

# Hospitality

The projects on these pages showcase designs that incorporate regional traditions and modern influences to create truly welcoming spaces

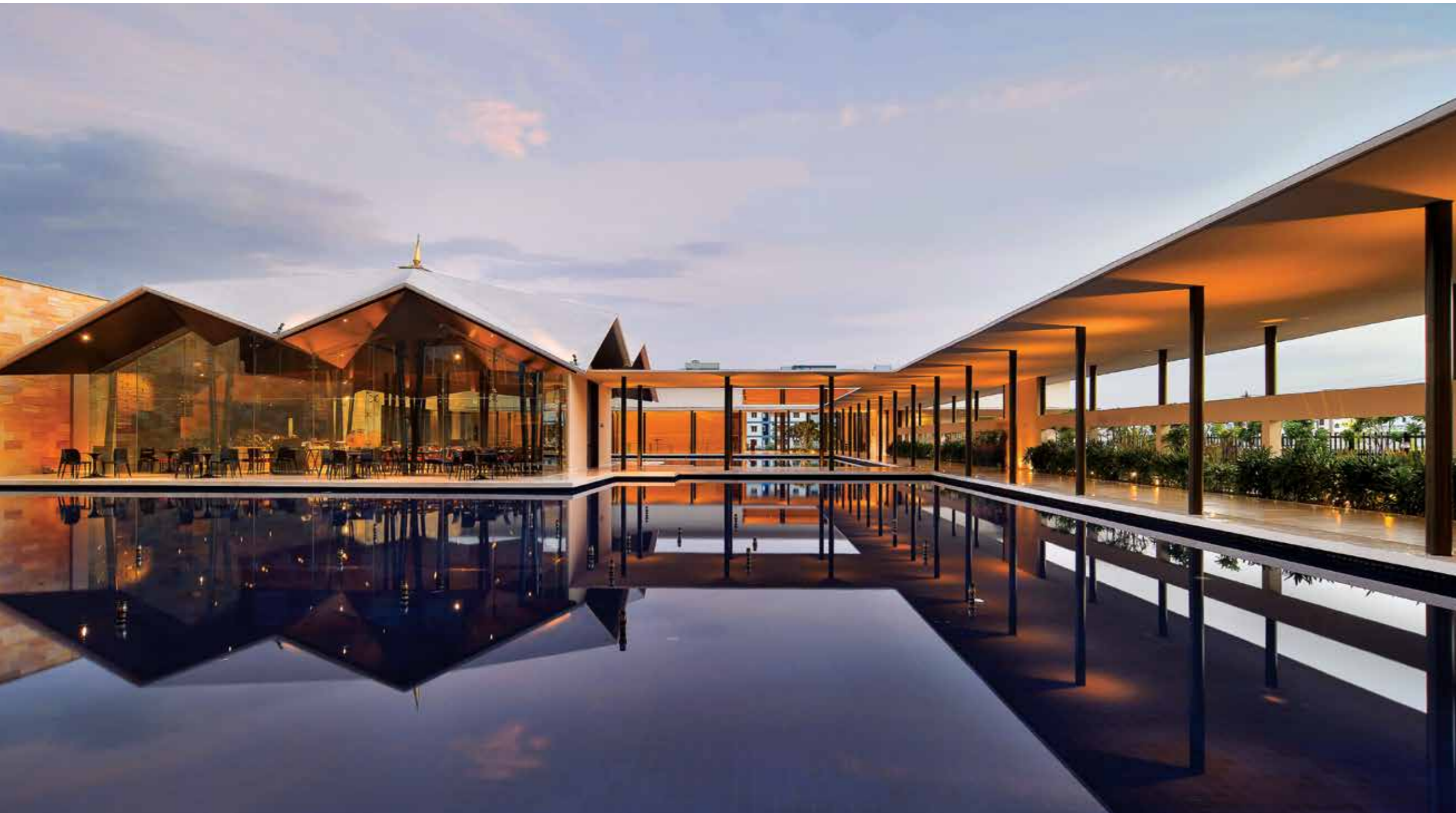


# The finer touches

SJK Architects takes its architecture and design cues from the temples in South India and adds a contemporary twist to execute the Marasa Sarovar Premiere Tirupati luxury hotel

## Preceding pages and

**below** Traditional temple architecture come to fore with a contemporary touch to showcase the grandeur and luxury of the Marasa Sarovar Premier Tirupati luxury hotel. Designed by Shimul Javeri Kadri of SJK Architects, the complex spans over 10,685 sq m and is located in Tirumala, Andhra Pradesh. Seen here is the courtyard and the Lotus Cafe restaurant.



