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*"The dialogue between client and architect is about as intimate as any conversation you can have, because when you're talking about building a house, you're talking about dreams"*  
— Robert AM Stern

# Languid Modernism

*A stylish beach house in Kerala epitomises the best of contemporary luxury in India*

TEXT: NICHOLE L. REBER  
PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF BHARATH RAMAMRUTHAM/KHOSLA ASSOCIATES



Architects	Khosla Associates
Project team	Sandeep Khosla, Amaresh Anand and Praveena A.
Client	Mike Manwaring
Location	Chowara, Kerala
Structural engineering	Manjunath & Co
Landscaping	Hariyalee Consultants
Interior design	Khosla Associates



People from all over the world rest weary bones in ashrams and ayurvedic spas in 'God's Own Country' – adopted by Kerala authorities as a tourism slogan – that realises the nation's reputation for tranquility and healing qualities. For ayurvedic enthusiast Mike Manwaring, it had been the ultimate place to escape the bustle of his primary hometown of London since 1995.

On one such return to Kerala, the Londoner stumbled upon a property perched on a cliff some 200 feet above the Arabian Sea, gazed upon the all-encompassing views of the sea and a surrounding coconut plantation, and immediately sought the assistance of architects Sandeep Khosla and Amaresh Anand of Khosla Associates, who designed the home keeping the 180° panorama of the sea constantly in mind.

A dramatically-rising triangulated canopy roof arrests the viewer's attention at once. It serves as the focal point of the Modernist house's composition. It's also the visual hinge connecting modern design aesthetic and vernacular traditions. The massing creates a sense of initial mystery, gradually revealing itself via expansive apertures and mingled areas of light and shade. It acts as a catalyst for the interplay of air and light, or *vayu* and *prakash* in Hindi.

An elevated, airy bridge unites the west and east wings of the programme, which further contains five bedrooms, walk-in closets, decks for meditation and other purposes, alfresco dining areas, a wine cellar and pool room, living space for servants, and a courtyard. The ceilings are breathtakingly high beneath the dramatic canopy roof but reduced to a human scale of three metres throughout most of the home.



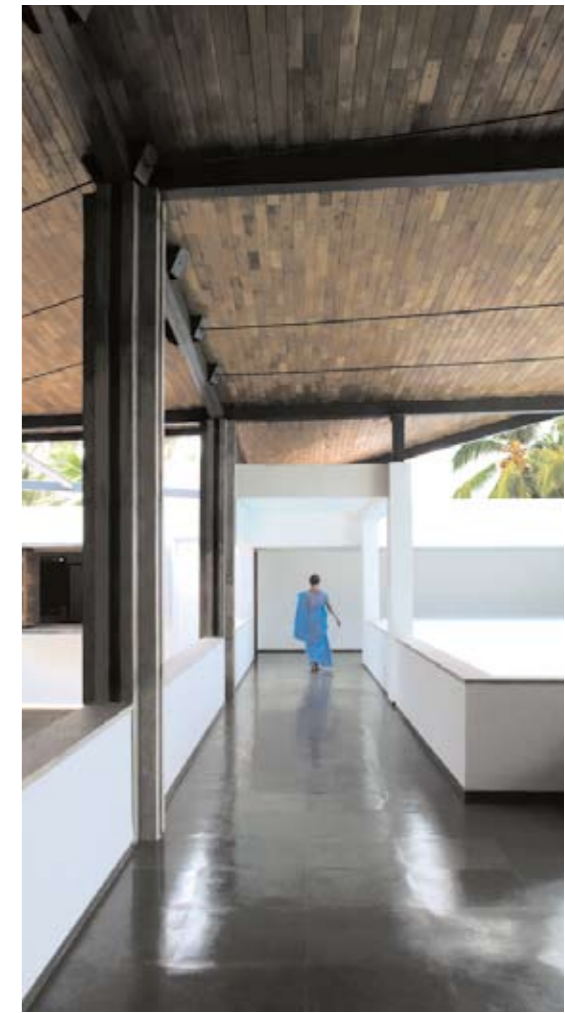
The two-storey, 1,372 sq-m house features abundant water elements such as a 418 sq-m infinity pool, bathing areas that blur the boundaries between indoor and outdoor, tranquilising reflecting pools, and lily ponds. Water gently flows through stone spouts; carefully placed plants lend further softness.

