

Business Traveller

INDIA

MAY 2024 ₹200

TURKISH TALES

*Exploring the breathtaking
cityscapes of Istanbul and Antalya*

SUAVE SPLENDOUR

*Must-have luxury accessories
for the dapper man*

SIPPING SUNSHINE

*Cocktail recipes that offer
respite from scorching
temperatures*

REPORT

*Frankfurt Airport Marriott
Hotel, Steigenberger Hotel Am
Kanzleramt Berlin and more*

THE JEWEL *of* RAJASTHAN

Discovering the regal charm of Jaipur





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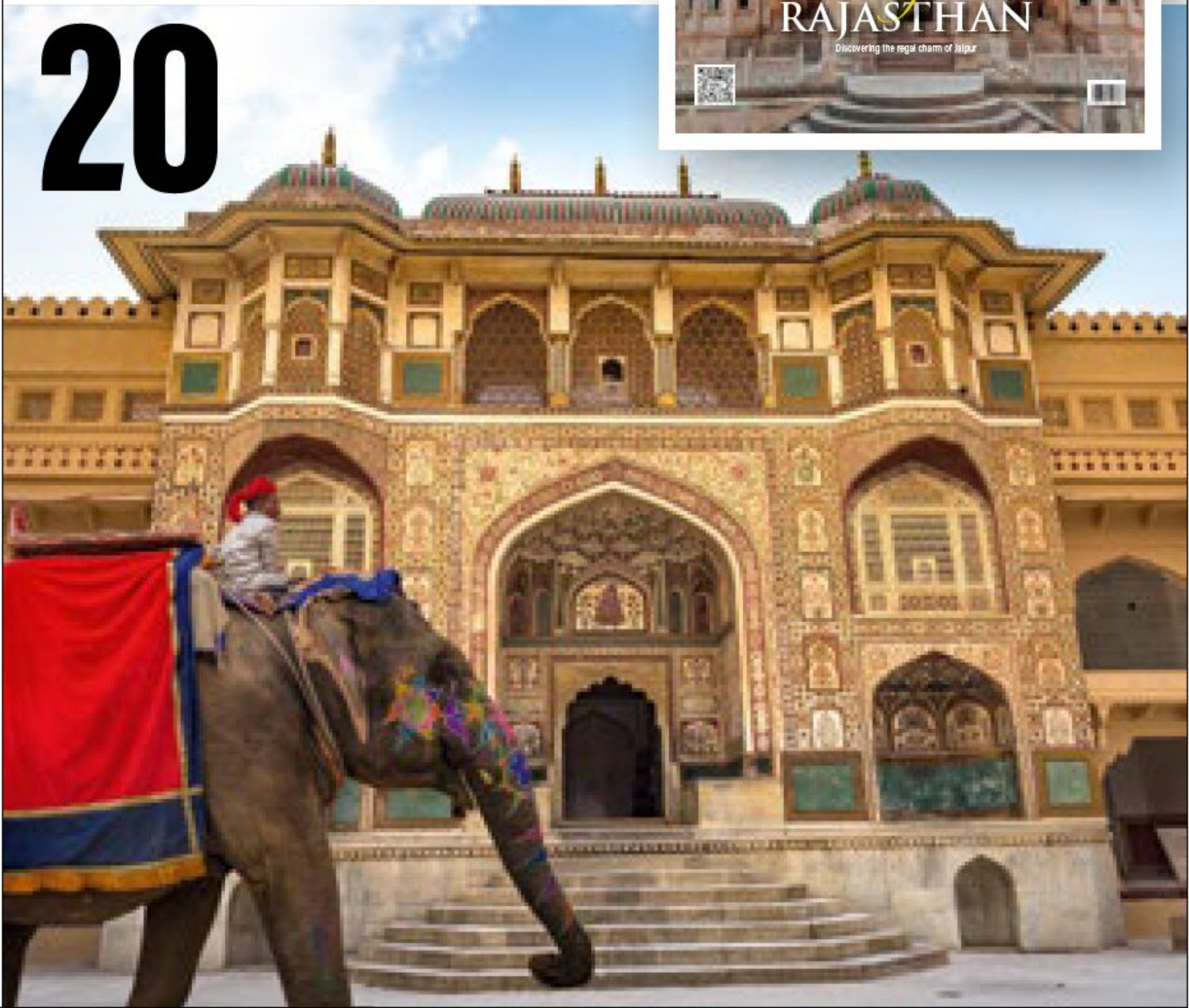
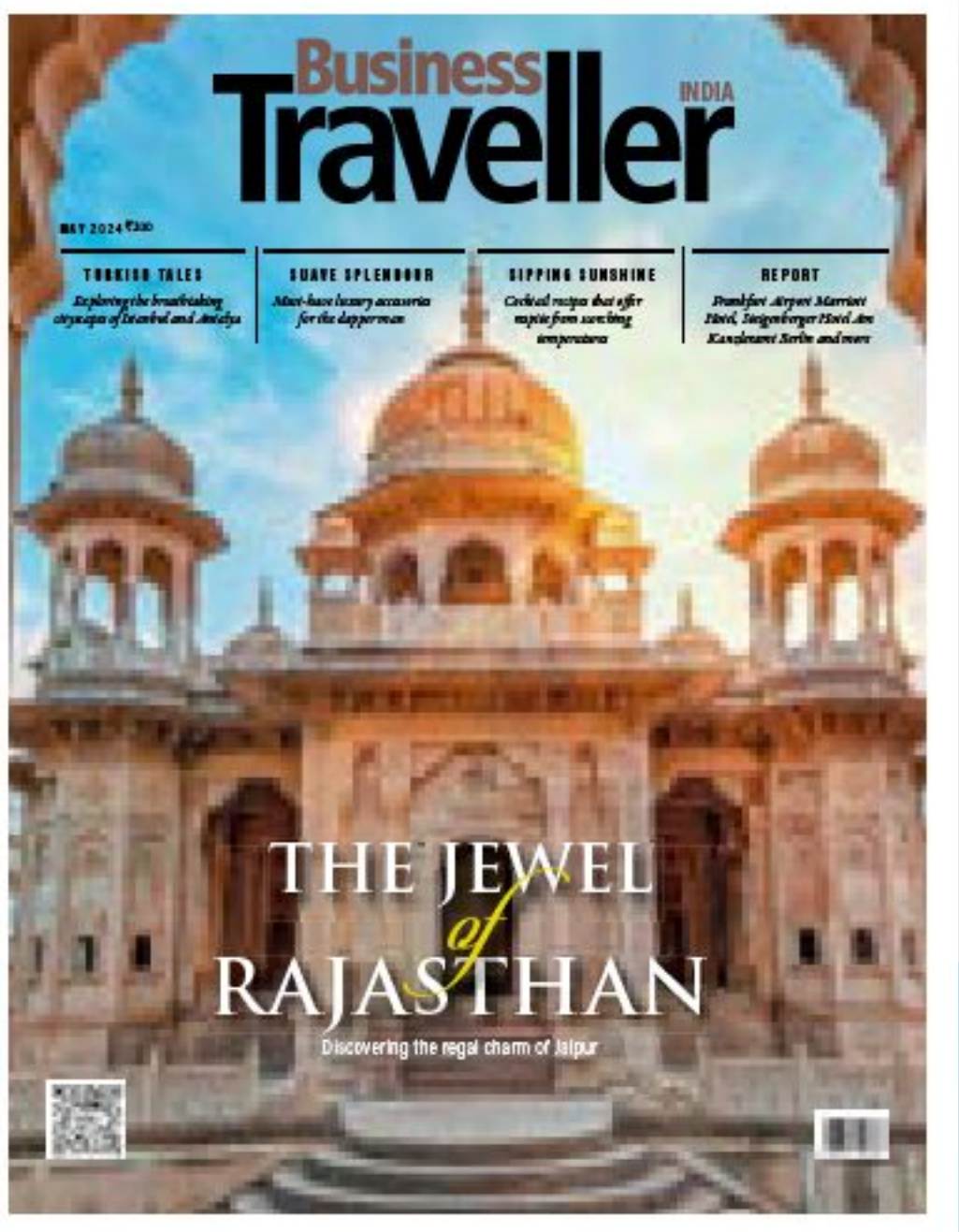
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WELCOME



W elcome to the May 2024 issue of *Business Traveller India*! Join us as we explore the world of luxury travel, style, and indulgence this month as we embark on a journey to Jaipur, a vibrant city teeming with rich culture, majestic palaces, and delectable cuisine. Whether exploring the iconic palaces or immersive experiences in bustling bazaars, it promises to be unforgettable for the discerning traveller. Venturing beyond borders, we jet off to Turkey, brimming with history, beauty, and charm. From the ancient wonders of Istanbul to the stunning landscapes of Antalya, our feature offers a charming recap of experiences that will surely ignite the reader's imagination.

For the opulence-inclined gentleman, we unveil a curated selection of must-have luxury accessories from elegant eyewear to sophisticated leather goods which elevate the personal style to new heights. As the temperatures rise, we invite you to cool off with our refreshing selection of alcoholic summer cocktails, perfect for sipping poolside or watching the sunset over the city skyline. Experience enhanced travel with AR, global reach through airline alliances, and much more we bring to you for your reading pleasure. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we have enjoyed curating it for you!

From all of us, we wish you safe travels!

Khursheed Mistry Consulting Editor

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Chris is an award-winning journalist based in Australia with a penchant for business travel and consumer loyalty. His next travel mission is to earn lifetime oneworld Sapphire status, after securing lifetime oneworld Ruby in 2023. In this issue, he charts the evolution of airline alliances- turn to page 52.



FLORIAN SENGTSCHMID

Florian Sengtschmid, CEO of the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, brings over 25 years of diverse experience in the tourism sector, ranging from his early roles in Austria’s private sector to pivotal positions within the Austrian National Tourist Board and extensive consultancy work across various countries. His expertise culminates in driving Azerbaijan’s tourism industry forward, evident in his strategic initiatives and insights shared in this issue. See page 70.

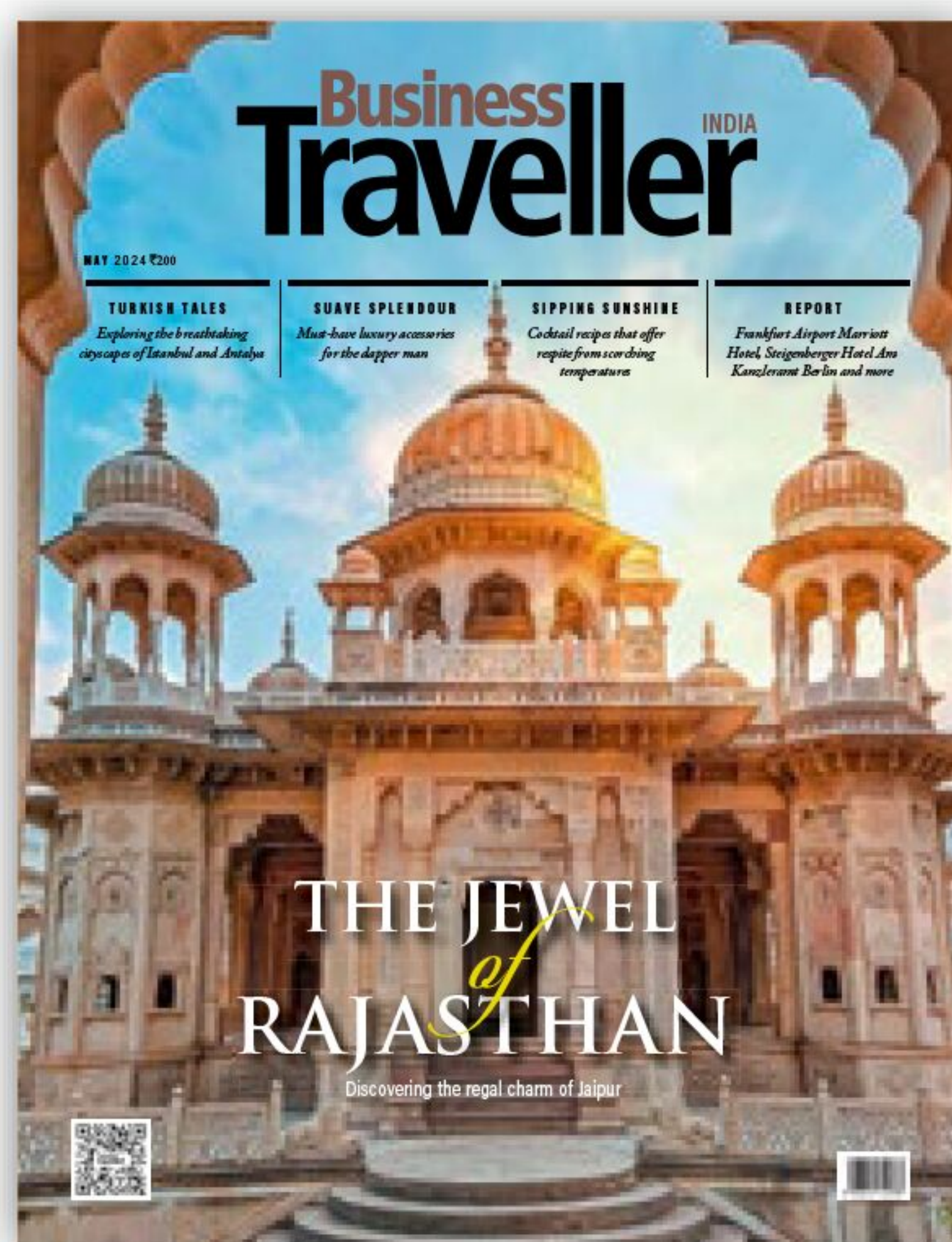


RAJ AJAY PANDYA

Raj Ajay Pandya, a writer and journalist holding a Master’s in Creative Writing from Brunel University London, leads a nomadic lifestyle, dividing his time between Mumbai, London, and Udaipur. With a keen eye for detail and a soul attuned to artistic nuances, Raj draws inspiration from his global travels, infusing his writing with the colours, sounds, and stories of diverse cultures. His latest adventure yields a captivating photo showcased in this issue, which readers can view on page 82.

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AIR MILES

Business Traveller India speaks to Jonas Wistrand, CEO of Gaston Luga and Aman Swetta, Co-founder of Maison id8 about Scandinavian design philosophy, introducing global lifestyle brands to the Indian market and more.

Could you delve into the inspiration behind Gaston Luga's Scandinavian design philosophy and how it resonates with the Indian market's preferences for elegance and minimalism?

Jonas Wistrand- Gaston Luga's Scandinavian design philosophy is deeply rooted in the region's ethos of simplicity, functionality, and elegance. Drawing inspiration from the clean lines, natural materials, and timeless aesthetics of Scandinavian design, we aimed to create products that seamlessly integrate into the modern lifestyle while exuding sophistication. This design philosophy resonates particularly well with the Indian market's evolving preferences for elegance and minimalism. As India undergoes rapid urbanisation and a shift towards a more cosmopolitan lifestyle, there's a growing appreciation for products that blend functionality with style.

Gaston Luga emphasises functional design alongside aesthetics. How does the brand strike a balance between meeting the practical needs of modern consumers while maintaining its signature sophisticated style?

Jonas Wistrand- The brand understands that modern consumers seek products that not only look good but also serve a practical purpose in their daily lives. We strike a delicate balance between functionality and aesthetics by prioritising thoughtful design features that enhance usability without compromising on style.

Our backpacks, for example, are crafted with durable materials and

ergonomic designs to ensure comfort and functionality, whether it's for daily commutes or weekend getaways. From padded laptop compartments to strategically placed pockets for organisation, every aspect of our products is meticulously designed to meet the practical needs of our customers. At the same time, we maintain our signature sophisticated style through attention to detail, premium craftsmanship, and minimalist aesthetics.

As Maison id8 specialises in curating and introducing global lifestyle brands to the Indian market, what criteria do you prioritise when selecting brands to collaborate with?

Aman Swetta- Our company is born out of over 20 years of hands-on experience in brand marketing and distribution strategy across India, North, and South America. Through extensive research, we've discerned a significant trend: the burgeoning travel habits of the young, stylish Indian demographic. This generation, deeply rooted in Indian heritage yet globally oriented, is increasingly traversing the world for both work and leisure. They seek travel options that seamlessly blend style, functionality, and environmental consciousness. Projections indicate that by 2030, Indians will rank as the fourth-largest global spenders on travel. Concurrently, we observe a notable migration of young professionals towards metropolitan areas, where reliance on public transportation is becoming customary for its convenience and time efficiency. Foremost, we prioritise brands renowned for their unwavering commitment to quality and authenticity, epitomising craftsmanship, meticulous detail, and a pursuit of excellence.



