Pune - Vol. II / August-September 2014

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THINK LIKE A CHAMPION

DONALD J. TRUMP

Meet Donald J. Trump as he makes his maiden trip to Pune and get to know this larger-than-life persona.





The Trump Brand comes to India to bring an exquisite residential project. Trump Towers Pune is a statement to modernity. Its 23 storied two towers and single-floor residences offer stunning views of the historical Aga Khan Palace and Joggers' Park. With a transcendent range of amenities, and embroidered with the aesthetics of Indian heritage, Trump Towers Pune offers truly inspired lifestyle.

"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 the connoisseurs." Atul Chordia, Chairman, Panchshil Realty

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What can one say about a multi-talented business magnate who is known not only for his business acumen, but also for the far and wide reach of his organisation across all corners of the world?

Donald J. Trump is a force to be reckoned with in the international real estate industry. Everyone, be it from the industry or outside it, knows of him.

So, it's a given that when 'The Donald' comes to town, we feature him here, in Pune's exclusive luxury magazine. The commemoration of the Trump-Panchshil association comes right at the time of nationwide festivities, as we start off the celebrations with a bang!

In celebration of India's 67th Independence Day, Meet the City takes you through the beautiful expanses of this country that are yet unheard of.
You'll be mesmerised by the hidden nooks we have chosen to feature in our Travel section.
Or maybe indulge your wanderlust by riding in style to various must-visit destinations of India on board a luxury train in India.

Get spooked by the many mysteries of India that will leave you intrigued - how did the River Saraswati disappear, where are the townsfolk of Bangarh and just how spicy is the Ghost Chilli? See London as never before through the eyes of the very talented Gond artist Bhajju Shyam.

Get to know Indian couture in all its resplendence with the inimitable Tarun Tahiliani. You could also tickle your taste buds with authentic Indian cuisine with celebrated food stylist and Chef Michael Swamy.

Explore, taste, experience, enjoy!

ATUL CHORDIA
Chairman, Panchshil Realty



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MONTBLANC TIMEWALKER CHRONOVOYAGER UTC



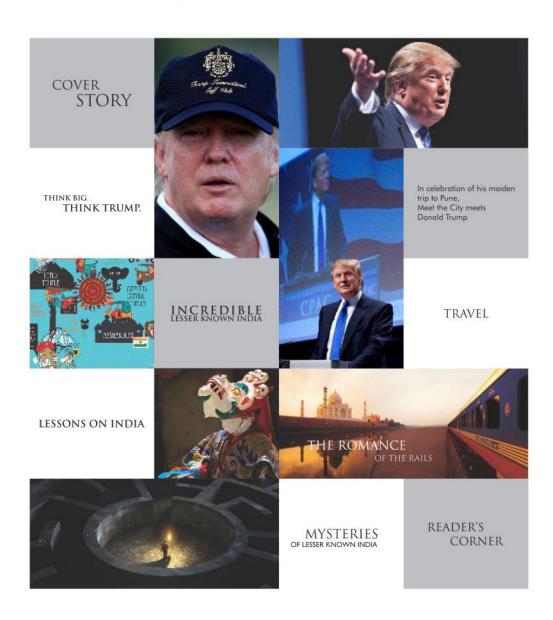
A second time zone synchronised with Universal Time Coordinated (UTC) makes this self-winding chronograph the perfect companion for all frequent travellers. Its robust 43-mm-diameter stainless steel case with satin-finished bezel and push-pieces unites elegant design and the traditional art of watchmaking. 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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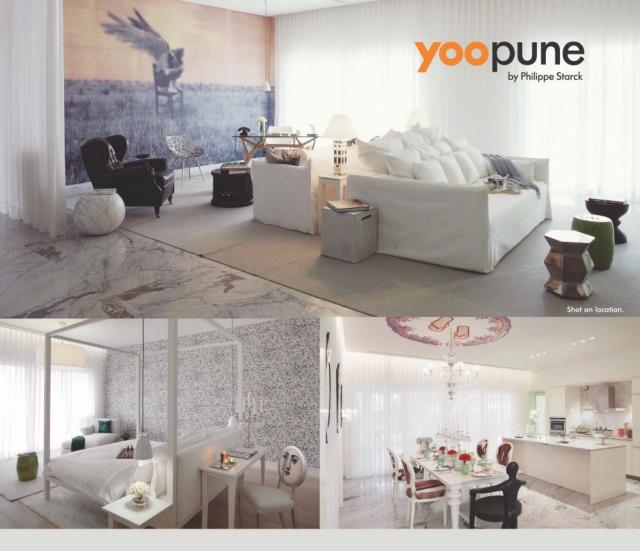


ditranduil oasis

At the centre of this luxurious property is a 5-acre indigenous forest, home to nearly 500 trees over 100 years old.

The residences encircle this forest, making it the focal point of the development and your personal sanctuary in the heart of this multi-faceted city.

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The business world today is ruled by disruptive innovators, by the young and fearless. It isn't enough to have business expertise or to be a specialist.

Today, you need to have chutzpah - a Yiddish word that means having personal confidence or courage to do or say things that may seem shocking to others.

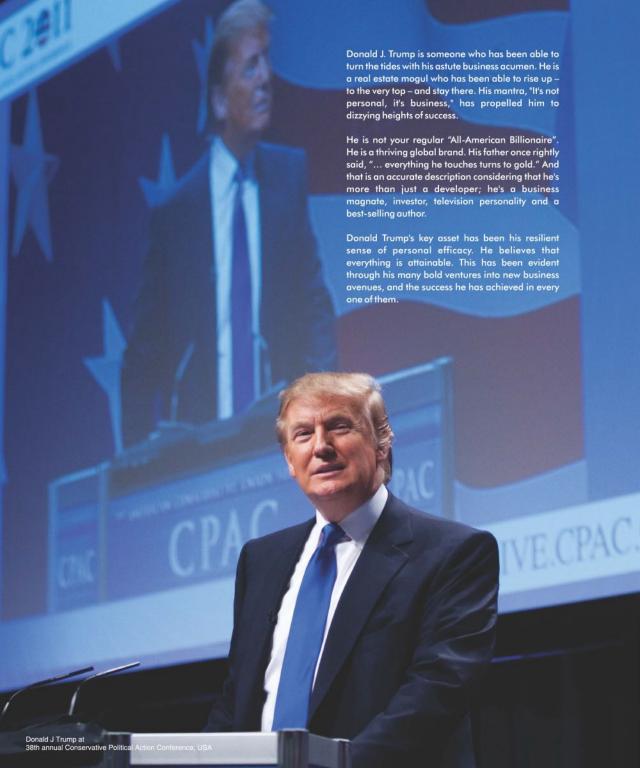
It's about having the bravery to go after what you want and to do it exactly how you want.

Guerrilla mentality may have fast become modus operandi of late, but there is one man who has been practising it all along. He has chutzpah by the bucket load.

Donald J. Trump hardly needs an introduction - the Chairman and President of the Trump Organization is the most recognised businessman in the world.

In celebration of his trip to Pune this August, Meet the City meets Donald Trump.





The Start Of A Star

Trump started his career in an office with his father in Brooklyn, New York developing middle-class rental housing. For five years he learned the ropes from his father and after a successful slew of business deals, Trump turned his attention to Manhattan in 1971. His rise began with the Grand Hyatt in 1980, followed by the iconic 58-storey Trump Towers on Fifth Avenue with its six-storey atrium pink-marble lobby and its 80-foot waterfall. It was then that the Trump Organization, as we know it, came into existence.

His current portfolio includes some unmistakable and iconic structures like Trump World Tower in New York,

Mar-a-Lago in Florida, the Trump Winery in Virginia, and the 17 Trump Golf Courses spread across the world. He recently broke ground on a \$200 million hotel that will transform the Old Post Office Building on Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and the Capitol, expected to open in 2016. "We're going to do a building the likes of which D.C. has never seen. I think it will be one of the fine hotels anywhere in the world, and maybe the finest".

Donald the Conqueror

Real estate may have been his first love, but that hasn't stopped him from dominating in other arenas. He's a two-time Emmy Award-nominated celebrity, and has received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his contribution to television.

With NBC Television Network, Donald Trump owns and has broadcasting rights for the Miss Universe, Miss USA, and Miss Teen USA Pageants. Also on NBC is his most famous television appearance on the no. 1 reality show, The Apprentice, currently in its fourteenth season. The show's trademark catchphrase, "You're fired," quickly became a world-renowned signature of Donald Trump.

Personally involved in everything that his brand represents, the Trump gold standard is recognised around the world. But what is it exactly that makes him a success?







Mentoring Matters

The 68-year-old billionaire, known popularly in the US as "The Donald" has also authored numerous best-selling books. He started with a bang with *The Art of the Deal* in 1987 - considered to be the most influential business book of all time. Since then, Trump has penned books with intrepid titles like Think Like a Champion, Think Big, Never Give Up, Think Like a Billionaire, How to Get Rich, and The Way to the Top amongst others.

Donald Trump serves as a mentor to many a young entrepreneur and these books offer guidance in a straight-forward, instructive and insightful manner.

Destined For Greatness

In 2010, Trump said, with pluck, that he considered himself to be a potential candidate for the 2012 US presidential elections. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll released in March 2011 found Trump leading among potential contenders to be the Republican nominee for the Presidential elections in the United States. His resolute promise? To "make this country great again."

It isn't possible for the media and public to ignore Donald J. Trump. Much like every celebrity, he has had his share

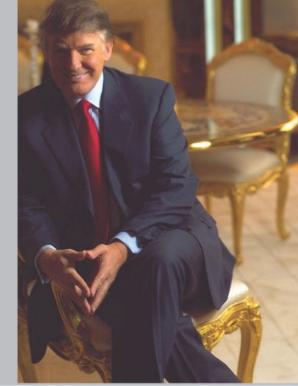


Trump International Hotel and Towe

of controversies, but all of it has only added to his largerthan-life image. Undeniably, he remains the preeminent developer of quality real estate across the globe. He is the archetypal businessman – a deal maker without peer, and an ardent philanthropist.

