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SEVEN WONDERS

OUR CURATED LIST OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL MARVELS IN INDIA

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RUKA

For Ruka, a resto bar at the Ramee Guestline hotel at Juhu in suburban Mumbai, the idea was to create a sophisticated take on the Japanese Izakaya (gastrobar) experience of informal dining. The uber-luxury Japanese restaurant and lounge has an outlet in Bahrain that was established in 2014. Raj Shetty, chairman of the Ramee Group of Hotels, Resorts & Apartments, says, "With the brand launching in Mumbai, Ruka is ready to bring vibrancy to the industry – taking dining to a new level by paying deep attention to detail and meticulous execution."

The 5,000sq-ft space on the ground floor with an entrance from the main gate as well as from the lobby of the hotel, offers a signature experience that showcases the significant components of the brand. Design elements like the luxe furniture add up to a relaxed, contemporary vibe similar to that of its flagship outlet. The furniture is a combination of high dining tables, chairs and lounge seats with a view of the interactive kitchen. The walls are punctuated with tanks containing fish, crabs and lobsters, some of which are used in the preparations.

To fulfill the client's desire for an upscale Japanese dining and lounge experience, the designers decided to create a contemporary space. They were inspired by water, which became an important element with aqua tanks, a glass water cascade and a glass floor over a running stream. "Japanese design is synonymous with simplicity, balance and a love for natural beauty – and this inspired us to use water as an element," disclose the designers. "The colour palette and choice of materials spring from this concept. Our aim was to create an innovative dining experience, which we did with the help of informal seating, interactive kitchen, sushi bar and mood-lit bar counter."

What's striking about the site is its vastness and free-flowing spaces. While the textures are rustic and earthy, the colour scheme is monochromatic with hints of beige in the form of sandstone relief feature walls to break the monotony and add warmth to the interiors. The dominant materials used are white marble for the flooring, river-washed black granite, warm sandstone and dark wood veneer.

MATERIALS & SUPPLIERS

Flooring: white marble

Veneer: dark wood veneer

Stone: beige sandstone, river-washed steel-grey granite (local supplier)

Tiles: slate tile (local supplier)

False ceiling/roofing: Acoustical modular ceiling – Anutone acoustical boards, glass canopy (custom made)

Lighting/light fixtures: LED lights and QR-111 (sourced from UAE)

Dado: sandstone cladding, river-washed granite cladding, matte black vitrified tiles (locally sourced)

Paint: charcoal grey – Asian Paints

Tables, chairs, sofas, etc: sourced from Vietnam

Sanitary fittings: Kohler

Hardware: Hettich

Air-conditioning/HVAC system: Ductable split AC

*All the materials were sourced by the client.



PROJECT DETAILS

Name of the project: Ruka, Japanese restaurant-lounge

The client: Ramee Group of Hotels

The designer: Bharat Shetty – principal architect;

team – Kranti Varadkar and Nkeeta Shah

HVAC consultants: M/S Sequeira Engineering Works

Lighting consultants: Bharat Shetty Architects

Kitchen consultant: Bonger's Kitchen-Net

Project management consultant: Ai

Duration of project: 6 months

Date of completion: December 19, 2016

Lighting, a crucial part of the design, complements the darkness of the interiors. "A major characteristic of the lighting was our illuminated fish tanks with cool lighting," point out the designers. "Stone-clad columns were down-lit, and these punctuate the vast space. Lighting levels are deliberately kept low to create a dramatic environment throughout."

Ruka is broadly segregated into two sections: an outside casual seating area, and an inside formal restaurant and lounge. Outside, the prime focus is on water as a design element. The space is enclosed on three sides by glass fish tanks and a glass water cascade. During lunch hours, they flood the space with natural light. A casual lounge seating on a glass floor has a water stream running below it.

A life-size, custom-designed statue of a sitting Buddha welcomes guests inside. The interior design is minimal, with accents of ancient Japanese accessories like tea urns. The bar is intersected by a wooden ice-carving station (that creates a spectacle for guests) and a DJ console. After dinner, the lighting transforms the central space into a dance floor.

The acoustics were a major challenge while executing this project, as the resto bar is sandwiched between the nightclub (Rock Bottom) in the basement and the rooms above. Special care had to be taken to make Ruka completely 'sound-tight', as it transforms into a lounge after dinner. The designers opted for a false ceiling and clad the columns with acoustical materials. "We used materials with rough textures to cut the reflection of sound. The relief work in the sandstone also helped in preventing sound reflection," disclose the designers.

An ideal location for a light lunch, dinner or a social get-together with friends, family or colleagues, guests can choose between the casual bar area serving unique molecular cocktails, an intimate dining area, or even opt to sit at the sushi bar where they can view Chef Masato Toida and his team deliver meals with skill and creativity. This chef from Japan has 43 years experience and has mastered the art of Kaiseki – the exquisite presentation of a multi-course Japanese meal. And the minimalist design is a perfect backdrop to the beauty of the cuisine. ■

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