

FROM THE CEO'S DESK  
STAY AT  
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF  
LIFESTYLE  
SPOTTED BY SITA  
TOP CHEF RECOMMENDS  
DESTINATION INSIDER  
6 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT  
FESTIVALS  
INSPIRATION LOCATOR  
IMPRESSIONS



# Art of Travel



## Pink And Greens

# From The CEO's Desk

Dear Partners,

The pink city of Jaipur is adding green to its palette. There is exciting news for tourists coming to Jaipur in the coming months. A jungle safari experience is soon to be launched at the Nahargarh Biological Park which is located on the Jaipur-Delhi highway. A close distance from the capital, one won't have to travel too far to experience the Indian jungle safari. I do hope you are able to explore this new aspect of the pink city.

With the festival season just around the corner, India is a delight of colours and traditions, each festival with its sole significance, age old rituals and the culinary delights, which surprisingly also vary with every festival. An ideal time to gain a fascinating insight into unfamiliar ways of life and exploring India's culture and cuisine up close. An experience that will resonate in your memories.

I do hope you have enjoyed our new design and content, the first of which was rolled out last month. Your feedback is of great value to us and we look forward to receiving your valuable comments.

Come Explore With Us.

Happy Reading.

Regards

Dipak Deva





# Stay At

## Overlooking the Dal Lake...



### Vivanta By Taj, Srinagar

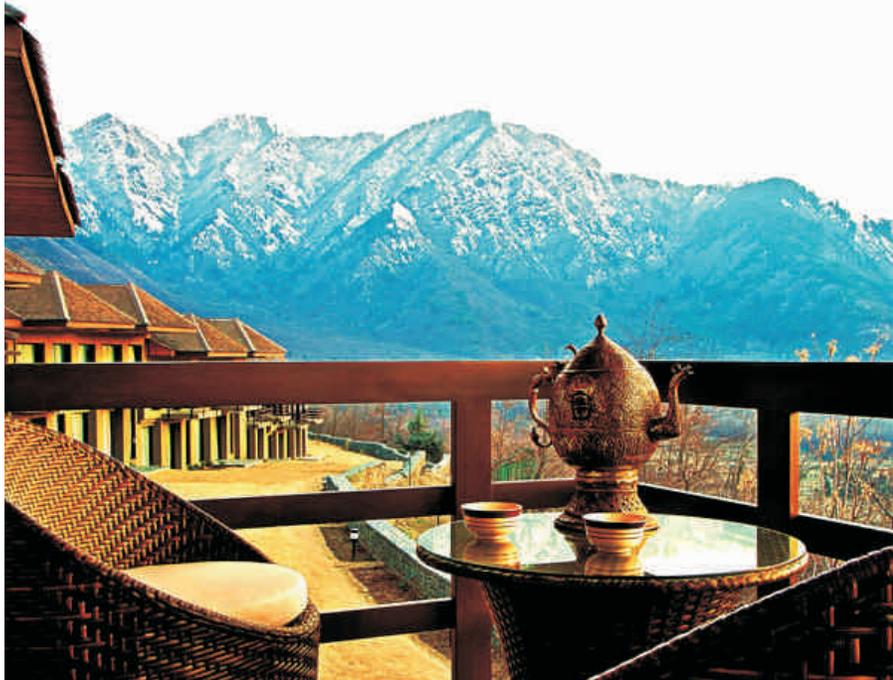
Perched on the Kralasangri Hill overlooking the scenic Dal Lake, Vivanta by Taj - Dal View, Srinagar, is an enchanting romantic getaway of pristine natural beauty. Situated at 1730 metres above sea level, the resort is 20 kilometres from the Srinagar International Airport. Accented in copper, local timber carvings and warm earthy colours the resort is spread across six acres highlighting the spirit and ethos of the valley. The 48 spacious rooms are designed with classic and elegant decor. The property is a modern and contemporary space which has the essence of Kashmir wonderfully woven in. (Refer to the pictures on the right.)

### Royal Heritage Haveli, Jaipur

Owned and managed by the Maharaja Jai Singh of Jaipur, The Royal Heritage Hotel is a property that lingers lazily over 100,000 square feet, complete with rambling lawns, serene courtyards, plush interiors and stately living areas. The hotel is dedicated to provide a quiet and tranquil haven of space and luxury. Beautifully planned to hold light within the interiors as it filters through elegant arched doorways and settles on frescoes on the walls, in harmony with the colours of each suite. Tasteful pieces of furniture occupy strategic areas while modern amenities lie peacefully amongst silk and velvet upholstery on handpicked, traditional furniture that adorns each well appointed suite. Luxurious and large, each suite has its own sitting area for your indulgence.