With a flurry of acquisitions and developments, especially golf courses, Donald Trump is now setting India ablaze. The first Trump-branded project, Trump Towers Pune, developed by Panchshil Realty, brings Donald Trump and his signature golden touch to Indian luxury real estate. Trump Towers Pune is the first project of its calibre in India; it is a synthesis of modern architecture, ultra-luxurious amenities and incomparable service. Already making an indelible mark on Pune's skyline, the Trump Towers Pune is located in the plush locality of Kalyani Nagar. All residences host a 360-degree view of Pune's vibrant cityscape, rubbing shoulders with the historic Aga Khan Palace.

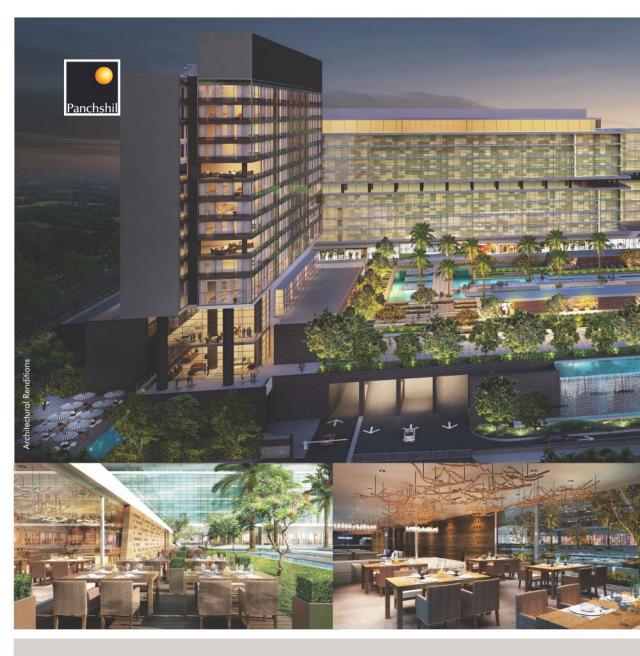
Never one to do anything in half-measure, Donald Trump has burst into India and is here to stay. He has effectively created a brand that stands for something larger than himself and it's only a matter of time before he sweeps India off her feet.





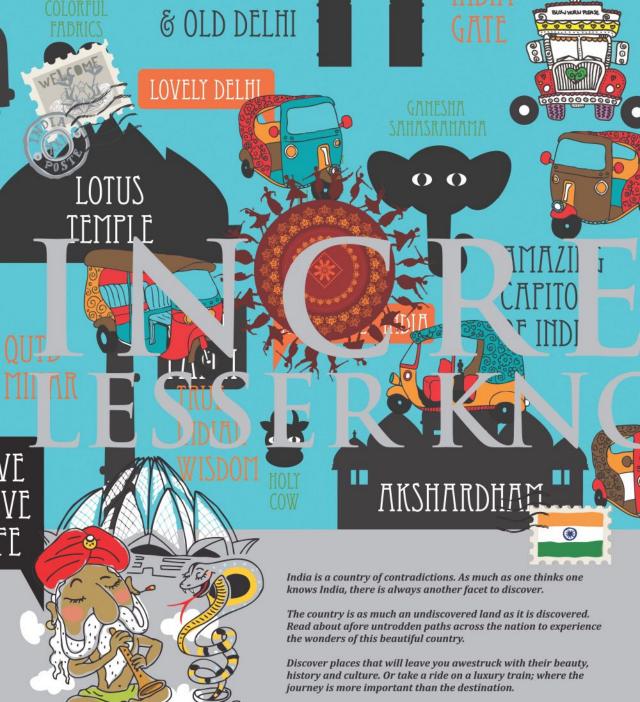


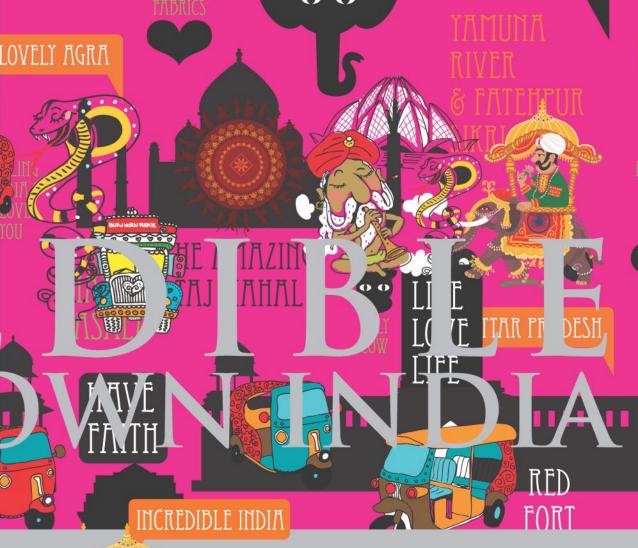




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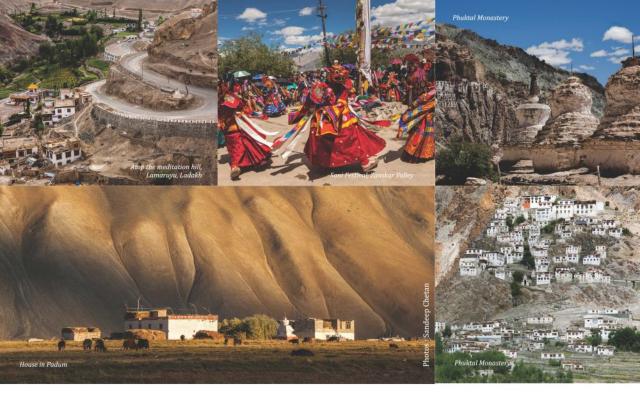




Experience travelling on an elephant vicariously through the words of a notable conservationist. Delve over the mysteries of India which will leave you confused, yet intrigued. Meet the stalwart of Indian fashion who brings a modern sophistication to the traditional Indian crafts. Taste the diverse authentic cuisines that encompass the rich Indian culinary culture.

Meet a tribal artist from Madhya Pradesh, who painted London in his own Gond style and re-introduced us to this age-old city. Get introduced to the most ancient form of martial art that will help you remain fit and learn self-defence.

This is but a glimpse of what is in store for you. This will surely whet your appetite for knowing more about the glorious country that is India.



Zanskar

The wild and breathtaking Zanskar valley, in the Ladakh district of Jammu and Kashmir, is probably the most isolated valley in India. At 5,700 metres above sea level, it is the highest populated valley in the world. Cocooned in the western region of the mighty Himalayan ranges, Zanskar is only accessible at certain times of the year. And this has allowed for these parts to remain pristine and jaw-droppingly beautiful. Needless to say, there aren't many luxuries to be had whilst exploring this rugged terrain.

The capital of Zanskar is its largest village, Padum. This village is the base camp for most visitors as it has the most tourist-facilities in the region. Six kms before Padum, lies the tiny hamlet of Sani. The oldest monastery in Zanskar, Sani Monastery, hosts an annual festival celebrating the victory of good over evil in July. This is a two-day festival filled with music, dance, and colourfully decorated masks.

Zanskar is dotted with monasteries. And visitors are welcome in any Zanskari's home along the way - the 'hill people' of Zanskar are extremely hospitable and you can always expect a place to stay, should you need one, accompanied with a fresh meal and a hot ceramic bowl of Yak butter tea.

Around 8 kms north of Padum lies the Karsha monastery, the largest monastery in Zanskar, set up on the Gelugpa school of thought. Don't miss a trip to Lamayuru, nicknamed 'Moonland' for its golden sand-stone cliffs that appear like the face of the moon. And tucked away in a cave north of Cha village is the most remote monastery of Phuktal.

Zanskar is a trekker's paradise - best viewed on foot. But for those who are looking for a less challenging alternative, it is possible to see some of Zanskar by jeep. The Zanskar river offers thrill-seekers a white-water rafting adverture of a lifetime

How to get there: There are flights from Delhi to Leh. Rent a motorbike or car and drive through Kargil via Rongdum.

When: May - October

Where to Stay: For local flavour, stay with a Zanskari family at there home in any of the villages en route. If you're not one to rough it out, Saboo Resorts in Leh offers a sample of authentic Ladakhi lifestyle with all the modern comforts. Or stay in a luxury tent in Tsermang Eco Camp. These resorts also offer tours into Zanskar.



Andretta

Flanked by the Shivalik hills and the mighty Dhauladhar range, Andretta is a picturesque haven for the creative community in the Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh, a short 20-minute drive from Palampur.

The Irish theatre artiste and environmentalist, Norah Richards moved to Andretta in the 1920s and built an adobe house with a small outdoor theatre which became a centre for creative arts. Prithviraj Kapoor, B.C. Sanyal of the Lalit Kala Akademi, Freda Bedi are a few of the prominent artists that frequented the quaint artist village at that time.

Andretta is now famous in the artistic community for the well-liked Mini and Mary Singh. Mansimran 'Mini' Singh, son of the renowned potter Sardar Gurcharan Singh, and his British wife Mary set up Andretta Pottery and Craft Society in 1983. Their Andretta Pottery Centre continues to provide three-month-long intensive residential courses to promote the art of pottery. The course is inclusive of instruction, lodging, and home-cooked meals.

Dharamsala, home to the Dalai Lama is 48 kms away. Bir-Billing, a Tibetan colony and a popular destination for paragliders is 28 kms away.

When: March-June / mid September-November

How to get there: There are overnight buses from ISBT Delhi to Palampur. The nearest railway station is Pathankot (120 kms away). Or you may take a flight to Dharamsala or Amritsar and drive down (around 235 kms away.)

Where to stay: The Andretta Pottery centre offers home-stays. Or you can choose to live in a very cosy and restored traditional Himachali mud house called The Mirage. This cottage is run by New Zealander Denis Haarap and his French wife.



Living Roots Bridges

Where would you find 100% natural bridges that are grown, and not made? The Khasi community in Meghalaya have through generations – by means of 'organic engineering' – turned the roots of Ficus elastic (Indian rubber tree) into a bridge over the river. Stones and earth fill the gaps between the roots resulting in an organic mesh that forms the foundation of the bridge.

A trek to the Wahthyllong Bridge from the town of Mawlynnong in the East Khasi Hills is made worthwhile by the view of the river gushing below, high tree canopies and the distant plains situated below the East Khasi Hills. Mawlynnong, named the cleanest town in Asia by Discover India magazine in 2003, is a quaint little town 90 kms from Shillong on the Indo-Bangladesh border. The Umshiang Double-Decker root bridge in Nongriat village is yet another bridge that leaves you amazed, the 2000 steps you have to traipse to reach it, notwithstanding!