Indian design and architecture take into consideration such environmental elements as ventilation and light in ways that designers and builders from more developed societies have recently only reminded themselves to do. Traditional – or sustainable – Indian design practices are now trendy practices encouraged by green building organisations. Trained in the West before the green movement became trendy, Khosla offers an Indian perspective on the importance of environment and tradition.

“Local materials bring in a sense of context and root the house closer to its environment. We are partial towards local materials in all our projects, because you leave a smaller carbon footprint by doing so and we have a wealth of exciting local material available to us. We took inspiration from some traditional Kerala wooden houses and palaces, but reinterpreted it in a contemporary way,” he says.

“Kerala has a tradition of good carpentry skills handed down from generations. This is evident in the traditional vernacular architecture, which has elaborate slatted wood walls and ceilings. We used local carpenters to create contemporary details of louvered timber sliding and folding shutters, slatted wood walls, and the timber-clad underside of the main roof.”

But, in true Indian style – one that embraces the benefits of contemporary life without eschewing the values of time-honoured traditions – Khosla explains his implementation of other eco-friendly practices. “We usually factor in green concerns like solar heating for water, LED lighting as well as rainwater harvesting on all our residential projects,” he notes.



“The design avoids expanses of glass that would have trapped the heat. Instead, we (used) a system of wooden louvered shutters”

Working seemingly backward to protect the owner and guests from Kerala’s fierce tropical heat, Khosla did not install an air-conditioning system. Instead, he worked with the locale’s natural benefits, harnessing the sea breezes house via expansive apertures and bending them to penetrate throughout. “The design avoids expanses of glass that would have trapped the heat. Instead, we (used) a system of wooden louvered shutters that the owners can operate according to their desired amount of light, wind, and warmth.

“We also devised a system of contemporary louvered wooden sliding and folding shutters for the doors and windows. These slatted shutters

can be modulated and allow for uninterrupted air circulation.”

Other materials such as cast concrete, polished cement, polished and rough Kota stone, and rough slate help keep the house cool and airy, and protect it from humidity. Conversely, teak furniture, tastefully and lightly placed throughout, anchors the home, giving it some warmth and weight.

The design appreciates contemporaneity in other ways, too. In India, a nation whose density almost makes one’s eyes bleed, privacy is virtually unheard of. Therefore Khosla used operable horizontal louvered shutters in the bathrooms, giving his client choices in the level of intimacy and

privacy they would like – even when taking an open-air shower. He avoided small, cramped, caged-in rooms, too; instead he burst open the space.

“Only half of the floor area of the house is actually defined by four walls. Everything else has been kept open to maintain the porosity of the house,” he says.

