

Inside Outside

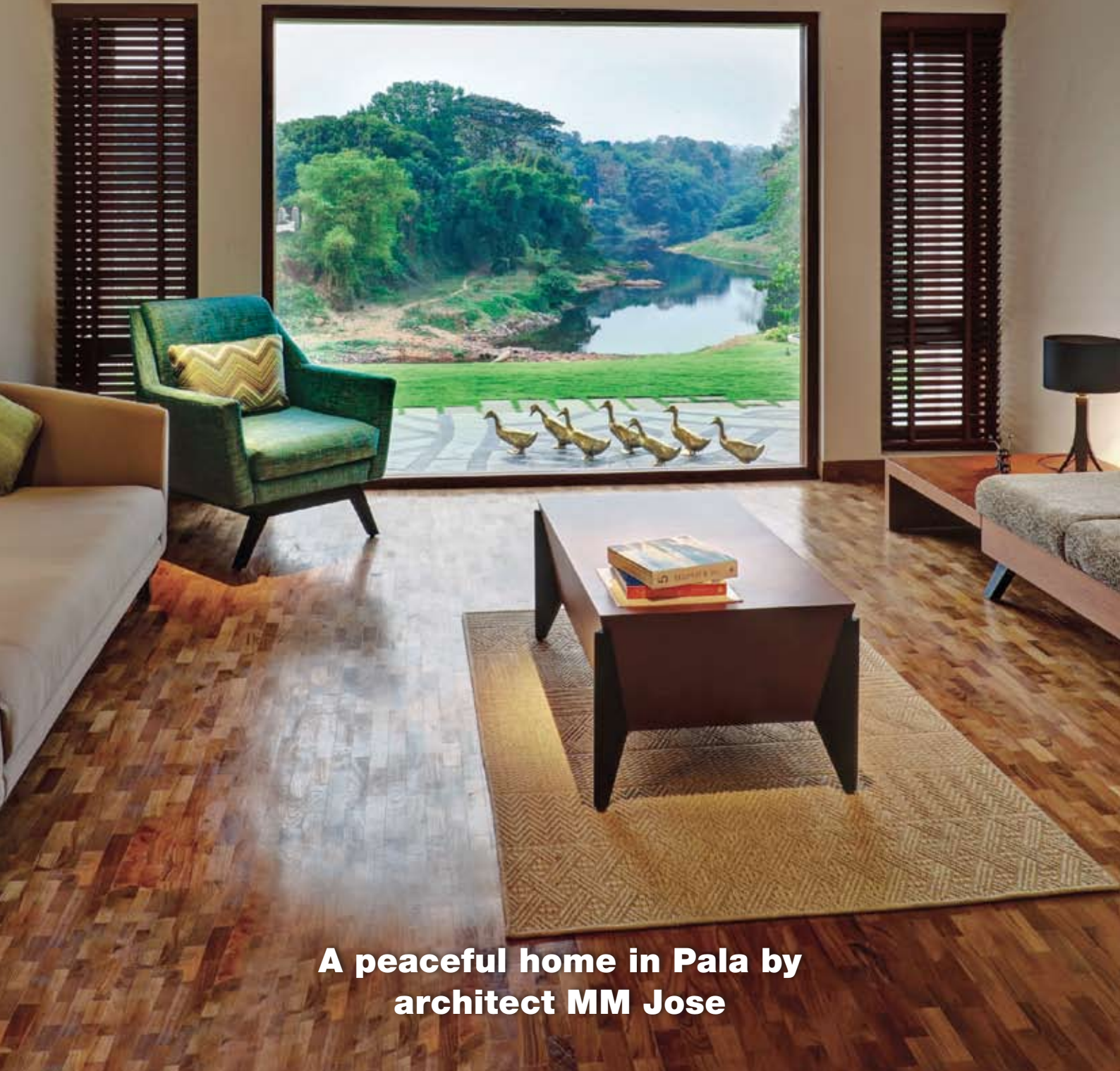
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**A peaceful home in Pala by
architect MM Jose**

