



SHOP ONLINE



www.woodlandworldwide.com



Customer Care No. 1800-103-3445



THE USA

# tieveler

EDITOR
AMIT DIXIT
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
BISHWADEEP MOITRA
CONSULTING EDITOR
NAYANTARA PATEL
ASSISTANT EDITOR
SUMEET KESWANI
CORRESPONDENT
MANEK S. KOHLI
DEPUTY PHOTO EDITOR
SHRUTI SINGH
SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER
PUNEET K. PALIWAL
SENIOR DESIGNER
JOYITA BANERJEE
DESIGNER
GULSHAN SHARMA
SENIOR EDITORIAL EXECUTIVE
KULDEEP KALIA

OUTLOOKTRAVELLER.COM
WEB EDITOR
BIBEK BHATTACHARYA
FEATURES WRITER
PRECIOUS KAMEI
FEATURES WRITER
SNIGDHA SHARMA
CONTRIBUTING WRITER
UTTARA GANGOPADHYAY

**LIBRARIAN** ALKA GUPTA

BUSINESS OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INDRANIL ROY

INDRANIC ROY
ADVERTISEMENTS
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
SWASTIK BANERJEE
VICE PRESIDENT
MEENAKSHI AKASH
SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER
KABIR KHATTAR (Corporate)
NATIONAL HEAD
MEGHA MISHRA
REGIONAL MANAGER
REKHA UPRETI (West)
BRAND & MARKETING
SHRUTIKA DEWAN

**DIGITAL TEAM** SUHAIL TAK, AMIT MISHRA, VENUS, SHASHI KAUSHIK

CIRCULATION
NATIONAL HEAD
ANINDYA BANERJEE
ASST. GENERAL MANAGERS
G. RAMESH (South)
VINOD KUMAR (North)
ZONAL SALES MANAGER
ARUN KUMAR JHA (EAST)
MANAGER
VINOD JOSHI
MANAGER
SHEKHAR SUVARNA

PRODUCTION
ASST. GENERAL MANAGER
SHASHANK DIXIT
SENIOR MANAGER
SHEKHAR KUMAR PANDEY
MANAGER
SUDHA SHARMA
DEPUTY MANAGER
GANESH SAH
ASSISTANT MANAGER
GAURAV SHRIVAS

ACCOUNTS
COMPANY SECRETARY & LAW OFFICER
ANKIT MANGAL
SENIOR MANAGER
DIWAN SINGH BISHT

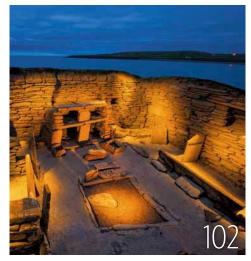
HEAD OFFICE
AB-10, S.J. Enclave, New Delhi 110029
Tel: 33505500; Fax: 26191420
Customer care helpline:
011-33505562, 33505500
e-mail: outlook@outlookindia.com
For subscription helpline:
yourhelpline@outlookindia.com

OTHER OFFICES
MUMBAI Tel: 33545000; Fax: 33545100
KOLKATA Tel: 335454000; Fax: 24650145
CHENNAI Tel: 42615224, 42615225
Fax: 42615095
BENGALURU Tel: 45236100; Fax: 45236105

Printed and published by Indranil Roy on behalf of Outlook Publishing (India) Private Limited. Editor: Amit Dixit. Printed at International Print-O-Pac Limited, C4-C11, Phase II Noida & published from AB-10 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029.

Released on 01-09-2016 Total no. of pages 144 + Covers

# **CONTENTS**









### **Features**

**102 ORKNEY** By Christopher C. Doyle

112 CANADA
BY Ranee Sahaney

118 NASHIK BY Manek S. Kohli

**124 KAKORI**BY Ranee Sahaney





Bombay, 1826 PAGE 134



Cover photograph: GETTY IMAGES

### Regulars

6 LETTERS 8 INSIDER 12 NSEW 22 HOTELS 134 BACK OF THE BOOK



### LETTERS



 □ The August issue was a fantastic one, or should I say, a complete 'independence special'—independence from the hustle and bustle of city chaos. I loved the 'Good Ideas' list, which I found new and unique. A person can attain great relaxation by playing polo, fishing or taking a bike ride, etc. Thanks for making us believe that such unique things can make us feel quite satisfied. The stories on Ladakh and Spiti were excellent write-ups. Congratulations to the whole team!

SANDEEP KUMAR, AMRITSAR

☑ August 2016 issue of Outlook Traveller rocks! The story about lesser-known, remote and intimidating Spiti is so full of surprises that it comes across as a revelation from OT. Ladakh is yet another place we only know for



 □ I have been reading Outlook Traveller since the very first issue. I am very fond of travelling and always look forward to your April issue

('The Hills Issue') as it suggests a lot of places for the summer vacations, especially when it comes to hill stations. As always, this year's edition did not disappoint me, thanks to its excellent coverage of several new places in Jammu & Kashmir, the ten homestays in the Himalayas, some well known places and some not so well known ones.

You have helped me make up my mind to visit Panchgani this summer. I never knew it was so close to Mahabaleshwar. However, in the information panel at the end of your article on the place, you had not given the phone and fax numbers of the mentioned hotels. Usually, you give such information.

P.C. GUPTA, ALWAR

its frightening cold, but these two places, seldom on an itinerary, have become must-visits. Thanks

SANJANA SHANKAR TALWAR, DELHI

☑ Being a trekker and geographer, I really enjoy the offthe-beaten-track and mighty Himalayas. There are places in the world where mountains are just a backdrop for something much greater. These heights are epic stages for you to reset and re-energise and feel the sparkling deep blue sky, the brush of the northern wind on your cheek and the warm sun. Ladakh is a great place where

time slows down and life itself can be seen afresh. It is the roof of the world and a favourite destination. While in India, if you want a slice of Buddhism and high adventure experience, then be sure to head there. The towering peaks of snow-capped mountains soar into the cobalt blue skies. At a breathtaking altitude, this highland is the viaduct between the earth and the sky. It offers a plethora of options to visitors. Remember to keep the memory in your house in the form of August 2016 Outlook Traveller magazine. OT, keep up the good work.

RAVI SHANKER, DELHI

☑ Since I am very fond of travelling and knowing new places while carrying my camera along, I go through many periodicals of travel & tourism regularly. During my long association with OT I have discovered one thing that no story, no feature, and no coverage is done superficially for the sake of only releasing a new issue. The magazine makes sure that if somebody is banking on them for guidance, it should be given properly. No tourism is complete unless one imbibes the ethos of the place she or he tours. And the testament of my categorical statement is the feature 'GOOD IDEAS'. I am totally overwhelmed by Stargaze, Listen, Volunteer, Play Polo, Go Birding, Go Fishing, Go Biking and Take A Shot, through which you gave a fairly good idea of fun activities to be done It is a hard fact that going to a new place and not feeling the USP of it is like swimming with a raincoat on.

B. AJIT, DELHI

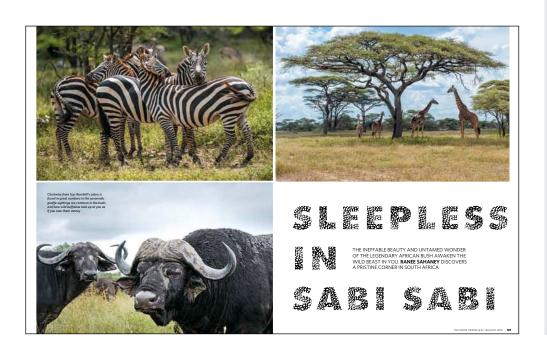


The letter of the month has won a copy of the new Festivals of India guide from Outlook Traveller Getaways.

• KEEP WRITING TO US AT: Outlook Traveller, AB-10 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029

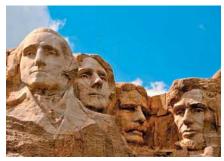
letters@outlooktraveller.com

Please note that Outlook Traveller will not be held responsible for the return of unsolicited material, including photographs.





### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR





Wildly different experiences feature on my America bucket list



I STILL REMEMBER the US cover story package we ran when Barack Obama was sworn in as President. There was hope in the air and a spring in our steps. We had finally shrugged off the paranoia that had gripped the world collectively after 9/11 (and in which tumultuous era Outlook Traveller had the strange fortune of being launched; in fact just a few months before that paradigm changing event®).

Then the world happened. Now, as the world watches the unfolding drama of the current US election with utter disbelief, we bring you America once more. Maybe all the happy, upbeat stories we're carrying will trump some of the not-so-great news coming to us from American shores.

Ah, America. It's something of a sore point with me. For reasons best forgotten, I've not yet struck this fine nation off my travel bucket list. No matter. Every so often, our pages ensure that I'm up to speed on all that's great and good in Destination America.

We've done the big ticket stuff more times than we can recall. Therefore, it made perfect sense to venture further afield. Sopan Joshi's Middle America piece turns that pejorative into a glowing positive. Florida, we discover, is so much more than amusement parks (all those Americans who've been holidaying there for years can't be wrong). There's New Orleans, because how could we not (and it's the capital of cocktails)? There's a spirited drinker's tour of the country. For good measure, we've thrown in sunny California and its wines as well. Hic, yes, at one point I wondered if we should call this a drinks issue.

Closer home too, the wine flows freely at a boutique winery near Nashik (and you can stay as well). Then there's Kakori, land of kand and kebabs, a destination surprisingly close to Lucknow which had escaped our sharp gaze until now. Sometimes, you don't have to go halfway across the world to discover a new place. You just need new eyes.

y @amitdixit

-AMIT DIXIT

### CONTRIBUTORS



RANJAN PAL is an adventurer. Having done all the major whitewater trips in India including the iconic Siang and Zanskar rivers, he returned to terra firma with trips to Everest Base Camp and Green Lakes Kanchenjunga. When it comes to travel writing, he believes that in exploring other cultures, one gets to know oneself better.



A freelance journalist from Bengaluru, CHARUKESI **RAMADURAI** writes mainly on travel, food and lifestyle. Her byline has appeared in several Indian and international publications, including The New York Times, BBC Travel, Singapore Airlines magazine, Outlook Traveller and Mint. More about her on charukesi.com.



RISHAD SAAM MEHTA is the author of Fast Cars and Fidgety Feet and believes road trips are truly therapeutic. He is currently working on his third book which is about his recent two-month drive from Munich to his house in Mumbai.



Seeker of ancient mysteries and secrets. Author of three books. Growth Catalyst. CEO Coach. Adventure traveller. CHRISTOPHER C. DOYLE is all the above plus the lead vocalist for a rock band. He visited the Orkney Islands as part of his research for his novel, The Secret of the Druids, which was released in June 2016 by Westland Ltd.



VIKRAM ACHANTA lives in New Delhi with his wife and two children. When he's not grappling with the challenges of entrepreneurship, he likes to write, quiz or run. Vikram is co-founder of Tulleeho, a beverage training firm; a drinks website; and BarX, a bar accessories e-tail venture. He's also co-author of the Tulleeho Book of Cocktails.



# your breath away

Look up to catch a glimpse of the beautiful Northern Lights dancing across Finland's famous night sky. This magical experience alone will make your trip to Helsinki unforgettable.

But there's so much more to discover in this inspiring country. From stunning nature to year-round attractions and events, the reasons to visit Finland are simply endless.

Fly to Helsinki starting October 2016.

Visit gmiles.com and enrol to Privilege Club today to earn a host of exclusive privileges.



Visit qatarairways.com



Call us on 079 3061 6000











0; Like us on :/ktonewdelhi





Couples and singletons, families and adventure buffs are discovering one of Asia's most enticing holiday hubs

uffused with heavenly delights from nature's endless bounty, cultural heritage experiences, and a pleasant climate, Jeju Island is a spell-binding world of romance and leisurely pursuits. One of Korea's best-kept holidaying secrets and acclaimed as one of the 'Seven Natural Wonders of the World', Jeju Island, which was carved out of millennia of volcanic upheavals, can be found off the southern coast of the Korean Peninsula. Adding to its attraction is a slew of carefully crafted tour packages, which feature the best experiences at the UNESCO World Natural Heritage site.

The breathtaking marvels of Manjanggul Cave—part of the tourist zone of the Geomunoreum Lava Tube System, the fabulous sunrises from Seongsan Ilchulbong Peak and sunsets on Hyeopjae Beach, the grandeur and romance of Cheonjiyeon Waterfalls and the sacred splendour of Mount Hallasan, blessed with the Baengnokdam crater-lake — where immortals are said to have bathed, are

magnets for honeymooning couples. If the Jeju Love Land sculpture park themed on sensuality is excuse enough for some fun and frolic, the Chocolate Museum near the Jeju Jungmun Resort is equally tempting. Located around 14km west of Seogwipo City (another tourist hub), Jungmun Resort is Korea's biggest pleasure resort. A selfie-haven, it's always ticking with the Alive Trick Eye Museum, Teddy Bear Museum and Yeomiji Arboretum. Thronged with visitors of all ages during peak season is the Jungmun Saekdal Beach, where a variety of water sports is on offer. An annual surf contest is also a huge draw. A trip to nearby Seogwipo offers an hour-long deep-sea submarine tour amidst the magical corals.

Getting to Jeju is an easy affair. Cathy pacific Airline connects directly to Jeju and travellers do not require visa as they are not touching mainland South Korea. Korean Air and Asiana Air offer regular flights from Seoul to the island.

# NORTH SOUTH EAST WEST



14 FOR RICHARD HADLEE. A VACATION MEANS TO 'SWITCH OFF' 16 DO YOU WANT TO CRUISE WITH THE STARS? 18 THE PROFESSIONAL 20 GEARBOX

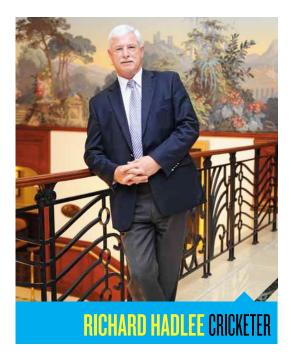


# • NIAGARA FALLS HIGH JINKS

een to the Niagara Falls and done that? We bet you haven't done this: ziplined for 670 metres at a speed of 70kmph along the edge of the Niagara gorge. The Niagara Parks Commission and Wildplay Niagara Falls recently inaugurated the MistRider Zipline, which gets participants up close and intimate with the world's most famous waterfall and its picturesque surroundings. Call it sightseeing on the go; surely, the most thrilling way to experience this majestic natural attraction is to be suspended from a wire 220ft above the falls. Four parallel ziplines face the American and Canadian Horseshoe Falls. Wildplay, the company behind this project, is also a consultation expert for outdoor adventure projects across North America and the Caribbean. A ride is priced at \$49.99 per person (wildplay. com/niagarafalls).

GETTY IMAGES

### NSEW • FFI I OW TRAVFI I FR



# TRAVEL INNINGS

### Which is your favourite destination in the world?

I enjoy going to different countries. England, because it's the home of cricket: it has beautiful cricket grounds and it's easy to get around and enjoy all the history there. I also like the Pacific Islands, like Fiji—lying around on the beach on a deck chair, lovely hotels and lagoons. I like to relax and switch off on a holiday. I'm a bit boring, really.

### Have you taken up any sports after retiring from cricket?

I enjoy playing golf on courses around the world. In fact, I live on a golf course in Pegasus. I love some of the courses around the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast in Australia because they have a lot of water and trees, birdlife and wild animals around.

### You've come to India multiple times on cricketing tours. What was that experience like?

My first trip in 1976 was a mixed bag. I fell quite ill during that tour. We came in October so we had trained in very cold conditions back home and within a few hours we landed up in the heat and humidity of Pakistan first, then India. My most memorable tour was in 1988 when we managed to win a Test match at Wankhede.

### What do you pack for a trip?

Apart from the necessities, I carry binoculars, a camera and my music on an iPad. I love my music. My playlist has easy and sentimental tracks, country and western music: for instance, Simon & Garfunkel, Westlife, Céline Dion, Dixie Chicks, etc.

### Where do you feel most at home?

At my home in Pegasus, just north of Christchurch city. We've also got a little holiday home at Hanmer Springs, just over an hour from Pegasus. It's a small alpine village with a population of 700 people. The big attractions there are hot mineral pools, forest trails and horseriding. That's my getaway place.

### What's your favourite dish? Do you like Indian food?

I'm a very basic eater. My favourite dish would be roast lamb with vegetables and roast potatoes. I also like Chinese and Thai food. As far as desserts go, I like a simple fruit salad with lots of ice cream. In Indian cuisines, I find chicken korma to be very palatable when eaten with rice.

### What is Christchurch's biggest attraction?

There's a whole new city coming up now. The earthquakes in 2010-11 did some damage, but we're rebuilding. New buildings and a convention centre are coming up; a rugby ground is being installed; the Hagley Oval has been revamped into a beautiful new venue for cricket. And we're lucky to have four very well-defined seasons in New Zealand.

SUMEET KESWANI





Top to bottom: Richard Hadlee enjoys golfing at the Gold Coast courses; binoculars are a must for every vacation; you'll find him lazing around Fiji's beaches if you're lucky





I LIKE FIJI—LYING AROUND ON THE BEACH ON A DECK CHAIR, LOVELY HOTELS AND LAGOONS. I LIKE TO SWITCH OFF ON A HOLIDAY. I'M A BIT BORING, REALLY



A world of privileges, now at your fingertips.

Watch your world transform with Baroda M-CLIP, the smart mobile wallet from Bank of Baroda. With this you can now access a world of privileges without carrying cash, with just one click.





Money Transfer (P2P) | Bill Payments | mVisa Payments Mobile, DTH & Data Card Recharge | Virtual Card | Gifting











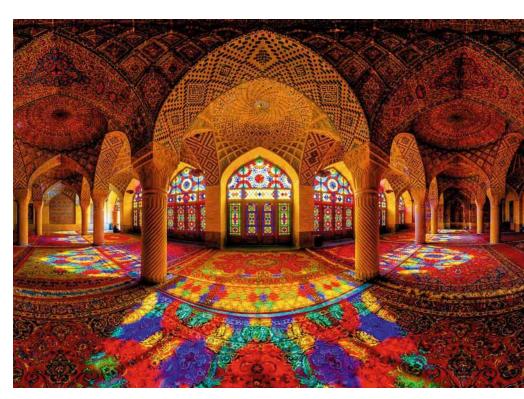




### IRAN

# **FLYING CARPET**

NE OF THE ANCIENT CENTRES of civilisation, tourism in Iran has been a less than popular business in the last few decades. (War does not enhance tourism) Suddenly, though, with the signing of a historic nuclear deal in 2015, the country has become a hotspot for travellers. The splendours of the land once famous as Persia are many and varied, of course. And here's your chance to experience it for yourself: travel operator Cox & Kings' new 'Splendours of Iran' package takes you to the capital Tehran, and the fascinating cites of Shiraz, Kerman, Yazd and Isfahan. The 12D/11N itinerary includes visits to the country's famous mosques, palaces, gardens and other landmarks. Packages begin from ₹2,34,600 per person, excluding airfare; see coxandkings.com.





### CRUISE

# **CRUISE CONTROL**

F YOU'RE ANYTHING APPROACHING a flag-bearer of 'true' Indianness, you're sure to be thrilled by this. We're talking about a cruise to Southeast Asia (exciting!) that combines cricket (whoa!) with Bollywood (woo hoo!). Monarch Cruise is offering you the 'The Journey of a Lifetime': a cruise that has cricketing celebrities—brand ambassador Sachin Tendulkar, no less, Australian cricketers Shane Warne and Brett Lee—and Bollywood faithfuls including singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, stand-up comics Papa CJ and Vir Das, actor Neha Dhupia and rapper Badshah, among others. Departing from Singapore on March 6, 2017, the cruise goes to Kuala Lumpur, Phuket, Penang, Colombo and Cochin before reaching Mumbai and then returning to Singapore via the same route. Available in seven-day and 13-day trips, prices start at ₹79,990 per person. See monarchcruise.com.

# NEW IDEAS **GET AWAY!**



\*IRED OF OFFICE, CRAVING A HOLIDAY, but just can't get the boss to sanction your long leave? Train your sights on the next long weekend (yes, even you busy office-workers do get those every once in a while) and get yourself a 'minication'. You can do it. Especially when all the painful aspects of travel are taken care of, such as on Abercrombie & Kent Vacations India's new minication packages. These short escapades—all only three nights long—have been tailor-made to give you the best possible experience in a short window. Packages are available to both near and far—Abu Dhabi, Dubai and the Maldives as well as Tashkent, St Petersburg, London, Edinburgh and Lisbon. Minication prices start from \$1,100 per person. See abercrombiekent.com.



### SINGAPORE

# **SUPER-SMART AIRPORT**

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT SINGAPORE'S CHANGI AIRPORT is a visual treat. And now, with its new interactive installations, you're going to have touch-and-feel evidence of the fact. The highlight is a digital wall, known as the 'Make it Your Singapore' showcase, which uses motion-sensing technology. The LED 'Dots Portrait Wall' is another exciting installation, which allows passengers to bring home portraits of themselves with various landmarks of the city in the background. With Singapore Airlines announcing special economy and premium class fares for travel from Indian cities to Australia, be sure to check out these unique works of art during your layover at Changi.



## TOURISM

# **WINNERS TAKE THEM ALL**

HE LATEST EDITION OF THE NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS was held last month and saw Kerala being honoured with eight awards, including six in the marketing category. Madhya Pradesh, too, won laurels in the category of 'Best State/Union Territory for Comprehensive Development of Tourism'. Gujarat and Karnataka's state tourism boards won the next two positions in this category. Out of Kerala's wins, the one for 'Most Innovative Use of Information Technology' speaks of its effectiveness in using social media to its advantage (its Facebook page, for instance, boasts of nearly 13 lakh 'likes'.) Kerala also won in the 'Responsible Tourism' category.

### **ADVT**

# Beer Festival

his August, beer lovers and sports enthusiasts had an all new reason to indulge. Four Points by Sheraton Hotel and Serviced Apartments, Pune hosted the beer festival on the International Beer Day which coincided with the Olympics 'Games. This extravaganza kicked off on August 5th and continued till 21st. An 'Olympics special menu' that includes beer cocktails like Mexican Michelada; London sour and snacks like chicken wings; Cheddar beer bratwurst; beer batter fried prawns; Asparagus stumps (beer batter fried asparagus and zucchini); Golf mushroom quiche; and Pizzas with a beer base!!

An added 'Late Night Happy Hours' between 11 pm and 12 am makes it an exciting destination for weekends or even during the week. Great music, prompt service at the pub, makes it a great place to hang out. After spending time at the festival, you can look forward to extend your stay at the hotel. At the onset, a contemporary lobby greets you. The hotel provides luxurious rooms with free Wi-Fi and freshly brewed coffee. In addition to this, it is the ultimate destination for tired travelers as it boasts of the signature Four Comfort<sup>TM</sup> Bed which is a plush sleep system with nine-inch shock absorber.



For those who want to enjoy the food at the hotel, there are two dining options: Panash and The Eatery. Panash is a pan Asian restaurant and the Eatery which is open 24X7 provides a multi cuisine culinary experience. It has an Indian and continental spread. A sumptuous breakfast buffet is the highlight providing a lot of options ranging from idli-sambar to pancakes.

Four Points by Sheraton Hotel and Serviced Apartments, Pune also has service apartments that consist of a complete unit by itself with a living room, bedroom and a kitchenette. It provides as a home stay experience for business travelers who wish to stay for a longer duration.

### NSEW • THE PROFESSIONAL

### How did you come to distil spirits at the George Washington Distillery?

I am a traditional miller and distiller by trade and have been operating, interpreting and repairing historic watermills for 23 years now. Since 2007. I have been distilling at George Washington's reconstructed distillery producing rye whiskey, single malt whisky as well as peach and apple brandy. Prior to coming to Mount Vernon, I was the miller at Stratford Hall, where I coordinated a major 27-month-long restoration of the mill. Before Stratford Hall, I worked at Colvin Run Mill in Great Falls, Virginia.

### What spirits does the distillery produce?

The spirits we produce include the George Washington Straight Rye, the George Washington Rye, the Peach Brandy, Peach Brandy Eau De Vie and the Apple Brandy.

### Can you share some tasting notes with us?

**Un-aged rye:** Fresh rye bread, surprisingly sweet nose, spicy, pepper finish.

Aged rye: Peppery nose, dried fruit, smooth on palate, oak, and hint of vanilla and caramel. Peach Eau de Vie (un-aged brandy): White wine grape and pleasant hint of alcohol on nose, strong stone fruit.

Aged Peach aged (aged in used bourbon casks): Wheat whiskey, preserved peach, vanilla and light cream in nose, oak, caramel, earthy, hint of bourbon.

Aged apple brandy (aged in used bourbon casks): Very ripe apple, allspice on nose, heavy mouth feel, rich, light 'old' oak barrel, slightly almond vanilla, burnt sugar finish.

### What's the distillery tour all about?

One of the nation's most beloved historic sites, Mount Vernon offers a glimpse into the 18th-century through an immersive programme honouring George Washington's life and legacy. The tour consists of well-guided, in-depth narratives of the history of the entire distillery. We also showcase the water-powered mill which operates as it did at the time when George Washington installed the latest advanced machinery to make his mill more productive.

### What are the other attractions at Mount Vernon?

Mount Vernon is a perfect destination for families. The Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens was the home and is the burial place of George and Martha Washington. Visiting Mount Vernon on the shores of the Potomac River in Virginia, a mere 15 miles south of Washington, D.C., you can see it is undisputedly one of the most scenic tourist attractions of the capital region. The mansion features restored rooms with original furniture used by Washington and his family. The museums and galleries, the whiskey distillery,

the expertly guided tours and the culinary options ensure that this tourist destination offers something for everyone.

### Is the distillery open all year? What's the best time to visit?

The distillery and gristmill are open for tours April 1-October 31. The site is closed to tours November 1-March 31. During March and November, we produce our rye whiskey, running five copper pot stills heated by wood fires. The

Mount Vernon Estate, Washington's Mansion, is open 365 days a year.

### What foods pair well with your spirits? What about Indian food?

The mix of brandy and Indian spices is a combination seldom heard of but the aromatic herbs used in Indian cuisine go beautifully with our peach and apple brandies. The spicy notes in the rye whiskies are also well suited to Indian cuisine and palate. ■ AMIT DIXIT





# **SMART MOVE**

TITAN JUXT PRO



The new Titan JUXT Pro looks like an analog watch, feels like an analog watch, wears like an analog watch but is so smart, it's almost not a watch. It has 20 preloaded designs to suit the dial mood you may be in and 4GB memory that lets you store songs and listen to them over Bluetooth speakers or headphones. It has a camera control for phone cameras, a phone finder to locate your device, a fitness tracker to calculate calories burnt and distance travelled, a notification feature, a safety panic alarm and priority calling feature... Phew. The smart (clever) watch is offered in a choice of smart (elegant) matte black or steel black. ₹22,995; titan.co.in

### PODSQUAD THE DAZZLING DOODLER



Abha Shah's brainchild, PodSquad is a travel-friendly and fun learning programme which comes in a neat box and is delivered straight to your doorstep in monthly instalments. There's digital content too, which can be downloaded and used on an iPad or similar device. Geared towards kids aged 3-7, it's based on Howard Gardner's 'Theory of Multiple Intelligences'. The key goal, they say, is "to equip children with the right tools to achieve success in a 21st-century environment and to identify individual aptitudes at a young age". Now, which parent can resist that? Every box has a theme like The Cool Chef, The Smart Detective, The Crazy Scientist and The Dazzling Doodler, with a new theme out every month. The Dazzling Doodler is packed with seven fun activities including a fold-out poster to put up. So, set free the artist in your child with wipe-and-clean doodle sheets; imagination games; draw-and-guess games and dot-to-dot fun. Psst, there's a plush toy too. ₹1,500 for Dazzling Doodler: monthly subscription options too; podsquad.in



### SHAHNAZ HUSAIN'S SHAFLIGHT

Air travel is a dehydrating activity, and the formulaic remedy: drink lots of water, avoid alcohol, do foot exercises and do not forget that moisturiser. And why any old moisturiser when there's one created for this very purpose. Pointedly christened Shaflight. it's all herbal and nutty and minerally—basically, good for you and suitable for all skin types. **₹710**; **shahnaz.in** 



### **SENNHEISER PXC 550**

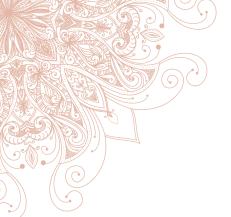
The company known for audio output devices that offer supreme balanced sound and build quality presents the PXC 550. Board that long-haul flight packed with screaming kids fearlessly—its battery won't die on you even after 30 hours of continuous usage. From ₹29,990; sennheiser.com



### **DELSEY PARIS LUGGAGE STRAP**

Anxious traveller, always worrying about the safety of your luggage? Consider gifting yourself Delsey's new luggage strap with a three-digit combination lock. Adjustable to any bag size, its bright colours also help identify your luggage on the belt.

₹1,850; delsey.com







# UNLOCK A WORLD OF PRIVILEGES

SBI CARD Elite





24/7 Conceirge service I Lounge access at over 850 airports worldwide
Convenience of contactless technology I Special discounts on health resorts and spas
Attractive discounts on Golf I Upto 50,000 Bonus Reward Points annually
2 Complimentary movie tickets every month

SBI CARD *Clite*. Live Privileged.

