

PROJECTS

Sink into a soulful escape at this Alibaug resort nestled intelligently among mango trees

The guiding philosophy for AAMRAI designed by Pentaspace Design Studio was rooted in three interlinked ideas: great design, belonging, and sustainability.

by **Staff Writer** | February 4, 2026

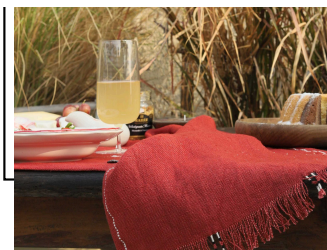
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Defining soulfulness

The soul, by its very nature, is intangible, something that transcends the physical realm and evokes a connection to a larger, unseen spirit. If an architectural space can be said to possess a soul, it must embody a life that extends beyond its physical boundaries, an essence that resonates deeply with its environment. This ineffable quality, this quiet resonance between place and purpose, is what may be called 'soulfulness'.

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Set within a 2.5-acre ancestral property once thriving with a mango orchard and betelnut plantation, the site of AAMRAI tells a story of soulful transformation. As urbanization crept into the surrounding areas, the natural contours of the land began to shift, forming a shallow basin where rainwater collected, flooding the orchard and damaging the betelnut grove. Yet, what first appeared as adversity soon revealed itself as opportunity, an invitation to reimagine the land as a space of retreat and renewal. From this vision emerged a boutique resort intimately woven into the existing orchard, aptly named AAMRAI — the mango grove.

Architecture that belongs

The design team's first encounter with the site revealed a living tapestry: mango and betelnut trees interspersed with amla, pomelo, starfruit, coconut, and lemon groves; a functioning well that sustained life; and a natural soundscape of birdsong and rustling leaves. The immediate instinct was one of restraint: "We cannot disturb this balance." The challenge, then, was to enhance rather than alter, to design a resort that truly belonged to its land.



The architectural response was one of light intervention. Instead of imposing built forms upon the terrain, the design sought to weave itself into the existing landscape. Villas and cottages were positioned sensitively among natural clearings, ensuring that not a single tree was felled without necessity. In several places, solitary betelnut trees from the earlier plantation were preserved as living markers of memory. This approach preserved the site's scale and intimacy, allowing the built form to emerge as a natural extension of its environment. Horizontally composed and volumetrically restrained, the architecture dissolves into the

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landscape, becoming part of nature's fabric rather than an object within it. The result is a resort that embraces visitors with quiet warmth, authenticity, and understated beauty.



Rooted in renewal

AAMRAI draws deeply from its cultural and geographical roots, reflecting the spirit of the Konkani region. The intent was not merely to create a destination but to curate an 'experience of place', one that embodies the local ethos and rhythm. Every material and detail echoes this commitment. Locally quarried laterite stone and native timber form the architectural palette, complemented by handmade tiles and artisanal artefacts. The result is an environment that feels both familiar and elevated, rustic in essence, yet refined in execution, capturing the true spirit of a tropical Konkani farm stay where simplicity defines luxury.



Sustainability at AAMRAI transcends material choices to become a way of life. The project was realized through close collaboration with local craftsmen and artisans, celebrating regional skill and community participation. The extensive use of locally available materials reduced environmental impact while enhancing authenticity. Handmade earthenware enriches the dining and living spaces, while the orchard continues to thrive: its produce of mango, amla, lemon, pomelo, and coconut integrated into the resort's daily life, nurturing both memory and sustenance.



AAMRAI is not merely a resort but a narrative, a story of renewal, rootedness, and reverence. It represents a seamless dialogue between land and architecture, where the built and the natural coexist in quiet equilibrium, each lending the other its grace, vitality, and soul.



Fact file:

Name of the Project: AAMRAI – The Mango Orchard Resort

Location: Alibaug, Maharashtra

Area: 2.5 Acre

Design firm: Pentaspace Design Studio

Principal designer: Harsh Pote

Photo credit: PHX INDIA

Landscape Design: Hemali Samant

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