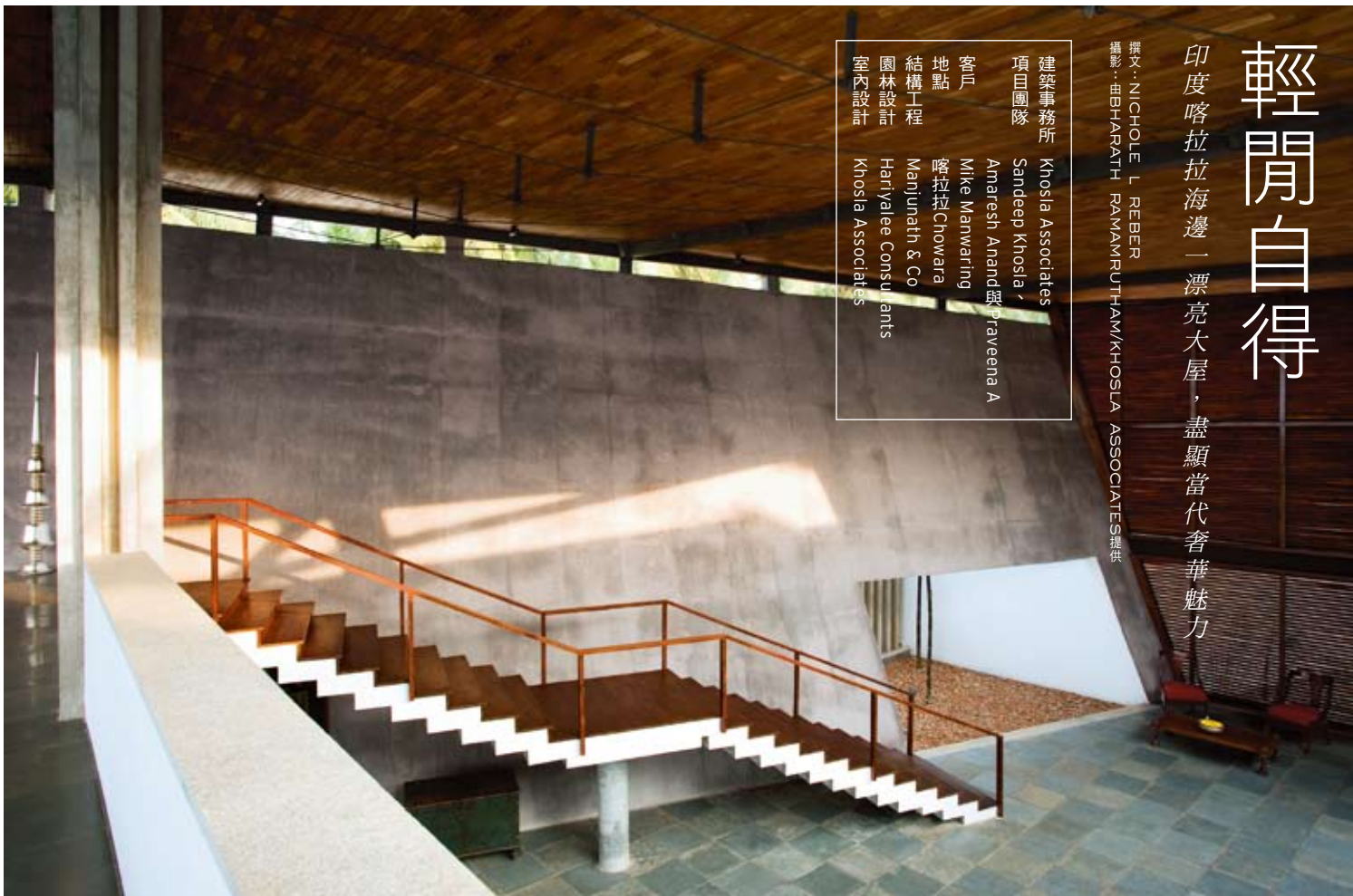
Whether relishing the sea views from an open-air shower or meditating on one of the wood decks surrounding the house, the homeowner must surely feel like a God of his own domain. Straddling the realms of today and yesteryear among the elements of light, air and water, the home optimises the opportunity to breathe deeply and relax.

# 輕閒自得

印度喀拉拉海邊一漂亮大屋，盡顯當代奢華魅力

撰文：NICHOLE L REBER  
攝影：BHARATH RAMAMURTHAM/KHOSLA ASSOCIATES提供

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室內設計 Khosla Associates



印度喀拉拉旅遊局喜用「上帝之國度」作招徠，吸引世界各地的旅客紛紛來到這片神之領域，在印度靜心所及艾育吠陀（ayurvedic）古法水療所中把疲憊放下，印證印度恬靜且能慰藉心靈的獨特氣質。熱愛 ayurvedic 古法水療的 Mike Manwarling，自一九九五年起便來到這片隱世樂土，逃離繁瑣的家鄉倫敦。

Mike 有次回到喀拉拉，偶然發現一間屹立于阿拉伯海二百多呎高的懸崖上，眺望環迴海景與四周椰子林的大屋。這間大屋讓他醉心不已，他隨即找來建築事務所 Khosla Associates 的建築師 Sandeep Khosla 與 Amarash Anand 為他設計理想家居。Sandeep 與 Amarash 二人在設計房子時，片刻不忘保留那片一百八十度的遼闊海景。

