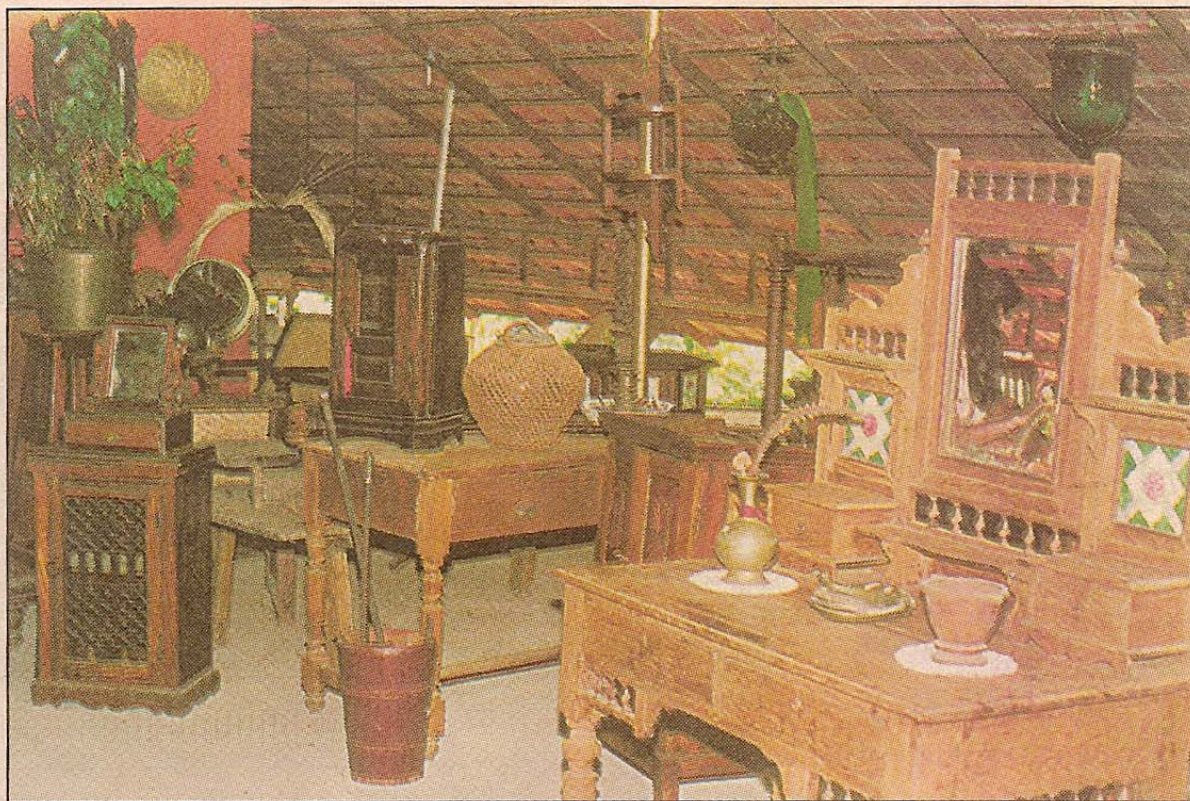


THE drive was long and the roads, bumpy. But it was worthwhile, for I was treated to some remarkable wooden delights, making me believe I was in a beautiful, old estate bungalow. An intricately carved meatsafe, a simple but elegant planter's chair, cots with carved headrests, dining tables, armoires, book holders, cradles, spice boxes, grain holders, medicine chests... the wood work was breathtaking. And, these were actually laid out in an attic of the city's residential locality of Raj Mahal Vilas Extension.