Additionally, we seek brands that exude a distinct allure tailored to Indian preferences, catering to diverse tastes and sensibilities. Equally vital is our emphasis on sustainability and ethical practices, as we advocate for environmentally conscious and socially responsible initiatives. Concurrently, we evaluate each brand's potential for enduring success and growth within the Indian market.

Maison id8 has been instrumental in bringing Western luxury brands to India. Could you elaborate on the challenges and opportunities you've encountered while introducing these brands to the Indian audience?

Aman Swetta - India's market is a kaleidoscope of diverse consumer preferences that vary by region. Our approach has been deliberate and gradual, encompassing every critical aspect from securing licences and permissions to establishing warehousing, logistics, marketing, branding, and distribution channels. Maison id8 is driven by a dual mission: to introduce the world to India while showcasing India to the world. We are consistently searching for high-quality Indian and global products tailored to a wide spectrum of audiences. We look for products that remain genuine and faithful to their origins.

THE FULLERTON HOTEL SINGAPORE



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Standing tall since its completion in 1928, the majestic Fullerton Building is a celebrated neoclassical marvel. Gazetted as a National Monument in December 2015, it once served as the distinguished domicile for Singapore's General Post Office, the Exchange, Chamber of Commerce, and the prestigious Singapore Club. For close to a century, it has been an integral part of Singapore's storied heritage. Today, the illustrious Fullerton Hotel Singapore stands as a testament to its legacy, offering 400 impeccably appointed rooms. Guests are treated to elegant accommodations with sweeping vistas of either the Singapore River or Marina Bay. Indulge in a culinary journey spanning diverse cuisines, from delectable Cantonese dim sum and indulgent afternoon tea to delectable vegetarian creations. Standing as a testament to Singapore's rich heritage, The Fullerton Hotel Singapore invites guests to indulge in its legacy of elegance, panoramic views, and culinary excellence. fullertonhotels.com

AIRBUS SIGNS CONTRACT WITH IIM-MUMBAI TO BOOST AVIATION TALENT IN INDIA

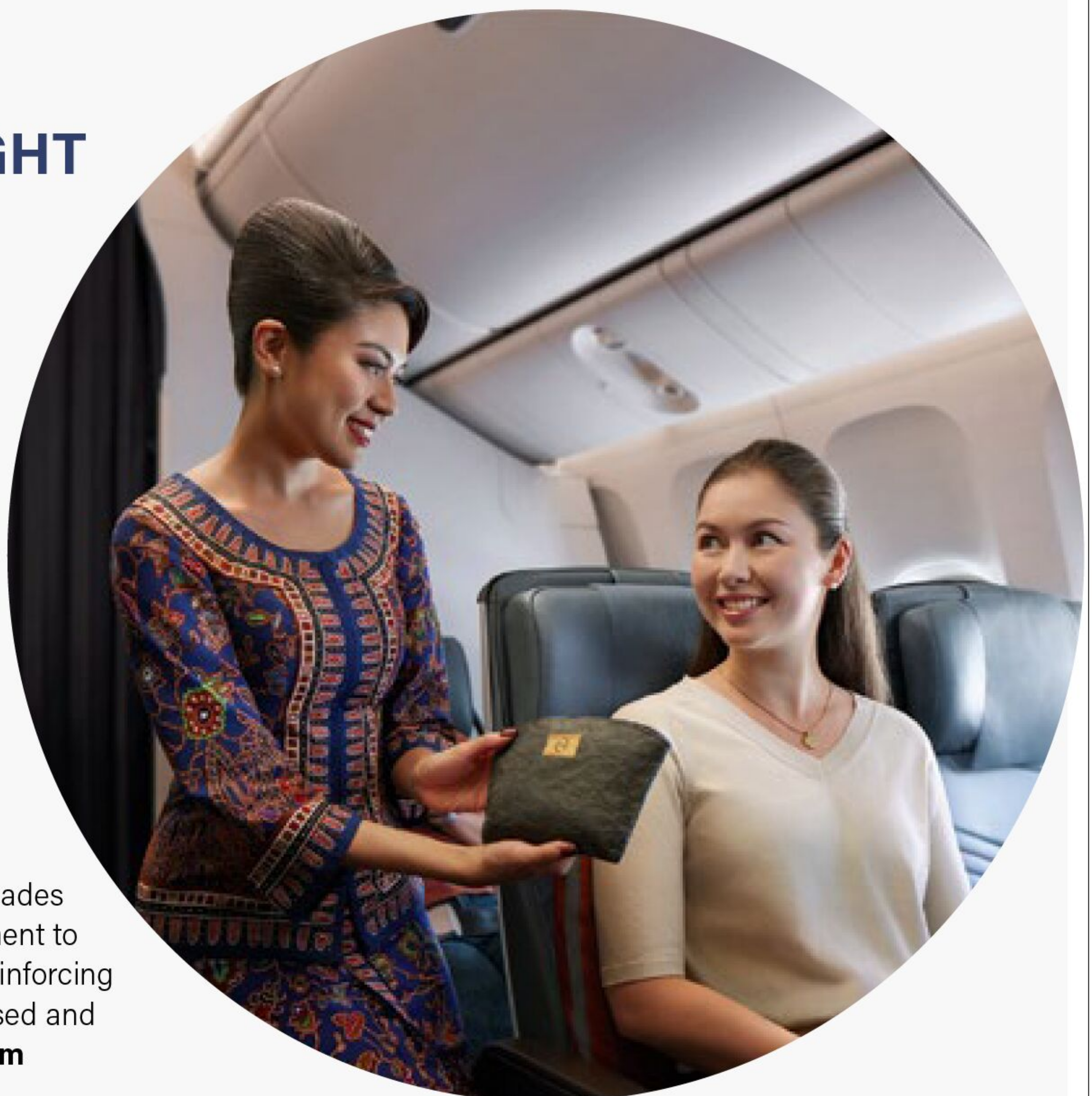


AIRBUS HAS SIGNED a contract with the Indian Institute of Management in Mumbai (IIM Mumbai) to provide aviation education to professionals and empower them with industry-ready skills through Airbus Beyond programmes. As per the agreement, IIM Mumbai will organise courses, onboard students and provide infrastructure and logistical support. Airbus will provide trainers and training material from the Airbus Beyond catalogue for short-term courses in the initial phase and co-curate long-term courses and certify their trainers in the later phase. Airbus Beyond is an Airbus company that empowers professionals for aerospace industry challenges. Leveraging on the knowledge and expertise of Airbus, the company delivers transformative programmes and boosts the skills, knowledge and behaviours of aspiring aviation professionals to foster innovation, leadership and operational excellence. The programmes are designed to enhance capability building at both the executive and frontline levels. **airbus.com**

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SINGAPORE AIRLINES ENHANCES PREMIUM ECONOMY CLASS IN-FLIGHT EXPERIENCE

SINGAPORE AIRLINES HAS unveiled its revamped Premium Economy Class experience, launched on March 31, 2024. The upgrade introduces an array of enhancements, including an expanded food and beverage selection with highlights such as Charles de Cazanove Brut Tradition NV champagne, a wide variety of appetisers and main courses, and an extensive wine and cocktail menu curated by SIA's panel of experts. This comprehensive overhaul aims to elevate the Premium Economy Class journey, catering to the discerning preferences of travellers seeking both comfort and value. In tandem with the culinary upgrades, SIA introduces a new eco-conscious amenity kit in partnership with Out of the Woods. Crafted from sustainable materials like Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified kraft paper and recycled PET, the kit features essentials such as eye shades and slippers. This initiative underscores SIA's commitment to sustainability while enhancing the travel experience, reinforcing the airline's position as a leader in delivering personalised and innovative services to its passengers. **singaporeair.com**



INDIA'S HIGHEST ALL-WEATHER GLAMPING SITE OPENS ITS DOORS

SAFFRONSTAYS PROUDLY UNVEILS Saffronstays Big Dipper, India's highest all-weather glamping site nestled amidst the majestic mountains of Bir and Barot Valley at an impressive elevation of 9,000 feet above sea level. Drawing inspiration from the celestial beauty of the Big Dipper constellation, this extraordinary destination offers guests a chance to immerse themselves in the splendour of the Milky Way Galaxy, visible with the naked eye thanks to its pristine location. What sets Saffronstays Big Dipper apart is its dual commitment to luxury and eco-consciousness. Anchored in a serene valley and surrounded by breathtaking views, this glamping site provides an ideal retreat for nature enthusiasts, ensuring a harmonious coexistence with the environment. Adventure seekers can indulge in exhilarating paragliding experiences and invigorating treks, discovering the natural wonders of the surrounding landscape. Ankush Rana, the homeowner and visionary behind the Big Dipper, describes it as a vantage point offering solitude, panoramic views, and opportunities for self-reflection amidst the forest and the firmament. saffronstays.com



IHG GROWS FOOTPRINT IN ASIA-PACIFIC TO MORE THAN 1,000 OPEN HOTELS

IHG HOTELS & RESORTS HAS reached 1,012 open hotels in the Asia Pacific region following stand-out openings in 2023 across many of its brands including Holiday Inn Hotels & Resorts, Intercontinental Hotels & Resorts, Regent Hotels & Resorts, Hotel Indigo, Vignette Collection, voco hotels and Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts. The APAC region is poised to see the most rapid growth in passenger traffic globally over the long term and newly relaxed travel arrangements – including visa-waiver agreements between countries, and the creation of new flight routes and new airlines– are boosting demand for hotel stays in APAC, IHG said on 14 March. As such, the hotel group's expansion across the region will continue. Currently, IHG says it has 705 hotels in 22 countries across 13 brands in the pipeline. From now on, IHG sees people travelling and spending more on experiences and to cater to this demand the group is exploring upcoming destinations including Halong Bay, Nagasaki, Penang, Lifou, Hubei and Taichung. ihg.com



DOUBLETREE BY HILTON DEBUTS IN BENGALURU

HILTON PROUDLY UNVEILS its latest addition, Doubletree by Hilton Bengaluru Whitefield, situated in the heart of Bengaluru's dynamic landscape. Developed by Kalyani Developers, this 180-room hotel marks a significant stride in Hilton's expansion across India. Nestled in Whitefield, Bengaluru's premier tech corridor with direct access to the Namma Metro, the hotel offers guests seamless connectivity to prominent IT hubs and entertainment options like Phoenix Marketcity and VR Bengaluru malls within a 15-minute drive. Combining colonial-era aesthetics with modern European décor, the hotel exudes a captivating blend of culture and heritage. Guests are invited to indulge in its rich historical charm and residential comforts. Three distinct dining venues cater to diverse palates, offering a fusion of Anglo-Indian, Indian, and Southeast Asian cuisines at 1882, while Drip serves as a versatile coffee lounge and meeting spot. The Rooftop Lounge Bar provides panoramic city views alongside signature cocktails and delectable bites. Amenities include a 24-hour fitness centre, rooftop pool, and flexible meeting spaces tailored to various event needs. **hilton.com**



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ITC HOTELS LAUNCH STORII SOLAN

STORII BY ITC HOTELS expanded its presence in Karnataka with the inauguration of Holiday Inn Express Bengaluru Bommasandra. Situated conveniently along the national highway, the hotel offers easy accessibility to major corporate hubs including Electronic City, Jigani, and the Bommasandra Industrial Area. As the sole international-branded hotel in the vicinity, Holiday Inn Express Bengaluru Bommasandra anticipates a surge in corporate clientele. Positioned within a seven-kilometre radius of esteemed companies such as Infosys, TCS, Wipro, and more, it is a prime choice for business travellers. Located 25 km from the city centre and 20 km from the bustling MG Road, the hotel promises a strategic location for guests. Embracing responsible tourism, the hotel utilises the IHG Green Engage System to monitor and manage environmental impact. Comprising 135 modern and spacious rooms, the hotel offers amenities such as workstations, flat-screen TVs, and complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi. With an all-day dining option at Express Café & Bar, along with a convenient Grab & Go service, guests are assured a delightful culinary experience. **itshotels.in**



IHG HOTELS LAUNCHES HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS BENGALURU BOMMASANDRA

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THOMAS COOK LAUNCHES THE ENTERPRISEFX CARD



THOMAS COOK HAS RECENTLY introduced EnterpriseFx – an innovative prepaid forex corporate card designed to cater to the rapidly growing business travel market in India.

This eco-friendly card, developed in collaboration with Visa and Mastercard, underscores Thomas Cook's commitment to sustainability while enhancing customer experience. With India's business travel market expected to triple by 2030, the launch of EnterpriseFx positions Thomas Cook as a frontrunner in offering environmentally conscious solutions to corporates, multinationals, and SMEs. The EnterpriseFx Card distinguishes itself through its emphasis on sustainability and premium benefits for business travellers. Made from recycled plastic and featuring a paperless green pin, the card reflects Thomas Cook's dedication to reducing carbon emissions. Moreover, for every 25th card sold, the company pledges to plant a tree, resulting in significant carbon savings equivalent to over 12 lakh trees for one lakh cards. Alongside its environmental focus, the card offers a host of perks including Thomas Cook Edge reward points, a complimentary international SIM card, free lounge access at international airports in India, and comprehensive insurance coverage. [thomascook.in](https://www.thomascook.in)

MAKEMYTRIP MAKES BHUTAN MORE ACCESSIBLE FROM MUMBAI

BHUTAN, RENOWNED FOR its rich cultural heritage and awe-inspiring landscapes, consistently ranks among the top international destinations for Indian travellers. It is one of the five most searched-for emerging destinations on the Makemytrip platform, witnessing an impressive 200 per cent year-on-year growth. This surge in interest underscores the growing fascination with Bhutan's mystical allure and highlights the increasing desire among Indian travellers to explore off-the-beaten-path destinations that offer unique experiences and insights. As Makemytrip introduces its exclusive charter service connecting Mumbai to Bhutan, it not only caters to this burgeoning demand but also fulfils the aspirations of travellers seeking unforgettable adventures. makemytrip.com

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AIR INDIA INTRODUCES REVAMPED CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAMME

AIR INDIA HAS INTRODUCED an updated loyalty program, aiming to offer enhanced rewards and benefits to its customers through a simplified structure. This marks the first major overhaul of the loyalty program, Flying Returns, in over a decade. Departing from the traditional miles-based system, the revamped program adopts a more equitable spend-based approach, as stated by Air India. Effective immediately, members can enjoy the benefits and accrue points under the new framework. Although Air India did not disclose the exact number of existing members, it highlighted several key features of the revised program. These include points with no expiry for active members, elimination of blackout dates, consistent tier privileges, opportunities for point collection and redemption across Star Alliance partner airlines worldwide, and a user-friendly digital interface for seamless transactions. airindia.com

VIRGIN ATLANTIC LAUNCHES BENGALURU ROUTE AND GOES DOUBLE DAILY ON MUMBAI



VIRGIN ATLANTIC IS INCREASING its services to India, launching a new route to Bengaluru and confirming a second daily service to Mumbai from October 2024. While Virgin celebrates its 40th anniversary in June, next year will mark another milestone – 25 years of operations in India. The airline added that it will offer over one million seats to the country from 2025, representing a 350 per cent capacity growth since 2019. The Bengaluru route was first announced in June 2023, with the carrier aiming to meet burgeoning business travel demand from India's Silicon Valley as well as connecting families, friends and students. Virgin competes with British Airways' existing daily service, while Air India is also set to launch a route from Gatwick in May. [virginatlantic.com](https://www.virginatlantic.com)

