



A SLICE OF PARADISE

The Dune Eco Village & Spa in Pondicherry stands out with its eco-friendly facilities and spa specialising in aquatic healing therapies.

By Bindu Gopal Rao

THERE IS SOMETHING about this quaint French town, Pondicherry. I don't know what keeps drawing me back to it: the lovely beaches, the serenity of the ashram or the cobbled streets of the French Quarter. Naturally I was excited to visit the Dune Eco Village & Spa that advertises itself as an eco-friendly beach hotel with gourmet food and a unique spa. Located on the scenic East Coast Road, there are 55 themed bungalows blending contemporary with the traditional seamlessly across 35 acres. "Dune is an oasis of peace, a lost paradise, in a fast-paced world," says Sunil Varghese, Director Dune Eco Group.

The bungalows' designs are the brainchild of artists, designers and architects from across the world. "We are committed to the environment that we live in, and many of our bungalows are reclaimed from Colonial houses,



Family house lounge



Garden room

Chettinad palaces and Kerala planter's mansions. We bring together luxury, and pure natural living," explains Varghese. The bungalows are fully equipped with solar water systems, low consumption bulbs and organic linen. In fact some of them use sea breeze instead of air conditioning for cooling, which can be enjoyed from the comfort of your own private garden, lounge or terrace. The Bamboo House has a high quality wooden roof made from Casuarina tree and comes with open terrace and private garden. The Baywatch Houses are sea facing with private garden. The Flex House designed by French artist Franck Thesée and fashion designer Aicha Abbes is enclosed by illuminated flex interiors printed with a surrealist picture collage and has a sea facing lounge with a private garden. The Flower House has a large private garden of 5,000 sq ft fenced by coconut palm leaf with an open Gazebo sheltering a colonial iron bed, a sofa, a high rosewood Tamil pictured bed and a separate open roof with a wide spaced bathroom. Recommended for nature lovers who



Flex house bathroom

enjoy sea breeze and starry sky. The Nawabi House designed by Chennai fashion photographer Monica Gurdhe and designer Natasha Jeyasingh is a traditional house on stilts covered with thatch roofing and separate bath, with a compound wall.

While at the property enjoy delectable healthy gourmet fusion food, prepared using organic local produce, courtesy FUN and Seafood Café. It also helps that the resort has two organic agriculture farms where most of the ingredients come from. The menu comprises varied options in Indian and continental fare. For super health-conscious they have the hypo-toxic menu created by French biologist Dr Jean Seignalet. The chef also takes special requests. For special occasions, the resort gives you the option to organise private, tailor-made dinners.

Special mention must be made of their spa that offers Ayurvedic treatments, yoga, meditation and alternative therapies including Watsu. In fact, they also offer other aquatic healing

therapies like Aquareflexo, Aquatic meditation, Water dance or Water Cranio, Aichi - Tai Chi in water and Woga - Yoga in water! Spread across a 12.500 square meter facility including a yoga hall, an Ayurvedic pharmacy, a medicinal laboratory, an aromatherapy steam house, a heated chlorine-free swimming pool, a multi-gym, a boutique and a beauty treatment center, the spa has garden abound with Ayurvedic plants and aromatherapy herbs. Children can also indulge in activities like pottery and milking the cow apart from cycling all around.

While you are at The Dune you can

experience a large range of activities such as wellness therapies and massages at the Paradise spa, yoga and meditation, tennis, cricket, volley Ball, jogging on the indoor-track, kite flying, pool, the extensive book and DVD library, and the swimming pool with overlooking the golden. A family friendly venue, kids will love milking the cows in the farm and taking part in pottery classes. A children's play house with bicycles, a large choice of tables games, a playground and a swimming are other activities designed with kids in mind. Apart from the spa, adults can indulge in yoga and meditation, tennis, cricket, volley Ball, jogging on the indoor-track, kite flying, pool, and the extensive book and DVD library or take a splash at the pool. The hotel can also help organise a visit to Artyzan school, Shiva Nataraj pyramid temple and Miracle forest for an extra charge. I also recommend that you keep a day aside to visit both Pondicherry and Auroville. A holiday at Dune will leave you rejuvenated and refreshed in more ways than one.



Kerala house lounge



Paradise Spa



Seafood bar



One of the bungalows