To apply: SMS 'ELITE' to 5676791 or visit sbicard.com





# CHECK OUT 22 STOK PALACE HERITAGE HOTEL, LADAKH 26 PRIDE PLAZA HOTEL AEROCITY, NEW DELHI

**CHECK OUT** 

# **PRINCELY REPOSE**

The Stok Palace Heritage Hotel is more than a royal palace, says Bibek Bhattacharya. It's Ladakh as an exquisite miniature. Photographs by Krishna Angira

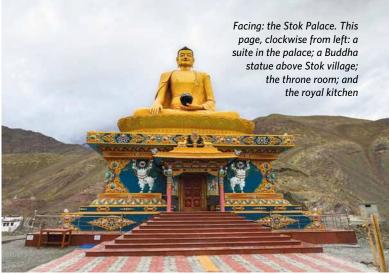
t was a Saturday morning in the middle of tourist-heavy July in Ladakh, and the Stok Palace was humming with visitors. The Leh valley had been seeing some pretty heavy unseasonal showers, but that didn't deter

day-trippers from visiting the quaint little museum of the Ladakhi royal family. As I was entering my room-okay, make that luxurious palace suite-a honeymooning couple passed by. I heard the woman whisper to her partner, "I want to stay

here too!" I totally sympathised with her. After all, there possibly isn't a better place to stay at, in and around Leh.

The Stok Palace was built in 1822, as a smaller retreat, since the main palace of the Namgyals was the Leh Palace, some









15km away, across the Indus. In a decade, however, Ladakh had been annexed into the Dogra kingdom of Kashmir and the Namgyals were made the jagirdars of Stok village. An old and proud kingdom had ceased to exist.

But this magnificent palace is no mean retreat. Smaller and cosier than the Leh Palace, it sits pretty atop a small hill at the mouth of the Stok Valley, overlooking a huge expanse of the Indus Valley. Stok is very much a living palace, home to the 50-year-old king, HE Raja Jigmed Wangchuk Namgyal. Renovated and restored, the palace was turned into a heritage hotel about a decade ago. These days, it offers discerning visitors a selection of four suites, a royal suite and the queen's bedroom. Stok Palace has become known as one of the most unique royal palace hotels.

We were received at the hotel by the

manager, the mild-mannered Sudhamma. A social worker and friend to the king, Sudhamma is very proud of the cultural heritage of Ladakh, and he tells us that the Palace is essentially a distillation of a way of life. We are eager to find out.

Our suite is a lavishly appointed room dominated by a huge double bed. Colourful murals in the Tibetan style adorn the ceiling and the room itself is a delightful mix of pastel shades and traditional wood and mud-brick stylings. The bathroom is modern and luxuriously appointed. The wooden balcony is a highlight, looking out on the palace's huge front courtyard, dominated by a huge tarchen, a flagpole that's commonly found in front of Tibetan Buddhist homes. It signifies that the household contains all the main Mahayana sutras as well as the Prajnaparamita manuscript. Since the palace is really a

home, albeit a very luxurious one, it is quite appropriately placed.

After a quick but delicious lunch in the lavishly decorated reception room, Sudhamma takes us on a tour. The interior of the building is dominated by a central courtyard with another, smaller tarchen tied to a yak head, with shaded balconies and small staircases leading off to the various wigs of the palace. We go up a short flight of stairs to the museum, which is open to all visitors. The main objects of interest here are the royal family's collection of thangkas, some of which are over 400 years old but retain a vividness of colour that's a marvel to behold. Other rooms in the museum hold ceremonial dresses of the king and queen, beautiful jewellery, copper pots for serving chang, exquisite jade and porcelain cups, a collection of modest weaponry and a huge royal perak





that was worn by the queen of old.

The palace has its own monastery, with a priest from the Chemrey monastery officiating for a year at a time. It's a large space dominated by a panel featuring large statues of the Buddha and Padmasambhava. There are also some exquisite little bronzes here, some of which are very old. From the monastery, we descend to the throne room of the king. Like most of the interiors, this too is colourfully painted and the ceilings are supported by the typical Ladakhi wooden T-beams, carved and painted gorgeously. The throne itself is an upraised pedestal, with a large ceremonial back dominated by a sculpture of two deer flanking the wheel of dharma. The king of Ladakh is a chakravartin raja in the old Buddhist monarchical tradition and this shows in the throne room's artwork.

Of the other suites, the most spectacular is the queen's room in another wing of the palace. A small, dark corridor leads to a low wooden door with a huge ornate knocker in the shape of two dragons, surrounded by the eight auspicious Buddhist signs. Inside is a huge room with old frescoes adorning the walls and a majestic four-poster bed. There's an adjoining living area with a great view of the Indus Valley. Photos of erstwhile queens and some of their memorabilia, like an old transistor radio, add to the room's charm, which

manages to be both grand yet understated.

There's much to do when you're at the palace. The pretty village of Stok is named after the strong mountain stream that flows through it, draining the Stok mountain range to the south. You can take a leisurely walk through the village, past its swaying poplar, apricot and willow groves, to the local monastery and the immense statue of the Buddha that's come up near the gompa. If you have more time, you can also head deeper into the mountains for a short trek to the Stok Kangri base camp.

Within the palace, visit the royal kitchen and take part in impromptu cooking sessions. It's a large space, a more lavish version of the traditional Ladakhi kitchen with its stone hearth with a chimney overlaid with gilded signs of the auspicious symbols and layered rows of copper utensils in which delicious fare is cooked every day. You could also just laze around at the ramparts of the palace, next to the small café, and watch the unending play of sunlight on the vast Indus Valley, as the mighty river moves past the distant Shey and Thikse gompas.

We had our dinner with the king on our second and final night at the palace. His family is still held in great respect by Ladakhis. Jigmed Wangchuk is an urbane man who divides his year between Stok and New Delhi and he's passionate about

A chat in the shade of the royal gardens; and a bedroom in one of the new villas

the conservation of Ladakhi culture. Over a delicious meal of gyathuk and mutton momos, Jigmed deplored the mess that Leh has become. "When I decided to open up the palace to let visitors enjoy our hospitality, I was of the firm opinion that the palace should remain a home, and not become a soulless hotel that so many royal palaces in India have become," he said. In that he has certainly succeeded.

Stok Palace is open only in the summer months, but three lavish villas have come up in the royal gardens just outside the palace walls, which will be open all year round. Tastefully designed in a traditional manner, they would be perfect, the king says, to enjoy Ladakh's winter. "There's nothing like it," he smiles. Just as there's nothing like the Stok Palace.

### THE INFORMATION

LOCATION Stok village/15km from Leh ACCOMMODATION 4 suites, 1 royal suite, 1 queen's bedroom and three garden villas.

TARIFF Suites ₹17,250, royal suite ₹28,750, queen's bedroom ₹34,500. All inclusive and on double occupancy. Heritage villas: ₹32,000 for four people, all inclusive

CONTACT +91-124-4062480, stokpalaceheritage.com





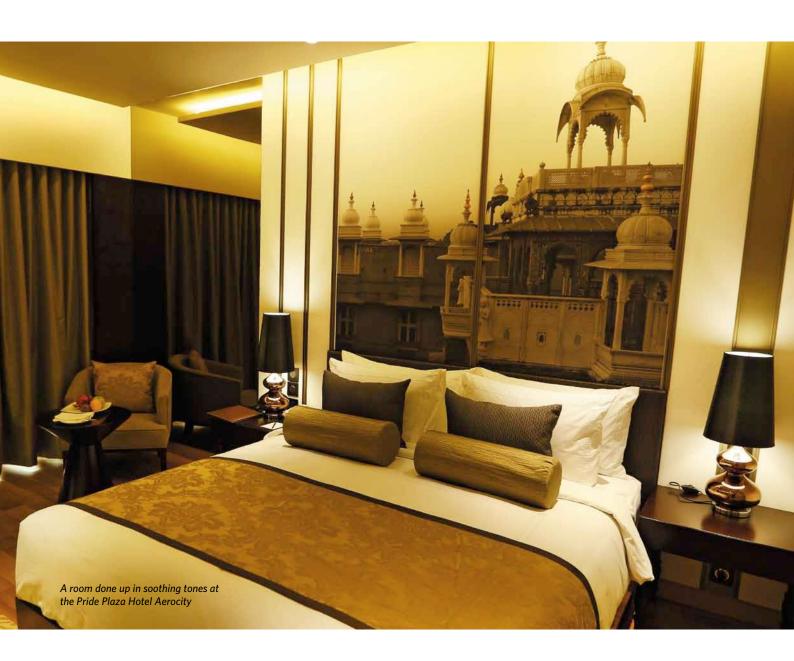








Discover Japan



### [CHECK OUT]

# **HIDDEN GEM**

The Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity is a surprisingly lovely hotel, from a rising hotel brand worth watching out for, says **Amit Dixit** 

have been observing the gradual blooming of the New Delhi Aerocity hospitality district with some interest. So when Raja Singh, from the Pride Plaza Hotel Aerocity's marketing and PR department, invited me to come and stay, of course, I said yes. It was one of the few functioning hotels in Aerocity I hadn't visited yet and I was curious to see how it was holding up

against formidable competition from the likes of JW Marriott, Pullman and Holiday Inn.

It turned out to be a spiffy hotel, run with quiet efficiency. The lobby carpet was so soft I nearly sank to my knees as I whirled around to admire the art. (The only thing softer is the intonation of GM Pankaj Mathur, whose last stint was at the Suryaa in Delhi's busy New Friend's

Colony neighbourhood.) The hotel has collaborated with Krsna Mehta to create the exclusive artwork on display. They've embraced a mostly understated aesthetic which I always find impressive. The room was well appointed, with an inviting bathtub peeking from behind a glass panel. (I later moved to the currently lone pool-facing suite and wasn't complaining for the extra leg room and



# DESIGNED FOR DOMINATION.

NISSAN TERRANO.









205mm GROUND CLEARANCE

NISSAN FINANCE - POWERED BY -

www.nissan.in | 🜃 /NissanIndia | 🍑 /Nissan\_India | TOLL FREE NUMBER 1800 209 3456

FOR A TEST DRIVE, GIVE A MISSED CALL TO 08080800480









largish dining table.)

So far so good. What Pride Plaza really does well though is the F&B. Café Pride, the multi-cuisine all-day diner, looked way better than its pictures. In fact, all the F&B venues, without exception, are stunningly designed. And the thoughtful seating ensures that all guests have a proper bit of elbow room.

I started off with a few drinks at Stallion, the equine-themed bar, where a fine bartender churned out cocktail after perfect cocktail until I had to beg him to stop. He had andaz, that elusive yet essential quality. Raja, who was chaperoning me, turned out to be excellent company and our conversation ranged from the growing importance of PR on the election trail to the merits of rearing the rare kadaknath breed of chicken

(which his family does) and everything in between. Dinner was at Oriental Spice, their fine dining dinner-only pan-Asian restaurant, under the watchful eye of Chef Timothy Lepcha. Chef Lepcha may have a humble manner but his food soars to heights that are anything but humble. I can still taste the lohan style vegetables and Burmese noodles I had. Another night, Chef Sartaj Qureshi presented a splendid Awadhi repast. Presiding over it all is executive chef Shailendra Singh and he runs a fine kitchen indeed. The hotel's superlative continental dishes (I had some excellent tenderloin) are a nod to Aerocity's cosmopolitan clientele.

There's a spa too, ORA, which specialises in a chocolate massage which I, regrettably, shied away from. (But there will definitely be a next time.) The gym is

Clockwise from top left: Café Pride; Oriental Spice; the Stallion bar; and ORA spa

perfectly nice but the staff needs to be a bit more experienced.

With such an excellent bouquet of offerings, Pride should be proud. Poised perfectly between Delhi and Gurgaon, this is so much more than a transit hotel. Staycations anyone?.

### THE INFORMATION

LOCATION Hospitality District, Delhi Aerocity, IGI Airport, New Delhi 110037. 1km from the airport.

ACCOMMODATION 385 deluxe, superior and premium rooms

**TARIFF** From ₹4,646

CONTACT +91-11-66007700, pridehotel.com

















welcome you will receive. Fabulous beaches, shopping and attractions to engage and entertain you. There is always a reason to smile in Sharjah, from the amazing hotels, to the warm traditional There are so many reasons to smile when you are on a family holiday in Sharjah.





### MIDDLE AMERICA





COURTESY GEORGE RANCH HISTORICAL PARK

he term 'Space Cowboy' comes from the eponymous 1969 Steve Miller song. To understand the meaning of that term, however, you have to visit Middle America. And you have to experience the mind-boggling transition from watching cowboys at a ranch to gazing at moon rocks.

As it is to so many visitors, the US to me meant the Pacific coast and the Atlantic coast, with a vast something in the middle surrounding the Grand Canyon. I'd travelled up and down the two coasts but never wandered inland. So, I had my doubts.

Day one in Texas began to clear up matters. You don't have to be fond of cowboy movies to be charmed by the George Ranch Historical Park, about 50 km southwest of Houston, Texas. Four generations of the Jones family owned this estate. Their houses have been restored and the employees dress up in period clothing to present an animated account of life in times past. This guided tour is especially popular among children. The tour ended with the Saturday Historic Lunch, on this occasion themed around the food of the poorer sharecroppers. There was fried gizzard (stomach muscles of chicken, for the uninitiated), 'dirty rice' prepared with leftover meats and offal, and cracklin'

You don't have to be a fan of cowboy movies to be charmed by the George Ranch Historical Park in Texas



cornbread, made with pork rind. It's not the kind of food you would advertise, but it makes for good dinner conversation.

Our return to the city became a back-to-the-future affair, for we landed at the Space Center Houston in the afternoon. From horses and longhorns, to posing for photos behind a space suit and poring over the world's largest collection of moon rocks—all in a matter of hours. I wouldn't advise visiting both these places on the same day; it takes some serious reorientation of time and space. What soothed the mind at the end of such a hectic day was the Kemah Boardwalk, a seaside walkway that has emerged as a food district, interspersed with entertainment parks overlooking the Galveston Bay.

Houston is the fourth-largest US city and has many attractions, the kind that large cities flaunt. But the real Texas-sized surprise is Austin, the state capital. Half a day here is enough to understand why it is the fastest growing of the 50 largest cities, why it's the preferred place for young couples to build a life. With its clement







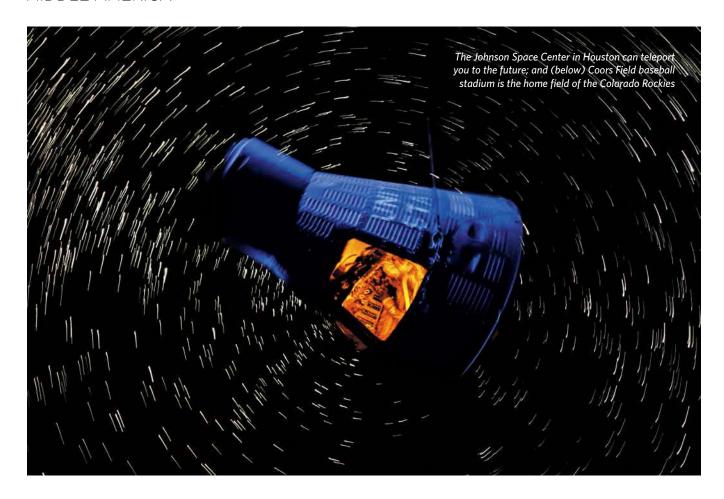
There is industry, but not manufacturing—that's Houston, with its factories and fishing and ports and old-world big industry. The smart and the enlightened like to eat well. Naturally, Austin is brimming with restaurants, which in many cases reflect the character of the districts. Food vans are ubiquitous and, in Austin, themed.

That's the other unusual thing about Austin: each of its localities has character. New money has not yet gentrified it inside out—not yet, anyway. Its geekturned-hipster vibe might resonate with Silicon Valley, but this is America's South. The city has a natural, old-world ease. It doesn't take any effort to relax in Austin.



Clockwise from top left: a helicopter is the best way to see the Grand Canyon; revellers at a concert in Austin; and a giant sculpture at the Denver Convention Centre

Half a day in Austin is enough to understand why it's the preferred place for couples to build a life



The city markets itself as the live-music capital of the world. Restaurants book their musicians in advance and advertise the dates; special Austin-themed albums are easy to find; and there is a year-long schedule of festivals.

The Austin Independent Business Alliance has a slogan, which is also an informal theme for this fast-growing city: Keep Austin Weird. There is also a book that investigates, from a demographic angle, how that slogan was commercialised; it's titled Weird City: Sense of Place and Creative Resistance in Austin, Texas. Get it?

Austin's rival in luring the smart and the young is Denver, Colorado, which has several universities in the area and is among the fastest growing major cities. But there are some striking differences between the two. At an elevation of 5,280 feet above mean sea-level (Denver is called the milehigh city), it does get dry up here; some people find the altitude a little hard on their breathing. It also gets

quite cold, what with the snow-covered peaks of the Rocky Mountains casting their shadow over the city. But that's the



big attraction here, too, for Denver is a magnet to those who like the outdoors and adventure.

Denver grew into a major city due to its location: it was a transportation hub, the link between the Midwest and the West Coast. The city's fortunes have risen and fallen with trends in the mining and energy industries. But the quality of life here has become an attraction for skilled young people, and that's bringing in the big corporations. We got a taste of its eclectic nature in the most peculiar vegetarian restaurant I've ever visited, where liberties are taken with several kinds of cuisines, and the results are surprisingly fresh.

You want to keep walking around Denver. During the day, it doesn't have the kind of buzz Austin has, for people here mostly work in offices. But in the evening, the city comes alive. We went on Denver's famous beer trail, for in no other US city is more beer (or more kinds of beer) produced. My guide was a writer, Rich Grant, who had



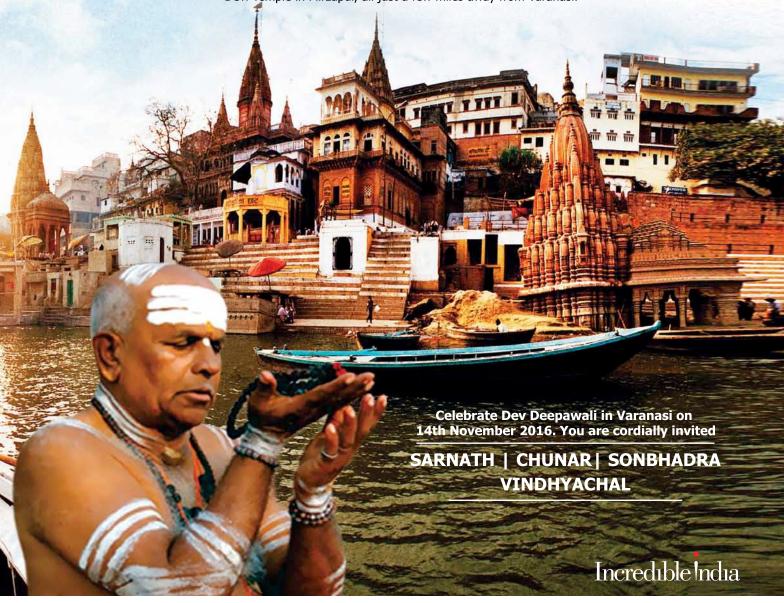
## DISCOVER THE HOLY STEPS THAT LEAD YOU TO NIRVANA.

Come to Varanasi

Step into the city that bathes in divinity every day. Known for its 1000 temples and numerous Ghats, Varanasi is the hub of spiritualism. Watch millions of devotees taking a dip into the holy Ganges to wash away their sins.

#### And your trip doesn't end here!

Visit Sarnath, the Buddhist land of enlightenment. Also explore enchanting historical Cave Painting & Fossils Park at Sonbhadra, Chandra Prabha Wildlife Sanctuary at Chandauli, and Chunar Fort & famous Vindhyachal Devi Temple in Mirzapur, all just a few miles away from Varanasi.



#### **Directorate of Tourism, Uttar Pradesh**

Paryatan Bhawan, C-13, Vipin Khand, Gomti Nagar,

Lucknow-226010. Tel.: 0522-2307037

Email: upstdc@up-tourism.com Website: www.uptourism.gov.in

**I** UttarPradeshTourism

uptourismgov

Helpline:18601801364





moved to the city back in his hippie days. The real high, though, comes in the Rockies. With a packed breakfast of bagels and cream cheese in the van, we reached the Rocky Mountain National Park in the morning and set off on a snowshoe hike. The trail was blessed with clear skies and tall trees, the kind of landscape that will seem familiar from the frames of Ansel Adams. On the way back to Denver, we stopped at another picturesque location made famous by another artist. The Stanley Hotel is where writer Stephen King spent a night with his wife when there were no other guests around. This is where he had a nightmare of his three-year-old son running in the desolate corridors. King woke up with the idea for *The Shining*, his novel that was adapted for an even more famous film directed by Stanley Kubrick.

From the serenity of the Rockies, there was only one place our excursion could conclude at: following the Colorado River to the Grand Canyon. We took a helicopter ride through the canyon from Las Vegas. Back in Sin City, there was gambling, fine dining, the High Roller and the Cirque du Soleil. Middle America is a wide, wide palette.

#### **■**THE INFORMATION

#### GETTING THERE

There are several daily flights from Delhi to Houston. **Emirates** (**emirates.com**) flights make their stopover at Dubai International Airport and reach Houston in about 28 hours. Round-trip fares start from around ₹83,000.

#### WHERE TO STAY

- > In Austin, **Driskill Hotel** has retained its 19th-century charm, with added mod cons and luxuries (from approximately ₹38,000 per night; **driskillhotel.com**).
- > In Houston, **Hotel ICON** is an exclusive member of Marriott's Autograph Collection which was originally built as the Union National Bank Building in 1911 (from ₹8,450 per night; see **hotelicon.com**.)
- > In Denver, the **Hyatt Place Downtown** is located within 2 blocks of the entrance to the Colorado Convention Center. (from approximately ₹10,750 per night; **denverdowntown.place.hyatt.com**)

#### WHAT TO SEE & DO

> The George Ranch Historical Park is in Richmond, Texas, about 50km southwest of central Houston. Apart from historical tours and Saturday Historical Lunch, the park is available for a host of personal events and parties. See georgeranch.org.

> NASA's **Space Center Houston** is right on the edge of



the Johnson Space Center, and the guided tour takes you inside, though you cannot get off the coaches (spacecenter.org).

> To experience the eccentric side of Austin, you can take a guided tour organised by Austin Detours (austindetours.com). The company has a range of storytellers—artists, musicians, foodies, writers, professional travel directors, outdoor enthusiasts and comedianswho know the city well. They also customise tours based on what you are looking for. For an elaborate guide to the food trucks, visit foodtrailersaustin.com, and austintexas.org is a one-stopshop for all information related to visiting Austin.

> Denver has a rich history of brewing. Look for the 'Denver Beer Trail' on denver. org. Travel writer Rich Grant conducts walking tours, in which he offers an intimate glimpse of the city. His Beer Walk is highly recommended (walkinganddrinkingbeer.com).

> The History Colorado Center (historycolorado.org) is a state-ofthe-art museum with a range of multimedia features telling the fascinating story of the region. It is situated in the Golden Triangle Museum District of

**Triangle Museum District of Denver**, which has several art museums.

- > The grandest and quickest way to experience the **Grand Canyon** is on a helicopter ride. There are several touring services. I used Papillon (**papillon.com**).
- > Rocky Mountain National
  Park has five visitor centres
  that offer guided tours. Bear
  Lake is a popular site in the
  middle of the park—it freezes
  over in winter. The people living
  around the park in Estes Park
  and Grand Lake run several
  small businesses linked to
  tourism and adventure; try
  rockymountainnationalpark.com.

SOPAN JOSHI

## DO IT ALL WITH THE SPORTY NUVOSPORT.

THE PERFECT COMPANION TO YOUR

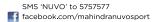
—— ACTIVE LIFESTYLE. ——

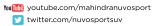






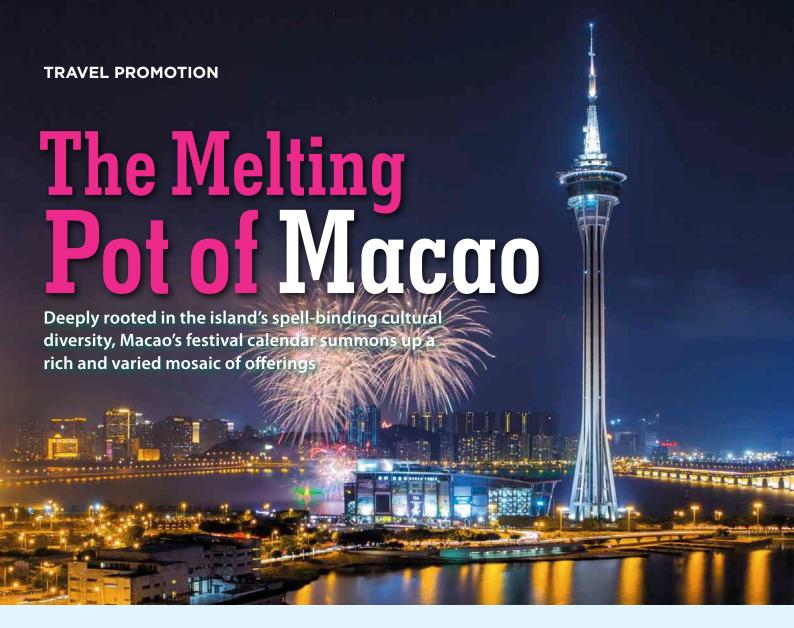








Give a missed call on 9223933330



Fun unlimited seems to have become the motto of this purported 'Island that never sleeps'. Yes, Macao may be deeply rooted in its over 400-year-old history of Chinese, Portuguese and other Western influences...but it's very much in step with the 21st century with its glitzy casinos, ritzy hotels and designer store line-up. And, to mark this brilliant syncretic profusion of offerings, its yearly calendar of events showcases its most alluring aspects to draw not just the home crowd...but even visitors from far-flung shores to join in the rollicking fun. The melting pot of entertainment is filled to the brim with traditional Chinese, local folk and religious festivals—and even a smattering of international events.

#### MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

#### SEPTEMBER 15

High-stepping celebrations, on the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar—marking the Mid-Autumn festival in Macao, brings people out in the thousands on to the streets aglitter now with hundreds of coloured lanterns. This Chinese tradition is an engaging affair for visitors. The gifting, serving and eating of mooncakes is intrinsic to the festivities celebrating a bountiful harvest. Dinner banquets with large family gatherings add to the jollity of the occasion, which also entails viewings of the full moon

lighting up the velvet darkness of the sky. Picnics by the beach or out in the garden are perfect for celebrating Macao's Mid-Autumn festivities. The festival is linked to several riveting legends, one of them related to a rebellion against and overthrowing of the Tartars. A message—"Kill the Tartars on the 15th day of the Eighth Moon"—on a slip of paper is relayed through the traditional distribution of mooncakes (no favourite of their oppressors). Popular hot spots for the gatherings are the Praia Grande and Nam Van Lakes, all gardens and Hac-Sa and Cheoc-Van beaches in Coloane.

#### MACAO INTERNATIONAL FIREWORKS DISPLAY CONTEST

#### SEPTEMBER 3,10,15,24 & OCTOBER 1, 2016

Organised by the Macao Government Tourist Office (MGTO), this kaleidoscopic display of pyrotechnics appears to be the perfect salute to Macao's Chinese heritage, for legend has it that the Chinese were the first to invent fireworks. And how it rocks the burgeoning crowd each year ever since this festive contest launched 27 years ago in 1989. Over time it has featured international teams from China, the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Australia, the UK, Switzerland, France, Germany,



Portugal and Spain. This year's festival, to be held along the seaface across from the Macao Tower, will feature a fantastic pyro display by Thailand Fireworks (Thailand), Macedos Pirotecnia, Lda (Portugal), Pyro 2000 Limited (UK), SUGYP SA (Switzerland), Marutamaya Ogatsu Fireworks Co., Ltd. (Japan), Daehan Fireworks Co (Korea), Orzella Fireworks di Orzella Antonio (Italy), Feu d'artifice Orion (Canada), Pyro-Technic Transilvania Srl (Romania) and Hunan Jingtai Fireworks Co. (China). The prize money is also a big attraction for the contesting teams. The annual event is part of an ongoing mission to make Macao into a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure.

#### CHUNG YEUNG FESTIVAL

#### OCTOBER 9

Celebrated as the Feast of Ancestors, this festival also goes by the name of Festival of Ascending Heights as the Chinese pay homage to their ancestors by visiting their graves and climbing high hills in their surrounds. The ninth day of the ninth month of the Chinese calendar is thought to be a time of danger—so to appease the gods it's the custom to climb a high hill, drink chrysanthemum wine and wear a sprig from the zhuyu plant (both these plants are considered to have cleansing properties). It's also a good time to do some house cleaning to get rid of any inauspicious vibes.

#### MACAO INTERNATIONAL

#### MUSIC FESTIVAL

#### OCTOBER 1-30

Organised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the highly acclaimed Macao International Music Festival (MIMF) is now stepping into its 30th year with a growing participation this year from Russia, the US, Germany, France, the UK, Portugal, Mongolia, Taiwan, mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao. Masses of global visitors are expected to mingle with the swelling home crowd. The theme for this year's edition is 'Glorious 30—The Sinophone Rhapsodies', and aims to present "the usual renowned classics" as well as several works of "ethnic appeal". The bill of fare on offer (20 programmes and 27 performances) includes a dazzling array of opera, orchestral and chamber music, Chinese folk music, jazz, Broadway numbers along with a fabulous selection from around the world. Some of the most sought-out venues for the concerts and performances are Macao's several World Heritage Sites including the Dom Pedro V Theatre, Mount Fortress and St Dominic's Church. Tickets have already been snapped up for the Berlin Philharmonic String Quintet, Quintessence Night, Magic Bow and The Story of Pipa. Performances by Lawrence Ku, guitarist/composer from China, Eugene Pao, jazz guitarist from Hong Kong, new Portuguese rising star Carminho and jazz trumpeter Roy Hargrove are other must-attend options. The event will also open up opportunities for backstage tours, "meet the artist" sessions and master classes to cultivate local interests in culture and music.