I was actually at Maram — a home-run outfit of two enterprising women. When Gita Krishnankutty and Sheila Panjwani began collecting wooden furniture and curios of a considerable antique value for personal use, they realised the immense appeal it had for their friends. It didn't take them long to realise that wood has its own charm and decorating one's dwelling with intricately carved wooden furniture is a dream that most people nurture and that there are many who have an eye for old and period furniture. Many of their acquaintances even coaxed them to get them a few such pieces for their homes. This constant demand for such furniture made Gita and Sheila wake up to the fact that they could actually open a small outlet. The result was Maram, born four years ago.

Though every piece at Maram bears the distinctive South Indian stamp, most of it is from Kerala. But there is a significant number



Wood's really good!

CHETHANA DINESH visits a home-run enterprise in the City which stocks delightful bric-a-brac that ooze old world charm

from Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry too. Gita attributes this to the fact that, of late, not many have the time to maintain traditional homes which are treasure troves of such wooden riches. The design and style of the pieces are all characteristic of their places of origin. And all these are made of teak, rosewood, maple or camphor.

A walk around Maram was like going back in time. Because each item has a rich history behind it. The chaise longues, door knockers

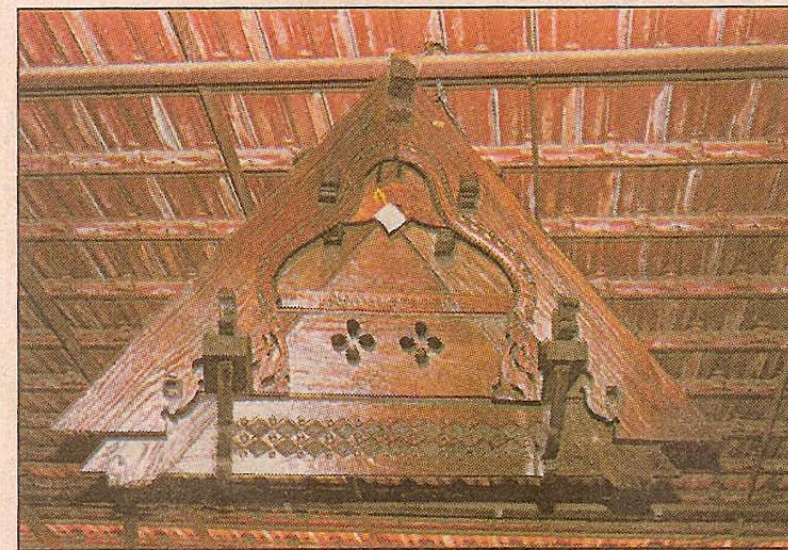
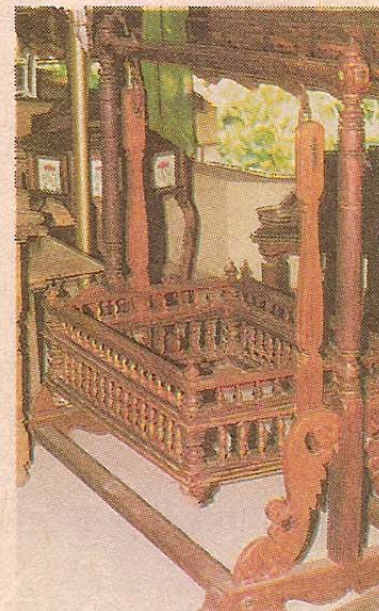
that served as doorbells in palatial houses, chest of drawers, grain holders with huge compartments and with capacities enough to hold grains to last a good three months during monsoons... the list was endless.

All good things is life come with a price. The pieces at Maram cost anything between Rs 300 and 30,000.

You could call 3411427 for more details.

Gita says their clients choose traditional furniture and curios and modify them to suit their modern lifestyle. Once, a sink was fitted to a chest of drawers as the client did not want the dining room to end up looking like a bathroom with a ceramic sink!

At Maram, an effort is made to modify the piece according to the client's specifications, but without damaging the original. "While altering the pieces according to the requirement of our clients, special care is taken to see that the piece doesn't lose its originality," points out Gita.



Some of the pieces at 'Maram' are vintage beauties