



# SOFT TREADS

ARCHITECT REVATHI KAMATH ESTABLISHES A LINK BETWEEN THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE JINDAL GUEST House at Raigarh using steel, fly-ash and slate. The structure stands in harmony with the surrounding hills and forest area reinforcing her philosophy of honesty and compassion to the earth

**W**hen one spends a day amidst the coal and grime of a steel plant, returning to a haven such as this, is what every visitor to the Jindal Steel and Power guest house looks forward to. Located at the fringes of the industrial township of Raigarh, the attempt was to design a structure that would coalesce industry and nature in a vocabulary that is modern and humane, with a lightness to its being. Following the diktats of the micro-landscape, the architects at Kamath Design Studio integrated the project at multi-levels with the plant-life, the geology and the tectonics of the building. With locally procured materials such as steel, fly-ash bricks and slate, the structure is ecologically sensitive as all other projects by the firm.



**IN THE PALM OF THE LAND**

The fish-tale palms already on the site vertically sited the building giving Revathi the inspiration to use I-girders to hoist the building façade. The minimal use of steel gives the building a lightness, which is complemented by the sloping terrain that seems to flow from the adjoining hills into the green rooftop down towards the landscaped garden and then the swimming pool.



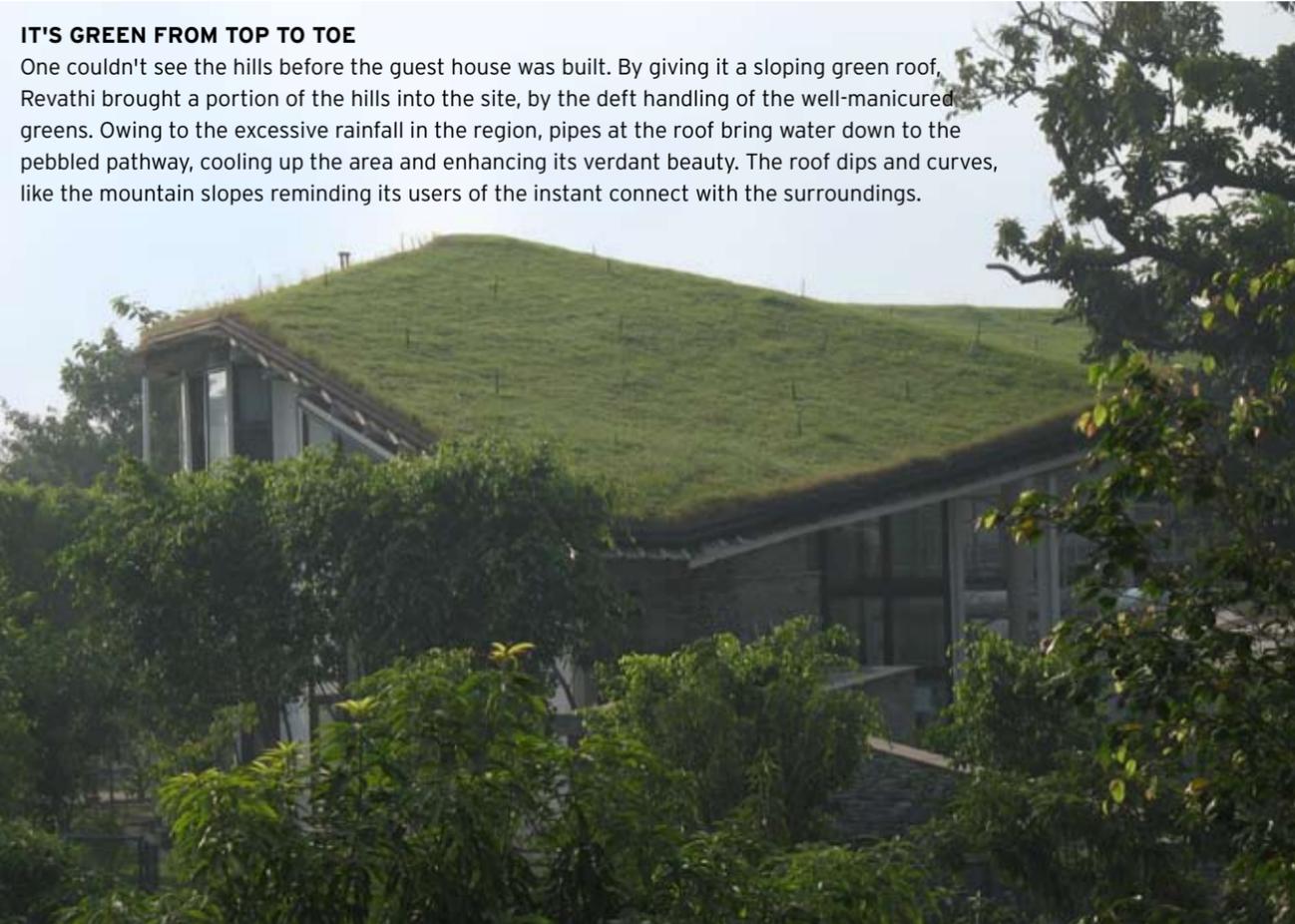
**NOT YOU SEE IT, NOW YOU DON'T**

The radial lines of the girders congregate at the center of the site from where one can view the forest and beyond. While each girder is given the impression of a palm trunk, each section seems to sit snug between two columns, almost lending it a tree-house effect. This break in the structure provides the openness to the surrounding landscape, becoming a bridge, reinforcing the intended connect.

**THE TREES MAKE A POINT**

To support the steel roof, with its bamboo and gypsum plaster inner layer, steel beams were laid out. What Revathi chose to do, was create nodes / stiffeners on the beam in keeping with the joints and breaks seen on the branches of the trees. The swirling, helix-shaped stairwell too uses minimal steel affording the entire structure to breathe and yet create an energetic space for people to interact in.





**IT'S GREEN FROM TOP TO TOE**

One couldn't see the hills before the guest house was built. By giving it a sloping green roof, Revathi brought a portion of the hills into the site, by the deft handling of the well-manicured greens. Owing to the excessive rainfall in the region, pipes at the roof bring water down to the pebbled pathway, cooling up the area and enhancing its verdant beauty. The roof dips and curves, like the mountain slopes reminding its users of the instant connect with the surroundings.



**SHALL WE WALK THE RAMP?**

The ramp leads to the roof, which was built for maintenance as well as offering visitors an aerial view of the landscape. The slate came from the waste of mines close-by while the rocks too were locally sourced. The undulations of the landscape had to be constant and in this space to it's evident.



**THE GEOMETRY IN THE SPACES**

While the steel columns form a portal, the curved staircase is reminiscent of the stairwell on the opposite side, forming a symmetrical balance in the structure, while the slate in its raw, untamed presence evokes the earthiness and richness of the region itself.

The project in its singular form is an awe-inspiring structure, offering calm, pleasant vistas to the fragmented soul. That it has recharge pools and filtration plants only supplements its effort of creating a space that is climate-, cultural- and environmentally-sensitive, unifying its existence on this patch of land.

FACT FILE	
PROJECT:	Oct 2006-Jul 2007
LOCATION:	Jindalgarh, Raigarh. Chattisgarh
CLIENT:	Jindal Steel & Power Ltd
ARCHITECT:	Kamath Design Studio, New Delhi
SURFACE AREA:	250 sq m