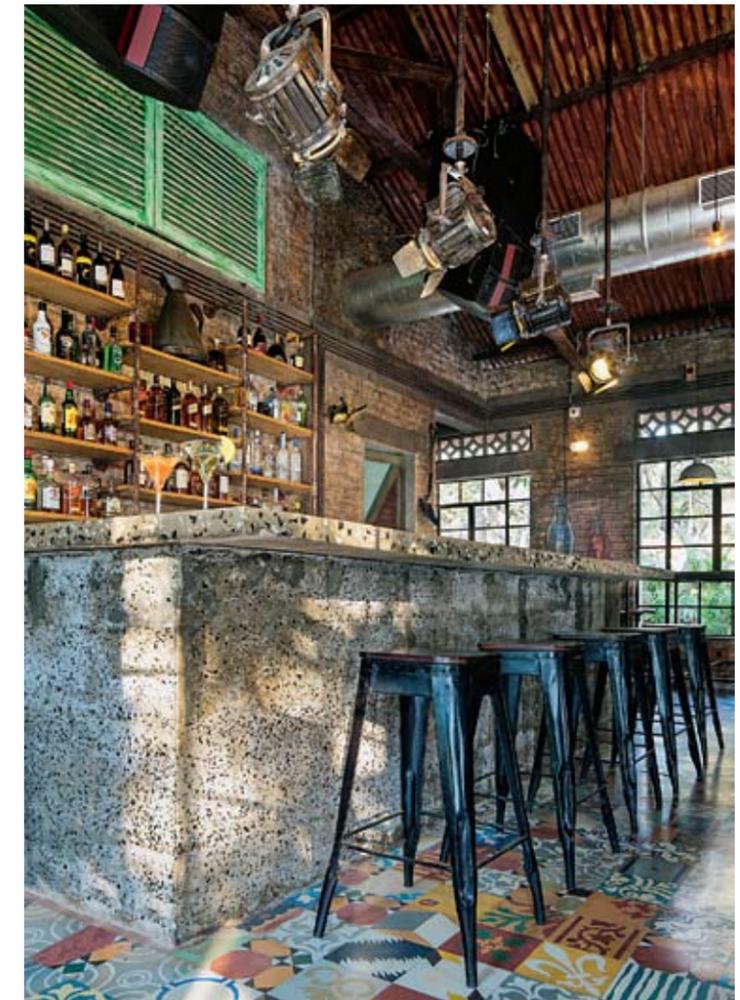


TEXT: BRINDA GILL PHOTOGRAPHS: HARSHAN THOMSON

Telling a Story

Goa-based architect Raya Shankhwalker designs Soro, a bar-cum-restaurant, with a charming industrial-chic ambience.



The bar area has a terrazzo counter, high bar stools, studio lights for a dramatic touch, shelves displaying bottles and wooden shutters (concealing the AC's return vent) above the counter.

My client bought a 6,500 sq ft corner plot in Assagoa, in North Goa, that had a nice set of mature trees around it and a small run-down structure in one corner. Though the structure was dilapidated, it had a charm about it. He was keen to retain it and start a bar there; however it was too small to accommodate one. As we thought about his suggestion, the structure became the starting point for a story

and the pub we went on to create', says Goa-based architect Raya Shankhwalker. To create a space that would catch the fancy of regulars, Raya opted for a down-to-earth, rustic design. "I enjoy designing F & B concepts with a quirky edge. A shabby-chic bar enjoys a sense of timelessness, comfort and warmth. It invites people to revisit. On the other hand, a clean, minimalist design leaves an intimate space like a bar slightly cold

and impersonal and its novelty wears off soon". So it was that the small decrepit structure with its weathered walls and cement-floor veranda stayed on to create an intriguing entrance experience. Further, its presence inspired the design of an all-new bar built beyond it and it also became a screen for and entrance to the new structure. The foliage around was retained for a natural ambience and to screen off the outdoor

Inspired by the small, old, decrepit structure to the left, Goa-based architect Raya Shankhwalker created an all-new pub with a weathered look beyond it.

seating from the roads. And in keeping with its natural look and feel, the pub was very simply named Soro which means alcoholic beverages in Konkani, the local language.

The Ruins Inspire
Soaking in the ambience of the abandoned structure, Raya thought of developing a fictional story around it as a means of creating a design expression for the pub. He also wished to leverage the

beauty of the existing structure and the trees whilst designing the space. Putting all these elements together, he conceived a story of the structure having been a corner store selling a variety of products in the 1940s personally overseen by an outgoing, multifaceted owner, whose business expansion necessitated the building of a large warehouse adjoining the store. To flesh out this story, Raya designed an all-new

2700 sq ft pub beyond the 'corner store' on the lines of an old warehouse used for storing merchandise and a waterbody by the side. Thus, retaining the original structure became essential to the story, and the warehouse-bar became a natural extension of 'the store'. And Raya thought of giving the entire complex the look and feel of a space built in the 1940s that the passage of time had gently mellowed.



