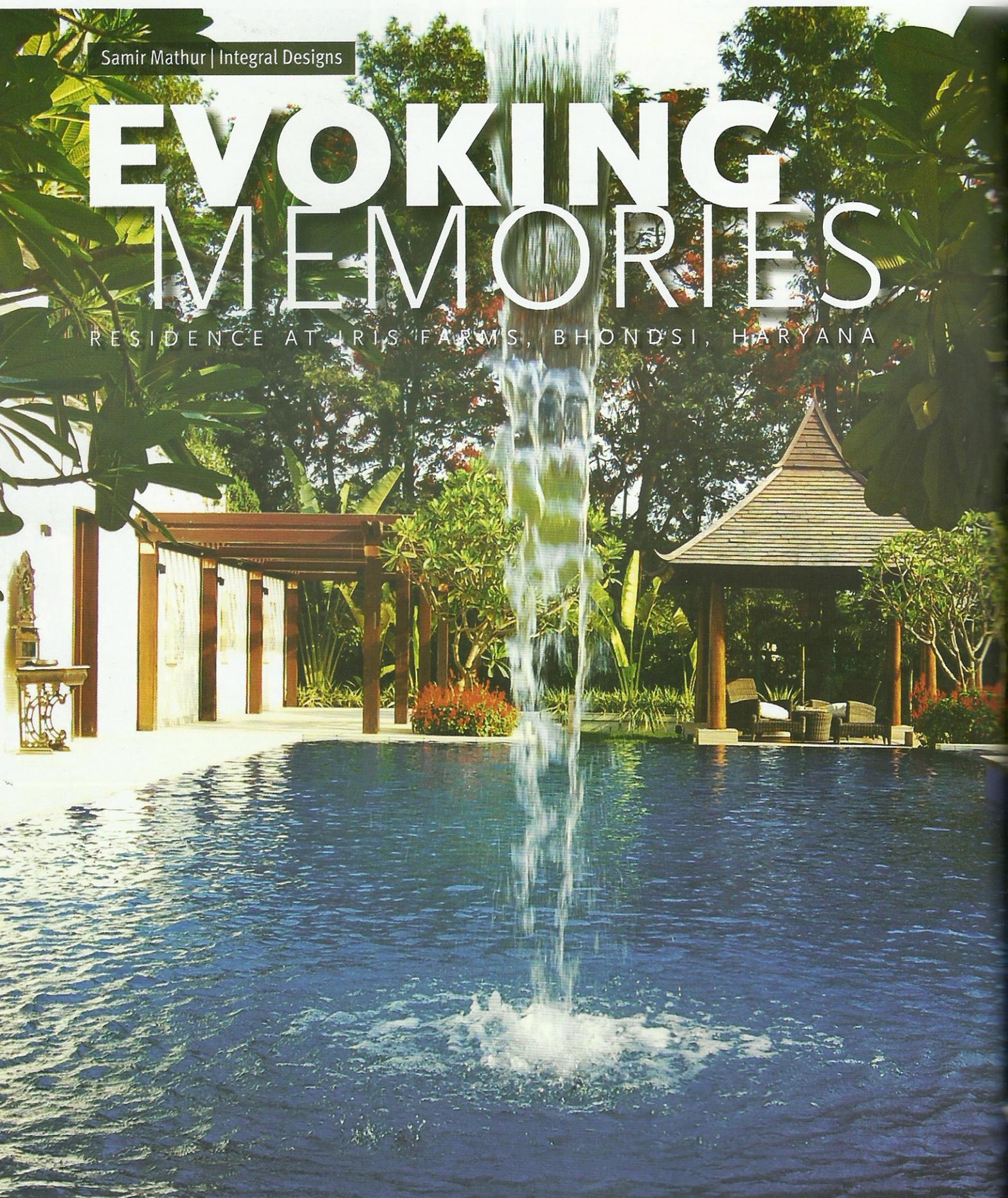


Samir Mathur | Integral Designs

EVOKING MEMORIES

RESIDENCE AT IRIS FARMS, BHONDSI, HARYANA





The landscape for the residence was designed to create a paradise-like-garden for the clients in Bhondsi in the vicinity of the city of New Delhi, reminiscent of the place they belonged to—the tropical land of Kerala—on a site which formed a part of barren farmlands contiguous to the mighty Aravalli mountain range through thoughtful and sustainable interventions. The landscape and the architecture were conceived as synergistic entities to create a spatial mosaic of built and unbuilt spaces which interact with each other to form an evocative tapestry.