ST. REGIS GOA RESORT UNVEILS NEW RESTAURANT: OLIVETO

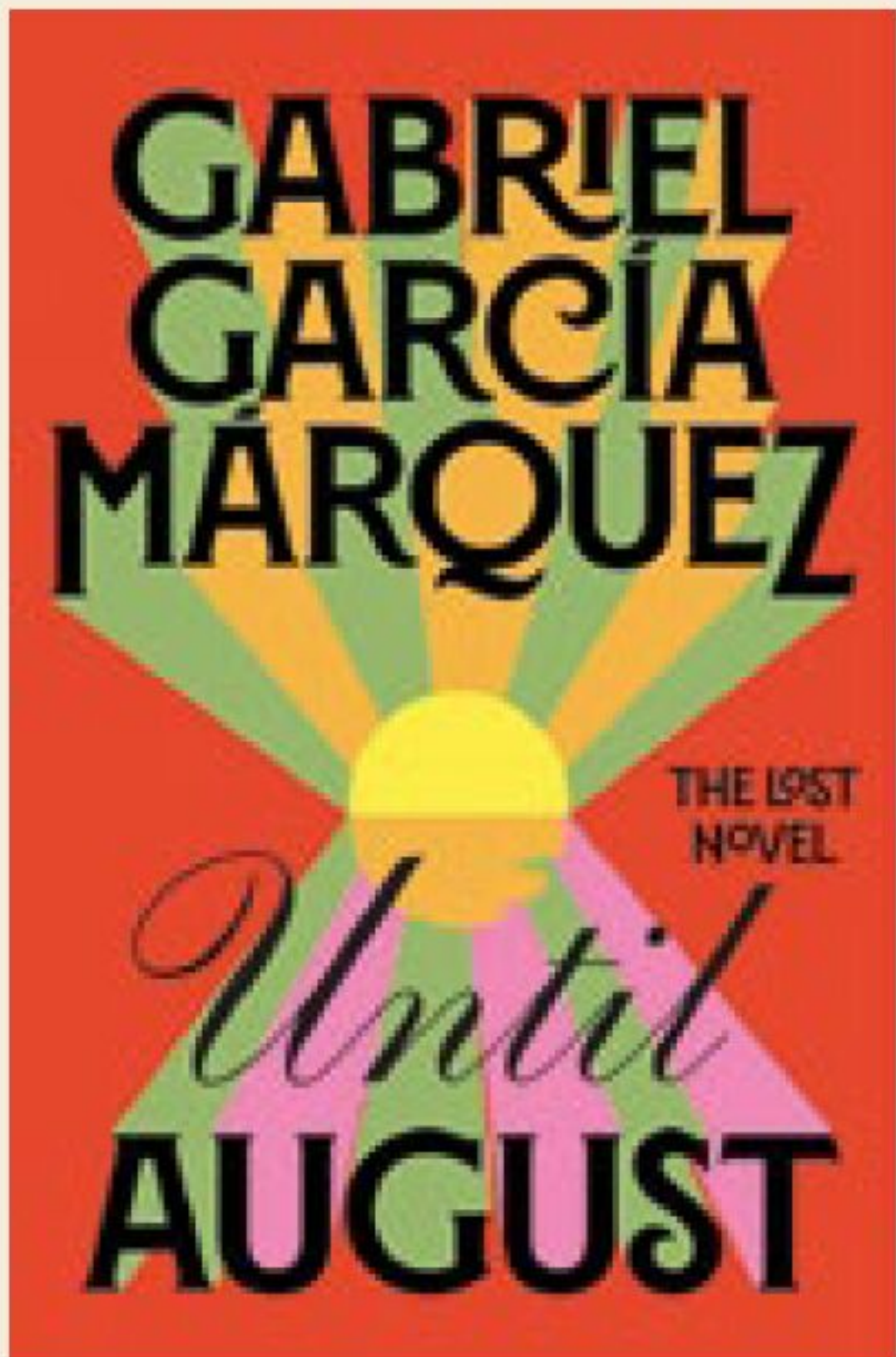
THE ANTICIPATION BUILDS at St. Regis Goa Resort as Oliveto, a sophisticated Italian eatery, opens its doors, adding a unique culinary experience to South Goa's dining scene. Set against picturesque pool views and tastefully designed interiors, Oliveto celebrates the essence of Italian cuisine, focusing on the purity of ingredients and the timeless allure of olive oil, a staple of Mediterranean gastronomy. Embracing the Italian philosophy of "La Dolce Vita", Oliveto presents a menu steeped in tradition yet infused with contemporary flair. Each dish reflects Italy's rich culinary heritage, crafted with meticulous attention to detail and an emphasis on fresh, vibrant flavours. The restaurant's ambience, reminiscent of rustic Italian charm, invites guests to savour every moment in a vibrant atmosphere brimming with energy and warmth. Indulge in the culinary journey at Oliveto with tantalising starters like Insalata Oliveto, featuring a vibrant mix of roasted cherry tomatoes, red onions, and smoked olives in a refreshing lemon emulsion. Sample their unique take on Tuscan cuisine with the Cavelossim Ribollita, followed by artisanal pizzas boasting a sourdough base and tantalising toppings like olives and burrata. [marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)



INFLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT
Our tips to make time fly by

READ: *Until August: The Lost Novel* by
Gabriel García Márquez

"Until August" is a captivating tale that delves into the complex emotions of Ana Magdalena Bach as she grapples with desire, regret, and the mysteries of love during her annual pilgrimage to the island where her mother is buried. Set against a backdrop of sultry days and tropical landscapes, the narrative unfolds with surprising twists and sensual encounters, drawing readers into Ana's world of longing and introspection. With lyrical prose and profound insights, this novel by the enigmatic Nobel Prize winner offers a thought-provoking exploration of freedom and the human heart's deepest yearnings.



WATCH: *See How They Run*

Amid 1950s London, the prospect of adapting a hit play into a film is shattered by a sudden murder within the crew. A seasoned inspector and a rookie constable are thrust into the enigmatic realm of underground theatre, embarking on a perilous investigation into the glamorous yet seedy world to unravel the mystery behind the homicide.



LISTEN: *Let's Talk About Myths, Baby!*

Let's Talk About Myths, Baby! is not your typical mythology podcast; hosted by a 30-something Millennial with a bold, feminist perspective, it delves into ancient myths with a modern lens. Through thorough research and candid storytelling, the podcast fearlessly addresses often sugarcoated and overlooked aspects of mythology, highlighting the voices of women, trans, and non-binary individuals. Expect frank discussions on violence, assault, and the curious habits of gods, all delivered with a blend of humour and expertise. This show promises to deepen your understanding of ancient myths and the cultures that spawned them.

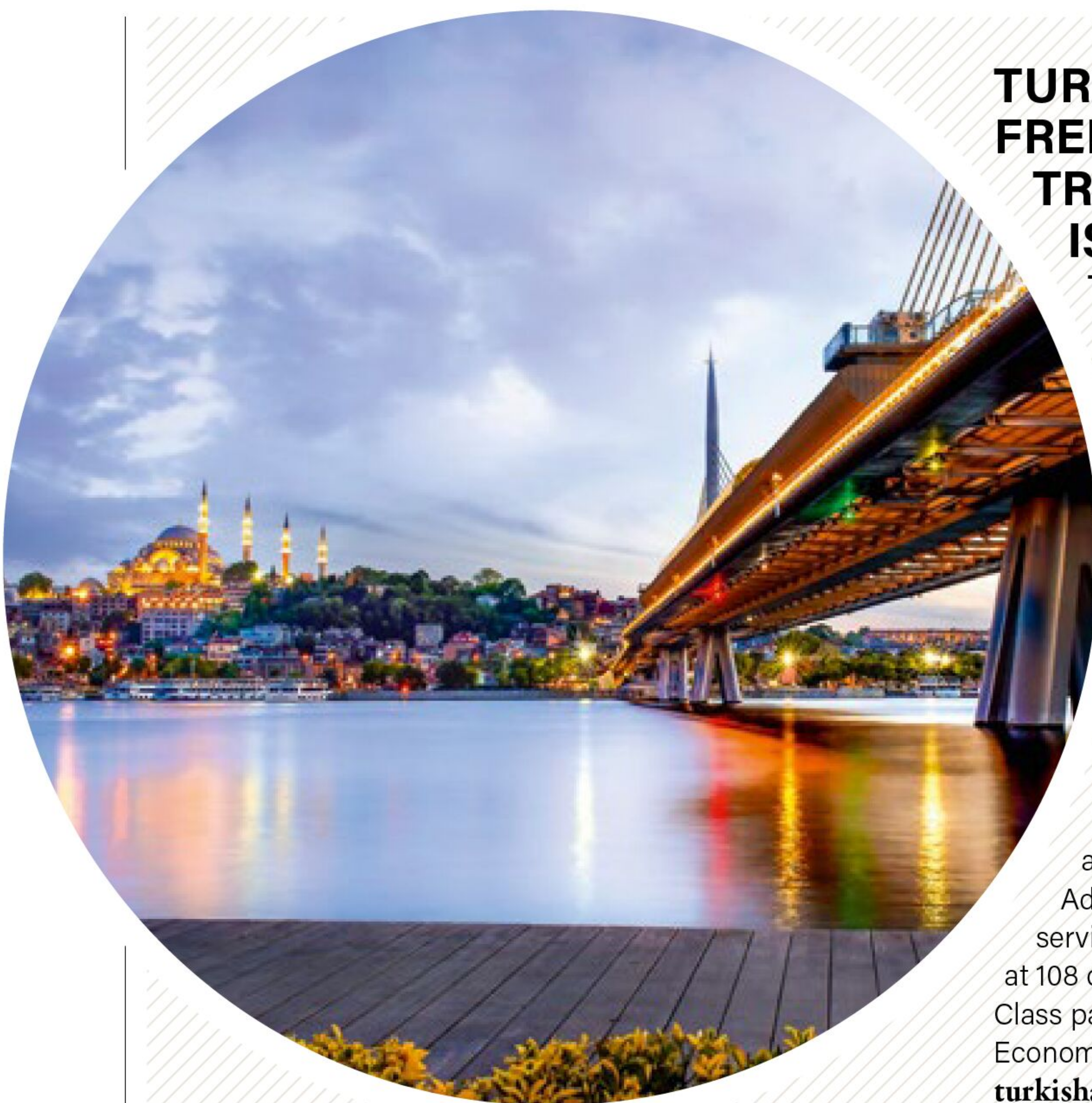


LOST IN
TRANSLATION



Idioms from around the world that have us scratching our heads. This issue, it's a Spanish expression.

Phrase: *Estar como una cabra*
Literally: *To be like a goat*
Meaning: *To be totally mad*



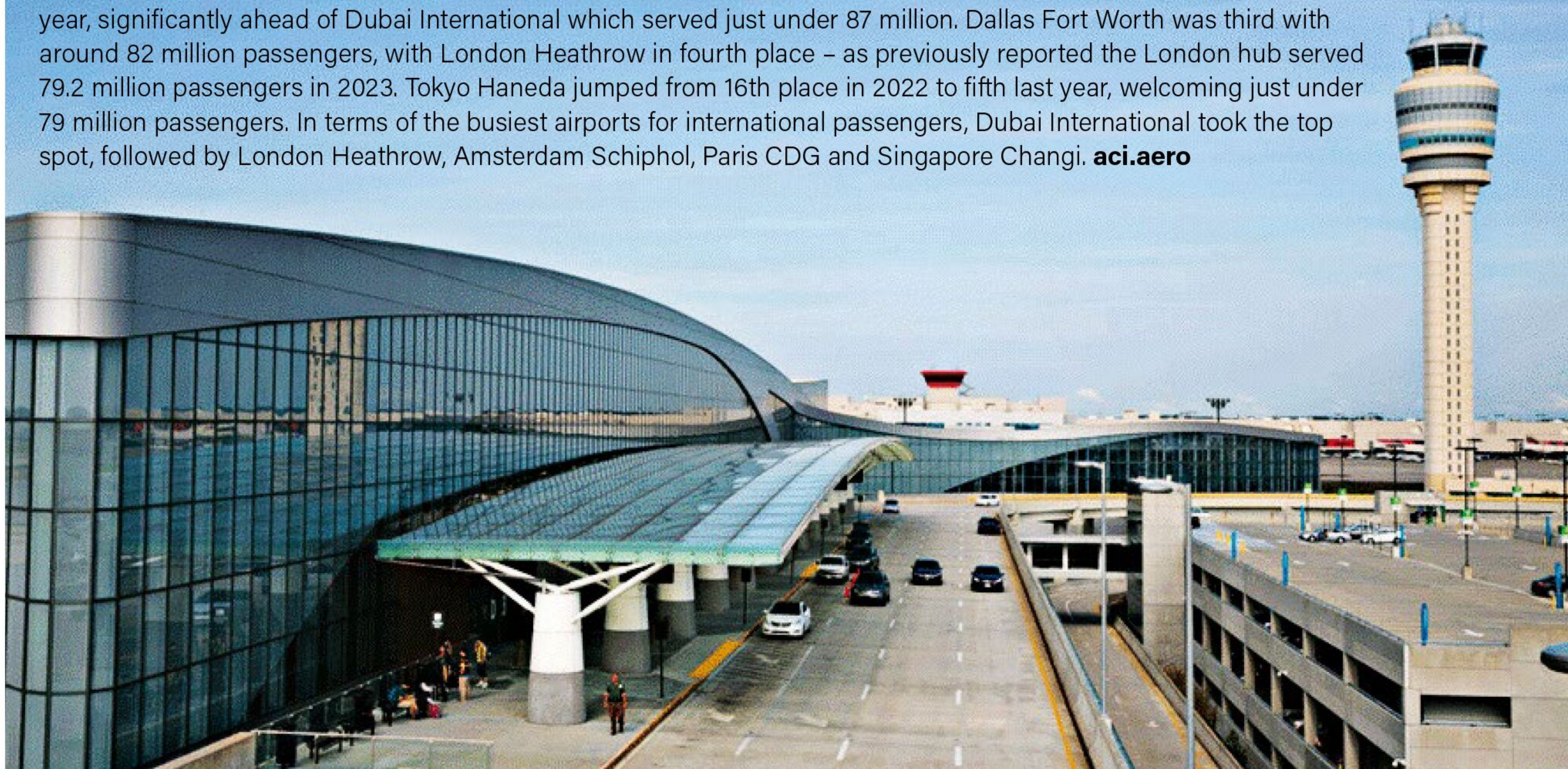
TURKISH AIRLINES OFFERS A FREE MINI-VACATION FOR INDIAN TRAVELLERS WITH "STOPOVER IN ISTANBUL"

TURKISH AIRLINES HAS introduced its stopover in Istanbul program in India, allowing passengers to explore the city during layovers. Passengers flying with Turkish Airlines can enjoy free accommodation in select partner hotels, enhancing their travel experience with cultural immersion and memorable moments. The program targets Indian travellers, aiming to enrich their journeys by discovering Istanbul's vibrant charm. The surge in Indian travel interest in European destinations post-pandemic has led to increased visits, with Turkish Airlines emerging as a preferred choice for seamless journeys. The Stopover in Istanbul program offers an additional perk for passengers travelling to Europe, providing a complimentary stopover in Istanbul. Eligible passengers with a layover of at least 20 hours can apply for the program, receiving vouchers for free stays. Additionally, Turkish Airlines offers Touristanbul, a free layover service, and the Stopover Accommodation service is available at 108 destinations across 42 countries, including India. Business Class passengers enjoy a two-night stay in a 5-star hotel, while Economy Class passengers receive one night in a 4-star hotel. turkishairlines.com

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ATLANTA TOPS WORLD'S BUSIEST AIRPORTS IN 2023

AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL (ACI) World has published its preliminary ranking of the world's busiest airports in 2023, with Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International again topping the list. The airport welcomed more than 104 million passengers last year, significantly ahead of Dubai International which served just under 87 million. Dallas Fort Worth was third with around 82 million passengers, with London Heathrow in fourth place – as previously reported the London hub served 79.2 million passengers in 2023. Tokyo Haneda jumped from 16th place in 2022 to fifth last year, welcoming just under 79 million passengers. In terms of the busiest airports for international passengers, Dubai International took the top spot, followed by London Heathrow, Amsterdam Schiphol, Paris CDG and Singapore Changi. aci.aero



ACCOR ANNOUNCES OPENING OF 22 NEW HOTELS IN JAPAN

ACCOR HAS ANNOUNCED the opening of 22 hotels and over 6,000 rooms in Japan, which will double its footprint in the country by increasing Accor's portfolio of hotels in Japan to 46 properties. The hotels, comprising twelve Grand Mercure and ten Mercure hotels, range in location from the northernmost prefecture of Hokkaido to the southernmost prefecture of Okinawa and are located close to local hidden gems such as Cape Zampa in Okinawa, Asuka village in Nara, Shiroyo Koibito Park in Hokkaido and Senri Beach in Wakayama. Each hotel offers a range of guestrooms, restaurants, and wellness facilities such as onsen (hot springs), saunas, and swimming pools, with select hotels also offering stunning views of the local landscape. accor-resorts-japan.jp



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SIX SENSES IS SET TO UNVEIL SIX SENSES RESIDENCES DUBAI MARINA, THE WORLD'S TALLEST RESIDENTIAL TOWER.

