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Sahar Haven: A Cultural Resort-A Fusion of Japanese and Moroccan Interior Design in Bangalore

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Abstract

This research explores the concept of "Pause" through an interior design project-Sahar Haven-a cultural retreat located at the Secret Valley Resort on Kanakapura Road, Bangalore. Sahar Haven merges the traditional aesthetics and philosophies of two rich cultures-Japanese and Moroccan-into separate yet thematically connected cottages. Utilizing sustainable materials such as bamboo for Japanese cottages and regionally appropriate textures for Moroccan cottages, this project serves as an architectural embodiment of mindfulness and rejuvenation. The goal is to offer a unique, cross-cultural sanctuary that encourages slow living and introspection.

Keywords: Regionally appropriate textures, Rejuvenation, Sanctuary, Introspection

Introduction

In a world increasingly characterized by speed and digital overload, the concept of 'Pause' is gaining prominence. Interior design, as a reflection of human needs and experiences, plays a pivotal role in shaping environments that foster mental and emotional well-being. This paper presents a detailed study of "Sahar Haven," a cultural house designed to offer a retreat from urban chaos. Drawing inspiration from Japanese Zen and Moroccan mystique, the project underscores how diverse cultural principles can harmoniously co-exist to create tranquil, immersive environments.

Background: Kanakapura Road, particularly the Secret Valley Resort area, offers a serene and topographically rich environment ideal for a retreat. The region is marked by lush greenery, rocky outcrops, and mild climate-making it conducive to open, breathable architectural forms. Historically, both Japanese and Moroccan cultures have deeply rooted traditions in hospitality and aesthetics, focusing on the sensory and spiritual dimensions of space.



Fig 1: Site Analysis

Importance of the study

This study bridges cultural narratives and sustainable design, encouraging interior design students and professionals to rethink spatial environments as places of cultural storytelling and emotional refuge. It promotes the idea that design can be both global and grounded, using cultural idioms to address contemporary issues like burnout, stress, and social disconnection.

Aim of the Project

The primary aim is to conceptualize and detail a cultural retreat that:

- Embodies the theme of 'Pause' through spatial design.
 - Integrates sustainable and local materials.
 - Encourages cultural dialogue through architecture and interiors.
 - Provides a blueprint for culturally sensitive and environmentally responsible design.
- <https://inyourtravel.com/why-is-cultural-tourism-important-in-india/>

Conceptual Inspiration

Sahar Haven draws conceptual strength from traditional vacation houses in Japan and Morocco. Japanese vacation homes often emphasize tranquility, nature, and impermanence-captured through minimalist architecture, natural materials, and seamless indoor-outdoor transitions. Moroccan vacation homes, by contrast, celebrate cultural richness, communal spaces, and decorative opulence. These spaces are layered with colors, textures, and traditional craftsmanship that foster sensory engagement and social interaction. By juxtaposing and interweaving these contrasting yet complementary concepts, Sahar Haven becomes a place where guests can experience a pause-whether through introspective solitude or vibrant cultural immersion.



Fig 2: Vacation Home

Connection to Pause

Cultural houses-centers dedicated to preserving and celebrating cultural identity through art, language, history, and community-are deeply connected to the theme of Pause. In a world that moves rapidly, driven by technology and globalized routines, cultural houses offer a moment to step

back, reflect, and reconnect. They act as sanctuaries where individuals and communities can pause the demands of everyday life to immerse themselves in cultural memory, artistic expression, and shared heritage.

The architecture and ambiance of cultural houses often invite contemplation. Whether it's the stillness of an art gallery, the quiet hush of a reading room, or the intimate storytelling in a traditional performance, these spaces encourage a slowing down. Visitors are not rushed-they're encouraged to linger, to absorb, and to engage with the past and present at a thoughtful pace.

