

feature ♦ living with nature



Space

Serene



Atop a misty hill, among the greens, there stands a house... The Jacobs' house in the Kerala heartland uses the lush greenery of 'God's own country' to perfection



Above: A green vista of coconut palms and dense foliage is the focus of the living room; **below:** an external view of the house; **left:** Adjustable, wooden louvered doors frame another striking view

Nestling on a slope, flanked by misty hills, the house's brick and stone facade seems to rise out of the earth. Built in 1992, the Jacobs' house finally evolved, after several changes, into an unusual home space where the outdoors were incorporated into the overall design mood to form a visually delightful interior.

A tree-lined driveway leads to the entrance marked by wooden and terracotta pillars. This opens the way to an inner garden. A typical entrance or *padippura* is suggested by an archway of pillars with an old wooden gable at the top. A door

SUVANIL K. RAJ
DESIGN CONSULTANTS
KOTTAYAM.





Above: Extraneous design is kept to a minimum — the spaces are left alone to speak for themselves

Facing page: The large verandah comprises an all-purpose utility area

within a door is created by inserting an antique wooden door with a traditional iron lock called *manichitrathazhu*, in the space. The warm gold of the Jaisalmer stone floor is accentuated by a dark green marble border. A wooden shoe cup-

board with a 'Tree of Life' shutter and a window framed by colourful, antique ceramic tiles create interesting accents.

In the spacious living room, a stunning vista of coconut palm fronds and paddy fields is the focus. Slatted teakwood folding



doors, a rich wooden flooring, offset by warm tussar blues in the upholstery, create a comfortable ambience. Rich detailing in the carved wooden pillars, the antique false ceiling and the unusual design on the beams are the other highpoints of this



unusual space. A watercolour by Balan lends a touch of colour. The family room is another place where the view takes one's breath away. The outside is framed like a picture by adjustable louvered doors.

Shades of warm blue in the Abstract by Adimoolam, along with the rosewood furniture in the dining room continue the colours of the living room. An open inner courtyard with tall areca nut palms piercing the roof, makes eating here an outdoor experience. The planting, often compared to a miniature rain forest, is designed to focus on the 'Tree of Life' cemented on the brick wall of the courtyard.

In the bedroom, the rich wooden tones of the four-poster bed, teak and rosewood tables and a wall of mahogany shutters, are complemented by the large green canopy of trees outside. Here one wakes to the call of birds; outside, squirrels leap

from tree to tree and butterflies flutter about among wild flowers. If the season is right, brilliant orchids on the Anjili tree complete the picture.

The sloped site allowed the possibility of a large room just below the northeastern side of the main house. This was later remodelled into a 1,500 sq. ft single-bedroom independent house. A large verandah with old wooden pillars and railings running the width of the house is the all-purpose space. During family get-togethers this doubles up as an outdoor eating area. A formal living room, and a dining-cum-kitchen space make it a compact independent set-up for Jacob's elderly parents.

Though the designs by architect Nina Korah Jacob arrest the eye, it is the feeling of calm, of spaces being left alone to speak for themselves, that form the USP of this enchanting home.

*Text and photographs courtesy
Suvarnarekha Consultants*