SIX SENSES RESIDENCES DUBAI MARINA, a collaboration between Six Senses and Select Group, aims to redefine healthy living with its integration of wellness-centric infrastructure and amenities into the design of the world's tallest residential tower. Offering 251 residences ranging from 2 to 5 bedrooms, the project emphasises sustainability, wellness, and happiness, with features like Sleep With Six Senses amenities and biophilia elements. Amenities include a longevity centre, gym, spa, and community spaces, all themed to promote well-being. Scheduled for completion in mid-2028, the development overlooks iconic Dubai landmarks and is poised to set a new standard for wellness real estate. Taking a holistic approach, wellness-centric and community-enhancing infrastructure elements and amenities are being seamlessly integrated into the design of the 122-storey building, which will be the world's tallest residential tower once complete.



LYLA: A NEW MEXICAN-CALIFORNIAN-INSPIRED COCKTAIL BAR MAKES ITS DEBUT IN BKC, MUMBAI

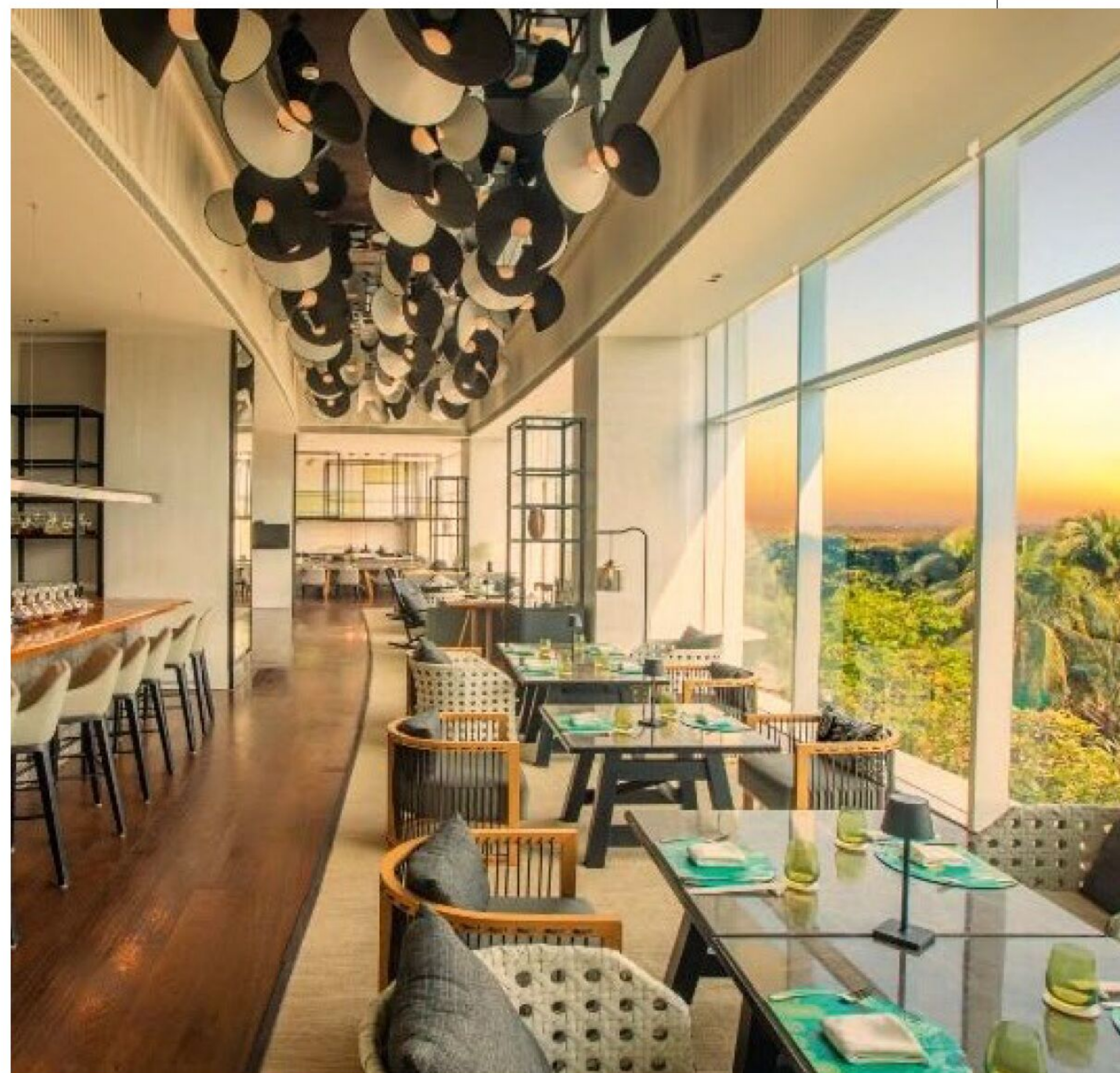
SITUATED IN MUMBAI'S BUSTLING BKC district, this Mexican and California-inspired cocktail bar by Chrome Asia Hospitality is poised to become the city's newest hotspot. Spanning 418 sqm Lyla boasts a fusion of native Indian, Afro-Latin, and Spanish design elements, creating a vibrant ambience with vivid pops of colour. Helmed by Pawan Shahri, Dhaval Udeshi, and Nikita Shahri, Lyla offers a chic

dining experience during the day and seamlessly transitions into a lively cocktail bar in the evening. Priyanko Sarkar, a distinguished spirits journalist and judge renowned for his storytelling-focused bar takeovers, lends his expertise to craft Lyla's innovative cocktail menu. Inspired by the tales of the dual Gold Rush, where the Spanish Navies introduced treasures like chocolate and mangoes to Mexico, and the transformative impact of the California Gold Rush, Lyla's cocktails are a testament to the rich histories of Mexico and California. Sarkar's signature concoctions, such as La Dorado—a picante featuring mango and avocado instead of typical spices—and the enigmatic Kahwen, tantalising with hints of coffee and chocolate, promise to entice the palate in unprecedented ways.



NEW LOOK UNVEILED FOR MAYOUCHI AT THE WESTIN MUMBAI POWAI LAKE

EMBARK ON A CULINARY adventure at the newly reimagined Mayouchi, nestled within The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake, where tradition meets innovation in every exquisite dish. Chef Golpin Sianipar, renowned for his virtuosity in the culinary realm, infuses each creation with a harmonious blend of flavours, drawing inspiration from the rich culinary heritage of China and Japan. From delicate dim sums to savoury signature entrees, every plate showcases Chef Sianipar's meticulous craftsmanship and deep-rooted passion for culinary excellence. The ambience at Mayouchi is a symphony of elegance and sophistication, where a chic and minimalistic design palette sets the stage for an unforgettable dining experience. Japanese display decorations, a live show kitchen, and intricate wooden carvings add to the allure, creating an intimate atmosphere that invites guests to unwind and savour each moment. As the sun sets over the picturesque Powai Lake, Mayouchi transforms into a high-energy lounge, offering handcrafted cocktails, curated music, and dynamic decor vibes. Whether you're seeking a romantic dinner for two or a lively evening with friends, Mayouchi promises an unforgettable journey through the vibrant tapestry of Asian flavours and aesthetics, leaving a lasting impression on every guest who walks through its doors. [marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)



THE JEWEL *of*

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RAJASTHAN

Exploring the royal history, heritage,
and timeless beauty of Jaipur

WORDS KHURSHEED MISTRY

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DESTINATION

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

The established principles of Vastu Shastra, used by noted architect Vidyadhar Bhattacharya, afforded Jaipur the distinction of being the first planned city in India. In 1876 when the Prince of Wales visited India on a tour, the then ruler Maharaja Ram Singh had the entire city painted pink as a symbolic gesture of his hospitality. Jaipur, which rises majestically against the backdrop of the forts - Nahargarh, Jaigarh and Garh Ganesh Temple can trace its origins to 1727 when it was established by Jai Singh II, the Raja of Amber who shifted his capital from Amber to the new city because of the rapidly growing population and increasing water scarcity.

Jaipur combines the mysticism of ancient history with all the advantages of a metropolis. This bustling modern city, acclaimed by some of the most well-known celebrities and discerning audiences in the world is one of the three corners of the golden triangle that includes Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur.





HANDICRAFTS AND CULTURE

Jaipur's rich cultural tapestry extends to its vibrant handicraft scene, where skilled artisans craft magnificent treasures; from intricate block printing, exquisite jewellery combining traditional techniques with contemporary designs, marble carvings, pottery, and leatherworks, to a kaleidoscope of vibrant fabrics. Jaipur's handicrafts reflect a timeless tradition of artistry and innovation. Adding to Jaipur's allure is the culinary cornucopia of popular local street delicacies and dishes which quintessentially define the region.

MICE AND WEDDINGS

Jaipur, famed as the Pink City, reigns as a premier and popular MICE and wedding destination, blending regal allure with modern amenities, and attracting visitors from across the globe. Its rich cultural heritage, majestic palaces, and ornate forts provide an enchanting backdrop for grand events. Venues like the City Palace, Rambagh Palace, and the Albert Hall Museum offer a glimpse into the city's royal legacy, adding grandeur to gatherings. With many luxury hotels, resorts, and convention centres equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, Jaipur seamlessly caters to corporate events and conferences of all scales.

The city's vibrant culture, rich traditions, and colourful festivities infuse weddings with unparalleled vibrancy and joy. Luxurious hotels and resorts cater to every wedding need, ensuring seamless celebrations are filled with opulence and elegance. With its blend of heritage and hospitality, Jaipur captures the hearts of couples seeking an unforgettable destination to begin their journey of love and togetherness, making it a cherished choice for weddings that leave lasting memories. Whether for corporate gatherings or lavish nuptials, Jaipur's everlasting allure captivates all who seek a truly unforgettable experience. Join us as we navigate the magnetism of Jaipur, inviting you to immerse yourself in its diverse and captivating offerings.



ROYAL LEGACY

AMBER PALACE

Amber, sheltered approximately 11 kilometres from Jaipur, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Once the stronghold of the Kachwahas of Amber, it served as the capital until Jaipur's establishment. Perched amidst rugged hills, Amber Palace epitomises a fusion of Hindu and Mughal architectural styles. Initiated by Raja Man Singh I in 1592, its construction culminated under Mirja Raja Jai Singh's supervision, fortifying it as an impressive refuge against adversaries. The palace's simple exterior belies the opulent interiors which are crafted from red sandstone and white marble adorned with intricate carvings, precious stones, and mirrors. Overlooking the serene Maota Lake, its majesty spans nearly seven centuries, evolving from a modest structure claimed by Rajputs from the Meena tribes into the resplendent Amber Palace, embodying its legendary past and captivating visitors with its magnificence.

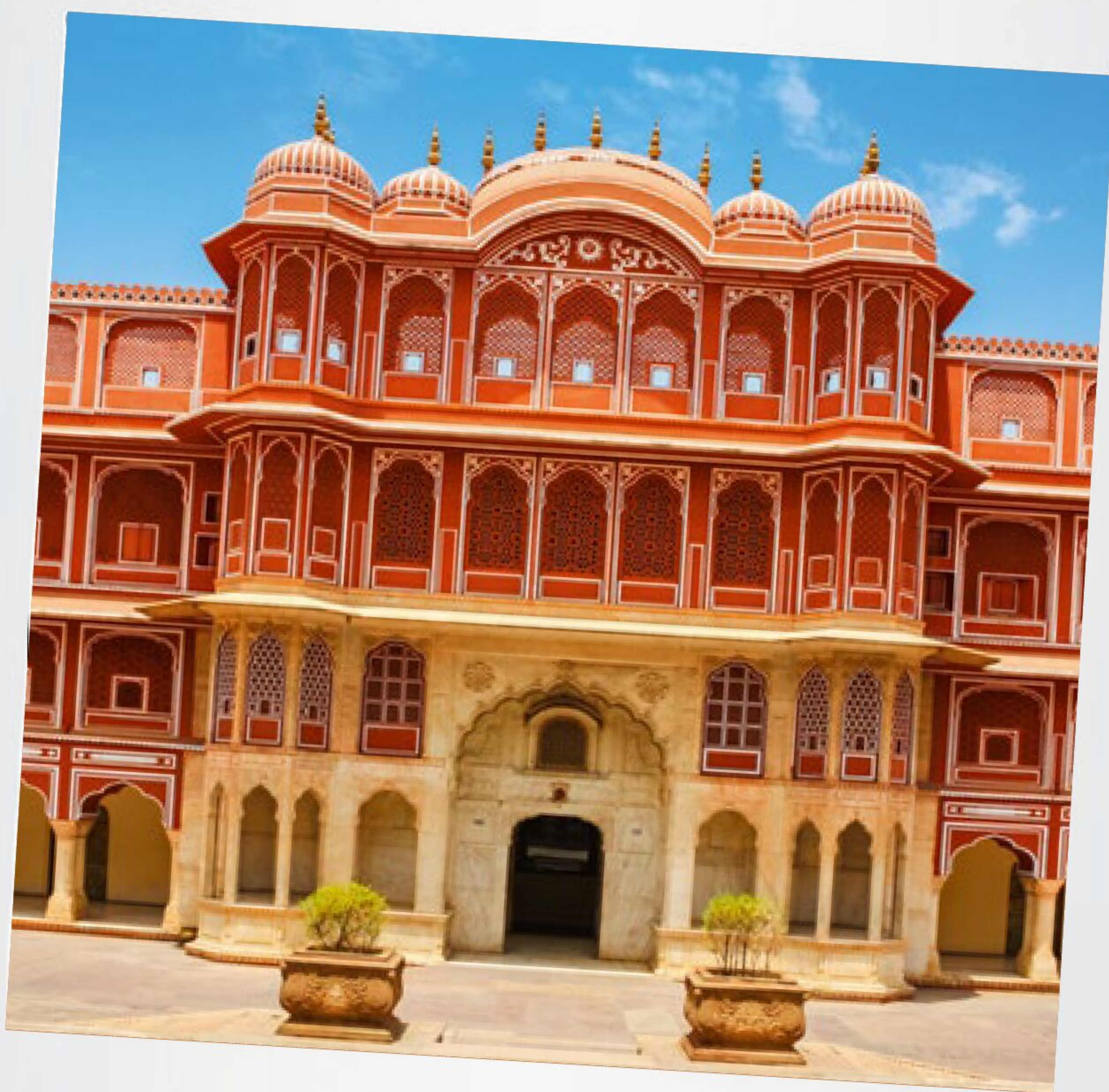


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HAWA MAHAL

Constructed in 1799 by Sawai Pratap Singh, the Hawa Mahal, or the Palace of Winds, was envisioned as a summer haven for the royal family and a discreet observatory for its female members. This five-storey structure harmoniously blends Hindu and Islamic architectural styles, with its intricate latticed windows resembling Lord Krishna's crown. Crafted from pink sandstone, Hawa Mahal stands as Jaipur's emblematic edifice, its façade adorned with 'jharokhas' that enhance its aesthetics and act as natural air conditioners. While its grandeur captivates from afar, visitors can also go right up to the top for panoramic vistas through the windows. Managed by the Archaeological Department of the Government of Rajasthan, the palace also hosts an archaeological museum within its courtyard, preserving its rich historical legacy.



CITY PALACE

Nestled within the fortified walls of Jaipur's old city, the City Palace complex stands as a tribute to the vision of Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, the city's founder. Combining Mughal and Rajput architectural styles, the palace still serves as the private residence of the ruling royal family. Initially constructed by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, subsequent rulers expanded the complex over time. Encompassing notable structures like the Mubarak Mahal and the Maharani's Palace, the complex is steeped in history. The Mubarak Mahal, now home to the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, showcases a diverse array of royal attire, including exquisite Pashmina shawls and Benaras silk saris. Meanwhile, the Maharani's Palace houses a remarkable collection of well-preserved Rajput weaponry dating back to the 15th century, alongside intricately painted ceilings. This blend of regal opulence and historical artefacts makes the City Palace Complex a captivating destination for visitors.

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JAIGARH FORT

Dominating the skyline of Jaipur, Jaigarh Fort stands as a formidable testament to the city's rich history. Built in 1726 by Sawai Jai Singh II to safeguard Amer Fort, it earned its moniker; 'Fort of Victory' for never being conquered. Nestled amidst thorn-scrub-covered hills, its steep ascent leads to the imposing Dungar Darwaza, the main gate. Perched on Eagle's Hill within the Aravalli range, Jaigarh overlooks the serene Maota Lake and Amer Fort. Linked by a subterranean passage, it forms a unified complex with Amer, offering an escape route for the royal family during the war. Preserved within its walls are palaces, granaries, temples, and the iconic Jaivana cannon, the world's largest cannon on wheels. Once a thriving centre of cannon production during the Mughal era, it now hosts a museum showcasing historic weaponry. Adorned with Indo-Persian architectural marvels, Jaigarh Fort remains a favourite relic of Rajasthan's regal past.