The main bar is designed as one large closed space with a bar counter along the centre of the wall to the right, with the rest of the area being taken up by tables. The floor presents a burst of colour in the form of a collage of colourful old tiles.



The walls feature advertisement-style artwork inspired by advertisements of the 1940s.



of passers-by to investigate the buzz from 'the warehouse' beyond it. As they make their way along the pathway – akin to a simple plaza inviting them to move seamlessly from the road to the buildings – they discover a charming space buzzing with food, drink and music.

Vintage Interiors

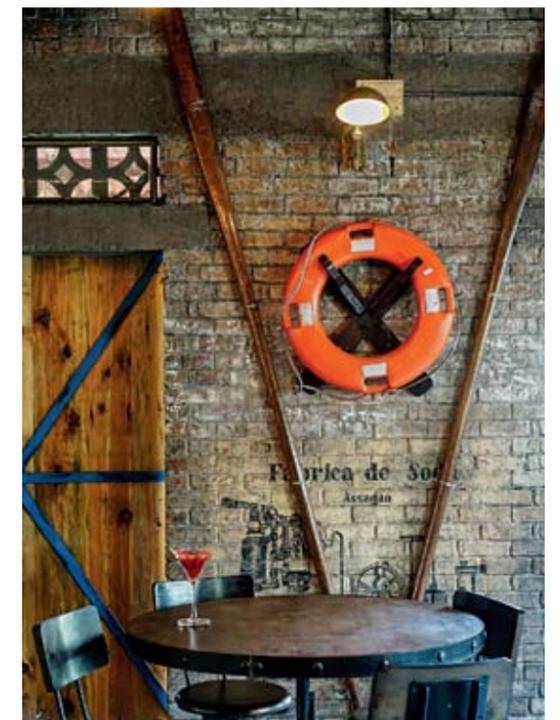
Raya designed the pub with closed, semi-open and open spaces to offer a choice of seating spaces. The main bar is designed as one large closed space with a terrazzo bar counter along the centre of the wall to the right, with the rest of the area being taken up by tables – high round tables towards the edges of the space. All the tables have

high bar stools, some with and others without backs. The long veranda also has high tables, while the outdoor seating along the waterbody has low rectangular tables with benches and easy sofa-style seating.

Infusing the interiors with an antiquated look and feel are vintage-style industrial furniture, lights, doors, artwork along with colourful cement floor tiles with a few modern additions that blend into the space. Bar tables and stools that are replicas of industrial-style furniture of the mid-20th century; a lighting scheme encompassing pendant lamps – both industrial and modern style, exposed bulbs and studio lights above the bar counter for a dramatic touch; AC ducts running



The pub has a broad veranda in the style of traditional Goan structures.



As the story speaks of the owner of 'the store', his persona is conveyed through displays of objects such as a lifebuoy and a pair of oars on the wall that speak of his passion of boating and fishing.



Architect Raya Shankwalker developed a fictional story around an existing abandoned structure in a corner of the plot to create a design expression for a warehouse-style bar.

The pub thus emerged in the local Goan architectural language of the early 20th century spanning a voluminous interior covered by a high sloping roof created by using galvanized iron sheets with large windows in mild steel and patterned fretted concrete panels above the windows to bring in light and breeze. Like most Goan heritage structures, it is edged by a broad veranda (to its north) and an open sit-out by a waterbody (to the east). To convey the passage of seventy-odd years the walls were given a weathered look with chipped paint on unplastered brick walls.

And in this scenario, the windswept 'corner store' appears like a teaser, and invariably piques the interest

restaurant



In keeping with the pub's natural look and feel, it was very simply named Soro which means alcoholic beverages in Konkani, the local language.

along the ceiling; exposed electrical piping; and wooden shutters (concealing the AC's return vent) above the bar counter create an industrial-pub ambience.

Adding a muted touch of colour to the walls is the art, inspired by advertisements of the 1940s, executed by Patanga Arts. Keeping with the thread of the story of the warehouse, these works feature advertisement – style artwork, telling of products sold at 'the store' with taglines in Portuguese as Goa was under Portuguese control at the time. As the story speaks of the owner of 'the store' his persona is conveyed through displays of objects such as a lifebuoy and a pair of oars on the wall that speak of his passion for boating and fishing.

If the overall look is mellow and aged, the floor presents a burst of colour in the form of a collage of colourful tiles. A stock of old cement tiles were sourced from Bharat Flooring & Tiles, Mumbai: the company sent a consignment featuring seventy different patterns and these were carefully placed so that tiles of the same pattern were not juxtaposed. In the muted interiors they add a touch of verve while remaining true to the time and ethos of the space. And for those who like a touch of nature, the outdoors beckon with the veranda seating as well as seating by the water-body with a string of lights draped from the trees, casting a spell and reflecting of Goa's quintessential easy-going nature and organic spaces on diners. 



The long veranda also has high tables with bar stools.