



LA VILLA, PONDICHERRY

A 100-year-old rambling bungalow where the principal of the neighbouring school lived for several years, has been converted into a bespoke luxury residence housing six exclusive, dissimilar suites. Paris-based architect and designer Tina Trigala of Greek origin, along with Yves Lesprit, has created a quiet space in a leafy by-lane of the southern retreat, with traditional materials and warm colours that bring back a leisure-filled bygone era. The mosaic patterns, wicker lampshades, sunshine-sprayed sit-outs and authentic Athangadi tiles laid out like a welcoming red carpet in the lobby, reek of old-world living and period novels. Breakfast on omelettes and toast in an open courtyard which is dressed up for dinner with candlelight and a continental menu with wines of choice. Allow managing director Sylvain Segiyane Paquiry to reminisce on the fascinating heritage of the French quarter and the hotel that stands serenely a few minutes away from its older, flamboyant sibling, Villa Shanti.

La Villa, not yet a year old, is popular with honeymooners, couples revelling in quiet company, the odd eccentric writer and small groups who are not looking to party into the night. Each suite is nestled between spacious,

contemporary bathrooms and balconies surrounded by foliage. A small swimming pool beckons beyond. The architects have been careful to retain the original nostalgia of the manor while carefully building upon local flavours for the newer additions.

USP: SERENE SPACE

The intimate setting that replicates the town's indulgent pace for those who want to put their chaotic routines on hold; for the traditional figurines at the entrance that lure you into clicking an unusual selfie; for the curving spiral staircase that leads up to a tree laden with plump fruit, ripe for the picking; for having justifiable reservations about permitting very young children but for leading you by the hand into your own forgotten childhood of picnics in the garden and playing hide 'n' seek by marble pillars.