

MEET THE CITY

PUNE - VOL. I / JAN-FEB 2014

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An architectural rendering of two modern skyscrapers, Trump Towers Pune, set against a dramatic twilight sky with soft clouds. The taller building on the left is illuminated from within, showing a grid of windows and balconies. The shorter building on the right is also lit up. In the foreground, there is a landscaped area with greenery and a walkway. The background shows a city skyline with other buildings.

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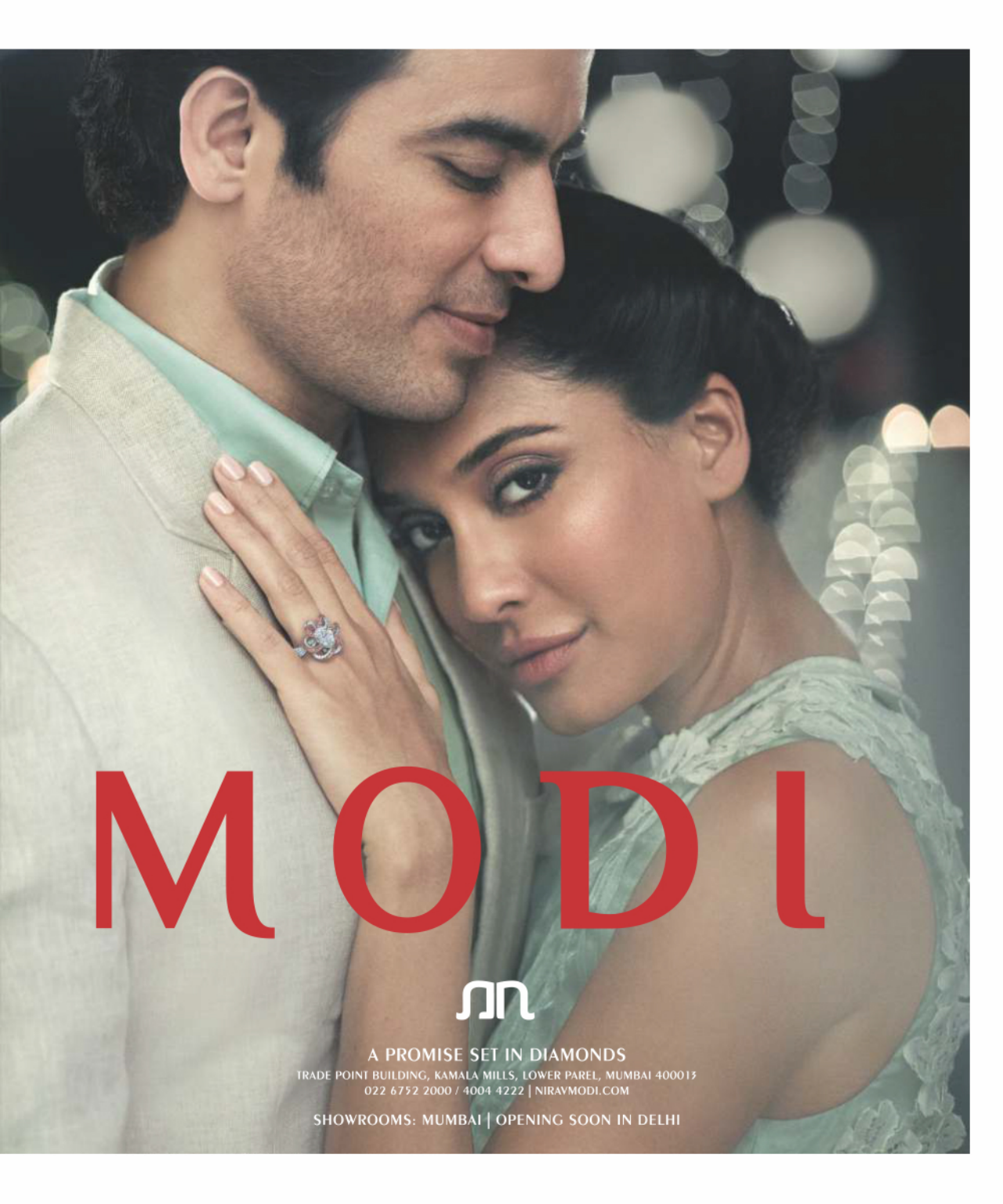
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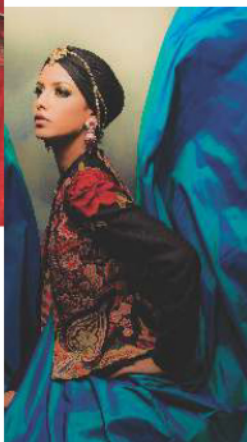
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EVENTS



Dear Readers,

George Bernard Shaw said that no love is more sincere than the love of food. We could not agree more. Gastronomy is a cultural pointer: people, who give you food, give you their heart!

Nothing matches the intimate experience of an extraordinary meal especially cuisine unexplored. To say that a delicious meal - fine or off the kerb - will not challenge your notions is an understatement.

Therefore, we decided to kick-off the New Year with love: the love for food. In this issue, straight from the streets of Pune, we bring delicious food stalls, quaint restaurants, vintage cafés and mouth-watering savouries. All you need to go out in Pune to treat your taste buds.

We also travel far and near, to bring cities of the world where directions are not mandatory, and culinary leaves you with a palate insatiate!

Read also the story of the man who fought hunger. Nikolai Vavilov's story and one man's mission to end world hunger is fantastic, as tragic. Yet, there is hope in it.

On parting, we wish this year that more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, and make a merrier world.

Enjoy reading!

