

MEET THE CITY

PUNE - VOL. I / JULY-AUGUST 2013

CENTO-FOLD

"I don't capture images; I make them!"

Darren Centofanti

Art
Fashion
Luxury
Style
Couture
Cuisine
Home
Happenings
Nightlife



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Briefing

COVER
STORY



WEEKEND
GETAWAY



DARREN
DECODED

MONSOON
METAMORPHOSIS



TRAVELOGUE

A WHITE WASH
EXPERIENCE

READER'S CORNER
RACE
TO ANTARCTIC



WINE
AND SOME MORE
WINE



FASHION

DHORA
CRAFTING CREATIONS
ECLECTIC ENCHANTMENT



MEET THE
CITY

PUNE - VOL. 1/ JULY-AUGUST 2013



HOOK, LINE
AND SINKER

EXOTIC
GETAWAYS

SPECTACULAR STAY

IT'S ALL IN
THE LITTLE THINGS...



DOUBLE TREE
BY
HILTON



FINE DINING
MODERN
GASTRONOMY



BY DAY, BY NIGHT
RANJIT BATRA
VS
DJ RB



ART
FOLD.
CREATE.
MEDITATE.

WHAT THE STORE

TULIPS
REALM OF
BESPOKE DESIGNS



EVENTS
& HAPPENINGS





The Indian Monsoon has arrived. The smell of wet earth, the carpet of foliage and the invigorating air is a feast to the senses, and Maharashtra wears a fresh new look.

Pune is beyond beautiful in the monsoon, and the shutterbugs leave no stone unturned to capture this beauty. Darren Centofonti is one such lens man. The Australia-born is taking the world fashion and advertising photography to new levels of creativity and style! Meet Darren as he shares his passion of lenses, lights and muses with Meet the City.

Meet the City's fifth issue takes you on a trip. We take you to the end of the world with Mr. Tanti as he takes us on an once-in-a-lifetime journey, to Antarctica, and then speed away to the many angling and riverine spots of India. Back home, we reveal to you magical places hidden in the folds of the Western Ghats and why you should not miss them. Interestingly, we travel back in time and meet two brave men who etched their names in the annals of history!

Add to that our regular features — and new ones — and you will discover why the fifth issue of Meet the City is magical as the monsoon!

Enjoy the weather!

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Interesting Ideas. Creative Concepts. Imaginative Images. Darren Centofanti is all about taking fashionable photographs...

An image speaks a thousand words. To get the proper message across, a photograph needs to have the perfect mix of imagination, creativity, style and of course, talent. Getting that mix right, Darren Centofanti took up the camera as the tool of his trade, and the rest, as they say, is history.

COVER STORY

DECODED DARREN



A photography-enthusiast from a young age – “When I look back to photos of when I was a kid, I have many of me with a camera around my neck” – Darren Centofanti is a veteran professional photographer now, having been in the field for past 25 years. Specialising in fashion and advertising photography, the Australia-born photographer is now settled in Mumbai. In 1995 and 1997, Darren Centofanti won the South Australian Professional Photographer of the Year award given by the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (A.I.P.P.) and was later honoured as a Master of Photography. Here, he talks about his journey till now, his love for photography and his wife, and doing what he does best – fashion photography...

His first steps into the world of photography...

“Photography feels like it has always been a fascination in my life. I think the appeal of looking through a box and seeing the world in a framed form was appealing to me even as a kid. I had a teacher at my primary school that used to shoot football matches and players for the weekly football magazine, which really impressed me because he would often give me a copy of the magazine with his work in it. I thought it was very cool that he was able to be around footballers by photographing them. During high school, I was only fascinated by photography lessons, everything else seemed bland compared to what could be done with camera, black and white film and printing in the darkroom.

I got my opportunity to spend time in a commercial photography studio during the work experience week in high school. I loved it and kept going back on weekends, school holidays etc. Soon after the studio owners offered me an apprenticeship. This is where my real photography education started. The earliest pictures I remember taking were at high school and they were of my friends, family and flowers!”

Finding inspiration...

“Honestly, I don’t look at other photographers’ work. I don’t want to pollute my mind with other people’s great images which in turn may affect my own thinking of original creative.

My inspiration comes from objects, shapes and colours that I see in day to day life. Good aesthetics is important when making photographs; I tend to rely a lot on this for my ideas.”

About styling the images...

“I make images... I don’t capture them. Everything I shoot is planned out and then built in front of the camera. So my images are always tailor-made and constructed in a way to maximize the visual. I would say my images are colourful, eye-catching and fashionable.”

From Australia, for love

“Well, to cut a long story short... it was love. I had come to India back in 1998 for a series of workshops I was hosting for Kodak. During my two-week stay in India, I was offered a few shoots, one was for ELLE magazine. I fell head over heels for one of the models I was shooting with – Vidisha Pavate. We have been married for almost 12 years and we have 2 daughters. Nowadays, Australia and India are both home for me and my girls.”

Australia vs. India: Difference in photography and fashion

“India has changed a lot over the past ten years so my answer would be different now, compared to five years back. Photography nowadays is relatively even throughout the world really. Digital has helped make the platform a more even space for people to produce good images. The real power however, is still in the mind of the photographer and this is something that is based on an individual nature – not on a culture or country.

When it comes to fashion, the Indian youth is driving the market to be more individual, western and unconventional. Australia has always had this attitude from as early as I can remember. Since Australia is a country full of different cultures, most styles and representation of fashion are on show.

A full-page photograph of actress Sonam Kapoor sitting in the back of a vintage-style car. She is leaning her head against the window frame, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She has long, dark, wavy hair and is wearing a vibrant pink, short-sleeved top with a colorful, abstract pattern. A gold chain is draped over her shoulder. The car's interior is light-colored, and the window shows a blurred view of greenery outside.

"Sonam (Kapoor) was a breath of fresh air to work with; built like a catwalk model but with the attitude of a 'girl-next-door'!"





Australians by nature are also quite casual in their style and dressing so I feel that Indians are probably better dressers nowadays once you factor in all the jewellery, textured fabrics, etc. I also think the beautiful varieties of Indian skin tone allow most coloured garments to be worn better – than on somebody with white skin.”

Making memories

“There have been so many interesting campaigns and assignments to name and all that come to mind are special for some reason or another. I’m always on the search for the next challenge that will blow my mind, that’s really what I continually focus on... the next great interesting campaign. Animals are always hard to work with because there is no control over them and anything can happen at any time. Heights are a problem for me; however one of my favourite viewpoints is shooting from directly above... I just love shooting this style. Most of my favourite images are like trophies to me because they look great and the story behind creating them leaves a great memory.”

Celeb speak

“I have worked with lots of celebrities in the past and honestly there is always a bit of nervous energy around... mainly because you need to be so politically correct and everything needs to go according to plan without stress or delays.

Sonam however was a breath of fresh air to work with. Built like a catwalk model but with the attitude of a “girl-next-door”; she fits into clothes beautifully, her body language is so graceful and her overall youthful energy is a lot of fun to have on the set. The shoot I did with Sonam in New Zealand was really a dream job — we have had quite a few good shoots together since then also.”

Editorial or advertorial: preferred profile

“Editorial gives a lot more creative freedom compared to advertising which is generally creatively strict but pays a lot more money. I try to blend the both so that my advertising images are treated creatively like my editorial style images... you need understanding clients to allow this mindset.”

Of fashionable things...

"Women's fashion products are by far the most interesting to shoot. I love the styling and hair makeup process, mixed with backgrounds and lighting, body language and the models looks. However, fashion as a "big picture" is many things. Interiors are definitely fashion – soft drinks, cars and clothes are also fashion. I call myself a fashion photographer because I shoot fashionable things."

Future perfect

"I have started directing TV commercials and I love the format of moving images. I intend on spending more time going into this realm alongside my still photography."





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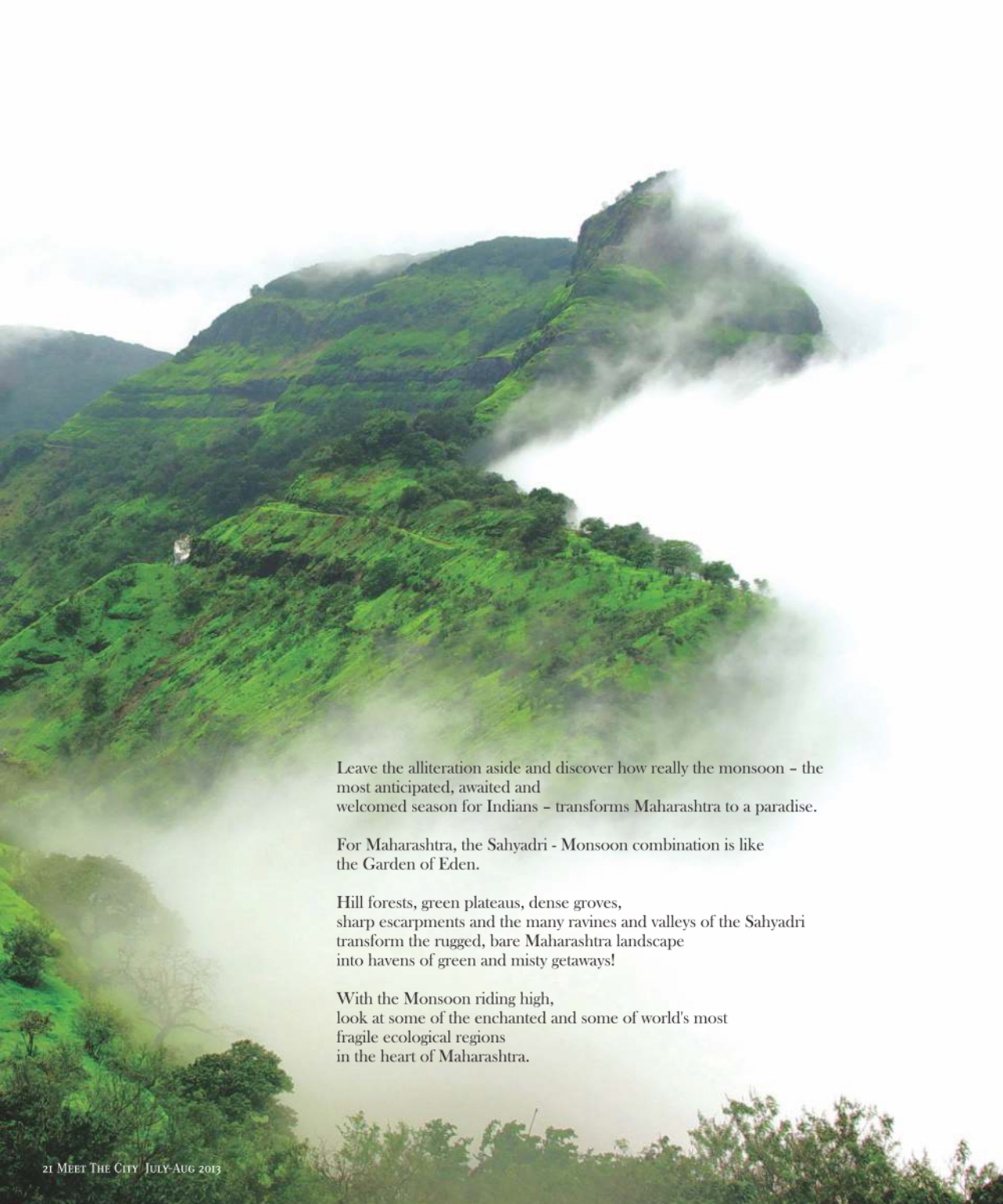
A full-page photograph of a mountain landscape during a monsoon. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a low sun, creating a hazy atmosphere. Thick mist or low clouds fill the valleys between the dark, silhouetted mountain peaks. In the foreground, tall, thin grasses with reddish-brown seed heads are in sharp focus, contrasting with the soft background. The overall mood is serene and atmospheric.