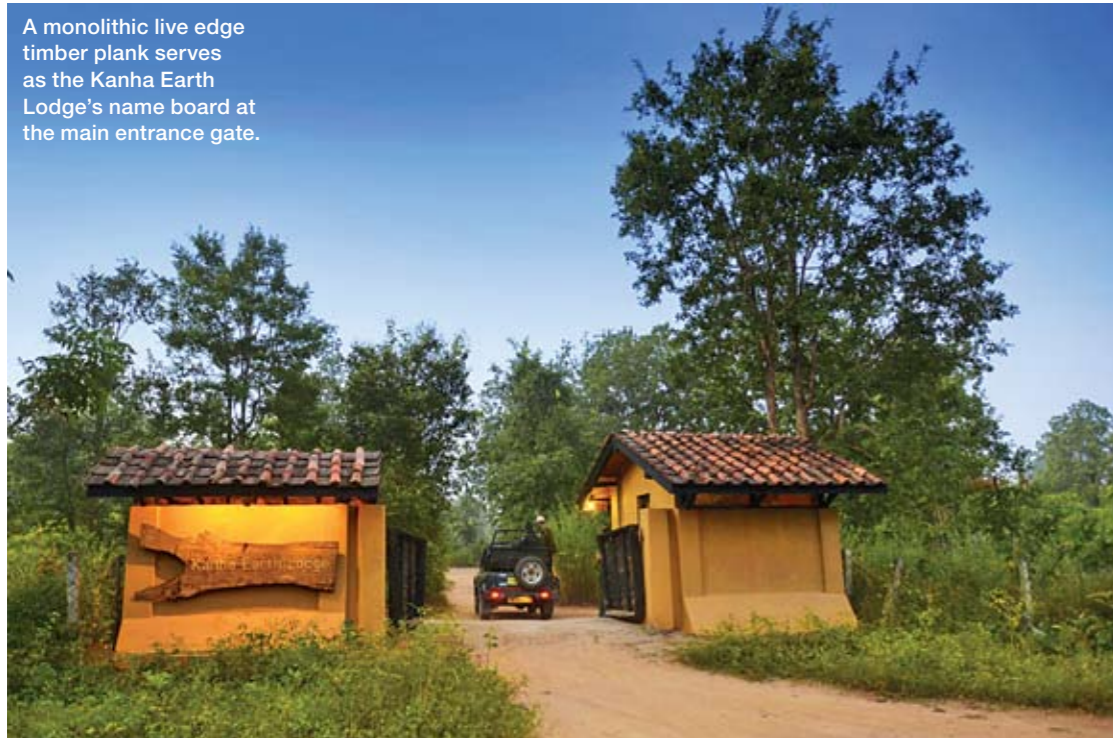
The architectonics of the roofing system cascade down to human scale at the entrance to the Kanha Earth Lodge's main building.

Jungle Book country

The Kanha region in Madhya Pradesh is designated the original Rudyard Kipling country, which fills the pages of the much-loved Jungle Book. And more recently, cinematic screens.

TEXT: AMITA SARWAL PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY PUGDUNDEE SAFARIS

A monolithic live edge timber plank serves as the Kanha Earth Lodge's name board at the main entrance gate.



The Wilderness Lodge

A dozen compact, 900 sq ft cottages dot the Kanha Earth Lodge sitting within 16 acres of natural forest and lying in the Gond tribal hamlet. Its neighbour is the famed Kanha Tiger Reserve. These blend with the wilderness lodge's three fold design mission: 'To be a low impact, nature based, financially sustainable accommodation facility that helps protect sensitive neighbouring areas and involves and benefits local communities. To offer tourists and employees an interpretative, interactive and participatory experience. To plan, design, construct and operate in an environmentally and socially sensitive manner.'

Well known for its animal

spotting, Kanha is the only home to the rare hard ground *barasingha* found in the grasslands. And of course, to tigers, leopards, sloth bear, deer, ungulates, lesser cats – and about 300 bird species.

A series of activities for visitors includes interacting with an experienced team of naturalists, who apart from accompanying guests on jeep safaris, also focus on holistic wildlife experiences like birding walks, cycling, nature trails and night patrol safaris. A visit to a nearby tribal village is interesting, as are local arts workshops. A junior ranger program is available for children. Also on offer are exotic, optional dining experiences like bush



Detail of a dining chair handle, inspired from a Gond tribal chair.



The alfresco seating with a Bourne firepit extends out from the main building deck facing the buffer zone forest.



Bird's eye view of the Lodge and its environs shot by a drone camera.

The Nature Aficionado



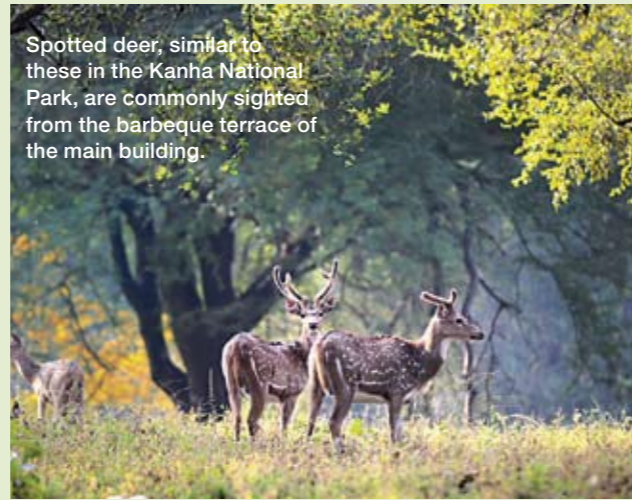
Architect Deepak Srivastava,
Principal Partner, Archinova Design Group