ATUL CHORDIA
Chairman, Panchshil Realty

EDITORIAL & DESIGN : PANCHSHIL CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
PHOTOGRAPHY : NASHI SHAIKH, RITESH RAMAIAH | CONTENT : RADHIKA SATHE, CHAITANYA DESHPANDE | PRODUCTION & CO-ORDINATION : SURBHI GUPTA

'Meet the City' bi-monthly is owned by AZZ Online Services Pvt.Ltd. Printed & published by Pradeep Bantlia, printed at Silverpoint Press Pvt. Ltd., A-403, TTC Industrial Area, Near Anthony, Mahape, Navi Mumbai - 400 709. Published at Tower E, S.No. 191A/2A/2, Next to Don Bosco School, Off Airport Road, Yerwada, Pune 411 006, Editor - Atul Chordia

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MONTBLANC TIMEWALKER CHRONOVOYAGER UTC



A second time zone synchronised with Universal Time Coordinated (UTC) makes this self-winding chronograph the perfect companion for all frequent travellers. Its robust 43-mm-diameter stainless steel case with satin-finished bezel and push-pieces unites elegant design and the traditional art of watchmaking. *This chronograph features a second time zone with day/night indication displayed by 24 hours on the flange, a date display, a central second-hand as well as two additional counters for up to 30 elapsed minutes and maximally 12 elapsed hours. The TimeWalker ChronoVoyager UTC is crafted in the Montblanc Manufacture in Le Locle, Switzerland.* MONTBLANC. A STORY TO TELL.

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Buried deep in the riches of Pune's cultural treasure is its thriving food culture.

Not just the fast food, fine dining, lavish buffets and gourmet escapes; Pune's food culture spills, quite literally, on its streets, stalls, and small eating joints.

Here is a small serving of what and where to eat in Pune.

Street food of Pune!



Sugar, spice and the tiny bits of raw mango, and tomatoes is what brings you to one of Pune's authentic and favourite chat centre: Kalyan Bhel.

Their Farsan Bhel is a typical tasty fare. For all the crunchy variations of bhel and chat, eating at Kalyan being spoilt for choices.

Location: Canal Road, Law College Road.

Chole Bhature

Head over to Koregaon Park to drool over North Indian cuisine. Teri Rajput Dairy's *chole bhature* are available in various permutations and combinations.

Choose from their range of *chapatti*, *phulka* or *tandoori roti* or stick to rice. Top off a meal with some *dal*-rice and *lassi*.

For spice lovers, chilly laced with turmeric and salt handsomely completes the meal. This is a dairy, so hang around to taste their milk products.

Location: Koregaon Park.



Pani Puri

Not everywhere in India do you find an ISO certification for a snack and *chat* vendor. Then again, not from everywhere do they export *bhel* and *pani puri* also.

Like any multi-national, Ganesh Bhel has regular audits – of employee hygiene and cleanliness.

Why, you ask? To serve Pune's cleanest, crispiest and savoury *pani puri*. Their *pani puri* is an exhaustive and mouth-watering assortment.

Location:
Ganesh Nagar, Karve Nagar.



Kathi Kebab Rolls

Kolkata's export, the *kathi roll* has but one address in Pune. The age-old *kathi roll* shop was thought to be dead and many devout food lovers were heartbroken when Olympia Kathi Kebabs was taken over by Kareem's.

Yet, not all was lost: Kareem's retained the little window, the menu screamed 'Olympia' and taste remains unchanged.

Order the more-than-filling Double Chicken Kathi Kebab Roll and bite into the thick chicken slices and beaten egg in the wrap. Dip tip: don't pass on the *podina chutney*.

Location: East Street, Camp.

LOCATION: KARVE NAGAR





Vada Pav

Vada Pav

With umpteen vada pav stalls, this humble Indian fast food is omnipresent. At Pune, the JJ Garden Vada Pav Centre is not just another vada pav stall. It is a cult. For over 40 years, the Kashinath family has perfected the vada pav and served their ultra delicious fare piping hot. Served with fried green chillies and a single piece of gentle-subtle lime pickle, the JJ Garden vada pav is a gem of Pune's eating alleys.

Location: At the JJ Garden corner, Bootee St, Camp.



Dosa & Vada

Mysore Masala Dosa

Nostalgia is Hotel Vaishali's main fare. That, and their superb Udupi menu.

Established in early 1950's as the Madras Health Home, it is part of the popular trinity along with Roopali and Amrapali.

For five decades, students - and ex-students - from Fergusson College have haunted this place. Waiting to get a table is mandatory at Vaishali.

Yet, worth the wait is the delicious Mysore Masala Dosa with its authentic ginger-garlic chutney and tantalizing *alu masala sabji*. Do not miss the SPDP - the sev potato dahi puri - a chat speciality, and Vaishali's typical *sitafal* shake.

LOCATION: FC COLLEGE ROAD





Kothimbir Vadi Sabudana Vada

This is quintessential Maharashtrian eating in the midst of multi-national fast food joints.

Shree Datta Snacks serves traditional fare like *Kothimbir vadi*, *Sabudana vada*, *thaalipeeth*, and *khichdi* to weary – and hungry travellers on the Mumbai-Pune highway.

A self-service restaurant, these tasty items are served in disposable cardboard boxes. For a cool drink, Datta's *kokam sherbet* is the definitive drink.

Location: Near Panvel *naka*, a few minutes away from the Mumbai-Pune and Mumbai-Goa fork.

Sabudana Vada

LOCATION: JM ROAD

Pav Bhaji & Pulao

A restaurant that opens everyday at 7:30 pm and is full before you can even finish reading the menu, which only has three items: *pav bhaji*, *pulao* and *pizza*.

Supreme Corner is a super-busy, super-famous pav bhaji hangout. Supreme hosts throngs of food lovers in a small, cramped area for hours.

Getting in queue is not a problem here. The owners and their innovative SMS token system ensure that you spend time eating, and not waiting.

The piping-hot *pav bhaji* is served with loads of butter and crisp *pav*. Not just the *bhaji*, even their pizzas is a crowd favourite.



Pav Bhaji & Pulao



Crunchy, thin-crust and packed with cheese, Supreme's thin-crust rendition of the pizza shames most pizza houses. There is also a take-away at the back if you mind the crowds.

Location: Jangli Maharaj Road, Shivaji Nagar.



Cad-B & Cad-M

This Pune export is rather mysterious. It is vanilla thick shake with vanilla ice cream, and unadulterated chocolate.

The chocolate seduces as chocolate powder sprinkled over the top, as bits and pieces of chocolate in the glass and the chocolate sauce. This chilled favourite is chocolate manna! While the Chocolate Cad-B is a rage, the Cad-M, a pure white, vanilla overdose is another variant.

