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"While the lower story planting of shrubs is real, all the ones that are not accessible are artificial. The idea was to amalgamate both well to create a holistic look."

Landscapes

CROWNING GLORY

A terrace where tinted sunbeams bounce dramatically, facilitating a cinematic celebration with the cultivated landscape design is what Landscape Architect Kalpak Y. Bhave has achieved with the Mirasol terrace, Daman.

When spring is in the air, your underutilised real estate atop a building or garage suddenly looks like the best place for a rooftop garden. In fact, roof top terraces can be so much - a venue for a chic soiree, a private sanctuary or even a space for organic farming.

Text By Kanupriya Pachisia
Photographs Courtesy Landscape Architect Kalpak Y. Bhave

By employing a minimal vocabulary of modern forms via vintage tables and modern industrial chairs, Bhave has let the tropical climate and landscape rule.

Landscape Architect Kalpak Y. Bhave had exactly these thoughts in mind and more when he completely transformed a 10,941 sq ft area for Mirasol Terrace, Daman and made it fit to host parties for destination weddings, giving the versatility of roof terraces another new angle.

When it comes to design, as long as the roof can bear the load of furniture, human traffic and plantings – the sky is the very limit. It won't be wrong to say that roof terraces are like stage sets. They're typically viewed from a single direction. While one can move around freely in a large garden, these spaces are primarily viewed from one direction.

As a result the space is viewed in tiers. Talking about this aspect of roof gardens, Bhave shares, "When I visited the terrace, the existing roof bothered me. I decided to divert the focus of the visitor to other attractive landscaped elements." Thus, he created three separate tiers that would be viewed as the terrace at large, the plantings, the landscaped elements and the roof.

Made more like an industrial shed, the 'before' look wasn't pleasing to the eye at all. "We cut down the height with a number of pergolas," shared Bhave.

After subsequent discussions with the client, a formal concept of design was adopted. Bhave shares, "I started imagining what all the visitor would see while lunching or chatting with others. Will he see the roof from an angle? If so, how can I block his vision with landscaped elements? Will he touch and see whether the planting is real or not?" The answers to these questions led the design team to create a different place altogether.

Talking about the roof, the height of the terrace was pinpointed as the first problem. It was almost two floors and the sides were open. Made more like an industrial shed, it wasn't pleasing to the eye either. "We cut down the height with a number of pergolas. The sides were open and we enclosed those with artificial green walls. The ugly columns resting on the floor were covered with GRC grills for ventilation," shares Bhave.
Since the site selected was atop a terrace, the addition of load was a major factor that had to be considered while choosing materials for landscaping.

As a result all lightweight materials were selected. Most of the landscaped materials were made out of glass, reinforced concrete and fiberglass. The flowerbeds and plants were also potted in hollow WPC and fiber reinforced plastic pots.

Bhave informs, "To avoid leakages on the terrace, we restricted plantings to pots. While the lower story planting of shrubs is real, all the ones that are not accessible are artificial. The idea was to amalgamate both well to create a complete look." While the artificial planting on the pergolas adds the pop of colour, the real plant palette revolved around plants that required little sunlight.

"The idea was to make the planting look fresh and green all through the year. Hence we avoided real flowering plants and played around instead with the foliage colour, texture and shape of plants to create an ornamental landscape design," says Bhave.

Bhave shares, "We wanted guests to spend more time here than actually required for eating breakfast, lunch or dinner and enjoy the ambience!"

Plants like Dieffenbachia, Aglaonema, Rhapis Palms and Coleus were used to create leafy layers across the terrace.

Permanent serving courts were conceptualised in order to render an organised look and aid in the convenience of serving. The serving counters positioned at the opposite end of the entry make sure that the visitors can take in views of the terrace garden first and not be distracted by the food alone. Bhave shares, "We wanted guests to spend more time here than actually required for eating breakfast, lunch or dinner and enjoy the ambience!"

No landscape is ever complete without a source of perfect lighting that illuminates the space and makes it come alive when darkness descends. A dramatic lighting scheme installed definitely adds stars to the outdoor ambience, setting the mood for various ceremonies. GRC grills were also used as partitions in order to generate a sense of privacy between groups. These also helped in making the ambience more cosy and intimate.

By employing a minimal vocabulary of modern forms by opting for vintage tables and modern industrial chairs, Bhave has let the tropical climate and landscape become the focus. With a landscape architecture that celebrates the tropical environment, the Mirasol Terrace is a reflection of the concept that drove its existence. Truly crafted incorporating every key requirement for a destination wedding address, the space experiments with nature and it is through nature that it makes an original statement.

✉ www.kalpakybhave.com

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