### The Park, Hyderabad

The Park is just not a thing of beauty that reflects the city's rich culture with an ecologically pleasing set up. The unique perforated metal exterior has been inspired by the 'Jalis' of old Indian palaces, while the naturally illuminated, indulgently luxurious interiors reflect traditions of patterning, craftsmanship and style. The property brings you exceptional spaces; from the varied range of 270 rooms and suites to choose from to the choicest of lounges, hippest of restaurants and other areas of absolute entertainment.





## Naturalist And Amphibian Expert



For David Raju, Senior Naturalist and Amphibian Expert at the Forsyth's Lodge at Satpura National Park in Central India, the nights are sometimes tiring and restless with alarm calls all around the Lodge. There is a female leopard that often patrols the edge of the village fields and sends the deers and the village dogs into a fit of anxiety. His day starts early at 05:00 hrs.

With the guests of Forsyth Lodge ready by 05:45 hrs and the breakfast baskets checked, he is ready to leave. It's a short 5 minute drive to the lake shore which is the entrance to the Satpura National Park. David tells us that at this time, before dawn there is always a chance to see the tiny and elusive rusty spotted cat or a jungle cat, hare, civet cat or porcupine. Or one can spot Malabar pied Hornbills flying to a banyan tree. Always in groups of two and fours a total of up to 25 hornbills can be seen on a good day. It's a wonderful sight as they swarm through the tree feeding on the small red figs that profusely cover the tree. A great way to start your morning at Satpura National Park, says David.

A boat ride takes David and his guests across the lake to Peeliya for a Walking Trail. Satpura is the only national park in India which allows you to explore the wilderness on foot. The Walking Trail at Peeliya is David's favourite. He loves this walk because it is a great area for wild dogs and sloth bear and he has also seen leopards once or twice on this walking trail. But - depending on the season - it can be full of Gaurs, Sambars and Nilgais. As the sun begins to warm up, butterflies appear on this trail - over a dozen species basking along the forest edge. David recalls a recent incident at Peeliya, where during one of the walking trails he found fresh tracks of a family of wild dogs, when suddenly the whole pack appeared. They were heading away in the unhurried lope, that is typical of wild dogs. At the first sight of the dogs everyone had dropped into a crouch because that is less threatening to wildlife than the tall biped silhouette of upright humans. His guests were over the moon, as they had never thought that they would ever see these formidable hunters while on foot.

After the early morning Walking Trail, David returns to the Forsyth's Lodge with his guests for a leisurely brunch, where they talk about the Satpura National Park. After brunch, whilst his guests rest or go for a swim in the pool at the lodge, David heads back to the Park to meet the Park Director to discuss or update

# A Day in The Life Of David Raju



him about the latest happenings of the Project - "Lost Amphibians of India". David is one of the Expedition Leaders of this Project, which is a sheer adventure in field biology.

At about 15:00 hrs, David heads back to the Park once again with his guests. This time, they drive in jeeps. The first hour is spent driving slowly, with quite a few stops, along the lake edge for bird watching and taking photographs of Sambars and Gaur, feeding on the grass at the water's edge. As evening approaches its time to head back to the Forsyth's Lodge but not before checking on the water holes of the park. On a lucky day, David says, you are likely to see sloth bears and leopards.

After dinner, for those guests who are interested, he conducts a night walk around the premises of the Lodge before calling it a day by 22:30 hrs.



# Lifestyle



## Hutheesing Ni Haveli

Ahmedabad's socialite Umang Hutheesing, who is a friend of Sita, is heir to one of the few historic mercantile families of India, who trace their lineage back to 1200 years. He is actively involved in the preservation of art and heritage in Ahmedabad and is an Art Consultant by profession. In Ahmedabad, Umang runs the Hutheesing Design Company (HDC) established in the year, 1881. Not many know that the artisans of Hutheesing Design Company work actively with Tiffany and have beautified portions of the Kensington Palace and the East Wing of the White House. Or that the carved-wooden furniture made by Hutheesing Design Company was displayed in London in 1886 and won the patronage and admiration of luminaries such as Mark Twain.

Umang's family was actively involved in financing India at different stages of her history. It was the Hutheesing family who financed major wars of pre-Mughal India, were official treasurers of the Mughal court; where the head of the family was referred to as Mamaji (maternal uncle) in all royal firmans (correspondence), provided financial support to the rebels of the 1857 Mutiny against the British East India Company and later funded Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggle for freedom.

Umang argues that, India's biggest contribution to humanity is the "strong family bond and values" in which still live India's culture and the ethos of its ancient civilisation.

