



9 March 2010

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From the CEO's Desk

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From the CEO's Desk



Dear Partners,

This issue onwards, we have introduced a new section called Destination Insider, where our expert will take you on an extraordinary journey of a truly authentic and sustainable travel experience. You will be shown a different angle on travel, one which highlights the great outdoors, local customs and charming hospitality, flavourful traditional cooking, stimulating art, intriguing architecture and much more, in a unique yet easily accessible manner.

I would like to thank you once again for your support and cooperation which helped us win the National Tourism Award for the 19th time this year.

Look forward to seeing you at ITB, Berlin.

Regards,



Dipak Deva



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Stay At



Suryagarh

Amidst shifting sands, Suryagarh stands tall in the desert of Jaisalmer with an indefinable aura of magic and mystery that surrounds its yellow sandstone walls and bastions that take on a golden hue in the afternoon sun. Fashionably designed with luxurious interiors, the sixty room hotel (32 operational rooms at the moment) with fifteenth century embellishments have been thoughtfully juxtaposed with every modern convenience possible. The historical suite is a magical experience, its pays homage to the state of Jaisalmer that never once seceded to invaders or foreign rule, this well-appointed suite is full of historic memorabilia and objet d'art. Cosy en suite dinners, delightful al fresco grill, dining arrangements, an empire-era bar and scores of lovely add-ons make this the ideal venue for a memorable holiday. Whoever said the desert was no place to go looking for yourself.

Ku

A favourite place for artists, photographers, fashion figures, nature lovers and modern families from all around the world, Ku is what a boutique hotel should actually be, absolutely unique. Two minutes from Morjim Beach, but hidden by antique doors and a luxurious tropical garden, Ku is an energy retreat, an ideal place to experience the beauty of a zen lifestyle in the Tropics. Ku is completely integrated into the landscape as opposed to dominating it. All six wood houses and water paths on this 1,000 sq m of sandy terrain, from the floors and frames to the poles have been slowly hand built. Yet their two Japanese rooms with their fish ponds and sliding doors are as comfortable as any room in a modern hotel.

Jhadol Safari Lodge

The Jhadol Safari Lodge is located in the foothills of the Aravalis at the edge of a magnificent lake with gently lapping waters, about 50 kms from Udaipur. Rustically dressed cottage suites with traditional tented ceilings are well furnished with modern amenities. The dinning area with its Raj era furniture, a delectable spread of traditional and contemporary cuisine, with the service to match, is an experience by itself. One can choose to unwind in the tranquillity with a cool, long drink. One can also choose to see as well as participate in activities that will give a taste of the unique ethnic local culture.



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Lifestyle



Kingdom of Dreams

Kingdom of Dreams is a perfect half day destination that connects very well with all the tour programmes & itineraries of North India such as the famous Golden Triangle. Due to its location (off the highway NH-8 & near the Delhi International airport), it's a fantastic fit to a traveler's programme. It's a ready venue & an exposition on a magnum opus scale - both for an incentive event for a group as well as for an individual to explore at his own pace. All the travellers & delegations to New Delhi -Gurgaon, now have an advantage of enjoying a glimpse of entire India in a few hours, through its art & culture showcased in both traditional & contemporary styled entertaining format. The venue is state of the art, in-built with today's technological wizardry and can be hired in the day-time for exceptional mega product launch, high profile and large sized business meetings, conventions and associations.

Apsara, Heaven on Water - The Park Hotels, Cochin

Akin to a floating boutique hotel, this eight-cabin cruiser takes guests to the tranquil waters of Kerala's Vembanad Lake, gliding them through the backwaters. Designed with luxury and comfort in mind, the interiors combine elements of Kerala's magnificent heritage with the quiet sophistication of European yachting style.

The 28m, 300 sq. m boat is built on two levels; there are eight rooms, a crew cabin, a galley, saloon & dining area, sundeck and a panoramic forward seating area.



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Responsible Tourism



Cleaning the Mountains of Trash

Adventure tourism in Ladakh started in the 19th century. By the turn of the 20th century, it was not uncommon for British officials to undertake the 14 stage trek from Srinagar to Leh as part of their annual leave. Agencies were set up in Srinagar and Shimla to specialise sport related activities — hunting, fishing and trekking. A large retinue of porters would carry huge canvas tents and collapsible string beds. This era is recorded in Arthur Neves The Tourist's Guide to Kashmir, Ladakh and Skardo, first published in 1911. Today, about 18,000 tourists visit Ladakh every year. Bounded by two mighty mountain ranges, it is a popular place for adventure tourism. The well-preserved Tibetan-Buddhist culture makes it even more attractive.

Ladakh has seen unprecedented changes in the last few decades. It is hard to reconcile the image of the pristine, snow covered, wind-swept crags of the mountaineer's ultimate challenge with that of a rubbish tip, and that is of grave concern right now.

As a responsible tourism initiative, we organise tours to participate and get involved in cleaning up of Skalzangling area, the entrance of Leh or in retrieving trash from the Markha Valley Trek - one of the most popular circuits visited. The Tours are done in partnership with local stake-holders and include interactive sessions, creating awareness.



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Destination Insider



Dear Friends,

The Destination Knowledge Centre would like to thank you for your keen interest in what we are doing in India.