**As a firm, SJK Architects do not believe in** a set design vocabulary that is then transported to whichever part of the world they are working in. “We absolutely revel in what the site has to offer, what the history of the locality is, we love exploring the diversity of locales and their cultural contexts. It is very much a kind of a combination of climatic, cultural and very kind of site specific response that we have to each of our project,” says Shimul Javeri Kadri, principal architect-designer of SJK Architects, Mumbai.

The Marasa Sarovar Premier Tirupati luxury hotel embodies the firm’s principle in being culturally indigenous, collaborative and people-centric in their design approach. Spread over 10,685 sq m, the luxury boutique hotel stands on a 13,150 sq m plot at the foothills of the Saptagiri mountain range and is 35 minutes away from the very famous Tirupathi temple.

“The brief for this project was to create a luxury boutique hotel to cater to the needs of the devout pilgrims who visit the temple town, to provide banqueting facilities for weddings, and also cater to the discerning business travellers who combine meetings with a pilgrimage and of course tourists,” adds Sarika Shetty, the principal executive of this project at SJK Architects.

“The hotel has a total of 121 rooms, with banquet areas, business centre, spa, gym, a game room, swimming pool and two restaurants.”

The core design embodies the classical, introverted Hindu temple plan in order to optimise on land, space and context. Orthogonal, introverted and circumambulatory – the standard layout for temple architecture, have been refined and distilled into a contemporary building.

An airy and open north and south connecting walkway abutts a water body located within the central courtyard and connects the hotel’s public areas i.e. the entrance, lobby, reception, business centre and banquet hall with a guest block.

The central open courtyard and the all-pervading water body form the core of the hotel, spatially

and experientially. For the design, the *pushpakarni* kunds, which are water-harvesting bodies, located outside the Tirupathi temple, were studied to obtain the perfect proportion of built v/s open spaces within the courtyard; the water body here measures 60m x 32m. The *mandapa* in the centre of the water body inside the temple complex were re-interpreted into the central courtyard with a water body, within which floats the all day dining space – The Lotus Cafe, one of the two restaurants in the building complex.

Another influence of temple architecture in the contemporary setting is the geometric vocabulary that has been played out in the guest block.

“As in temples, *gopurams* are always seen as rising up, towards the heavens and the structure has multiple levels. We have replicated in the same here for the guest block, which houses the rooms and suites for the guests, along with the spa and games room,” she further adds.

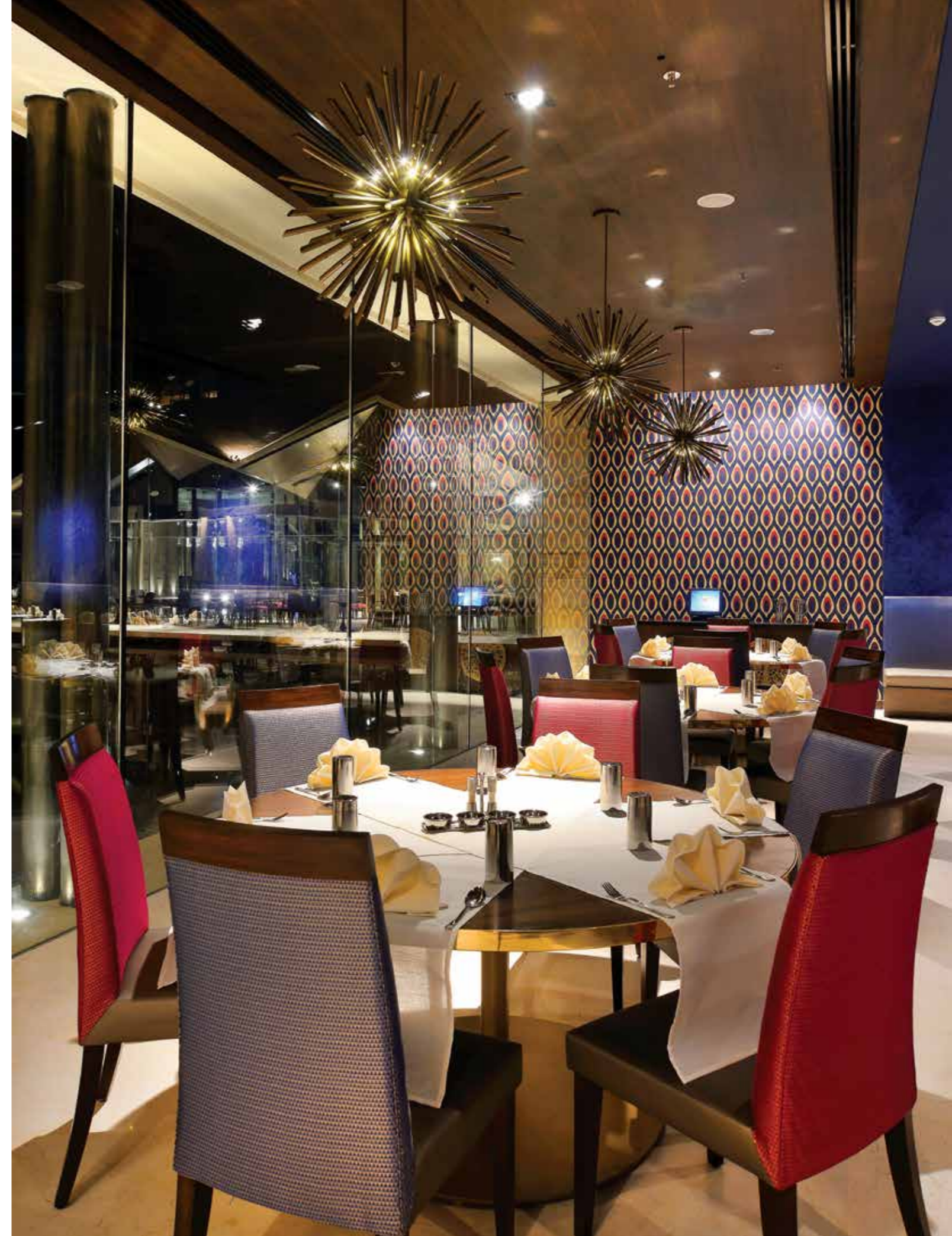
The guest blocks are adorned in a black gold paint and subtly stand against the beautiful