Deepak Srivastava's childhood was spent in Dehra Dun, in a colonial bungalow beside the Rispana river with the majestic Himalayas as a backdrop. Being the only child he 'devised a magical world made up of art and green open spaces. This early introduction to the outdoors, intensified my appreciation of natural materials like wood, stone and mineral hues, and imbued a sensitivity towards nature'. He attended the illustrious Doon School, and then did his B. Arch degree in 1993 from the MM College of Architecture, Pune. 'I lost my father during my first year of col-

lege and hence could not pursue further studies. As my family had moved to Bhopal, I returned home and set up Archinova Design Group (ADG) in 1994. My six months' internship during the degree course was spent in building a house for my mother. This was a major hands-on learning experience, where all decision making was thrust upon me,' he reminisces. 'To pursue architecture came naturally and intuitively. To be involved in the design process and be able to materialise your dream work into reality is a deeply satisfying experience, made more special by the knowledge that these creative endeav-



A tiger cools off in a water body in the nearby Kanha Tiger Reserve.



Spotted deer, similar to these in the Kanha National Park, are commonly sighted from the barbeque terrace of the main building.

ours will far outlive you,' says Srivastava. 'Motivation comes from Geoffrey Bawa, pioneer of the "Tropical Modern Style", and works of Kerry Hill and Ernesto Bedmar who had the good fortune

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Jeep Safari.



On arrival the guests are welcomed in the traditional Indian style.

to work with the Master. The take away from these great exponents of the discipline are an architecture that blends with its

is the respect for the cultural heritage of the place and to reinterpret the age-old time tested solutions in a contemporary

been our ongoing endeavour to promote and use indigenous art forms in our projects, specially the wilderness lodges. Wilderness lodges and residences are our main body of work, and are primarily in the national parks of Madhya Pradesh.

ing bespoke furniture and artefacts, mainly using creations by folk artists,' divulges Srivastava.



Racket tailed drongo.



A young guest with a chef in the organic kitchen garden.

landscape, where inside and outside fuse seamlessly and spaces provide a sense of well-being and pleasure to its inhabitants. Another important aspect

vocabulary. Among the Indian architects Studio Mumbai, RMA architects, Rajiv Saini and Associates are inspiring,' says Srivastava.

'We aim to touch the land lightly... Conserve and protect nature. The natural wear and tear due to weathering and through use does not in the least undermine visual appeal but rather enhances it. Paring back and emptying out brings out the beauty of things. Less is more,' the architect says.

FACT FILE

TYPOLOGY
Resort/Wildlife Lodge

PROJECT
Kanha Earth Lodge

LOCATION
Kanha, Madhya Pradesh

CLIENT
Pugdundee Safaris

COMPLETION
2012

SITE AREA
16 acres

CONSTRUCTED AREA
17,000 sq ft

ARCHITECT
Deepak Srivastava

ARCHITECTURAL FIRM
Archinova Design Group,
Bhopal

ARCHITECTURAL TEAM
Kaushal Bhadoria, Yogesh
Badgaiyan, Apoorv Garg

**INTERIOR DESIGN /
ARTEFACTS**
Padmaja Srivastava

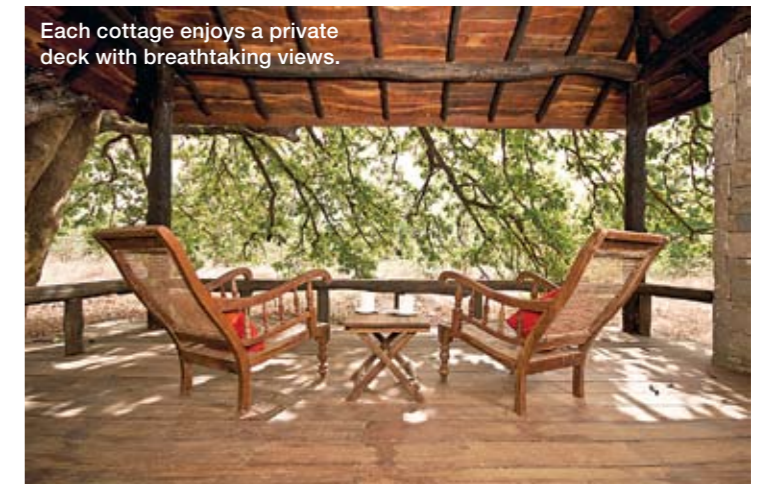
CONTRACTOR
Santosh

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT
Rajesh Bisaria





The sunken seating area in the main building lounge is furnished with furniture crafted mainly from old railway sleeper wood.