MAHARASHTRA

METAMORPHOSES IN MONSOONS

WEEKEND GETAWAY





Leave the alliteration aside and discover how really the monsoon – the most anticipated, awaited and welcomed season for Indians – transforms Maharashtra to a paradise.

For Maharashtra, the Sahyadri - Monsoon combination is like the Garden of Eden.

Hill forests, green plateaus, dense groves, sharp escarpments and the many ravines and valleys of the Sahyadri transform the rugged, bare Maharashtra landscape into havens of green and misty getaways!

With the Monsoon riding high, look at some of the enchanted and some of world's most fragile ecological regions in the heart of Maharashtra.



KAAS PLATEAU

25 km west of the city of Satara is the Kaas Plateau, or Kaas *pathaar* as the locals call it. It is here that the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson's words stand in front of you: "the earth laughs in flowers". Kaas is Maharashtra's own 'Valley of Flowers', and a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its ecological diversity and fragility.

Unlike its counterpart in Garhwal, the Kaas Plateau requires no feat of trekking or mountaineering. An easy access road takes your drive right up to this grassland plateau, situated at a height of 1,200 metres above sea level.

The name Kaas originates from the Kaasa tree (*Elaeocarpus glandulosus*), the leaves of which turn from green to red on maturity. Kaas is a floral paradise. A carpet of flowerbeds. A rainbow land of colours and beauty. The diversity of flowering plants here is mindboggling and a photographer's dream.

Local flora includes the pink balsam, yellow *Smithias*, the bluish hues of *Cyanotis*, *Drosera* and *Utricularia*, the brilliant blues of the topli karvi (*Pleocaulus ritchiei*) and the sheets of pink of the *Impatiens*. This but just a taste of the visual delight Kaas has to offer.

The fauna of Kaas includes a multitude of insect orders: beetles, bugs, mantids, spiders, millipedes and butterflies that have co-evolved with the vibrant flora to add to the beauty of Kaas.

The basalt soil and lateritic formations of this region make Kaas a unique place. No words can describe the magic of this place. The many rock pools are other micro-habitats that support the flowering (literally!) biodiversity here.

The abundance of insects and the rather nitrogen-deficient soil make a deadly combination – quite literally! At Kaas are common the Indian sundew, the Bladderwort and the tubular-flowered *Ceropegia*.

Beautiful as Kaas may be, its growing popularity today is in danger of harming the fragile ecosystem. Tourists, amateur botanists, birdwatchers, trekkers are trampling thousands of these miniature flowers in their enthusiasm and ignorance. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, local authorities now allow limited traffic to Kaas only with prior permits.

WHEN TO VISIT: AUGUST TO OCTOBER

HOW TO GET THERE

By Rail: Satara (24 km)

By Road : State Transport buses ply between Satara and Kaas/Bamnoli.

Drive from Mumbai takes six-seven hours (285 km)



It is one of India's wettest regions - an incredible average of 7,400 mm of rainfall! The enormous moisture-laden environment makes it a paradise for herpetofauna.

The perennial blankets of mist and fog make it an idyllic place to relax, unwind and go for long walks. The scenic hillscapes and misty forests offer great opportunities to explore and discover new paths.



AMBOLI

Approximately 400 km from Pune, at a height of 690 metres above sea level is one of Maharashtra's petit hill stations – Amboli.

Relatively known and yet largely unexplored, Amboli (District Sindhudurga) is located at the cusp of the Maharashtra-Goa-Karnataka order.

Amboli is home to amphibians, reptiles and more reptiles. So unique is this ecological zone, it is home to some of the exotic species of amphibians and reptiles in the world. Any amateur herpetologist will list the rare species found in Amboli: Amboli bush frog, Bicolored frog, Daniel's night frog, Malabar gliding frog, and the Amboli caecilian.

Of the serpents, at home in Amboli are endemic species like the Giri's bronzeback and the Castoes coral snake. Other snake species include the Malabar pit viper, and Travancore wolfsnake, amongst many others.

The primary cause of this thriving amphibian and reptilian fauna are the bushes, dense vegetation, and the highly moist climate of Amboli. Many of these animals are nocturnal and can be spotted under rocks, dead foliage and other corners of forests of Amboli.

Historically, Amboli emerged as a resting hole being close to the port of Vengurla, a trade settlement as far back as the 16th century inhabited by the Dutch during their eight-month blockade of Goa. Recently, Amboli has grown popular as a hill resorts. It hosts views of the expansive Arabian Sea and the sprawling Konkani coastline.

Popular tourist places include the Sea-view Stage, Mahadevgad Stage, a mythologically important *Hiranyakeshi* temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, Narayan Gad, and historic botanical gardens and bauxite mines.

The dense forests of Amboli are accessible by three distinct trails that cut right into its heart. The first is the trail from Forest Park to Parikshit Point, which is by far the most convenient, and common trail to spot and observe the graceful Malabar gliding frog.

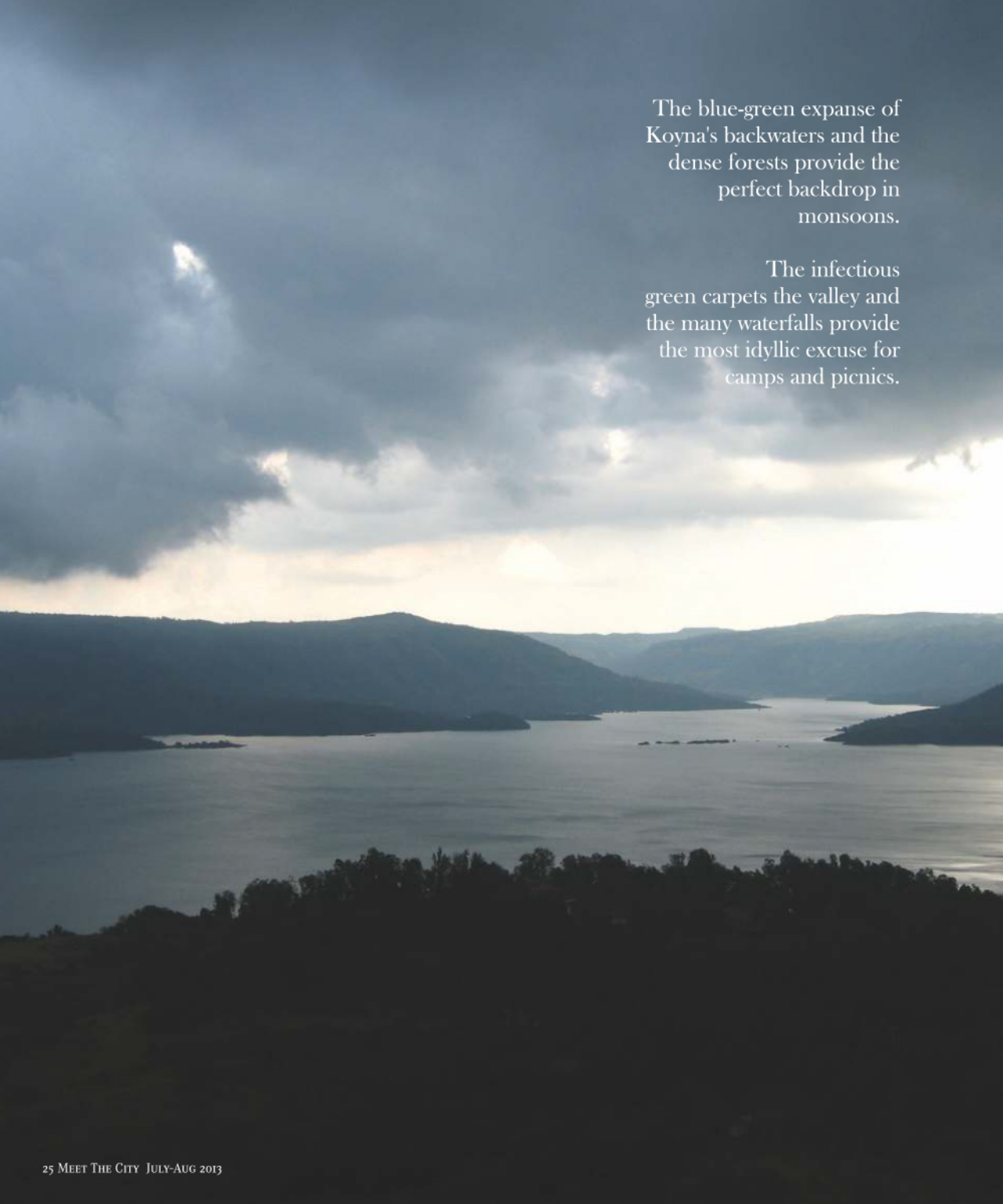
The second is the trail leading to Mahadevgad, where the gaur and mouse deer can be spotted. Last is the trail to the Chaukul village. This trail takes you through a semi-evergreen forest and opens to a lateritic plateau. A breeding ground for crickets, this trail is constantly abuzz with the noise of the mating crickets.

To soak in Amboli, a day is simply not enough. As much accommodating as the village is, places to stay at Amboli include resorts of the State Government and other private resorts.

WHEN TO VISIT: APRIL TO OCTOBER

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air : Belgaum (64 km)
By Rail: Sawantwadi (28 km)
By Road : Mumbai is 550 km. Pune is 400 km.
State Transport buses from Vengurla, Sawantwadi, Ratnagiri and Belgaum



The blue-green expanse of
Koyna's backwaters and the
dense forests provide the
perfect backdrop in
monsoons.

The infectious
green carpets the valley and
the many waterfalls provide
the most idyllic excuse for
camps and picnics.



KOYNA

What is Koyna? A river. A town. A dam. And, India's largest completed hydroelectric project.

However, Koyna, by virtue of being in the Sahyadris is a sanctuary for a diverse variety of animals that includes the keystone species (a species with maximum impact in an ecological community), Bengal Tigers. More than six adult tigers have been spotted in the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary.

Apart from the Bengal tiger, the Indian leopard, Indian bison, sloth bears, sambar, barking deer and the Indian giant squirrels are commonly found in the dense forests of Koyna.

The abundance of exotic wildlife enhances Koyna's reputation as a Western Ghat must-visit. Spread over more than four hundred square kilometres in area, the Koyna National Sanctuary comprises of three major sections – Vasota, Maharkor and Indavli Met. The rivers Koyna, Kandati and Solashi form the lifeline of this sanctuary.

A southern tropical evergreen forest, Koyna is a great place for campers, wildlife enthusiasts and photographers. Vasota Fort, a hill fort is a landmark of Koyna. said to be built by Kolhapur Shilhara Raja Bhoja II of the Panhala dynasty. Shivaji Maharaj later christened it as *Vyaghragad* – or 'fort of the tiger', owing to its naturally defensive location.

Vasota offers many pristine camping points along the shore. A great place for birding, popular species here include the Heart-spotted Woodpecker, Rufous Woodpecker, the Asian Fairy Bluebird, Crested Goshawk, along with many other watering bird species.



At the Shivajisagar Lake, boating and rides are also allowed with permits. In addition, there are a multitude of waterfalls and cataracts offering enough fun and frolic in monsoons!

While the dam and its reservoir host a thriving ecosystem, indiscriminate tourism and carelessness on part of the visitors is threatening conservation and preservation efforts.

Koyna stands on an edge: to embrace the growing attention, and shying away from its fallout.

WHEN TO VISIT: THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air : Kolhapur (60 km)

By Rail: Kolhapur (60 km)

By Road : State Transport buses from Radhanagari (55 km) on Kolhapur-Deogarh State Highway.