Nearby attractions: For the adventurous at heart, the caves in Meghalaya are a sight to behold. Krem Mawkhyrdop is a famous Buddhist cave near Cherrapunji near the hamlet of Mawmluh. The cave at 4503 m, is the fourth longest cave in Indian sub-continent. Krem Liat Prah (31 km) is the largest cave in the Indian subcontinent in the nearby Jaintia Hills.



When: All year round, especially the monsoon season that typically lasts from May to October.

How to get there: By air to Umroi Airport (35 kms from Shillong) and by road to the towns in the Khasi Hills.

Where to stay: Stay in Shillong and go on daytrips to see the bridges and the caves. Try hotel Ri Kynjai with its upturned-boat rooftops.



Wayanad

The least populous region in Kerala (only 3.79% urbanised,) Wayanad, was born as the 12th district of the stat on 1 November 1980. It is an ancient land steeped in history and folklore, and carpeted with dense rainforests and aromatic tea and coffee plantations.

Wayanad's name has evolved with the times, formerly 'Mayakshetra', then 'Mayanad' and finally a combination of Vayal (paddy field) and Naad (land), Wayanad - the land of paddy fields.

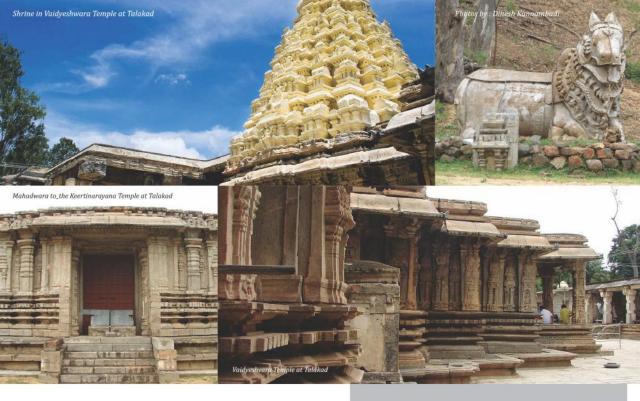
There is archaeological evidence that shows that these forests have been inhabited for more than 3000 years. The pictorial writings on the walls of the two caves of Edakkal are remnants of the New Stone Age civilization. A large part of Wayanad is covered by coffee plantations. At the same time it is home to many endangered species of flora such as rosewood, anjili (Artocarpus), mullumurikku (Erthrina), several species of caussia, and many more, all preserved to give shade to the coffee plants. Wayanad is also home to a large aboriginal population in Kerala such as the Paniyas, Adiyars, Kattunaikkan, Kurumas and Kuruchiyas. In fact, more than half of the population of Wayanad consists of tribes who have a rich cultural legacy of music, dance, ornaments, and handicraft.

This region is bordered by the Nilgiris and national parks - the well-know Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary is connected to Bandhipur National Park in Karnataka and Madumalai sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. It has been brought under the Project Elephant and is home to some 900-odd wild elephants. Other residents of this reserve are monkeys, panthers, tigers, civet cats, deer, bears and bison. One of the best ways to explore the sanctuary is on elephant back, which can easily be arranged by the Forest Department. There are plenty of tourist destinations in Wayanad such as the Pookote Lake, Chembra Peak, Sentinel Rock Falls, and Kuruva Island.

How to get there: The nearest airport is Karipur airport, 120 kms away. The nearest railway station is 96 kms away at Kozhikode.

When: November to May

Where to stay: For a little adventure and to experience the natural beauty of Wayanad, choose between Tranquil Resort which has luxury Tree Houses, and Grassroots which has well-appointed luxury Swiss tents.



Talakad

Interested in history and mystery? This is one location where you'll get both. A Cauvery riverside sand-covered town in South Karnataka that has mentions as early as 247-266 A.D.

The town is riddled with sand dunes that move according to the winds to hide and show the hidden temples and houses. The town is recorded to have at least 30 temples that can be seen.

The five main temples are of Sri Vaideshwara, Sri Maruleshwara, Sri Muduhuthore, Sri Arakeshwara and Sri Pathaleshwara – the five avatars of Lord Shiva. On the day of amavasya in the Lunar month of Kartik, a five day festival is held in honour of these five. The festival beckons devotees from afar to worship the panchalingas on this auspicious day.

The sand dunes' presence is a mystery in this otherwise green covered area. History, or myth, states that the Mysore king Raja Wodeyar so desired the beautiful jewellery of Rani Alamelamma, the second wife of Sri Ranga Raya, the king of Vijaynagar that when Sri Ranga Raya passed away, Raja Wodeyar tried to seize the jewels. But legend has it that the

queen, along with her jewellery, jumped into the Cauvery and placed a curse on Talakad to be covered with sand.

The Mysore Palace is a must-visit. Around Mysore, you'll find a plethora of destinations for wildlife and nature to historical. Choose your calling and head out.

When: All year round; The Lunar month of Kartik is ideal since this is the time of festivities.

How to get there: By air or rail to Mysore (35 kms away) and by bus or cab to Talakad.

Where to stay: In Mysore, and take a day trip to Talakad. Mysore has an array of options available for accommodation. Try The Kings Sanctuary, an Eco-friendly resort.



30-feet-wide and 120-feet-long, Vihigaon Falls offers the daring adventure-enthusiast a thrilling excuse to step out during the monsoons. This lesser-known attraction of Maharashtra is tucked away deep into the moist deciduous forests in the Western Ghats. Vihigaon is a small hamlet located in the Shahapur taluka of Thane district, 18 kms away from Kasara, Maharashtra.

If you find rappelling an exciting sport, and you're up for something a little more challenging, you should give waterfall-rappelling a go (aided with proper equipment and guidance, of course). The gushing water brings with it a blast of adrenaline and a surge of joy.

Visitors at Vihigaon Falls can partake in activities like rappelling, down climbing and river tracing. It is a refreshing and exhilarating experience that is a must-do for any adventure junkie travelling through Maharashtra.

Jaivilas Palace in Jawahar, Dhamma Giri Vipassana Centre in Igatpuri, the highest peak in Maharashtra: Kalsubai, and Bhandardhara Dam are other places you could visit when here.

When: Mid-June to September end.

How to get there: Vihigaon is 124 kms (a 2-3 hr drive) from Mumbai and can be reached via NH3. The nearest railway station is Kasara which is 6.5 km away from Vihigaon.

Where to stay: In Mumbai, and take a day trip to the falls.



Bera

When you think Rajasthan, you think desert sands and arid land. Visit Bera in Pali district, and you might think otherwise. Bera is a beautiful bio diverse destination, that celebrates human-animal co-existence in the best possible way, despite the comparatively hostile terrain. The whole place is filled with enchanting sounds and fascinating visuals; it is a place which has retained its pristine beauty, where one can experience the true, unadulterated glory that nature has to offer.

Bera boasts of fascinating wildlife, like leopards, hyenas, crocodiles, and even migratory birds such as pelicans and demoiselle cranes. The Jawai Bandh, which is the largest man-made dam in Western Rajasthan on river Jawai, hosts the Sarus cranes that dot the horizon like beautiful musical notes. The flora at Bera includes long-lived evergreen trees such as Mango, Palm, Tamarind, Bhelpatra, Neem, Sanawan and Ashoka.

The local Rabari tribe, known for their beautiful embroidery and textile tradition, survives primarily on an income

generated through livestock, wool, milk and leather.

Visit Bera to witness wildlife and rural cultures of Rajasthan from close quarters or immerse yourself in the pristine beauty of the many lakes and the famous Jawai Bandh.

How to get there: The nearest rail station is Jawai Bandh. From here, the drive to Bera takes 20-30 minutes. The nearest airports are Udaipur and Jodhpur both of which are a good 4-5 hours drive from Bera.

When: Ideal months to visit are from October to March.

Where to Stay: Castle Bera or Leopard's Lair Resort are two luxury resorts to choose from, both of which are housed in the renovated Fort Bera.



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A lot has been said about must-see places and offbeat adventures; luxurious spas and the most sought-after resorts.

Many words have been devoted to the hottest destinations.

In this article, Rashmi Alevoor delves into the real essence of travel-the beauty of the journey $\label{eq:control} \mathbf{i}$

THE ROMANCE





Luxury train travel in India conjures up sepia-toned images of a bygone era, of erstwhile Maharajas and of sheer opulence. They evoke an alluring sense of romance, nostalgia, and wonder that is rarely found in any other form of travel. The trains carve through the lands in a leisurely manner and offer passengers an intimate glimpse into India. Their cargo of sojourners soak in all of India's rustic beauty, hassle-free, without having to sacrifice modern comforts.

Visitors get to view the mighty subcontinent in its raw splendour. Over 65,000 kilometres of tracks weave their way through the country, giving these trains easy access to most parts of India. They promise rich rewards including a front-row, panoramic view of the changing coastal and inland scenery.

The elegance of travel has all but disappeared in today's frantic world, with travellers increasingly seeking the quickest way to reach their destination. Luxury tour operators attempt to recapture the romance of travel by celebrating the journey rather than merely the destination.

And what a beautiful ode to the journey it is - these trains boast of mahogany-panelled dining cars that offer sumptuous gournet meals, served on the finest of china: the best of wines served in sparkling, hand-cut crystal stemware. The deluxe sleeping cars are impeccably well-appointed with en-suite cabins that offer every imaginable convenience and comfort. "The standards and expectations of rail passengers just keep going up," says Eleanor Flagler Hardy, President of the Society of International Railway Travelers. And luxury train tour operators are pulling out all the stops to meet these escalating standards - each of them constantly upping the ante on luxury. Spa and Massage cars replete with a steam room and gym, well-stocked libraries, plush bars, and meticulous attendants attending to their discerning patrons' every conceivable need.

Rail tourism also offers passengers another intangible luxury. It allows them to escape the chaos of airport transfers and the exhausting and unrelenting traffic on India's mottled roads. The all-inclusive and tastefully crafted itinerary on board a luxury train, fitted with every designer comfort, offers the well-heeled traveller a far more desirable alternative.