Each cottage enjoys a private deck with breathtaking views.



The cottage bedroom blends seamlessly with the outdoor deck and forest beyond.



Rustic but luxe interiors provide guests with every creature comfort.

dinners, sundowners, and picnics by the riverside.

'In our chase for blind luxury, we tend to go overboard alienating nature and abusing resources. For Kanha Earth Lodge, our vision was to set high standards in eco-luxury

while contributing positively to the environment and people around it. Not only does the lodge offer guests a feel-good factor and a great vacation but it also sends them back as ambassadors for environment and wildlife. We aim at setting

the very best standards in sustainable tourism by innovating and setting redefined goals year after year,' says Manav Khanduja, Managing Director, Pugdunde Safaris.

Manav adds, 'The brief for Kanha Earth Lodge was –

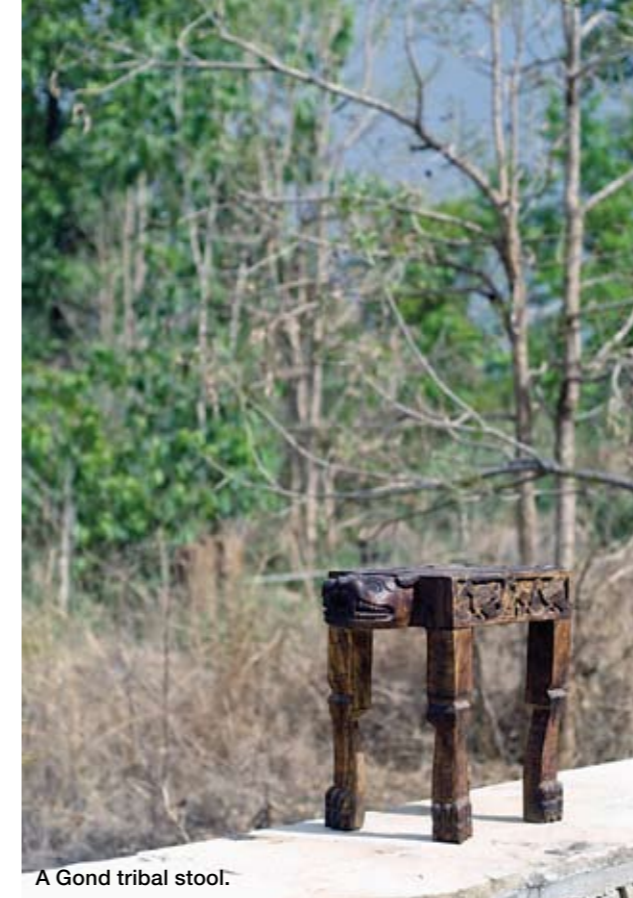
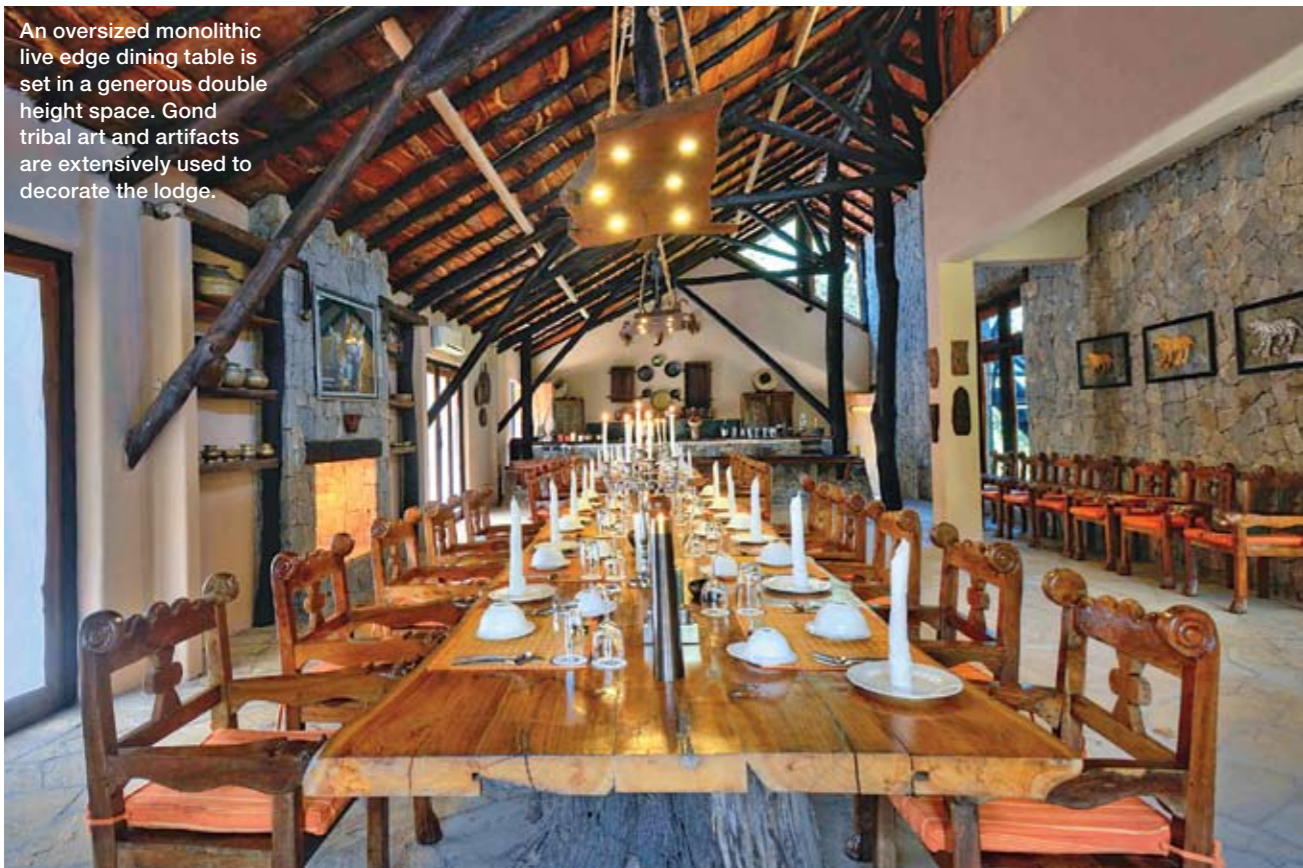
rustic yet luxe eco lodges. We scoured through innumerable books and resources featuring premier lodges in Africa. Local village houses in Kanha's vicinity were photographed extensively. Indigenous materials were used to