In 2001 when I borrowed money from a friend and a seasoned nomad in Bombay to travel to the Maha Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, I was told "So you want to travel real bad, don't you? Be careful what you wish for it may come true!!" A decade hence, I am literally living out of the suitcase, armed with a camera, traveling hundreds and thousands of miles across the country in search of new knowledge, new skills, new experiences, and to connect with local experts. And it has been a humbling experience.

All this is a part of our new product line Explore for the inquisitive traveler who wants to satisfy his curiosity of the Indian sub-continent through immersive experiences which are fun, crisp, active and completely engaging. It is about doing less rather than more and Exploring India with one's heart. So far the Destination Knowledge Centre has traveled to Agra, Jaipur, Varanasi, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Ahmedabad and Goa in search of experiences which are out of the ordinary. Kerala is next on the agenda, sometime in April.

One of the driving forces behind the Explore product line is the realisation that no matter how good or wise we are, locals always know the best kept secrets that will bring long-term success to a particular destination. And while I travel on behalf of the Destination Knowledge Centre from one destination to another in search of compelling stories to inspire your clients to travel, to them feel that they are in the know, and that they will be better human beings for having travelled there. It has been and will be our constant endeavour to listen to locals, initiate partnerships, engage them, and determine mutually beneficial alignments.

We have made several friends in the process and the mix is a heady one; from rare textile artists living in the narrow twisted lanes who creates magic with their raw hands to socialites in whose honour the Parisian fashion fraternity hosts champagne dinners. They are among the very best in their profession and are here to help your clients absorb and enjoy the destinations like a local.

Come Explore with us

Love and Light

Kuntil Baruwa

Ps Last I heard my nomad friend from Bombay was in Guatemala; exploring the beautiful country on horseback. But we agreed to meet in the Maha Kumbh Mela in Allahabad in 2013. I still owe her money and there will be a lot of catching up to do.



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Festivals



Hemis Festival, Ladakh *21st - 22nd June 2010*

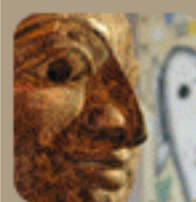
The courtyard of Hemis Gompa-the biggest Buddhist monastery in Ladakh is the stage for the famous 'Hemis' festival that celebrates the birth anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava. The colourful two-day pageant falls on the 10th day (Tse-Chu) of the Tibetan lunar month. Splendid masked dances are performed to the accompaniment of cymbals, drums & long horns. A special highlight of this colourful festival is the display of beautiful handicrafts, each one unique in its creation.

Chambakulam Boat Race, Alappuzha *26th June 2010*

Chambakulam Boat Race is held every year at the Chambakulam Lake in Alappuzha, Kerala. This is the first boat race of the harvest season of the state. One of the most popular snakeboat races of Kerala, the Chambakkulam Moolam Vallomkali is conducted on the Moolam day of the Malayalam month of Mithunam (June/July). The exciting event breaks the tranquility of the quiet back-water countryside which is fresh and green after the monsoon showers. The snake boats of Kerala are so called because of the raised prow that resembles the hood of a snake. Thousands of people crowd the banks to cheer the boatmen on. At least eight snake boats participate in the race. There are races for boats of every category right from the largest to the smallest craft.

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.



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Networking



Meet us at the following upcoming trade shows in 2010

If you wish to schedule a meeting, do e-mail us at: info@sita.in

Trade Show	Place	Date	Booth No	Whom to Meet
ITB	Berlin	10th -14th Mar	Hall 5.2b, Booth No. 208	Prabhat Verma
Kerala Tourism Road Show	Glasgow	15th Mar	Sita Desk	Lynne Rogers & Julian Lancaster
Kerala Tourism Road Show	Manchester	16th Mar	Sita Desk	Lynne Rogers & Julian Lancaster
Kerala Tourism Road Show	Birmingham	17th Mar	Sita Desk	Lynne Rogers & Julian Lancaster
MITT	Moscow	17th -20th Mar	Awaited	Ernest Dias & Deepak
Kerala Tourism Road Show	London	18th Mar	Sita Desk	Lynne Rogers & Julian Lancaster
TUR	Gothenburg	25th -28th Mar	A02:60	Philip Thomas



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Impression

**From:** Lisa Samel**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2010 12:28 AM**To:** Info Sita**Subject:** Wonderful Experience in India

My son and I just spent 10 days traveling in your beautiful country. Our tour (Delhi, Varanasi, Agra, Jaipur, and then back to Delhi) was arranged through Kensington Tours.

All of our guides were wonderful. However, our guide Aman in Agra was exceptional. He not only shared his in depth knowledge of amazing sites in Agra but also shared his family's story. We had many interesting discussing comparing culture and lifestyle differences. Meeting Aman was one of the highlights of our trip.

Also our driver, Vikram Singh, who safely and calmly negotiated our way through Indian traffic for six days, was kind, helpful and informative. As you know Indian traffic can be stressful for tourists, Vikram's driving and humor kept us calm throughout our journey. One day of our trip, my son ran a fever and was quite ill. Vikram was very supportive during this stressful part of the trip. Our last day in Delhi we had no guide, but Vikram drove us around. It was a wonderful day. We went to the Red Fort, the National Museum, India Gate, had lunch at a lovely garden restaurant and finished up at the Mahatma Gandhi Museum which was a wonderful way to end our stay in India. Vikram's driving skills and pleasant demeanor and will be part of our fond memories of our adventure in India.

Sincerely,
Lisa Samel