

Luxury meets lions at this new resort in Gujarat

This 38-key stay promises to raise the bar for the dry state

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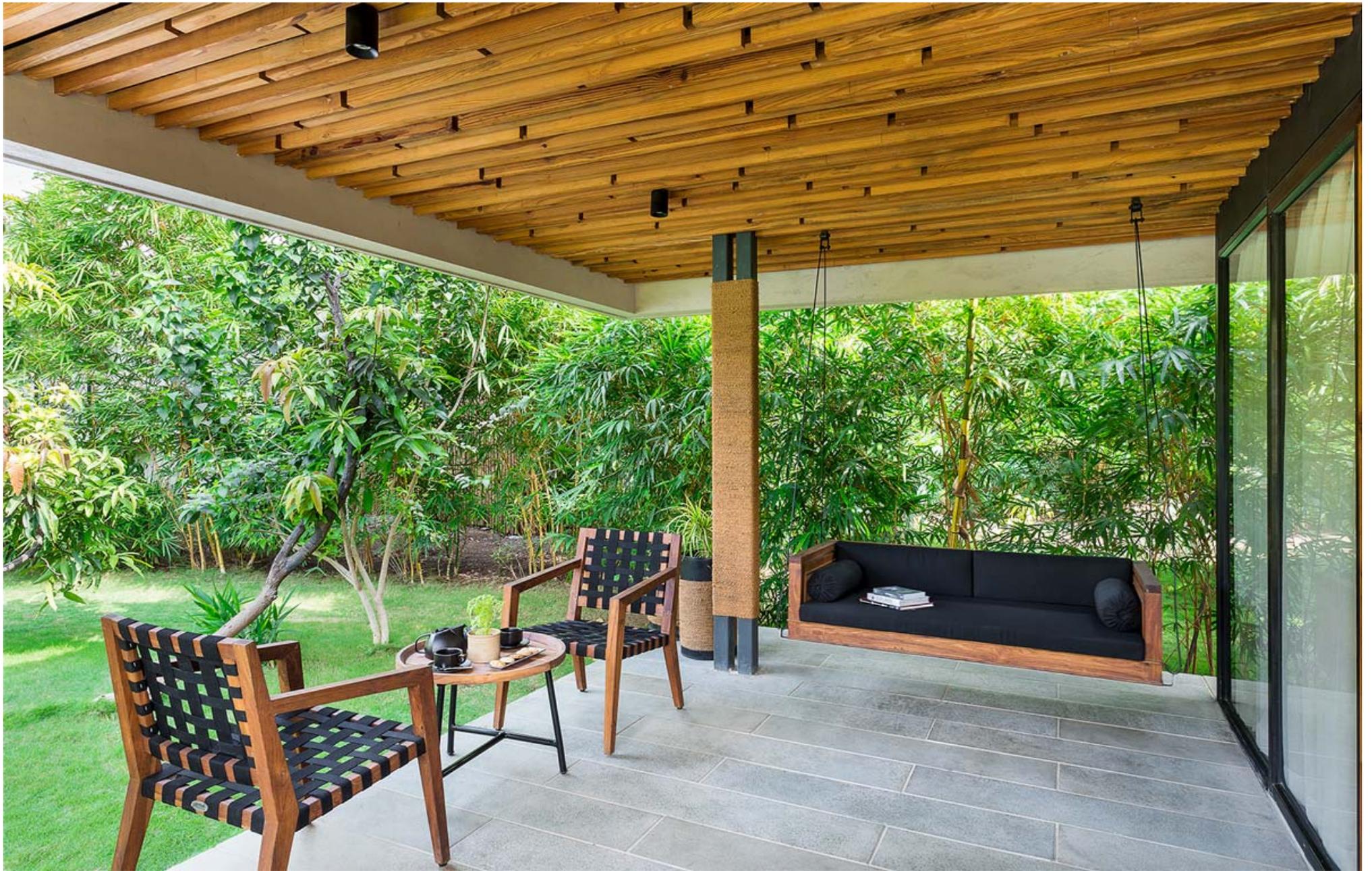
The Som Spa in Woods at Sasan.

Simple, local, intimate. These are words one hears often, especially in hospitality. But if you spend even 10 minutes at Woods at Sasan, you will see them all around you. You see it in the way the staff members greet you with hands folded every single time you enter or exit the property or even pass by them on a walk. You see it in the fact that many of them don't have any work experience in hospitality; they are local villagers who worked at the project site when the hotel was being built and were then hired, such as Kaki, an elderly lady who used to cook at the site and now works in the kitchen at Swadesh, the excellent in-house Gujarati speciality restaurant. You see it in the design: reclaimed wood from a nearby dockyard in your room; a nail-and-thread installation on the ceiling at Swadesh; terracotta pots, lanterns and wall planters at the aptly named multicuisine restaurant, Terracotta; tiles on the wall near the infinity pool that display various aspects of local life, designed by [artisans in Kutch](#). You see it in the fact that if you mention, just in passing, a liking for lemongrass tea, a pot will appear at exactly the same time as your wake-up call in the morning.

The flagship property of [Ahmedabad](#)-based 1000 Island Hotels & Resorts, this eco-friendly resort is set on an eight-acre mango orchard in Sasan, on the edge of Gir Forest National Park, the last remaining home of the Asiatic lion in the wild (the evening before my visit, I was told, a lion had sauntered casually up the road right by the property). And while the ruler of the jungle is, of course, the big draw, there's much else to see and do. Like a pottery class with Nathabhai, an artisan from the Saurashtra region, who turns local black mud into things of wonder. Or an early morning outdoor yoga class overlooking the forest. Or a delicious-smelling body scrub at Som Spa. There's also a gym and a social hall for events, and a small play room with toys to keep your little ones busy while you laze at the poolside bar (a liquor licence is awaited). Visit the famed Somnath temple, about 40km away, go trekking up Mount Girnar, dig into bhutta by the gushing Jamjir waterfall, about an hour's drive away. And every morning, take a mug of that lemongrass tea out to your terrace, garden or patio, and exhale.



Outdoor shower at Pavilion room.



Outdoor deck at Pavilion room.



Pavilion room interiors.



Studio room.



Swadesh, the Gujarati speciality restaurant.



Terracotta, the multicuisine restaurant.



The villa, with a private pool.