#### LUSOFONIA FESTIVAL

#### **OCTOBER 21-23**

Rooted in its Portuguese past, Macao's Portuguese Speaking Communities

Cultural Festival—Lusofonia (spread over three thrill-filled days) showcases the multiple aspects of Portuguese culture. Visitors have, during the past 18 annual Lusofonia festivities, thoroughly immersed themselves in the cultural and gastronomical wonders of Macao, Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Goa, Daman and Diu, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Principe and East Timor. The musical performances are a major highlight of the event. The first of these festivities was kicked off way back in 1998—on Portuguese Expatriate Day (June 10th) to honour Portuguese-speaking residents of Macao and their contribution to the development of the island. Visitors to the venue—the Taipa Houses-Museum promenade and surrounding streets and lanes of Taipa Village—will be welcomed







#### TRAVEL PROMOTION

















by the beautiful Portuguese-style ambience and the offerings of the many pavilions, including traditional games, handicrafts, art collections and lots to eat and drink. And there's dancing too.

#### MACAO FOOD FESTIVAL

#### **NOVEMBER 11-27**

The Macanese love for good food is beautifully showcased at its much awaited and very well-attended annual Macao Food Festival, which lingers on from 11th to 27th November, with the crowds getting bigger and bigger by the day. Organised by the Association of Macao Restaurant Merchants, in its 16th year the festival is being held at Sai Van Lake Square (Praça do Lago Sai Van)—opposite the Macao Tower. Visitors can partake of many different culinary experiences—which range from Asian, European, Mainland Chinese and local delicacies. There's also plenty of live entertainment, games and beer competitions to keep the buzz flowing. The atmospherics are further heightened by the lively mix of street stalls, booths and tents.

#### 63RD MACAU GRAND PRIX

#### **NOVEMBER 17-20**

The adrenalin-pumping show is back in Macao for its sensational 63rd edition of racing at its most high-powered intensity—Intense is the key word here during this gala event—with the home crowd routing for top favourites as they whroom past on the custom-built course which has witnessed the crowds growing by the year. It's the best place to come and watch the best motorcycle, WTCC and Formula 3 racers in the world outdo each other in a fine display of heightened moves and beautiful coordination of body, mind and machines.

#### PARADE THROUGH MACAO, LATIN CITY

#### DEC4(TENTATIVE)

Macao's Portuguese heritage is beautifully showcased at the annual Parade through Macao, Latin City, an astonishing marvel of a cultural extravaganza which first kicked off in 2011. It's not just the talent of local performers you get to enjoy, the grand show also attracts many performers from abroad. It is not unusual to see the people join in all the exuberant action with the performers as they cross the maze and streets and lanes around the city. Organised by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macau SAR Government in cooperation with several other government departments, it's one of the most awaited events in Macao, also because it's a sincere effort to promote mutual understanding in an atmosphere of great jollity. The show climaxes with performances at Tap Seac Square, where the

parade ends in one great burst of festive fervour.

#### INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL & AWARDS

#### **DECEMBER 8-13**

Macao will play host to its first-ever International Film Festival and Awards: Macao (IFFAM) event slated to be a real showstopper—at the Macao Cultural Centre and Macao Science Centre. The show, to be held under the auspices of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) and Macau Films & Television Productions and Culture Association (MFTPA) along with Cultural Affairs Bureau and Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau, promises to be a real treat for visitors, who are expected to arrive in droves from home and abroad—including the glitterati of the international film community—film directors, film stars, film producers, distributors, investors, international buyers, 100 local and international members of the press, as well as key persons from major film festivals around the world. At least 500 participants are expected to attend the inaugural edition of IFFAM—which will be "a long-term benefit for the sustainable development of the tourism industry and the creative industry in Macao."The competition will present 12 feature films. A jury composed of five film personalities will appraise and award the 'Best Film' prize.

#### CHRISTMAS

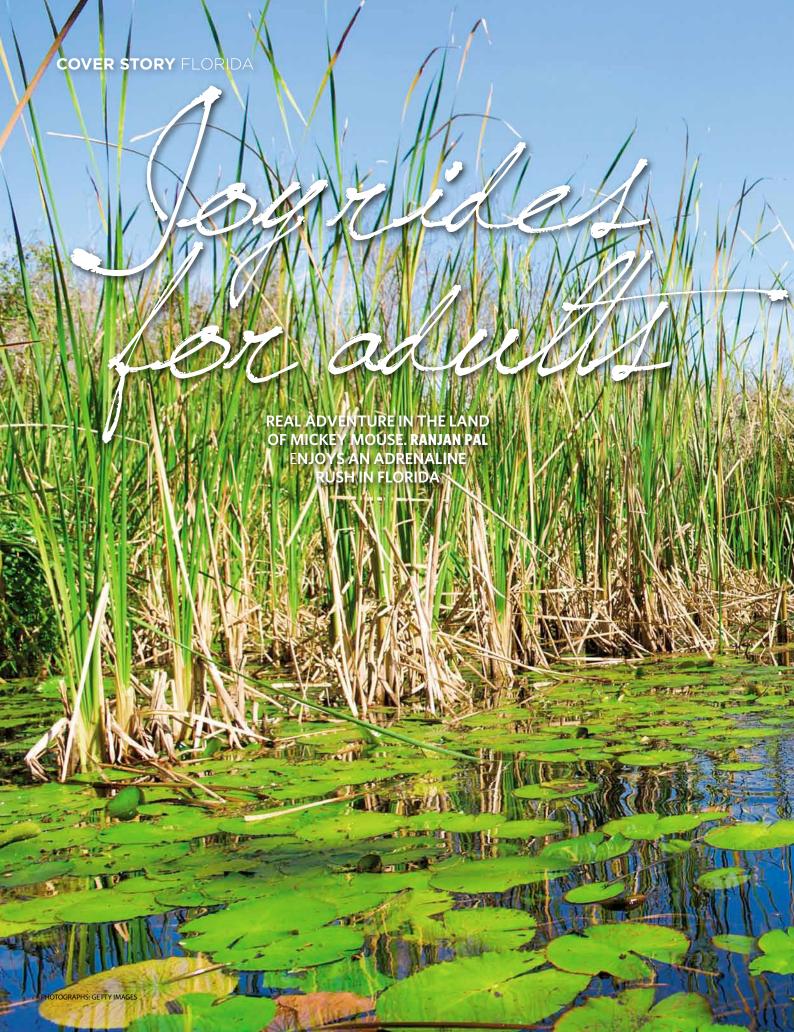
#### DECEMBER 24-25

The Portuguese may have handed over Macao to the Chinese in 1999, after ruling for 400 years, but they also left behind one of their most sacred and joyful traditions, Christmas, which has become an important feature of the city's annual festival calendar, and is celebrated with glittering Christmas trees, lit up shopping spaces and feasting with friends and family.

#### FAIRYTALE OF LIGHTS FESTIVAL

#### **FEBRUARY**

In the dark of night, through February, the glittering expanse of Macau's Taipa Houses-Museum area and adjoining areas, becomes a magical place of romance as the Fairytale of Lights Festival bursts into full bloom with over 9,999 rose illuminations. It's a rollercoaster ride of pure entertinment starting from the Eve of the Chinese New Year, through Valentine's Day and the 7th day of the Lunar New Year. The Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau and Cultural Affairs Bureau, co-organisers of this festive show-piece, have a treat in store for hundreds of residents and visitors at 10 different locations where the light installations, an interactive game and 3-D mapping show will unfold.







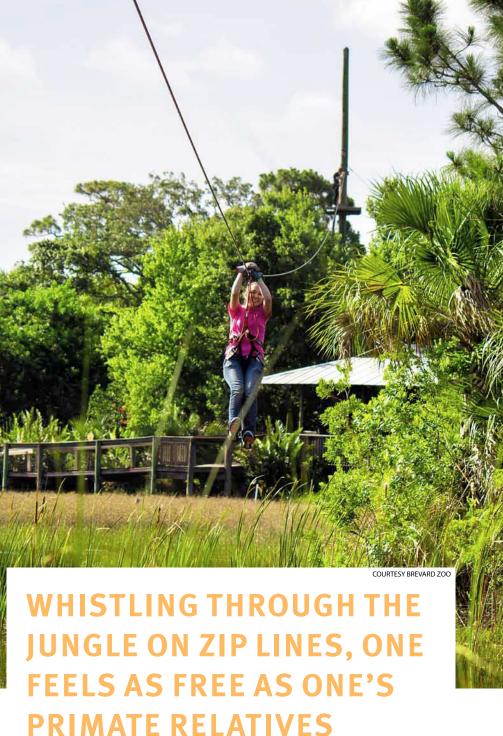
ip-lining is to bungee jumping as snorkelling is to scuba-diving—not quite the real thing but with enough of an adrenaline charge and a solid sweaty workout. Ever since I chickened out of a tandem jump with my daughter off the highest bungee jump in the world at the Bloukrans Bridge in South Africa, I've had a lasting sense of regret. Now, some small measure of redemption is available as I clip onto

the zip line high above the tree canopy at the Brevard Zoo on Florida's Space Coast. The small wooden platform I am standing on is precarious and I can feel my heart pounding. I close my eyes and take a deep breath to calm myself down. Slowly I count to ten and firmly push off into space. Gravity takes over immediately and I accelerate effortlessly down the line, the tree platform in the distance rushing to meet me. It is exhilarating and

I use my gloved right hand to decelerate by pressing down on the cable. Eventually I come to rest with a satisfying thunk, both feet landing solidly on the platform. One zip down, eight more to go.

Earlier in the day we were briefed by a young trainer called Morgan, who showed us the proper way to clip-pulleyglove-clip onto a practice zip line and how to reverse yourself if you fell short of your platform and pull yourself up





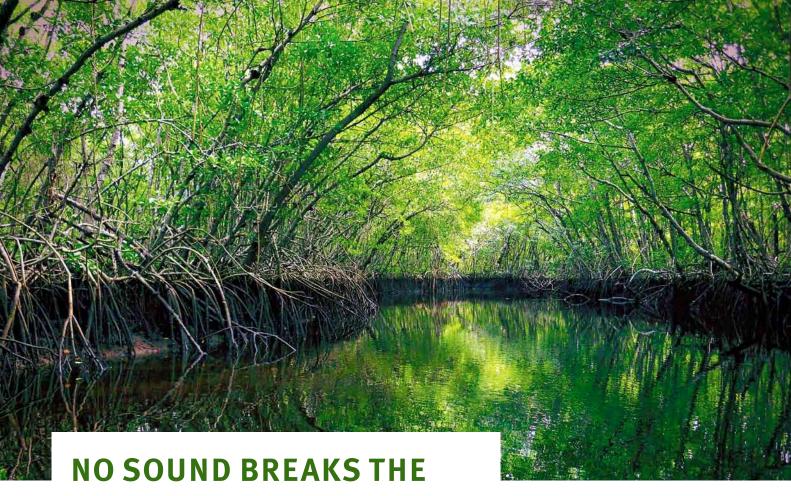
From left to right: kayaking is one way to witness wild animals at the Brevard zoo; and (right) zip-lining is another

backwards hand-over-hand. There's actually not all that much to it if you stay calm and follow the procedure. They do tell you that if you get stuck halfway and are unable to rescue yourself, they will have to come up and get you and your

ride will be over. Enough incentive to pay close attention to Morgan as she goes through her moves. The basic course has nine zip lines and, whistling through the jungle, there is no better way for a human to go. One feels as free as one's primate relatives who swing so effortlessly from branch to branch. One particularly spectacular ride is across a pond infested with alligators and, as I zip across, legs at full extension with zoo visitors gawking

upwards, I feel like the heroic protagonist of an Indiana Jones movie.

Later that afternoon, we head for Wildlife Watersports located on a tranquil bay in Cocoa Beach's Thousand Islands. We are welcomed by a couple of shoeless surfer dudes who look like they spend their whole lives in the water. We are about to go kayaking and the rest of the group grip their paddles nervously during the safety briefing. Indians are



Cypress trees block out the sun and seem to press in on the creek

SILENCE OF SHINGLE CREEK
OTHER THAN OUR PADDLES
SWISHING THROUGH THE
CLEAR STREAM WATER

generally not good swimmers and the prospect of being out on the big ocean must be intimidating. Happily for me, I am a veteran of several multi-day expeditions on big white-water in the Himalayas, and I spend my time taking photos of the group. I slip into the one-person kayak and love the familiar feel of the paddle as it slips cleanly and smoothly through the water.

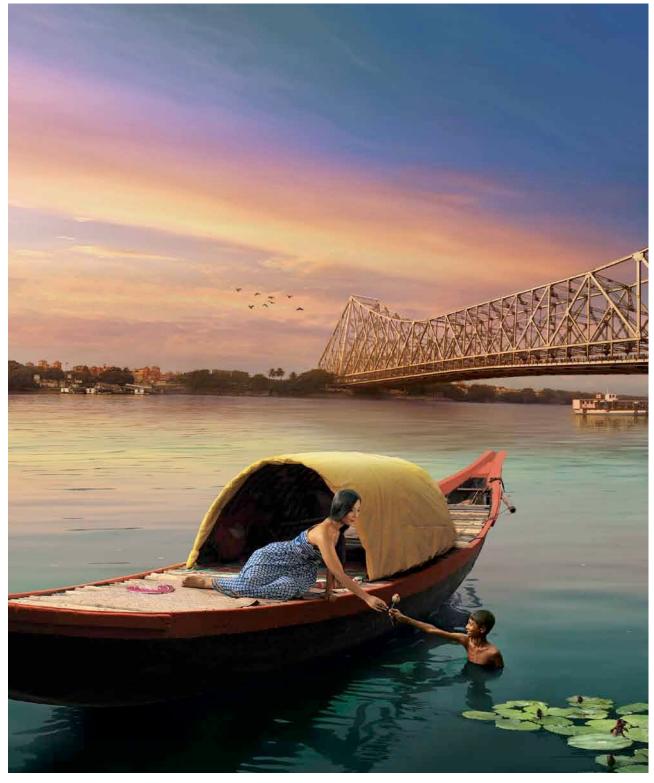
The surface of the lagoon is quite flat and there is no discernible current. I paddle steadily and, as I round the first mangrove island, I leave behind the rest of the group. I revel in the feeling of being out on the water by myself with the sun shining brightly down on my orange

fibreglass vessel. I parallel the boat channel not too far from the shore and then cut across the bay to make for the other side. A group of teenage girls passes me in a small motorboat going the other way and I wave out a greeting. It takes quite a while to get to the far side where I can see traffic racing along the freeway and finally decide to turn the nose of the boat around and head home.

Later that week, kayaking on Shingle Creek in Kissimmee is a very different experience. It is a small waterway that is generally considered to be the northernmost headwaters of the Everglades and drains into Lake Tohopekaliga. No sound breaks the silence in the thick forest

other than our paddles swishing through the water while the tall cypress trees block out the sun and seem to press in on us. One could almost imagine Ponce de Leon, Spanish conquistador and the man who 'discovered' Florida in March 1513, navigating his way along these shaded waterways in search of the Fountain of Youth. The water in the stream is clear and we can see right through to the bottom, where largemouth bass lurk, and pass a couple of Florida cooter turtles sunning themselves on submerged logs. I pull over for a closer look and the younger one slips off and into the water but the big fellow stays in place, still as a green-and-black striped rock, almost within touching distance.

As we push further along, the creek gets narrower and the waterway is crowded with tree trunks around which we have to navigate. It is a tricky business and our speed drops with all the awkward manoeuvring. Lori, our guide



#### KEEP CALM IN KOLKATA

Meet the currents that have helped build this bustling city. As you float under the night sky, the Hooghly will paint a silhouette of the metropolis on both sides. And remind you that in this city, tranquility is just a boat ride away.







A hot air balloon ride provides a fresh perspective to Florida

DRINKING CHAMPAGNE
OUT OF PAPER CUPS IS
ALMOST A POST-BALLOON
RIDE RITUAL

from Experience Kissimmee, decides that we should turn around and I readily agree. But before that I ask her to take a photo of me with my camera and remove my cap with a flourish but at the same time succeed in depositing my sunglasses in the stream. Not wanting to lose them I lean over to grab them as they begin to sink through the sun-dappled water and instantly the kayak capsizes! I struggle to my feet in waist-deep water, drenched to the bone, and grab the kayak in an attempt to right it. But the hull is filling rapidly and this is going to be no easy business. I drag the kayak to the riverbank and finally succeed in turning it right side up and draining it. Then I climb in again; Lori takes the camera

shots that started it all and we begin the journey home, enough adventure and heroics for the day!

Next day we approach Shingle Creek again, but from a different direction and in an entirely different way. Our airboat skims across the placid waters of Lake Tohopekaliga towards the point where the stream joins with it. There are six of us arranged in two rows under the command of a chatty captain called Trudy. Headphones on to cut out the propeller engine noise and shades firmly in place to cut out the sun's glare, we can hear her in our heads as she explains the sights and sounds of this vast empty space.

The full form of Lake Toho translates as "we will gather together here", named

by the Seminole Indians who used to inhabit the area. It covers about 100 sq km and spans 70 km in circumference. Trudy turns the engine off and brings the airboat to an idling halt in a side channel of the swamp. Her keen eyes have spotted some bubbles rising to the surface in a deep 'hole' and she tells us it is a large female alligator buried in the mud at the bottom waiting for us to leave. And we do. Trudy eases up on the throttle and the airboat glides across the water in search of further prey, so to speak.

As we move along the water channel, a couple of white egrets watch us warily from a distance. All of a sudden, there is a great rush of wings as a great blue heron is startled from its lair and flaps slowly away from us. The boat comes to a silent halt, just feet from a large piece of rotting log. We look more closely and realise with a shock that it is the snout of a giant alligator, mere inches above the waterline. We linger for a while watching it

#### HITACHI Inspire the Next

Fridge on Top.
Bigger Convenience on Top.
Designed Just For You.



Two ultra-efficient technologies make the Hitachi refrigerator a leader in energy savings. First, an inverter compressor controls the cooling power. Second, Dual Fan Cooling uses two separate fans, one dedicated to the refrigerator compartment and the other to the freezer, to maintain the optimal chilled air environment in each compartment independently. Our eco-refrigerators have received worldwide recognition for top energy savings.



R-WB800PND5 XGR



R-WB730PND5



R-WB550PND2 GBW



2 R-WB480PND2 GBK



R-SG37BPND



R-SG31BPND







Manufactured by Hitachi Appliances Group Sales and Distribution in India by Hitachi Home and Life Solutions (India) Ltd.



ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE

# CELEBRATION IS TOO PERFECT A TOWN WITH WELL-MAINTAINED BIKE TRACKS AND BOARDWALKS

in nervous fascination but the alligator remains motionless. Turning around for home, we cruise back up the St Cloud canal to our landing stage.

After a hectic day of exhilarating but exhausting rides at Universal Studios, it is a good idea to unwind with a relaxing ride using one's own feet. So after a sumptuous breakfast of eggs benedict, blueberry pancakes and maple butter

French toast at the Market Street Cafe in the town of Celebration, we waddle over to a bike rental place run by an enterprising young man named Scott and his parents. Celebration itself is an extension of Disneyworld, an oddly too-perfect town. But it is certainly fun riding around the neighbourhood on the well-maintained bike tracks and boardwalks. We cover some eight miles, weaving in and out of

The cosy little town of Celebration is an extension of Disneyland

the woods and past several man-made lakes. Scott stops to point out several interesting things along the way including the ubiquitous though peace-loving alligators, some of which are out sunning themselves on the lakeshore.

The grand finale to our tour of Florida was supposed to be a hot air balloon ride but it started to pour the night before which resulted in the dawn flight being cancelled. Now we have only one more night to go and thus we wait in the predawn darkness. Finally, we get the green light and race to the launching area in the company vans, the large balloon wicker baskets rattling along behind us on the trailers.

Mrityunjay and I, the only men in our group, are requisitioned to help with inflating the blue-and-yellow striped balloons. So we stand there, holding the ropes over our shoulders while the burners spit fire and the balloon swells behind us. Soon it has filled up enough to drag the wicker basket upright and we quickly clamber aboard on the captain's command, four to a compartment as the balloon strains at the leash.

And then we are off, rising majestically into the air with the ground dropping quickly away below us. We soar silently through the dawn sky while I stare wistfully down at many of Florida's lush golf fairways and greens spread out far below us. The white dune buggies scurry across the courses like busy ants and I imagine the golfers intently focusing on their shots and finding their balls, oblivious to the onlookers above. The pilot manoeuvres the balloon up and down giving us a closer look at the swamplands and the orange groves, the freeways and the townships, passing quickly below.

Soon, he puts the balloon down in a clearing and, once the envelope is deflated and packed away, we celebrate with cheap Cook's California champagne in paper cups, very much a post-balloon ride ritual!

### South Africa

#### KwaZulu-Natal - A traveller's dream

Welcome to the Zulu Kingdom, or the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal: an enticing, spectacular and fascinating multi-cultural showpiece destination which makes it ideal to visit all year round.

The Zulu Kingdom offers a good half-dozen different ways of enjoying the adventure in the beautiful region of KwaZulu-Natal

#### **AIR ADVENTURE**

#### 1. Helicopter Rides

How about treating the family to a helicopter ride along the east coast? Durban offers a scenic flight along its beachfront towards the Durban harbour and back, affording seaside views one way and city views on the return trip.

#### 2. Microlighting

If the idea of microlighting is appealing then it's time to take to the skies in one of two beauties: an open cockpit in which the passenger sits in tandem with the instructor, or the sport-plane enclosed cockpit, in which the passenger sits alongside the instructor. There's a choice of a coastal flight to enjoy whale sharks, rays, dolphins and turtles from a rare vantage point, or a scenic flight inland over the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

#### LAND ADVENTURES

#### 1. Mountain Biking & Cycling

Mountain biking is heaven! KwaZulu- Natal is a treasure trove of exciting routes, discovered and waiting to be uncovered, with weather allowing for cycling at any time of the year. Drakensberg and Pietermaritzburg is blessed with superb options.

#### 2. Kamberg Nature Reserve

In the foothills of the Drakensberg lies the Kamberg Nature Reserve, a popular spot for those who enjoy exploring the great outdoors. The reserve is home to a variety of wildlife including wildebeest, blesbok, eland, red hartebeest and oribi.









#### **THE INFORMATION**

#### GETTING THERE

Air India flies New Delhi-Orlando via New York return for approx. ₹60,000. Several other airlines also do the run, with stops either in Europe or the Middle East, depending on the airline.

#### WHERE TO STAY

The Orlando area has a range of accommodation options. We first staved at the Ramada Plaza Resort & Suites (from ₹4.500: ramada.com). The hotel offers suite-style accommodation which is good for families and can make special arrangements for Indian food at their Chutney's restaurant. On the Space Coast, we stayed at the newly-opened and very comfortable Homewood Suites by Hilton Cape Canaveral-Cocoa Beach (from \$130; homewoodsuites3.hilton.com), which are a stone's throw from the bars and restaurants of the cruise port. But the undoubted high point of the trip was our stay in a luxury 10-bedroom vacation rental home in Kissimmee (jeevesfloridarentals.com), which came with every facility including a swimming pool. Ideal for families travelling in large groups

and looking to economise on the high cost of a Disney hotel stay.

#### WHAT TO SEE & DO

> Brevard Zoo offers various levels of treetop aerial adventures. Zip lining is the most popular and you can go from the basic nine zip lines to 'Challenge Reloaded' and the ultimate 'Black Diamond' which throws in additional obstacles like a highwire bicvcle and a rock wall. For the less adventurous, there is the treetop canopy walk 20 feet up in the trees and two zip lines. For those with families, the zoo also has wonderful opportunities for feeding, petting and interacting with giraffes, lorikeets, rhinos and other animals. Guided kayaking trips and a train ride are also available as parts of a zoo admission package but the adventure activities have to be bought separately. Adults \$17.95, children \$13.95; brevardzoo.org > Sea kayaking can be done on a tranquil bay in Cocoa Beach's

a tranquil bay in Cocoa Beach's
Thousand Islands through Wildlife
Watersports. They have a wide
selection of one- and two-man
kayaks and paddleboards to
choose from. Private changing

stations, lockers and a basic level of instruction for beginners are provided. See **wildlifewatersports.com**.

> For a different river kayaking experience, go to Shingle Creek in Kissimmee and rent your equipment at The Paddling Center—kayaks, paddleboards, canoes. It also offers guided tours of the creek and nearby Makinson Island on West Lake Toho. For landlubbers, there are adjacent biking and hiking trails and outdoor picnic tables. Guided canoe tours from \$45, canoe rentals from \$13/hour; paddlingcenter.com.

> Airboat rides are offered by Spirit of the Swamp. You can take rides lasting an hour, 90 minutes and two hours—that way you can have enough time to find the elusive creatures of the swamp, particularly the alligators. Be sure to call and reserve beforehand no walk-ins are allowed. From \$49.95 adults, \$44.95 children; spiritoftheswamp.com.

> Cycling is a good way to explore the picturesque model town of Celebration with its 1940s architecture. Rentals are available from Celebration Bike Rentals (tourcelebration.com). Scott will take you on a guided tour of the neighbourhood along scenic winding trails and waterfront pathways—it is quite an easy and relaxed ride with no ups and downs and lasts about two hours. Scott is an entertaining guide and the bike trip can be an enjoyable antidote to the non-stop action at Disney and Universal.

> A hot air balloon ride is a fun and unique way to experience Orlando and Orlando Balloon Rides (from \$195 adults, \$99 child; orlandoballoonrides.com) offers safe and enjoyable rides lasting about an hour. Reservations are required two days in advance and due to the tropical thunderstorms that sometimes occur in the Florida area, one needs to confirm the flight at 8pm the previous night. If the flight is cancelled due to weather, you will be rescheduled to the next day so it is good to plan ahead and keep a day in reserve. Another tip is to wear the same casual and comfortable clothes and shoes as you would when walking around as it is no colder in the air than it is on the ground.

RANJAN PAL

# Incredible India



# Welcome to Pollachi and Valparai.

Where you can see the best of nature and wildlife. This is an ideal location to shoot your next film.

The flora and fauna, sprawling Coconut grooves, Green Valleys blend well to make it picture perfect.

Location: 50 kms from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, South India.

Nearest Airport: Coimbatore





Commissioner of Tourism, Tamil Nadu Tourism Complex, No. 2, Wallajah Road, Chennai - 600 002. Tamil Nadu, India.
Ph: 91-44-2533 3333 / 3857. Fax: 91-44-2533 3385. Website: www.tamilnadutourism.org E-mail: ttdc@vsnl.com For online booking log on to: www.ttdconline.com Toll Free No. 1800 4253 1111 Ooty : 0423 - 2444370 To 377 Kodaikanal : 04542 - 241336 To 339 Yercaud : 04281 - 223335 To 336 Ahmedabad: Ph: 079 - 2658 0317 Hyderabad: Ph: 040 - 2322 6858 New Delhi: Ph: 011 - 2374 5427 2336 6327 Mumbai: Ph: 022 - 2411 0118 Kolkata: Ph: 033 - 2423 7432 Jaipur: Ph: 0141 - 2204 999

DIPR/511/Display/2016

## GREAT OCEAN DRIVE



SITTING BY THE DOCK OF THE BAY IS NOT THE ONLY PLEASURABLE THING TO DO IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS BY **RISHAD SAAM MEHTA** 



It was on this diesel-electric submarine of the Soviet Navy that the world came within a whisker of vaporisation



This Soviet submarine brought the world close to nuclear apocalypse in October 1962; and (right) one of these torpedo tubes was loaded with a nuclear warhead

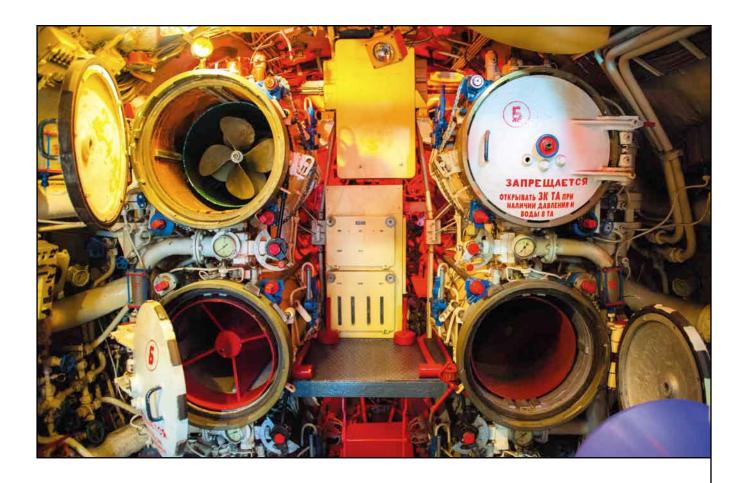
tepping into the B-39, as it stands slowly being eaten away by vicious rust in the San Diego harbour, is reason enough to get a tetanus shot. Because of its tiny confines, the chances of scratching yourself on the profusion of metal within are very real. But on October 27, 1962, the threat onboard was even greater than that. It was on this diesel-electric submarine of the Soviet Navy that the world came within

a whisker of vaporisation.

Submarine B-39 was involved in the infamous Cuban Missile Crisis and it had been cut off from communication with Moscow while submerged. It urgently needed to resurface for air. On top of that, the US Navy destroyer it was shadowing, USS Beale, started dropping depth charges on the beleaguered B-39. In the sweltering command module of the sub, Captain Valentin Savitsky ordered the crew to prime the sub's 10-kiloton nuclear torpedo

because he was convinced that the Cold War between the US and the USSR had finally heated up. The target was the *USS Randolph*, the giant aircraft carrier leading the task force, blockading Cuba.

Political officer Ivan Semonovich Maslennikov gave his consent for the launch but chief of staff of the submarine flotilla, Commander Vasiliy Arkhipov, who was also onboard, stubbornly refused to do so. The consent of all three was required and, by refusing to do so, Arkhipov effec-



#### This bone-chilling tale, about how close the world came to nuclear apocalypse, is reason enough to visit the B-39

tively saved the world—what would have followed that torpedo strike would have been a barrage of nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles laying waste to the world.

This bone-chilling tale, about how close the world came to nuclear apocalypse, told on a vintage cathode ray tube monitor right next to that very torpedo tube, is reason enough to visit the B-39. This is one of the 11 ships in the collection of the Maritime Museum, San Diego.