Narrative

The residence was designed as a weekend retreat for a family of two in the outskirts of the city. The site formerly formed a part of an agrarian expanse which over the years mal-formed into a desolate and infertile area, that was divided into smaller land parcels and subsequently sold as residential plots. The client impressed by the spectacular views of the surroundings and captivating natural beauty of the site, decided on building a residence on this site away from the hustle bustle of city life.

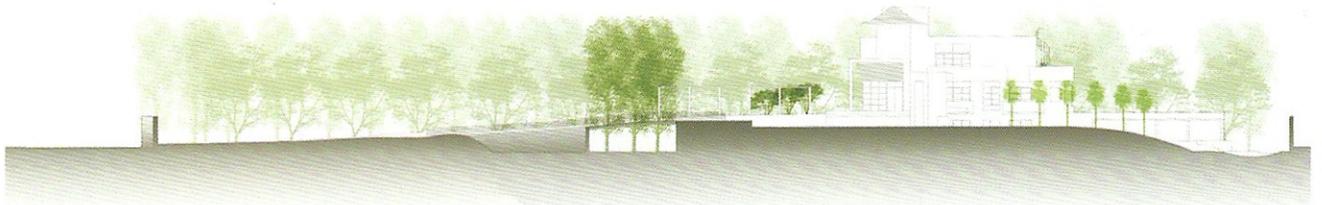
The clients intended to create a residence with an entrance court, outdoor seating spaces, a congregational lawn, private landscaped terraces, swimming pool with pool deck, vegetable gardens and a leisure walking trail amidst nature, reminiscent of the traditional homes of Kerala and also capturing the breathtaking views around the site.



↑ **Site Plan**

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Entrance Court | 7. Pergola | 13. Swimming Pool | 19. Pavilion |
| 2. Feature Garden | 8. Waterbody | 14. Timber Deck | 20. Service Court |
| 3. Navagraha Mandla | 9. Family Lawn | 15. Terrace | 21. Parking |
| 4. Temporal Axis | 10. Lawn | 16. Mukhapura | |
| 5. Driveway | 11. Dining Lawn | 17. Swale | |
| 6. Pedestrian Path | 12. Parents' Lawn | 18. Kitchen Garden | |



↑ **A sectional view through the temporal axis extending from the entry level to the house bridging across the valley of existing Silver Oak trees displaying the play of levels found at different locations along the site.**

Site and Context

The site, as a part of the larger surrounding hilly landscape was undulating and was segregated into two land parcels by an avenue of existing mature Silver Oaks (*Grevillea robusta*) which were formerly planted as wind breaks to protect the crops from the harsh summer winds.

Design Intent

In response to the undulating topography of the site, the landscape architect along with the architect sited the house on the highest point of the site atop a natural knoll to take advantage of the views around, which was later faintly re-graded to fit into the intended design language. Inspired by the cosmic geometries of the *Navagraha Mandala*, a hedge-row marking the site entrance and creating a welcoming ambience was laid out. The main entrance and the house were aligned along the cardinal axis creating a temporal connection, leading to the house, traversing the existing grades in the form of a natural stone pathway, which bridges across the natural valley along the boughs of the existing Silver Oaks. A relatively levelled piece of land was created around the residence which housed the private terraces tailored to the specific requirements of the individual family members.

An axial entrance aligned with the cardinal axes of the site, enhances the strong geometry of the residence and extends its lines to meet the surrounding green. ↗

The main entrance of the house is composed of a series of frames, using reconstituted wood from the ancestral residence of the client in the back waters of Kerala; thereby creating a journey that is both spatial and spiritual. ↗

The existing topography has been cleverly manipulated using natural methods of soil stabilization to enhance the transition from the entrance to the residence. The elevated dimension offers the clients an intimate space to have a meaningful dialogue with nature. →



↓ *Different materials, textures, heights and colors of the plants have been combined together in trying to form a beautiful symphony in the outdoor areas.*



↙ A traditional pavilion sits amidst the surrounding greens and is screened away by vegetation to lend privacy to an otherwise open seating.

↓ An existing row of silver oaks has been preserved and a walkway has been created to evoke the experience of wandering through the woodlands.

↘ Rain water collected at the terrace level is naturally filtered and aerated as it cascades down from the first floor level into the swimming pool.



Reflective pools were designed to create a foreground for the residence which also defines the main entry to the threshold of the house. On the rear side of the house is a pool with an extended timber deck and a 'mukhapura', a traditional wooden pavilion overlooking the pool. The raised landscaped areas subsequently merge with the surrounding grades in the form of gently sloping mounds marrying the two levels.

A large lawn was designed at the lower level as an open gathering space interspersed with sculptural elements, which were sourced over the years by the client. The sculptures add a nostalgic touch to the space and garner memories of the owners' native place.