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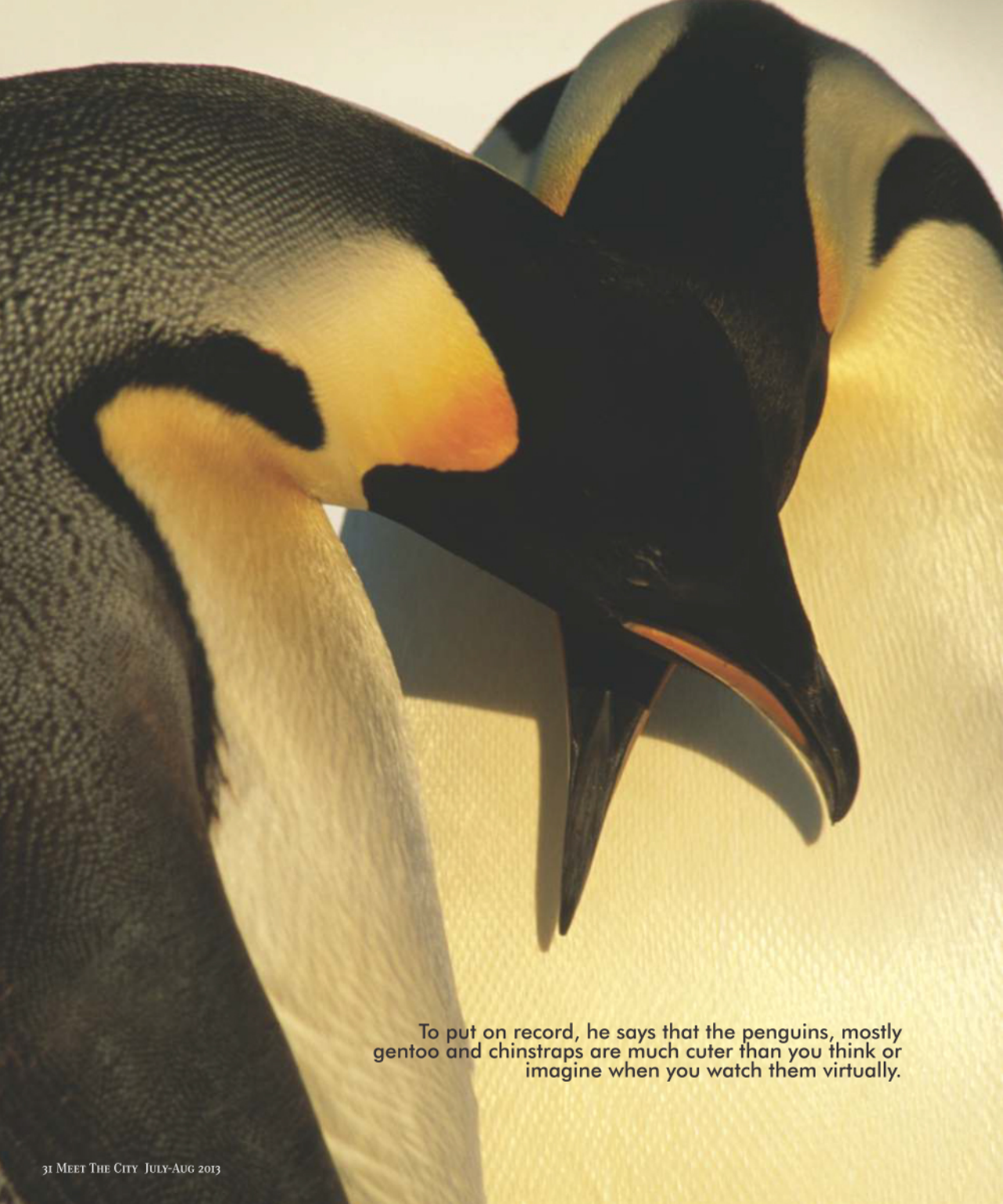
EXPEDITION TO THE WHITE CONTINENT – A WHITE WASH EXPERIENCE

BY JR TANTI

It is a barren wasteland. The highest, driest, emptiest and coldest place on Earth.

It is the edge of the world, where life thrives in seemingly inhospitable conditions. The expanse of white is unending: treacherously bright, surrounded by frigid waters. This is the bottom of the world. This is Antarctica.

Roadl Amundsen's desperation, Robert Scott's scientific meticulousness and Ernest Shackleton's heroic attempt at crossing the desolate Antarctic surface on land were challenges accepted in the face of death and defeat. Stories of their hardships, camaraderie and rivalries became the stuff of legend, inspiring generations of explorers and adventurers.



To put on record, he says that the penguins, mostly gentoo and chinstraps are much cuter than you think or imagine when you watch them virtually.

Antarctica was the final frontier then: a place where one could not boldly go and live to tell the tale. However, nearly a hundred years (and more) since the "Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration", travelling to Antarctica is a lot easier. As daunting as the place may be, it always calls out to the explorer deep within us.

In February 2011, J R Tanti, MD of Synefra Infrastructures Ltd., decided to embark on the journey of a lifetime to Antarctica aboard the 'Antarctic Dream' cruise with three fellow Indian adventurers. This is a chronicle of the memories and magnificence of this 11-day expedition that began in Ushuaia, Argentina.

Arguably, the southernmost city in the world, Ushuaia is the starting point for nearly all Antarctic-bound expeditions. Mr. Tanti and Co. ended up here from Mumbai via Johannesburg and then the Argentinean capital of Buenos Aires. The port of Ushuaia is from where the M/V *Antarctic Dream* takes its passengers to the White Continent.

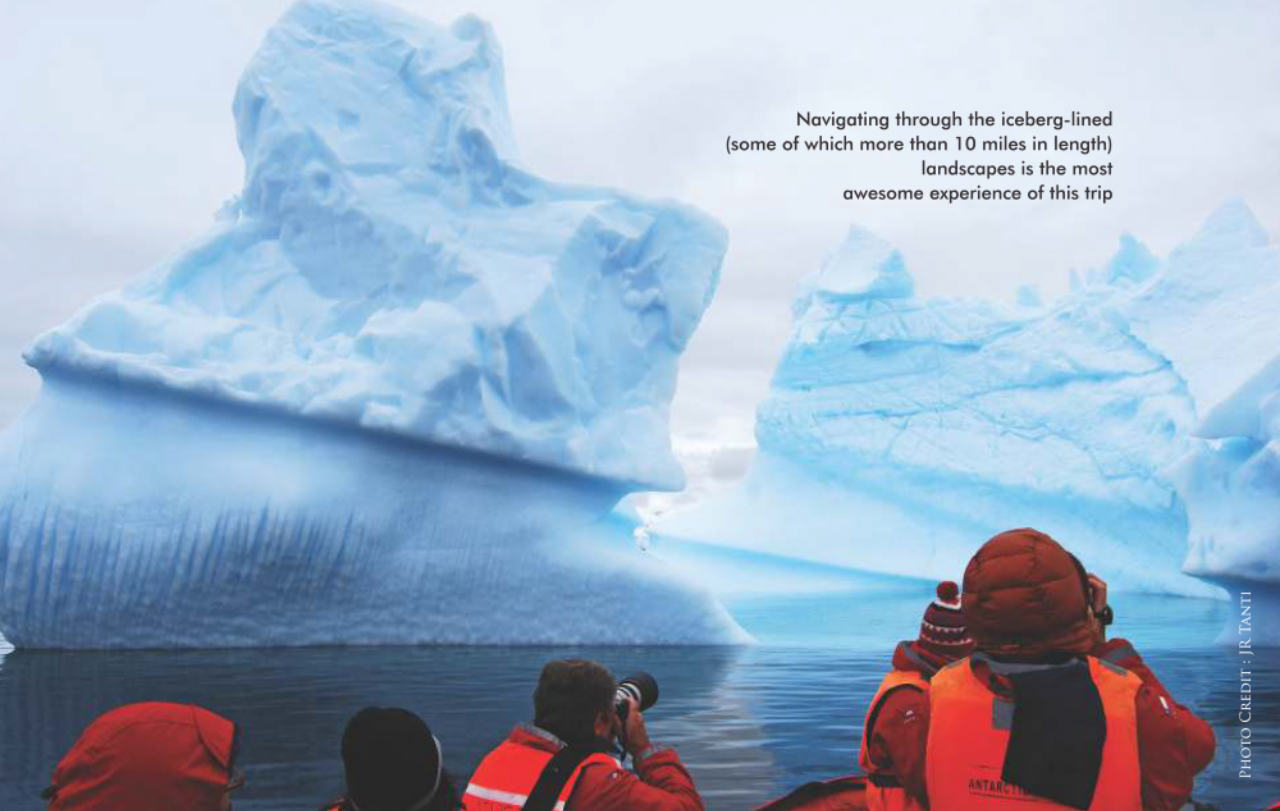
With a forty-odd crew, the *Antarctic Dream* is a motor vessel built to negotiate the choppy southern waters. On the way to the continent, an old adage is oft cited, 'Beyond 40° south, there is no law... beyond 50° south, there is no God.' The passage itself is a test of nerves!

Being aboard with fifty wonderful co-passengers from seventeen countries, Mr. Tanti had a multicultural experience that opened not just eyes, but minds. They shared not just the decks and food but an experience of a lifetime.



Its iced landscape and
pristine mountain
ranges inevitably heightens
feelings of humanity's insignificance and
nature's awe-inspiring grandeur.





Navigating through the iceberg-lined
(some of which more than 10 miles in length)
landscapes is the most
awesome experience of this trip

PHOTO CREDIT : JR TANTI

While several operators offer trans-Antarctic flights, the charm of journeying the 'old way' is unmatched. Crossing the Southern Ocean aboard the Antarctic Dream is an experience in itself – with no landmass, low-pressure systems circle clockwise unimpeded, reaching incredible speeds. The sound of the wind is deafening, its force enough to knock you off your feet. The Southern Ocean isolates the continent geographically, biologically and climatically from the rest of the world. The westerly winds here reach great speeds – and the seas can get very rough and nerve-wrecking.

As anxious as the passengers of the Antarctic Dream were to cross the Southern Ocean, the two-day journey beginning January 28, 2011 through Drake Passage was a rite of initiation. As albatrosses, storm petrels and gulls wandered overhead, the Antarctic Convergence drew the attention of the adventurers.

A biological barrier, cold polar waters sink beneath the warmer waters of the temperate zone here. The Drake Passage is notorious for being treacherous. On one hand is the 'Drake Shake' – calm and smooth waters, and on the other is what sailors call, 'paying the Drake Tax' – when the ocean whips up its roughest and tumultuous waves, seasickness becomes the norm, and winds threaten to push you off the deck.

However, as Mr. Tanti recalls, the passage was a prelude to Antarctica's remoteness and isolation. Spending two days marvelling at the changing vista, the 1000 km stretch offers an unsettling, yet first-hand insight into Antarctica's soul.

The desolation of Antarctica starts with the South Shetland Islands, followed by Deception Island, Livingstone Island, Elephant Island and then a string of others until the main Peninsula is sighted. The first sight here as you exit the Drake Passage is the open sea circumscribing the horizon. The waters are filled with pack ice drifting on the current. Blue icebergs gleam like massive diamonds, complementing the sky above and water below.

Day 4 brings to King George Island – the largest of the South Shetland Islands, which serves as an introduction to Antarctica. It is here that the enormity of the journey grows on the visitors. White and blue dominate the senses. As the journey progresses, the crew and experts aboard familiarize passengers with what is expected. Lectures, demos and more importantly, many conversations are held. It is like a crash course on Antarctica, but as Mr. Tanti tells us, Antarctica leaves you spellbound even after knowing about it!