Saptagiri hills, allowing the guests a view of both: the scenic hills on one side and the serene water-body on the other.

At the heart of the experience lies the design interpretation *Dasavataras*, the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu. These have been characterised in the design of the public spaces using symbolism, colour and symmetry to evoke an emotional experience with each avatar being captured in a single space.

The design of the reception is inspired by the transformative nature of the *Kurma* (tortoise) avatar. The hexagonal form of the tortoise shell has been abstracted in a geometric way to depict a large 20’ high reception wall panel in bevelled mirrors fitted hexagonally. The decorative light too, depicts the faceted nature of the tortoise shell to create a clear glass bevelled & brass edged custom-designed pendant light fixture. A 20’ high turquoise green stucco wall at the hotel reception depicts Lord Vishnu’s 10 incarnations as custom-designed 2’ diameter brass discs, created by method of

**Below and facing page** Thali is the second restaurant in the complex and the colour and symmetry of the space is inspired by Lord Krishna. Deep blue stucco walls are offset by the customised peacock feather wallpaper. A custom-designed pendant globe in radiating flutes with LED lights completes the picture.





**Left** The Lotus Cafe has a multi-faceted roof with brass finial. This form has been carried within the space in the form of a multi-faceted veneer finished false ceiling, which has been carefully designed to achieve the desired volume for the space..

*Dhokra*- lost wax casting technique, one of the craft forms, once native to the state of Andhra Pradesh. The banquet area lies adjacent to this space and the design of the space is in accordance to the colours and symbolism of Lord Rama, which is purple and gold in the carpets and the design of the furnishings.

The second restaurant in the complex is Thali and the avatar of Lord Krishna inspires its design. A 30' long wall symbolises the pots filled in with colours depicting the colourful festival of Holi associated with Lord Krishna. The deep blue stucco wall within this restaurant is reminiscent of the blue God. A custom-designed pendant globe in radiating flutes, with LED strip lights within commemorate the flute- Lord Krishna's favourite musical instrument. A custom designed wallpaper in a colourful play of Lord Krishna's ornament- the peacock feathers offsets the blue stucco painted walls.

A 65 m walkway connects this north section with the south of the complex. Abutting this is the Lotus Cafe, which 'floats' in the central courtyard.