Location: Any Ice Cream Magic shop at Viman Nagar, or Kothrud or a street-side coffee shop across Pune.

Also, for the love of coffee, don't miss out on the legendary cold coffee at Durga Café, Kothrud.

Matka Kulfi

The *kulfi* is by far the most delicious street food ever. While there are great many vendors who sell this sweet delight, *Vrundavan Kulfiwala* or commonly called 'Z Bridge Kulfiwala' is one of Pune's most sought-after *kulfi*.

From flavours like *malai*, *pista*, *mix* and chocolate to the seasonal varieties like *raspberry*, *chiku*, this *kulfi* lights up thousands of faces with its rich, thick flavour.

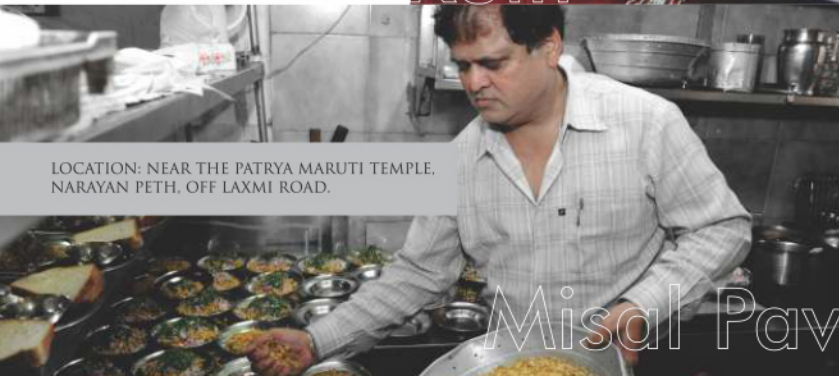
All it takes is a small stall, a compact refrigeration unit and voila!

Location: at the end of two-wheeler bridge leading to Jangli Maharaj Road at Deccan

Misal Pav

The *misal* (Marathi for "mixture"), is one of Maharashtra's famous food exports. Known for its pungent flavours and tantalising aromas, the *misal* has outdone itself in variety and flavour across Maharashtra.

This one-meal food has a legendary address in Pune: the Bedekar Tea Stall. The Bedekar family takes its *misal* seriously: every *misal* is...



LOCATION: NEAR THE PATRYA MARUTI TEMPLE, NARAYAN PETH, OFF LAXMI ROAD.

...layered with spiced potato topped with the lentil mixtures (the *usal*), followed by chopped coriander and onion on top! Their 'sample' or *tarri* – the thin hot gravy – renders the dish a rather unique sweet flavour.

Unlike its variants, this is not a tongue-burning dish, and the Bedekar tradition is to serve *misal* with slices of bread, and not the *pav*.



Bun Maska – Irani Tea

When in Pune, do the Irani cafés. While there are others, between the trio of Café Yezdan, Vohuman Café and Café Goodluck, they serve some of the most delicious breakfast fares in Pune.

Characteristic old-school seating, simple décor and a no-nonsense attitude towards hot Irani *chai* and *bun maska* (*bun* laced with dollops of butter!) make a must-visit. While Goodluck's *bun maska* makes you swoon, Yezdan's *chai* and Vohuman's

cheese omelettes make you hog. Rules to remember when in an Irani café in Pune: turn up early, grab a table and order, and then eat, eat until you burst and eat to save your seat.

Yet another favourite in this club is *Kohinoor Restaurant* (MG Road).

Location:

Café Yezdan - Sachapir Street, Sharbatwalla Chowk, Camp.

Café Vohuman - Near Jehangir Hospital, Sassoon Road.

Café Goodluck - Deccan Gymkhana.

Bun Maska

Pithla-Bhakhri

The simplicity of Maharashtra's rustic *pithla-bhakhri*, the monsoon and a trek to Sinhagad (literally, the Lion's Fort) is unmatched. But not just the rains, while trekkers scale the crumbling walls, many food lovers find their way to the top to indulge in this Maharashtrian fare. *Kanda-bhaji* and *pithla-bhakhri* served by the locals in shacks and stalls must never be missed.

Location: top of the Sinhagad Fort.



Burger

It is easy to understand why burgers are popular. It is easier still when they come from Burger. Formerly, 'Burger King', this place – in Koregaon Park and on MG Road is burger heaven! Dig into the greasy King Beef or the Chicken Jumbo Burger and you will why size does matter when it comes to burger. This old-school self-service burger joint is also known for its Steak Burger. Also, try the Veg. Potato Burger with the mayonnaise and mustard oozing out! Location: Near ABC Farms, North Main Road, Koregaon Park.

Sandwich

It is hard to miss the red and white sign on Main Street, MG Road. The quaint Marz-O-Rin café has amazing chicken sandwiches. This Parsi eating joint in a century-old building is a great place to sit and chat and eat, and then eat more.

Try the bakes – macaroni and spaghetti and lively sauces, or get cakes and pastries from Pasteurs. As you sit back on a balcony table, let the eating never stop while the road goes on.

Location: Main Street, MG Road.



Shrewsbury biscuit

The Shrewsbury biscuit is a compelling reason to shift to Pune. Though not a 'street food', excluding the Kayani's Shrewsbury biscuit from Pune's food list is sacrilege! Kayani Bakery is time-locked: a five-decade old Irani bakery serving the same crunchy, crisp, and scrumptious biscuit that is sold-out in a matter of minutes for decades now! Their wood-fired ovens churn out delicacies like *mawa* cakes, flaky *khaari*, sourdough bread and *nankhatai*. Enjoy! Location: East Street, Camp.





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COVER STORY

THE ART OF EATING

A row of five teddy bear-shaped cakes, each sitting on a small dark brown wooden base. The cakes are light brown with white faces, black eyes, and black noses. They are arranged in a diagonal line from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a plain white surface.



A decade ago, the union of food and art was largely unheard of. Food was food, art was art; and art with food was well, imaginative at best.

