

Matrimandir

February 2017



Maintaining the Matrimandir can sometimes be an adventurous task. Here we see one Aurovillian riding our home-made petal climbing trolley up the face of one petal to power wash the sandstone cladding.

Work in the Gardens

After having made a first step in the completion of the remaining nine gardens of Matrimandir, by planting 12 Royal palm trees in the garden of Light in October, we have shifted our focus to the Garden of Progress, on the opposite side of Matrimandir. We are now concentrating on the three gardens of Progress, Utility and Wealth, - which lie just between the main Amphitheater and Matrimandir, - so that they are in place and flowering for Auroville's 50th anniversary in 2018.

During the last few weeks, the earth of the Progress garden has been contoured and shaped to lay the base for the garden to come. At the same time

trenches have been dug to lay down electric lines to supply the lights of the garden and soon irrigation pipe lines will be laid. Next, the visible 'dressing up' of the garden will begin, with the laying out of pathways, planting shrubs, flowers and trees, the creation of the pond which is at the outer edge of this garden, along with several other features which the designers have envisioned for the garden. As always, the key feature in the garden, its symbolic focal point one might say, will be the flower that the Mother has chosen as the living symbol to be grown in this garden. For the garden of Progress, the flower she chose is the hibiscus named "Power to Progress", which will be grown at the garden's inner edge.



Contouring Auroville's red earth in the garden of Progress

of the outer slope of the Amphitheater, a Green Room is being built,- a space where performers can prepare themselves, before coming out via a passage created through the Amphitheater steps to reach the rounded stage of the Amphitheater just adjacent to Auroville's marble inaugural Urn. Musicians and dancers, - performers from many other disciplines too, will continue the tradition of giving here their best and most inspiring artistic offerings over the years to come.

Work on both rooms is progressing steadily. (We do not show you photos of this work at the moment as it features simply a lot of

Work under the Amphitheater

We have shared with you over the last year the plans to develop the two large rooms which lie underneath the eastern and western edges of the Amphitheater.

On the West will be a large underground space devoted to the storage of gardening tools used daily in the upkeep of the 22 acre gardens Oval.

On the East, beneath the red stone cladding

masonry work, - making floors, walls, toilet spaces, and changing rooms.) One feature which is now complete is an air-conditioned storage space built to safely store the set of sound equipment which has recently been purchased. This set of equipment, - everything from speakers to cordless microphones, - ensures that we can look forward to high quality and beautiful sound in the amphitheater over the coming years.

The passing of Dominique Darr

If there has been one person who has taken as her task the documenting of life in Auroville and especially of the building of Matrimandir from the days of its inception in 1970 right up until the present, it has been

Dominique Darr. We regret to inform you that Dominique passed away on December 25th 2016. Born in Paris in 1932, Dominique was trained in Fine arts and Decoration and then worked as a wood carver and colorist for a publishing House while traveling widely around the world developing ever more deeply her interest in photography. Dominique first visited India in 1970 and began her photographic documentation of Auroville and Matrimandir from that time, - a mission which she carried out unfailingly for 46 years. The images she has taken of the



Dominique Darr

Matrimandir highlight not only the growing structure in its many phases of construction, but focus too on the people who have been there to help build up

this marvel. She has captured the joy of this work, and the demand too that it made on the thousands of people who participated in the task.



Dominique's image of the digging of the Matrimandir crater in 1971 is a classic.



Dominique captured the stark beauty of the growing structure of Matrimandir.



Dominique captured many images too of the joy of self giving through work

Dominique recently put together a choice selection of her photos and published a magnificent book, entitled “Matrimandir ... Hymn to the Builders of the Future”. This priceless record of the growth of Matrimandir, 212 pages long, is available at Auroville’s Visitors’ Center as well as at the Sabda and Focus books shops in Pondicherry.

Friends and well-wishers of Matrimandir will treasure this book as a companion and a reminder of the tremendous work done over the last 46 years. Thank you Dominique!

Dominique’s book cover



Information on sending your offerings: Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You can send us by post your offering by DD/Cheque payable to “Matrimandir”. You may also give your offering in cash/cheque/DD at the Matrimandir Office during your visit for meditation.

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