Half a mile south along the San Diego Bay is the Navy Pier and here stands the USS Midway, which is now a museum. I spent an entire day on it, fascinated by how realistically it is presented to an awestruck visitor. The self-guided audio often had me break out in goose-bumps as scenarios and situations were excitingly narrated. This mammoth aircraft carrier was commissioned a week after the end of World War II and served for 47 years. Today its 18 Mark-16 guns, 84 Bofors-40mm guns and 68 Oerlikon-20mm cannons are silent forever, after having blazed away in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf.

In fact, my plan for that day, besides visiting the Maritime Museum and the *USS Midway*, was to drive six miles to Coronado Beach and visit the Hotel del Coronado

with its iconic red roofs and enjoy the sunset there. But my fascination with *Midway* put paid to that plan. So with only a little bit of daylight left, I headed to Mission Beach and signed up for a spot of jetpacking. I thought photos of me shooting into the sky, blasted up by high-powered jets of water, would look cool on Instagram and it looked so easy. But after lots of dunking during my long learning curve I realised that jetpacking needs patience and perseverance. The jets of water were like living pythons that seemed to have a mind of their own and the directional adjustments had to be minuscule. Too much in either direction often

Here, boards of all sizes take pride of place, used to surf or paddleboard. You can even practise yoga on paddleboards here!





A view of Orange County's city of Laguna Niguel; and (below) a spot of yoga on Huntington Beach before a day out stand-up paddleboarding

had me slamming down into the water headfirst or doing a backflip mid air. I just about managed a vertical flight of 20 feet in the air. But for many days afterwards, thanks to my dunking, I had saltwater running out of my ears and sinuses.

Leaving San Diego the next day, I drove 40 miles north to Escondido, to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park. Though the famous San Diego Zoo is within the city and close to Balboa Park, I thought Safari Park a far better experience. Again I'd made the mistake of making too little time for it and with a number of animals and attractions I ended up spending a better part of the day



X & KINGS COX
S COX & KINGS COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX
S COX & KINGS COX
S COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX
& KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX
& KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS COX & KINGS
COX & KINGS CO

COX & KINGS COX &

A luxury holiday destination with picturesque landscapes - serene lagoons and golden beaches, Ras Al Khaimah is unique for all ages. Besides dreamy waterfront homes, unique camping to idyllic luxury wellness, Ras Al Khaimah also offers an adrenalin boost to adventure lovers with water sports. It boasts of beautiful natural attractions - sailing in traditional dhows, Falconry, Wadi safaris and camel racing. An unforgettable Arabian experience awaits you just 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport.

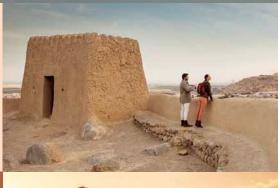
#### TAILOR-MADE HOLIDAYS

**BEST OF RAS AL KHAIMAH** 03 Nights / 04 Days Visit Ras Al Khaimah

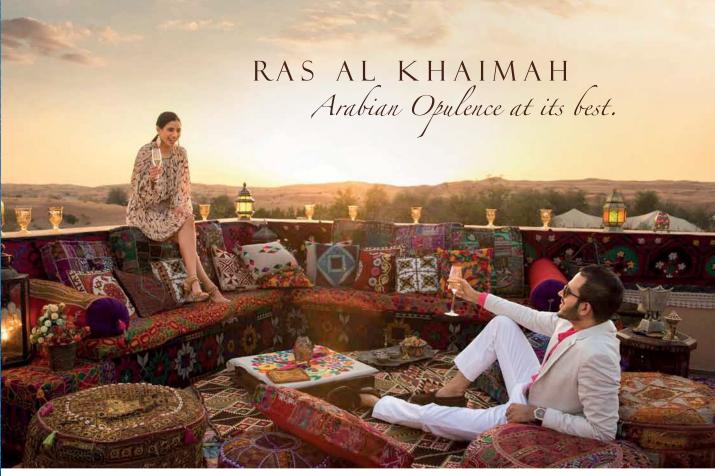
Ras Al Khaimah ₹**33,500**\* per person

BEST OF UAE 05 Nights / 06 Days

Visit Ras Al Khaimah & Dubai ₹47,500\* per person







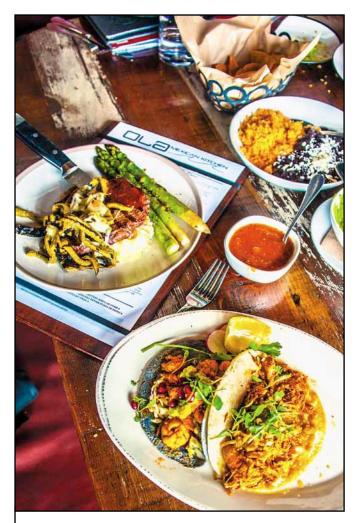
\*Above mentioned rates are Starting From per person rates on Twin Sharing Basis. Holiday Price Includes: Accommodation with breakfast, Transfers and Sightseeing's as per the itinerary. Holiday Price Excludes: International Air ticket, Airport Taxes, OTB, Visa, Over-seas Mediclaim Insurance, Govt. Service Tax of 4.50%, any expense of personal nature. Holiday price calculated on ROE 1 USD = 68 INR. Rate of Exchange on the day of the booking will be applicable. Above rates are not applicable during Blackout period. T&C applicable.

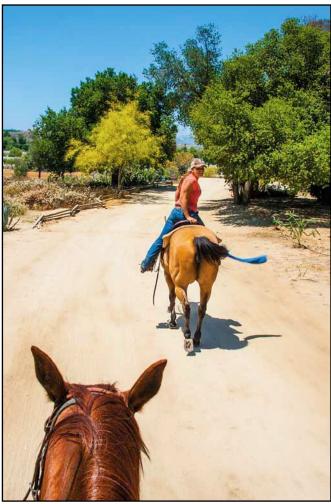












# Before I could ride I had to befriend my horse, brush it down and saddle it. Luckily he was friendly and quite easy to ride

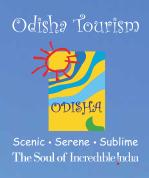
there. On the caravan safari I got to feed giraffes, saw a 20-minute-old wildebeest calf take its first hesitant steps even before his mother's placenta had dried up and fallen off, and a number of rhinos and buffaloes. The gambolling Sumatran tiger cubs were show-stoppers too.

As a result, my Dodge Charger roared into quiet little Temecula pretty late in the evening. I was up before sunrise and the crack of dawn found me standing in a wicker basket with seven others. The

roar of a propane flame rent the silent dawn and, as 250,000 cubic feet of hot air filled the balloon, we lifted off in the wicker basket attached to it. There was a low mist and breaking through it and floating above it at 2,000 feet was a wonderful experience. Temecula is a wine-growing region and the rising sun soon melted away the mist and golden rays of light lit up symmetrical vineyards. After a champagne breakfast I headed to the Green Acres Ranch on De Portola Road, which is lined with wineries.

Lunch at Ola Mexican Kitchen at Huntington Beach; and (right) horse riding around Temecula Wine Country at the Green Acres Ranch

At Green Acres Ranch they are passionate about horses and I was there for a horse ride. But before I could ride I had to make friends with my horse, brush it down and saddle it. Luckily he was friendly and quite easy to ride so I could look around and enjoy that mid-morning ride.



## come to Home

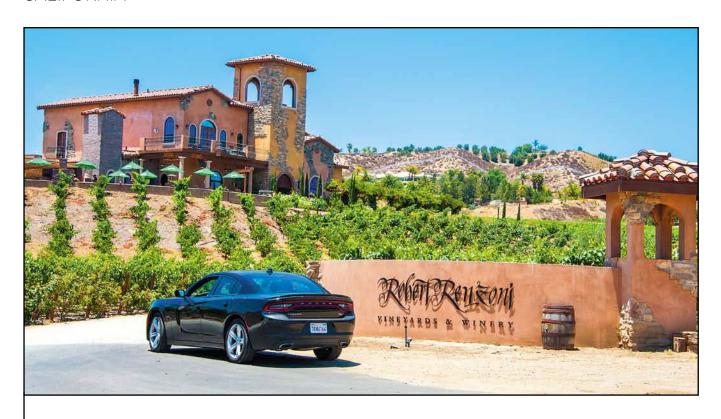


Hi, I am a Ruddy Shelduck waiting to receive you at Nalabana, Chilika Lake, Odisha, India.



Website: odishatourism.gov.in / www.visitodisha.org | E-mail: oritour@gmail.com
OTDC Central Reservation Counter (10am - 6pm): Tel.: +91 674 2430764

Toll free: 1800 208 1414



# Vineyards and winemaking is relatively new, but that doesn't mean that the stuff in cellars here is below par

The rest of that day I spent leisurely exploring the vineyards on De Portola Road. Temecula is in California's Riverside County, the stomping ground of Native Americans before the first Spanish missionaries arrived in the late 1780s. The stagecoach line through this region saw further development and Temecula Valley grew to become ranching land.

Vineyards and winemaking is relatively new—not even a century old—but that doesn't mean that the stuff in cellars here is below par. In fact most wineries are familyrun and winemaking here is practised in more with a passion for this art rather than an eye on the profit line. And the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere at most wineries make them a delight to visit. I had a fabulous lunch on the terrace of the Robert

Renzoni Winery. The star of the menu was the meat, cheese and bread sampler plate served with olives, tapenades and dips. My favorite wine was Cougar Winery's Pink Cougar Sangiovese Rose.

Temecula also takes the prize for my favourite meal which was at the Gambling Cowboy in Old Town Temecula. The slow-cooked prime rib is divine enough to make a grown man cry with happiness. The city's main street, crowded with noisy, happy pubs and delicious restaurants, all set in architecture from when California belonged to Mexico's Spanish Empire, is the place to be for a night on the town.

Happily surprised by Temecula, I headed northwest towards the beaches of Orange County, my last stop before I would fly out of Los Angeles. Great driving roads on this trip warranted a big-engined Dodge Charger Road and Track

Laguna Beach and Newport Beach are famous for their fabulous surfbreaks. But bikinis and bloody marys are as much of a draw—the former have less surface area than a handkerchief and the latter is a buzzing meal by itself, with a shrimp, crab claw and vegetables added into it, not to mention the handcrafted Tito's Vodka from Texas.

Broadway by Amar Santana, a restaurant from a chef of Indian origin from the Dominican Republic, is an intimate space in Laguna Beach that has a unique menu. The braised Beeler's pork belly, the trufflecrusted Scottish salmon and the crisp brussels sprouts are all must-trys.

Huntington Beach—the grungier cousin



#### **CALIFORNIA**

of air-brushed Newport and Laguna-is also surfing paradise. Here, boards of all sizes take pride of place, used for surfing or stand-up paddleboarding. You can even practise yoga on paddleboards here!

At one of the quieter bays around Huntington Beach I met up with Rocky McKinnon, a surfer who not only offers superb stand-up paddleboarding lessons but also designs and manufactures surf

and paddleboards. He taught me the basics of balance and how to hold the oar. I had never done this before so I was prepared for a dunking in the water, as with my jetpacking incident. But as I tentatively set off, I was surprised to find that SUP is easier than it looks. In just a few moments I had found my balance. Besides being a fun way to be out on the water it is also very good core exercise. It's like cycling: once you find your balance and how to keep your centre of gravity low and within the dimensions of the board, you are set for good.

That was how I spent my last few hours in Southern California and a few hours later I had packed my bags and pointed the nose of my Dodge Charger towards Los Angeles. Nevada and another adventure were waiting, but that, as they say, is another story.

#### **■**THE INFORMATION

#### GETTING THERE

Etihad Airlines flies Abu Dhabi to Los Angeles and has convenient connections to Abu Dhabi from many Indian cities. A Mumbai-Los Angeles round trip costs ₹70,000 (approx.). Passengers complete US Immigration and Customs formalities in Abu Dhabi itself, enabling them to simply collect their bags and walk out at Los Angeles or any other US city. Several other airlines also do the route with stops either in the Middle East or Europe or Southeast Asia.

#### WHERE TO STAY

I drove from San Diego to Los Angeles, staying at San Diego, Temecula Wine Country and at Orange County.

> In San Diego, the **Kimpton Hotel Palomar** (from ₹13.000: hotelpalomar-sandiego.com) is in the popular Gaslamp Quarter and is walking distance from theatres. restaurants, nightlife venues and the harbour. Overnight valet parking costs ₹2,800 or you can find street parking around the hotel that is free on weekends and from 6pm to 8am.

- > In Temecula Wine Country, I stayed at the Temecula Creek Inn (from ₹9.000: temeculacreekinn. com), which has a lovely 27-hole championship golf course on the property and offers in-room massage treatments.
- > The Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort and Spa (from

₹20,000; huntingtonbeach.regency. hyatt.com) was my base in Orange County. It is connected to the beach by an overhead bridge and has an onsite surf, yoga and watersports centre. About 24km south along the coast is Laguna Beach which is not as grungy as Huntington Beach and a little more upmarket. Here a good place to stay is the Inn at Laguna Beach (from ₹5,000; innatlagunabeach. com). It is right on the beach and yet in the heart of the city of Laguna Beach.

#### WHERE & WHAT TO EAT

> Broadway by Amar Santana: This cosy little restaurant at Laguna Beach is fantastic for a date night or an intimate family dinner. Standouts include the pork belly, the beef marrow and the pan-seared Alaskan halibut (broadwaybyamarsantana.com).

> Ivory Restaurant and Lounge: Again at Laguna Beach, the crab cakes and Chilean sea bass are simply fantastic (ivorylaguna.com).

- > The Gambling Cowboy: Located in Old Town Temecula, this rollicking joint is all about local brews and hearty cuts of meat. The steaks here are grilled to perfection. But you should start your meal with the delicious bacon-wrapped scallops served with a Brie and chives cream sauce (ilovethecowboy.com).
- > Café 21: This bustling café in the Gaslamp Quarter is known for its brunch and my choice of a scallop,



tomato, pesto and mozzarella omelette was served in an oldstyle cast-iron skillet (cafe-21.com).

#### WHAT TO SEE & DO

> San Diego Zoo Safari Park offers a great day out for kids and adults alike. There are plenty of helpful volunteers to help you plan your visit as well as handy and easy to read maps to carry around and orient yourself. They have 10 safaris to choose from, including the caravan safari where you can feed giraffes, and the jungle ropes safari for the fit and adventurous. The Ultimate Safari is a sort of VIP safari that is customised according to what you want to see. Day tickets: ₹3,500 adults, ₹2,800 children; sdzsafaripark.org > Jet Packing can be done on the San Diego Bay at the Mission Bay

Sports Centre. It is great fun and

the crew are helpful and patient

and will get you flying, but takes some learning. A 20-minute flight costs ₹2,000; jetpackamerica.com

> Stand-up paddleboarding and surfing lessons are offered by Rocky McKinnon at Huntington Beach. Rocky manufactures as well as designs surfboards and SUP boards. An hourlong lesson costs ₹7,000;

#### mckinnonsurfandsuplessons.com

> A hot air balloon ride is a fun and unique way to float over Temecula, taking in the sunrise and the vineyards. A Grape Escape (from ₹8,700 per person) offer safe and enjoyable rides lasting about 90 minutes. Reservations are required and because these flights are very weatherdependent one needs to confirm the flight at 8pm the previous night. Check out hotairtours.com.

RISHAD SAAM MEHTA



SINGAPORE | MALAYSIA | THAILAND | INDONESIA | SRILANKA | DUBAI OMAN | VIETNAM HONG KONG | CHINA | MAURITIUS | MALDIVES | TURKEY GREECE | AUSTRALIA | KENYA SOUTH AFRICA | EASTERN EUROPE | SCANDINAVIA

your ultimate travel hub

We are delighted to welcome you to this professional travel home for an outstanding travel experience under the guidance of experienced and passionately committed team members.

#### STHI HOLIDAYS INDIA PVT. LTD.

Tel: 011- 40414041 | Mobile + 91 9999075445 | +91 9953014041

Head office: +91 9540004411/22/24/33/55/66/77 | +91 9643209502/03/04/05 | 9643504041

Haryana +91 9991544041 | Jalandhar +91 902314041 & 9023344041 | Amritsar +91 9023944041 | Jaipur +91 9950760009

Ahmedabad +91 7226904041 | Surat +91 7228904041 | Mumbai +91 9004424041 | Bengaluru +91 9591364041

@ query@theleafholidays.com www.theleafholidays.com

H.O. Delhi: 111 RG Complex II Prashant vihar, Rohini –
 Sector 14, New Delhi - 110085.







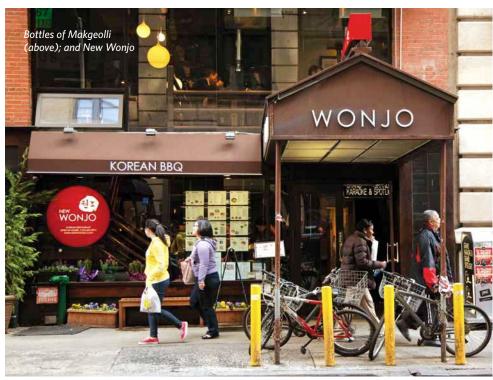
#### **NEW YORK CITY**

I didn't have happy memories from the last time I was in NYC's Little Korea in 2013. I was younger then, but not so young that I deserved to be carded. My driving licence, ancient as it was, was illegible, and my voter ID did not have my year of birth. So, in spite of my advancing years, I was turfed out. Well, three years on, I was back in K-Town and, to make doubly sure that no one dared ask me for ID, I'd even become bald.

We were at **New Wonjo** (newwonjo. com), apparently the only restaurant in K-Town which had managed to persuade the powers that be that they could operate a charcoal-fired grill at each table (other restaurants had to make do with gas-fired grills), on which a range of meats were barbecued. To wash down the BBQ, we had a large bowl of Makgeolli, a milky, sparkling rice wine. Literally meaning "roughly strained", it's an unfiltered rice wine. A working-class favourite till it went out of fashion, it's come roaring back. The fair amount of lactic acid and fibre it contains make it popular with the elderly as well.

A bottle of soju is also de rigueur. Here's a piece of soju etiquette: soju should always be served and accepted with both hands. I suspect it's not so much a cultural thing as a need to make sure you don't drop it, which can come from underestimating the potency of soju. Distilled from rice liquor, it's incredibly popular in Korea, which has

Makgeolli, a milky, sparkling rice wine, means "roughly strained". A working-class favourite till it went out of fashion, it's come roaring back



























State Bank Multi-Currency Foreign Travel Card Go Abroad with

Convenient . Secure . Cashless







- Chip & PIN protected for premium security & worldwide acceptance.
- Accepted at over 35 Million MasterCard locations globally including over 2 million ATMs.
- 24/7 Global Emergency Assistance.
- Available in US Dollar, Singapore Dollar, Pound Sterling and Euro.
- For more information please visit: www.sbitravelcard.com



ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE

# The singularly named Dead Rabbit Grocery and Grog was created by the incomparable duo of Sean Muldoon and Jack McGarry

made Jinro soju one of the world's topselling liquor brands.

Next up, **Pocha 32** (pocha32.com), a very popular pub known for its range of flavoured soju. It takes its name from the Korean term for makeshift taverns in South Korea, which were known as pojangmacha, then shortened to pocha. We opt for the signature drink here, their watermelon soju, which was served chilled in half a scooped-out watermelon, and was delicious.

The next night, there are two young Danish women at the bar next to me, and we strike up a conversation. They frequently consult a book, which had helped guide them to the bar we're at, the singularly named **Dead Rabbit** 

**Grocery and Grog** (*deadrabbitnyc.com*), created by the incomparable duo of Sean Muldoon and Jack McGarry, fully as Irish as their names suggest.

I'd been guided here, not by a book, but by the urge to see if the Dead Rabbit lived up to the hype of the last few years, during which it has received awards from both World's 50 Best Bars and Tales of the Cocktail. This is also the bar where Ben Reed, a friend and cocktail wizard, once spent a well-soaked evening with his girlfriend, in which he conspired with the bar owners to serve a cocktail to her with an unusual garnish—an engagement ring. (No, she didn't consume the ring, and, yes, she is now his wife.)

The ground level of the bar is called

the Taproom. I peruse the menu, consult with Melissa the bartender and order a Slim Shady ("Powers Irish whiskey mixed with Suze, Lillet Blanc, Lemon, Peach, Basil and Green Peppercorn, and served in a champagne coupé glass"). There's also punch on offer and, as I wait for my drink, I decide to check with the bartender if she knows the etymology of the word punch, that it derives from the Hindi word, paanch (she didn't). I had along with me a copy of The Tulleeho! Book of Cocktails, which I wanted to present to Sean and Jack. Sean's wife Ann was behind the bar, and she graciously accepted the book on their behalf. I then found out that upstairs was the Parlor, an exclusive part of the bar,



## HAVE YOU SEEN SEHWAG'S BOUNCERS ONLINE?

66

#OSMQuote

Sehwag sure has a funny bone when it comes to birthday wishes!

99







**Hospitality Partner** 



**Marketing Partner** 



**Digital Partner** 



**Radio Partner** 



Here is a first-of-its kind initiative to honour the true superstars of social media. Lloyd OSM Awards recognises and rewards the Outspoken, the Outstanding, the Outliers of the social media ecosystem. It seeks to honour individuals, companies and brands and the significant others, who have made a mark for themselves on Social Media.

#LLoydOSMAwards • f /OSMAwards • y /OsmAwards • www.osm-awards.com





An Outlook Initiative



















GETTY IMAGES

Facing, clockwise from top left: makgeolli; a coffee daiquiri; cocktails at Bear's Tooth, Juneau; beer from the Skagway Brewing Company; a cocktail at Dead Rabbit, NYC; watermelon soju; and a glass of De Brau

with a menu comprising 72 cocktails, dreamt up by the 19th century's most talented bartenders. Up I went.

Seated at the bar, I was pleased to find the two Danes joining me soon. I order a Big Wig ("Ardbeg 10 Year Old Islay Scotch Whisky, Bulleit Rye Whiskey, Cinnamon, Fennel, Lime, Curry Leaf, Orinoco Bitters") and also take a look at what the 'grocery' part of the title of the bar has to offer. A bottle of the signature Dead Rabbit Orinoco bitters made by my friend Adam Elmegirab of Boker's Bitters is on offer and I picked it up for a cocktail enthusiast back home. I also

picked up a copy of Dead Rabbit—Resurrection, a drinks menu designed as an adult graphic novel. Did Dead Rabbit live up to the hype? In spades.

#### WASHINGTON D.C.

The doorman at the Loews Madison Hotel in D.C., where we're staying, is from Cameroon. I reminisce with him about Roger Milla, the Cameroonian striker from the 1990 World Cup, who scored four goals and, at the age of 38, took Cameroon to the quarters. The doorman shakes his head, and bemoans the fact that players nowadays don't have a feeling of national pride; it's now all about the rich clubs of Europe, which have seduced the best African talent.

With soccer on our mind, it's just as well that Euro 2016 and the Copa America are both on, full tilt. After a long, hot



day on the National Mall, a cold glass of beer was welcome at the bar at Rural **Society** (*dc.ruralsocietyrestaurant.com*), the well-thought-of Argentinean restaurant at our hotel. The DC Brau Public Pale Ale was the only local beer available on tap, and I decided to start with it. Brewed in the classic American pale ale style, it seemed a far more civilised way



### **IS THE BUREAUCRAT YOU FOLLOW ALSO LEADING SOCIAL MEDIA?**





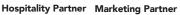
## Vote for your favourite OSM Bureaucrat of the Year

for more information log on to www.osm-awards.com























**GETTY IMAGES** 

to spend the evening compared to the fans amusing themselves at the England-Russia game in Marseille. I follow up my DC Brau with a pint of Loose Cannon IPA, a flagship beer from the Heavy Seas Brewery in Baltimore, figuring that Baltimore was close enough to DC to count as local. The match ends 1-1 and we leave before violence breaks out on screen.

Detente is in the air. Obama has visited Cuba, diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba have resumed and civilian flights from the US to Cuba are set to take off soon. What better time to revisit the daiquiri, a cocktail born in Cuba and which came to the USA via a historic club in DC, the **Army and Navy Club** (armynavyclub.org). A private function is winding up in the Daiquiri Lounge, so we were ushered first to the Eagle Grill. My wife and I have a daiquiri each, served in a signature jam jar with a handle, and excellent they were.

The private function over, we make our way up to the Lounge, where we coax another daiquiri from the bartender, and read the legend on the wall. Back in 1898, Jennings Cox, an American mining engineer in Cuba invented the daiquiri, which he named after the town of Daiquiri where he was then working. In 1909, a junior medical officer named Lucius W. Johnson visited Daiquiri, where Cox introduced him to the drink. On Lucius's return to DC, he introduced it at his club, the Army and Navy, making it the first place in the USA where the daiquiri was made and served. The rest, as they say, is history.

#### **ALASKA**

Alaska's largest city, Juneau, is blessed with some of the best beer I've tasted at the sister outlets of Bear's Tooth and Moose's Tooth, along with some amazing food. Rod Hancock and Matt Jones, united by their love for beer, pizza and rock climbing set up their first outlet, Moose's Tooth (moosestooth.net), naming it after a peak in the Alaska Range. After an exhilarating but exhausting day spent hiking in the Chugach Stage Park and cycling on the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, I walk over to Moose's Tooth and settle in at the bar counter. I find myself next to Joe, who's on a break from DC and is off the next day to a friend's fishing camp in Kodiak, where he hopes to learn the trade, and perhaps orchestrate a

career shift.

"Handcrafted ales of the last frontier" is their tag line, and I start with a sampling paddle, with the choice of four beers from their large menu left to you. I chose the Prince William Porter, which is an American Brown Porter, the Northern Lights Amber Ale, a copper-coloured ale, the Moose's Tooth Hefeweizen, an American-style Hefeweizen and the Pipeline Stout, a full-bodied stout beer. Moose's Tooth and, as I was to discover, other brew pubs I visited in Alaska, also made available a selection of beers from other brewers, one of which I choose. The crowds keep thronging in and I'm gratified that, settled at the bar with my paddle and pint in front of me, I look like a veteran, and a few people ask my advice on what they should order!

Outside it was touching midnight, but it seemed like it was barely past midday. I began to empathise with Al Pacino's character in Christopher Nolan's *Insomnia*. After a couple more beers, I head home, as the next morning we have an early start to the town of Talkeetna, from where we're taking a light plane through the Alaska Range, and where we are to land on the south-east fork of the



The famous daiquiri was born in Cuba and came to the US via the historic Army and Navy Club in D.C.

Beer on tap in Washington D.C.; and a daiquiri keeps company with a sister cocktail



### IS YOUR FAVOURITE **MUSICIAN ALSO ROCKING SOCIAL MEDIA?**







#### Vote for your favourite **OSM Musician of the Year**

for more information log on to www.osm-awards.com

#LLoydOSMAwards • f /OSMAwards • y /OsmAwards





Hospitality Partner Marketing Partner Digital Partner





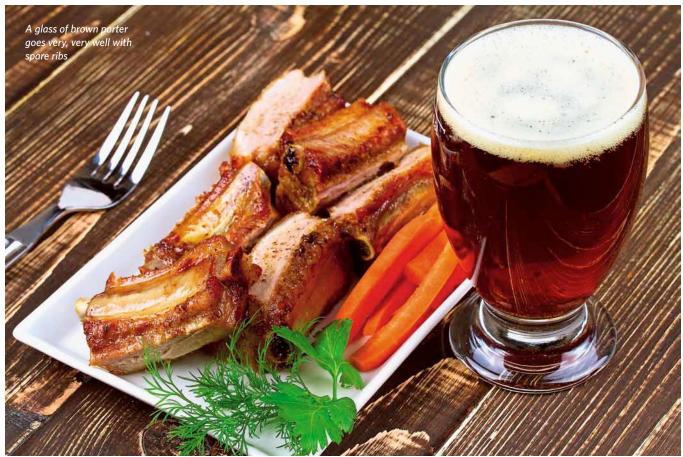












ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE

# Outside it was touching midnight, inside it felt like midday. I began to empathise with Al Pacino's character in *Insomnia*

Kahiltna Glacier. This is also where the Denali base camp is situated, from where climbers head off to the tallest mountain in North America.

On our return from our 'flightseeing' trip, we head to **Bear's Tooth** (beartooth grill.net), which serves outstanding Tex-Mex food and beer. I start with the Wild Country raspberry wheat beer, flavoured with Oregon raspberries, and then tempted by a weeklong celebration of the Negroni cocktail, opt for one, made with 50 Fathoms gin from a local distillery, Port Chilkoot Distillery.

A scenic bus ride down the Seward highway gets us to Seward, from where we board our floating home for the next week, the *Celebrity Millennium*. And, apart from the scenic wonders of Alaska, I'm looking forward to the brews and bars along our voyage. We're scheduled for four days of back-to-back stops following our first day of looking the Hubbard Glacier in the eye.

Juneau, Alaska's capital, beckons and I was looking forward to a brewery visit at the famed Alaskan Brewing Company, but it was closed, it being a Sunday. So I settled for the next best thing, the **Red Dog Saloon** (*reddogsaloon.com*), which was set up in 1887 to cater to gold miners. The batwing doors of the Red Dog Saloon open to give us a view of what the 19th century might look like, with possibly the only thing changing being the 70-year-old stand-up comic with his electric guitar, and a tip box labelled 'Old Farts Fund' in front of him.

I start with a laden glass of the Alaskan Amber ale, served on tap, and raise a toast to Marcy and Geoff, the co-founders of Alaska Brewing, and my wife has

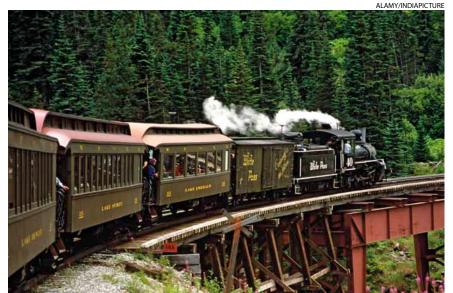


#### Your heavenly abode at the feet of Tirumala, Tirupati

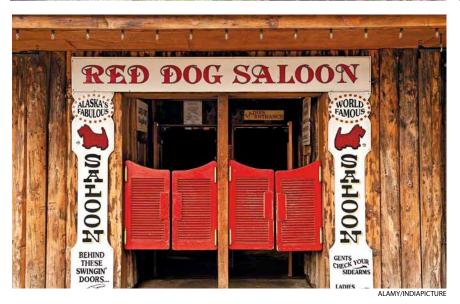
On the way to Lord Venkateshwara Swamy temple, Marasa Sarovar Premiere is the first world class hotel in Tirupati, inspired by the 10 avatars of Lord Vishnu. Come, stay in a state of divine bliss, with a perfect combination of soulful aesthetics, modern world-class facilities, divine dining experience and signature Sarovar hospitality.