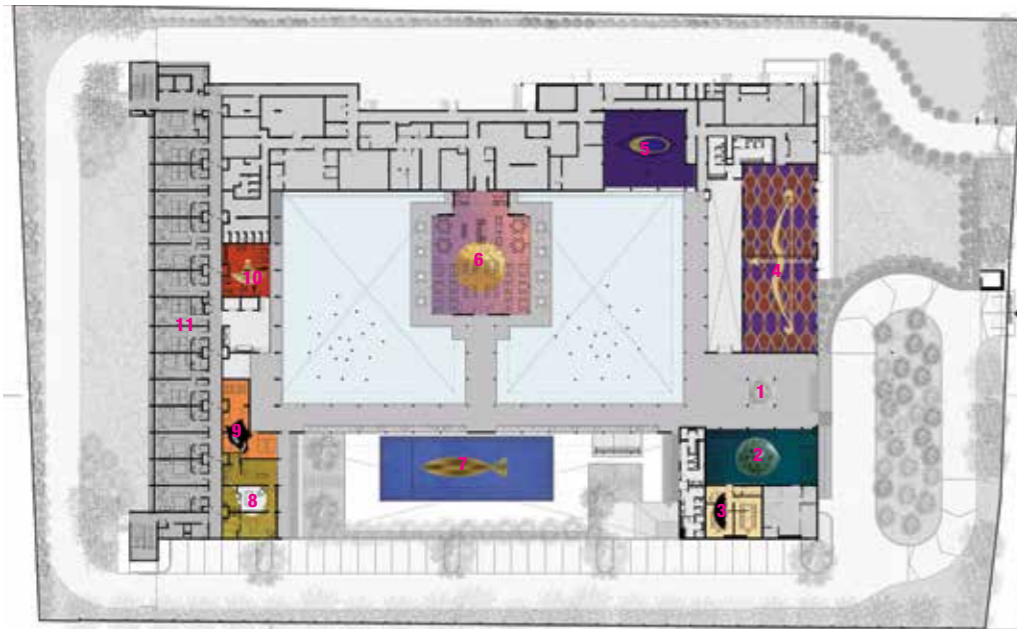
"The inspiration for the design of the Lotus cafe were two subjects, one was *Narasimha* and the other was the geometric structure of the lotus itself," points Shetty. "*Narasimha* was half man and half lion and existed in a transitional state where it was neither in land nor water nor does it exist in day or night," she finishes.

"The Lotus Cafe is a contemporary interpretation of the *garbhagriha*, which is the last sanctum in the temple where the idol is placed, and circumambulating around the *garbhagriha* is where you would perform the *pradakshina*. So literally you are, doing the *pradakshina* around the waterbody to access the amenities, guest, service block while the Lotus Cafe sits right in the middle," explains Shetty.

The all day dining cafe seamlessly merges these transitional zones. The cafe was envisioned as a lotus in the pond characterised by the multi-faceted roof with a brass finial over it, much like a *shikahara* over the *garbhagriha* in a Hindu temple. This faceted form has been continued within the space in the form of a multifaceted veneer finished false ceiling, which has been carefully designed to ensure all services are accommodated within

without compromising on its form and achieving the desired volume within the space.

The other spaces in the complex are the pool court represented by *Matsya*, *Varaha* for the indoor games area, *Vamana* the intellectual represents the business centre, *Parasurama* the powerful is adroitly represented in the gym and *Buddha* for his serenity is depicted by a gold *kalamkari* Bodhi tree motif in the spa. ■



**Legend to plan** 1 Entrance courtyard, 2 Reception, 3 Business centre, 4 Social Banquet, 5 Thali restaurant, 6 Lotus Cafe, 7 Pool area, 8 Spa, 9 Indoor game area, 10 Gym, 11 Guest blocks.

**Below left** The overall palette of the suites in the guest blocks is a rich combination of beiges with gold, maroon and purple hues. The furnishings within the rooms like the carpet, bed runner and accents are custom designed using temple borders inspired from local *Mangalgi* textiles.

**Facing page above** The Lotus Cafe overlooks the waterbody in the central courtyard.

**Facing page below** An aerial view of the complex shows the circulatory walkways, courtyard, the Lotus Cafe and the guest block in the background.

**Project** Marasa Sarovar Premier, Tirupati  
**Architect** Shimul Javeri Kadri; SJK Architects  
**Design Team** Sarika Shetty, Michelle Pereira  
**Structural Engineers** Engineering Creations Consultancy (I) Pvt. Ltd.  
**MEP & FF Consultant** AECOM  
**PMC** Sycone CPMC Pvt. Ltd.  
**Lighting Consultants** Lighting Design Works  
**Landscape Consultant** IPDM Services (India) Pvt. Ltd.  
**Kitchen & BOH Consultant** Mistry Associates

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