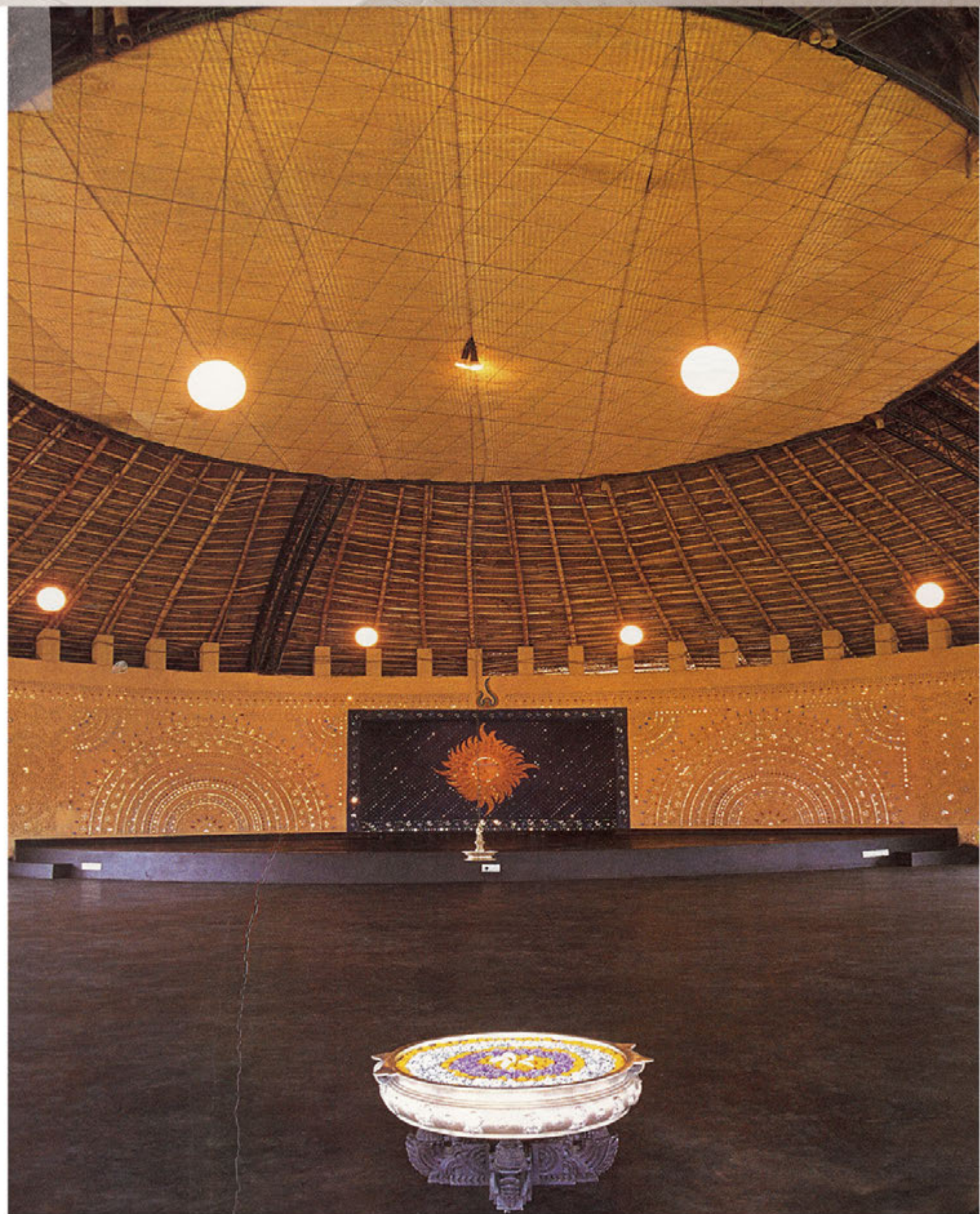


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SPACES ETCETERA



SOUL DEEP

THIS WELLNESS SPA ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BANGALORE HAS A DESIGN THAT IS AS HOLISTIC AS THE lifestyle it promotes. Dr Issac Mathai and wife Suja worked on the design concept to create an international centre that offers a uniquely Indian experience. Design Today checks in

WHEN DR ISSAC MATHAI and his wife Suja decided to set up a centre for the business of well-being, they did not want it diluted by any mechanics or theories of applied design. They decided to let it grow, taking a form of its own based on their own concepts and ideas, garnered from international travel and experiences. Dr Mathai is an experienced and highly regarded practitioner in the field of health care. When it came to creating a centre where they could put their

The tranquil environs of this spa promote a sense of well-being by soothing all the five senses in one form or the other

ideas and expertise into practice, they knew they already had the blueprint in mind. Working with a structural engineer and a contractor the duo got down to setting it up. And going by the experience of many, it sure is a design that has worked well to enhance the spa experience. So what is it that makes it so?

The simple elegance of Indian architecture that has been adopted for the design of Soukya lifts the spirits of guests even as they drive in. Traditional building styles, local materials, and soft landscaping all create a mood that puts one in sync with the overall feel.

Derived from the word 'soukhyam', which means well-being, Soukya is an international holistic healing centre.