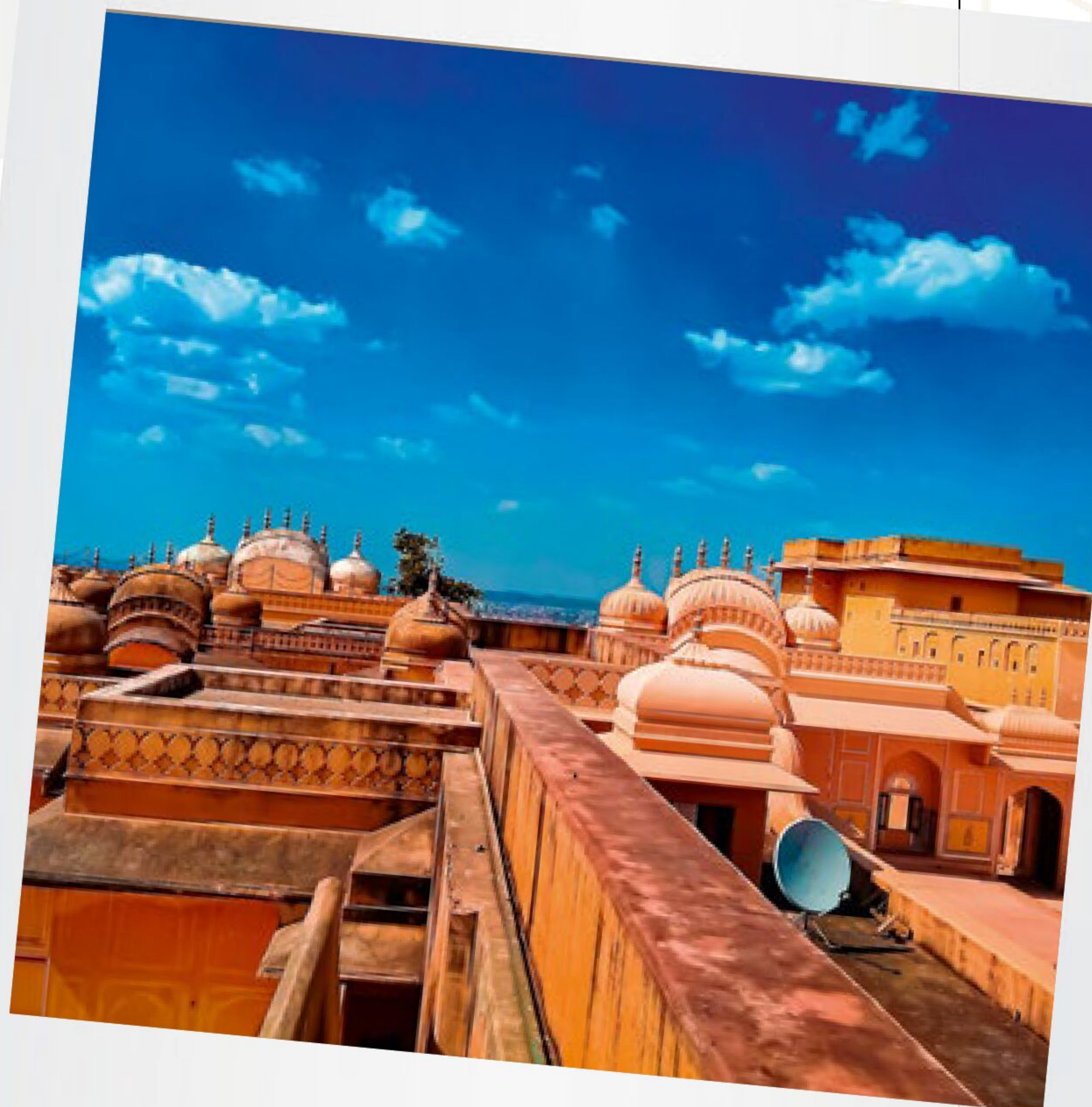


JAL MAHAL

Jal Mahal, translating to 'Water Palace,' initially served as a hunting lodge for Maharaja Madho Singh I, designed amidst the Man Sagar Lake. While it stands as a prominent sightseeing attraction, its purpose extends beyond mere aesthetics, offering a retreat for the king and his cortege during duck hunting expeditions. Jal Mahal is built in classic Rajput style with pink sandstone, showcasing symmetrical architecture that embodies the region's cultural heritage. While many admire its exterior from the lake's banks, few recognize the technological marvels concealed within. Despite its visible single-floor structure, Jal Mahal encompasses four submerged levels, skilfully engineered to resist water seepage using specially crafted lime mortar. For over 250 years, this architectural feat has withstood the test of time, preserving its legacy as a testament to ancient ingenuity and craftsmanship.

NAHARGARH FORT

Perched majestically atop the Aravalli Hills, Nahargarh Fort forms an imposing backdrop to Jaipur. Constructed in 1734 during the reign of Jai Singh, it was expanded in 1868, serving as a vital defence against invaders. Its name, Nahargarh, meaning 'abode of tigers,' reflects its formidable presence. Enclosed within its walls is the elegant Madhavendra Bhawan, a summer retreat for the royal family, featuring 12 matching boudoirs for the queens, along with a suite for the king, connected by corridors adorned with intricate murals. Today, the palace remains a popular destination for local picnickers. Illuminated by night, Nahargarh Fort offers a breathtaking panorama of Jaipur, its twinkling lights casting a mesmerizing glow over the cityscape, ensuring its enduring allure as a symbol of Jaipur's regal heritage.



JAIPUR JAUNTING

ANOKHI MUSEUM OF HAND PRINTING

Spearheaded by the husband-wife team comprising Rachel Bracken-Singh and Pritam Singh, the Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing was conceptualised and established after the acquisition of the Chanwar Palkiwalon ki Haveli mansion by Pritam's father in the late 1970s. Recognized by UNESCO for Cultural Heritage Conservation in 2000, the preservation project laid the foundation for the museum. Structural adaptations transformed the historic haveli into a modern space suitable for exhibiting delicate textiles, while the Anokhi Archives underwent enhancements for storage and research. The museum's inaugural exhibition, 'Print Progress – Innovation & Revival 1970-2005,' marked the beginning of its journey. Continuously evolving, the museum remains committed to refining practices, conducting research, and educating locals about their textile heritage, fostering a deep sense of pride and connection within the community.



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ALBERT HALL MUSEUM

Named after the renowned Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Albert Hall in the heart of Ram Niwas Garden is a magnum opus of architectural inspiration.

Conceived and designed by Sir Swinton Jacob, the visionary behind many of Rajasthan's palatial wonders, it blends Indo-Saracenic styles. In 1876, the foundation stone was laid by the Prince of Wales. This museum showcases a diverse array of artefacts including metalwork, woodcrafts, carpets, sculptures, weaponry, natural stones, and ivory goods. It boasts an extensive collection of miniatures from various schools of art such as Bundi, Kota, Kishangarh, Udaipur, and Jaipur, offering visitors a glimpse into the rich artistic heritage of the region. The Albert Hall stands as testimony to the fusion of cultural influences and artistic excellence that define Rajasthan's architectural legacy.



JAINIWAS UDHYAN - LIGHT AND SOUND SHOW

The light and sound show at Jainiwas Udhyan sets a precedent in Rajasthan with its innovative 3-D projection mapping technology. Utilizing state-of-the-art 3-chip DLP projectors boasting 25,000 lumens, alongside DMX-controlled LED lights and a 5.1 audio surround system, it offers a captivating and compelling narrative. The show chronicles the legendary tale of the renowned Shri Govind Dev Ji temple of Jaipur - from the intricate carving of the idol by Brijnabh, the great-grandson of Shri Krishna, to the temple's establishment in Vrindavan, and its tumultuous history of invasions leading to the hiding and subsequent rediscovery of the idol by Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's disciples. It culminates with the journey of the idol to its current abode in Jainiwas Udhyan, marking the rich heritage and devotion etched in every facet of its existence.

JAWAHAR KALA KENDRA

The unique architecture of Jawahar Kala Kendra conceptualised by the late Charles Correa, is inspired by the nine-planet concept of Indian astronomy and echoes the square-grid plan of Jaipur city. Established in 1993, it is an international hub for multi-art and culture, dedicated to preserving and promoting various Indian art forms. It has emerged as a prominent cultural destination, offering workshops, performances, exhibitions, and publications focused on art and culture, facilitating interaction among enthusiasts, scholars, artists, and visitors. Jawahar Kala Kendra enriches the visual and cultural heritage of Jaipur by showcasing nuances of various genres. Over the years, it evolved into an integral centre bridging classical and folk traditions, poised to embrace tradition and innovation. It aims to embrace contemporary narratives in its programming, solidifying its role as a dynamic platform for diverse artistic expressions in Rajasthan.



JHALANA SAFARI PARK

Jhalana Safari Park, a sprawling wildlife reserve, renowned for leopard sightings, spans 1,978 hectares on the southeastern border of Jaipur. Until 1860, it served as the exclusive domain of the Jaipur estate, used for royal sports and meeting local fuel and fodder needs. In 1862, Dr. Brandis assumed the role of Forest Inspector General, initiating systematic forest management. The park boasts rich flora and fauna and offers safari tours with wildlife sightings in their natural habitats, including 15-20 resident leopards and diverse species like striped hyenas, desert foxes, and chital. Bird enthusiasts delight in sightings of Indian Pittas, Dusky Eagles, and numerous other avian species. Attractions within the park include a historic Shikar oudhi, a temple dedicated to Goddess Kali, and a Jain Chulgiri Temple, enhance the allure of this natural wonderland.



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MUSEUM OF GEM AND JEWELLERY

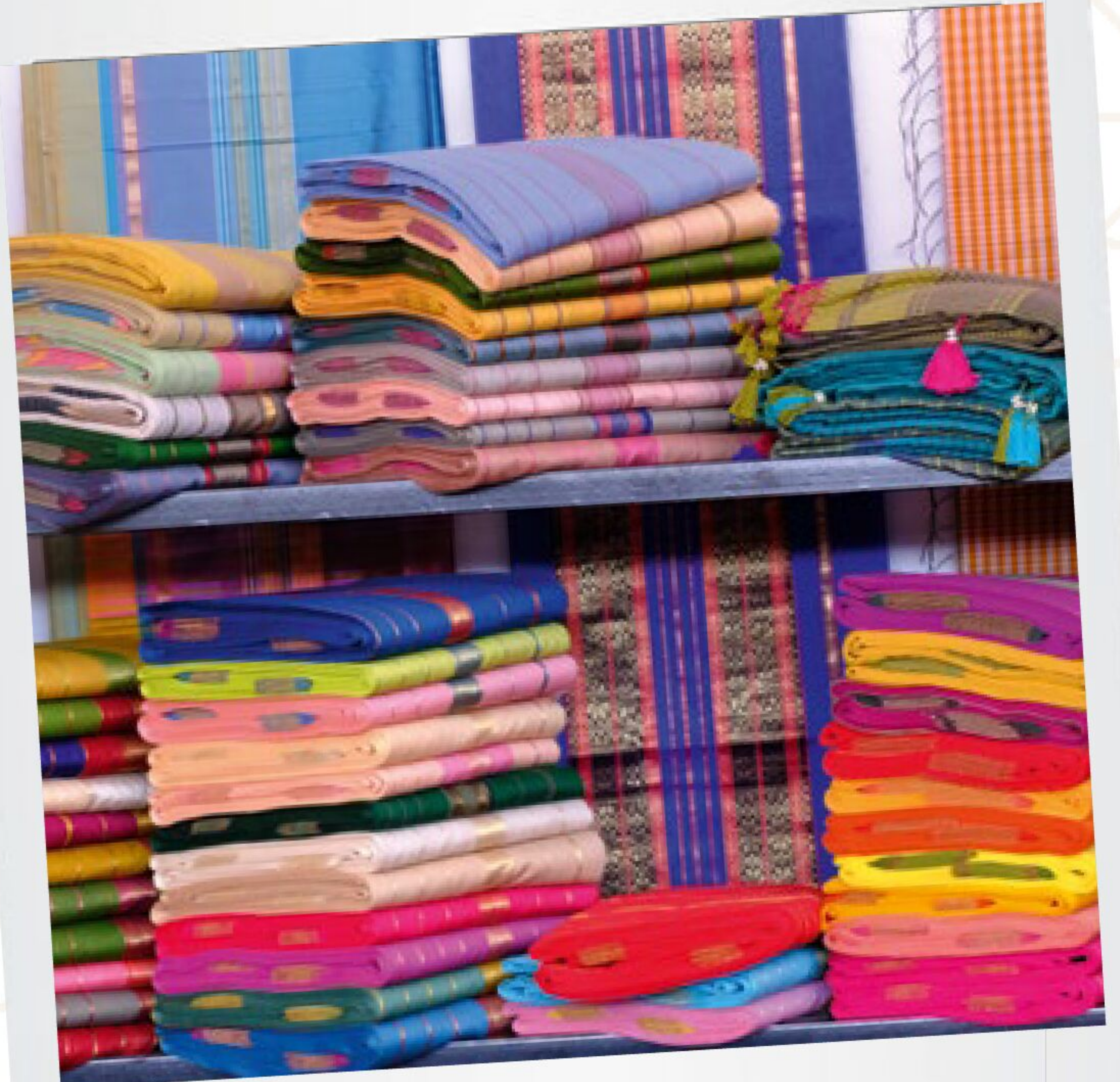
The Museum of Gem and Jewellery in the Rajasthan Chambers showcases the allure of vibrant precious stones through captivating displays and insightful narratives. It offers enriching experiences for visitors and chronicles Jaipur's rich legacy in the gem industry, from tracing the origins of diverse specimens to exploring the history of trade and showcasing exquisite craftsmanship. It stands as one of the country's most vibrant and unique repositories of gems and jewellery.

Generous contributions from global jewellers ensure a stellar collection. With a gift shop, rotating jeweller displays, and regular workshops, seminars, and conferences on gem-related topics, the museum provides an immersive and captivating journey into the world of gemstones and jewellery, captivating all who enter its doors.

RETAIL HAVEN

BAPU BAZAR

Nestled in the heart of Jaipur, between the Sanganer Gate and the New Gate of the Pink City, lies Bapu Bazar, a bustling shopping hub offering a myriad of treasures from accessories and shoes to handlooms, artificial jewellery, brass works, and precious stones. Reflecting the vibrant spirit of Rajasthan, this market captures rich traditions through diverse arrays of artefacts and handicrafts. Renowned among locals and tourists for its vibrant ambience, Bapu Bazar is as a favourite shopping destination in Jaipur. Catering to the discerning shopaholic who is adept at bargaining, it offers a plethora of options. With its abundance of traditional Rajasthani merchandise, Bapu Bazar beckons to those enamoured with all things traditional, serving as a haven for enthusiasts seeking authentic cultural experiences through their shopping endeavours.



JOHARI BAZAAR

Johari Bazaar, near the iconic Hawa Mahal, is a renowned shopper's haven, celebrated for its opulent jewellery and elegant artefacts. Its rich history and lively ambience make it one of the oldest markets in the Pink City offering a glimpse into its eclectic, cultural tapestry. With its plethora of jewellery options, Johari Bazaar entices visitors with its allure. The market, aptly named 'Johari' meaning 'Jeweller' in Hindi, boasts numerous shops showcasing exclusive jewellery pieces, reflecting rich Rajasthani heritage. From precious gems to semi-precious stones, the dazzling array of jewellery beckons visitors to indulge in a souvenir or two. While bargaining may not always be fruitful here, the fixed prices don't deter from the allure of the exquisite offerings. Whether seeking customized pieces or selecting from the array of Rajasthani elegance, Johari Bazaar promises an unforgettable shopping experience steeped in royal elegance and sophistication.

TRIPOLIA BAZAR

Named after the Tripolia Gate, which translates to 'three gates' in Rajasthani, the bazaar traces its origins to the gate built in 1734. Historically, this gate served as the main entrance to the City Palace, accessible only to the royal family and their guests. Today, it remains a significant landmark, marking the entrance to both the City Palace and Jantar Mantar. Tripolia Bazar, one of Jaipur's oldest markets, is renowned for its traditional lac bangles, emblematic of the city's rich heritage and vibrant fabrics. Organised into separate lanes dedicated to various trades, such as lac bangles, blacksmithing, and books, Tripolia Bazar offers a structured shopping experience. Each lane bears a unique name reflecting its speciality like Maniharon Ka Raasta for lac bangles and Tikkiwaalon Ka Raasta for blacksmiths.