A SAROVAR HOTEL







At the Red Dog, the floor is strewn with sawdust. The only things missing are a card sharp and a shootout

Clockwise from left: The Red Dog Saloon; on the Yukon Railroad; and a glass from Icy Strait Brewing

a Glacier Margarita. Stand-up fades into country music taking us back to Johnny Horton's country music standard 'When It's Springtime in Alaska (It's 40 Below)'. The floor is strewn with sawdust and the waitresses are dressed in period clothes. The only things missing are a card sharp and a shootout. But this is America, anything can happen, I figure, and decide to order the Alaskan Summer Ale, a crisp and light Kolsch-style ale. We reluctantly bid adieu to Red Dog as I also want to visit the famed Tracy's King Crab Shack (kingcrabshack.com), right on the shore where we have some absolutely brilliant beer-battered shrimps, crab legs and another glass of beer from the Alaskan brewing company.

The next day we're in Skagway, home of gangster Soapy Smith, whose shootout with Frank Reid appears to have

been the high point of Skagway's existence. Off the ship, we take the White Pass and Yukon Railroad, an amazing feat of civil engineering, completed in 1900 and built to provide a way to the Klondike Gold Rush. We pass a stunning panorama of waterfalls, snow-capped peaks and glaciers as the train hugs sheer cliffs on its way to the White Pass.

Back in town, after succumbing to a bawdy depiction of Soapy Smith's life and death, we head for the **Skagway Brewing Company** (*skagwaybrew ing. com*) to calm our nerves from the train ride and the subsequent 'on stage' shootout (which made up for striking out at the Red Dog Saloon). As we have the time, I follow this up with another beer, the Spruce Tip blonde, which incorporates hand-picked Sitka spruce tips.

From Skagway we head to Icy Straits,

where the pleasures of a Bloody Mary packed with crab meat, and garnished with a crab leg, seem a drink too far for me. Instead, I have a brew—from, you guessed it, **Icy Strait Brewing** (*icystrait brewing.com*).

From Icy Straits, we head to our last halt, Ketchikan. Eschewing the charms of an 'authentic' totem village, we instead go for a hike on the Rainbird Trail, getting to which itself is quite a hike! Back to the pier we head back to the Alaska Fish House (alaskafishhouse.com), where a plate of halibut and chips had impressed us earlier. The sun is glorious and welcome, as we dry out from our hike, and our table has a great view of our cruise ship on one side and kayakers on the other. One beer soon stretches into three. No, Muddy, whiskey (and beer), you bin very, very good...

## Participate in the most exciting ROAD TRIPS

## in different corners of the WORLD with ADVENTURES OVERLAND

Self Drive or Sit back & Enjoy the Ride!



OUR EXPEDITIONS ARE SAFE
 SUITABLE FOR ALL AGE BRACKETS
 NO SPECIAL DRIVING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
 ACCOMPANIED BY AN EXPERIENCED CREW

#### **EXPEDITION CALENDAR**

Alaska - Drive to the top of the world - 21st Aug - 3rd Sept 2016

Drive through the Alaskan wilderness on the Dalton Highway beyond the Arctic Circle

Jordan - Drive to the lowest point on earth - 8th Oct - 15th Oct 2016

Experience the Wadis, float on the Dead Sea and drive to Petra, one of the Seven Wonders of the World!

Snow Drive in Iceland - 19th Nov - 26th Nov 2016

Glaciers, Waterfalls, hotsprings, Geysers and above all...your own monster truck for a week!

Road to Rann - 10th Dec - 18th Dec 2016

Experience deserts, wetlands, salt marshes, crystal blue beaches and wildlife in a matter of days!

Russia - The Frozen Lakes Drive - 21st Jan - 28th Jan 2017

Can you survive the extreme Russian winters while driving on surreal frozen lakes from Moscow to St Petersburg?

Road to London 2017 - 15th April - 31st May 2017

15 Countries, 15000 km, 45 days and 8 timezones...can you handle the mother of all road trips?



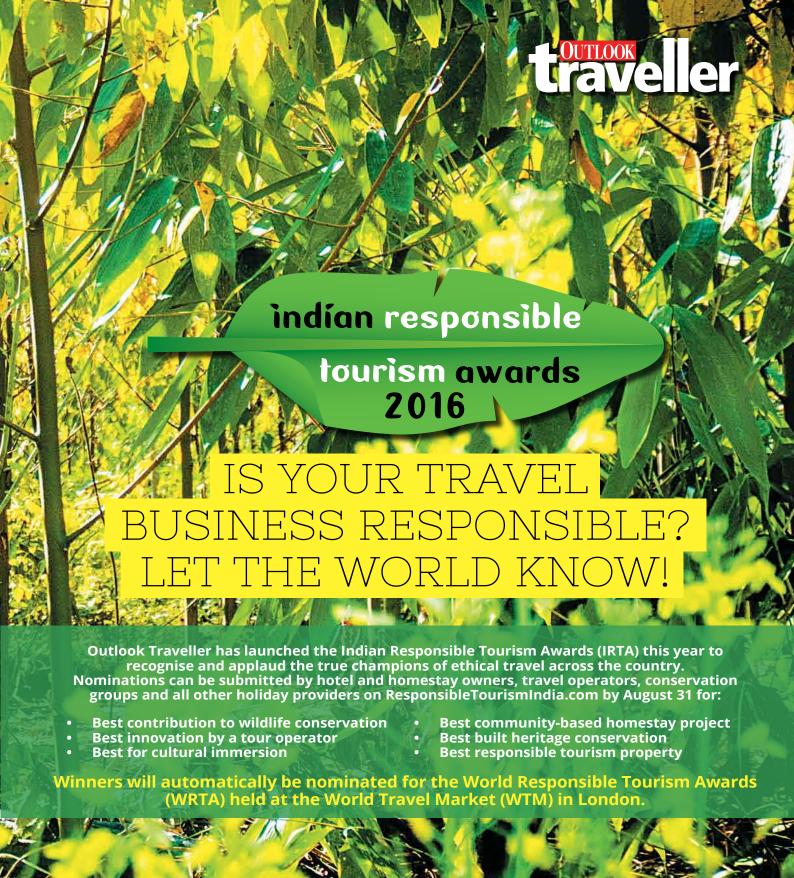


In partnership with:









For nominations, visit **www.responsibletourismindia.com.**There's no entry fee, and you can nominate yourself for more than one category.
For any other queries, mail **soity@outlookindia.com.** 

## IT'S N'AWLINS, Y'ALL!

JAZZ AND COCKTAILS MAKE FOR A HEADY MIX IN A STORIED CITY. CHARUKESI RAMADURAI PAYS HOMAGE





The oldest neighbourhood of the city, the French Quarter is the beating heart of New Orleans

ome of the best things in life seem to have come from New Orleans— jazz and cocktails, to name just two. I learn this significant fact on walking tours themed around each of these in the city.

The jazz, of course, everyone knows about. (Two words: Louis Armstrong.)

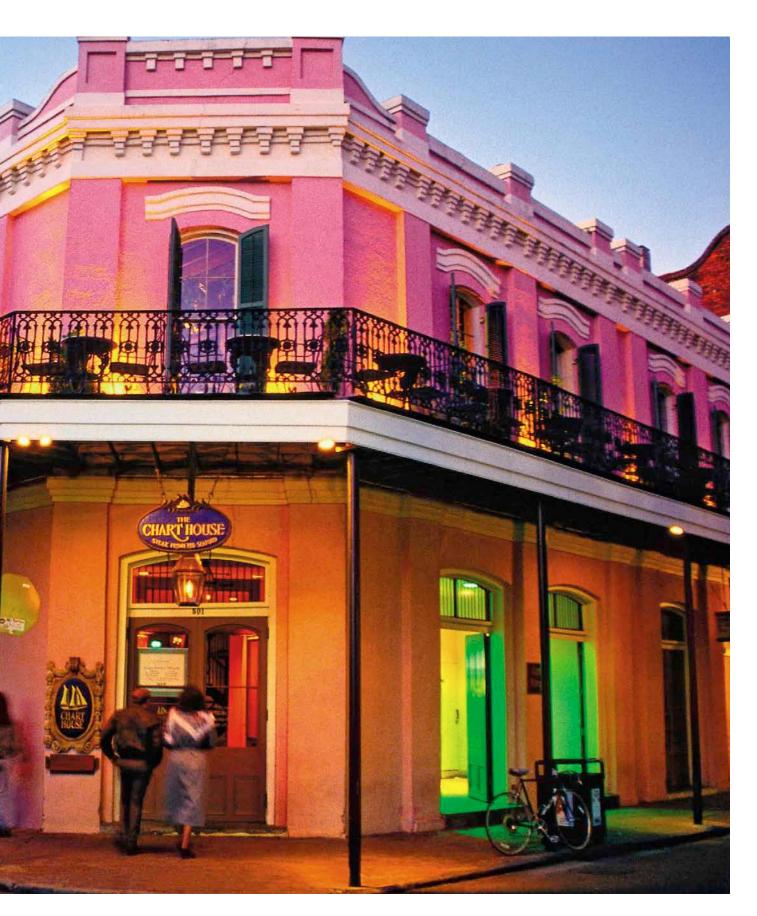
But the cocktails is a delightful discovery. On my walk, I come face to face with the potent Sazerac, the fruity Bayou Bash and the whimsical Green Fairy, among other boozy liquids. The story goes that in 1838, Antoine Peychaud, a French apothecary in New Orleans, began to serve brandy with bitters (and a secret ingredient) as a panacea.

This concoction, named after his favourite French brandy, Sazerac-de-Forge et Fils, was served in small egg-cups—coquetier in French, mangled to 'cocktail' in English. Although over time, American rye whiskey has taken the place of brandy, and a few drops of absinthe are added on top, Sazerac remains the signature drink of New Orleans.

Located on a strategic bend on the Mississippi, New Orleans has a colourful and chequered history. It was founded by the French, then ruled by the Spanish before being bought by the United States in 1803. It was also home to a large population of Africans, brought here as slaves. Today, the city is a melting pot of French and African languages and traditions.

Traces of the distinctive Creole culture are to be found in New Orleans' food. Seafood gumbo, jambalaya, red beans and rice, boiled crawfish, Oysters Rockefeller, po' boy—it's a long and famous list. My search for vegetarian gumbo (yes, there is such a thing) is fruitless, but I do try a po' boy—stuffed sandwiches created for the 'poor









boys' during the Great Depression.

Early one morning, I set off with my friend to the French Quarter, which is already up and about, with buskers and artists in action. The French Quarter is the beating heart—and touristy centre—of New Orleans. It is also the city's oldest neighbourhood, and its neat grid layout makes it easy to explore. I keep my neck craned towards the intricate grillwork balconies on the buildings lining the streets. Although the French first settled here, way back in 1718, it was the Spanish who built these, after the city was destroyed by fire in the late 18th century.

We are both high on sugar, having

stopped for breakfast in the form of beignets at the accurately, if unimaginatively, named Café Beignet. Think of beignets as square doughnuts on steroids and, like Polo mints, without the hole.

Of course, everyone will tell you the place to go for beignets in New Orleans is Café Du Monde. But that is a tourist attraction in itself, with mile-long queues. And I also think of this as my way of contributing to the perennial debate on where the best beignets are to be found. So I merely smirk at the waiting throngs from the shaded comfort of the streets bounding Jackson Square, across from Du Monde.

Music is in the very air that New

There's no dearth of voodoo stores in the French Quarter; and (below) The Spotted Cat is one of the most iconic jazz bars on Frenchmen Street

Orleans breathes, and nowhere more so than this neighbourhood. Spectacular brass bands appear with regularity, playing for all they're worth, occasionally moving the audience enough to dance in a self-conscious manner.

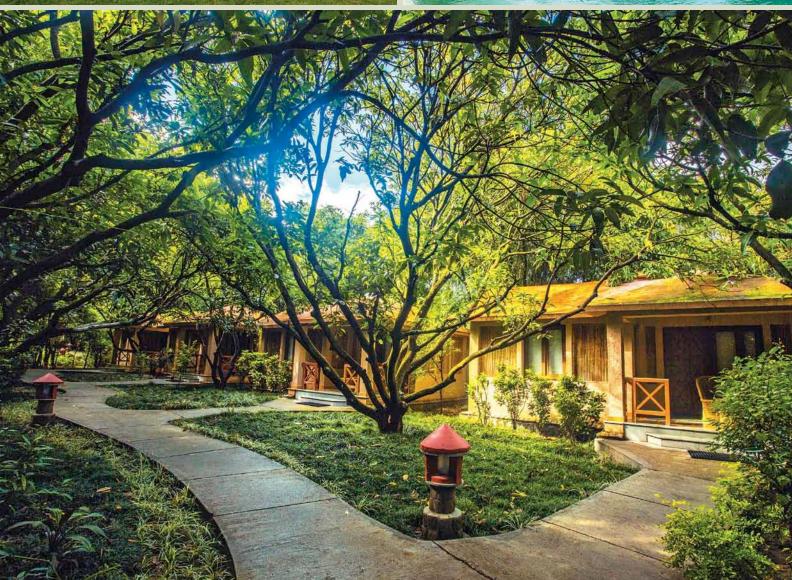
And apart from the music, there is much else going on at this square. Clairvoyants and fortune-tellers have set up shop on tables and chairs by the kerbside. One of them beckons to me as I stop to take her picture. Her board says, "Prepare to be amazed." I am prone to be amazed by the new and the wonderful, but not by crystal ball-gazers. But she is not offended when I refuse with a smile, and turns her attention to a couple hovering tentatively in the area.

I am more interested in the shops selling voodoo stuff ("May the curse be with you," says one signboard). Talk of voodoo is everywhere in town, from guided tours to spiritual temples. It has origins in the city's African immigrants from the late 18th century, who brought with them their belief in Voudon, or Great Spirit. I walk into one of the shops at random—run by an Indian immigrant—and find it stocks all manner of spells and oils for the curious and serious.

It turns out that Jackson Square is tame compared to Bourbon Street, where I head to later in the evening. Here, I feel like I have fallen through the rabbit hole and landed with a thud. Two men have painted themselves entirely in gold and silver and are seated on chairs in the middle of the road, showing passersby the middle finger (their way of asking for money). There are people holding up signs advertising 'Big Ass Beers' (and others holding up massive mugs of said beer). A small, squat machine is blowing out soap bubbles non-stop. And to one corner of the road, a young woman clad in just enough accessories to keep her from getting arrested, poses with tourists in exchange for dollars.







#### Tiger Camp – Corbett National Park (A Unit of Habitat Hotels Ltd.)

1/5, First Floor, Garage Block, Regal Bldg., Connaught Place, New Delhi – 110001 INDIA Phone: +91 11 4329 0022, +91 11 4329 0033, Mobile: +91 9911792327, 9891852004, 9910295370

E-mail: info@habitathotels.com, www.habitathotels.com



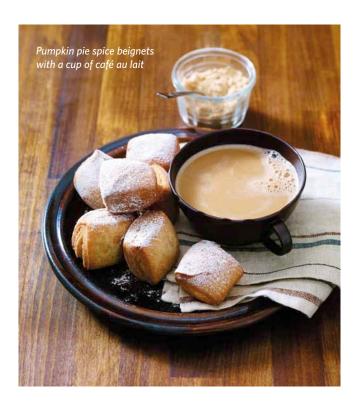
Earlier, when I had asked a resident for directions to a popular jazz club, he'd said, "It's at the nice end of Bourbon Street." And he added for emphasis, "Not on that side." I was, at the time, clueless about what that side was, but had nodded knowingly. Now, I know.

Having said that, I
have no reason to smirk.
For a good hour, I sip on
a noxious drink called
Hand Grenade, served in
a fluorescent green plastic
container, shaped like,
yes, a hand grenade with a
long stem. This is another
trademark New Orleans
cocktail, but one that did
not feature in my earlier
tour, for obvious reasons.
You must understand that
the Hand Grenade is adver-

tised as "the strongest cocktail in New Orleans" (a fact I was not aware of when I purchased the drink). And I believe it.

Later at night, I Google the ingredients of this cocktail, but give up reading after grain alcohol, gin, vodka and melon liqueur. Some things one is better off not knowing. But hey, I'm in N'Awlins! And here, everything goes. Even drinking in public, with bars helpfully serving drinks in to-go glasses.

In contrast, Frenchmen Street, a little distance away from the French Quar-



BOURBON STREET FEELS LIKE FALLING THROUGH THE RABBIT HOLE ter, is quiet, with all the buzz contained indoors. Frenchmen Street boasts of some of the best jazz bars in town, including the iconic Spotted Cat. This one is sadly silent between gigs, and I am there only for the music. So my friend and I walk up and down the street a couple of times, torn between snatches of wonderful music emanating from each of them.

We finally decide on entering one where the music has me twitching my feet. We settle down on stools to drink and listen. I sense that there is a lot of alcohol flowing through this story. But remember that bit about New Orleans being the birthplace of cocktails? I am merely paying homage.

This bar does not feature in any of the lists of best music

clubs in town but, as someone had told me earlier, you can't go wrong anywhere on Frenchmen Street. Gig finished, we head out into the cool night air, in search of the next place that would stir our souls with the music.

We have not walked far when we come across a quartet swinging it on a street corner. Despite the lateness of the hour, a small crowd is watching, a few heads nodding and feet tapping in time to the music. With or without the costumes, in N'Awlins, every day is Mardi Gras.

#### **■**THE INFORMATION

#### GETTING THERE

The best option is to fly into New York's JFK airport and take a connecting flight to New Orleans. The cheapest return fares to JFK from India are on Etihad and Turkish Airlines (from ₹68,000 return on economy class.)

#### WHERE TO STAY

Stay in the French Quarter, at the **Omni Royal Orleans (omnihotels.com)** or the **Royal** 

Sonesta (sonesta.com). Both offer rooms from ₹8,000. Luxury hotels such as Ritz-Carlton, Intercontinental and Marriott are also within walking distance.

#### WHAT TO SEE & DO

> For a break from the hubbub of the French Quarter, hop on to a tram going towards **St Charles Avenue**, a quiet residential street lined with elegant 19th-century mansions.

- > Take a **cruise on the Mississippi** on a paddlewheel steamboat for glimpses into the city's past.
- > Go jazz club-hopping on Frenchmen Street and Bourbon Street to catch the local music.
   > Try to plan your trip around the Mardi Gras (February/March) or the Jazz Festival (April/May) for the most intense N'Awlins experience.

CHARUKESI RAMADURAI





because every wedding deserves a perfect setting.





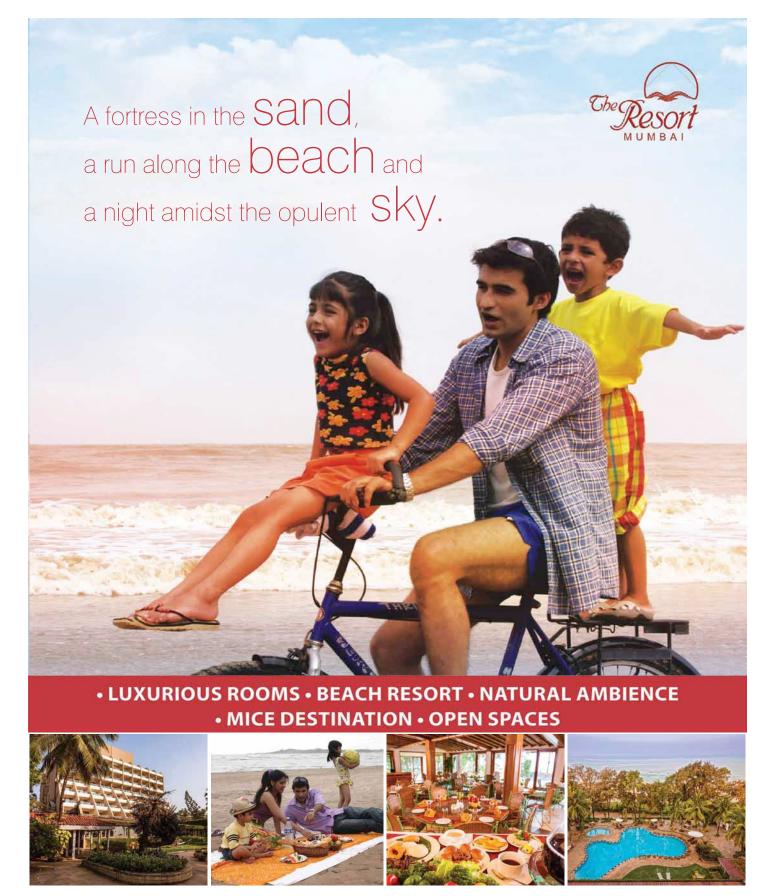
www.samode.com



Showcasing a tantalizing spectrum of delights to shore up years of wondrous togetherness for the bridal pair

here was a time when wedding planners were falling over themselves to sell the most thrilling theme wedding options to the bridal pair...they even threw in some interesting inputs on where they could spend their honeymoon. Well theme weddings haven't quite disappeared, but what's really come to the forefront of the 'wedding affair' is the 'Destination Wedding' —customized for all budgets. If you are beach person you can go to Goa or Kerala...and if you are really high-end—not just Mauritius...why not Capri or Santorini? And the hills are still alive with the sound of music...birdsong and burbling brooks— and fancy wedding destination resorts (with vintage fireplaces and stunning hill views) to take care of all your needs. An exclusive island wedding? You got it!

India or abroad...the canvas of Destination Weddings offers a tantalizing spectrum of delights to shore up the years to come.



Tel: 28447777, 61367777

11, Madh-Marve Road, Aksa Beach, Malad (West), Mumbai - 400 095 Resv. ID: resv@theresortmumbai.com, Email: info@theresortmumbai.com

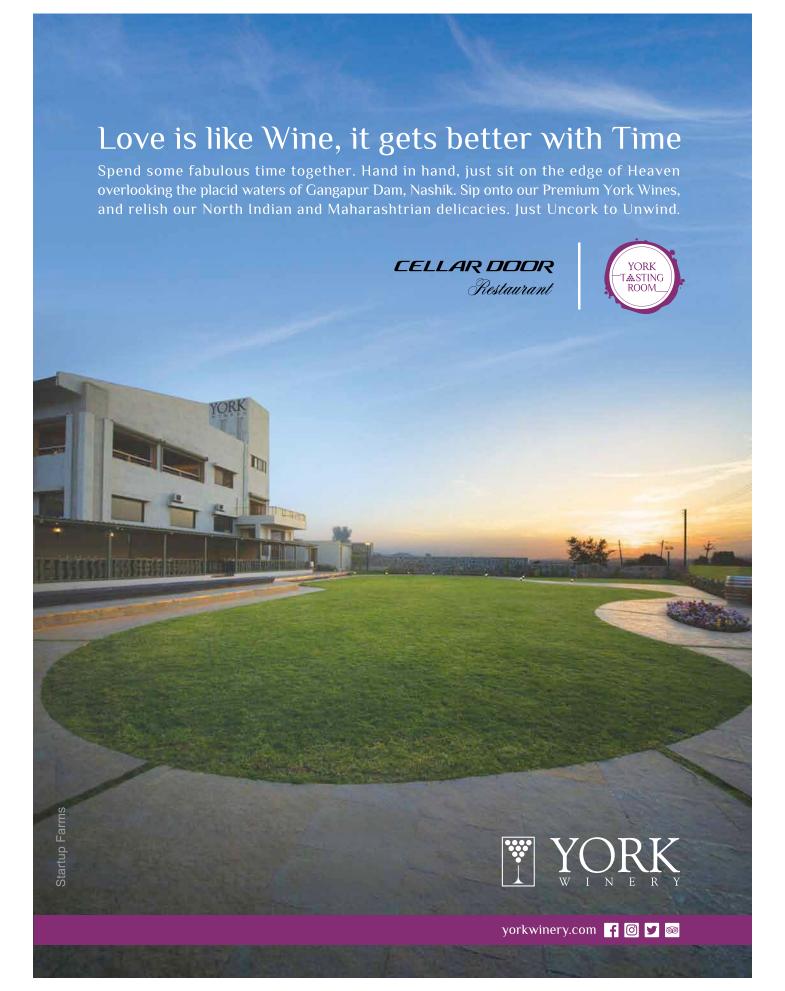
### YORK WINERY



## **NEELAM'S—THE GLITZ AND THE GRAND**

aving two beautiful properties on one of Goa's greatest beaches has given the Neelam Hotels & Resort Group group a huge edge in the Wedding Destination market. The Glitz, a dazzling 4 Star Luxury Hotel with 140 rooms and suites, has an expansive range of banqueting facilities as well as an Ayurvedic Spa where one can recover from all the hectic action of the 'beach wedding' created so flawlessly by their wedding professionals. The Glitz is a 4-





#### **Travel Promotion**



Star category Premium Boutique Hotel with 44 rooms and suites richly accoutred with luxurious interiors. The group has recently launched new concept in India called "Goa Grand Beach Weddings" which provides affordable packages for all upper middle class Segments. These 'One Single Window Packages' include all wedding arrangements at the Goa luxury Beach Hotels/Resorts with attractive beach venues. Goa Grand Beach Weddings "All Inclusive" Packages Unbelievable starts from Rs.16.99 lakhs

### MONTEGO BAY BEACH VILLAGE RESORT



Tts long stretches of beautiful beaches, its sunny clime, the glory of the Arabian Sea and its laid back ambiance has created one of India's most terrific wedding destinations. Sequestered in the

secluded serenity of Morjim Beach in North Goa, is the delightful Montego Bay Beach Village Resort, which faces the iconic Chapora River and Fort. It's not just the wonderful arrangements organized





#### **Grand Beach Weddings**

**Novel New Concept** 

Wedding Packages with Beach Venues @ 4 Resort





Marriages are made In Heaven but .....

Preferred in Goa.....







Inclusions: Beach Wedding Venues - Marriage Themes + Event Management all services + Transfers + Rooms + Food + Cocktails Parties/Gala Dinners + Gifts & Many More Gala Parties at Luxury Yacht options available

Category	Price Rs.	No.Rooms	No.Persons	No of Nights	Venues
Exotic Wedding	16.99 lakhs	50 Rooms	100 Persons	3 Nights / 4 Days	1 Beach venue
Romantic Wedding	29.99 lakhs	75 Rooms	150 Persons	3 Nights / 4 Days	2 Beach venues
Grand Royal Wedding 33.99 lakhs		75 Rooms	150 Persons	3 Nights / 4 Days	3 Beach venues

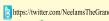
Meet our Sales Team:- TTF Ahmadabad 2 – 4 Sep, TTF Surat 9-11 Sep, TTF Mumbai 16-18 Sep, TTF Chennai 23-25 Sep, IITM Mumbai 23-25 September, IITM Delhi (Gurgaon) 30 Sept, 1-2 Oct, BLTM Business & Luxury Travel Mart Hyatt Regency Gurgao, New Delhi NCR 24-25 Oct., IITM Pune 25-27 Nov, IITM Hyderabad 2-4 Dec, TTF Bangaluru 13-15 Jan. 2017, OTM Mumbai 21-23 Feb. 2017, IITM Kolkata 24-26 Feb 2017, SATTE Delhi 15-17 Feb. 2017, TTF New Delhi 27th Feb. to 1st March 2017

Neelams - The Grand reputed and popular 4 Star Hotel with 140 rooms and suites and The Glitz of 4 Star Boutique Hotel with 45 rooms and suites with all International Standard facilities at our Hotels Located at the Landmark of Calangute, North Goa.

> Reservations Ph No.: 0832 2281800-04 / 09011086456 Email: weddings@thegrandgoa.com

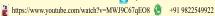
For All Details & Colorful Wedding Videos Kindly Visit our Website www.thegrandgoa.com















#### Travel Promotion



by professional for a wedding it's also the leisure activities on the beach under balmy skies that make a stay here so memorable. You can choose stay in Log Cabins and Luxury Tents or Casa de Mudanc'a and a Beach Villa scattered across a 100,000 sq ft sprawl under in the shade of the swaying coconut palms; all rooms have ensuite bathrooms equipped with complimentary luxury



bath products. Yoga and Ayurveda massages, romantic sunsets, leisurely romps on the beach and delicious fresh seafood make it the perfect sanctuary for the bridal party. The nearby Turtle Beach which migrating Olive Ridley Turtles use as a nursery is another attraction .