In India there are over six 'Desirable Alternatives.' These exquisite trains offer unique and tailored cultural experiences across the country. There's Palace on Wheels, Royal Rajasthan, and Heritage on Wheels in the North. The Deccan Odyssey runs largely through the West. The Golden

Chariot tours the sunny landscapes of South India. The newest and the most expensive Maharajas' Express covers Central and North India with a seemingly special focus on exclusive experiences like an Elephant Polo Match in Jaipur, high tea at Laxmi Vilas Palace with the royal family of Baroda, and spa therapies at the grand 120-year-old Usha Kiran Palace in Gwalior.

PALACE ON WHEELS

The oldest of this smart set, *Palace on Wheels*, was India's first luxury train and is most revered even today. It was ceremoniously launched on the country's Republic Day, January 26, in the year 1982. Originally meant for the rulers of the princely states of Rajputana and Gujarat, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Viceroy of British India, the Palace on Wheels is the pride of Rajasthan. Adorned in traditional Rajasthani décor and packed with every comfort facility, the train has been voted 'World's 4th Best Luxurious Train' in year 2010 by global travel magazine Condé Nast. The tour starts in heritage-rich Jaipur, popularly known as the 'Pink City.' Here, guests are treated to an assortment of palaces and forts, the most notable being the aweinspiring Hawa Mahal. Decorated with intricate latticework and constructed entirely from red and pink sandstone, the

structure has 953 tiny windows called *jharokhas*. Interestingly, these windows had once allowed the royal ladies (who had to obey strict *purdah*) to observe the outside world without being noticed. Apart from such historic landmarks, the guests are introduced to exotic shopping destinations like Gandhi and Baapu Bazaar where they can purchase everything from a pair of traditional Jaipuri *jootis* and Bandhani-printed saris to sparkling gemstones and silverware. The train then chugs along through the former princely states of Sawai Madhopur, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, and Bharatpur. The last stop on this poetic journey through Rajasthan is very aptly the most iconic monument of love, the Taj Mahal in Agra.

THROUGH ROYAL RAJASTHAN

For those who would like to see a little more of India, the newer Royal Rajasthan on Wheels takes you through Rajasthan and also stops at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, famous for the erotic sculptures carved onto its temple walls, and the holy city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, described by Mark Twain as being "older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend and looks twice as old as all of them put together."





WANDERING HERITAGE

The newest luxury offering of the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation and Indian Railways is the Heritage on Wheels. This train is ideal for those travellers who have developed a taste for the offbeat. It tours through the largely unexplored regions of Bikaner and Shekhawati of Rajasthan. Shekhawati is rich in history and drenched in colourful Rajasthani culture. It is called the 'Open Art Gallery of Rajasthan' as it has the highest concentration of frescoes in the world.

THE ODYSSEY

With comprehensive itineraries that cover most of the many sights of India, is the Deccan Odyssey. The trains have tours that include the grandeur sights of the northern states of Rajasthan, Agra, and the like, as well as the "Jewels of the Deccan," heritage sites in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Apart from this, Deccan Odyssey offers planned devotional excursions titled "Soul Quest" and "Spiritual Sahyadri" that guide visitors on a hallowed journey into the very fabric of the nation. The train visits the Trimbakeshwar temple in Nashik and the holy city of Shirdi among other sites.

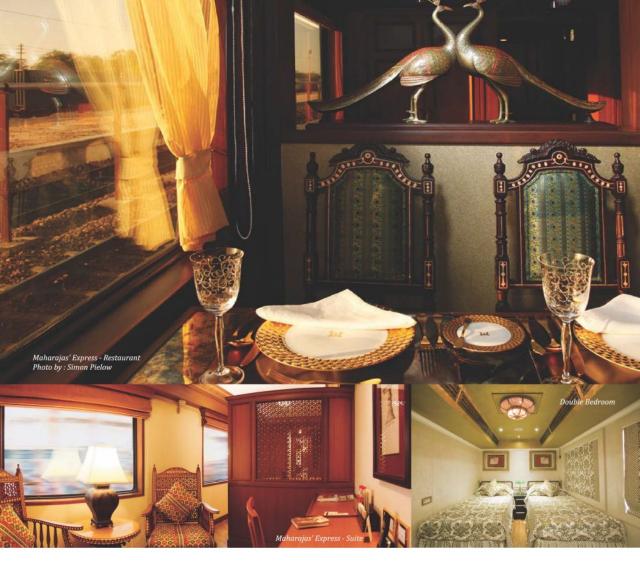
GOLDEN CHARIOT

Named after the magnificent Stone Chariot at Vittala Complex in Hampi, the Golden Chariot lives up to every expectation. Each of its 19 rail cars is named after a ruling dynasty of South India such as Hoysala, Rastrakota, Chaulakya, and Vijayanagar. The exquisite interiors of these coaches are inspired by the aesthetics of the early 20th-century Hoysala and Halebid temples and also the extravagant luxury of the Mysore Palace. The Golden Chariot deservedly won the award for 'Asia's Leading Luxury Train 2013' at the annually held, World Travel Awards.

MAHARAJA EXPRESS

Another big winner at the World Travel Awards that was held in Doha, Qatar in 2013 was the Maharajas' Express. The luxury tour operator emerged victorious for the second consecutive year in the 'World's Leading Train category', surpassing the likes of the iconic Venice Simplon Orient-Express, Belmond Hiram Bingham, and South Africa's The Blue Train. And rightly so.

India's first pan-Indian super luxury train, Maharajas' Express is the last word in elegance. It is touted to be the



most expensive, most luxurious, biggest, and most glamorous train to hit the rails. This statement may seem exaggerated and packed with superlatives but few (if any) who have been on this train would disagree.

With each of its 24 carriages named after a precious stone, palatial suites fitted with marble bath tubs, discreet but immaculately attentive service, and an opportunity to dine with Indian royalty, the Maharajas' Express promises to deliver an incomparable experience. The ultra-luxurious stay on the train is so utterly rewarding that its destination almost doesn't seem to matter.

There are few things as enriching as the novelty of visiting an antique land, the gentle rhythm of the rails, and the indescribable comfort of journeying on a luxury train.

And if we were to take a leaf out of Robert Louis Stevenson's book, we'd learn that the purpose of travel was "not to go anywhere, but to go"; to "travel for travel's sake."

For, as the astute poet and novelist succinctly put it, "The great affair is to move."



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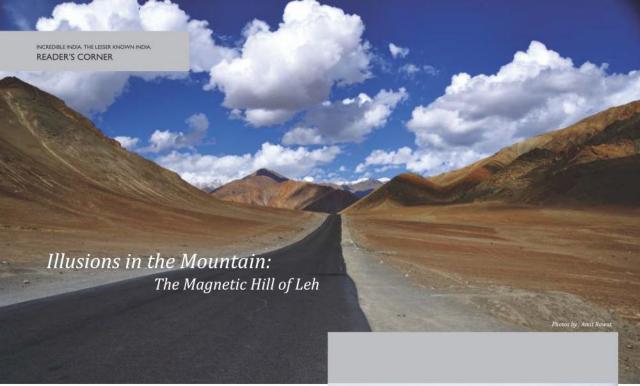


It is a long held belief that India is an exotic land of mystery and ancient civilisations. It is a country with a lot of soul - rich in folklore and tradition.

If you've ever wondered about the story behind the Magnetic Hill in Leh, and the world famous *Bhut jolokia*, or the curious phenomenon of "Fish Medicine", your search stops here.

Join Chaitanya Desh
pande as he attempts to uncover but a few of the many mysteries of India.
 $\,$

MYSTERIES OF LESSER KNOWN INDIA



Ladakh is a Buddhist ex-kingdom. Colorful prayer flags flutter in the strong winds against the backdrop of jagged, arid mountains. Ladakh is picture-perfect, and it draws thrill-seekers by the numbers every year. Some seek the quiet and solitude, some come here riding a thousand kilometres seeking vindication as they soak in the desolate landscape. For all of Ladakh's wonder, the most curious of all phenomena is the Magnetic Hill.

Located 30 kms from Leh on the Srinagar - Ladakh National Highway, at a height of 14,000 feet above mean sea level, the Magnetic Hill pulls cars uphill and forces aircrafts to gain more altitude to avoid strong magnetic interference. Some say this is because of high magnetic fields but locals, especially guides, are convinced that supernatural forces are at work here.

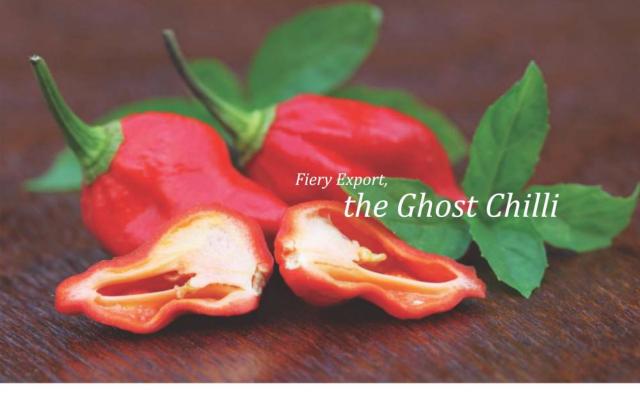
It's almost impossible difficult to miss this hill. A BRO (Border Roads Organization) sign invites you to stop your car over a square marked on the road, switch off the ignition and step out. The car actually starts moving on its own at speeds of 10-20 kmph. This isn't very surprising as you're travelling downhill. But turn the car in the opposite direction it starts moving uphill! Yet, this is not as unexplainable as other mysteries of India and can be rationalised. There's no known magnetic field here in this region, and yet it's called the Magnetic Hill.

The reason why cars are pulled up is because they are actually being pulled down! The topography creates an



optical illusion. The eyes are met with vast unbroken stretches of land; in fact, there's hardly a horizon. This means that in the absence of a reference point, the downward slope on the Magnetic Hill becomes imperceptible. Objects one would normally assume to be more-or-less perpendicular to the ground, like trees, may actually be leaning and offsetting the visual reference. Of course, there are no trees here to tell you which way is up. Quite simply, if the horizon cannot be seen or is not at level, false perspective plays a role because of which it looks as if the car is pulled up, when in fact, it's going downhill!

Gravity is responsible for this, not magnetism. But why spoil the fun of experiencing something magical?



For everything that India has given to the world, nothing compares to the cruel fascination of the bhut jolokia, a thumb-sized chilli pepper with frightening potency and a superlative rating: the spiciest chilli in the world. A dab of its paste, smaller than a child's teardrop burns the mouth, setting off pinpricks on the forehead and an after-burn that lasts for 15 minutes! It's a chilli so deadly, its hotness so unimaginable that anyone who eats it will end up "dying" - therefore the descriptive title 'Ghost Chilli'.

