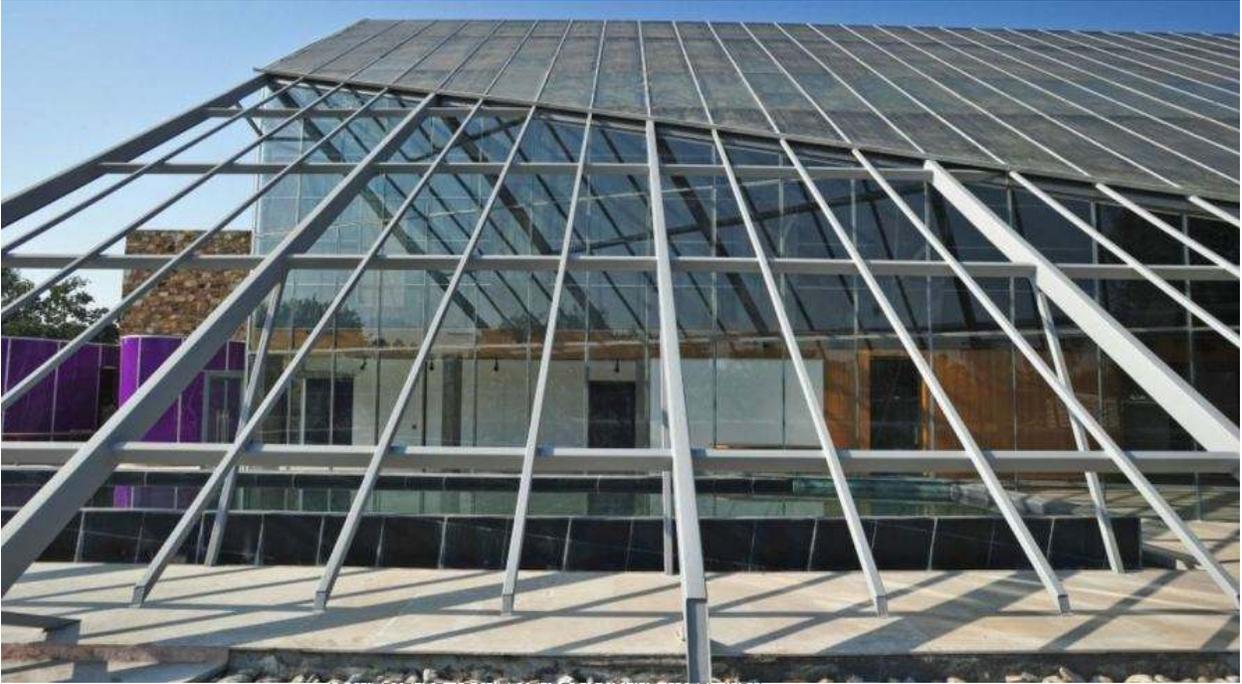


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MANA HOTEL BY ARCHITECTURE DISCIPLINE

| APRIL 5, 2014 | MARCO RINALDI

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Sited in the vivid, enchanted Udaipur valley in the Ranakpur province, the hotel as a public space with a service-intensive program is conceived to celebrate order and dissonance, continuity, stability, the experience of slow-moving time and the vernacular as an imbibed ethos.





These values are celebrated through an architectonic intervention, form and material play in a region with a stark change of seasons and landscape, where the forest changes from Lush Green to bare and arid and the hills turn red during spring as the Tesu trees come to full bloom. Amidst the hills, with a clean, shallow river in the front, a km away from the famed Jain temple and adjoining a reconstructed old haveli, the client brief called for a boutique hotel that offers a unique, iconic experience for travelers in all seasons.



Introducing the design intent to the visitor by creating a reading of the building as it is unraveled, allows for moments and spatial intervention. Layering is adopted to restore the notion of the collective memory, and repetition is used as a technique to establish the contrast and difference. The site is planned in a manner that upturns the land, as it opens up to the river on one side, while establishing contrast with the old haveli and the temple. The plan is derived from the time-honored 9x9 grid and the site was dotted with points that would then go on to become trees. Normalcy is achieved through the grid, and deviations are used to break the order.