And to convince us, Umang took us on a 2 hour long tour of his ancestral Haveli in the historic walled city of Ahmedabad. The Haveli is 250 years old and incorporates a blend of Indian and European style; Gujarati wood and stone carvings. The interiors are equally stunning with gold work, brocades, rich tapestries, metal work and sculptures. Even as Umang took us on a roller coaster ride through the cycle of life as conceived in Hindu tradition and mythology, he quoted from Hindu scriptures and moved on to Shakespeare and even Rabindranath Tagore. For us it was an intense and uplifting experience, absolutely refreshing and a reaffirmation of our own family bonds.

Sita recommends this fantastic Haveli in Ahmedabad for an exclusive Gala Musical Soiree for your clients looking to celebrate a special occasion.





## Eternal Lamp Of The Backwaters

This Eternal Lamp which has been kept burning for nearly five centuries by a Christian family along with the statues of Jesus and Mother Mary in their private shrine, was spotted by Sita during a country canoe ride in the narrower canals in the backwaters of Kerala . The Lamp was given to their ancestors by a Hindu King.

In 1545 A.D, an entourage of the local Hindu King was passing through the backwaters with an idol of Lord Krishna. They were on their way to a place called Ambalapuzha where the idol was supposed to be consecrated. When night set in, they were given shelter in a Christian household, the home of Mappilassery Itty Thommen.

Next day, the Hindu King turned up at Itty Thommen's house where he performed a religious ceremony and carried the idol to Ambalapuzha. Itty Thommen and his family also travelled with the idol and on the way, the priests and laity of the local Church also honoured the King and the idol. The King, pleased with the love and affection shown to him by his Christian subjects, declared that henceforth, to commemorate these events, a great water carnival would be held. Thus, began the Champakulam Snake-Boat Race which continues to this very day and is held every year in the month of June.

In 1613 AD, sixty-three years after the idol was given shelter at Mappilassery Itty Thommen's, the old house was demolished. News was immediately sent to Itty Thommen's family that the area where the idol was given shelter be considered a sacred place. A special Lamp made of rare metals was given to the family to be kept burning as an eternal flame. Special privileges were also conferred to the Itty Thommen's family, including grant of land and coconut groves to supply oil for the Lamp.

Every year before the Champakulam Snake-Boat Race starts, representatives from the Ambalapuzha Temple come calling with gifts for the head of this Christian household. They are treated by the Mappilassery family to a sumptuous feast. It is only after this that the Champakulam Snake-Boat Race starts.

# Spotted By Sita





## Gnocchi Di Patate Alla Cacciatore

Vishal Atreya, Executive Sous Chef at The Imperial, New Delhi recommends the Gnocchi di Patate Alla Cacciatore as a must try during your stay here. "It is made naturally with fresh ingredients which are not extravagant but rustic in nature and full of authentic flavours, derived from extremely simple ingredients like Cherry Tomatoes, Potatoes, Basil and Parmesan Cheese," says Vishal. The Gnocchi di Patate Alla Cacciatore is priced at ₹ 650+ taxes.

# Top Chef Recommends





# Destination Insider



## Silent Valley: Noah's Ark Of Biodiversity

Dear Friends,

I was recently at the [Silent Valley National Park](#) in the Nilgiri Hills of South India. One of the last remaining oasis of primeval rain forests, with vast ecosystem diversity and holding one the richest and least disturbed trove of endemic tropical species, many of which are not found outside this habitat for hundreds of years, the Silent Valley National Park is a veritable paradise of nature. Gouged into the side of the Nilgiri massif by the Kunti River, the deep and twisting cleft that forms the park, was lying hidden for several years, until explorers discovered it in the late 1800's. The valley is characterized by a complete absence of any ancient human presence, as well as by an inexplicable absence of the Cicada, which leads to the un-naturally quiet forests and hence the name Silent Valley. The valley is also one of the remaining protected sanctuaries for the Lion Tailed Macaque, as well as many species of flora and fauna that are still being discovered.

This piece of paradise shot into worldwide prominence in the late 1970's owing to India's fiercest environmental protests - featuring Romulus Whitaker, Dr Salim Ali, Dr. MS Swaminathan, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the much aware Kerala public - against a proposal to dam the valley for hydel power. The project was ultimately shelved and the National Park was notified in 1984 by the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The road to the Park gates at Mukkali wind steeply uphill through dense rain forests. Here you will board forest department approved vehicles. The forest track twists and winds for 20km through the narrow forest valley to reach the forest bungalow at Sairandhri. The knowledgeable foresters and watchers at this forest outpost, make excellent guides and interpreters of nature. They will lead you over hiking trails that allow you to experience the eerie silent forests over the next 3 or 4 hours. You can wash off your fatigue in the ice cold waters of the Kunti River as you make your way back to the forest outpost.