It's a potent pepper, straight from North-east India with a global recognition: the world's hottest chilli pepper! It only grows in Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland where it has been used, and loved, for generations. It is eaten as a spice and used as a cure for stomach troubles and, absurdly, as a way to fight the crippling summer heat. Locals have spent lifetimes eating this pepper with its strange name and vicious bite.

The bhut jolokia is also known as naga jolokia, nagamorich, bih jolokia, and even as red Naga chilli. The name bhut jolokia comes from the Bhutia tribe who used to originally bring it down to the valleys of Assam for trade. The translation "ghost chilli", though apt is erroneous.

In 2007, Guinness World Records certified that bhut jolokia was the world's hottest chilli pepper, 401.5 times hotter than Tabasco sauce. However, as of 2012, it was superseded by the Trinidad Moruga Scorpion", and on December 26, 2013, the Guinness World Records rated the "Carolina Reaper" the

world's hottest pepper, moving the ghost chilli to third place. Yet, locals insist outsiders shouldn't even try eating it. It's an all-out assault on the senses. The smallest specks can flavour a sauce so intense, it's barely edible; the hotness is overbearing over every other flavour.

Locals believe that one does not simply eat a bhut jolokia, and leave!

How hot is the bhut jolokia?

For the record, spiciness comes from a chemical compound known as "capsaicin". The Scoville scale is the measurement of the pungency (spicy heat) of chilli peppers or other spicy foods and reported in Scoville Heat Units (SHU).

A New Mexico green chilli contains about 1,500 SHUs and an average jalapeno measures at about 10,000 SHUs. The *bhut* jolokia, at 1,001,304 Scoville Heat Units (SHU) is a scorcher!

Beyond culinary

The bhut jolokia is world-renowned. Several Twitter accounts and recipe blogs exist dedicated to this fiery chilli. Yet beyond the obvious is the Indian Army's agenda to weaponise it! The world's hottest chilli will be one of the "non-lethal" ways to stop terrorism. Chilli grenades will be used to immobilize suspects. A step ahead is the DRDO's aim to produce bhut jolokia-based aerosol sprays to be used by women against attackers and for the police to control and disperse mobs.

Curious Cure

Every June, asthma sufferers gather in Hyderabad, India's IT & Tech powerhouse to swallow live fish. This is a fact propagated by the Bathini Goud family, who claim to cure asthma – for freel Live fish dipped in prasadam the treatment used to cure asthma and other respiratory ailments. It's a bizarre cure for a condition that affects nearly 300 million people globally.

It began in 1845, when Veeranna Goud, a charitable man who gave bread and toddy to labourers encountered a holy man. Veeranna claimed this man gave him the formula to cure asthma on the condition that it must be administered for free. On agreeing, he was given a secret formula of herbs and the holy man blessed a well to use in the treatment. No one knows what the formula is: it remains a closely-guarded family secret.

Since then, every year, members of the Goud family churn the secret herbal mix in the waters of the blessed well and spend a day giving it out to whoever is in need. The ingredients are collected months in advance and mixed the day before using water from the blessed well. Preparations are elaborate as are the rituals surrounding it. The day of the treatment is defined each year by astrologers: MrigasiraKarti, the first day of monsoon.

Doodh Bowli, near Hyderabad's Charminar is the seat of the family and sees approximately 50,000 people come from all over India come here on the appointed day.

With increasing numbers, the Goud family now administers the medicine in a stadium thanks to the help of the local administration. Several volunteers with badges saying "Mrigasira Asthma Fish Trust" distribute tokens, aid the patients and even help the police to maintain law and order each year.

Small bazaars spring up outside the stadium from where the long queues begin. Since the fish is critical to the treatment, the drill is to buy fish outside, carry it in a clay pot of water and take it with you inside. Needless to say, thousands come flocking for this novel cure from across India and business booms.

The medicine, herbal paste, is mixed with the well water and is pushed into the mouth of a live murrel fish which is then ritualistically put in the patient's mouth and it wiggles it way down the throat. Many pinch their noses, tip their heads back and close their eyes as the fish wiggles its way down; others gag, most swallow with fervent prayers and children have it forced down their throats.





The basis of the cure claimed is that the fish as it moves down the gut, helps clear the phlegm as it beats its tail and fins. Every patient receives three extra doses - without the fish - to take home and to be taken on appointed days of the year with a strict diet to follow. Patients are advised not to eat or drink anything from four hours before and two hours after.

The fish medicine, the family says must be taken for three continuous years! Only this will ensure that the asthma is cures permanently, they say.

Many claim it has worked for them thus adding to the legend of the Goud family and their cure. Activists oppose this ritual and label it "unscientific" and "superstitious". Violations of human rights and hygiene issues are also cited, but the Goud family rejects it all. The fact remains, crowds appear for a cure. So much so that the Indian government arranges special trains for the "Fish Medicine" festival every year!

With pinched noses and watery eyes, thousands line up to swallow the fish with the promise of a cure. The yellow paste and the fish may just in fact be placebos, but faith remains the strongest remedy.

River

Saraswati

In the Rig Veda, the River Saraswati has been eulogised as "best mother, best river, best goddess". A fierce and roaring river in her full grandeur, she flowed from "mountains to the sea", nourishing lands along the way. With the passing centuries, she gradually faded from people's memories and her history became legend. Today the legend is the myth of modern India's "miracle river".

The Vedas are full of tantalising hymns about Saraswati as the life-stream of the people of the Vedic and the pre-Vedic Age. But when or how did this once-mighty river disappear is a mystery.

For 2,000 years, between 6,000 and 4,000 B.C.E., the Saraswati flowed as a great river. According to geological and glacial studies, its origin lay in Bandarpunch (literally, "tail of the monkey") Massif in western Garhwal division of the Himalayas and it traversed the plains of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, to finally join the Arabian Sea at the Great Rann of Kutch.

Saraswati's march to oblivion commenced around 3,000 B.C.E. when a series of catastrophic tectonic events in the Siwalik domain severed its glacial connections and cut off the supply of glacier meltwaters to this river. As a result, Saraswati became non-perennial and dependent on monsoon rains and was eventually obliterated.

Some say she's invisible today, meeting the Ganga and Yamuna at Allahabad to form the cusp of Hinduism's holiest spot. Many others believe she still flows underground, unseen to the eyes. For most part, the Saraswati is better known for its divine namesake - the goddess Saraswati - the Hindu goddess of Learning. The goddess' connection to water is part of the enigma that surrounds the river.

Through satellite photography, scientists have mapped the course of an enormous river that once flowed through the north western region of India. The images show that it was 8 kms wide in places and that it dried up over 4,000 years ago. Deep in the western Rajasthan desert giant drilling rigs probed deep into the dry, arid earth to pull out undisturbed layers of soil and sediment for scientists to study and test. Researchers believe that one of the ancient buried channels may have been be the river Saraswati.

Carbon dating reveals that the water found is 4,000 years old; precisely the time period when the Saraswati vanished. The modern-day quest for the Saraswati was first ignited by the English engineer C.F. Oldham in 1893 when he was riding his horse along the dry bed of a seasonal Rajasthan river called the Ghaggar. It struck him that there isn't any



reason as to why the puny Ghaggar should have a bed up to 3 km wide unless it occupied the former course of a much larger river possibly that of the Saraswati. In fact, as early as in 1760, a map from The Library Atlas published by Bryce, Collier & Schmitz showed the Saraswati (spelt 'Soorsuty') joining the Ghaggar ('Guggur') in Punjab. Most agree that the modern-day Ghaggar is the emaciated remnant of the Saraswati.

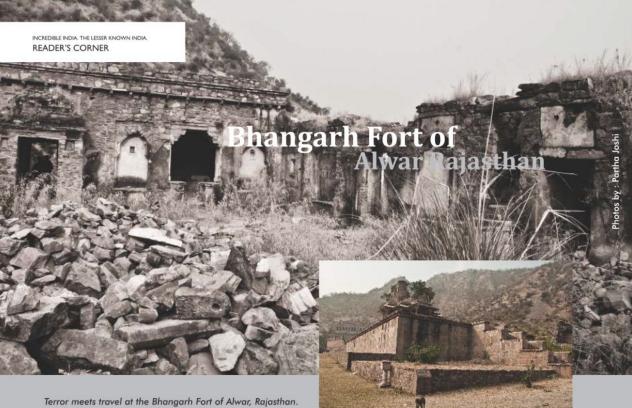
New findings strengthen the idea that, what is referred to as the Indus Valley Civilization was largely located on the banks of and in the proximity of the Saraswati. The study titled 'Fluvial Landscapes of the Harappan Civilization' supports this view and declares that waning of monsoons spurred both the rise and fall of the Harappans! The sudden change in the course of a river as wide as the Saraswati, would invariably lead to flooding in certain areas as its tributaries change their course, and a drought in the long run as the waters of the mighty river start dwindling and are unable to sustain the vast cities built on its banks.

But like all theories, this one is contested as well.

All theories and evidences still offer little help to solve the mystery of the Saraswati: if the Vedic hymns' description of a river flowing from the mountain to the sea and located between the Yamuna and the Sutlej is to be considered, then the Ghaggar is the sole candidate for being the Saraswati.

Yet, archaeological and paleontological signs suggest that an epoch of Indo-Aryan history does not fit with the conventional scenario of Saraswati's existence, references, and decline.

Ultimately, the mystery of the Saraswati's existence remains hinged on a clearer grasp of India's ancient history. What is true however, is that in the absence of the Saraswati, the Ganga took over precedence in the lives of the people of the north of the Indian subcontinent, and became the goddess we all know today.



Ierror meets travel at the Bhangarh Fort of Alwar, Rajasthan. Situated at the edge of the Sariska forest in Rajasthan, Bhangarh's status as India's most haunted place is uncontested. Ominous signboards displayed prominently by the ASI warn visitors, "Entering the borders of Bhangarh after sunset is strictly prohibited". Yet tourists throng this place to enjoy the chills that a good ghost story brings.

What's the story?