Today, food art has grown by leaps and bounds. Culinary artists are rock stars in their own right. Elaborate castles, musical instruments, intricate fashion accessories, human and animal forms and even large dioramas entirely made from foodstuffs! Food art today is as much celebration as meticulous.

Pune Baking Company (PBC) at the JW Marriott, S.B. Road, is an exclusive food art destination in the city. Ajmal Salim, Executive Chef & Cluster Executive Pastry Chef, creates beautiful pieces of confectionary art so delectable you would have to resist not cutting it up!



Chef Ajmal
JW Marriott, Pune

A well-travelled man, Chef Ajmal's visits take him on culinary escapes across continents.

His travels have led him to the confectionary delights of the world, places like France, America, Switzerland, and Japan, to name a few.



A well-travelled man, Chef Ajmal's visits take him on culinary escapes across continents. His travels have led him to the confectionary delights of the world, places like France, America, Switzerland, and Japan, to name a few.

Infused with the creative outburst he experienced, his wish to bring this art to India now bears fruit at PBC "I started working on different themes. Once I was able to create one, it gave me the confidence to make more intrinsic and difficult subjects... and the learning is still going on..." says Chef Ajmal on food art.

"I was once at the departure lounge at the Dubai Airport and saw a store with few antique items, one among them was a vintage telephone..." – Chef Ajmal on inspiration for a chocolate vintage telephone. Insightful about this wondrous art form, his emphasis is "...always about things that brings smile to our faces." Ideas and inspiration come pouring in from fashion, style, toys, books, television, and even airport lounges.

"One of our guests came to me and said that they are celebrating their child's third birthday and the only toy that he likes is JCBs, diggers, excavators and such vehicles. So the next day I went to a construction site and observed these large vehicles up close. I took few pictures and then recreated it with chocolate! The child was thrilled to have his cake!"

For a food art enthusiast, PBC offers plenty of designs available to choose from, the theme keeps changing every month. "Some are constant themes such as gadgets like iPhone, jewellery, antique or vintage equipment like a piano or an old-style leaning chair, cartoon characters, wild animals, fashion oriented like shopping bags, sunglasses, designer shoes, etc."

"It is difficult to remember all the designs we make; and it is always tough to choose which is more memorable than the other," Chef Ajmal tells, "Among those that I have made recently includes a castle (Aladdin and Jasmine), a large piano, an excavator, a jungle cake, and an old style radio."

While all are quite difficult to make, jewellery based designs and kids' toys need a lot of detailing making them quite a task.



Easter Eggs



Music Band



Dogs

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A silver fork is positioned vertically on the left side of the frame. To its right, a white plate features a world map composed of small, golden-brown rice grains. The title 'CULINARY TRAVEL' is centered over the image, with 'CULINARY' in a light grey serif font and 'TRAVEL' in a larger, bold black serif font.

CULINARY TRAVEL

Capital Cuisine

Or a rather tasty guide to few of the best gourmet cities of the world.



Cities are alive. Their hearts throb with the culture that flows in the streets.
Cities resound with music and museums.
Parks and plazas. Cafes and markets. History and high-street.
Museums and metros.

Yet, there is nothing like looking into a city's soul through its gourmet culture.
Here is our bucket list of the world's best cities that are a delight to your taste buds.



Paris, France

For the longest time, gourmet cuisine meant Paris, and Paris was the world's Mecca for good food.

From a simple crusty baguette to the high-dining restaurants, dining in Paris is a treat! The French are passionate lovers, but even more so about what they eat, or serve, for that matter. Add some of the world's best wines to this attitude, and French cuisine is a trip to heaven.

Wander *Rue Mouffetard* and *Rue Montorgueil* to sample the typical street flavours of *rillette* and *foie gras* (the fat of goose or duck liver) or taste the might of molecular gastronomy at *Restaurant Pierre Gagnaire* on *Rue Balzac*.

From big, bustling *brasseries* that often serve seafood to modern bistros with *prix fixe* menus to the chic restaurants

of the 16th arrondissement with wine lists longer than your address book – Paris has it all!

Only when you experience your first authentic French picnic can you truly say you have eaten in Paris! Got to Notre Dame, in the square in front of the cathedral or the garden behind it or occupy a *quais* (platforms) by the Seine and eat.

However, whatever you choose to eat, plan, polish your French and do not miss tasting the Bordier butter, typical French baguette and pastries, and the famous *Laurent Dubois* cheese.

Bon appétit!

For details, visit parisinfo.com





Marrakech, Morocco

Steeped in Moorish history, the 'red city' of Marrakech is a city of cultural combinations at the foothills of the High Atlas Mountains.

The Moroccans have mastered equally exquisite flavours and aesthetics. *Tajine* for example, cooked and presented in mysterious pots, is rich with aromas of tender slow-cooked lamb, raisins, nuts and an array of spices. Slow-roasted lamb cooked in a *hammam*, and roasted-eggplant caviar is a must-experience!

The *Djemaa el-Fna* is prime-time drama with its many people, food stalls, lights and sheer turnover of ingredients. Marrakech's main square is home to signature dishes like the *harira* (a tomato-based soup filled with chickpeas, lentils and fresh herbs), steamed snails, tongues and even sheep's intestines for the bold and freshly cooked fish, *kebabs* and veggies for the less brave.

Marrakech is also home to many good-value restaurants littered over the city, but nothing packs quite the punch like enjoying a home-cooked meal. If you stay in a *riad*, chances are a *dada*, matriarchal home cook, will cook elaborate yet typical Marrakech food enjoyed on the *riad* terrace like a Moorish blue blood. On rooftops again, soak in the sunset and market lights come alive sipping on the sugary mint tea overlooking the *Djemaa el-Fna*. Various licensed restaurants, especially in the Ville Nouvelle, offer an eclectic mix of traditional and modern cuisine.

Lastly, no visit is complete without a visit to the fibrous confusing network of *souks* where you can buy everything from carpets and cotton textiles; woolen hats, spices and magic supplies. As you browse, stop by at a *souk* café to indulge in vegetarian *Berber couscous*!