Cultural houses also offer a metaphorical pause in the context of identity. In diasporic communities especially, these spaces can serve as anchors-providing a break from pressures and allowing a reconnection with ancestral roots. Through traditional cooking workshops, exhibitions, or oral histories, cultural houses help individuals pause the forward rush of modernization to reflect on where they come from. Moreover, cultural houses serve as places of dialogue. They allow societies to pause and examine complex narratives-colonial histories, migrations, generational trauma, and resilience. By hosting exhibitions and conversations, they provide platforms for both celebration and critical engagement, urging us to take a moment to look back before moving forward.

In this way, cultural houses do more than preserve-they create meaningful pauses in time and space, where culture is not only remembered but re-experienced. They remind us that in the act of pausing, we find perspective, healing, and a renewed sense of belonging.

<https://neurolaunch.com/psychological-benefits-of-vacation/>

Materials Used

Japanese Cottages: Bamboo, rice paper, tatami mats, shoji screens, stone, gravel, and cedar wood. Minimalist furnishing with natural fibers like linen and cotton.



Fig 3: Japanese Cottage Render

Moroccan Cottages: Clay plaster walls, mosaic tiles (zellige), carved wood, wrought iron, Berber textiles, lanterns, and terracotta. Color palette includes warm tones such as ochre, indigo, and emerald.

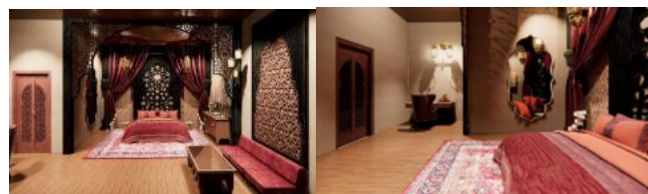


Fig 4: Moroccan Cottage Render

Common Areas: Blended elements like neutral-toned pathways, water bodies, indigenous flora, and ambient lighting to seamlessly integrate the two styles.

Literature Studies

The conceptual and spatial framework of *Sahar Haven* is deeply enriched by key literature that explores the philosophies and aesthetics of Japanese and Moroccan design. These texts provide theoretical grounding and cultural insight, guiding the interior design approach beyond visual styling into the realm of experiential and emotional resonance.

In Praise of Shadows by Jun'ichirō Tanizaki

Tanizaki's seminal essay delves into the Japanese appreciation of subtlety, shadow, and patina. It challenges modern Western design ideals that prioritize brightness and uniformity, instead celebrating dimness, irregularity, and time-worn textures. This influenced the Japanese cottages in *Sahar Haven* by promoting the use of ambient lighting, raw textures, and spaces that evoke contemplation and intimacy.

The New Moroccan by Lisl Dennis and Landt Dennis

This comprehensive visual exploration of Moroccan interiors showcases the rich layering of color, texture, and pattern. It emphasizes both traditional and contemporary Moroccan expressions, inspiring the design of the Moroccan cottages with elements such as intricate zellige tilework, carved wooden panels, and vibrant textiles. The book emphasizes the sensual and social qualities of Moroccan homes, which inform the communal and immersive aspects of these spaces in the retreat.

Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers by Leonard Koren: Koren's work on Wabi-Sabi—a Japanese aesthetic centered on transience, imperfection, and authenticity—supports the retreat's conceptual theme of "Pause." The use of irregular surfaces, hand-crafted decor, and asymmetrical spatial planning in the Japanese cottages is a direct interpretation of Wabi-Sabi principles, inviting guests to accept stillness, simplicity, and the beauty of natural aging.

The Spirit of Moroccan Design by Miranda Innes

Innes explores the symbolic, artistic, and spiritual dimensions of Moroccan architecture and interiors. The book underscores the role of sensory design in Moroccan spaces, where patterns, light, scent, and texture come together to create emotionally resonant environments. This aligns with *Sahar Haven*'s intent to evoke cultural depth and sensory richness in the Moroccan cottages.