Legend has it that this 16th century town was home to a tantrik (an occultist) called Singhia. He fell hopelessly in love with Princess Ratnavati. Knowing he could never have her, Singhia resorted to the dark arts, to entrap her. He cast a spell on the oil that was bought by the princess' maid. If the spell worked, on touching the oil, Ratnavati would submit herself to him.

Locals say that Ratnavati herself was skilled at the dark arts and she found out about his plan. She threw the bottle of oil away and it happened to fall on a stone. As soon as the oil touched the stone, the spell took effect and it rolled its way to Singhia and crushed him in a mortal embrace. The dying Singhia then cursed Ratnavati, the royal family, and indeed, the kingdom to death with no rebirth.

Rebirth is an important component of Hindu beliefs, and the entrapment of the soul is a terrible curse. And so, the kingdom withered away and the souls of these remain confined to the palace at Bhangarh today.

That might be more legend than fact, but Bhangarh is still a charming ruin to visit. Bhangarh is well-planned city and serves as an excellent model for modern town planning. Yet, strangely, there are no roofs on the houses, shops and even on the palace. Amazingly, for a haunted place, Bhangarh is littered with beautifully carved temples of Gopinath, Shiva (Someshwar), Mangla Devi and Keshava Rai that have survived the passage of time and are a must-see for visitors. The dancer's haveli, the ruins of the city, and scattered boulders with carvings are a great sight to behold. Close to the ruins of the palace is the chhatri that is said to be the home of Singhia, the tantrik.

The Tantrik-Ratnawati myth continues to fascinate everyone. Many claim witness to paranormal activities in the area: the sound of music and the tinkling of anklets heard in the dead of the night, footsteps and apparitions walking on the walls. Some even claim to find unearthly spots in the pictures taken at Bhangarh!

All of this could be a well-imagined plot to draw the tourist numbers since Bhangarh remains one of those green belts of Rajasthan that are pleasing to the eye. Yet, believers or nonbelievers, Bhangarh isn't for the faint-hearted.

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The King of the Underworld

In Gond belief, the world below is ruled by the earthworm.

He found this true in the case of the London Underground. So he has depicted the tube as the earthworm. The snakes symbolize the crisscrossing routes of the train and the spiders (sitting on their webs) denote the different stations. The smiling man with the guitar is his ode to the many buskers Bhajju saw in the London Underground. He liked how relaxed they appeared, spreading happiness through their music.

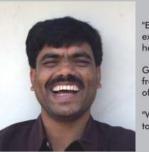
 $\label{thm:linear} \emph{His hotel was at King's Cross and so he has included the King's Cross stop sign in the picture.}$

A TOUCH OF the crissmote the INNOCENCE

Rashmi Alevoor tells the coming-of-age story of a man who finds his true calling. More than just a story, it is a lesson in humility; a parable of art and tradition.

This is the evolutionary journey of Bhajju Shyam.





"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." Pablo Picasso often extolled the virtues of possessing a childlike sense of wonder. He painted objects as he *thought* them, not as he saw them.

Gond tribal artist, Bhajju Shyam would wholeheartedly agree with Picasso's technique. His own art comes from a place of unbridled innocence and vulnerability. He draws from a deep and sincere source, so that all of his paintings appear to be an honest expression of his heart.

"We (Gonds) are not interested in reality - only in how things are imagined in the mind, and our paintings try to show what is in the *mind*'s eye."

THE BIRTH OF AN ARTIST

Born in 1971 in the Gond tribal village of Patangarh, in the forests of central India, Bhajju Shyam, hadn't set out to be an artist. His brush with art began at an early age. Bhajju recalls, "My mother painted the walls of our home, as is our tradition, and she would ask me to paint the parts she couldn't reach." As is with many other tribal groups today, Bhajju Shyam's family grappled with economic hardship. They sent their children to school but couldn't afford to put them all through full term, "One of us had books, the other would have a uniform and the third would have a bag. If we were all one child, we would make it through. But we were three and there wasn't enough to go around."

At his age of 16, Bhajju Shyam left home to earn a living in Bhopal. He was employed as a night watchman until he was called on to work with his uncle, the renowned Gond artist, Jangarh Singh Shyam. Bhajju worked as an apprentice, filling out patterns in his uncle's designs. But even from within those dots and dashes his talent shone through. With his uncle's encouragement, Bhajju spent the next 10 years wielding his brush and honing his craft. It was there and then that Bhajju Shyam began identifying himself as an artist.





LONDON CALLING

In 2002, Bhajju and another Gond artist, Ram Singh Urveti, were commissioned to paint the interiors of an Indian restaurant in the London suburb of Islington. This was the first time he was to fly in an airplane and Bhajju was like a sponge - soaking in each and every sensory experience he possibly could. He marvelled at the clinical nature of an airport, the scores of passengers walking in a file. And as the plane took off, he was astonished - he thought it to be as likely as a heavy elephant that had sprouted wings and started to fly.

This is but one of the many whimsical images that sprung to Bhajju's mind during his two-month sojourn in London. Fortunately for art aficionados everywhere, Bhajju Shyam was to meet Gita Wolf and Sirish Rao from Tara Books at a workshop in Chennai in 2003. A few conversations later, the idea of chronicling his London experiences in an illustrated book began to take shape. The London Jungle Book is a disarming visual travelogue; an extraordinary record of the tribal artist's reaction to his experiences in London. He captures cultural differences in his symbolic drawings, putting the new world into familiar context.



"I saw Big Ben, and I thought: so this is their temple of time. It's beautiful, and carefully built because they are very careful about time here... Everyone checks their watches all the time. I have a watch too, but my symbol of time is still the Gond one..." And so the Big Ben is rendered beautifully as the Gond symbol of time - a rooster. Simple yet profound.

He depicts the London underground as an earthworm.
"In Gond belief, there is another world below this one, and I discovered there is such a world in London as well,

When Two Times Meet The Big Ben is transformed into the Gond symbol of time, the rooster.

Leaving My World Behind

The artist has drawn his own face wearing a "50-50 expression." Excited at the prospect of travel and exploration but sad at the thought of leaving the familiar behind. The symbols are all of the many thoughts running through his mind (depicted as tangled in his hair.)

though different from the Gond one. In Gond stories, we say the world below is ruleed by the earthworm. So I have thought of the underground as London's world below the earth, and the tube as the earthworm that rules it."

Bhajju was careful to include symbols that meant something to Londoners as well. "Without that, my paintings will have no meaning. And this worries me a lot - in my traditional work I know when it is good and when it is bad. But in this new one, I won't be able to judge my own paintings and I don't want to do bad work." It is this wide-eyed sincerity and humility that makes Bhajju Shyam endearing to the Western world.

GROUNDED IN TRADITION

The many exhibitions across the world and the fame and acclaim have not changed him. His work has been exhibited in the UK, Germany, Holland and Russia. He has won numerous awards, the State award by Hasta Shilpa Vikas Nigam for The Origin of Man and the Earth in 2002 and the State award for 'Best Indigenous Artist' in 2001 among others. "It hasn't changed our everyday lives." He remains unaffected in Bhopal with his wife and two children.

Over the last six years, Shyam has collaborated with Tara Books to create a range of award-winning books for children. His art serves as a reminder to us all - the world is a fascinating place full of magic and mystery. We must attempt to view it with our mind's eye, and rediscover joy by awakening our inner child.



With a brand philosophy called 'India Modern', one can expect a beautiful marriage of modern styles and traditional designs.

'India Modern' marries contemporary design, with the traditional Indian form of draping. Combined with western notions of cut, construction and finish, Indian heritage and craftsmanship is brought to the forefront.

Designer extraordinaire

Having founded his design studio in 1990, Tarun Tahiliani's distinctive signature has since evolved as a fusion of textile detail, refined luxury, and meticulous tailoring. The Tarun Tahiliani Design Studio creates couture, diffusion and prêt-a-porter. These are Indian in their sensibility, yet international in their appeal. The rich heritage of the subcontinent is reinvented in his designs as contemporary high fashion through the genius of Indian craftsmanship and the finest textiles. His unique creations are the perfect combination of vintage opulence and contemporary chic.

Bejewelled ensembles

Blurring the lines between a product of style and a piece of art; the Tarun Tahiliani Autumn/Winter Collection '14 did away with the distinction between clothes and jewellery. Inspired by ornaments, they dug deep in the trenches of the heritage of the world and struck gold.

Tarun Tahiliani opines that his collection, that marked the commencement of Wills India Fashion Week 2014, captures "the last free flowing drapes into easy fluid structured forms, as observed from around the (Indian) subcontinent and parade with the vibrancy of colour, the intricate embellishments and the symbols that came to define these races. Hence ornament as the principal embellishment is the glue that binds this collection together."





Statement of style

Tarun Tahiliani uses his mastery achieved from years of draping, to make stunning contemporary separates; this ready-to-wear collection offers an array of options and allows the wearer room for individuality.

The garments in this collection are statement pieces with necklines so ornamental, they render a jeweller useless. Details of gold finery deck the collars and cuffs, giving the illusion of fine gold jewellery. The tunics stand out while providing the ease of wearing heavy jewel patterns on fabrics light as air.

The ornate kaftans balance the heavy gold patterns with recurring jewel motifs making it luxuriant and indulgence ready. Tops with mukaish-work and a full village-belle skirt add elements of fun, while striking kurtas and tunics with medallions and printed doubloons painted on form an emblazoned bounty.

The collection also showcases a new found emphasis on print. Various multi patterned scarves together create an optical illusion, with tier upon delicate tier, to make stunning kaftans, unconventional saris and dhoti skirts.

The Jamawar inspired pencil skirt is a delicate work of seemingly hand painted filigree fading into a darker ombre creating a trompe l'æil effect. Vintage embroidery in honeyed rusts is brought to life against black contrasts of velvet, seen on tunics with dolman sleeves, bejewelled collars and an Anarkali, gilet and churidar pairing.

Brand Tarun Tahiliani has yet again, brought the prettiest of ensembles, traditional yet modern, to its loyal patrons worldwide.





When asked if there is a particular dish that represents the whole of India, *Khichdi* is the immediate response: "Simple *Khichdi* made with rice, lentils, basic spices and a few veggies thrown in. It's the ultimate comfort food, healthy, nutritious and the one dish which is made in every home regardless of caste, creed, religion, status or economic standing."

numerous courses, techniques, meats and vegetables."