For details, visit visitmorocco.com



Kyoto, Japan



The town of tea and temples, Kyoto's culinary tradition is both tasty and tactile! Typified with traditional exteriors, formal gardens, and waiters in *kimono* and *yukata*; Kyoto's food guide is extreme: from aristocratic *kaiseki-ryōri* meal to austere vegetarian *shōjin ryōri*. So typical is the food in Kyoto, it spawned its own cooking style –

ingredient in this strictly vegetarian fare. Supplemented by Kyoto's natural wells and perfect water, the Kyoto tofu is the most famous in all of Japan. The highlight of tofu cuisine is the *yudofu*, and the Nanzenji district of Kyoto is famous for it. It is always advisable to have advance reservations if you decide to go to a temple for authentic *shōjin ryōri*.

Outside of central Kyoto, you can also eat over flowing water. Called the *Kawayuka* (or *Kawadoko*), this is where you dine outdoors in summer on temporary platforms. The most famous area to experience *kawayuka* is along the Kamogawa River. From May to September, restaurants here construct temporary wooden decks over the canal on the river's west bank. In Kibune especially, the platforms are only centimetres above the water!

Must-visit at Kyoto is its many *izakayas* serving typical fresh seasonal produce from the Kansai region and the fusion restaurants of the Pontocho nightlife district and Kyoto's best urban gourmet experiences.

For details, visit kyoto.travel

the *kyō-ryōri* which aims to enhance the subtle flavors of its basic ingredients.

Kyoto's tea culture, a heritage in itself, is the origin for the *kaiseki-ryōri*, the zenith of Japanese gastronomy. An elaborate dining style, the Kyoto style *kaiseki-ryōri* or *kyō-kaiseki* is a refined dining experience with special emphasis on subtle flavours and seasonal ingredients. Every cooking method determines the prescribed order of serving courses. For a casual traveller, typically a stay at any *ryokan* will include a *kaiseki* dinner.

The *shōjin ryōri* comes from the austerity of Buddhist monks. Tofu is a common



Seoul, Korea



Seoul contradicts itself: Fourteenth-century city gates, gizmo-wired youth, rash of identical buildings and swanky malls to splurge. Yet, here are reasons why Seoul is one of the world's best food cities.

For one, Korean cuisine has more side dishes than main dishes - at least seven distinct side dishes! Then there is *kimchi*, fundamentally Korean and with powers that bestow longevity. At the heart of South Korea's glittering techno-savvy capital is an exclusive food alley: vast and epicurean in its flavours. The archaic Gwangjang Market with almost two-hundred stalls specializes in the *bibimbab* (mixed rice) and the *nokdu bindaetteok* (mung-bean pancakes).

Although Seoul does not tolerate street food

with its many bans on food stalls and vendors, the *pojangmacha* - covered wagons - attract numerous food-lovers, and the after-work crowds. These wagons serve traditional Korean fare like the *hotteok* (stuffed pancakes), *tteokbokki* (rice cake), *odeng* (fish cakes), and *mandu* (dumplings) cheapest, tastiest barbecue on the street. As the light fades in Seoul and neon takes charge, many *pojangmacha* also furnish the *soju* - Korea's native distilled beverage.

The innovation of Korean cuisine is amazing. A stellar example is the *gamja-dog*, essentially a deep-fried hot dog covered with French fries. As satisfying as messy, Seoul's Myeong-dong neighborhood is the place to head to. Another inventive edible is the *galbi*, barbecued ribs with a DIY experience.

The staff, with a designated chef, will stand by your table to marinate the meat and serve you fresh off the barbecue!

For details, visit visitkorea.or.kr

Seoul must-see:

Gyeongbok Palace (Palace of Shining Happiness) - for fairy-tale views of Seoul's oldest, largest palace

War Memorial of Korea - for military history, the Korean War
Insadong - for typical Korean shopping
Sinchon - for nightlife
Mount Namsan - for nature trails, cable car, viewing platform, and revolving restaurant



San Sebastian, Spain

On the shores of Bay of Biscay, San Sebastian, or Donostia (in Basque) is the great food capital of Europe. Basque cooking - *La Cocina Vasca*, is light and rustic, and influenced by the abundance sea produce and fertile Ebro Valley on the other.

Through the old city, the beach and surrounding areas of San Sebastian enjoy food across the spectrum: from the eight famous restaurants with 16 Michelin stars between them to small *pintxos* and veritable cider houses (*sidrerias*). The food culture here makes San Sebastian a pilgrimage for the gourmand! Experience Spain's greatest gastronomic delights like *jamón serrano* (cured ham), *tortilla española* (potato omelette), *gambas* (shrimp), *gazpacho* (bread and tomato soup) here in true Basque style.

Wander any of the old streets and you find a host of restaurants and tapas bars. A plate of *patatas bravas* and mussels in spicy tomato sauce is a must-have here. Marvellously, you also get whatever you want cooked to order. Blessed with three pristine beaches, San Sebastian's simple harbour taverns serve mouth-watering seafood delicacies!

Red wine is the cultural flavour, typically because of its proximity to the famous wine growing regions of Navarra and Rioja. A great local favorite is the *txakoli*, the effervescent local green wine. San Sebastian is a treat for the senses: breathtaking panoramas, exhilarating walks, and a fascinating film culture.

For details, visit sansebastianturismo.com





Oaxaca City, Mexico

At the cusp of three valleys between high mountains, Oaxaca City is an unadulterated Mexican experience. Life is on a roll in Oaxaca ("wah-HAH-kah"). It is an endless celebration of culture and cuisine. Local legends say that once you eat here, you cannot resist not coming back. The 'land of the seven moles', Oaxaca's legendary complex sauces are to die for!

Surrounded by fascinating archaeological sites and pueblos, Oaxaca is a treat for the eyes. Few buildings rise taller than two floors, making it a quaint small town.

The gem of Oaxacan food art is in its local markets. From bread, spices to chocolate to insects: Oaxacan palate requires a bold will. Tasting *chapulines*, browned grasshoppers with garlic, lemon and salt is a dare. *Tlayudas*, giant tortillas with mashed beans, cheese and salsa is for true gluttons. For dessert, there is nothing better than sherbets in flavors such as burnt milk, cheese and *mezcal*, local alcohol of the maguey plant.