With Day 5, the Antarctic Peninsula approaches, and the snow-capped peaks of Antarctica rise in the horizon, and shimmer in their reflective glory. Besides the splendid scenery of mountains, snow and ice, Antarctica is home to a variety of wildlife. From blue-eyed shags, gulls, cape petrels, skuas, snowy sheathbills and Antarctic terns to marine mammals like the Weddell crab-eaters and leopard seals.

Landing on the continent is subject to permissions. While most ships with up to two hundred passengers face little problems with permissions to land, the larger, five hundred-plus strong cruises are often not allowed to shore. Instead, inflatable boats - called zodiacs - are deployed for landing while the ship anchors in the bay. Two to three landings are usually the norm.

The first landing for Mr. Tanti and Co. was on the White Continent (Neko Bay) and with another on Port Lockroy (Gaudier Island). Discovered by Belgian explorer, Adrian de Gerlache, Neko Bay offered an opportunity to walk uninhibitedly on the Antarctic continent.

The ride to the shore is a visual treat. Albatrosses flying at the back of the ship, humpback whales, Minke whales and the occasional orca: all these marvellous sights as Mr. Tanti and Co. lay huddled in a zodiac with brash icebergs around.

Mr. Tanti vividly remembers the moment he set foot on the Peninsula mainland! How can he not, when the weather here freezes hell over, subzero temperatures (avg. -45°C), thick sheets of ice and cruel winds (often always more than 120 km/h) reign supreme.

What make it worse are long periods of constant darkness or constant sunlight - no sunset for six months at a stretch and the high reflectivity of the ice, which makes sunburn a glaring health issue!

What struck Mr. Tanti the most, and as he recalls it, is the stark reality of Antarctica being a lonely land. No permanent human population lives here except for the many scientists and other staff members at research stations set up by many a country. Fortunately, the Antarctic Treaty (1959) sets it apart as a scientific preserve, establishing freedom of scientific investigation and banning military activity on that continent. Mr. Tanti mentions that here, ice and weather, not clocks or calendars, determine the itinerary and the timetable of your day.

Day 6 of Mr. Tanti's expedition brings the Antarctic Dream to Pleneau-Petermann Island sailing through the Lemaire Channel. This narrow channel is a gateway to one of the most beautiful places in the world! It is here that one meets the most southern colony of Gentoo penguins.

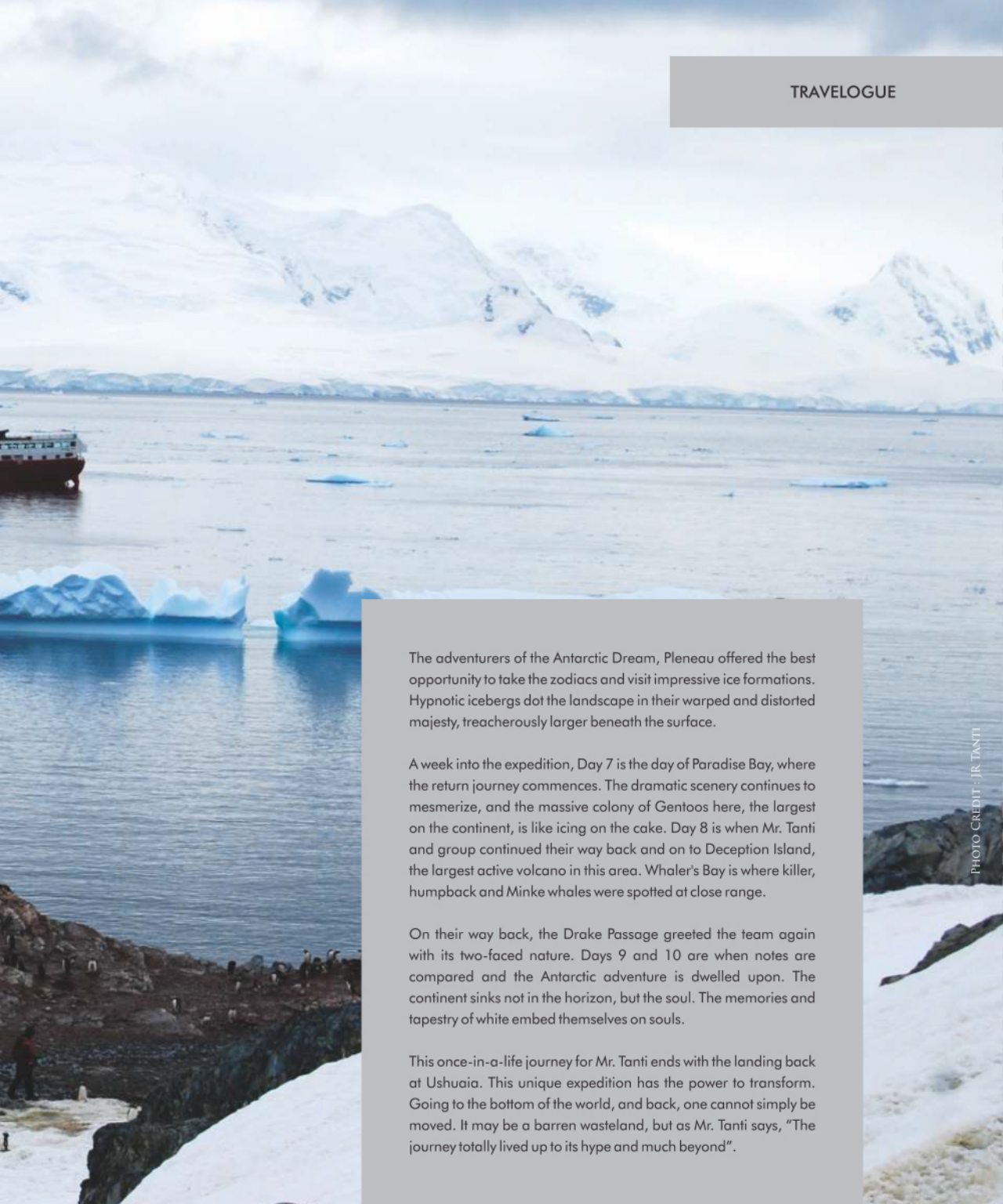
The beautiful Adelei penguins, Gentoo and Chinstraps are animated at best! Their antics, parental instincts, busy-bee routine, community equations and male-female bonding have more drama than a primetime soap opera. The Antarctic shores ring with the cacophony of petrels, skuas, gulls, terns and the magnificent albatross.

Most people are anxious about crossing the Southern Ocean
but it must be done in order to reach Antarctica

Certainly the weather can be stormy
and the mood swings that a person
experiences are nerve wrecking
not to mention suicidal







The adventurers of the Antarctic Dream, Pleneau offered the best opportunity to take the zodiacs and visit impressive ice formations. Hypnotic icebergs dot the landscape in their warped and distorted majesty, treacherously larger beneath the surface.

A week into the expedition, Day 7 is the day of Paradise Bay, where the return journey commences. The dramatic scenery continues to mesmerize, and the massive colony of Gentoos here, the largest on the continent, is like icing on the cake. Day 8 is when Mr. Tanti and group continued their way back and on to Deception Island, the largest active volcano in this area. Whaler's Bay is where killer, humpback and Minke whales were spotted at close range.

On their way back, the Drake Passage greeted the team again with its two-faced nature. Days 9 and 10 are when notes are compared and the Antarctic adventure is dwelled upon. The continent sinks not in the horizon, but the soul. The memories and tapestry of white embed themselves on souls.

This once-in-a-life journey for Mr. Tanti ends with the landing back at Ushuaia. This unique expedition has the power to transform. Going to the bottom of the world, and back, one cannot simply be moved. It may be a barren wasteland, but as Mr. Tanti says, "The journey totally lived up to its hype and much beyond".



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A full-page background image featuring a large, jagged iceberg in the foreground on the right, with another smaller iceberg visible in the distance. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a sliver of lighter, yellowish-green light visible near the horizon. The water is dark and textured.

THE GREAT ANTARCTIC RACE

A large, jagged iceberg floats in dark, choppy water. The iceberg's surface is highly textured with sharp peaks and deep crevasses. The sky above is filled with heavy, dark clouds, with a bright, yellowish-green light breaking through near the horizon, creating a dramatic and somber atmosphere.

In the long and tragic history of the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration, the names of Amundsen, Shackleton, and the tragic Robert Falcon Scott outshine everyone else.



Roald Amundsen (extreme left) with his team.



South Pole was the final frontier in the 19th century, and many brave souls lay buried in the frozen hell of Antarctica: none lived to tell the tale. Then Roald Amundsen, an ardent explorer of Polar Regions conquered it 1911. Amundsen was five weeks ahead of his closest rival, British Royal Navy officer Robert Falcon Scott. This victory came at a bitter cost, overshadowed by the tragic deaths of Robert Scott and team.

The Race to the South Pole and Scott-Amundsen rivalry remains an oft-cited tale of human endurance and grit.

Roald Amundsen's initial plan was to reach the North Pole and claim it for Norway. Rival American explorers Frederick Cook and Robert Peary beat him to it. Bitterly disappointed, Amundsen looked diametrically opposite to the South. He now remained secretive about his intentions of reaching the South Pole. News of the brilliant Robert Scott's Terra Nova expedition reached him. Amundsen resolved not to be beaten this time and anchored at the Bay of Whales, and in January 1911 established *Framheim*, his base camp for the southern conquest.

Amundsen's conquest is a tale of passionless application of expertise and cold ambition. All he ever wanted was to be the first to reach the South Pole. With meticulous planning and prudence, he wrote his name in the annals of history. Amundsen was smart, he understood that he cannot defeat the violent continent by being naïve and headstrong. He set out to establish three supply depots stocked with tons of seal meat, gallons of paraffin oil and sledge biscuits, these depots would prove critical for the return journey. After nine months of rigorous preparation Amundsen pushed down south on September 8, 1911. This initial thrust proved disastrous as the weather pushed him back. Amundsen retreated to *Framheim* and bid his time, all the time worried about Scott's expedition.

On October 19, 1911, Amundsen set to South Pole with five men, four sledges and fifty-two dogs. As he crossed the icy world of Antarctica, he discovered the Axel Heiberg Glacier, a guiding point to the South Pole. Amundsen progress was rapid, owing partly to the strategic use of skis and sled dogs. At 10,600 ft of glacier at 85° 36' S, Amundsen and team set off for the final stage of their journey. Until then, the farthest any man had ever reached was 88° 23', which Amundsen and team passed on December 8, 1911.





Robert Falcon Scott with his team.



The party on December 14, 1911 reached the southernmost part of the Earth, as close as they could be to the actual pole and set up camp. Amundsen named his camp *Polheim* and the entire plateau surrounding the Pole as *King Haakon VII Plateau* in honour of King of Norway.

They spent three days to fix the exact position of the pole and the 'boxed' it. They erected a small tent and left letters stating their accomplishment. Amundsen also left equipment for Scott, and a letter addressed to King Haakon that he requested Scott to deliver.

Imagine Scott's crushed dream when he chanced upon the Norwegian flag and the tent Amundsen left behind! Being five weeks behind Amundsen, Scott's

endeavour was not half as easy as his rival's. The return was not even close. Scott was 'bitten by the Pole mania' in the golden days of polar expeditions. Having already set out to conquer the South Pole, Scott was inadvertently drawn into this deadly race by Amundsen.

All it took was a simple telegram from Amundsen informing Scott of his true intentions:

"BEG TO INFORM YOU FRAM PROCEEDING ANTARCTIC - AMUNDSEN."