[Noah's Ark of biodiversity](#) - click here for the itinerary

Cheers  
Kuntil Baruwa





## Aman Resort, New Delhi

# 6 Things We Liked About

### Open Spaces

Walk into the Aman Resort in New Delhi and you wouldn't realise that this is a city centre hotel in India's raging capital city. Long open corridors, lush green gardens, sun dappled rooms with exceptional views of the city, is very special. And instead of the regular claustrophobic corridors, you have an innovative design which allows you an uninterrupted view and a feeling of abundance in terms of space.

### Do not Disturb Me!!

Who says you have to be funny, whacky or even in your face, when it comes to being creative with the "Do not Disturb" sign. At the Aman, if you want to be left alone in your room, just hang the Rudraksha rosary on your door knob which the hotel provides. Rudraksha rosaries are traditional prayer beads in the Hindu religion and are supposed to have tremendous healing powers. We thought... that was classy.

### Magic Service

Every time you come back to your room at the Aman Resort in New Delhi, you find it in its immaculate condition. The beds made, the room cleaned and amenities replenished. All done in an unobtrusive manner.

### The Traditional Turkish Hammams

We liked the idea of Traditional Hammams, the Turkish variant of a steam bath, in the Spa at the Aman Resort, complete with vaulted mosaic ceilings, three separate temperature chambers, hot and cold plunge pools, private treatment areas and relaxation lounges. Perfect antidote to jet lag, we are told.

### The Pilates Studio

The Pilates Studio at The Aman Resort in New Delhi offers the highest standards of instruction in Pilates with state-of-the-art equipment. In consultation with Ivana Daniell, an internationally recognized instructor with more than twenty years of experience in Pilates and Movement Therapy, the studio has a multi-disciplinary and dynamic team to lead classes, research and development.

### The Aman Auto Rickshaw

Whilst we love Aman Resort's customised Ambassador Cars, the Aman Auto Rickshaw is surely a fun way of taking a spin around Delhi and best recommended for short journeys to nearby places of interest such as the Lodhi Gardens and Khan Market.





# Festivals



## Thimphu Tshechu 6 - 8 October 11

Tshechu is a festival celebrated in respect of Guru Rinpoche, the saint regarded as the 'Second Buddha' who brought Buddhism to Bhutan. The Thimphu Tshechu re-enacts the teachings of Guru Rinpoche, the 8th century spiritual master, through mask dances and is attended by thousands of local people. People bring out their finest clothes and their most prized jewels; families gather outside the dzong to enjoy elaborate festivities.

Most of the Festival dates are decided by Solar / Lunar calendars practiced in India, due to which the dates are subject to change.

You may plan some special departure based on these festivals. For any assistance please contact us.





# Tourist Map of INDIA

Scale: 1:7,200,000 (1 Centimetre = 72 Kilometres)  
Kilometres 400  
Miles 300

## LEGEND

- National Capital
- ⊙ State Headquarters
- Other Town
- Places of Tourist Interest
- ✈ International Airport
- ✈ Domestic Airport
- 🌳 Wildlife Sanctuary / National Park
- International Boundary
- National Highway
- Major Road

**STAY AT Srinagar**

**TOP CHEF RECOMMENDS New Delhi**

**6 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT New Delhi**

**STAY AT Jaipur**

**Festivals Thimpu**

**LIFESTYLE Ahmedabad**

**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DAVID RAJU Satpura National Park**

**STAY AT Hyderabad**

**DESTINATION INSIDER Silent Valley National Park**

**SPOTTED BY SITA Kerala**

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The responsibility for the correctness of internal details rests with the publisher.  
The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate baseline.  
The administrative headquarters of Chandigarh, Haryana and Punjab are at Chandigarh.  
The international boundaries between Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya shown on this map are as interpreted from the Border Security Force (BSF) Operational Map, 1971 and have yet to be verified.  
The external boundaries and coastline of India, as well as the National Highways shown on this map, are as approved by the Survey of India.  
The scale boundaries between Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh have not been verified by the Government.



# Impression



## My Hat Is Off To Sita

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From: Rob  
Sent: 14 July, 2011 1:28 PM  
To: Pant, Om Prakash; Verma, Prabhat  
Cc: Jamwal, Navjot

Subject: RE: Arrival of Kate Party in India  
Importance: High

Dear Prabhat,

My Hat is off to SITA! Never have I experienced this sort of pro-active feedback from a local agent! I was so impressed, I even showed this mail to all my colleagues here as an example of excellent service from an agent.

SITA is not always the cheapest (I've been comparing a little) but this is an example of the type of "value added service" that make price less of an issue!

I would no longer consider using another agent.

Maybe you see me as a bit of a joker and not very serious (I do like my fun ☺)... but I have been in the industry a long time and have not been so impressed for many years.

That along with the consistently excellent service from Om and Jamwal, all I can say is Congratulations on a professional organization and a fantastic team!

Very best regards and much respect,

Rob