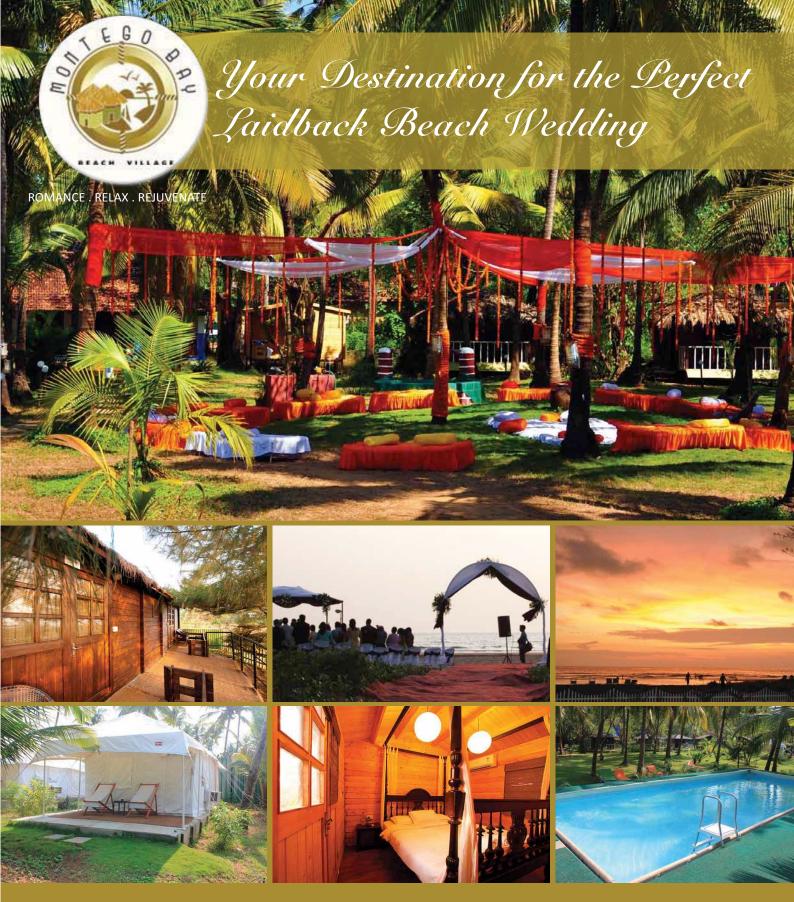
### THE RESORT



beach holiday is the platonic ideal of vacations; what nearly every traveler, whether active or armchair, dreams of. When you're looking for the best family vacations, there's no place better than Beaches. The Resort is a place to leave behind the regular activities action and enjoy the beach at its very best giving your health and well being an indulgent boost as the sands on our beach offer a whole new meaning of serenity. It offers the perfect mix of exceptional accommodations and classic hospitality. The widespread property is equipped with beach-facing lawns, extensive poolside area with 94 rooms where almost all the rooms are beach facing and 2 bedroom villas with a private lawn. Besides comfortable stay at The Resort, there are number of facilities and amenities like Room service, Baby sitting service, Steam,



Restaurant, Bar, Coffee Shop, Business centre, Conference halls, Airport transfers, Swimming pool, Gymnasium, Kids Play Area, Goofy Park, Wi-Fi Internet, Basketball Court, Volleyball Court, Parking and many more. The Resort is equipped with various Dining areas like High Tide – Restaurant with a pool and sea-view, Bay-watch Coffee Shop – the 24 hours coffee shop, Upper Deck – Bar offering a stunning view of the ocean, Poolside – perfect place to drown your stress where sumptuous snacks awaits you. The range of beautiful and flexible venues, backed by the great service and dining experiences makes your stay truly an unforgettable experience. At The Resort, the desires are understood. Experience oneness as you witness the most memorable family holiday ever.



Montego Bay Beach Village, Vithaldas Waddo, Morjim,Pernem, Goa, India - 403512, www.montegobaygoa.com
Email: info@montegobaygoa.com,

Tel: +91 - 9822150847



## M Y S T E B I D B S I S E S

#### **CHRISTOPHER C. DOYLE** GOES PEEKING INTO CRAMPED IRON AGE CHAMBERS AND CAIRNS ON AN EXOTIC ARCHIPELAGO OFF THE SCOTTISH COAST

fter 35 minutes of being tossed around by high-velocity winds since leaving Aberdeen, the Fairchild 340 touches down at Kirkwall airport. I zip up my windcheater and turn up its collar against the rain as I disembark. I have arrived in Orkney, the 70-island archipelago that lies beyond the farthest tip of the Scottish

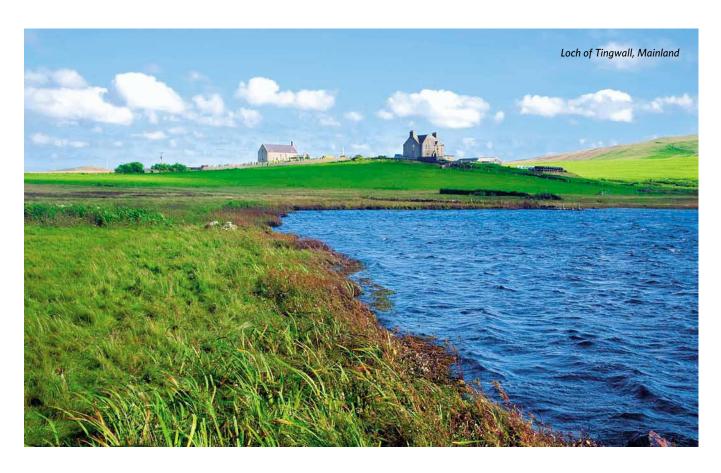
mainland. It is early October, and I am here to research my new book, The Secret of the Druids, which is set in the UK, with plans to tour the Mainland-the largest island in the group—and its neighbour, Rousay.

The next morning is wet and windy. Thanks to Dave Lawrence, the archaeologist who will be my guide, I'm prepared. Our first stop is Mine Howe, an Iron Age

underground chamber on a farm. The site is not open to tourists, but Dave has obtained the farm owner's permission to visit it. He hands me a helmet and a torch as we walk towards the low mound within which the chamber is hidden. A massive ditch and bank—the henge—encircles the mound, only partly excavated. Clearly, not many were allowed here even 2,000 years ago.



ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE



## The roofs of all the cairns were destroyed around 2500 BCE. Few human remains were found in these cairns

As I peer down into the manhole-sized shaft that leads into the depths, my excitement mounts. Mine Howe is arguably one of the most mysterious structures in the world. Dave warns me that breathing might be difficult once we descend into the chamber—the wind blowing over the shaft's mouth prevents effective circulation inside.

After warning me about the irregularly shaped steps, Dave begins his descent. A modern-day iron ladder bridges the gap between the opening and the first step of the stone stairway. I climb down slowly and with trepidation, holding on to the iron rail fastened to the wall. The stone stairs are tricky and the shaft is narrow. I reach a small landing, illuminated by Dave's torch. Down a second flight of stairs and another iron frame bridging the three-foot gap between the final stone stair and the floor of the chamber, and I find myself in a vertical,

irregular cylinder made of dry rock piled up underground, almost four feet in diameter and 12 feet in height. Our breath comes in gasps—Dave wasn't joking about the air quality. Our torches are off, plunging the chamber into an inky darkness. More terrifying than the darkness is the silence-it is absolute and oppressive. Whoever built this chamber ensured that no light or sound would penetrate it. I take photographs with some difficulty, since there is little room to manoeuvre; and then it's time to leave. Dave points out two smaller chambers built into the wall above the main chamber. My mind is abuzz—why was this structure built? What purpose could it have served?

Next, we visit the Rennibister Earth House, another interesting underground structure, but it is the so-called burial mounds that I am really interested in.

Dave hands me a pair of gloves and knee

pads as we arrive at the first of these—the Cuween Hill Chambered Cairn—so called because of the four small cells that lead off the main chamber. The entrance to the cairn is halfway up a hill, through a passageway around three feet high. I realise what the knee pads are for as we crawl through the entrance to gain access to the main chamber. Within, I am overawed by the masonry—the dry stone walls built without use of mortar. I am able to crawl into three of the side chambers through openings which are two-and-a-half feet high.

Dave tells me that the roofs of all the cairns were destroyed around 2500 BCE. Few human remains were found in these cairns—unusual for community burial chambers; most of the bones have disappeared. Maes Howe is our next stop—a 5,000-year-old mound with an enormous central chamber with four cornerstones





Celebrate festivals, enjoy the infusion of Chinese and Portuguese culture, experience world-class mesmerizing shows, stimulating nightlife and create beautiful memories with your loved ones in the beautiful city of Macao.







**MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE** www.macaotourism.gov.mo



## Skara Brae begs the question: why was a settlement built at a place where food and fuel would need to be imported?

that weigh 70 tonnes each and three side chambers. It is renowned for its alignment with the rising sun, which shines onto a stone placed at the far end of the chamber, opposite the entrance, at sunset on the winter solstice. No human remains were ever found here.

After visiting Unstan, another cairn, we arrive at Skara Brae: a mysterious underground stone village built 6,000 years ago, which was discovered when a storm in 1850 ripped off the turf that had concealed the settlement. I marvel at the stone constructions—a central hearth, stone beds, stone cupboards and even stone tanks to store water. Mysterious symbols are carved into the walls of the apartments. Artefacts that seem impossible to create using the primitive technology of the Stone Age have been discovered here. Their

The Standing Stones of Stenness are a sight to behold; and (above) Skara Brae is an underground stone village discovered in 1850





quare one home made treats, as the eatery is known, has come of age. Square One has over the years grown to become one of the most sought after food joints in the city for traditional as well as continental cuisines, ethnic snacks, cakes and other homemade delicacies. It is now widely acknowledged as a sure destination for pure, safe, homemade foods prepared to choicest recipes.

Square One's uniqueness lies in its unusual concern for healthy, less oily preparations and an uncompromising commitment to quality and hygiene. Travelers from any part of the globe or families from far and near can vouch for oven fresh daily arrivals from the Square One kitchen, all neatly packed. Seasonal "chakka (jackfruit) kadumanga" and the all season "kappa (tapioca) chicken curry" are hot favorites with connoisseurs of local taste, as also is the packed noon meal with a rich assortment of fried chicken and home grown veg sides. Other home made offers from Square One's rich culinary heritage include

### AN IDEAL **FOOD HAVEN IN** TRIVANDRUM

traditional Kerala puttu with beef fry, the Syrian Christian rice pidi with kozhi curry, and the renowned Kochi special pathiri with masala chicken which no food savvy traveller can afford to miss.

Perhaps Square One's culinary expertise finds its finest expression in a wide range of ethnic Kerala snacks which are living testimonies to Travancore's revered culinary heritage. Foodies can savor sukhiyan, banana ball, ilayappam, kumbilappam, vellayappam and kozhukkatta, all fresh from the steam pot. Carry home or take overseas packed snacks like murukku, kuzhalappam and banana chips, deep fried in pure homemade oil. Square One's treasured delights also include rare combinations of pickles and jams.

However, the most talked about Square One special are the cakesinnovations in flavor- each piece a paean to the Square One quality. Taste any of these and be a fan! -Red Velvet, Sacher Torte, Vintage Butter Milk, Orange Marble, Fresh Fruit Tart, Coffee Chocolate Sponge, Caramel with Caramel icing, and the Mud range - to mention a few.

Square One's more ambitious ventures, thanks to growing social awareness for healthy foods, await opening in the city itself. Let the world emulate the Square One example.

### **OUR MOTO IS TO GIVE COMFORT & SATISFACTORY** SERVICES TO OUR CLIENTS



The STHI Holidays is a unique travel company offering a broad spectrum of Travel related services catering to the requirements of all your travel needs. The company started in 2008 and in such a short span of time it has increased its presence in the travel market around the world by providing 24X7 support system to all the customers. Gagan Kumar, Director added that, STHI Holidays has been established by a group of expert professionals with best knowledge of the Hotel and Travel industry. The team guarantees one of the best services at all times. We have well expert team in organizing any domestic or international events like cultural shows, music concerts for inbound and outbound international travellers , visa services. At STHI Holidays, the Relationship with a customer never ceases, we go further in redefining perfection day after day. We have tie up with one of the best hotels, domestic and international surface, cruise bookings to suit the requirements of our client. Also, We arrange surface / train / cruise bookings for

For more log on to: www.theleafholidays.com & Phone: 011-40414041.

the Indian travelers abroad and inbound travelers in India.

We are preferred partner for Star Cruise in India offering best / economical facilities to our travelers.

STHI Holidays is a Destination Management Company for 19 countries, mainly South East Asia like: Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand , Indonesia, Srilanka, Dubai, Oman, Vietnam, Hong Kong, China, Mauritius, Maldives, Tur-

Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Jalandhar, Surat and





#### A modern ramp and suspended bridge above the Mid Howe enable visitors to gaze at it without entering the cairn

difficult angles and perfect finish rival machine-made stone artefacts of modern times. The mystery that shrouds Skara Brae revolves around why a settlement was built in a location where both food and fuel would need to be imported from elsewhere. No one seems to have an answer.

The day is rounded off with visits to two nearby stone circles—the Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness.

Much to our joy, the next day dawns bright and sunny and the ferry ride to Rousay, on a cobalt blue sea, is breathtaking. My main objective is to visit Mid Howe, a huge stalled cairn on Rousay. En route, I take in the beauty of Orkney, accentuated by the azure sky and brilliant weather.

We arrive at Mid Howe where the ruins of a Stone Age Broch (tower) stand next to a building that looks like an aircraft hangar. The ruins of Mid Howe lie within this building. We trek down the hillside, crossing three levels of terraces. Nothing I have read prepares me for the sight that greets my eyes. Hundred feet long, built of stacked drystone, the cairn is divided into 24 stalls or compartments. A modern ramp and suspended bridge above the cairn enable visitors to gaze at its magnificence without entering the structure. Bones of 25

The Ring of Brodgar is a Neolithic henge and stone circle

individuals have been recovered from this cairn, assumed to have been a communal tomb. Today, the roof is missing and the cairn is in ruins but I can picture the grandeur of the original structure.

We head for the remaining cairns on Rousay, all of which have stalls. The Knowe of Yarso and Blackhammer have only part of the structure still standing; both are protected within a concrete structure, but neither can match the magnificence of Mid Howe. Our final stop is Taversoe Tuick—the only two-storeyed cairn that I have read about.

I head back to Tingwall, on the Mainland, the sights of Orkney occupying my mind. Who were the people who built these structures 5,000 years ago, before even the pyramids at Giza? The engineer-









# THE KERALA BACKWATER EXPERIENCE. NOW WITH LUXURY ATTACHED.

Get ready for a one-of-a-kind holiday, inside a palatial houseboat floating over the magical backwaters of Kerala. Decked with the most modern amenities, the houseboat promises a cruise experience like no other.

AMENITIES Plush Interiors | Spacious Bedrooms State-of-the-art Safety Measures | Multi Cuisine Kitchen

FACILITIES AT ITS EXCLUSIVE DOCKING YARD Swimming Pool | Restaurant Water Sports | Health Club | Indoor Games | Ayurvedic Spa Souvenir Shop | Furnished Rooms | Wi—Fi



The engineering of the 5,000-year-old structures and their design, especially the astronomical alignments, point to an advanced civilisation



A neolithic bone comb from Skara Brae

ing and the design, especially the astronomical alignments, point to an advanced civilisation. I am up at the crack of dawn the next day, to catch my return flight. As I drive to the airport, I know that although my sojourn in Orkney has come to an end, part of me will always remain here.

Christopher C. Doyle's latest book is The Secret of the Druids

#### **THE INFORMATION**

#### GETTING THERE

The archipelago of Orkney lies north of Scotland. The largest island, known as the **Mainland**, has an airport at **Kirkwall** that connects the islands to the rest of Scotland. Ferry services run between the 70 islands of the archipelago, not all of which are inhabited. It is good to go prepared with waterproof and windproof clothing and sturdy boots, since Orkney is windswept and wet nearly the entire year.

#### WHERE TO STAY

You could stay at the **Smithfield Hotel**, in Dounby, west mainland of Orkney. The hotel is surrounded by many archaeological sites, RSPB reserves and lochs brimming with brown trout. A 15-minute drive from Kirkwall & Stromness, it has a restaurant and a public bar. (Bed and Breakfast is from £42.00 per person per night; **smithfieldhotel.co.uk**)

I stayed at the Ayre Hotel at Kirkwall. It features great views of the harbour, fantastic food and excellent service. (From £115 per night; ayrehotel.co.uk) There's also

Merkister Hotel by the Harray Loch. Here, breakfast is accompanied by sights of swans and herons. (From approximately ₹11,326. See merkister.com.)

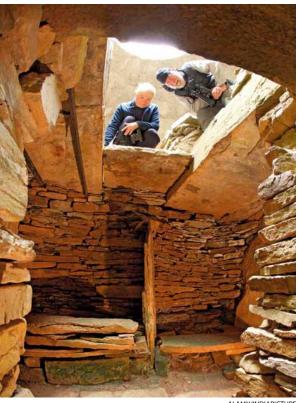
#### WHAT TO SEE

The successors of the first inhabitants of these islands from the Neolithic Age, who started the agricultural tradition that still continues, built prominent sites here—stone circles, burial mounds and stone settlements—which are well preserved.

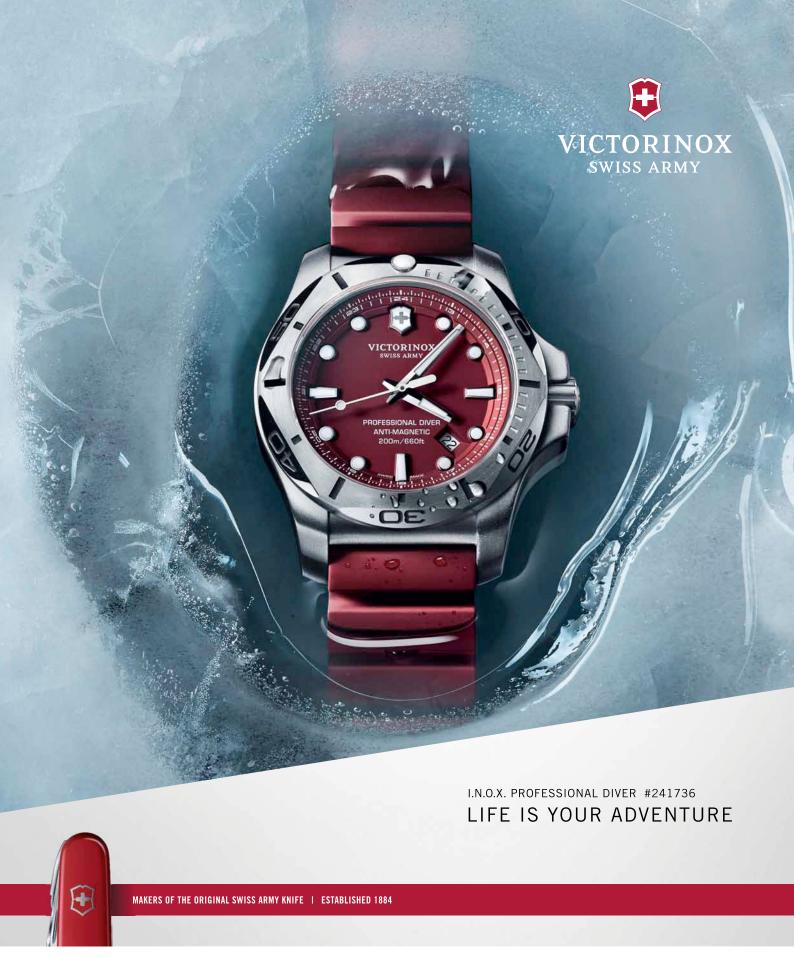
There are various historic sites to explore. The mysterious underground stone village, **Skara Brae**, is a mustvisit. Also, notice the stone artefacts obtained from this site. **Maes howe, Ring of Brodgar, Standing Stones of Stenness, Brough of Gurness, Brough of Birsay, Mid Howe** are other enchanting options for first-time visitors to Orkney.

■ CHRISTOPHER C. DOYLE

The Taversoe Tuick on the island of Rousay



ALAMY/INDIAPICTUR



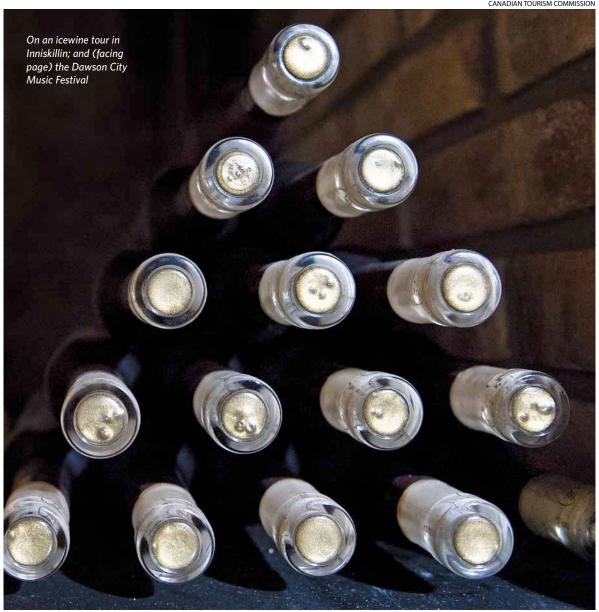
AVAILABLE AT ALL THE LEADING WATCH STORES IN DELHI NCR, MUMBAI, KOLKATA, BENGALURU, AHMEDABAD, BHUBANESHWAR, CALICUT, CHANDIGARH, CHENNAI, COCHIN, COIMBATORE, GOA, GUWAHATI, HYDERABAD, JAIPUR, JALANDHAR, LUCKNOW, NAGPUR, NASHIK, PATNA, PUNE, SILIGURI, SURAT, TRIVENDRUM, VARANASI.

Service Center: Victorinox India Pvt. Ltd., MUMBAI - 022 3366 8888 | For Information Contact: 9819257107.

Victorinox Swiss Army watches purchased through the internet from unauthorized partners will not be covered by the manufacturer's warranty in India.

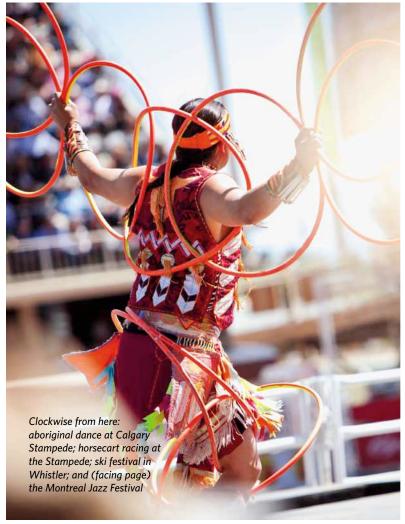






IF ANYONE KNOWS HOW TO CELEBRATE THE PASSING OF THOSE LONG, HARD ARCTIC WINTERS, IT'S THE CANADIANS. AND WHAT AN EXPLOSION OF CELEBRATIONS IT IS—THAT WONDERFUL WELCOME TO THE BALMY DAYS OF SPRING AND SUMMER. TEXT BY RANEE SAHANEY







hose who have tasted the rich and varied cultural delights of Canada's many festivals will recall them with the fondest memories. And if it's your first time, be assured you have some wonderful times to look forward to.

Music...music dominates the country's festival calendar in a huge way-showcasing so many different genres...it will blow your mind away. From the blues to jazz.... from bluegrass to classical chamber instrumental...It's all there for you to enjoy...out in the open air or in some presti-

gious venue. Ballet...folk dances... theatre, rodeos and so much else is on the cards during the day-long festivities. There are picnics and beerdrinking competitions, shellfish culinary adventures and flowering tulips, that fill up those warm happy days to be enjoyed with friends and family. Canada's aboriginal heritage adds colour to the festival calendar too. But even in the winter there's something to look forward to for all age groups...with ice skating and snowboarding festivals to storm welcoming and whale-watching.

Toronto, Canada's biggest city, alone has over 50 ballet and dance companies in addition to its opera companies and symphony orchestras. Powered by the great explosion of migrations over time, especially from the 50s, it offers a banquet of festivals-multi-ethnic cultural forays revolving around art and theatre, religion and dance, food and drink. The Toronto International Film Festival, held in September, is one of the world's most prestigious. The city's other top festivals are Canadian Music Week (May); Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival (June); Harbourfront Centre Summer Festivals (June-September); Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival (July); and the Winter Wonderland Parade (December).

Montreal is justly famed for its Maison du Festival de Jazz, the world's largest jazz festHeld at the Quartier des Spectacles in the last

week of June and the first week of July (mind you check the dates during your travels), it features over 1,000 concerts and activities, with musicians and entertainers (3,000 of them) from over 30 countries participating. From morning till late at night it's a heady affair. Some of the concerts are held in the intimacy of a closed venue, but the open-air ones are the most fun of all, with plenty of eats and drinks available to fuel your enthusiasm. At least two-thirds of these activities are free.

Six days of non-stop music and end-



Marvel at an Inuit throat singer improvising with a rapper...then go ahead and dance the night away...

less fun in the second week of September await you at New Brunswick's Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival, powered by over 400 musicians across 27 different stages scattered around Fredericton. The Afterburner party is a whirl of dancing and beer aplenty. If you're lucky and your personal festival guide enterprising, you might even be able to go backstage. With the ocean so close there's the added allure of seafood.

Marvel at the versatility of an Inuit throat singer improvising with a rapper... then go dance the night away to country

> and world-beat music under the midnight sun...even rub shoulders with some of the musicians in the general melee at the Dawson City Music Festival. For over 35 years now people have been thronging Yukon town (a National Heritage Site) of Dawson City, mesmerised by the three-day folk, rock and reggae performances of a slew of top Canadian artists...jamming in vintage log houses or back-in-the day gold-rush heritage buildings. The festival is held over a weekend every summer in mid-July starting on the Friday.

Join scores of wine aficionados at the Niagara Icewine Festival to savour the offerings of over 30 wineries which take part in this jolly showcasing of the harvest from Niagara's frozen vineyards, held every year in mid-late January; its venues are Niagara-on-the-Lake and Jordan in the Niagara region. It's quite a unique affair as you'll discover an entire bar carved out of ice and even glasses made from ice. The chefs pull out all stops to serve up a wondrous array of local Niagara culinary delights to pair with the rare and precious ice-wine made from -8°C picked icewine grapes. There are street parties (free) too which you can join and mingle in great bonhomie even with strangers who share your love for icewine-made in only a few areas of the world, with Canada's Niagara region being one of those special places.

It's called 'the greatest outdoor

#### CANADA



show on earth' and when you attend the Calgary Stampede you'll find yourself in a kind of freefall as you soak up the atmospherics of this massive high-stepping spectacle. From bucking broncos (thousands of horses and cowboys) to lavish floats (150 of them)...from endless hours of drinking and eating-it's a completely mind-grabbing entertainer for 10 days-from mid-July each year, with the burgeoning crowds (1,000,000 visitors and counting) adding to the fun and frolic. Rub shoulders with hundreds of happy visitors on the sidelines as floats, bands, riders, celebrities and hundreds of horses pass by during the Calgary Stampede Parade. This is rodeo magic with a vengeance. Unspooling in front of you is the wondrous show of the world's top rodeo athletes taming and riding wild horses and bulls, roping cattle and lots more. There's more to follow—as the crowds roar and the adrenaline pumps overtime, teams of four horses charge around the track during the much-lookedforward-to chuckwagon races. At the Grandstand Show, savour the staged spectacle of horses, singers, dancers and music which will knock your socks off.

With 60 years under its belt, Canada's Stratford Shakespeare Festival has to be on your bucket list. Not only will you get to watch traditional dramatisations

Clockwise from left: at the Toronto Film Festival; whale watching; and the Stratford Shakespeare Festival



STRATFORD SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

of the Bard's best-loved works by North America's top actors...get ready to enjoy more innovative interpretations as well. The level of acting, the interpretations, the sets and the costumes all provide plenty of fodder for discussion and diatribes among purists as well as novice attendees. You

exiled royals during World War II. It was also an appreciation of the role the Canadian troops played in liberating the Netherlands. Springtime is a riot of millions of tulip blooms scattered across the National Capital Region. The first Canadian Tulip Festival was held in 1953. Ever since, visi-

## Canada's most thrilling whale watching experience unspools at Tofino in March with the Pacific Rim Whale Festival

Even the winter chill can't dent the carnival air of the World Ski & Snowboard Festival at the annual jamboree in the town of Whistler held over 10 days-and nights. The very motto of the fest clearly urges visitors to "Party in April. Sleep in May"so chuck off your lassitude and get into the fray...jostling with the crowd as the festival offers a mix of sports, music and, of course, lots of the arts. On the sports side, there are at least eight ski and snowboarding competitions. The Shred Show is a chance for snowboarders to win some greenbacks. Edgy fashion shows (Fashion Exposed), film screenings (from the Olympus 72-Hour Filmmaker Showdown), art (Olympus Pro Photographer Showdown; State



can even attend a lecture or too, to bone up on your knowledge of the Bard's works, as well as some of the interactive sessions with the actors. You might even be able to pull off a backstage tour and enter the riveting world of props and costumes. The festivities are on from April to November, but from June to July the summer crowds are probably the biggest. Join scores of other theatre-lovers over a picnic by the nearby Victoria Lake or the Avon River.

Ottawa's hugely attended Canada Tulip Festival emanated from a wondrous gift of 100,000 tulip bulbs in 1945, from Princess Juliana of the Netherlands to the country's First City, for providing refuge to Holland's tors have been gathering in huge numbers at the Commissioners Park by the banks of Dows Lake. Enjoy this vast expanse of 300,000 tulips in all their springtime glory. This festival is one of the world's largest shows of its kind with an annual haul of over 600,000 visitors. Ottawa's tulips have become an enduring symbol of peace, freedom and international friendship. Every year, the Dutch Royal Family and the Dutch Growers Association each send 10,000 tulip bulbs to Ottawa. The censure of all eyes is the spanking new red and white Canada 150 tulip gifted by the Dutch people to Canada to mark its important 150th anniversary.

of the Art), music (from the free Outdoor Concert Series) and nightclubbing around town are the other highs.

Canada's most thrilling whale watching experience unspools at Tofino (from where Japan lies across the Pacific) in March with the Pacific Rim Whale Festival-running from November to March. For the annual migration of the Gray whales be there between March to May; Tofino's also becoming a huge draw for storm watchers, wading into the roiling surf in the aftermath of one of the massive winter storms rising out of the Pacific punishing Vancouver Island's pristine coastline between November and February.