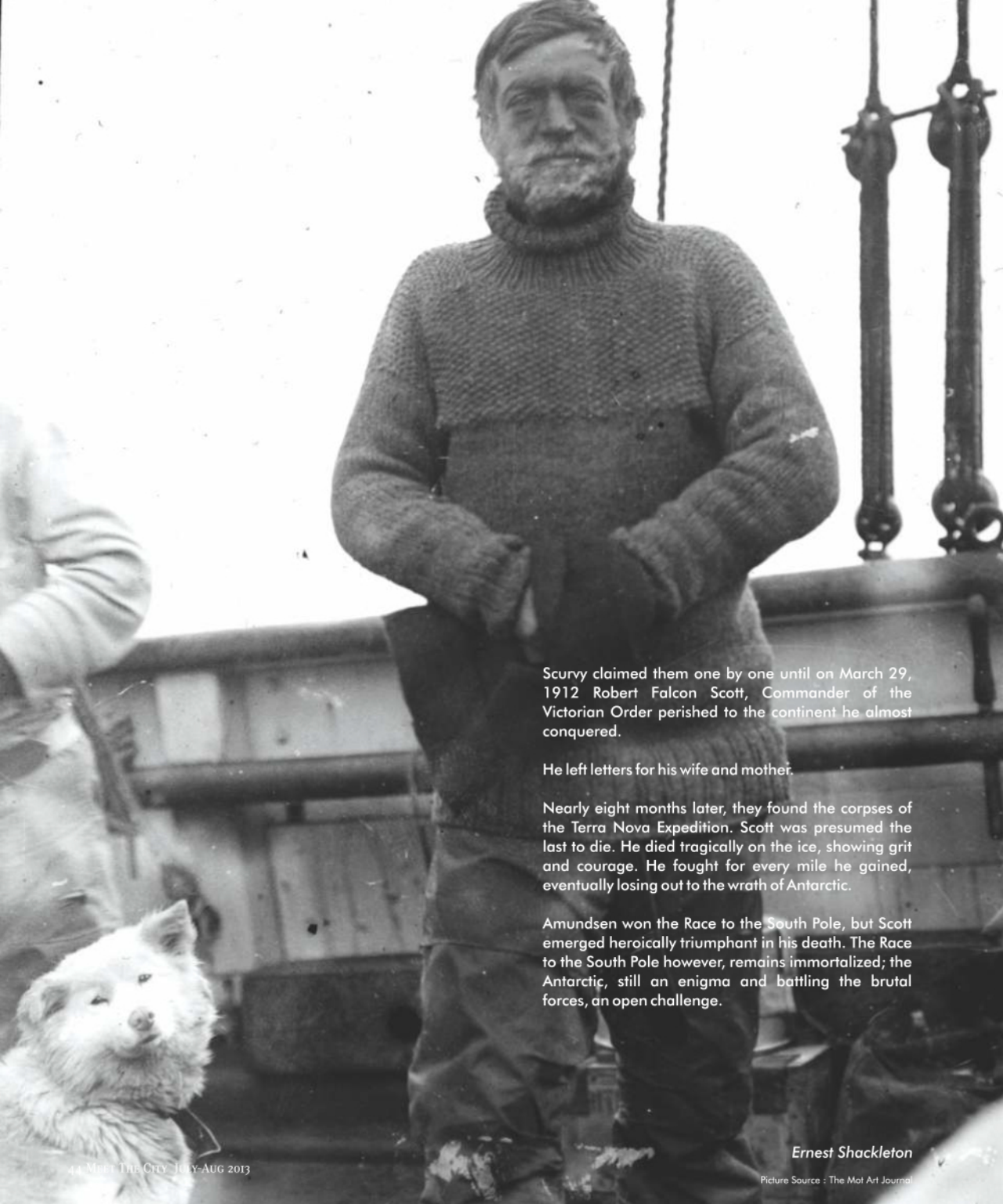
Scott was in charge of the Terra Nova Expedition or officially the British Antarctic Expedition. The Terra Nova Expedition was doomed since its beginning. On its way from New Zealand to Antarctica, the ship *Terra Nova* was trapped for twenty days in ice pack. It got worse when they reached the Bay of Whales to see *Framheim*, Amundsen's base.

Scott's approach to conquering the South Pole was starkly different. Where Amundsen relied on the importance of skis and sled dogs, Scott hedged his bets on Manchurian ponies and motorized sledges. Scott intended to reach the Pole via the Beardmore Glacier, pioneered by Shackleton. He thus relied on having the experience of a 'known path'.

Scott's journey was long and arduous, his men pulling their own sledges and losing ponies along the way. Scott team also ran out of provisions, they did not have the foresight of Amundsen in setting up depots. Like true old-fashioned explorers, their South Pole conquest was emphasized with struggle, character and plain old grit. There was nothing heroic about their return; in fact, Scott's return journey was a tragedy.

Scott reached the Pole on January 17, 1912, five weeks after Amundsen. The 1,300 kilometre journey back to the Bay of Whales was never to be. Edgar Evans was the first casualty on the journey back at Beardmore Glacier. He succumbed to exhaustion, cold and frostbite. Meanwhile in an unfortunate turn of events, the *Terra Nova* docked at Bay of Whales to receive the returning team. They directly disobeyed orders to go further south to pick up Scott!

With 670 km to go, the expedition was stopped by bad weather. Snow blinded, they lost dog-teams to the fury of the continent, and suffered a second casualty in Oates. The worst was yet to come. March 19, 1912 and 38 kilometre from their original location, a fierce blizzard stopped them again. Scott and team spent nine days without supplies. Frozen fingers, lack of light and the brutal storm left them stranded.



Scurvy claimed them one by one until on March 29, 1912 Robert Falcon Scott, Commander of the Victorian Order perished to the continent he almost conquered.

He left letters for his wife and mother.

Nearly eight months later, they found the corpses of the Terra Nova Expedition. Scott was presumed the last to die. He died tragically on the ice, showing grit and courage. He fought for every mile he gained, eventually losing out to the wrath of Antarctic.

Amundsen won the Race to the South Pole, but Scott emerged heroically triumphant in his death. The Race to the South Pole however, remains immortalized; the Antarctic, still an enigma and battling the brutal forces, an open challenge.

Ernest Shackleton

A close-up, low-angle shot of a woman's face. She has light skin, blue eyes, and is wearing dramatic, dark purple and black eye makeup. Her lips are painted a vibrant red. The image has a digital, glitch-like overlay with various text and symbols in shades of brown and gold, particularly concentrated on the right side of her face. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white pattern.

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Dhora — “sand dune” in Rajasthani language — is a brand that aims at promoting the art and craft of Rajasthan. Siddharth Daspan and Aavriti Jain, both from the state of cultural diversity and heritage, came together to form a brand through which they could apply all that they learnt at the Istituto Marangoni in Milan into something real. Dhora was conceptualised as a result of turning a vision into reality.

CRAFTING CREATIONS

ECLECTIC ENCHANTMENT

Sand dunes evolve through time as the winds change directions and the dunes metamorphose themselves accordingly. When it comes to the new age innovators and designers — quite like the sand dunes, the latest trends, the changing consumer demands, the different seasons take up the role of the wind and aid in the evolution of the today's brands. These brands today have to cater to discerning consumers who want something new, something fresh and something unique. One brand that is catering to these new age consumers with its creative and original products is Dhora.





Coming from different backgrounds, Aavriti, a Mass Communication graduate, and Siddharth, an Economics graduate, have forged a brand that aims at redeveloping the values of yesterday in a contemporary frame. The label intends to give back to its source of inspiration which is handmade jewellery, linen and cotton apparel and leather goods. A mélange of Indian craftsmanship with high edge and fashion, the label is a unique diffusion line.



Talking about design philosophy, they are looking at “a massive exploration of biodiversity. We have a vision to promote and uplift the small communities of artisans and craftsman of Rajasthan.” They participated in the India International Jewellery Week (IIJW) in 2012 with their first collection. “Karigars enjoy working on our pieces because it's away from the stereotypical products they make. Initially karigars used to correct us or find our work uncanny, therefore we called our first jewellery collection 'The Mistake',” the Dhora curators inform. The entire collection was made using uncut and unpolished stones paired with odd objects like door knobs and baseball masks using only natural stones and metal.

Their latest collection is the 'Thar Collection'. It replicates the grainy and colourful landscape of the desert in Rajasthan. “We worked with this really interesting stone called the 'Drusy'; it shines like a star!” the duo explain, “The texture of the stone is very similar to the dune when it glistens under the sun.” Their new collection has influences of the 'Raika Tribe' of Rajasthan; they are an ancestral caste of camel breeders of the state. They find it exceptionally intriguing to be working on this theme, they share.

They plan now on diversifying brand Dhora in the future. “We absolutely love to design line extensions of our brand into different categories like an Art and Music Café, a concept store and a salon. These of course are our initial aspirations and we look forward to them materializing soon. Though fashion remains our focal point,” the duo signs off.



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PUNE HINJEWADI



Either give me more
wine or leave me alone.

Rumi

"Anyone who tries to make you believe that he knows all about wines is obviously a fake." says Leon Adams, Co-founder of the Wine Institute, California.

Consider all that you know of your favourite wine. There is nothing more intoxicating than enjoying your wine, and talking about it.





You know your red from your white. Your palate from your bouquet. You know your rosé from your sparkling. Your terroir from your brut. You even know your Burgundy from your port.

You are as ardent a wine enthusiast as can be. Wine is a lifestyle, nothing less. However, here's helping you out on ameliorating your wine IQ.

We have compiled a list of some of common whites and reds in India which make for some of the best wines in India and all over the world. This is a (short) no-nonsense to the richness of these wines.

Chenin Blanc, a 'noble' sensation

This grape is an all-rounder. Its high acidity means Chenin Blanc is an ideal ingredient for everything from sparkling wines to desserts. Even the terroir expression in this white wine is exceptional.

Born of the Loire Valley, France the grape carries in itself a diverse range of sweetness. Winemakers usually exploit this to make great crisp, citrusy unoaked style wines or lusher, sweeter wines a la Chardonnay or Viognier.

A noble grape, its sweetness is outstanding: honeyed and fresh.

Characteristics:

Colour: White, varying from very pale to deep gold

Body: Light to full

Taste: Apple and honey with hints of refreshing lemon acidity. Hints of vanilla and floral aromas.

Local Pick: Mercury Chenin Blanc, York Chenin Blanc, Reveilo Late Harvest and Sula Late Harvest Chenin Blanc, Vallone Chenin Blanc, Reveilo Chenin Blanc

Sauvignon Blanc, like fresh-cut grass

New Zealand vintners are responsible for indulging the world with this lovely grape. Back in the 1990s, they made brilliance out of this white grape, making the world swoon over its freshness.

Born in the wilds of the South West France and nurtured in Loire and Bordeaux, Sauvignon Blanc makes crisp, elegant and fresh wines. A favourite of the New World, Sauvignon Blanc is cultivated in Chile, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Brazil amongst other places.

However, for all its versions, true Sauvignon Blanc soul is in the Sauternes of Bordeaux and the Sancerre of Loire. Especially in Bordeaux, the sweet wines depend on Sauvignon Blanc to balance the intense sweetness.

With a bright refreshing acidity, a young Sauvignon Blanc with its methoxypyrazines (compounds responsible for its flavour) is as good as a vintage can get.

Characteristics:

Colour: White; pale with hints of green or yellow

Body: Light to medium

Taste: Pungent, like 'cat's pee on a gooseberry bush'. The bouquet covers pea pods, and green fruits through limes to passion fruit.

Local Pick: Indus Sauvignon Blanc, Château d'Ori Sauvignon Blanc, Reveilo Sauvignon Blanc, Sula Sauvignon Blanc.

Chardonnay, a movie star

This grape is like a movie star: more famous than the famous wines made from it.

Relatively easy to grow, Chardonnay is the first step to foray into the international wine market. Originated in Burgundy, Chardonnay now covers every part of the world's wine growing region. From England to New Zealand and closer home, it is a key component of Champagne. Blended with red grapes like Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier as well, Chardonnay is a very 'malleable' variety. Its acidic attributes have all the jazz of a movie star.