<https://www.explore.com/1410639/best-unique-themed-hotels-world/>

Benefits of the Project

- **Mental Wellness:** Offers guests a serene atmosphere for reflection and relaxation.
- **Cultural Appreciation:** Encourages understanding and appreciation of global traditions.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Promotes the use of local and natural materials.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Can serve as a model for culturally themed resorts, boosting local crafts and tourism.

Cultural Significance: The cultural significance of *Sahar*

Haven lies in its deliberate celebration and spatial interpretation of two globally admired design traditions—Japanese and Moroccan. These cultures, though geographically and aesthetically distinct, share a profound connection to mindfulness, sensory richness, and a respect for tradition. Integrating them into a unified retreat space in India offers not just architectural beauty, but also a meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.

Japanese Influence

Japanese design is rooted in a spiritual and philosophical framework that promotes harmony between humans and nature. Concepts such as:

- **Ma (間):** The spatial awareness of negative space. In the Japanese cottages, *Ma* is expressed through open layouts, framed views of nature, and the intentional use of emptiness to create pause and reflection.
- **Wabi-Sabi:** The acceptance of imperfection and impermanence. This is seen in the use of unfinished wood, handcrafted elements, weathered textures, and soft, diffused light.
- **Shizen (自然):** Naturalness or organic presence. Design choices such as bamboo construction, earthy color palettes, and indoor-outdoor transitions help create spaces that feel grounded and alive.

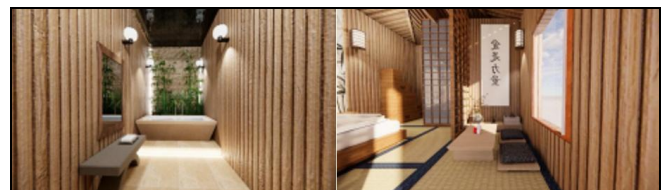


Fig 5: Japanese Influence Render

These ideas promote introspection, stillness, and balance—qualities essential for guests seeking a meaningful pause from the pressures of modern life.

Moroccan Influence

Moroccan design is a celebration of culture, community, and craftsmanship. Its essence is found in:

- **Zellige and Geometry:** The use of intricate, mathematically precise tile work is not just decorative, but symbolic of infinity and divine order. This repetition and symmetry encourage meditative reflection.
- **Courtyard Living (Riad-style):** Traditional Moroccan homes are built around a central courtyard—a private oasis that promotes family bonding and quiet relaxation. In *Sahar Haven*, this concept appears in the Moroccan cottages through internal gardens that create an immersive sensory experience.
- **Color and Texture:** Deep indigos, burnt oranges, and emerald greens are paired with richly textured fabrics like wool, silk, and leather. These elements stimulate emotional

Where Japanese design invites inward peace and natural simplicity, Moroccan design evokes social intimacy and cultural richness. The interplay of both within *Sahar Haven* allows visitors to experience two unique approaches to

achieving "Pause"-either through contemplative solitude or communal immersion.

<https://cultures.fr/en/post/articles/the-importance-of-culture-why-is-it-vital>

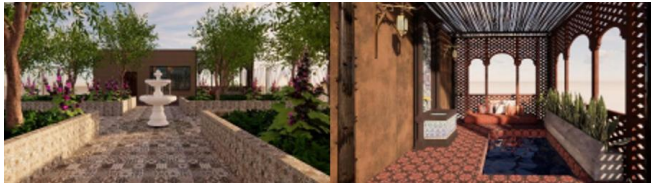


Fig 6: Moroccan Influenced Render

Conclusion

Sahar Haven is not just a retreat; it is a philosophical exploration manifested in space. Through its thoughtful incorporation of Japanese and Moroccan design idioms, it advocates a lifestyle of intentionality, calm, and cross-cultural empathy. Set against the natural canvas of Secret Valley Resort, this project is a blueprint for future cultural houses that inspire people to pause, reflect, and reconnect with themselves and the world around them.

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