傾側的三角板屋頂氣勢逼人，旋即吸引目光。三角屋頂是這間代表現代主義的房子佈局構圖的焦點，亦是聯繫現代設計美學與當地傳統建築的核心視覺元素。這個大型屋頂瞬間營造神秘感，繼而緩緩從偌大的門窗開口及光影交纏的空間中透視其形態。屋頂亦使充沛日光與流通空氣透進室內；在印度，風被稱為「vayu」（泛指生命之神），光則叫「prakash」（意指智慧），意義重大。

一條輕盈開揚的高架橋把大屋的西翼與東翼連接起來；屋內設有五間睡房、步入式衣帽間、可作沉思冥想或其他用途的平台、露天餐廳、儲酒庫及泳池、工人的生活區及庭園。大型三角屋頂使室內的樓底高得驚人，不過經調整後合乎人體工學，全屋樓底大多都保持在三米高。

這間兩層高的大屋面積達一千三百七十二平方米，水是最重要的元素之一，設有四百一十八平方米的無邊際泳池、模糊室內外分野的浴室空間、波平如鏡的水池，以及百合花塘。流水輕緩流過石噴水口，而特意擺放的植物則帶來更柔和細膩的感覺。

已發展國家的設計師與建築商直至最近才留意到要應用通風與光線等自然環境要素，但印度的設計與建築卻早已融入這些元素。印度傳統設計一向環保，但經綠色建築機構倡議後現在已成為暢行的實務指標。Sandeep 在綠色運動興起之前便在西方學習建築設計，在設計中充分表現印度十分重視環境與傳統。

他說：「當地物料為房子帶來本土色彩，使

房子更靠近自然環境。我們所有的項目都備受選用當地物料，因為如此一來碳足跡會少一點，而且當地物料十分豐富。我們的靈感源自喀拉拉一些傳統木製房屋與宮殿，但以當代形式演繹。」

他續說：「喀拉拉的優秀傳統木工工藝一代傳一代，而當地傳統建築總見精緻木製欄柵牆與天花。我們聘用當地木匠為木製百葉遮板與摺合百葉窗、木欄柵牆及天花底層的木層加上時下流行的細節。」

真正的印度風格既懷抱當代生活的樂趣，亦不會忽略歷久不衰的傳統。Sandeep 便以此解說其他環保措施。他說：「我們所有住宅項目通常都會加入各種綠色元素，包括以太陽能加熱用水、LED 照明及收集雨水。」

Sandeep 似乎以更原始的方法來使屋主與客人避開喀拉拉的熱帶高溫，沒有安裝空調系統；反之，他善加利用當地的自然氣候，透過偌大的門窗開口把海風帶進室內各個角落。他說：「設計不採用大面積玻璃，避免把熱能鎖於室內。我們反而選用一系列的木欄柵板，讓屋主能因應所需的陽光、風量與溫度來作適度調較。」

他續說：「我們更替門窗設計了一系列富當代感的木製百葉遮板與摺板。這些百葉遮板可作調較，讓空氣暢通無阻流進室內。」

清水混凝土、拋光水泥、光面與粗面 Kota 石，以及粗糙石板有助屋內保持清爽與空氣流通，又防止潮濕。另一方面，柚木傢俱隨意的擺放家中，卻呈現獨到的品味，為房子帶來溫暖質量的感覺。

此外，其他設計也注重當代感。印度是個熙來攘往的國家，人口密度高得很，私人空間在這裡可真是天方夜譚。故此，Sandeep 在浴室採用可調較的水平百葉窗，讓屋主自行選擇要多隱私的浴室空間，甚至乎來個露天淋浴也可。他亦避免細小狹窄的牢籠房間，反而把空間打通。

他說：「房子只有一半的面積是由四面牆壁包圍，其他空間都呈開放格局，保持房子通氣開揚。」

無論是在享受露天淋浴時品味海景，還是在其中一個環繞房子而建的木平台上沉思冥想，屋主總會感到自己就是這個家的主宰。設計從陽光、空氣與水出發，跨越今古時域，讓人在內全放放鬆，深深吸一口新鮮空氣。E