In order to be environmentally conscious by reducing transportation, local material and manpower dictated the architectural intervention; only what was not available was prefabricated and brought from the outside. Apprising the visitor of local ethnicity, an archetypal regional material palette of Stone Masonry and Sandstone floors has been adopted. For most part, the local Rajasthani craftsmen and construction workers were employed to build in a manner rooted in the region and its landscape. Structural steel has been used as it is a long life span material, reducing dead load & thereby overall material consumption. The concrete consumption is insignificant for a building of this type and size.





The spanning system is made with locally available kashia stone- a sandstone that can span up to 3 meters and trusses are used to support it. Being in seismic zone 2, a lean, vernacular method of creating structural stability is adopted that allows for the creation of large spans that are well-optimised by the nature of the space. The steel joists that hold up the Kashia slabs are visible within the guest rooms. The main load bearing wall of the hotel cuts through the corridor one side, in contrast with the fabric panels on the other side. An acoustic ceiling also reminisces the perforations while cutting doing ambient sound.



Rainwater is harvested and Grey water from the sewage treatment plant is used to irrigate the hardy, local trees that are a part of the landscape. During construction, tree-cutting was avoided and the external hardscape is constructed and recycled from the waste materials that was accumulated during the digging process of the foundation. An exclusive HVAC system is developed as a significant element; a system that uses Earth cooling, Thermal Storage and



Displacement ventilation to reduce energy consumption. While conventional air-conditioning systems consume 40% of the energy used in a building, apart from lower energy consumption, this system also ensures better indoor air quality and avoid recycling. Both water and air circulate in distinct open loops and air is exhausted from in-between the dry, sandwiched roof. Towers that emerge from the ground help to transfer air to the interiors, and work as a means of architectural expression that is evocative of the traditional forts of Rajasthan. Multiple layers of glass are used to generate draughts of air and to filter sunlight. The minimal heat transmitted through the glass is used to induce the displacement ventilation system.





Jaalis that are evocative of traditional Rasjasthani stone Jaalis with filigree are recreated in vinyl as a notional device to filter light and air for comfort. Daylight ingress into the building is ensured in a manner that eliminates the use of artificial light during the day. Night lighting resonates that of an art gallery; all lighting is from the top with a hint of the sky, the jaali or the clear glass. The landscape lighting is de-cluttered, and is lit with borrowed light from the cottages and the hotel buildings. The overhang roof is used to bounce light from under the cottage and the overall intent is to efficiently orchestrate lighting in line with the running cables with no sharp rendering.



Light from the west that is a dramatic, warm yellow, crafts an array of experiences in the different rooms, while bright southern light is used to bring in luminosity into interior spaces. A minimal palette of stone, glass, steel and vinyl that is not distracted by too many surfaces is adopted to craft an architecture that is intense and bare-boned all at the same time. Concrete is used to a minimum, hard edges are contrasted with timber warmth, and the structural system/ construction techniques are expressed clearly with as little cladding as possible. As a hat tip to the 70's India modern, the solid, minimal furniture in rubberwood and rosewood inlay as inserts is designed to reflect the environmental concerns of the hotel.



The contrasting circular pattern in the perforations also mimics and expresses itself as an intention in the upholstery, linen and furniture. As an attempt to blend in the local craft and culture, the furniture is sourced from local artisans and craftsmen. Like a glasshouse in a jungle, Mana Ranakpur attempts to recreate the site as it was discovered, by unearthing

ing the various layers that have been embedded in time. Rooted in regionality and collective memory, through its architecture, it creates interfaces that are expressed not as mere filigree or ornate decoration, but as a reflection of time.



Location: Ranakpur, India **Architects:** Architecture Discipline Project **Team:** Sneha Gurjar, Nidhi Khosla, Stuti Sahni, Debbayoti Dey **Structural:** Isha Consultants Pvt **Electrical:** Lirio Lopez **Landscape:** Gauri Gandhi **Area:** 65,000 sqft **Year:** 2013 **Client:** Mana Hotel Ranakpur **Photographs:** Akshat Bhatt







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