Characteristics:

Colour: White, varying from pale to yellow gold

Body: Medium to full

Taste: Citrus and apples to tropical fruits. Ageing the wines with oak adds aromas of toast and butter.

Local Pick: Reveilo Chardonnay Reserve, Fratelli Chardonnay, Grover vineyards Art Collection Blanc de Blanc



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th bluish tinges

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ather and wet

la Rasa,
Fratelli Shiraz



This is but a sniff of the enormous world demand for quality wines increases, wine bold and creative in the wines they make not know about tirage, racking, or Nevertheless, after this, you may pass connoisseur and indulge in your love of the

Zinfandel, a real American hero

American dreams do not get any better than a Zinfandel wine. Planted in over ten percent of Californian vineyards, campaigns have been run to make it a monument of Californian history. Interestingly, the Zin of California is a distant cousin of the Crljenak Kastelanski grape from Croatia.

With vineyards over hundred years old growing Zinfandel, the wines of this grape are as robust and strong. An ardent favourite for making the semi-sweet rosé style, Zinfandel is also a great reflection of terroir, and a winemaker's style and skill.

Characteristics:

Colour: Red; medium to deep garnet

Body: Medium to full

Tastes: Red and black plums. Vanilla and coconut when aged in barrels.

Local Pick: Sula Zinfandel Rosé, Four Seasons Blush Wine, York Zinfandel Rose, Sula Zinfandel

Cabernet Sauvignon, global legacy

Cabernet Sauvignon is a role model. Correction: Cabernet Sauvignon of Bordeaux is a role model. Born in the 17th century as a hybrid of Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc, the grape quickly became a 'colonizer' and today is grown in virtually every wine growing of the world. The backbone of a great Cabernet Sauvignon wine is its structure, acidity, aging and tannins.

With an inclination to bloom in the oak, Cabernet Sauvignon wines are a complexity of flavour, aroma and colour. While Bordeaux red are intimately always Cabernet, since they blend it with Merlot and Cabernet Franc. New World Cabernets from California, Chile and Australia also command deep respect.

Characteristics:

Colour: Red; from ruby to deep dark

Body: Medium to full

Tastes: Green pepper, mint vegetal and jam. Aged wines show blackcurrant and firm tannins.

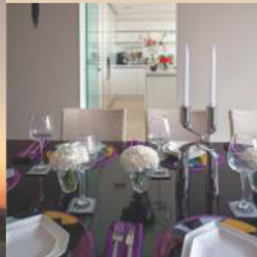
Local Pick: Indus Cabernet Sauvignon, York Cabernet Sauvignon, Grover's La Reserve Cabernet Shiraz, Reveilo Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Sula Cabernet Shiraz





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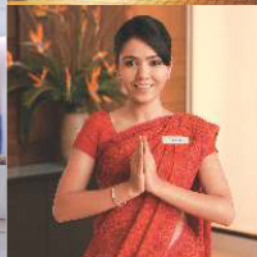
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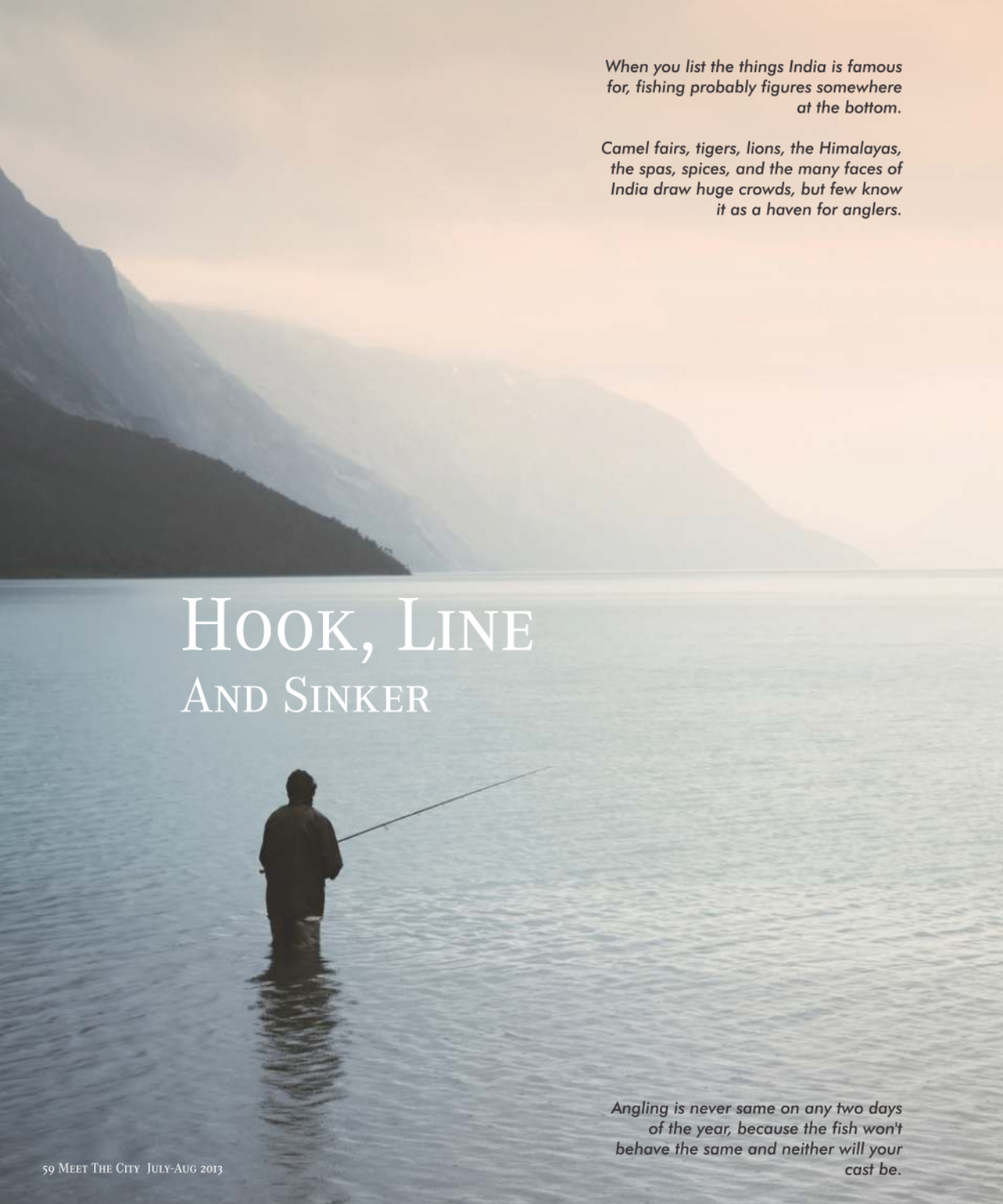
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A person is standing in a calm lake, fishing with a rod and reel. The person is silhouetted against the water. In the background, there are large, misty mountains under a soft, hazy sky. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

*When you list the things India is famous
for, fishing probably figures somewhere
at the bottom.*

*Camel fairs, tigers, lions, the Himalayas,
the spas, spices, and the many faces of
India draw huge crowds, but few know
it as a haven for anglers.*

HOOK, LINE AND SINKER

*Angling is never same on any two days
of the year, because the fish won't
behave the same and neither will your
cast be.*

With the abundance of coastline and inland waterways, India is the perfect destination for all types of angling and fishing holidays. Blessed with a 7,500 km long coastline and some of the clearest and cleanest sea, fishing is a much-underrated sport in India.

Not just the seas, the interiors of subcontinent are as much fun for angling as well. With the snow-fed northern rivers and the abundant peninsular rivers of South India, the scope for angling spans across the best and most scenic spots in the country.

Angling is a sport. Angling is time consuming, but that is just the point of it. It is a sport where the rules are governed by game. Game fish make angling a tough sport and an unwavering passion. The many rivers of India are abundant in game fish.

Angling is such a sport where even losing means you have won.

EXOTIC GETAWAY

Beas Ghat, Uttarakhand

Situated in the foothills of the Himalayas, the Beas Ghat is the ideal habitat for Mahseer. This stretch of the Ganges offers lucrative experiences of fishing in wild. The largest ever catch of Mahseer found in this location has been app. 60lbs. (almost 28 kg!)

Nayar, a rivulet of the Ganges, is one of the ideal fishing beats of the river, and thrives with game population. This is also the site for 1989 documentary "Casting for Gold" by John Bailey and Paul Boot.



For all the fish which take the bait, the ones that get away make for the most thrilling. While the struggling and pulling and pushing may last for but a few seconds, the stories of the one that was almost landed, or the 'big one' that escaped away run for years together! Angling is not just a sport; angling is a fever, curable only with application of cold water and fresh, untainted air.

Angling is an outdoors experience like no other. India provides exciting conditions and angling opportunities. Sport fishing experts from all over the world make it a point to have a fishing expedition at least once in India!

Here are some of the angling destinations in India where you can experience the romance and thrill of angling:

Ranikor, Meghalaya

120 km from Shillong is Ranikor, small-town on the border of India and Bangladesh. Situated in the wettest land on earth - Mawsynram, Ranikor is one of the last wild fishing spots in the state of Meghalaya. The fishing catchment along the River Kynshi is approximately 15 to 16 kilometres.

Ranikor is an isolated place, and predominantly a tribal area. Tribal anglers are regulars at angling here and employ traditional means of angling/fishing. A very active tribal conservation program has added to a healthy growth in the fish population.



Mahakali River, Pancheshwar

On the Indo-Nepal border, the River Mahakali is a raging torrent, and by far one of the most sought after Mahseer angling spots in the country.

Mahakali is a snow fed river originating in Higher Himalayas of India and the clear waters provide an unforgettable fishing experience.

Yamuna

Yamuna and its many tributaries like Giri, Tons and Pabbar are havens for angling. Other famous spots include the Tajuwala Canal and Hathnikund.

Then there is the Ramganga flowing through the Corbett National Park which not only provides exciting opportunities

for Catfish and Mahseer, but also a wildlife sojourn with tigers, leopards, elephants and a host of avian species!

A great spot for overnight fishing, Ramganga is by far the only destination to cast bait in tiger territory.

Jia Bhoroli, Assam

The river Jia Bhoroli borders the Nameri National Park, which is UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site and is a famous angling destination since the Raj.

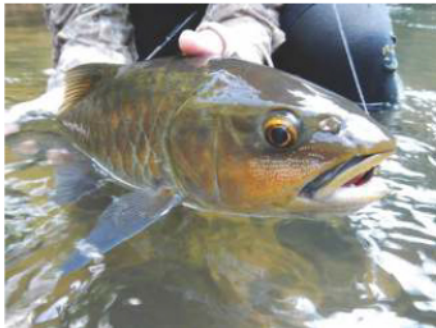
The snow-fed Nameri through is a dream destination for Golden Mahseer. This is the site of an annual angling competition, fishing here is regulated by the forest department. All catches have to be reported and released.

Angling in Andaman

The Andaman Islands are jewels of Indian Ocean. Sparkling clean waters, pristine beaches and an (yet) untouched wildlife makes it a great destination for sport fishing. Angling tours off the shores of Andaman offer great thrills in sport fishing.

Shoals, underwater canyons and coral reefs offer vast richness of game fish. Commonly found fish include the Giant Trevally (including the monstrous ignobilis!). Groupers include snappers, wahoos, barracudas, jobs, Yellowfin tuna and the Blue Marlin billfish amongst many other.

Since monsoon plays havoc in the seas, Andaman sport-fishing is recommended from October to April. Small yet powerful boats, large enough to carry three to four enthusiasts regularly anchor at prolific fishing zones.



A different kettle of fish!