Also heard to beat is hot chocolate at El Marqués del Valle, overlooking the town square, and rose-petal sorbet at the Temple of Solitude!

While Oaxaca offers fine dining options, nothing beats eating like a local. So while you visit the many galleries, nearby pueblos and various archeological sites, do not miss out undeniably delicious cuisine like *queso Oaxaca* (Oaxacan cheese), *cemitas* (stuffed egg-rich rolls) and tacos *arabes*!

If you do not eat *mole* when you are in Oaxaca, it is as if you were never there.

The 7 moles:

Negro: plenty of dark, bitter chocolate.

Rojo: dried red chilli like *pasilla*, *guajillo* and *ancho*

Coloradito: Brown mole: between *rojo* and *negro*.

Amarillo: No chocolate. No sweet stuff. Simple and effective.

Verde: Bright green, made of extra pumpkin seeds.

Chichilo: Dark, spicy sauce of beef stock.

Manchamantel: Literally, "tablecloth stainer." Classic fruity sauce of pineapple with red chorizo grease.





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NIKOLAI VAVILOV
vs HUNGER



A seed collector, plant hunter, botanist and an adventurer, Nikolai Vavilov is one of Soviet Russia's greatest and most wronged sons. The man who wanted to end hunger, died of hunger under Stalin's misguided regime.

How a brilliant scientist's dream to end world hunger did not fit into the Socialist utopia.



Nikolai Vavilov

Ravaged by many famines and decaying agricultural production, Soviet Russia's hope lay on the science and vision of a brilliant botanist and geneticist – Nikolai Vavilov, the man who could have ended world hunger.

Nikolai Vavilov, a prominent Russian botanist and geneticist dreamed of ending hunger and famine. Famines had ruined Soviet Russia: millions died due to starvation and hunger. Vavilov spent his life and career in ending the hunger problem.

Born into a merchant family on November 25, 1887, Nikolai Vavilov was one generation past poverty. His grandfather was a serf, and Vavilov knew all too well the bane of being poor and starving. Since an early age, he obsessed over ending the hunger problem for Mother Russia, and the world.

In 1910, young Vavilov graduated from the Moscow Agriculture Institute and moved on to work at the Bureau of Mycology and Phytopathology that worked on plants, plant diseases and immunity. From 1913-1914, Vavilov encountered William Bateson, a Cambridge don and inarguably the founder of the science of genetics.

Young Vavilov, eager in his efforts to end hunger problems, was inspired by Bateson. He realised the practicality of genetics and hit upon the brilliant idea of cross-species genetics. He envisioned cross breeding plants to produce super crops for Soviet Russia.

Russian winters were long and harsh. The traditional Russian food crops yielded paltry harvests and the soil depleted, unable to sustain any sizeable harvest. Vavilov knew from his travels in Europe of the plant gene diversity and he was convinced that Mendel's inheritance traits could help create crops that would survive the Russian climate. He hoped to harvest a great botanical treasure in his quest!

With the support of comrade Lenin himself, Vavilov launched several botanical-agronomic expeditions. He travelled extensively across five continents - from Afghanistan to Eritrea to Brazil and collected seeds, shoots and plant samples.

Vavilov established a central vault in Leningrad and pioneered the seedbank - world's largest collection of plant seeds even as he continued his hunt for the best crop varieties. "Life is short, we must hurry," Vavilov was wont to say. Vavilov was a man of passion. Always a sharp dresser, he was seldom seen without his trademark three-piece suits on these expeditions. Even in the jungle, the dapper Vavilov worked alongside his team to collect samples. He focussed on mountain regions. Vavilov observed that plants at high altitudes were most adaptable and versatile. He made routine expeditions to Central Asia.

In Afghanistan's Nuristan region, Vavilov came across wheat that grew in salt-encrusted soil. In Algeria, he collected onions that weighed two kilogram each! From Kazakhstan, he collected wild apples, sixteen-kilogram radishes from Japan! His travels became the stuff of legend.

He spoke no less than twenty-two languages and dialects. Vavilov visited fifty-two countries in two decades of exploration, and was arrested multiple times on suspicions of being a Soviet spy. In many regions, the natives attacked and ambushed his party several times. Vavilov even defied death: he almost drowned in China once and even contracted near-fatal malaria and typhoid! Even so, Vavilov remained dogged in his search.

He had one singular aim: the end of hunger. He collected 250,000 seeds and plants in his travels; all sampled, recorded and stored with meticulous details and notes.

From 1924 to 1935, Vavilov served as Director of the All-Union Agricultural Science Institute in Leningrad. He established a network of four hundred institutes and research stations spread across the Soviet Union and employed thousands of employees to help in his research.

These institutes worked tirelessly on hybridization and experiments on cross-species genetics. Vavilov propounded the Law of the Homologous Series of inherited variation. Based on this empirical law he hoped to predict the direction of the evolution of established species and the emergence of new biological species.

But Lenin's death in 1924 changed everything as Joseph Stalin came to head the Soviet Union. By 1928, Stalin implemented the policy of collective farms and a centuries-old system of farming, already feeble, was destroyed! The great famine of 1932-1933 claimed over ten millions lives.

Stalin was not a man too keen on scientific indulgences. For him genetics was 'bourgeois Western propaganda'. Genetics was stigmatized as a "fascist science", hinting its closeness to eugenics and Nazi propaganda.

Mendelian genetics particularly enraged Stalin because its founder Gregor Mendel was a Catholic Christian priest.

Stalin was thus intolerant and did not have patience, or the inclination to wait. He ordered Vavilov show results with immediate effects.



But Lenin's death in 1924 changed everything as Joseph Stalin came to head the Soviet Union. By 1928, Stalin implemented the policy of collective farms and a centuries-old system of farming, already feeble, was destroyed! The great famine of 1932-1933 claimed over ten millions lives.



Vavilov's master plan for improving Soviet crops was designed to work over decades, not a few years, and he could not meet Stalin's impossible demands for immediate results. Vavilov tried in vain to explain that his work would only secure Russia's food problems in the long run. Stalin refused to see his point, and gave Vavilov a three-year deadline to create super strains. The Stalinist regime was to rob Mother Russia of one of her brightest sons.

