

Nature's Nurture

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Text: Deborah Cornelious ·

Photographs: courtesy the architect ·

Hotel Sea Princess' shining glory is its first floor where Suara (the spa) by Studio Padmini Pandey celebrates nature's beauty.



The entrance to Suara is inspired by wind carrying leaves — here they guide one inside.

It's a tranquil world in its own. It's a cocoon, offering protection from worries that await you. It's a spa unlike the other tried-and-tested stereotypes 'invoking Zen' in Mumbai. Located in Hotel Sea Princess, the recently-launched Suara will surely nourish the senses and transform you — metaphorically, of course.

Hotel Sea Princess wanted to go that extra mile by offering its customers a holistic package with a spa in its premises. Thus Suara came to be. When Minal Gundecha approached Padmini Pandey for this project, the architect was thrilled that her client was ready for something

different. Of the 12 existing rooms on the floor, six now contain the spa. To execute this mammoth task, Studio Padmini Pandey had to overcome several obstacles. “Suara is just above the service floor, where usually in hotels, the structural grid changes and beams are wider and deeper with many wet areas. Hence, it was a challenge to find the right spaces to dig up and establish the locations of the changing rooms, showers and washrooms, to allow proper functioning and services.” So these sections have been meticulously planned in one corner. Then there was the problem of the low ceiling with deep beams. With no way to circumvent this, inclined walls were created to conjure the illusion of space. On one side, they expand the breadth of a room, and behind, the enclosure thus created has a feeling of intimacy. It’s no ordinary feat that the architect has managed to fit a gym, reception area, a foot massage section, a fruit bar, changing rooms with showers and steam baths for both men and women separately; and massage areas by overcoming these challenges.



Pamper your tired feet with a seat on this majestic and comfy sofa. Note the little white bird perched amidst the grass turf.

So what exactly sets Suara apart from its several peers in the city? Explaining the unique philosophy, Padmini articulates, “Healing and relaxing could be as simple as surrendering yourself to mother nature.” Unlike the typecast that has come to surround a spa’s design, Suara has a deep reverence for nature that can be witnessed all over. In fact, it starts from the outside itself. The wall adjacent to the entrance is a pretty introduction to what lies inside. Within a stark white Corian background, several cut-outs filled with artificial grass turf create the illusion of a windy day with flowing leaves beckoning and guiding one inside.

Once in, the dulcet tones of music are relaxing — preparing the mind for what the body is about to experience. On par is the main passageway that connects the treatment rooms. Again within a white Corian wall, natural oak rests inside cut-outs resembling slender trees, creating the illusion of walking through woods. Even the massage rooms have large depictions of beautiful flowers captured in mosaic. But what really steals the show is the vertical verdant wall in the juice bar area. Comprising several artificial varieties of leaves woven together by Temple of Flowers, this custom-made green creation is a sight for weary eyes.



The juice bar is nestled in a bed of faux grass turf, while patrons have a full view of the custom-made vertical green wall crafted by Temple of Flowers.

Suara has a restrained material palette. “We’ve kept it to a minimum to avoid chaos,” explains Padmini. The space restrictions would have been brought to the forefront had there been different materials adorning various surfaces. White Corian is seen on the feature walls. With its modern appeal, all the right spots are appropriately highlighted. All the flooring is engineered oak from Pergo, a dream to walk on when footwear comes off. The steam and massage rooms are all clad in Bisazza mosaic for an opulent yet relaxed look. Finally, artificial grass appears juxtaposed against Corian and in the foot spa area for a walk on the wild side. To make matters even better, it’s the small details that make you smile. For instance, the two cute, white birds that sit perched in the faux lawn complete the setting.

In Mumbai’s concrete jungle, Suara offers a chance to escape. It’s a getaway from the hustle and bustle, anxiety, schedules, and everything else that’s breathing down our necks. So if a little respite is the need of the hour, you know where to go.

CONCEPT

To utilize space to the maximum through the creation of a spa that provides holistic solutions.

MATERIALS

Walls Natural oak wood, Corian and faux grass turf **Flooring** Engineered oak (Pergo) **Furniture** Custom-made

FACT FILE

Project name Suara **Location** Hotel Sea Princess, Juhu, Mumbai **Area** 2,000 sq ft **Architect** Studio Padmini Pandey

Some more images...



The couple’s massage room recalls romance with this sensual use of red in the Bisazza mosaic.



A jacuzzi set-up replete with luxurious accoutrements to enhance your spa experience.



The angled walls help create the illusion of space, while providing largeness on the outside, inside there's a more enclosed feeling for privacy.



With white chrysanthemums adorning the walls, this massage room invokes peace.

Tags: [Hotel Sea Princess](#), [Mumbai](#), [Padmini Pandey](#), [spa](#), [Studio Padmini Pandey](#), [Suara](#)



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