KISHANPOLE BAZAR

Kishanpole Bazaar, nestled in the heart of Jaipur, exudes timeless charm. This historic market offers a window into Jaipur's hidden gems, with its vibrant pink-hued buildings and shops adding to its allure.

Home to the city's oldest and most esteemed handicraft shops, it boasts a legacy of dedicated craftsmen. Running parallel to Johari Bazaar, Kishanpole Bazaar promises a culturally enriching experience. With a plethora of shops lining its streets, it caters to every taste and preference. In the early morning light, the bazaar takes on a magical hue. Moreover, it offers a gastronomic adventure, with delicacies like Kheer and Golgappas tantalising taste buds. From souvenirs to freshly ground spices, Kishanpole Bazaar is a treasure trove waiting to be explored by visitors from around the world.

GASTRONOMICAL FLAVOURSCAPES



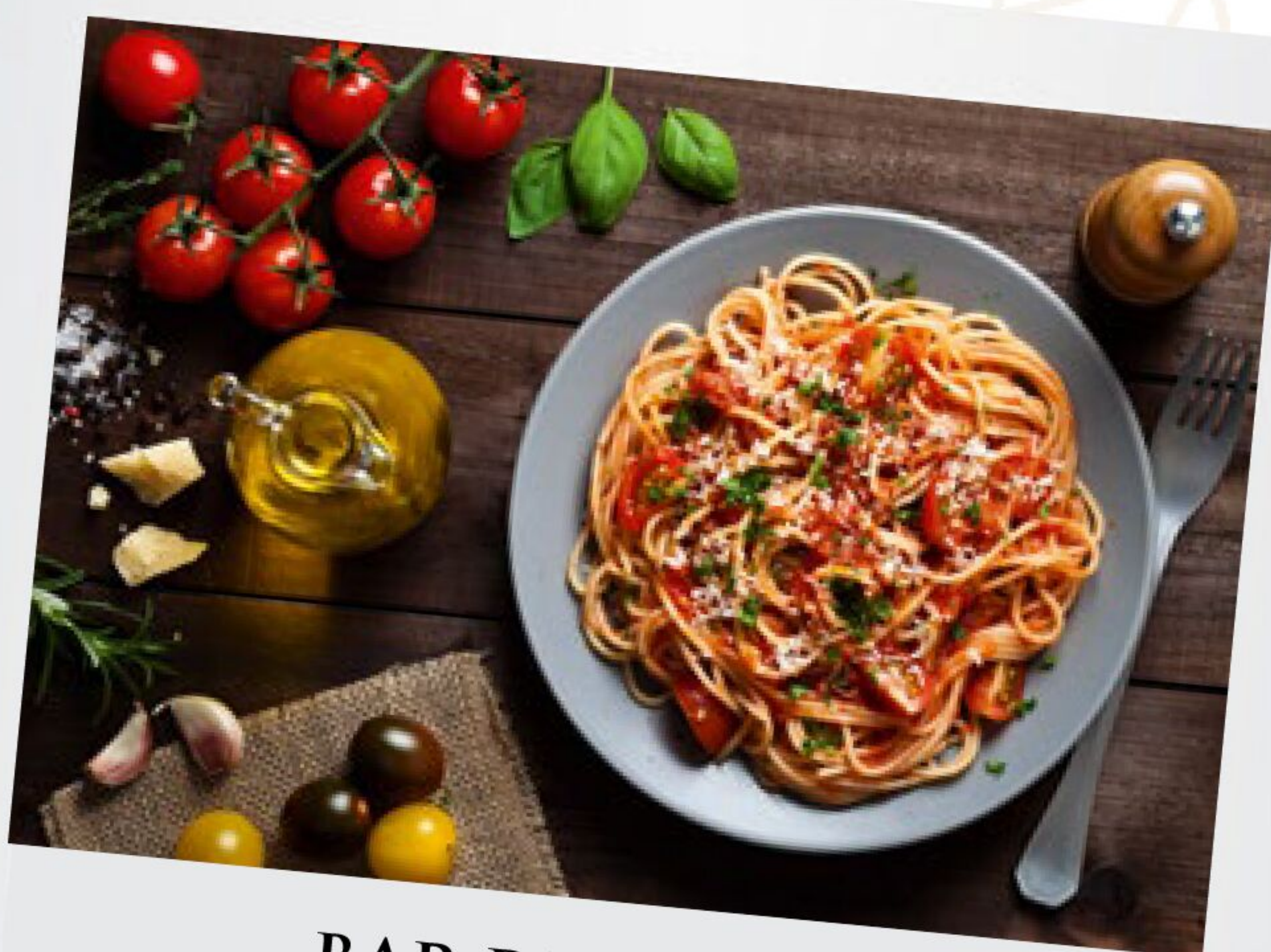
GOLGAPPA AT CHAWLA'S AND NAND'S

Nand and Chawla's, competitor stalls on Jaipur's fashion street, offer the ultimate Golgappa or paani-puri experience. Amidst bustling crowds, patrons savour an array of spicy, sweet, and tangy chutneys accompanying these delectable delights. Sample from both stalls to determine the reigning champ!



CAFE LAZYSOJO

Cafe LazyMojo in Malviya Nagar is a renowned culinary gem. This multi-cuisine hub promises a feast for every palate offering Italian, Mexican, continental, Indian, and Chinese fares. Reputed for exceptional service, it caters to groups, casual lunches, intimate dates, and professional meetings alike. The charming ambience, cosy seating, and inviting lighting create a delightful setting.



BAR PALLADIO

Bar Palladio Jaipur, in Narain Niwas Palace Hotel, offers classic Italian cuisine in a stunning setting, blending Italian elegance with a Mughal-inspired ambience. With a lush garden, peacocks, and tented canopies, Bar Palladio, Jaipur, presents a captivating fusion of European dining and Indian aesthetics, inviting patrons into an orientalist dream world.

LUXURY OASIS



RAMBAGH PALACE, JAIPUR

The Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, offers 78 meticulously restored opulent rooms and suites, blending rich history with impeccable hospitality. Its unique event spaces cater to meetings and grand wedding celebrations, immortalising memories in beautiful locations and verdant gardens. Maharani Mahal, with ornate metal doors, leads to a hall adorned with traditional arches and hand-painted silk panels. Its antique mirror ceiling reflects the glass chandeliers' brilliance, while wood and glass doors unveil lush gardens. Chandra Mahal boasts a grand dome with twinkling broken mirrorwork and an intimate garden-view verandah. Sabha Niwas caters to private business meetings with state-of-the-art equipment. Suvarna Mahal, Rajput Room, and Verandah Café offer royal dining experiences to esteemed guests. Guests can also indulge in signature wellness treatments to elevate their retreat experiences at J Wellness Circle. Experience the epitome of Rajput hospitality and regal splendour at this spectacular hotel. [tajhotels.com](https://www.tajhotels.com)

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ITC RAJPUTANA, A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL, JAIPUR

ITC Rajputana with its red brick exterior enclosing a central atrium, long corridors, serene courtyards, and tinkling fountains transport visitors to bygone majesty, making the hotel a refined host offering contemporary luxury. Luxurious accommodations feature garden or pool views, spacious bathrooms with bathtubs, premium bedding, a refreshment centre, and an executive desk. Some rooms allow access to the club lounge. Guests can enjoy a diverse array of flavours and culinary creations at award-winning restaurants and a spectacular bar. Kaya Kalp, the spa guarantees guests a journey through India's ancient customs and spiritual legacies, while the fitness facilities and outdoor pool provide rejuvenation and relaxation. The hotel offers versatile meeting venues, including outdoor spaces and a pillarless banquet hall, with Suryavanshi Mahal, accommodating up to 450 guests. This ensures ample space and guarantees a memorable and seamless experience for all attendees. [marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)





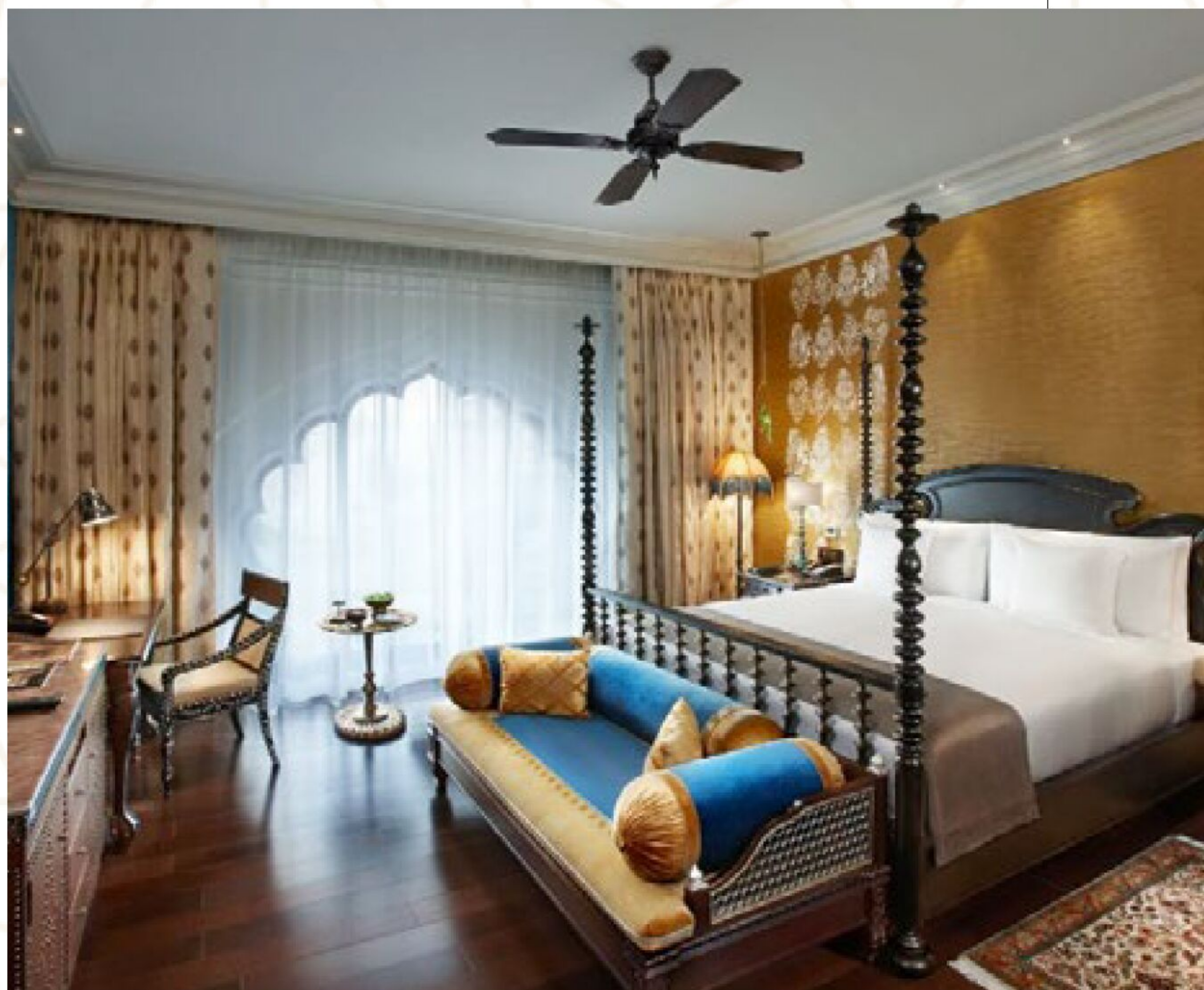
HILTON JAIPUR

Located in the heart of the city, Hilton Jaipur catering to both business and leisure travellers, is conveniently situated a short distance from the railway station and 11 km from Jaipur International Airport. From a total of 179 guestrooms including luxurious suites with private terraces, panoramic views, and executive rooms with club lounge access, each accommodation offers modern amenities for ultimate comfort. Guests can enjoy rejuvenating treatments and wellness regimes at the outdoor pool, fitness centre, and spa. Dining options include local and contemporary cuisine at Chaandi and Aurum, while Krystal Bar offers an eclectic beverage menu. Nebulae, one of the highest rooftop lounge bars, is perfect for special celebrations. With around 862 sqm of indoor and outdoor venues, including a pillarless ballroom and a canopied poolside space, the hotel caters to social events, meetings, and team-building activities. Expert wedding specialists and staff ensure memorable gatherings, whether large or small. [hilton.com](https://www.hilton.com)

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FAIRMONT JAIPUR

Fairmont Jaipur, a luxurious palace blending Rajputana and Mughal architecture with modern comforts, offers 245 guest rooms, including seven suites, each opulently designed for comfort with some offering sweeping Aravalli Hills, poolside or landscaped garden vistas. Intricate Mughal arches and plush fabrics create a regal ambience. Relaxation options abound with poolside lounging, massages, and fitness centre workouts. Experience holistic renewal at Ruhab Spa's ancient-inspired therapies. Award-winning restaurants feature inspired menus catering to every palate with their spectacular culinary creations. Fairmont Jaipur excels as an event destination, with impeccable catering and planning services for weddings and conferences. The Grand Ballroom and seven meeting rooms blend modern technology with opulent decor, perfect for corporate or social gatherings. With attention to detail and dedication to excellence, the stay promises an unforgettable experience amidst the beauty and tranquillity of its surroundings. [fairmont.com](https://www.fairmont.com)





INTERCONTINENTAL JAIPUR TONK ROAD

Nestled in Jaipur's verdant landscape, Intercontinental Jaipur Tonk Road is conveniently located. Featuring 218 spacious rooms, the hotel offers timeless beauty and magnificent views of the Greenbelt. The rooms feature luxury amenities, work desks and ample natural daylight. Guests can experience global flavours with three dining venues, two vibrant bars, and a serene lounge offering epicurean delights. At Tattva Spa, one can indulge in rejuvenating treatments in four therapy rooms or opt for a la carte services. Dive into the pool or enjoy modern fitness facilities. Boasting well-appointed boardrooms, banquet halls and open lawns, the 4,738 sqm event spaces set the stage for all corporate gatherings, intimate celebrations, or weddings, providing a perfect canvas for memorable and successful occasions. For cherished moments with friends or to mark significant occasions, the hotel ensures an unforgettable experience. [ihg.com](https://www.ihg.com)

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JAIPUR MARRIOTT HOTEL

Jaipur Marriott Hotel, nestled in the vibrant heart of the Pink City, offers opulence and convenience for the modern traveller. Its refined hotel suites are meticulously crafted, blending comfort with timeless elegance. Each room and suite boasts sweeping vistas of Jaipur and offers luxurious amenities, including pillowtop mattresses, fast wifi, and ergonomic desks. With a range of dining experiences, the hotel is the ultimate haven for culinary solace. The Grand Ballroom accommodates up to 700 guests, perfect for larger groups. State-of-the-art conference technology enhances event spaces. One can optimise any business event or grand celebration, such as weddings, with creative catering from custom menu options. Select venues at the hotel offer the ideal setting for unforgettable celebrations, ensuring memories that will last a lifetime. To unwind and pamper the senses, The Palm Spa offers rejuvenating spa packages and treatments, promoting total well-being. [marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com) **BTI**



TURKISH



Tales

Business Traveller India went on a captivating journey through the vibrant streets of Istanbul to the serene shores of Antalya, delving deep into the intriguing fusion of tradition and modernity that defines these enchanting destinations in the majestic land of Türkiye

WORDS ANITHYA BALACHANDRAN

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My exploration continued with a visit to the opulent Marmara Esma Sultan, a historic mansion steeped in regal heritage

Arriving in Istanbul, a city that had long inhabited my dreams, was a surreal experience. The beauty that unfolded before me exceeded all expectations, casting a spell of enchantment upon my senses. Welcomed by Ali, my affable tour guide turned lifelong friend, I was immediately enveloped in the warmth and familiarity of Turkish hospitality. Checking in at the magnificent Swissôtel The Bosphorus, I was escorted to my exquisite room overlooking the mesmerising Bosphorus. The sight before me, with its tranquil waters and bustling shores, left an everlasting imprint on my memory. At that moment, as I settled into my surroundings, I knew that my journey through Istanbul would be nothing short of extraordinary.

