on Havelock Island, which are set along the beach, Jalakara occupies an inland site overlooking rainforests and paddy fields. To make the most of the location, Andagere spread the floor area across four blocks, using stepped terraces to create varied spatial perspectives and experiences. On entering the main gate, one arrives at the first block, where the public amenities — the car park, pool and sundeck, dining area and lounge bar — are located. Sloped timber roof structures clad in locally made woven bamboo mats and ceramic tiles shelter the dining and bar areas, and rainwater is collected in the handcrafted anodised copper gutters. Inside, the bar counter is crafted from a single timber plank painted indigo blue, and here, as well as along the sun deck, seating is in the form of custom-designed polished cement benches with loose cushions.

The second block contains the service areas, which are built around an open courtyard, while the third (and largest) block houses six guest rooms. These rooms are accessed via a common living pavilion and pantry, and each has a different interior layout and decor theme.

'Guests can see the rainforest and lotus pond as they walk along the corridors of the pavilion to their rooms,' says Andagere, who designed this block after a large Indian-style family home so that corridors, staircases, courtyards, gardens and lily ponds unite the individual rooms to create an intimate, homely feel. Also within this third block is the spa room, which looks out to views of a lily pond on one side and the sea on the other.

The property's largest villa is in the fourth block, and features rotating slat walls of woven teak that allow plenty of sunlight and fresh air in, and a timber sun deck and copper plunge pool overlooking the rainforest.

Andagere designed more than half of the furniture in Jalakara himself, to better suit the context and his design concept, and had the pieces built by carpenters at his in-house workshop. The handcrafted furniture and carefully considered materials, such as jute curtains, hand-printed cotton textiles, printed linens, brass fixtures and dark, oiled wooden accessories, create lush and atmospheric interiors that are the perfect complement to the villa's texturally rich, tropical architecture.

Text

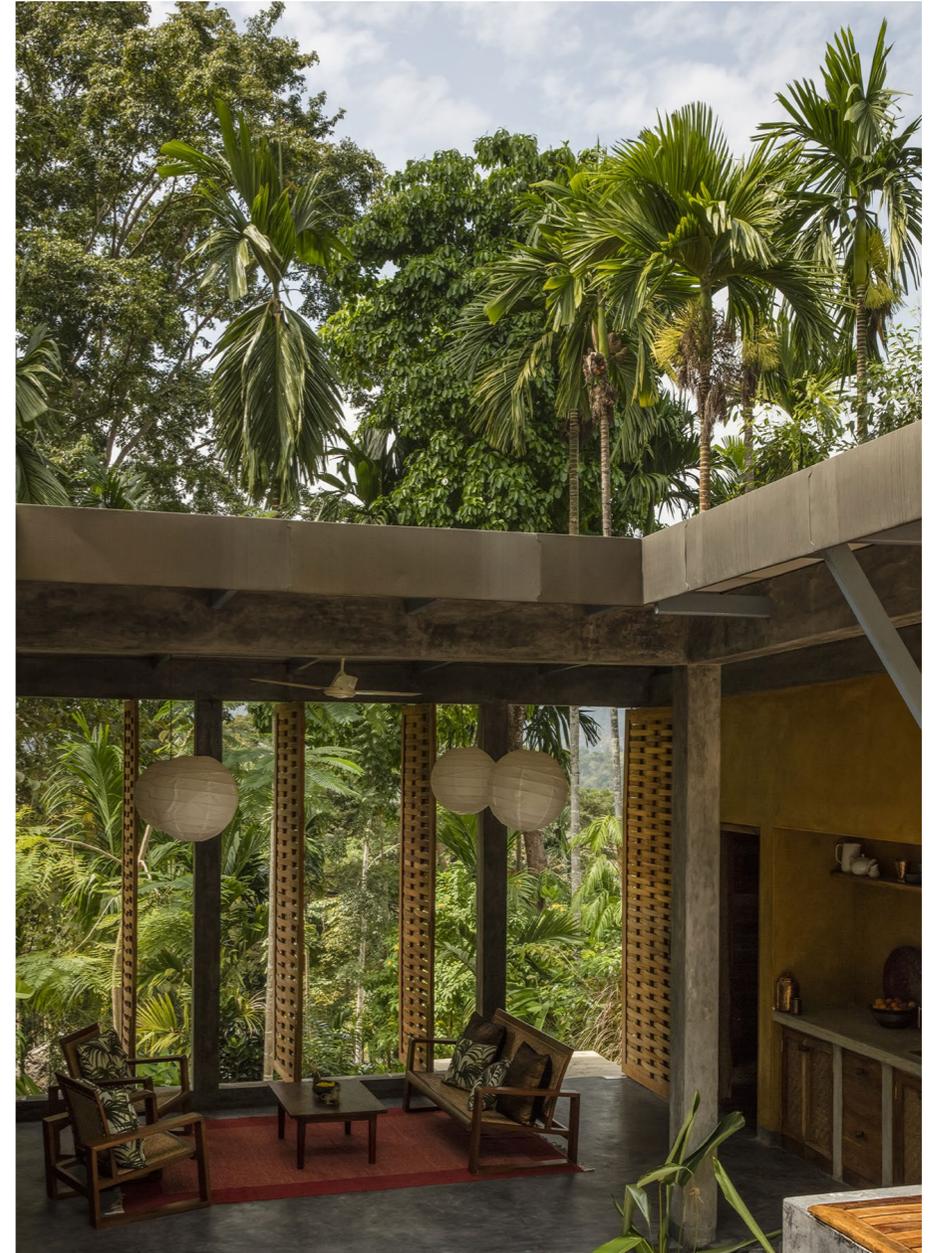
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Images

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Facing page

Away from the typical coastal resorts on Havelock Island, Jalakara offers the privacy and intimacy of a private villa with the amenities of a boutique hotel





Facing page, top
The property's largest villa features rotating slat walls of woven teak that let the outside in

Facing page, bottom
Despite being inland, Jalakara is well positioned for island exploring, with local markets, beaches, jungle treks and more just a short bike ride or walk away

This page
If R&R is more your style, any of the villas make a good base camp from which to explore the pool, sundeck, lounge bar and spa