The storm water generated from the site gets directed into a swale looped adjacent to the peripheral pathway and ultimately to the rainwater harvesting pit creating opportunity for ground water recharge and thereby making it a zero discharge site. This water is used for irrigating the landscape during summer.

During the construction stages, all the existing trees and topsoil were specially preserved and the topsoil reused as planting soil. Rainwater collected at the terrace level is naturally filtered and aerated as it cascades down from the first floor level into the swimming pool.

The landscape recreates a spatial and temporal narrative which captures the essence of the place from the childhood memories of the owners in a distant land while respecting the natural processes and history of the site.

LIST OF PLANT MATERIAL USED

TREES

- Agathis robusta*
- Artocarpus heterophyllus*
- Averrhoa carambola*
- Bauhinia blakeana*
- Callistemon lanceolatus*
- Calophyllum inophyllum*
- Chorisia speciosa*
- Citharexylum quadrangulare*
- Dillenia indica*
- Ficus benjamina*
- Grevillea robusta*
- Lagerstroemia flos reginae*
- Lagerstroemia indica*
- Plumeria alba*
- Plumeria rubra*
- Prunus persica*
- Spathodea campanulata*
- Tabebuia rosea*

SHRUBS

- Bauhinia tomentosa*
- Cassia biflora*
- Crotons*
- Dracena tricolor*
- Dracena marginata*
- Euphorbia caracasana*
- Ficus panda*
- Ficus reginald*
- Ficus Starlight*
- Gardenia florida*
- Hamelia patens*
- Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*
- Ixora coccinea*
- Nerium oleander*
- Pleomele reflexa*
- Plumbago capensis*
- Punica granatum flore pleno*
- Schefflera arboricola*

- Spathoglottis plicata*
- Hymenocallis littoralis*
- Tabernaemontana coronaria*
- Tabernaemontana coronaria variegata*
- Tecoma capensis*
- Tecoma gaudichaudi*

GROUND COVERS

- Alternanthera ficoidea*
- Asparagus meyeri*
- Asparagus sprengeri*
- Dianella tasmanica*
- Iresine herbstii*
- Lantana sellowiana*
- Ophiopogon jaburan variegata*
- Rhoeo discolor*
- Syngonium podophyllum*
- Wedelia trilobata*
- Zephyranthes grandiflora*



↑ A wooden deck floats over a reflecting water pool offering a quiet and unassuming seating area hidden behind a screen of wild grasses. Sculptures inspired by the heritage of Kerala are placed to evoke feelings of nostalgia.

An intricately carved wooden member, which once formed a part of the clients ancestral home has been reused as a Mukhapura; a traditional pavilion of Kerala, to stay true to the clients wish to recreate their childhood memories. ↗

The effect of concrete in pathways is broken by using interspersing bands composed of stones sourced from local quarries. The light fixtures have been extended the same courtesy to stay relevant to the landscape strategy. →

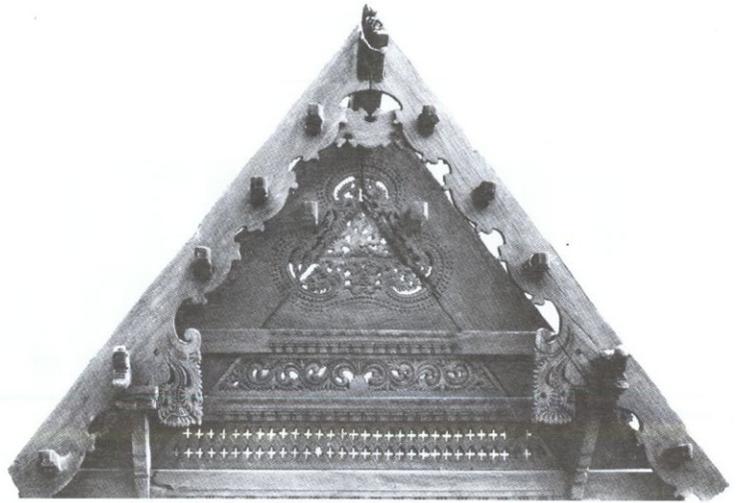
CREEPERS

Allamanda cathartica
Bignonia gracilis
Cryptostegia grandiflora
Jacquemontia violacea
Passiflora caerulea
Petrea volubilis

Pinus roxburghii
Rhapis excelsa
Ravenala madagascariensis
Washingtonia robusta
Wodyetia bifurcata

ORNAMENTAL PLANTS –
BAMBOO & PALMS

Bambusa ventricosa
Bismarckia nobilis
Caryota urens
Cycas circinalis
Cycas revoluta
Ficus benjamina topiary
Furcarea watsoniana
Livistonia chinensis
Phoenix roebelenii



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