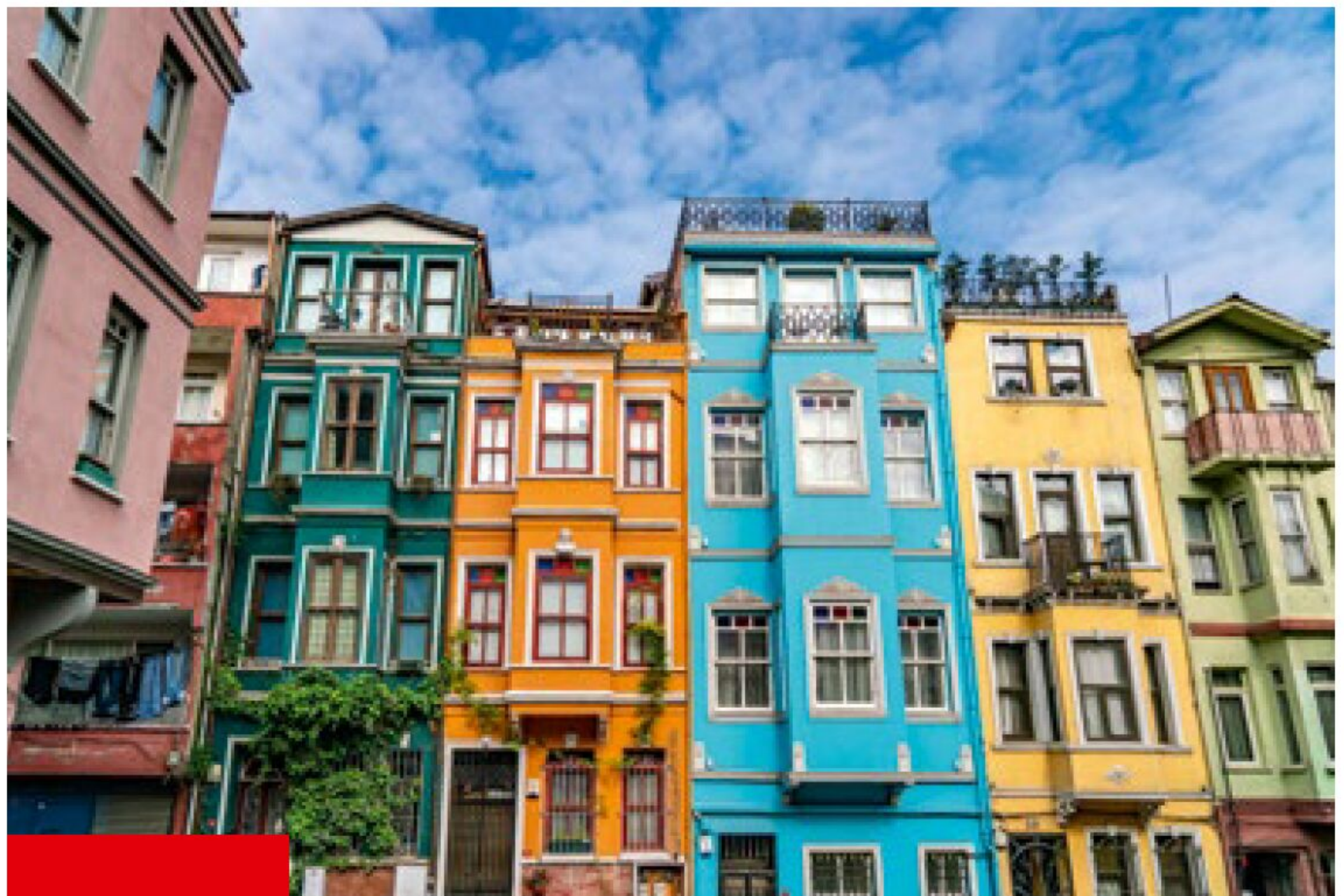
On my first day in Istanbul, we walked through the enchanting district of Ortaköy, where we indulged in freshly prepared mussels, generously filled with savoury rice and garnished with zesty lemon—a culinary treasure that would take a magical hold over my palate in the days to come. Ortaköy's allure lies not only in its culinary offerings but also in its panoramic vistas of the Bosphorus, extending gracefully towards the Asian shores, embellished by the resplendent Ortaköy Mosque, an architectural masterpiece steeped in Neo-Baroque elegance.

My exploration continued with a visit to the opulent Marmara Esma Sultan, a historic mansion steeped in regal heritage, exuding timeless elegance. Named in honour of Esma Sultan, daughter of the 32nd Ottoman sovereign, Sultan Abdülaziz, this distinguished venue has witnessed the passage of illustrious figures and historic events over the centuries. Renowned for its verdant gardens, idyllic waterfront location, and convenient access via a private dock, the Marmara Esma Sultan stands as a coveted destination for summer weddings and prestigious MICE gatherings alike.



Despite the weariness that typically accompanies a day of exploration, Ali, my insightful guide, urged me not to surrender my quest for steps just yet. He promised the next place on my itinerary would capture my heart—the Atatürk Cultural Centre. Within its walls lies a sanctuary that stole my soul for hours: the AKM Library, a haven dedicated to music, arts, architecture, and design. Nestled within the cultural hub, this specialised library beckons to scholars and enthusiasts alike with its expansive collection of books, spanning two main floors, two mezzanine levels adorned with shelves of knowledge, and a dedicated study floor.

As an aficionado of the arts, stepping into this bibliophilic haven felt akin to a divine encounter. Satiated in spirit, I sought edible sustenance at the Divan Brasserie Foyer. The evening crescendoed into an unexpected symphony of serendipity as Ali and I, swept up in spontaneous fervour, decided to attend a performance by the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra. It was a decision that yielded boundless rewards, as the orchestra's spellbinding renditions transported me to ethereal realms, where time ceased to exist and only the music held sway over my senses. The following morning commenced with a regal breakfast at Çırağan Palace, characterised by a delectable spread befitting nobility. Following numerous servings of sucuk and menemen, I found myself invigorated for another day of exploration. Our destination was Balat, renowned as one of Istanbul's oldest and most picturesque districts. Upon traversing its narrow, cobblestoned alleys and historic edifices, an ambience unique to Istanbul, if not the entire world, enveloped us. Balat's most iconic feature undoubtedly lies in its vibrant, multi-coloured



residences lining the meandering, inclined thoroughfares. These dwellings, some dating back over half a century and others boasting two centuries of history impart a palpable sense of enamouring permanence. Our itinerary included a visit to The Patriarchal Cathedral Church of St. George, a paramount Eastern Orthodox sanctuary. Dedicated to the revered Christian martyr Saint George, this cathedral serves as the venue for numerous solemn ceremonies of significance. Culminating our day's endeavours, we indulged in a sumptuous Indian feast at Madhu's, Istanbul's primary Indian dining establishment nestled within the Swissôtel The Bosphorus.

The following day commenced with our arrival at The Peninsula Istanbul Hotel, where, after swiftly completing check-in formalities, I indulged in a sumptuous brunch affair. The exquisite freshness of oysters and prawns served as notable highlights, elevating my gastronomic experience to unprecedented heights. Following this indulgence, we leisurely strolled through the enchanting environs of Galataport, immersing ourselves in the captivating atmosphere and marvelling at its status as a globally recognised destination project, boasting a cruise liner port along its 1.2-kilometre coastline and housing a total of 230 food and beverage and retail establishments within its premises. Continuing our epicurean exploration, we delighted in an exquisite baklava tasting session at the esteemed Karaköy Güllüoğlu, relishing the intricate flavours of this cherished Turkish delicacy. Alongside the baklava, I savoured a plate of my favourite Börek, a savoury pastry crafted from thin flaky dough and filled with a delightful combination of spinach and cheese. Karaköy Güllüoğlu, with its singular outpost in Karaköy, stands as an institution in the realm of baklava making, drawing crowds eager to sample its heavenly varieties. Venturing onward, we meandered through the bustling lanes of İstiklal Avenue, adorned with grandiose department stores and animated by the picturesque presence of tramcars gliding through its thoroughfares. Particularly enchanting were the charming alleyways, brimming with a diverse array of dining establishments and bars.





Navigating its
labyrinthine alleys,
we were enveloped
in a sensory
symphony of
sights, sounds,
and aromas

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As the realisation dawned upon me that my time in Istanbul was drawing to a close, a tinge of melancholy crept into my heart, tempered only by the determination to seize the day to its fullest. Our first destination, the Istanbul Lütfi Kırdar Congress and Exhibition Centre, situated in the esteemed Congress Valley, epitomised the convergence of culture, art, and business. It served as a testament to the city's capacity for hosting diverse events, boasting technical prowess and impeccable hospitality services. However, it was the anticipation of visiting Hagia Sophia that truly stirred my soul. Stepping foot into this historic marvel, my long-cherished dream transformed into a reality, evoking profound epiphanies as I contemplated its rich heritage as a mosque, a former church, and a revered cultural landmark. My companion Ali, an avid history enthusiast, regaled me with a treasure trove of knowledge and intriguing tales surrounding the monument, enriching our experience. Our journey continued to the Blue Mosque, a breathtaking masterpiece of Ottoman architecture adorned with intricate details and resplendent motifs. After a morning immersed in history, we savoured the quintessential Turkish delight of Simit, before delving into the vibrant surroundings of the Grand Bazaar. Navigating its labyrinthine alleys, we were enveloped in a sensory symphony of sights, sounds, and aromas, losing ourselves in its timeless charm. We then headed to the Basilica Cistern which transported us to the realms of adventure and mystique, akin to the climax of an Indiana Jones saga. Our pilgrimage culminated at the



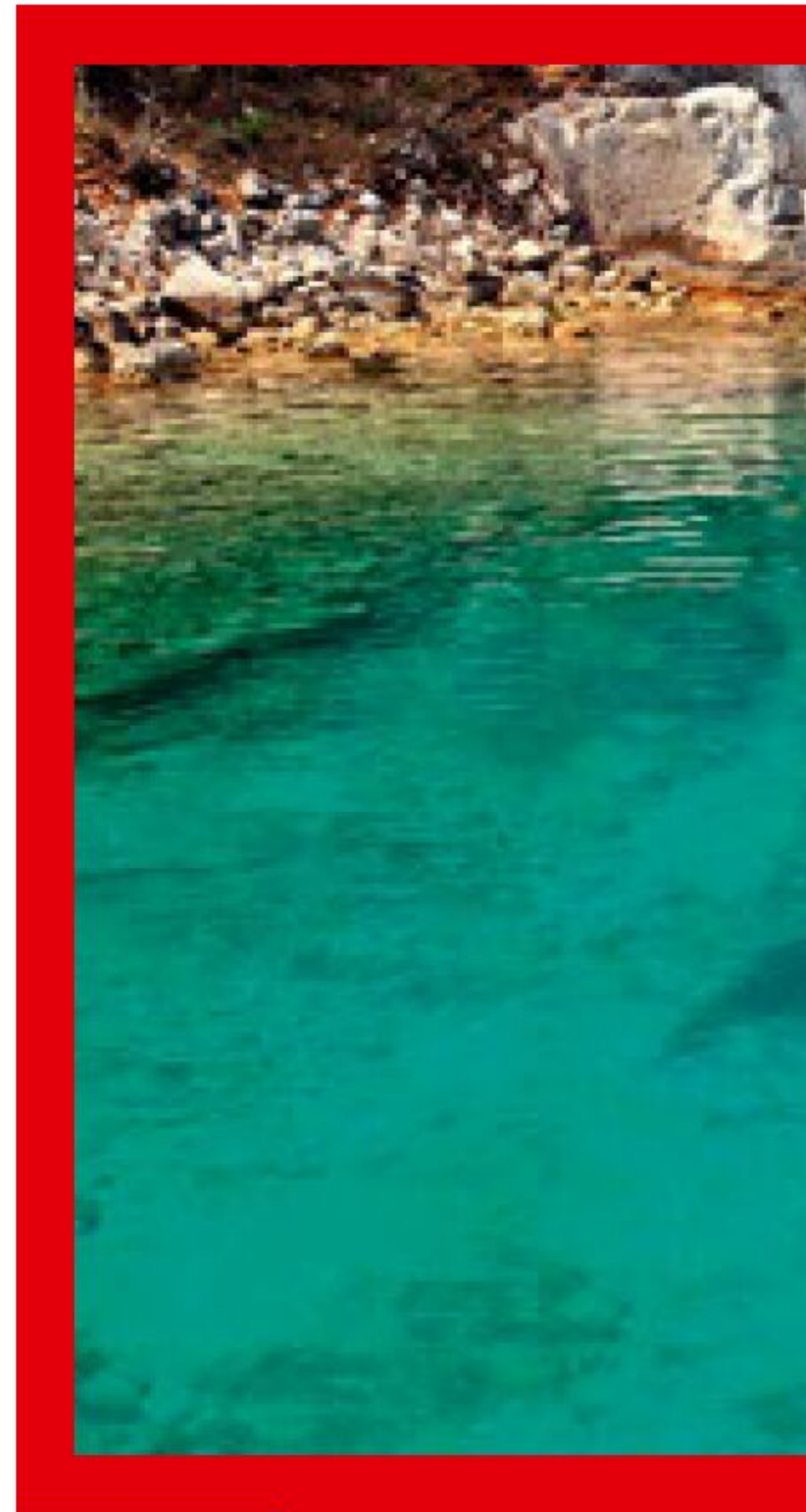
iconic Pera Palace Hotel, a haven of elegance and history that ignited the nostalgic fervour of an Agatha Christie devotee within me. Indulging in a sumptuous meal at the Kubbeli Lounge, amidst the grandeur of this legendary establishment marked the perfect finale to my Istanbul odyssey—an unforgettable amalgamation of cultural immersion, historical marvels, and culinary delights that shall forever linger in my memory.

As the sun bid its fiery farewell over the enchanting skyline of Istanbul, I couldn't help but feel a pang of reluctance in my heart, knowing I was leaving behind a city steeped in history and mystique. However, anticipation brimmed within me as I eagerly awaited my arrival in the coastal gem of Antalya. Dubbed the “capital of tourism” in Türkiye, Antalya's allure lies not only in its yacht-dotted Old Harbour and sprawling beaches hugged by grand hotels but also in its awe-inspiring ancient roots intertwined with modern luxury. Nestled along Anatolia's southwest coast, embraced by the majestic Taurus Mountains, this city, once known as “Attaleia” after its founder Attalos II, king of Pergamon, now beckoned me with promises of unparalleled relaxation and discovery. As my flight descended into the embrace of Antalya's azure waters and snow-capped peaks, the breathtaking vista unfolded before me, a juxtaposition so vivid it seemed straight from the pages of a novel. Welcomed warmly by my guide Mehmet, who exuded the charm and hospitality typical of the region, I found myself enveloped in a sense of tranquillity as we checked into the luxurious sanctuary of Gloria Serenity Resort. Indeed, amidst the serene ambience, I could already sense that my time in Antalya would be a delightful amalgamation of relaxation and rejuvenation.

Our first day in Antalya kicked off with a visit to the impressive NEST Congress and Exhibition Centre, strategically situated just 32 kilometres from the airport and 45 kilometres from the heart of Antalya city. Boasting an expansive 15,000 sqm of indoor space spread across two levels, complemented by an additional 5,000 sqm of outdoor area, NEST served as an ideal venue for both business and leisure pursuits. Following our enlightening excursion, we made our way to The Land of Legends, a realm that seemed to materialise from the pages of ancient folklore. As we approached the hotel, my awe was palpable, for it stood as a testament to opulence and grandeur. The expansive complex, adorned with an array of shopping outlets, a captivating theme park, and themed hotels, promised an experience unlike any other. Amongst the myriad offerings, the Kingdom Hotel captured my imagination with its whimsical

and thoughtful amenities. As the day drew to a close, we retreated to the tranquil sanctuary of the hotel lobby bar, where the gentle ambience and indulgent libations provided the perfect conclusion to our first day of exhilarating adventures in Antalya. With hearts full of joy and minds brimming with memories, I eagerly anticipated the myriad wonders that awaited me the next day.

As Mehmet forewarned me of the day ahead, promising a journey filled with exploration and adventure, I dutifully laced up my most comfortable shoes. Our odyssey began with a picturesque drive to the ancient marvel of Aspendos, a testament to the enduring legacy of Greco-Roman civilisation. Situated 40 kilometres east of the bustling metropolis of Antalya, this historic site beckoned us with whispers of meticulous antiquity. Upon arrival, a refreshing glass of freshly squeezed orange and pomegranate juice greeted me, offering a revitalising sip of what felt like the elixir of life itself.



We made our way to The Land of Legends, a realm that seemed to materialise from the pages of ancient folklore

charm





Eager to delve into history, we made our way to the awe-inspiring Roman Theatre of Aspendos, a testament to the architectural prowess of antiquity. Built in the second century, this magnificent amphitheatre stands as one of the best-preserved relics of the Greco-Roman era, evoking a sense of wonder and reverence. As I wandered amidst the weathered stone steps, I found myself transported back in time, envisioning the vibrant performances that once graced its stage, the echoes of laughter and applause reverberating through the ages. For someone who had long harboured a passion for the dramatic arts, this visit felt like a poignant culmination of a lifelong love affair with theatre.