The vast tapestry of angling in India is centred on the 'tiger of the waters', the Golden Mahseer. Angling enthusiasts from all over the world visit India for the sport baiting this large-scaled prized fish. The trophy of the Himalayas and its many rivers, Mahseer here has been recorded to weigh up to 55 lbs! Not just the Golden Mahseer, but the Silver, Silver-grey, Black, Redfin and Yellowfin Mahseer make for a medley of adventure, fishing and fly-fishing opportunities.

Goonch, also called the 'Giant Devil Catfish' is yet another prized fish in Indian fresh waters. Found in fast moving large rivers, this fish is the stuff of legends. Object of attention in the popular River Monsters show, the Goonch have been

reported to grow over 300 lb in weight and 3 metres in length!

Introduced during the Raj, the Brown trout is another fascinating fish found in the upper cold rivers of India. The Beas, Satluj and Ravi are abundant with Brown trout populations. From November to February every year, trout-fishing season reaches its climax. Himachal is by far a golden destination for angling the brown trout.

Some of the other fish one can rope in include the crafty trout, menacing shark, Catfish, Rohu, Catla, Mrigal, Barilus species, and the Glyptothorax species.

SPECTACULAR STAY

IT'S ALL IN
THE LITTLE THINGS...

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WHEN ONE GOES TO A HOTEL, ONE WANTS THE EXPERIENCE TO BE RELAXING AND COMFORTABLE. FROM THE BIG THINGS LIKE THE ROOMS, SERVICES, FACILITIES, ETC. TO THE LITTLE THINGS LIKE HOW THE STAFF INTERACTS WITH THE PATRONS, THEIR WELCOMING ATTITUDE, ETC. MATTERS A LOT WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING A COMPLETE PACKAGE.

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Hilton™ Pune-Chinchwad has 115 rooms for every type of guest: from single business travellers to families on a leisure holiday. The hotel is conveniently located near the Mumbai-Pune National, Express highway and the Pune-Nasik highway and the Pune city centre, airport and railway station.

The hotel offers myriad services and facilities. The rooms are designed to offer the all possible comforts. With services like special smoking rooms, 24-hour in-room dining, 24-hour Business Centre, 24-hour Fitness by Precor™, dedicated flexible-sized meeting rooms called Viharas, concierge/tour desk, meditation centre amongst many other facilities, CITRON Honey & Coriander by Crabtree & Evelyn® bath products to pamper yourself, DoubleTree by Hilton™ makes sure to give exactly what its customers want.



Dining option is one of the most important criteria to choose a hotel to stay in. Head to 3 Spices, a stylish all-day dining restaurant for contemporary buffet, *a la carte* and a wide selection of wines. Or get some authentic Japanese cuisine like Teppenyaki, Sushi and Sashimi at Miyuki. Or select from a range of fine malts and innovative cocktails at the lounge and bar Linear. You can also head to an open-to-air poolside resto-lounge Level 12 for a selection of cocktails, mocktails and scrumptious finger foods. You can satisfy your sweet tooth at Tarta with its freshly baked cakes, coffee frappes and desserts.

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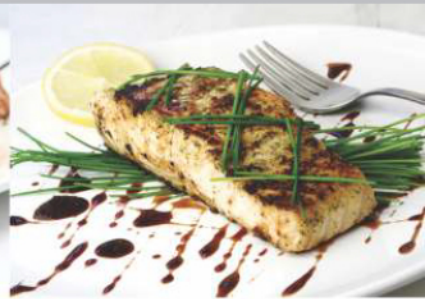


MODERN GASTRONOMY



Food with fresh ingredients, carefully balanced flavours and simple culinary techniques, while not considered a basic necessity, is just as essential for those who are true food connoisseurs. Getting the concept of Modern Eating and Modern Dining to the country, MoMo Café by Courtyard by Marriott, Pune – Hinjewadi offers enticing dishes that reflect the diversity of the modern world.

Open 24-hours, MoMo Café is the ideal place for a traveller to unwind with a snack or a meal, a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, or simply by net browsing or reading magazines and books dotted around making every guest feel at home. From a hot cuppa coffee to a midnight snack to a full-fledged dining experience, you will find everything here.



A classically inspired menu using authentically prepared dishes is the foundation that forms MoMo cuisine. It has a focus on freshness of ingredients and simple home cooking. MoMo also focuses on local customers; regional favourites feature on the menu. This changes from country to country. MoMo Burger is a signature dish of the Courtyard Marriott brand. It is on menu in every Courtyard Marriott hotel in Asia Pacific. The Marriott burger is a classic bacon and cheddar burger in sesame seed bun. An exclusive Maharashtrian dish is the *Kombdi Cha Rassa* – spicy chicken-based gravy made from dried coconut and onions. Eponymously, they also serve momos of different varieties and with different sauces.



The guests can also treat themselves to a glass of the finest variety of wine whilst they enjoy watching their meals being prepared in the one of its kind open kitchen. Key dishes on the menu are paired with the wines to help guest make choices. Designer coffees from an Italian espresso machine are available throughout the day.

A special emphasis has been laid on the design element with finely coordinated interiors, well planned lighting, flower arrangements, etc for setting up the perfect soothing mood. The open kitchen and bar area helps the clientele see exactly how their order is being whipped up. Each of the sections is divided by clever seating design and the colours that intertwine through them. The warm colour scheme used throughout gives a cosy and homey feel.

For the foodie in you, MoMo Café is the place to head to!



BY DAY, BY NIGHT

FACE OFF!

RANJIT BATRA VS. DJ RB



There comes a time when you want to follow your dreams while enjoying what you are doing at the same time. Indulging and bringing out your hobby to the fore, along with your work, is the answer to this; but doing it successfully is a tightrope act. Meet the man who handles top hospitality brands like JW Marriott Pune and Oakwood by day, and belts out some groovy music by night.

As I enter the quiet office of Ranjit Batra, I come across a quintessential corporate man: in formals, sitting in front of a computer going over minutes of an important meeting. The fact that the President, Hospitality in Panchshil Realty, Pune's leading construction group is also a DJ will leave you astounded!

Hospitable endeavours

"I was always interested in music since childhood; I had the latest music available before all my friends," Ranjit, with his flair for repartee, shares, "But the aroma of tandoori chicken and other delicacies arising out of the restaurants' kitchen pulled me towards the hospitality industry when the time came to select my career." He had his own business in New Zealand and trained with the Oberoi Group of Hotels before he moved to Pune to join Panchshil Realty as "it was the right time and the right decision". As the President of the Hospitality department, Ranjit is in charge of JW Marriott Pune, Courtyard by Marriott Hinjewadi, Oakwood Premier Pune and Oakwood Residency, Naylor Road.

Finding your inner passion

"Then came the time of the mid-life crisis..." says Ranjit, chuckling, "I hit the 40s and realised that I wanted to do

something that I am really passionate about and can get engaged in. Music was the answer. When I am travelling or in my free time, at airports before a flight, or during stop-over, or if I am not able to sleep, I am trying out different music software, listening to different music, mixing it together, etc." It is a destresser for him, and something he enjoys, "I have been instrumental in handpicking the DJs that play in the club. Few times I realised, that I could probably play better, and put it up as a challenge to myself to do DJing. I didn't want to show anyone down, but to prove to myself."

From calm corporate to high volume energy!

DJ RB, the alter ego of Ranjit Batra plays according to his mood. "I don't play on a specific date as such. It's a good thing that I have an understanding boss, and we have two clubs where I can belt out my music," he elaborates, "I like to experiment. I don't want to do stuff that is easy to do. I like to push the boundaries; these days I am doing so with retro remixes. It's not easy but I am trying it. Commercial music is limited and I get quite bored playing it now. I am trying out Underground and House." The man who is constantly in his musical world when not having his high-rolling meetings says that thanks to his love for music and constant search for new music daily, even his secretary "has become half a DJ"! "I am now planning to play out of Pune too now; I will be performing at Olive in Mumbai sometime soon. I have taken this up to a professional level. I have all the latest equipment with me."

"I see myself getting old and the passion slowing down," he smiles ruefully, when speaking about future plans, "DJing a very high energy demanding career. I don't see myself having white hair and DJing in clubs. But I will enjoy it till I can..."

FOLD. CREATE. MEDITATE.

MAKING A THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECT FROM
TWO-DIMENSIONAL PAPER BY FOLDING, UNFOLDING AND
REFOLDING IS A MATTER OF GREAT PATIENCE,
DEDICATION AND, OF COURSE,
INNOVATION.

For copywriter and voice-over artist Himanshu Agrawal, this art has been a companion for the past twenty-three years.

Starting at a young age of ten, when someone gifted him a book on origami, Himanshu now makes elaborate origami sculpture that leave you awestruck! "Origami is an art-form where the artist has to know the subject well: the fibres in the paper, the textures, the paper thickness, etc. What you want to create, and its size and shape, is all dependant on how you manipulate the paper and make what you want to. It is quite a scientific art, based on geometry," Himanshu shares. Strong, handmade papers work the best in origami, he believes.

Talking about his large-scale artworks, he explains that one has to plan the process out before actually starting the process of folding and creating the object.

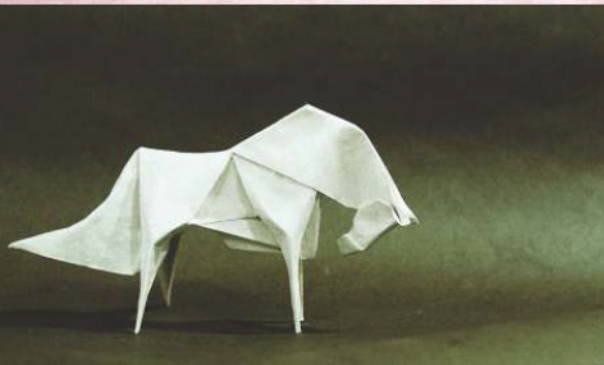


"I NORMALLY MAKE A SMALL SCALE MODEL BEFORE AND FIGURE OUT THE PROBLEM AREAS."

"I normally make a small scale model before and figure out the problem areas." Himanshu features in the Limca Book of Records three times: for his 20 ft long giraffe, 105 ft dinosaur and his 25 ft long golden dragon. Himanshu made the golden dragon to commemorate 60 years of Indo-Japanese relations and the Japanese Embassy hosted the dragon at the end of the cultural exhibition for which it was originally made for.. In the ultimate respect given to this art form in Japan, the Embassy decided to cremate the artwork once it was to be brought down.



Himanshu Agrawal



"Origami is not just something for children's craftwork. It is an art form by itself," Himanshu clarifies to erase that misconception. "I am a part of an organisation called Origami Mitra where many of us origami-lovers have come together," Himanshu informs, "We teach origami to not only children, but we also go to rural areas and teach it there, as also to people with disabilities."

"Origami is like meditation," Himanshu claims, "When you sit down to make a model, you have to stick to it till it's done. As it's all about precise folds and maintaining those shapes, you have to diligently keep at it till it's done. It helps in developing patience and enriches experience. Origami, like other Japanese art, is a calm and peaceful art."



Avantika Kumar Agrawal
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WHAT THE STORE

REALM OF BESPOKE DESIGNS



TULIPS STORE

DO UP YOUR HOME IN LUXURY WITH THE HELP OF TULIPS, INDIA'S PREMIERE SOFT FURNISHINGS RETAIL STORE

"SURROUND YOURSELF WITH QUALITY, NOT CLUTTER. BUY IT ONCE, AND BUY IT RIGHT."

MARNI JAMESON,
COLUMNIST, AUTHOR AND SPEAKER

Home is an extension of the people living in it. When it comes to elevated living, everything inside the house exudes elegance and luxury. Bespoke designs for home are sought after when designing the homes.