Michael laments, "Indian cuisine has, however, plateaued and though modern Indian cuisine is taking a foothold and bringing to light indigenous ingredients and techniques, a lot more emphasis needs to be put on highlighting nuances of regional cuisines at the global level so that the world knows that Indian cuisine is so much more than chicken tikkas, rajma and gulab jamuns".



India in a meal

If Michael were to design a meal representing cuisines from all over India, it would have...

- Samosa (Punjab) or Chaat (U.P)
- Spring Rolls (Tangra cuisine, Kolkata)
- Chhaas (Gujarat)
- · Rogan Josh (Kashmir)
- Panchratna Dal (Rajasthan)
- · Avial (Kerala)
- · Fruit de la Mer (Soup from Pondicherry)
- · Red Rice (Coorg)
- Kulchas (Punjab)
- · Rasgullas (West Bengal)

Teaming up!

Michael teams some Indian dishes with different wines

- Starters Shiraz
- · Rogan Josh Cabernet
- · Panchratna Dal Semillon
- · Avial Riesling
- · Fruit de la Mer Chenin Blanc
- · Rasgullas Eiswein

Under the Chef's hat!

Every week, the Swamy household came together for their weekly ritual of baking cake. Michael always enjoyed it. This was when his love for all things culinary started. As his mother was a documentary film-maker, Michael literally grew up in studios, closely studying and handling various aspects of media from handling cameras to editing. This inspired him to become a food writer; combining both his interests of food and media. His mother insisted that to become a good food writer, an understanding of the art and all its details is essential. Therefore Michael decided to don the chef's hat.

His passion for food extends beyond cooking. He is not only a writer but also a food stylist and a photographer. When asked to describe how he balances the many roles, he says that there is no end or beginning of a particular role. It's all intertwined, "Each role supports the other and enhances it, while each role without the others makes me incomplete."

Michael has written two books till date, Gourmand World Cookbooks Award-winning 'The East Indian Kitchen' and 'The Easy Guide to Pairing Indian Food and Wine' along with many corporate books. He believes in letting cookbooks and the recipes in them be the guidelines, as against something written in stone. The real "magic" of cooking lies within the individual cook – be it a home cook or a professional chef.

Michael wants to systematically document the Indian culinary culture and techniques for future generations; he wants to leave behind a

legacy. Traditional methods, in his opinion, make food more flavourful as against the new age methods (for example, the use of a mortar-pestle instead of a grinder). Chefs can make a difference with their food, by simply incorporating some traditional culinary techniques.

Having travelled across the nation, Michael has had many memorable experiences to recall. But the one that was the most memorable is his travel in the Himalayas, at a Pahadi house in Dharachula. The lady of the house cooked simple local fare for Michael and his team. Sitting amidst the green slopes and a sight to behold, is Michael's favourite memory.

Michael's travels have inspired him to go out, explore and taste different dishes from various cuisines. This has given him an insight into how food can be prepared differently.

Rapid fire

- · Favourite dish: A good Khichdi
- Inspirations: Chef Antoin Mosimann, food stylist Lisa Golden, photographer Henri Cartier Bresson and writer John Carafolli.
- Favourite cuisine: French & Italian. North Eastern when it comes to India-specific.
- Favourite drink: Chaas
- Favourite book: Food Photography and Styling by John Carafoli
- Favourite pastime: Travelling and photography
- · Favourite quote: Be the Buddha
- Perfect meal: Colourful, simple and flavourful
- · Food to you is ... sacred!

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Valencia - Spain





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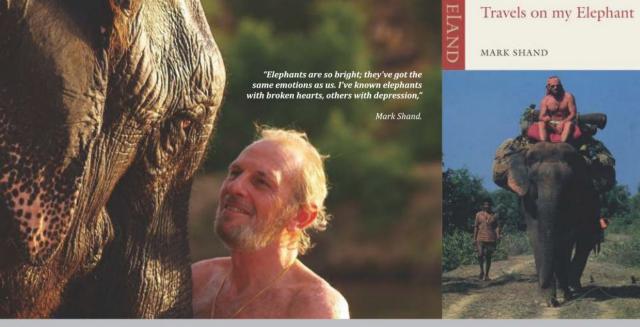
When Mark met Tara

"With one hind leg crossed over the other, she was leaning nonchalantly against a tree, the charms of her perfectly rounded posterior in full view, like a prostitute on a street corner. I knew then that I had to have her."

This is British writer Mark Shand on the love of his life. Only, the travel writer with a reputation for being a casanova, is talking about a 30-year-old elephant named Tara in his memoirs, Travels on my Elephant.

Chaitanya Deshpande brings to you the fascinating story of Mark Shand and Tara the elephant

In this entertaining account of an 800-mile ride from Konark, Orissa on the Bay of Bengal, to Sonepur, across the Ganges, to the Great Elephant Bazaar, impulsive and emotional Mark Shand writes about feeding elephants, pastoral India, policemen and erstwhile princes, cobras, and his growing infatuation of Tara.



"Am I right in assuming that you want to buy an elephant?" the voice from New Delhi shouted own the telephone to me in London. Even through the hiss and static of the long-distance connection I could detect the apprehension in the voice. 'Yes,' I shouted back."

Shand on Tara and his five eccentric Indian companions in a jeep laden with supplies, plod through India's hinterlands much to the amusement and bewilderment of locals. It's delightful to see an Englishman trying to be a mahout and ordering a rather eccentric elephant, even as the warm hospitality of the locals touches Mark's heart.

The real hero, however, is Tara and her transformation from a half-starved thief and a nomadic elephant into "five tons of spoiled bliss" under Shand's indulgence and care. This impish elephant who can't help but shoplift fruit and lift prostitutes' saris is the genesis of Mark's life-changing journey and quest to save the Asian elephant from extinction.

Mark's fervent efforts to ride Tara as a true mahout, the squabbles of the mahouts over Tara and the fact that they share rum to hide their tears at his leave-taking, bring a smile. Mark's refusal to use the *ankush* is as affectionate as Tara's errant ways or the awe with which they are received in the villages.

On this cross-country trudge you see temple-towns, rice and banana plantations, elephant traps, mendicants, snakes and neglected havelis still trying to live out their royalty.

Mark and Tara's journey doesn't end in Sonepur, perhaps the only greatest elephant bazaar; it only just begins as it leads

Mark to 'Elephant Family' - a charity specifically established to protect the environment of the Asian elephant, tiger and orangutan. At the 'hatthi bazaar', Mark donated his beloved Tara to Belinda Wright, a friend and founder of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, so that she could draw tourists to Kipling Camp, a resort in Madhya Pradesh's Kanha National Park.

Happy and healthy, the now 57-year-old Tara has been staying in Kipling Camp since 1989. Her favourite pastime is to be bathed and scrubbed in the Banjar River.

Till his death in April this year, Mark remained an international crusader, a champion of the Asian elephant. His motto was: "Save the elephants and then you save the forest - and then you save yourself."

Mark Shand who also head-hunted in Indonesia and motorraced from London to Sydney is also the author of River Dog: A journey down the Brahmaputra, Queen of the Elephants, and Skulduggery. For Travels on my Elephant Mark received the Travel Writer of the Year' award.

This story of man and elephant is poignant and exciting. Comic and exotic in its flavour, Mark will take you away on his daily adventures in an India as seen from atop an elephant.



Mother of all martial arts

Kalaripayattu maestro **Belraj Soni** talks about the ancient martial art and how it is beneficial in maintaining fitness. As told to Radhika Sathe.

Kalaripayattu is an Indian martial art from the southern state of Kerala. Legend traces the 3000-year-old art form to Sage Parasurama, the master of all martial art forms. Kalaripayattu is derived from two words in Malayalam: Kalari and Payattu. Kalari means the place, where any particular art form is taught. Payattu literally means practice or exercise. It's often called mother of all martial arts and is one of the oldest fighting systems in existence.

Shrouded in deep mystery and mists of secrecy, Kalaripayattu was taught by the masters in total isolation, away from prying eyes. There is no other ancient martial practice in the country that can compete with its training system and application techniques. It is a rare combination of martial training, physical culture, self-defence practice and physiotherapy treatment.

Kalari sharpens one's mental and physical faculties in a balanced manner, leading to spiritual growth, along with instilling the discipline of self defence. The training is acute and time-consuming and cannot be treated as a hobby. Complete training calls for a residential schedule with the teacher (though, there are workshops to learn the very basics of it). There are three styles of Kalaripayattu-Vadakkan or Northern style, Madhya Kerala style (central) and Thekkan or Southern style.

There is no gender classification for learning, male or female, anyone above the age of seven can learn Kalaripayattu. People from all walks of life such as theatre artists, dancers, players, actors, etc follow the practice of Kalaripayattu.

Inducing healthy living

Kalaripayattu has always been known as a martial art, practiced by warriors of ancient kingdoms and also by those called upon to get engaged in physical combats as years went by. But there is another dimension to its relevance in health care and cure. The very fact that all the limbs, faculties and systems in one's body from head to toe are



Practicing Kalari is a natural way to reduce excess body weight. This ancient healing art will help you get rid of obesity and obtain effective control over your body weight. Deha Kanthi Kalari program is the safest way for enhancing a healthy body for those who are suffering from the ill effects of obesity and health related problems. Special Kalari exercises for burning excess fat, natural Kalari diet for reducing weight, Kalari massages and Ayurvedic medicines for preventing fat accumulation, important health tips for body fitness etc. are other unique benefits of this Kalari program.

The regular practice of *Kalari* helps control body movements thereby making the body flexible, and movements graceful, while also building stamina. It naturally helps develop *pranayama* or breath-control, which in turn enables the practitioner to achieve mostery over the art.

This is the essence of the Kalari dictum meiyyu kannavuka (the body becomes all eyes).

brought into play in the practice of Kalaripayattu, endows it with a unique power to diagnose and heal many of the physical ailments of non-congenital nature.

Breath control is an integral part of the practice and lung related problems wane away in short time. Many of the exercises prescribed help to avoid coronary and circulatory disorders. Inexpensive care and cure is one of the hallmarks of Kalaripayattu which is quite welcome in an era, when one finds what is achieved for a song from *Kalari*, costs a fortune in today's medical setup!

The stretching movement in Kalari blends the body, mind and spirit. It harmonises the biological system of the body, enhances the circulation of body fluids and activates the lymphatic system of the body, thus working as a cleansing agent. It is a positive approach to good health. Even if you do not suffer from any disease you can use it to promote and rejuvenate the body and mind.