By this time, Trofim Lysenko, a young Ukrainian agronomist was making his presence felt. Moulded in the classic Bolshevik ideal of a proletariat hero, Lysenko appealed to the Socialist ideals. Lysenko then was an employee at one of the stations established by Vavilov in Azerbaijan. Lysenko had his own theory on alleviating the food problems, but more dangerously, he harboured political ambitions.

"We shall go the pyre...but we shall not retreat from our convictions... to retreat from it simply because some occupying high posts desire it is impossible."

- Nikolai Vavilov, 1939



Trofim Lysenko
Image Source : Getty Images



Soviet infantry unit at the Leningrad front, 1942
Image Source: Armed Forces of the Russian Federation_Archive_PPSh_41

Lysenko developed a procedure, 'vernalization', and its apparent success gave him just the right opportunities to rise amongst the scientific and political ranks. Initially interested in Lysenko's procedure, Vavilov encouraged and help him gain scientific legitimacy.

Lysenko's procedure was not original, and neither was it actual science. He was a proponent of ideas of Ivan Michurin, one of the founding fathers of scientific agricultural selection. Lysenko, however, was popular because he was extremely fast in responding to problems, albeit with little success. His work caught the attention of Stalin.

Lysenko influenced Stalin with his cunning demagogues and rejection of Vavilov's work. He fudged data to enter Stalin's good books. Fraudulent claims and speculative theories were accepted blindly. Emboldened by the faith Stalin had on him, Lysenko and followers started to undermine Vavilov's theories. He was put in charge of agricultural affairs of Russia.

Vavilov and his science faced scathing attacks from Lysenko and his followers. His many expeditions to countries were under scanner. On March 11, 1930, the Russian secret police prepared a dossier on Vavilov. Spies kept a watch on his every movement; proof was being gathered of his sedition and betrayal.

Soon, his exit out of Russia was disallowed. Vavilov became a prisoner in his own country. By 1936, Lysenko-ism had grown to monstrous proportions. Scientists were forced to testify wrongfully against Vavilov. His former associates turned on him fearing for their lives.

In 1936, Conference on Genetics and Agriculture met in Moscow to discredit Vavilov and genetics. Nikolai Vavilov was branded 'underachiever'.

In 1939, Nikolai Vavilov squared off directly against Lysenko at the Conference on Genetics and Agriculture. He criticized Lysenko's view openly. He defended unsuccessfully Mendelian Genetics and its applications against heckling and interruptions.

Vavilov was not skilled politically and failed to see that there was nothing scientific about the conference. Lysenko had won; Vavilov was soon to be destroyed.

August 6, 1940, Vavilov was in Ukraine. He was at the Carpathian Mountains, doing what he did best – collecting samples. Four of Stalin's secret police, the NKVD, followed him and arrested Vavilov on charges of treason, collaborating with the Nazis and boycotting Soviet science. Vavilov refused all the charges.

Back in Moscow, Vavilov was repeatedly tortured and



interrogated. Meanwhile, his associates and friends were also rounded up and executed for treason.

July 9, 1941, a military court put Vavilov the traitor on trial. The jury sentenced him to death based on the 'confessions' recorded during interrogations. Vavilov denied all the charges. He was transferred to Saratov. Once a smart dresser he was clad in a canvas sack with holes for arms and head and slippers of tree bark. Vavilov, the man who was possessed with ending hunger was starved: soup of rotten tomatoes or cabbage was his only diet.

On January 26, 1943, Vavilov died in his cell. Pulmonary oedema, dystrophia and chronic malnutrition were causes of death. He was buried in a common prison grave. Ironically, the man who devoted his life in fighting hunger and famine died of want of food.

Nikolai Vavilov although a great scientist, proved to be a political scapegoat. Lysenko distorted science, lay waste to rational thinking and destroyed radical thinking.

Vavilov proved to be yet another tragedy, an isolated genius destroyed by mediocrity. The fight for hunger however, continues even today.

Nikolai Vavilov may have died, but his legacy continues even now. The seedbank in Leningrad continues to be the centre for scientific progress.

The Second World War and Nazis proved to be a formidable threat to the seedbank's enormous reserves of crops, fruits, and seeds during the famous Siege of Leningrad. Nine people in charge of the seeds boxed up the seeds, moved them to the basement, and took shifts protecting them.

A Nazi commando unit was ordered to seize the seed bank, yet the Vavilov's life's work remained secure. Although suffering from hunger, the seeds' caretakers refused to eat what they saw as their country's future. By the end of the siege in the spring of 1944, the self-appointed seed guardians had died of starvation.

Since then, over 400 strains have been developed from the collection and numerous hybrids produced. It is estimated that by 1979, a four-fifth of cultivated land has origin in Vavilov's collection.