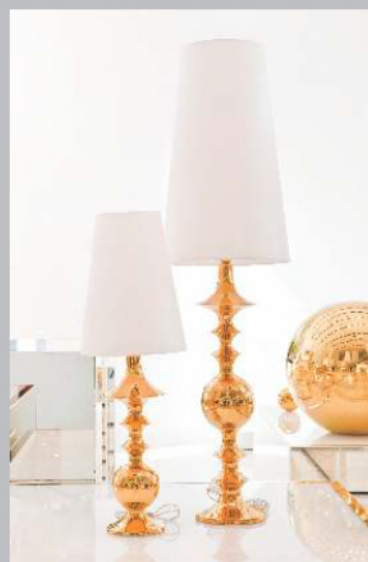
Initiated in the 90's, Tulips is India's premiere soft furnishings retail store that resonates a mélange of luxury, design and flawless creations with finesse to unfold imagination into a reality. Tulips' forte lies in excavating luxury that creates a perfect ambience to suit the eccentricity of a niche architecture and taste. The store is home to an eclectic mix of beautifully woven fabrics, wallpapers, frescos, exquisite drapery, window dressings, curtains and sophisticated upholstery that can be tailor-made and personalised with monograms, initials and individual design intricacies.

Tulips incessantly aims at integrating people skilled in art, promoting and reviving ancient skill and craft as well as the artisans who create these stunning collections that further harmonise the interiors. In essence, it is a holistic brand of bespoke design services for varied spaces with an elaborate selection of the home décor accents combined with turnkey solutions and consultancy that collectively transforms into a personalised realm.

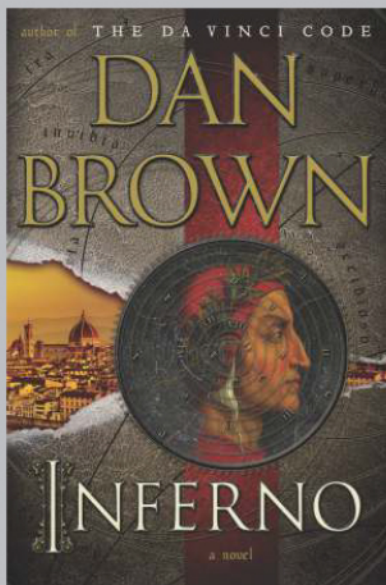
An assortment of European object d'art, glamorous chat pieces and artefacts from Gabriella B (Italy), Bull & Stein (Germany) and Pols Potten (Netherlands) vary from solid colours to monochromatic tones and metal tints with some of them that stand as tall as person and are definitely eye-catching as a collection. A fun range from Ferm Living, Denmark for kids includes duvet covers and cute cushions with elaborate characters to amuse the kids.

Plush bed linen with coordinated bath linen in classic silhouettes, soothing colours & comforting fabrics from Valeron, Turkey exude a sense of indulgence. Fine Cashmere blankets and Merino Wool throws from the German brand 'Uppercase' transports one into a luxurious escapade. Additionally, Tulips' exquisite selection of scarves shawls and throws from Abafazi, South Africa are adorned with Ostrich feathers and makes for a stylish piece of timeless heirloom. This array of fine collectibles is made exclusively and is an embellishment to any wardrobe.

Fusing international design extravagance in Indian homes, Tulips exclusively brings to an astute buyer some of the finest decor wares from across the globe.



BOOK REVIEW



INFERNO: THE NEW ROBERT LANGDON THRILLER

DAN BROWN, RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHING

One Hell of a Book to Read!

Harvard University professor and symbologist Robert Langdon is back in action after a 4-year hiatus. This time, Langdon is in Florence, trying to make his way across hell to stop a worldwide biohazard catastrophe.

Dan Brown is an old hand at conjuring international conspiracies. With *Inferno* he weaves artwork, literature, science in a tapestry of riddles and puzzles that takes Langdon across splendid Italian landscape and to hell.

"*Inferno*", quite literally means "hell" in Italian, and Langdon's scavenger hunt is no less than that. He finds himself in Italy with a mysterious object on him and a head injury that prevents him remembering why or how he is there. Dressed in tweeds, his favourite Mickey Mouse watch and accompanied by the lissom doctor Sienna Brooks, Langdon evades a femme fatale assassin, the US government and the 'Consortium'- a private society, to unravel a bioterrorist plot that will change human kind forever!

With *Inferno*, the historish backdrop is back, and so are historical facts and references. *Inferno* is the underworld as described in Dante epic poem *The Divine Comedy*, which portrays hell as an elaborately structured realm populated by entities known as "shades"—bodieless souls trapped between life and death. Langdon uses Dante's cantos as source material to find his way through murder attempts and a villainous catastrophe.

Serious readers may feel short-changed with Brown's prose, but make no mistake, this book is a thriller and hard to put down. The entertaining tension is high, and every chapter serves as a cliffhanger for the climax.

HALF A RUPEE STORIES BY GULZAR

TRANSLATED BY SUNJOY SHEKHAR, PENGUIN PUBLISHING HOUSE

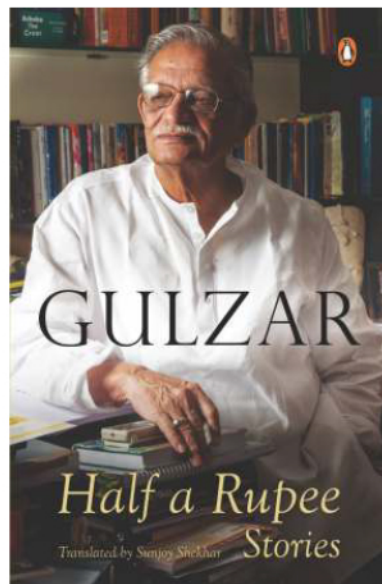
Life's like that!

Half A Rupee Stories by Gulzar is a collection of twenty-five short stories, some of which are biographical while others are purely a result of imagination. Translated by Sunjoy Shekhar, Half A Rupee Stories delves into different subjects ranging from the biographical anecdotes of Javed Akhtar, Sahir Ludhianvi and Kuldip Nayyar to tall tales set in Kashmir, in the hinterland, in the modern mega polis and on the LoC. A collection of stories of love and betrayal to fables of courage and conviction.

Gulzarsaab in his usual brilliant penmanship holds your hand and personally walks you through the lives of the protagonists. On showcase is a gamut of human emotions. Half A Rupee Stories is woven with the threads of compassion, love, friendship, care, brotherhood and many quirks of being alive.

A glimpse of the stories to look forward in this nugget on life include stories of a suicide bomber, who assassinates the Prime Minister, an army officer on LoC so used to his army life that his sentences are incomplete without the radio sign-off 'Over'. Yet another story is that of a drunkard in the slums of Mumbai who fights the torrential rains as his shelter is swept away. Half A Rupee Stories also includes the tale of a cop who drags a dead cow from Vinayak Rao Patwardhan Road to the adjoining Bapu Road, since the latter is easier to spell.

Because life's like that, Half A Rupee Stories by Gulzarsaab is a book on the life he leads, we lead and we all lead.



FITNESS FIRST

BY
ABHIMANYU SABLE



GET OUT OF THE MONSOON BLUES!

Regular exercise delivers a mental and emotional boost. It improves your mood, bolsters your self-esteem and gives you the confidence. It keeps your body in top shape and provides you with the energy and stamina you need to pursue all your interests. So it's all the more important to not let rains stop you from exercising. Regular physical activity fortifies your immune system and helps you to avoid or recover more quickly from colds and other minor maladies associated with rainy season.

When you are physically active your body releases chemicals known as endorphins. These are your body's natural painkillers and stress reducers. They diminish anxiety and depression and produce a sense of well being known as the exercise 'high' which is required in high quantities, especially during monsoons.

So where can one start? The first thing is to choose an activity you like or want to do. You're much more likely to stick with it; and you'll have fun doing it. Also, remember to have a plan B: for example, if it's raining, walk around an indoor studio or mall or do an exercise video at home.

Monsoon Workout Plan

Set goals

Maybe you want to lose a little weight, get in shape for a particular sport you enjoy or increase joint mobility. Match your fitness goals to your fitness program.

Strength

Make sure to include strength training in your fitness regime. It increases your metabolism and builds lean muscle mass. The net result is increased stamina and endurance. Visit the gym at least twice a week to lift weights. Stronger muscles improve posture, balance, and coordination

Cardiovascular workout

To give yourself a cardiovascular workout, go for a slow jog or brisk walking when you can get out of the house if it is not raining. Do this at least twice a week for 20 to 30 minutes at a stretch.

Flexibility

Stretching after your workout helps prevent injuries, maintains flexibility, and is wonderfully relaxing. All physical activities become easier and more enjoyable if you have strong flexible joints. Stretch extensively all your body with each stretch at least for 12 to 15 seconds.

Schedule your Workout

Initially combining exercise with work schedule will be an adjustment, but when you begin achieving great results, the excitement and fun you experience will make the change well worth the effort.

abs[®]

fitness & wellness club

A daily fitness routine ensures that one can remain in shape. But what happens during the monsoons, when it is all wet and dreary outside and all one can do is avoid getting drenched?

*Fitness guru **Abhimanyu Sable** comes to the rescue and shares some tips that are useful to remain fit during the season of rains.*

If rains stop you from visiting gym then you can perform following exercises at home just with a pair of dumbbells and barbell, ankle weights and mats.

Push Ups	3 Sets* 12 Reps
Squats	2 Sets* 12 Reps
Standing Hip Extension	2 Sets* 12 Reps
Side Leg Raises	2 Sets* 15 Reps
Triceps Dips	2 Sets* 12 Reps
Biceps Curls with Dumbbells	2 Sets* 12 Reps
Side Bending	2 Sets* 15 Reps
Crunches	2 Sets* 18 Reps



Nargis Fakhri

BOWLED OVER!

PVR bluO recently appointed Nargis Fakhri as brand ambassador. To launch their Phoenix Marketcity Pune outlet, the beautiful diva came to town and wowed the crowds, and how! Ajay Bijli, CMD, PVR Ltd, said that such ventures are part of the group's initiative to increase the fun quotient for cinema goers.

The evening of bowling, music and drinks was a huge success as Nargis and all the Puneites enjoyed themselves at Pune's largest bowling centre.



Faisal Qureshi & Nadeema Ali



Guests enjoying the evening at the launch

Ajay Bijli



Maral Yazarloo, Imraan, Praveen Mutha, Amrita Batra & Meetashi Makkar



Ladies trying their hand at bowling



Sagar and Shribala Chordia with John Abraham



Prateek Chordia with John Abraham



Sejal Firodia, Monika & Shribala Chordia



John Abraham with his fans



Prasanna Firodia, Govind Thakkar with friend

SHOWTIME!

The movie buffs in the city got to see *Shootout at Wadala* alongside its star John Abraham at a special private preview of the movie at Inox.

After enjoying the movie, the party shifted to Oak Lounge, where John and the Oak patrons enjoyed good food, chilled drinks and great music.

JW MARRIOTT PUNE WEDDING SHOW '13

The glamorous event held at the spacious JW Marriott Pune Ballroom was a one-stop wedding solutions showcase displaying an extravagant mix of traditional and modern setups by the best vendors in the business including personalised gifting options, wedding cards and packaging, trendy displays as well as an exclusive Bridal Wear collection by celebrated designer Nivedita Saboo.



White weddings



Riona Biyani



Wedding wows!



Nivedita Saboo with friends





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TIMELESS ELEGANCE.

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DEVELOPED BY
PANCHSHIL



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"Inspired Living is brought to life by the Trump brand. Created with a curator's wisdom, and an artist's taste, Trump Towers Pune is a unique project in the heart of Pune. Built by connoisseurs, for connoisseurs."

Atul Chordia, Chairman & CEO, Panchshil Realty.



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