blend seamlessly with their surroundings, keeping the carbon footprint to a minimum and reducing the visual impact of the cottages.'

Stepping in, Ar. Deepak Srivastava, Co-Founder, Archinova Design Group, Bhopal,

reinterpreted and incorporated vernacular architectural elements. 'It was, therefore, a given that the structural designs would be inspired by traditional Gond architecture. Working wood "ballis" for roof structural members and for

An oversized monolithic live edge dining table is set in a generous double height space. Gond tribal art and artifacts are extensively used to decorate the lodge.



A Gond tribal stool.



A tribal chair placed under a hat and coat stand, by the architects, borrows inspiration from tribal furniture.

Alfresco dining with a live food preparation counter in the background.



Detail of the local beige stone masonry with 'ball' door frames have hand forged handle and latches.



The circular shower in the bathroom is fitted with a live edge plank shower panel. The skylight above allows natural daylight.



resort



door and window frames was specially challenging. Creating true levels for roofing systems, and making rebates for door and window shutters became time consuming and labour intensive. Uncoursed polygonal stone masonry has been used extensively, each stone being hand cut and fitted into place, under concentrated supervision.'


Not a single tree was felled during construction and each cottage is oriented adjacent to a tree such that the shadows cast remain over the cottage for most of the day and help reduce radiant heat gain. The usage of mud plaster, stone, terracotta tiles, rough-hewn timber beams, columns and furniture made from waste and recycled wood, combine harmoniously. Further inspiration came from the local dominant design factors such as pitched roofs, deep overhangs, verandahs, the presence of skylights, large



openings offering shade and cross ventilation. Gond tribal artefacts serve for decoration and are also kept for sale in the lodge souvenir shop.

Sewage disposal is done using Shankar Baram Septic Tanks – a President's award winning solution, where dual flushing cisterns for toilets and water saving devices for toilet fittings have been incorporated.

ADG's portfolio incorporates over half a dozen wilderness

lodges. Thus, the design at Kanha Earth Lodge follows the theme of not only an authentic jungle camp experience for the serious wildlifer, but also a place for contemplation and quiet reflection for someone wanting a break from the urban scenario, and an experiential vacation for the family. Working in these national parks/reserves has resulted in staying in touch with nature and getting sensitised to conserve the environment. 

Dinners by the riverside are much in demand by guests.