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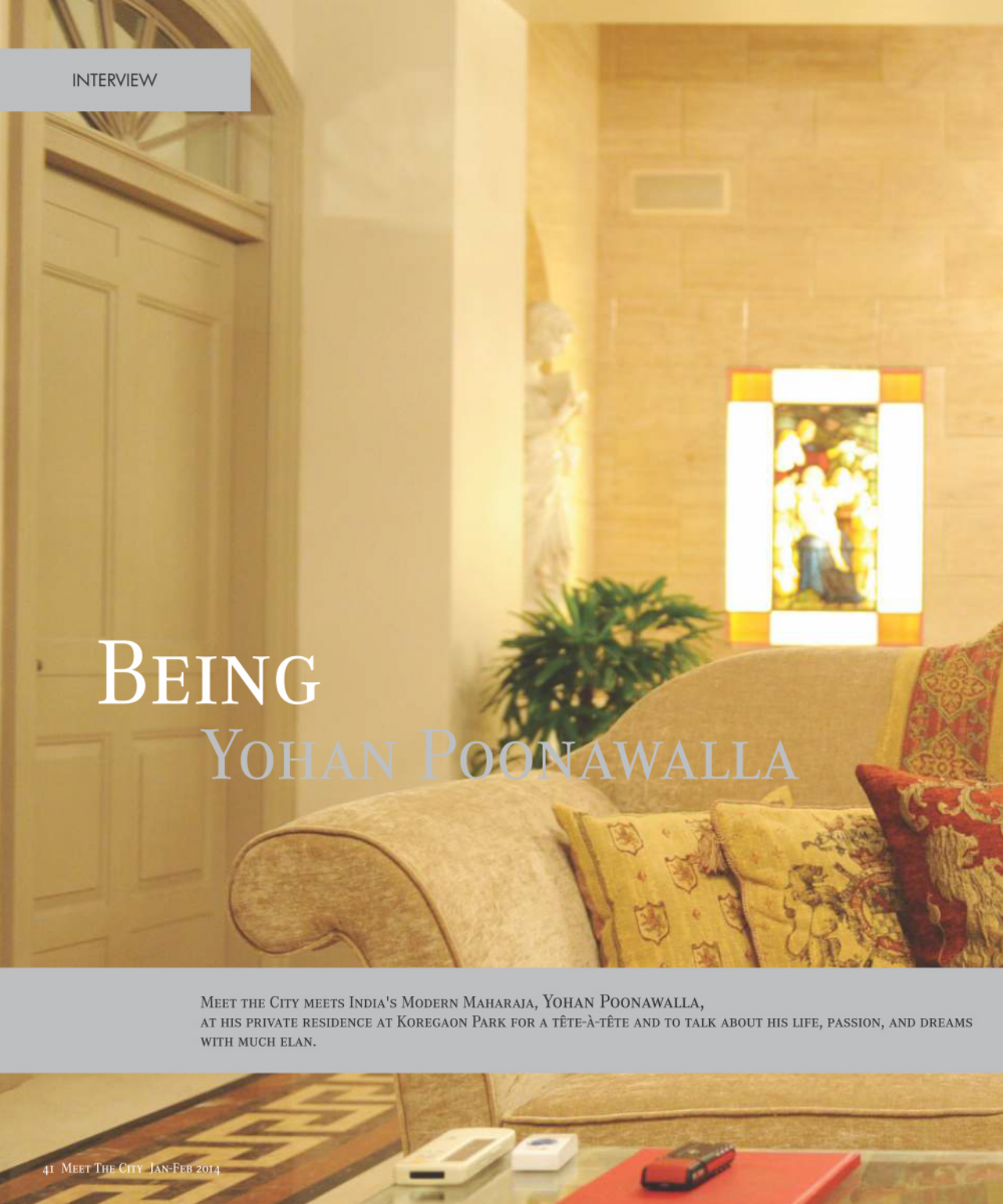
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INTERVIEW

BEING YOHAN POONAWALLA

MEET THE CITY MEETS INDIA'S MODERN MAHARAJA, YOHAN POONAWALLA, AT HIS PRIVATE RESIDENCE AT KOREGAON PARK FOR A TÊTE-À-TÊTE AND TO TALK ABOUT HIS LIFE, PASSION, AND DREAMS WITH MUCH ELAN.





Touted as India's Modern Maharaja by the New York Times, Yohan Poonawalla is everything you'd expect from the scion of one of India's blue-blooded families.

He interjects with "a Maharaja who works", his only addition to a title which is so apt in every other way. Widely known for his flamboyant lifestyle and his passion for cars, horses and planes, there is more than meets the eye to this hedonistic millionaire.

Yohan is a shrewd businessman – one who has been responsible for the Poonawalla Group's first international ventures with the acquisition of UK-based Grayshott, the uber luxe spa at Surrey and Fawsley Hall, a countryside hotel located close to the Formula 1 racing track at Silverstone.

He also is very particular about putting back money into social causes by aiding healthcare, improving the city's infrastructure and providing education to those who need it most. In his spare time, he fuels his early ambition to become a licensed pilot by aero-modeling.

To Yohan, life is all about balance – balancing his hectic work schedule, continuing to build on the Poonawalla legacy, spending time with his family and revelling in his adrenalin-pumping passions.

In true Yohan style, he sums up his "work hard, play hard" life mantra, "Once you're on a tiger's back, you have to do everything to keep sitting there; otherwise it's going to eat you up."

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark pinstripe suit jacket over a white button-down shirt, stands in a well-lit, opulent interior. He is positioned next to a large, dark bronze statue of a jockey riding a horse. The statue is mounted on a marble pedestal. The man is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He wears a gold watch on his left wrist and a gold ring on his left hand. A patterned pocket square is visible in his jacket. In the background, a large chandelier hangs from the ceiling, and a colorful patterned rug is partially visible. On the marble surface in front of him, there is a small glass of water and a small dark object.

IN TRUE YOHAN STYLE, HE SUMS
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To say Yohan is passionate about cars is an understatement. Like most men, he's been fascinated with them since a very early age, but unlike most, his first love weren't the fast, racy kind but more eclectic vintage variety. He has two vintage cars that hold a very special place in his heart.

The **1949 Bentley Mark VI**, which till today is one of the best sellers in Bentley history – and one that signalled a sea-change in vehicle production.

The Bentley Mark VI was the first motor car to be built entirely at Bentley's Crewe works with all-steel coachwork and was also the first complete car assembled and finished at their factory.

Originally imported for the Maharaja of Mysore, the elegant and sweeping lines and dramatic all chrome radiator grill, takes one back to an age where romance and style were customary.

1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III powered by the V12-powered was a technical and stylistic tour de force. The villainous Auric Goldfinger drove an excellently preserved black and yellow Phantom III in the 1964 Bond movie, Goldfinger.

Back then, the Phantom III was equipped with a brand new V-12 engine, which produced 180 hp at 3000 RPM. Apart from its sheer looks and vintage value, the Phantom III is a superb riding and handling car.

Yohan Poonawalla owns a 1934 seven-seater limousine and a 1992 Silver Spur. He is an avid car collector, but says the Rolls-Royce Phantom III is a special one to have in the collection.

YOHAN POONAWALLA OWNS A 1934 SEVEN-SEATER LIMOUSINE AND A 1992 SILVER SPUR HE IS AN AVID CAR COLLECTOR, BUT SAYS THE ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM III IS A SPECIAL ONE TO HAVE IN THE COLLECTION.



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