Traditional Indian architecture and use of local materials create the intended 'Indian' experience



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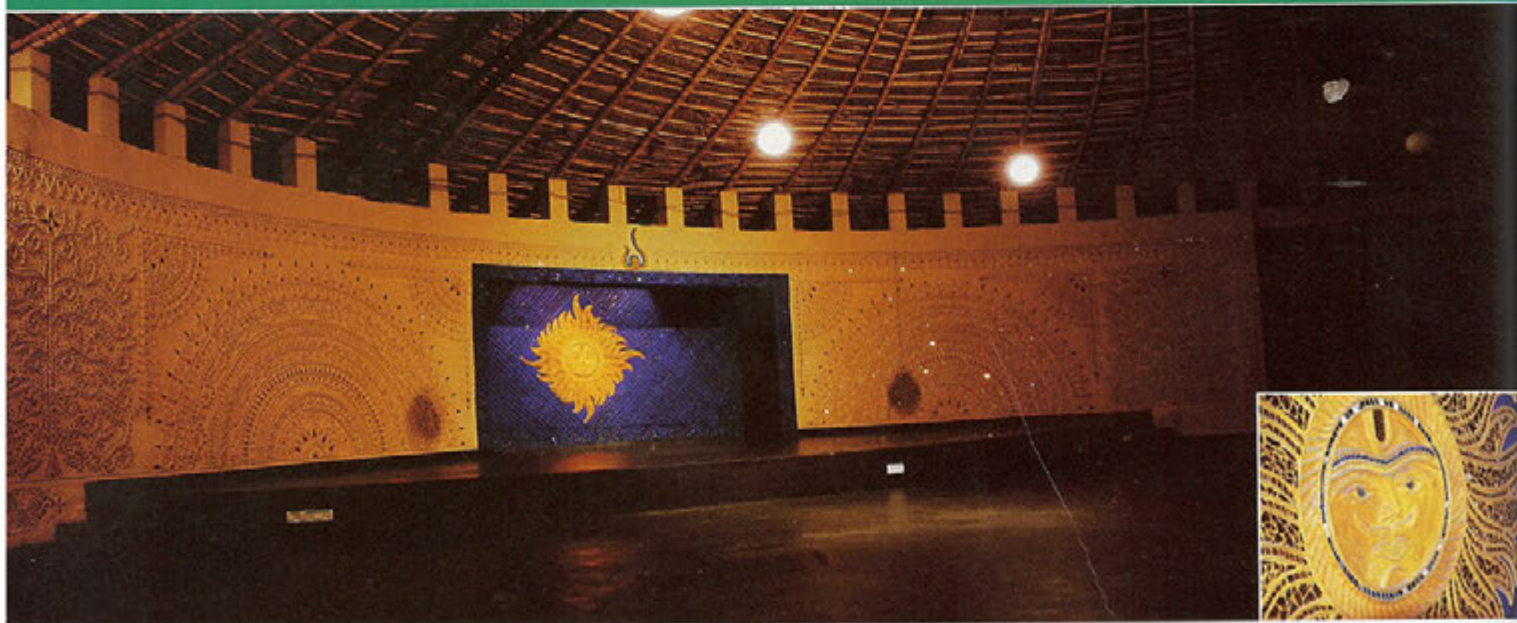
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ISSUE FOCUS



Lush surroundings, gentle forms and smooth curves have a calming effect on tired nerves. Attentive detail-



spread over an area of 30 acres of lush vegetation, located in Whitefield, Bangalore. Because the Mathais wanted to create a space where they could carry out the business of well-being in a manner befitting their holistic approach to health care, they naturally ensured that the design and the ethos of Soukya emerged as nurturing in character. As such, one sees that Soukya has a very organic feel to it. Right from colours, spatial layout, forms and even smells, everything here contributes to an elevated spa experience.

This 30-acre organic farm is completely conducive to

peace and harmony as it blends the outdoors and the indoors into one seamless experience. There are private gardens, French windows and glass walls for every set of rooms. Bamboo fences border the private gardens dotted with fruit and flower-bearing trees. The vegetation has also attracted many rare birds and an abundance of fauna. Waterbodies at regular intervals with fountains and fishes help to de-stress a weary guest. Hence, it is not as if one has to be in the treatment rooms of Soukya to experience a feeling of wellness. Just being around on this vast property and taking in the

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ing in the meditation hall and a profusion of natural textures make for a visual treat

(Clockwise) Single height structures in local materials conform to the overall scale; detail of stone pillars; Indian craft forms adorn the meditation room; the pool that spells 'un-hurriedness'

unique ambience can do it.

Comfort and harmony also come from the colours used across the centre. Earthy shades that cool and have a calming effect have been employed with an understanding of what the spa guest might be seeking. The range of services is not compromised; but the guests are encouraged to lead an outdoor regimen. Keeping in mind the flow and movement of traffic, the private and open spaces are

The undulating terrain dotted with several waterbodies and flower and fruit-bearing trees attract a large variety of birds

adequately set apart. Smooth gentle curves coupled with a dimension of scale that is introduced at certain points are very easy on the eye; the pool and the profile of the main building are points in case. Single height cottages scattered comfortably apart ensure that the structures stay unobtrusive.

At Soukya, besides the treatments and massages in the special rooms designated for the purpose, one can continue to savour the spa experience. The textures, forms and materials combine to complete the feel that some have even called life-changing and life-transforming.