# THE GIFT ——of—— THE GRAPE

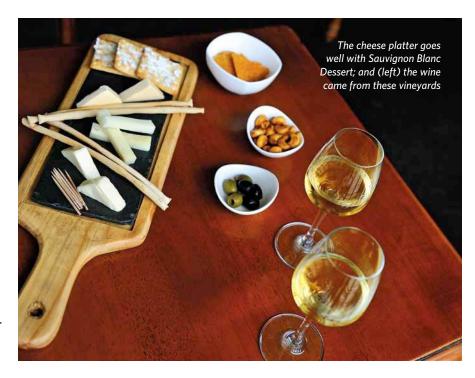
MANEK S. KOHLI VISITS A BOUTIQUE WINE ESTATE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF NASHIK, PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PUNEET K. PALIWAL** 

irst, lift the wine glass from its stem. Take care not to touch its bowl, since you don't want any fingerprints. And then, see. Hold it against a bright white background—the ceiling or a wall should do-and observe its clarity. Particulate matter of any kind is unacceptable. Then, observe the colour. Assess its richness, evaluate its depth and focus, particularly at the top rim of the liquid. For red wine, the brighter this rim, the older it is. For whites, darker is older.

And then. swirl. With a free, loose wrist. Watch your drink rotate, almost hugging the rim of the glass, and then watch it settle. You have now released its fragrance. Sniff. Take a strong whiff, and describe what you smell. A fruity, citrusy or perhaps nutty, caramel-like aroma? Or spicy? And finally—*sip*.

This formulation isn't mine. As we sat in Soma Vine Village's winery, at a table surrounded by wine-themed display pieces, humongous barrels and rows of sparkling wine at various stages of fermentation, we were being educated in the art of wine tasting by Cellar Door Manager, Amritpal Singh.

Soma Vine Village is located 12km from 'India's Napa Valley', Nashik, Maharashtra, in a belt of wine estates



which also includes the well-known Sula Vineyards. Continue on the same road, enjoying the freshness of the lush rainfed vegetation coupled with the constant scent of petrichor, and turn left to find the splendid vineyard resort. Slanting roofs supported by wooden panels, its balconies and verandas overlooking a

hill on one side and the infinity pool, the Gangapur Dam, vineyards and distant hills on the other.

Every story looks a bit prettier if it has a hero. In Soma's tale, the protagonist is Pradeep Pachpatil, chairman and managing director, fondly called PSP. He's a jovial and enthusiastic individual



Soma's hospitality is lavish. Can the same be said of its wine? On the contrary, we encounter humility and a glimpse of PSP's vision pursuing a unique idea—that of fermenting wine suitable to the spice-loving, masala-obsessed Indian palate.

The PSP-owned Vine Village is a nearly decade-old 25-acre complex. Its 15 acres of vineyards grow all five Indian grape varieties, allowing for a yearly output of 85,000 litres of wine. Pachpatil previously worked with Sula, concentrating on their wine tourism sector. What resulted, in 2010, was the Beyond Vineyard Resort, which Sula ran till June 2016. A couple of months ago, Beyond became the Soma Vine Resort. Suddenly, Pachpatil had 46 rooms under his wing-29 in the erstwhile Beyond, three in a magnificent villa he had originally built for his own use and seven each in two other massive villas.

While the rooms at the resort have simple interiors, and are all equipped with either a balcony or a sit-out and lounges/bathtubs in the case of the pricier options, such as the luxury suite, the villas are even more stylish. The three-bedroomer, especially, is gorgeous, with wooden flooring, sitting room with beanbags and barrel-shaped tables, dining table at the centre embellished with bottles of different kinds of wine, winding staircase, many large rooms and garden with a large pool.

Soma's hospitality wing is lavish. Can the same be said of its wine culture? On the contrary, we encounter humility and a glimpse of PSP's vision. The first vintages were presented in 2014, and the winery's 19 fermentation tanks produce a limited yearly output. So this makes Soma, as Amrit said, "India's only boutique winery". PSP wishes to keep it lowkey. The idea isn't to expand aggressively but to promote wine connoisseurship through an honest tourism experience where people come, experience wine and all its facets and go back wiser. It was left to Kalyani Jadhav, Soma's marketing manager, to tell us of plans to increase production five- to six-fold in the future.

The winery produces 13 blends—some of them white, some red, some sparkling, one rosé, and all of them delicious. The vineyards grow five varieties of grapes to produce these blends—Sauvignon Blanc,

# ELEGANCE GETS A NEW . SYNONYM AS E-HOTEL

eople who travel to Chennai and look for a classy and sophisticated stay in the heart of the city will check into E-Hotel without any second thought. A place known for its uncompromising quality, "Happening" location and above all, a only luxury vegetarian boutique hotel in Chennai.

It focuses mainly on redefining luxury for customer delight. E-Hotel's guests vary from Leisure, Family, Medical Treatment, Corporate, MICE and out of town shoppers from India & Abroad., in which the main attraction is it offers World Class vegetarian cuisine. It consists of 44 guest rooms categorized as Elegance Rooms and Emperor Suites; in which there are inter-connected rooms for the family to get benefit. The 3 different Banquet Halls Enrich, Exchange, & Engage, suits well for the Parties, Engagements, Exhibitions, Press Conferences, Training, Board meetings etc., which can hold up to 400 pax.

Entrée is the major crowd-puller for E-Hotel. It is a pure vegetarian restaurant serves array for global cuisine dishes along with regional cuisine dishes prepared by expertise chefs. The restaurant being a global multi-cuisine restaurant has a wide range in menu (a



la carte) and people have a tough choice of choosing their favored cuisine. Their unique menu includes Global, Asian & Indian dishes.

Elixir Lounge Bar is another highlight of E-Hotel. It serves both food & beverage in the bar, serves the best drinks in the city. It has separate Private Dining Room inside for exclusive private parties. The uniqueness of the bar is the synchronized lighting and the service. Elixir hosts events all throughout the weekends.

It is located in the premises of Luxurious Mall, Express Avenue. This helps the guests to spend their leisure time in shopping and other entertainments. Within 3 years of its inception, E-Hotel is awarded with 'Travelers Choice' of Tripadvisor, 'Stellar performance' by Make my trip and Zomato user choice award for Entrée Restaurant. E-Hotel has also been the choice of more foreigners as they find a complete serenity.

For more log on to: www.emallhotel.com & Phone: +91 44 2846 3333.

# **JOYS PALACE**

pened in 2007, Joys Palace is the first venture into the hospitality industry by Mr.Joy Nareparambil. Mr.Joy, an eminent businessman in the field of electro maintenance in the U.A.E had a vision to provide the best service in the hospitality industry. With 62 rooms, 5 banquet halls and a swimming pool, Joys Palace is fully equiped to cater to the needs of any guest. The breakfast buffet is the a speciality with a spread of Indian cuisine and continental dishes to savour one's mouth. The house of ayurveda is an exemplory in – house service to provide the best traditional Keralite massage.

The promoter's endeavour is integrated with a vision of par excellence to impart their own contribution in Kerala's cosmic scenery of service and hospitality. Joys Palace, a Five Star Hi-Luxury Hotel, intends to give due magnitude to the business class as well. Joys Palace enjoys the relevant setting of Thrissur, the city of a higher intellectual and cultural heritage.

The culture and philosophy that Joys Palace holds is redeemed through its employeespeople who are focused and inspired to present outstanding service.

Last year Joys hotels and resorts expanded with a resort in Munnar having the same standard of excellence in service to satisfy the guest in every manor that Joys group has extended their arms in. The resort has opened with 32 rooms and a offers a beautiful scenic view of the waterfalls, tea gardens and hills. It is breathtaking to sip on a cup of tea and enjoy nature's beauty in the verandah of the resort.

The third stepping stone of the group will be a landmark resort in Poovar island which is slated to come up shortly & further more endevours are planned for Kodaikanal and Bekal in the future.





Chenin Blanc, Zinfandel, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon.

On our second day, Puneet and I had lunch with Jadhav at Suffiana, the resort's multi-cuisine restaurant. We ordered a Sauvignon Blanc Dessert ("white wine made with Sauvignon Blanc; extra sweet") which is basically wine acting as dessert, and which we enjoyed with a cheese platter. I'd take a sip of the 'dessert', quite pleasing to my sweet tooth, and immediately neutralise it with a bite of cheese. At nights, we enjoyed some of the Sauvignon Blanc Gold ("white wine made with Sauvignon Blanc; dry or absent of sweetness") and Chenin Blanc Silver ("white wine made with Chenin Blanc; sweet"). Puneet preferred the drier wines-he thoroughly enjoyed the Sauvignon Blanc Gold, which he found refreshing and rich. I enjoyed the Silver, with its citrusy sweet flavour. And we both loved the Rosé ("made of Zinfandel"), which tasted just right in every way imaginable.

Soma Vine Village has a few more in-

teresting tricks up its sleeve. The newly opened restaurant Vintage: Rotisserie, Grill and Wine Bar, presents a unique concept—every dish has a touch of wine in it. Their Spa Nilaya offers vinotherapies, using wine-related ingredients. Puneet and I took a, well, couple's massage, where an 'Insta Life Red Wine Therapy Masque' had us rejuvenated and smelling, quite strongly, of wine. The Sensation Vine Lounge is a garden amphitheatre for larger events and Zonkers, Soma Vine Village's adventure park, offers go-karting, rope activities, rock climbing and other activities at just a slight walk away.

The first time we met the staff, we joined them at the winery where a meeting was underway. A couple of chocolatiers had come, and we ascertained how different kinds of chocolate went with the wine. Seventh on the list was popcorn chocolate, with its burnt and smoky flavour, to be tried with one of Soma's reds. We then had a, well, chocolateflavoured wine. I thought it delicious.

Most others thought it too sweet. As Puneet and I walked back, I said, "Wine and chocolate. Wine and popcorn. Wine and Gujarati cuisine. What's next?" He responded, "Wine and samosas?" Now, that's a new idea for anyone looking...

#### THE INFORMATION

#### **GETTING THERE**

The closest airport is Mumbai (174km/3.5hr), although Pune (222km/5.5hr) is also close. Soma Vine Village is 12km from Nashik. Cross Sula Vineyards and York Winery to find it on your left. The nearest station, Nashik Road, is 25km away.

#### **SOMA VINEYARD RESORT**

The resort has options for all budgets. The cheapest are the standard rooms (from ₹6,000 doubles), but the ₹7,000 deluxe rooms are worth the extra buck. For larger groups, the three-bedroom villa begins at ₹24,000 and the seven-bedroom villas at ₹42,000 (taxes extra; rates inclusive of breakfast, vineyard and winery tour, winetasting sessions). Contact: +91-7028066016; somavinevillage.com



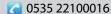
#### Where the journey begins

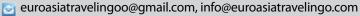
Discover your next great adventure, become an explorer to get started

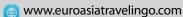




- Domestic Airlines Bookings
- International Air Lines bookings
- **World Wide Hotel reservations**
- Car rentals and Coaches
- Domestic & International Holiday Packages
- Customized and tailor-made holiday packages
- Travel Insurances
- Visa & Passport Services,
- Foreign Exchange
- Rail Ticketing Assistance,















# PEELING BACK THE LAYERS

ITS ICONIC KEBABS AND MANGOES ARE REASON ENOUGH TO VISIT. BUT RANEE SAHANEY IS DELIGHTED TO FIND MUCH, MUCH MORE IN KAKORI. PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PUNEET K. PALIWAL** 

've always wondered about that thing called serendipity. When you've been thinking about something or someplace, and suddenly all kinds of events and names and places associated with it start making popping sounds in your brain, all at once? Well, now I know. And it happened in the unlikeliest of places, in the town of Kakori, on the outskirts of Lucknow, in Uttar Pradesh's legendary 'mango belt' of Malihabad.

I had been invited to experience what Renaissance Hotels calls their 'Global Day of Discovery', which they celebrate at Renaissance Hotels across the world. I'm at the spanking new Renaissance Marriott Hotel in Lucknow. And I'm looking forward to a traditional Lakhnavi 'mango party' as a chaser to gourmet indulgences of the legendary, eponymous kakori kebabs on home soil.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. What had



# The Kakori Memorial transports you to the momentous days of India's freedom struggle

been on my mind were mangoes. The edible kind, of course. But also the 'Mango Murders'—the recent gruesome crime committed in Kakori for the neighbours' bumper crop of Dussehri mangoes. And now I'm actually in the heart of it all, at the site of the bizarre crime. Historically minded folks will know, though, that conspiracies, big money, violence and murder are no strangers to this small town, which has reserved its place in history for a rather more noble cause—that of India's freedom struggle. More about this shortly.

We leave behind the the modern expanses of Lucknow, and set off on a smooth run to the outskirts, from where a turn-off bumpily led us into Kakori's pastoral setting, interspersed with great stands of mango groves. I recall debating with friends the finer points of the popular Hindi film *Rang de Basanti*. Now I was on my way to the site where the daredevilry had actually unfolded.

Kakori is just 30km away from present-day Lucknow, with its noisome malls and modern hotels. But the serene Kakori Memorial—also known as Shaheed Smarak—swiftly transports you to the momentous days of India's freedom struggle. The famous 'Kakori Kand'—the Kakori 'revolution' or conspiracy aka 'Great Train Robbery'—sent out widening ripples in the dark waters of the British administration in the early 1920s. The railway line snaking out of Kakori

The Takiya Shareef Kazmiya is home to the tombs of Shah Kazim Qalandar and Shah Ali Anwer Qalandar

station is the setting of the Kand, when rebel freedom fighters, the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA), looted the government treasury from the Number 8 down train.

I stand before the board that recounts the tale of the train robbery and read: 'Wo jism bhi kya jism hai jismein na ho khoon-e-junoon, Kya lade toofaanon se jo kashti-e-saahil mein hai. Sarfaroshi ki tamanna ab hamaare dil mein hai, Dekhna hai zor kitna baazu-e-qatil mein hai.' These are the words of Ram Prasad Bismil, who masterminded the heist.

# MARASA SAROVAR PREMIERE, TIRUPATI. WHERE DIVINITY ABOUNDS.

irupati. Where the very air you breathe is imbued with divinity. And you will find, at the holy feet of Tirumala Hills, on the hallowed precinct of Lord Venkateshwara Temple, a serene abode of luxury for the devout pilgrim – Marasa Sarovar Premiere. Inspired by the 10 Avatars of Lord Vishnu, it is the closest 5 star luxury hotel to the sacred temple. Between two restaurants, In room dining and a Bar the hotel offers exhaustive choice of Indian and global cuisine. Leisure activities include a fully-equipped health club, swimming pool, and Buddha spa specializing in relaxation and rejuvenation treatments pamper

personal fulfillment. Special Kid Zone helps in keeping the restless minds of the little ones engaged. A Business Centre and outstanding meeting, banqueting and conferencing facilities offer a perfect venue to host weddings and other corporate and social events.

Get set to be delighted with small surprises from the moment you enter this hotel in Tirupati!

For more log on to: www.sarovarhotels.com & Phone: 0877 6660000

# HOTEL KANHA Shyam-allahabad<sup>,</sup>

otel kanha shyam IS UNIT OF Shyam Group- is a testament to unparalleled grandeur in Allahabad (UP). The hotel's entrance and the lobby is grand and impressive. The lobby's royal interior is as crystal clear as the chandelier hanging overhead. Hotel Kanha shyam offers a choice of well appointed, spacious and luxurious rooms offers all the modern amenities and comforts. All rooms are equipped with direct dial telephone, central air conditioning, hot/cold

water, wi-fi, hotel mode LCD TV, an executive writing desk with chair, Hair dryer, Tea/coffee makers. Hotel General Manager Mr. Rupesh Kumar Singh explained that 24 coffee shop – The Patio, Jannat – An International Indian Restaurant & Celebrity Bar offer wide varieties of liquor and wines and is proud to offer fine delicious designed by our experienced chefs to cater every palate and preference from casual to formal fine dining with welcoming ambiance. Hotel Kanha Shyam is an ideal place to accommodate any size and style of gatherings, like business meetings, confer-



General Manager, Mr. Rupesh Kumar Singh

ences, weddings or private parties. The fully equipped conference hall includes a large screen projector and wi –fi facility. A wedding at Hotel Kanha shyam ensures beautiful designs and concept for each ceremony,

selective choices for indoor and outdoor banquet arrangements, luxurious accommodation for your guests and expert catering team that thrives on making every detail of the event-extravagant, elegant and lively, explained Hotel Kanha Shyam General Manager Mr. Rupesh Kumar Singh.

For more log on to: -www.hotelkanhashyam.com, Email-reservations@hotelkanhashyam.com & Phone: 9918201932





KARAN SAWNANI

The looting of the train—scheduled for August 9, 1925—was to be executed by Ashfaqullah Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil, Chandrashekhar Azad and other rebels.

Kakori town was in sight...a pulled chain...the train grinding to a halt...the swift overpowering of the guard...the breaking open of the guard van. The speedy and faultless execution of the heist sent the British administration into shock. However, the long arm of British wrath was inexorable. Khan, Bismil, Thakur Roshan Singh and Rajendra Lahiri were caught and in a trumpedup hearing at Lucknow's Ring Theatre at Hazratganj (where 'Dogs and Indians' were not permitted entry), were sentenced to be hanged. Today the same

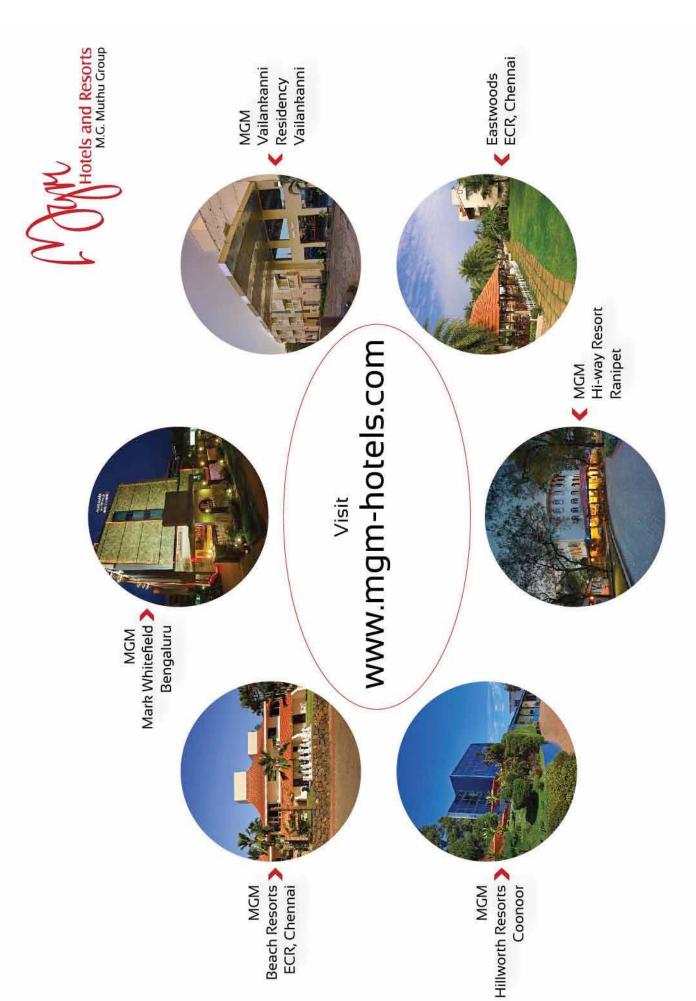
Ring Theatre serves as the GPO.

The memorial building is studded with the busts of the martyrs of the Kand. Across the wall of the complex is the exact spot (km 1085/4-7 railway milestone) on the railway line where the train was stopped and looted.

Hunger pangs make intermittent reproofs as our party now moves to one of Kakori's legendary mango orchards. Passing through a screen of heavily laden trees, we are led to a vast open space where an excellent *bandobast* had been made with low-set divans, a long table setting and a scattering of craftsmen.

The Renaissance team had done themselves proud with the fabulous spread, served al fresco. While the chef kept us happily busy with melt-in-the-mouth kakori kebabs, the tandoor kept the rotis flowing. Stuffed to the gills with fragrant biryani and alu dum, we were shocked to find we had room for Kakori's Dussehri mangoes—and oh, how divine they were! Malihabad's mango belt is also known for its Safeda, Langda, Chausa, Tukmi, Khaas-ul-Khaas, Lakhnawwa and scores of hybrid mango varieties.

It was at just such a 'mango party' in the 1800s that a British official is said to have passed a snide remark about the texture of the kebabs. The incensed host, Nawab Syed Mohammad Haider Kazmi, summoned his kitchen staff to make him the finest kebabs this side of the Suez. This latest version of the seekh kebab







'Dama Dam Mast Kalandar' keeps the crowd rapt; and (below) sumptuous kakori kebab

featured a combination of the minced tendon of the leg-o-mutton, khoya, white pepper and some secret spices.

When the official was invited again for a meal, he was left speechless.

While the others were lolling around recovering from these gourmet indulgences, I roped in Hasan Alvi, who runs a travel agency, to show us a bit of his

Kakori was not just an important Sufi hub, it was also a great centre for scholarship, poetry, art and craft

hometown. I had recently returned from a tour of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, so it turned out to be a most pleasant coincidence (serendipity again!) to be introduced at the mango party to members of Kakori's leading families, hailing from the two Arab branches of the Banu Hashim clan of the Quraysh Tribe: the Alavi (Moulvi Zadigan), who trace their lineage to Hazrat Ali (the fourth Caliph and Prophet Mohammad's cousin and his son-in-law), and the other, the Abbasi, who claim their lineage to Al-Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet Mohammad. Qazi Shaikh Klan Abbasi had settled in Kakori after his appointment as the first Qazi of Kakori by the Royal Court of Delhi in 1490.

Kakori has always been home to a large Muslim populace which nourished the kasbah culture. Partition got in the way of this tradition. Many Muslims fled Kakori for Pakistan. Driving through the bazaar's streets, Hasan points out the ruined havelis, once owned by Kakori's leading families. Kakori Kothi, earlier known as Martin House, was built by Major General Claude Martin. A momentous occasion in its history was the signing of the Lucknow Pact, between the Muslim League and the Indian Na-



Reach out to Central India's biggest B2B Travel Market Place

# Madhya Pradesh **Travel Mart 2016**

Explore Diverse Offerings Of The Second Largest Indian State In A New Way.

14TH - 16TH OCTOBER, 2016 I HOTEL LAKE VIEW ASHOK, BHOPAL

#### **Exclusive Features For Sellers**

- Exceptional one to one business meetings with the select international and domestic buyers!
- Increase awareness about your brand
- **Build relationships with prospects**
- Meet with key clients
- Develop relationships with attendees who are serious about doing business with you
- Network with peers in your industry

#### **Exclusive features for Buyers**

- Subsidy on return economy international flight. (As per the region wise price band fixed for refund)
- Return surface transfers from Airport Hotel Venue
- Accommodation on twin sharing basis (with breakfast) for show dates.
- Post event hosted FAM tours.
- Invitation to hosted inaugural dinner, cultural evening and networking lunches.

Early Bird Registration Closes 31st July, 2016

For details please write to: mptm16@candidindia.com Website: www.madhyapradeshtravelmart.com

#### PREMIER MEDIA PARTNER



#### **MEDIA PARTNERS**







OUTDOOR















The Blue Moon





#### ASSOCIATION PARTNERS

























COURTESY RENAISSANCE LUCKNOW HOTEL

tional Congress.

Our drive leads us into a vast green open space, dominated by an ancient banyan tree, an ageing beauty of 250 years. Rising from this verdant spot are twin marble structures—the tombs of Shah Kazim Qalandar and Shah Ali Anwer Qalandar of the famous Takiya Shareef Kazmiya shrine, which has a huge following, drawing *murids* (spiritually mentored devotees) from all over.

During the Urs, Kakori's tombs are decorated with fairy lights and new *chadars* and fresh flowers are put upon the graves. The *sama* sessions (spiritual concerts) attract huge crowds.

The shrine appealed to all communities, including Hindus. Centuries ago, Maharaja Tikait Rai was deeply attached to this shrine. Today, a descendant of a local resident, Lala Beniram, a devotee of Shah Kazim Qalandar, lights the first candle of the annual Urs.

Kakori, I learn, was not just a very important Sufi hub, it was also a great centre for scholars, poetry, art and craft. Several Urdu poets have their roots here—including Mohsin Kakorvi, Noorul Hasan Naiyyer and Ghulam Ahmed Alavi 'Furqat Kakorvi'.

Returning to the mango party, we find people up and about and gathered

Zardozi workers (left); and the Rennaissance Lucknow Hotel's smart lobby lounge

around the craftspeople who are show-casing zardozi and chikankari work. I learn that even Mumbai designer duo Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla have set up their production centre at Kakori. The party wraps up with a qawwali session and as we wander out to the waiting coaches the faint strains of 'Dama Dam Mast Qalandar' induce nostalgic pangs, of my mother singing it to me during my childhood and how I loved it as an adult living in the tea gardens. Beautiful, serendipitous world...

#### **1** THE INFORMATION

#### GETTING THERE

- > Air: We caught the 4.40pm **Indigo** flight to Lucknow from New Delhi, arriving to a rainy welcome at 6pm. Our return flight, **Indigo** (again) to Delhi left at 9.15am and brought us into Delhi at 10.20am. The return fare cost approx. ₹5,900.
- > Rail: Several trains run between Lucknow and Delhi. Try the overnight **Rajdhani** or the **Lucknow Mail** (₹1,200-1,500).
- > To get to Kakori from Lucknow, hire a car for the day (₹1,200-1,600). You can also call

Husain Alvi (9839261944), who can set up a guided tour for you.

#### WHERE TO STAY

Spread over 14 floors, the 96 guestrooms and 16 suites, at Marriott's **Rennaissance Lucknow Hotel** offer expansive views of the landscaped Gomti riverfront and the humongous Ambedkar Memorial Park. The terrace **Sky Bar** is an exceptional dining experience. The food is varied and just as delicious as it should (from ₹9,000; 0522-

4055555, renaissancelucknow.com).

#### CONTACTS

- > To set up **events** and parties: A.H Alvi (9839261944)
- > For **mangoes**: Shayan Akhter Alvi (9935086007)
- > For **zardozi** and **chikan** work: Shahid Abbasi (7754968463, 9936240906)
- > For **kakori kebabs**: Hasan Alvi (9935226739)

■ RANEE SAHANEY





# california pistachios

# **EXTRA LARGE** in size\*

# THE ALL WEATHER SNACK

Perfectly roasted & precisely salted Extra Large Californian Pistachios



Because of their relatively high levels of antioxidants, good fats and plant sterols, PISTACHIOS may help# to keep your heart in top shape.



Being one of the lowest<sup>#</sup> calorie nuts with high fibre and protein, PISTACHIOS are known to be an ideal snack for the weight conscious.





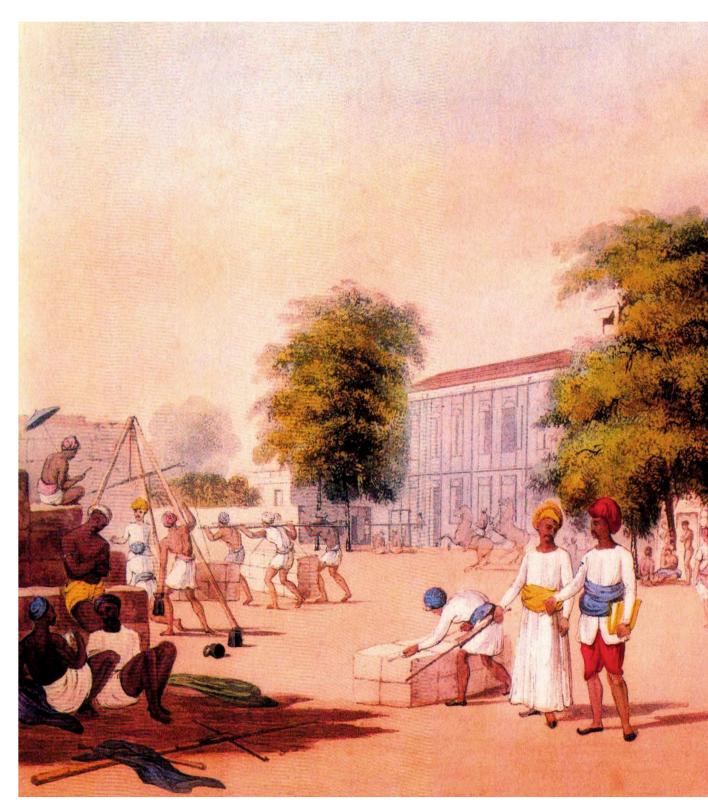
\*Before roasting, as per United States Standards for Grades of Pistachio Nuts in the shell.

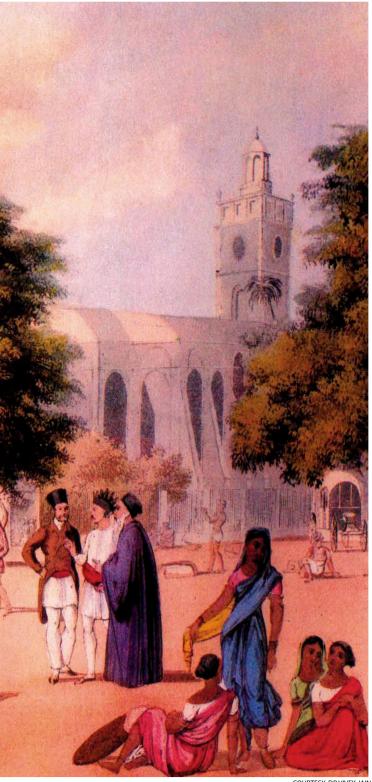
\*As per reports and journals available in public domain.



■ Time Pass ■ Where on Earth? ■ Picture Post

Travel Classic ■ The Grumpy Traveller ■ Edited By SUMEET KESWANI EDITED BY SUMEET KESWANI





COURTESY: DR VIVEK JAIN



#### **BOMBAY, 1826**

 Gifted colonial painters like the Daniells are justly famous, but there were so many more. A loyal reader brought the work of Robert Melville Grindlay (1786-1877) to our notice. His lushly produced album—Scenery, Costumes and Architecture chiefly on the Western Side of India—which was issued in six parts between 1826 and 1830, comprises 36 colour plates done by Grindlay and a few other artists, including the renowned landscape painter William Westall, who was one of the first English artists to work in Australia.