At home with PortsideCafé

PortsideCafé helps you do up your home in the most aesthetic way, with its beautiful handcrafted India-inspired furniture, reports Radhika Sathe.





The PortsideCafé set up shop in 2007, to promote original and innovative furniture ideas, be it leather beds, bars, sofas, tables or other must-have home and office accessories. Each piece is handcrafted and hand-finished using an array of innovative staining techniques. Every collection is influenced by a variety of factors such as the vibrancy of colours, the humming, pulsating streets; old architecture, music and even Bollywood.

The primary vision of PortsideCafé is to add some zest to your home; rather than taking over an entire space with just one single style, make a statement with individual and unique pieces in the room. Wood and leather being the primary materials incorporated, accents of metal have been used to create both functionality and style in the products. Add to this an array of unique finishes and stitches, bold treatments on leather, vibrant colours, intricate details, and easy elegance, all of which come together to form PortsideCafé's unique furniture.

PortsideCafé founder and designer Bobby Aggarwal's childhood experiences and the influences of later years have had a cumulative and regenerative effect on his design style. Having lived near a lake and woods, in

Bhopal, the surrounding environment cultivated in Bobby, a desire for simplicity of form and a need to express what came naturally to him. This led to an organic process of creativity that was not encumbered by linear thought, and became a distinct feature of his work in later years. Bobby is also influenced by Islamic and Parsi cultures, and he is one of the few designers in the country who seeks inspiration from the rich geographical and cultural canvas that India as a country presents.

When PortsideCafé Furniture Studio first opened its doors in Pune, Bobby delved into his own life and drew from the Islamic architecture of Bhopal, the *Havelis* of Old Delhi and the vibrancy and colour of Bollywood.

This resulted in the conception of Mixed Metaphor, a collection about contemporary India and also its heritage, brimming with activity, and vibrantly expressive. The collection also reflects Bobby's personality—funloving and explorative. He has travelled across the country to seek inspiration for his different collections like the Dak Bangla, Balli Maran, Hughes Road and the Rose series.





The success of the Pune store led to a second store being set up, this time in the by-lanes of Lado Sarai in South Delhi. The store design there has been personally conceptualised by Bobby, keeping the PortsideCafé ideology of "unconventional and unique" in mind. PortsideCafé Furniture Studio is soon to be launched in Bangalore, and plans to retain its signature offbeat designs.





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3sp(ces | LEV3J

Miyuki Tarta.



"Our focus has always been on generating employment for the physically disabled. And in instilling self-reliance."

Meena Bedarkar, with her long greying hair and her kind eyes, is the type of person who would give you the shirt off her back. She founded Nirmalya Trust in 2003. But she had been working hard in service of the "differently-abled" for over two decades before she decided to start the non-profit organisation.

Meena strongly believes that disabled children and adults require to be positively occupied and must be given equal opportunities to learn and grow. Before starting Nirmalya Trust, she taught craft to children with special needs. She recognised that arts and crafts provided these children with much needed stimulation. It helped give them a sense of calm and gave them an opportunity to explore the world around them.

Her own child, Tanuja, is differently-abled. She remembers the 14 long years of daily visits to K.E.M. hospital her daughter had to endure. "But...," she's quick to add, "we're lucky we had the money."

No Substitute for Hard Work

Mrs. Bedarkar is single-mindedly devoted to the obstacleridden task of helping integrate the disabled into mainstream society. Being integrated into his or her community gives a person with disabilities a sense of purpose and identity. It also improves their self-esteem and quality of life.

But Meena is firm about one thing – she will not and does not encourage anyone else to pity the disabled. Not even the disabled themselves. She instructs, "If you have one finger, work with one finger. If you have one hand, work with that one hand. But you must work."

And they do. People with disabilities often make the most loyal and hardworking employees. All they need is some initial support and guidance. This is where Nirmalya Trust comes into play.

The organisation counsels, trains, and creates employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

A Sense of Community

The first vocational training unit they set up was the Sunkisd Plant Nursery on Bhandarkar Road, Pune. It was especially set up to employ the disabled from the rural sector. Here, they are trained to propagate plants, which is to create new plants from various sources such as seeds, bulbs, cuttings of the same plant, to care for them and ultimately to prepare them for sale. Participants of the program include the paraplegics, mentally and physically disabled people, as well as the hearing and visually impaired.



They are each given a fair stipend and encouraged to 'earn and learn'. Working together over a common goal and being responsible for the plants gives them a sense of achievement. Besides increasing self-esteem, this also inculcates discipline in their lives and helps develop skills of time and financial management.

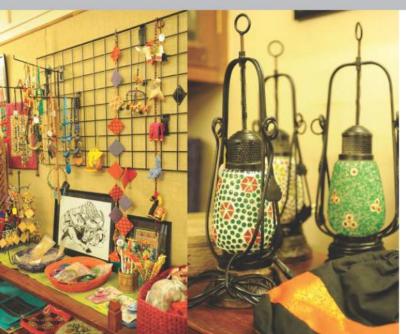
Nirmalya Trust's second and very successful vocational unit, Taruvar, promotes the usage of environmentally-friendly and hand-made products. Here, the partially sighted, blind, and hearing impaired people are trained to make attractive newspaper carry bags with hand-painted designs, key chains and woven items like baskets and coasters made with old newspaper, beautiful hand-painted table mats, and adorable papier-māché piggy banks. They also make colourful stationary items like greeting cards, bookmarks, folders, envelopes, writing material and the like – all made with hand-made paper.

Working together and supporting each other also fosters a sense of community within the disabled people working at Nirmalya. And they learn to care for each other as if they were family.

Mrs. Bedarkar says, "You forget they are challenged. You get to know them as people." She beams, "I have so many children. I feel like a proud parent to see how far they have progressed."

She has successfully placed more than 2000 of her children with well-paying jobs. Some of them have been gainfully employed in the banking sector while most of them are employed in hospitality. They continue to learn





and support themselves with decently paying jobs in places like Citrus Hotel, Lemon Tree Hotel, Courtyard Marriott, JW Marriott, Costa Coffee outlets and so on.

Talking About Individuals

Most of the disabled people who reach out to Nirmalya are from villages around Maharashtra. As far as possible, the trust doesn't encourage migration. It's important for them to have the support of their families. But for those who move to Pune in search of employment, Nirmalya Trust provides boarding and lodging on a short-term basis. They pay individuals a subsistence allowance for the first month, while they undergo training. They teach them how to cook and provide them with necessary life skills so that they may be independent and self-reliant.

While there is a system in place, Meena Bedarkar insists that the work they do with every disabled person varies. "I'm not talking of classrooms. I'm talking about individuals. Each has a particular need."



Apart from training and placements, Nirmalya Trust offers paraplegics calipers, crutches, and two-wheelers attached with side-wheels. This increases their mobility which in turn affects their job opportunities in a positive manner.

They are fully committed to working in partnership with people with disabilities to develop their potential to the fullest so that they may lead productive and fulfilling lives. They are helped in their efforts by volunteers from all walks of life. They comprise of women, students, working professionals, and international students. They are also blessed to have the support of long-term volunteers like that of Kalpana Moghe, who has been generously offering her time and help for over 8 years now. When asked what her motivation was, she responds with a warm and genuine smile, "It's fun." Mrs. Bedarkar explains that Kalpana understood the purpose well and that there was no reason

Moving Forward

Their most recent project involves the rehabilitation centre in Panoli which is a village in Parner Taluka in Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra. Nirmalya Trust was recently able to

why working at Nirmalya Trust shouldn't be fun.

purchase a 1-acre piece of land where they have built a basic structure with a few rooms. In these rooms, they provide counselling to people with disabilities and their families. They host computer classes, English-language classes, and educational lectures, and are also in the process of building a Braille library and a career guidance unit among other things. They would also like for the unit to be solar-powered.

Mrs. Bedarkar recognises that it is a long-term project. In order for the organisation to complete construction on their Panoli Rehabilitation Centre, they will require donations in the form of money, bricks, cement, and any such building material.

There is a pervading sense of cheerfulness and hope at every centre of Nirmalya Trust. It's hard to be sullen around such positive energy. "It's wonderful doing the kind of work we do. We're opening a new world of opportunities for them," Meena Bedarkar smiles beatifically.

For further information, please visit: www.nirmalyatrust.org 020 - 25656724/94225 09649 or info@nirmalyatrust.org

EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

GOOD TIMES

Reshma Sharma recently celebrated her birthday at Mix@36 at the Westin Pune Koregaon Park. Friends and family enjoyed a lot with camaraderie at the fore at the brunch. Good food, better conversations and great friends... it was an afternoon to remember!



Reshma & Tarun Sharma

Uzma Karia-Aggarwal & Varsha Chordia



Sagar & Shribala Chordia, Reshma & Tarun Sharma with Padma Reddy

Atul Chordia, Jatin Aggarwal & Anil Sanghvi





Pankaj Ojha, Col Lalit Rai, Ranjit Batra & Mustafa Hussain



Col Lalit Rai, Vir Chakra



ON THE WAR FRONT

Col Lalit Rai, Vir Chakra, recently made an inspiring presentation on 'leading from the Front' at EON Knowledge Park auditorium, where he shared his experiences of the Kargil War. The presentation was about leadership, perseverance, decision making, courage, discipline, determination, focus and goal setting; and how the tough lessons of life from the war front are equally applicable in one's everyday life.

ROUND THE CORNER

Race on the mind: The 2014 Pune Racing Season is in full swing: the thoroughbreds galloping down the tracks, the enthusiasts sitting at the edge of the seats to see if their favouries take away the laurels. The glitterati of the city and the fans of the sport crowd the venue – like each year – for a packed season of top races over the entire three months.

Dhol, taasha, festivities! One of Pune's biggest celebrations – the Ganesh Utsav – is just around the corner, and the city is getting busy with the preparations. The city is in for a delightful treat drenched in traditions. The Ganesh Utsav festivities will commence on 29th August and end on 8th September 2014.

Dance Pune Dance! The 5th Pune International Dance Congress will be held in the month of August, bringing together dance enthusiasts from around the world. Conceptualised by Latin dancer and teacher Rocky Poonawala, it will bring together dancers and dance teachers, performing different styles to 'learn, perform, compete and party'!



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