Grindlay, a self-taught amateur artist, went to India in 1803, aged 17, as a cadet in the East India Company's military service, a position to which his London merchant father had him nominated. He served from 1804 to 1820 and in this period made an impressive number of sketches and drawings depicting daily life and scenery in India. For an amateur painter, Grindlay displays great virtuosity and an eye for detail, as can be witnessed in this mildly busy scene behind the

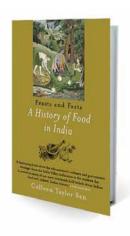
St Thomas Cathedral in Bombay. The cathedral, which lends its name to the nearby Churchgate Station, was rather new when the scene was painted.

Grindlay became a captain in 1817 but retired on half-pay in 1820 and returned home. In 1828, he started an agency house in London with a partner, Leslie. The partner left after two years but the agency prospered, offering the booking of sea passages to India and allied services. It gradually expanded, eventually becoming the banking empire we know as Grindlays. Grindlays had a long reign before being absorbed by Standard Chartered Bank in 2000.

# Delicious History



This is a food book with a difference. Instead of talking about the different kinds of Indian cuisines, Colleen Taylor Sen sets out to document Indian food



Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India By Colleen Taylor Sen

By Colleen Taylor Ser (Speaking Tiger, ₹699)

through history, something which no one has done before. She traces Indian food through the Vedas, pointing out that alcohol was frowned upon, though other intoxicants like *som ras* were used for religious rites. Since then *soma* has vanished from Indian botany and remains an unidentified ingredient. The book is peppered with similar interesting titbits focussing mainly on spices which Sen sees as the connecting thread between the vast variety of Indian food.

There are also 14th-century recipes and even an Ode to Ghee. We learn about the various cookbooks starting with the seminal work attributed to the mythical ruler Nala in whose honour all northern Indian cooks were called maharaj. Chandragupta Maurya was apparently a Jain and starved himself to death in the ultimate Jain fast. Many of the

Muslim rulers ordered cookbooks so that their five senses could be stimulated by the different aspects of Indian food.

Painstakingly following the history through empires and religions, Sen gives us a complete picture of the influences on modern Indian cuisine. She also traces the different strands from Avadh to Hyderabad and Kashmirdocumenting the fabled Kashmiri wazwan served on celebratory occasions and the various conceits created by the royal cooks of Avadh and Hyderabad who excelled in making pulao look like pomegranate seeds or could cook a different daal dish for every day of the year, as Shah Jehan's jail chef claimed.

There are lists of incredible ingredients or the different poetic names given to pulao—biryani somehow failed to inspire such poetic heights. Curry apparently

came from a Tamil word and the Portuguese in the century they ruled Goa changed Goan cuisine totally while apparently influencing the Bengali tradition of curdled milk sweets.

Much of the work was translated from Sanskrit with the help of researchers and it is obvious that Sen herself is not too familiar with Indian languages. To a Bengali, the glaring error would be classifying bhetki as a sea fish, which she does when she talks about Bengal's food habits on the eastern and western sides. Odiyas might be annoyed at having Lord Jagannath's splendid kitchens left out, though Sen does talk about prasad and its religious significance. According to her, Assamese cuisine is truest to the vedic traditions, showcasing different flavours, sour, salty, sweet, astringent in every meal. Though she does talk about the

chilli being introduced from North America, she does not delve into how it spread in its different incarnations across India. However, given the vast amount of research that has gone into the book—coming a good 25 years after K.T. Achaya's groundbreaking Indian Food: A Historical Companion—Sen is wise not to attempt an overload.

While the book's reach stretches out to the 21st century, embracing the global spread of the Indian diaspora and modern Indian eating habits which have resulted in the growth of diabetes, it must be admitted that Feasts and Fasts' true wealth lies in the historic sections with the pictures, the poems and the recipes—though many of them are untested and most follow the habit of not giving exact mesaures, relying upon the chef's skill.

■ ANJANA BASU



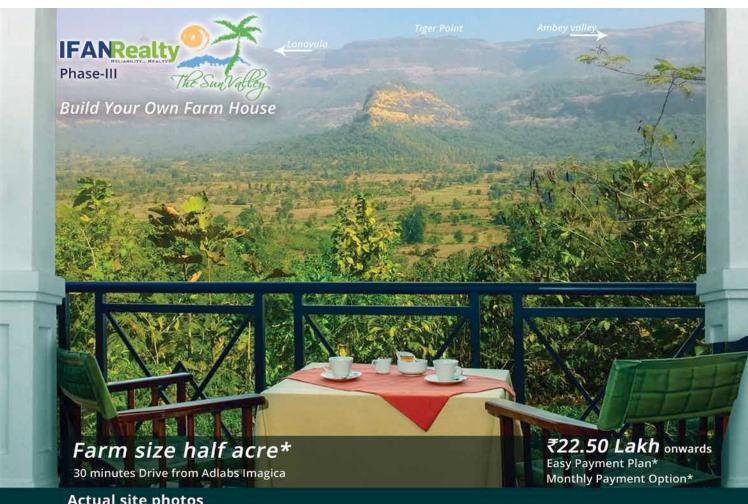
[DAVE BESSELING]

## **Travel Classic**

I don't really know what defines a travel book anymore. Theroux, Didion, even the singular contribution of Bowles—all canonical writers that writers like me are supposed to look up to. But those types of books I admire more for their writing than for instilling any will to travel. The

best travel books then are the least pretentious. Books like The Beach or Shantaram affected my longing to visit Thailand or India far more than anything high-handed. But it's perhaps the same reason guidebooks are almost extinct—technology has cut into the degree of fascination we have of a place before we visit it. As someone who grew up with one foot on either side of the tech divide, I find classics like The Great Railway Bazaar more as a guide for prose writing than adventuring, and find more wanderlust in the pages of horribly written dimestore hackery like The Da Vinci Code.

Dave Besseling's latest book is Laid in India



**Actual site photos** 



#### **Amenities**

Gated Community | Fully Fenced Plots | Street Lights | Fruit Trees | Club Facilities Dripping water System | Electricity | Water Front & Dam | Internal Road Networks

#### Attractions

It is in nature's lap ......surrounded by 12 waterfalls...so close that you can touch and feel them....peninsula of 2 rivers......lush green in monsoon......sounds of birds chirping and waterfall can disturb you. Enough open space, one need to travel at least 20000 sq.ft minimum to meet next door neighbour, you can have your own fruit varieties and flowers.



#### **IFAN Finsery Private Limited**

(Erstwhile ING Financial Services Pvt. Ltd.), 301, VIP Plaza, Near Infinity Mall, Off Link Road, Andheri (W), Mumbai 400 053, India. Email: advisor@ifan.co.in Website: www.ifan.co.in CIN U72900MH2005PTC154875

For more details contact:

+91 99879 90367 + 91 99878 24927

The details stated herewith are for information purpose only. Any use of the information and investment related decisions of the Investors/Recipients are at their sole discretion & risk. The details stated nerewith are for information purpose only. Any use of the information and investment related decisions of the investors/Recipients are at their sole discretion & risk. IFAN Finserv Private Limited ("Company / IFAN") especially states that they have no financial liability whatsoever to the recipient. You are advised to go through the detailed terms and conditions applicable to the above information before investing. IFAN, its affiliates, their directors, employees, representatives or agents shall not be liable or responsible, in any manner whatsoever, to any Investor/Recipient or any other person. The distribution of this document in certain jurisdictions may be restricted / prohibited by law and the persons who come into possession of the document should inform themselves about and observe any such restrictions/prohibitions. The information in this Document reflects prevailing conditions as of date of publication and is subject to change from time to time. The distribution, reproduction or other use of all or any portion of this Document is prohibited.



Higher Than Everest: Memoirs of a Mountaineer By Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia (Niyogi, ₹695)

#### Nine Brave Men

#### • IN THIS DAY AND AGE OF BURGEONING HORROR STORIES ON EVEREST caused by

overcrowding and climate change, it is a pleasure to read of an Everest summiting story from another era. Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia's Higher Than Everest is a new edition of his 1973 autobiography, so this isn't a new book. However, the author has expanded his story to talk about the past four decades of his eventful life. A native of Sialkot in Punjab, the young HPS was a career army man when he caught the mountaineering bug and enrolled at the mountaineering institute in Darjeeling under the tutelage of Tenzing Norgay. A member of a gifted generation of Indian climbers, he would go on to climb extensively in Sikkim and Nepal, culminating in the successful Indian attempt on Everest in 1965. As one of the fabled nine Indians to stand atop Everest that year, Ahluwalia's fame was assured. However, soon after this triumph, Ahluwalia was injured during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War and suffered a grievous spinal injury. The fact that he thrived despite this physical disability and opened India's first institute for spinal injuries takes his achievements to a whole different level.

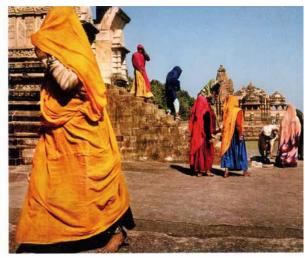
Reading about the expedition in these pages, it strikes me just how far removed the Everest of 1965 is from the Everest of 2016. There were hardly any crowds; the Sherpas of Namche Bazaar were still primarily agriculturalists or small traders; and whoever had the temerity to try and climb Everest had to do so on their own steam. Granted, the Indian expedition was literally on a military siege scale, but the climbers themselves, legendary figures like Bull Kumar and Sonam Gyatso among them, were seasoned mountaineers with excellent skills, none less so than Ahluwalia, who was an excellent rock climber. Another aspect of that famous climb that shines through is the sheer will of the Indians to make the '65 attempt count, especially after missing out on the summit in 1960 and 1962.

Defeated by the mountain in late April, the party waited almost a month, and against the odds, put nine men on top of Everest. It's some story, and Ahluwalia tells it well.

■ BIBEK BHATTACHARYA



Khajuraho By Raghu Rai (Niyogi, ₹3,000)







#### **Masterful Chiaroscuros**

nown for his pointed focus on singular subjects, Raghu Rai's early photo book on the Taj Mahal had afforded viewers a glimpse into life around the monument by taking them outside the Taj's complex and implying its overwhelming presence. In a new reprint and a fresh approach, *Khajuraho* is an interesting mix of colour and black-and-white photographs, though more literal in approach than his Taj Mahal book. Usha Rai's introduction discusses the Chandella rulers' fetish to build, delving briefly into the history of the temple complex at Khajuraho.

The first few photographs establish the environs in which the temple complex is located and Rai wastes no time in stamping his iconic style over the depiction of life outside the palaces and temples. There is a constant reference to that which does not exist anymore, and this is perhaps the most interesting thing about revisiting old photographs. One can see the slow but steady relocation of villages as the temple complexes began to recieve maintenance uplifts by the state. For much into the first half, Rai's wide compositions narrate the simplicity of daily life in the village. In one delightful colour frame, he pans an eager crane following its owner as a group of Jain temples bask in Khajuraho's iconic golden light in the distance. Several images detail the intricacies of the sculptures, and these make for an interesting study of human movement (tourists) around the temples as well as light's relationship with stone. A magnificent image is that of the pattern of a visitor's shawl against the stunning panels of the Duladeo temple. There are also a few literal juxtapositions of real women against sculpted characters in the book.

Built environments are hard to photograph—especially historical sites since they tower over everything, leaving little room for a photograph to show anything else. However, Rai's *Khajuraho* breaks several norms even within his own practice as he attempts to go beyond the grandeur of the obvious.

#### Outlook group











#### HIDESIGN OFFER

Spend Rs. 6,999 & above Get: a Hidesign Voucher worth Rs. 5,000/





Spend between Rs. 4749/- to Rs. 6998/-: Get an additional subscription for 1 year worth Rs. 1799/-, or 4 Guide books Free

Wildlife | Trekking in the Himalayas | Driving Holidays | Kerala

TOTAL SPEND (IN Rs.) MAGAZINE 1:



Spend between Rs. 3,399/- to Rs. 4,748/- : Get an additional subscription for Six months worth Rs. 900/-, or 3 Guide books Free

Rajasthan | Special Holidays | Romantic

Spend between Rs. 1,799/- to Rs. 3,398/- : Get an additional subscription for Three months worth Rs. 450/, or 1 Guide Book Free



TOTAL AMOUNT:

Heritage

MAGAZINE 5:



#### Yes, I would like to subscribe/renew to the magazine(s) as indicated below:

MAGAZINE 2:

(s)	TERM	OUTLOOK	OUTLOOK TRAVELLER	OUTLOOK MONEY	OUTLOOK BUSINESS	OUTLOOK HINDI
MY MAGAZINE CHOICE	1 YEAR	Rs. 1799/- Rs. 2550/-	Rs. 999/- Rs. 1200/-	Rs. 499/- Rs. 600/-	Rs. 999/- Rs. 1300/-	Rs. 499/- Rs. 650/-
	2 YEAR	Rs. 3399/- Rs. 5100/-	Rs. 1799/- Rs. 2400/-	Rs. 899/- Rs. 1200/-	Rs. 1699/- Rs. 2600/-	Rs. 899/- Rs. 1300/-
	3 YEAR	Rs. 4749/- Rs. 7650/-	Rs. 2499/- Rs. 3600/-	Rs. 1199/- Rs. 1800/-	Rs. 2399/- Rs. 3900/-	Rs. 1199/- Rs. 1950/-
	5 YEAR	Rs. 6999/- Rs. 12750/-	Rs. 3799/- Rs. 6000/-	Rs. 1799/- Rs. 3000/-	Rs. 3699/- Rs. 6500/-	Rs. 1799/- Rs. 3250/-

MAGAZINE 4:

Name: Mr/Ms					
Designation:		Organization:			 D D M M Y Y
Address:				PIN:	Date of Birth:
E-mail:			Mob. no		favouring OUTLOOK PUBLISHING (INDIA) PVT. LTD.
Ph (Res):	Please find end	losed Cheque/DD No:		Dated:	
Charge it to my Visa/Maste	er Card No.			Card Expiry:	For Rs

Please fill in this Order Form and mail it with your remittance to: OUTLOOK PUBLISHING (INDIA) PVT. LTD., AB-10, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110 029

MAGAZINE3:

For all subscription related queries, please contact at: yourhelpline@outlookindia.com

Date:\_\_\_\_\_Signature:\_\_\_\_

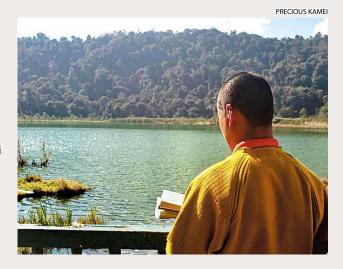
## The Grumpy Traveller

#### WHITHER WORLD PEACE

**"LOOK, LOOK, FISH!" CRIED OUT THE FATHER** to the rest of the family, which was marching ten steps behind him. The voice of the tourist, everyone. So what if this place was the serene Khecheopalri Lake? So what if there was a monk reciting prayers and feeding the fish in absolute silence? The tourist must point and yell!

Khecheopalri Lake—a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage site—is one of the most visited spots in Sikkim. Nestled in a pine forest, amid fluttering prayer flags, rhododendrons and many cairns that line up the forest path, this sacred lake is where monks chant their prayers—prayers for world peace. How do I know this? I waited for one to finish, then politely asked. The believers come here and ask the monks present to offer prayers for them. But Indian families do not make for model tourists. We get so excited at the prospect of sightseeing that we often forget the respect a place demands.

The lakeside can lend you tranquillity within, that is, if you keep quiet! I had walked across a gorgeous wooden bridge, adorned by prayer wheels on both sides, to reach a serene spot. I sat on a bench, trying to meditate, when I heard voices approaching, "Look how beautiful these flags are!" It was a big family with shrieking kids sprinting full speed at the frontline, followed by relent-



less chatter among the grown-ups at the back. A hissing 'shush' escaped my mouth instinctively. My peace had been violated; the monk, however, seemed unfazed.

But the worst was yet to happen. In a moment of sheer disbelief, tourist aunty poked the praying monk to ask for a selfie. The humble man he was, the monk smiled and posed for not one but a bunch of pictures (because the light was just not right for aunty), before returning to his interrupted prayers for the greater good. Is there any wonder we don't have world peace yet?

■ PRECIOUS KAMEI



#### SHADES OF BLUE

f you look up sunset in the Andamans, you're sure to stumble upon Chidiya Tapu, a little island at the southern tip of South Andaman island. An hour's drive away from Port Blair, the island is teeming with rare bird species, which lend it its name (Bird Island). I was on this serene isle in January this year to become a certified open water diver and subsequently try my hand at underwater photography. Havelock is the

favoured Andamans destination for scuba diving; Chidiya Tapu is less known and thus far from the madding crowd.

While diving here is absolute bliss, the view from above the water is spectacular as well. At a local's suggestion, I decided to try out a vantage point called Munda Pahad, an elongated blackrock cliff at one end of the island. The hike there is a surreal mix of forest and ocean two of my favourite things. The trail starts from Chidiya Tapu beach and goes uphill through the woods-the floor rustling with leaves and the air filled with birdsong. The trail is a 45-minute walk, with the tree canopy blocking out daylight completely from parts of it. There are a couple of clearings on the way which give you a teaser of the view to come.



During my leisurely walk spanning almost an hour, I encountered not a single soul through the woods and went by instinct on a couple of forks. The silence was absolute, as far as man-made sounds are concerned; the ocean's hum lingered in the air perpetually. When I finally reached the clearing at the edge of the cliff, I was greeted by a roaring wind. That, combined with a panoramic view

of the ocean—the sun just about to dip behind Rutland Island and a lone boat floating idyllically in a palette of blue shades—made the walk totally worth it.

A handy tip: carry enough water and a snack for what can be a 90-minute trek to and fro. Also, start early so that the return trek can be made before absolute darkness descends on the woods. Carry a torch.

#### India's Biggest Travel Show Network



www.ttfotm.com



Since 1989, it provides annual marketing platform and opportunity to network with the travel trade in all major cities. **OTM** is India's biggest travel trade show on the basis of number of participants, visitors and rented area. It is held every year in February, in Mumbai, the largest source market of Domestic and Outbound tourists. This is in addition to the **TTF Mumbai** in pre-diwali high season in September.

More than 2,500 Exhibitors from 80 Countries and 36 Indian States / Union Territories have participated in our **TTF** and **OTM** branded shows, making us the leading travel trade show organisers, with about 50% market share.

#### **Participation Package**

	Rate / sq m :	National	International/NTOs	
Α.	TTF Ahmedabad	₹ 21 500*	USD 325*	
B.	TTF Surat	₹ 21 500*	USD 325*	
C.	TTF Mumbaı	₹ 21 500*	USD 325*	
D.	TTF Pune :	₹ 21,500*	USD 325*	
E.	TTF Chennaı	₹ 21 500*	USD 325*	
F.	TTF Bengaluru	₹ 21 500*	USD 325*	
G.	OTM Mumbaı	₹ 23 500*	USD 395*	
H.	TTF New Delhi	₹ 21 500*	USD 325*	

- ➤ Add 10% for Corner, 20% for Peninsula and 30% for Island Stand.
- ➤ Add 25% premium for Extra Upper Floor Area, if any. \* Service Tax extra.
- \* Payment is due at the time of booking.

#### Schedule

#### 2016

TTF Ahmedabad: 2, 3, 4 Sept
TTF Surat: 9, 10, 11 Sept
TTF Mumbai: 16, 17, 18 Sept
TTF Pune: 23, 24, 25 Sept

#### 2017

TTF Chennai : 6, 7, 8 Jan

TTF Bengaluru : 13, 14, 15 Jan

OTM Mumbai : 21, 22, 23 Feb

TTF New Delhi : 27, 28 Feb, 1 Mar

To book your vantage stand at TTF write us to contact@fairfest.com or visit www.ttfotm.com

Supported by:































Official Trade Publication:



- OFTEN CALLED THE MOST FAMOUS MAZE IN THE WORLD, this hedge maze was commissioned around the year 1700. Trapezoidal and covering a third of an acre, it's a multicursal labyrinth which often makes visitors go round in circles or hit dead-ends for hours. It even features in a famous comic travelogue centered on a boating holiday undertaken by three folks. The maze was formerly made of hornbeam and constituted a part of a certain 'wilderness', which is today carpeted with daffodils and crocuses.
- NAME THE MAZE AND THE COUNTRY IN WHICH IT IS LOCATED.



ALAMY/INDIAPICTURE

#### WINNER **JULY 2016**

#### TAMAL BHATTACHARYA

KOLKATA In July, we featured

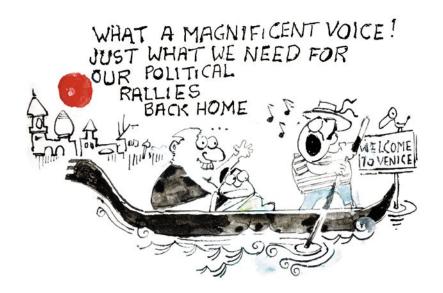
#### Zwinger Palace, Dresden. MAIL YOUR ENTRIES TO

'Outlook Traveller Quiz', AB-10 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029 by September 30. Email submissions will not be considered.

One lucky reader who answers correctly will win the brand new **Outlook Traveller Getaways** Trekking in the Himalayas written by Harish Kapadia.



# Traveltoons [BY MARIO MIRANDA]





# 24 - 25 October 2016 Hyatt Regency Gurgaon, New Delhi NCR.



India is the fastest growing business travel market in the world.

Delhi is a major business hub of India, with decent buyer potential of Business, MICE and Luxury Travel spending. In addition to hundreds of buyers from the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR), BLTM will provide you guaranteed visit of hundreds of Hosted Buyers from all major cities in India.

#### India: The Next Big Thing?

According to GBTA: "More than any other country, India is poised for breakout growth. In 2014, India had \$26 billion in business travel spending, which will grow by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.5 percent through 2019 to \$45 billion." (From its present position of 10th largest market in the world) "Fifteen years from now, India will likely be a top-five market in business travel spending"

At the BLTM you will meet India's leading business, MICE and luxury travel buyers, and some of the high profile media editors. Our team is rigorously qualifying and personally inviting up to 500 top hosted buyers from all over India and additional 2000 local buyers from Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) with equally high buying potential.

BLTM is brought to you by Fairfest Media Ltd, the oldest and the leading travel trade show organiser in India. Our OTM in Mumbai is India's biggest travel trade show, with participation of 1000+ sellers from 50+ countries.

#### Participation Package

		Tariff *	Early Bird Offer *#		
			Before 31 May'16	1 June - 31 July'16	
Shell	Shell Scheme	US\$ 495 / sq m	US\$ 395 / sq m	US\$ 445 / sq m	
Jileii		INR 29,700 / sq m	INR 23,700 / sq m	INR 26,700 / sq m	

- Add 10% for Corner, 20% for Peninsula and 30% for Island
- Add 25% surcharge for extra upper floor area
- Deduct US\$ 10 per sq m for bare space.
- \* Service Tax extra \* Payment is due at the time of booking # Early Bird Offer is strictly as per date of payment

To book your vantage stand at BLTM write us to contact@fairfest.com or visit www.bltm.co.in

#### hot deal



#### YOGA & WELLNESS PROGRAMS IN BANDHAVGARH & JAGESHWAR BY EVOLUTION.

Learn the ultimate technique for physical & mental fitness - Hatha Yoga, Kaivalya Kriya & Pranayam, Meditation, Yoga. Myriad activities such as safaris, birding, treks, games, and excursions. Mobile: +91 9811124222, +91 9971883171, +91 120 4222797 E: info@asianadventures.in W: www.evolutionretreats.in



#### MONSOON FOREST

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve One of the finest conservation & wellness lodges in Bandhavgarh. Great wildlife experiences. Yoga & Meditation Retreats with trained teachers in July, Aug & Sep. Natural History Workshops for families & corporate companies. Online Booking. Early Bird offers. Call: +919871907474, +919810362445, +91 9266519519, +91 120 4222797 E: info@asianadventures.in W: www.monsoonforest.com



#### JOIN OUR FIXED DEPARTURES

Trek. Nanda Devi Base Camp (East) Mammals, Birds & Photography: Various Options! Call: +91 9811704651, +91 9312206571, +91 120 4222797 E: info@asianadventures.in W: www.asianadventures.in



#### JUNGLE LORE BIRDING LODGE. KAFAL HOUSE, PANGOT, NAINITAL.

One of the most charming places near Nainital for birds and photography.

Deals you cannot miss!
Call:+91 9266519519,
+91 120 4222797

E: info@asianadventures.in
www.pangot.com



Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture. Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com

#### Rs 4500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com



#### VAN SERAI - THE WELLNESS LODGE! JAGESHWAR, UTTARAKHAND

A very powerful Shiva shrine. 2500-year-old temple architecture. Great Day Treks. Yoga & Meditation Retreats. Himalayan Temple Architecture Tours. Deals you cannot miss! Mobile: +91 9266519519, +91 120 4222797 E: info@asianadventures.in W: www.jageshwar.in



#### ABBOTT MOUNT COTTAGE, LOHAGHAT. MAGPIE COTTAGE BY THE STREAM - NEAR

SONANADI (LANSDOWNE). Himalayan History, Himalayan views, Walks, Fishing. Natural History. Ideal for long stays & visitors who wish to have the bungalow to themselves. Self-cooking. Pet-friendly. Call: + 91 9266519519, +91 120 4222797 E: info@asianadventures.in www.abbottmountcottage.com & www.magpiecottage.in



#### WALTERRE. DEHRADUN-MUSSOORIE ROAD

One of the finest luxury lodges in Doon Valley on the way to Mussoorie. Bird Watching & Relaxation. Online Deals. Call: +91 9266519519, +91 120 4222797 E: info@asianadventures.in W: www.walterre.in

Book this space for

Rs 6500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com

Book this space for

#### Rs 6500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com

#### hills

#### **CRYSTAL COUNTY**



#### **RESORT**

- · Rooms
- Conferences
- •Banquets
- Swimming Pool
   Wedding
- · Wi-Fi facility



#### **Bombay** Ourmet

- A Family Restaura • Indian
- •Mughlai
- Tandoor
- Chinese
- South Indian

Between L & T Training Center & Fariyas Resort, Tel.: 02114-272430/60/70/80 Mobile: 9545952927

Book this space for

#### Rs 8500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com

#### Rs 4500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com

#### Rs 2500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com



#### FOR SALE/LEASE

Ideal for homestay, newly constructed 2-BHK fully furnished cottage/bunglow for sale/lease. On the fringes of the famous Jim Corbett national park. Perched on hilltop with 360d view of the valley and river below. 2 Balconies, Serene and cool atmosphere

Plot Area: 2400 sq yd Covered Area: 1700 sq ft Contact: Mr Ashish - 9810140091 ashish@ewest.in

**Helicopter Air Taxies & Joy** Rides i Budget Group Tours | Beach Holidays | Student Tours | Houseboat Holidays | Ayurveda Wellness Anti Age Package 3/196-J, Veluthamana Buildings, Civil Lane Road, Chembumukku, Kochi, Kerala, India - 682 030

Ph.: 0091 9895 135 458 0091 7034 898 009 0091 484 4055 458

E: gabrrielsons@gmail.com

Book this space for Rs 8500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Fmail id: bharat@outlookindia.com

> Book this space for Rs 6500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla 9899556999 011 33505500 Fmail id: bharat@outlookindia.com

#### wildlife



#### Rs 2500/-

Place an ad to promote your property or product. The ad must be accompanied by a picture.

Contact: Bharat Chawla, 9899556999, 011 33505500 Email id: bharat@outlookindia.com



#### KEN RIVER LODGE - PANNA

Rs 12000/- Double occupancy, Rs 11000/- Single Occupancy in Ac Huts

#### www.kenriverlodge.com

KINGS LODGE - BANDHAVGARH Rs 18000/- Double occupancy, Rs 17000/- Single Occupancy in AC Cottage

#### www.kingslodge.in

#### TREE HOUSE HIDEAWAY -**BANDHAVGARH**

Rs 20000/- Double occupancy, Rs 19000/- single occupancy in Ac Tree house

#### www.treehousehideawav.com

#### KANHA EARTH LODGE-KANHA

Rs 18000/- Double occupancy, Rs 17000/- Single Occupancy in Ac Bungalows

#### www.kanhaearthlodge.com

#### DENWA BACKWATER FSCAPF-SATPLIRA

Rs 18000/- Double occupancy, Rs 17000/- single occupancy in Ac cottage. Rs 20000/- Double occupancy, Rs 19000/- single occupancy in Treehouse

#### www.denwabackwaterescape.com

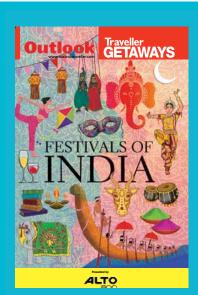
PENCH TREE LODGE - PENCH Rs 20000/- Double occupancy, Rs 19000/- single occupancy in Ac

#### BARAHI JUNGLE LODGE -

#### **CHITWAN NEPAL** Rs 18000/- Double occupancy,

Rs 17000/- single occupancy in Ac cottage www.barahijunglelodge.com Above Package includes accommodation in mentioned category, 1 Shared Jeep Safaris/ activities, All Meals and all

Call: +91 - 124 - 2571404, 2570404, +91 8800637711 enquiry@pugdundeesafaris.com www.pugdundeesafaris.com



# know India Best

# FESTIVALS OF

**Outlook Traveller Getaways** presents a guide spanning the entire extent of India, focusing on destinations that have remained off the beaten path thus far

IT IS TIME YOU BOUGHT YOUR COPY





# City Of Gold

Photograph by ARUN SAHA

Bhandara Festival, Jejuri, Maharashtra





Wanted! Your travel photos—from Beluga to Belgaon, Kozhikode to Kraków. Give us your best shot (high-resolution 300dpi/at least 2MB, along with a caption and date) by September 20 and win the SoulTree Soumya Gift Box which has a shower gel, moisturiser, massage oil and hair oil. Email your entries to picturepost@outlookindia.com.





#### EUROPE'S BEST AIRLINE FOR THE 6<sup>TH</sup> YEAR IN A ROW



MUMBAI - 022 61997900 NEW DELHI - 0124 4193000 TURKISHAIRLINES.COM