Sitting amidst the ancient ruins, I couldn't help but marvel at the historical surroundings that enveloped me, from its humble beginnings as a hub of commerce and culture to its transformation into a palace for the Seljuks in the 13th century. Today, restored to its former glory, the Roman Theatre of Aspendos stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of the past, drawing visitors from far and wide to marvel at its grandeur.

The next part of our day led us next to the enchanting Kaleiçi, the historic heart of Antalya, where time seemed to dance between ancient stones and modern charm. Encircled by sturdy walls that once guarded its treasures, Kaleiçi boasts an impressive assortment of architectural wonders spanning Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, Ottoman, and modern Turkish eras. As we strolled through its winding, cobble-stoned streets, we found ourselves amidst a living museum, where traditional Turkish homes have metamorphosed into boutique hotels, quaint eateries, and artisanal shops brimming with folkloric treasures. We walked to Hadrian's Gate, a testament to the enduring legacy of the Roman emperor who graced these streets centuries ago. After indulging in a sumptuous spread of fresh seafood, we found solace by the tranquil waters of the Old Harbour, where time seemed to stand still as we watched the gentle ebb and flow of small boats upon the deep blue abyss.

Returning to our sanctuary at the hotel, I surrendered



to the allure of my first Turkish Hamam experience, a rejuvenating ritual that felt like a heavenly rebirth that was much needed for the physical exhaustion brought on by all my explorations. As I said adieu to Antalya, my heart overflowed with cherished memories and my suitcase brimmed with tokens of protection in the form of evil eye souvenirs. My journey through Türkiye served as a delightful reminder of the pleasures inherent in travel. It reignited my fervour for exploration, underscoring the enchantment of immersing oneself in diverse cultures and forming genuine connections. Amidst the vivacious alleys of Istanbul, the ancient marvels of Antalya, and the gracious embrace of Turkish hospitality, I found respite from life's trivial concerns. My time in Türkiye provided me with profound insights into the interwoven fabric of human history, emphasising its enduring influence on contemporary society. This revelation has only deepened my thirst for adventure. **BTI**

ACCESSORIES

SUAVE SPLENDOUR

Dive into the realm of opulence and refinement with Business Traveller India's guide to elegant men's accessories, where every detail exudes sophistication

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WORDS ANITHYA BALACHANDRAN

In the dynamic world of fashion, the significance of men's luxury accessories goes beyond mere embellishment. These meticulously crafted accoutrements are more than just adornments; they embody a statement of refinement, confidence, and timeless style.

At the heart of every well-dressed gentleman's ensemble lies a carefully curated selection of accessories, each piece meticulously chosen to complement and elevate the overall look. From sleek watches to finely crafted leather goods, these accessories serve as subtle yet powerful expressions of one's individuality and discerning taste.

Moreover, the significance of men's luxury accessories extends far beyond their material value. They possess the remarkable ability to enhance one's confidence and self-assurance. When adorned with meticulously crafted accessories, a man feels imbued with a sense of poise and sophistication, exuding an aura of effortless elegance.

Indeed, the transformative power of luxury accessories is undeniable. They possess the remarkable ability to elevate even the most understated ensemble, infusing it with an air of refinement and sophistication. Whether it's a finely tailored suit accented with a statement timepiece or a casual outfit elevated by a sleek leather belt, these accessories can elevate one's style quotient to new heights.

In today's increasingly image-conscious society, cultivating a polished and refined appearance cannot be overstated. Men's luxury accessories are pivotal in this endeavour, serving as indispensable tools for crafting a distinctive and memorable personal image. They offer a tangible means of expressing one's unique sense of style and personality, setting the stage for impactful encounters and meaningful connections.

In a world where perception is often reality, embracing the power of luxury accessories is a surefire way to make a lasting impression—one that speaks volumes without saying a word.

TOM FORD

Polarised Hudson Sunglasses

With an exquisite fusion of premium metal and durable plastic materials, these sunglasses epitomise timeless elegance, distinguished by the iconic metal T logo delicately engraved on the temple. Crafted in Italy, renowned for its artisanal craftsmanship, they assure uncompromising protection with 100 per cent UV shielding, assuring your eyes' safety from the sun's detrimental effects. Furthermore, their meticulously engineered polarised lenses guarantee optimal glare reduction, delivering unparalleled visual clarity and augmenting your visual experience with unparalleled comfort and style.

tomfordfashion.com





GOYARD

Victoire Wallet

The Victoire wallet, meticulously crafted in France, seamlessly integrates practicality with sophistication. Its compact design, adorned with Goyardine Canvas and Vauzelles Calfskin, features a luxurious Yellow Nièvre Goatskin lining. Designed for versatility, it effortlessly organises cards, papers, and notes, fitting snugly into bags or jacket and trouser pockets alike. With eight card slots, two flat pockets, and a note pocket with a billfold it offers ample storage. Additionally, it can accommodate the Insert Victoire card wallet, further expanding its capacity for cards.

goyard.com

MONTBLANC

Masters of Art Homage to Gustav Klimt Limited Edition 8

The Masters of Art Homage to Gustav Klimt Limited Edition 8 is an exceedingly rare collection, limited to just eight pieces to honour the auspicious number in Asian cultures. This edition intricately brings forth the artistry of the Vienna Secession and the Stoclet Frieze. Its design features luminous white marble underlays on both cap and barrel, accentuating the solid Au 750 gold skeleton decoration adorned with triangles, spirals, and lines. Elaborate engraving techniques, along with mother-of-pearl, black onyx, and jade inlays, further enhance its allure. The cap showcases a hand-engraved black onyx depiction of one of the three black Horus falcons from the frieze, embellished with a red ruby. Transitioning to the cone, the solid Au 750 yellow gold decoration takes on a mosaic effect crafted from hand-engraved gold, set with individually cut tsavorite, amethyst, and citrine gemstones. The nib, also solid Au 750 yellow gold, features embossing that mirrors Klimt's geometric style, while the clip is adorned with brilliant-cut diamonds and the cap top is crowned with a diamond-set Montblanc emblem. [montblanc.com](https://www.montblanc.com)





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CARTIER

Tank Belt

Crafted with exquisite attention to detail, this Cartier belt boasts a luxurious golden-finish ardillon buckle adorned with the iconic Cartier signature. Crafted from luxurious black porosus crocodile skin, it exudes sophistication and refinement, elevating any ensemble with its understated yet unmistakable charm. Measuring 30 mm wide and 1,230 mm long, this belt offers adjustable sizing for personalised comfort and style. A well-chosen belt not only serves as a practical accessory but also plays a pivotal role in defining the overall aesthetic of an outfit, adding a sense of polish and refinement that effortlessly ties together every look. [cartier.com](https://www.cartier.com)

TATEOSSIAN

Round Gear Carbon Fibre Cufflinks In Gunmetal Plated

Crafted with meticulous attention to detail and inspired by the intricate workings of mechanical watch movements, these cufflinks exude timeless sophistication. Their round shape, finished in gunmetal plating truly sets them apart and is an enamouring addition to any ensemble. Each cufflink features three individual gears that are framed within, inviting tactile interaction as they rotate with a simple touch. The addition of a masculine blue Alutex base adds depth and dimension, further enhancing the visual appeal of the multi-coloured gears above. This modern interpretation breathes new life into the brand's iconic gear cufflinks, offering a fusion of classic craftsmanship and contemporary design. [tateossian.com](https://www.tateossian.com)





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SUPREME X PELICAN

1060 case

The Black Plastic Pelican 1060 Case from Supreme is a pinnacle of practicality and style. This case boasts a clip fastening and clasp fastening for secure closure, adorned with a printed logo for a touch of brand distinction. Equipped with a hanging key fob and a main internal compartment, it offers convenient organisation for one's essentials. Constructed from watertight, crushproof, and dustproof polycarbonate, accompanied by a rubber liner and printed logo, this case ensures optimal protection for your belongings. Tested to withstand submersion under one metre of water for up to 30 minutes, it exemplifies durability and reliability in any environment. supreme.com

PRADA

Re-Nylon Gabardine Tie

Introducing Re-Nylon by Prada, a groundbreaking collection of sustainable products crafted from regenerated Econyl nylon. This innovative material is derived from recycling and purifying plastic sourced from oceans, discarded fishing nets, and textile fibre waste, embodying a commitment to environmental responsibility. The Re-Nylon gabardine tie exemplifies this ethos, marrying advanced technology with timeless elegance. Crafted from regenerated nylon fabric obtained from oceanic plastic trash, it represents a fusion of ecological consciousness and refined style. prada.com





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GASTON LUGA

Spläsh 2.0 - 13" Backpack

The redesigned Spläsh backpack epitomises sustainable sophistication with its eco-conscious construction featuring a waterproof material boasting an impressive 8000mm rating. Crafted from recycled polyester coated in a solvent-free polyurethane, it not only champions environmental responsibility but also ensures durability and resilience. Designed to accommodate laptops ranging from 11 to 16 inches, its main compartment, secured by a sleek double-strap flap closure, offers ample space for essentials, including notebooks and gadgets. Enhanced with cushioned and breathable back support, zippered front pockets, and a contemporary aesthetic, this backpack seamlessly blends style with functionality, making it an ideal companion for urban exploration or long haul journeys.

gastonluga.in

Why airline alliances work for global travellers

From smoother journeys to frequent flyer perks, airline alliances offer benefits to all

WORDS CHRIS CHAMBERLIN

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Airline alliances are the gold standard of modern aviation. Consistency and proper integration between airlines remove much hassle from the travel experience. But formal alliances offer so much more – and not just for passengers.

Let's wind the clock back to 1997, when the concept first took flight. Hungry for new opportunities, Air Canada, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), Thai Airways and United Airlines banded together to form Star Alliance. Dubbed "The Airline Network for Earth", its name tips its key objective – having a broad network of destinations dotted across the map, like clusters of stars in the night sky. For the trivia buffs, Star Alliance's logo also connects five points to create a circuit – representing those five founding airlines working together. Precious metals double as Star's global frequent flyer tiers: Silver and Gold.

Not to be outdone, American Airlines, British Airways, Canadian Airlines (later absorbed into Air Canada), Cathay Pacific and Qantas would then come together and form oneworld in 1999. Making a planetary play of its own, oneworld is symbolised by a globe-like orb,

across which oneworld's members can transport you. Oneworld's frequent flyer tiers would also pay homage to the earth. High flyers would be identified via gemstones: Ruby, Sapphire and Emerald.

A third collective emerged in 2000, which joined Aeromexico, Air France, Delta Air Lines and Korean Air. SkyTeam was what it said on the tin, championing simplicity over branding trends. Regular flyers would simply be categorised as Elite or Elite Plus.

Whatever the name, alliances serve to boost airline bottom lines. Fresh revenue opportunities come when a traveller flies with a new partner. Mix in operating benefits – everything from smoother transits to coordination on spare parts – and there's a lot to keep the accountants happy. Efficiencies also drive alliances to recruit new members. A gap in a region could be plugged by adding a strong local partner. Or perhaps, a non-aligned airline might have close ties with an alliance member. That can also motivate an airline to change its alliance allegiance. Brazil's

You can expect broadly the same privileges with a partner airline



TAM Airlines notably switched from Star Alliance to oneworld after its merger with LAN, forming LATAM in 2012. (Ironically, LATAM would later exit oneworld after investment by SkyTeam's Delta, without LATAM joining SkyTeam itself.)

MAKING ALLIANCES WORK FOR YOU

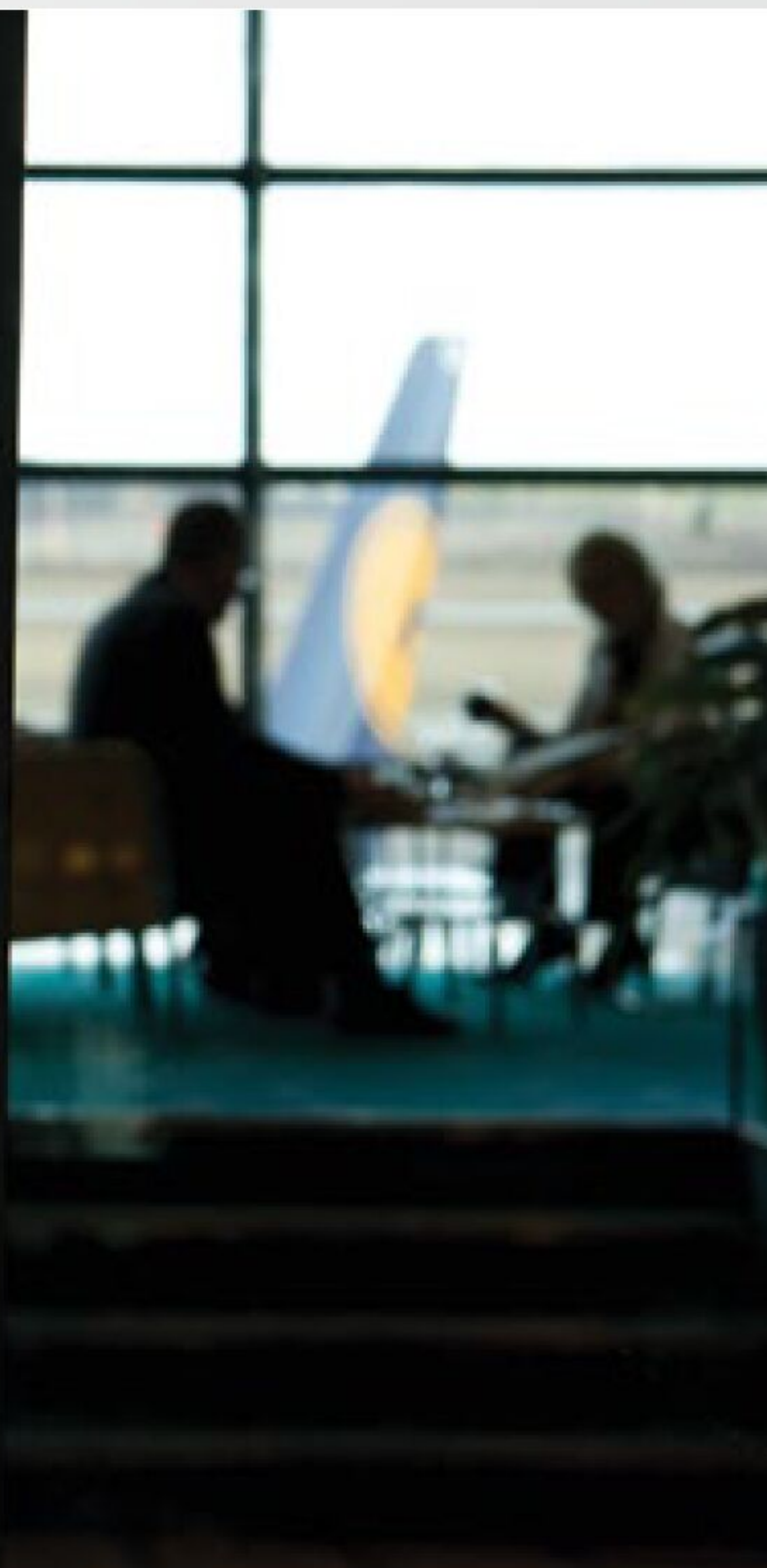
Airlines needn't belong to global alliances to facilitate frequent flyer ties or baggage through-check. But alliances provide consistency. One ticket can cover an entire multi-stop or round-the-world journey. In other words, for the passenger, it's just easy.

Alliances also enforce global standards. How much baggage can I bring? Can I visit the lounge? Where do I line up? When you have lofty elite status, it's usually straightforward. You can expect broadly the same privileges with a partner airline as you'd get on your home carrier. For instance, British Airways' Executive Club Silver unlocks BA's business class lounges. It also aligns with Sapphire – oneworld's middle rank. Through Sapphire, you'll qualify for lounge access across oneworld. Book airlines near and far – Finnair, Iberia, American Airlines, Cathay Pacific, Qantas and more – and your loyalty to BA is rewarded and recognised. That's the power of an alliance. For →



MEMBERS ONLY

LOUNGE PARTNERS



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the savvier flyers, drilling down into the detail can pay dividends. For example, not all paid fares on partner airlines accrue Tier Points or help retain status. Keep that in mind when booking 'best fare of the day' in economy: the lower-end tickets often don't count. You might also need to undertake a certain amount of travel on your 'home' airline each year to keep that status in check. On the flipside, some frequent flyer programmes track your travels year-on-year for recognition that lasts a lifetime. It's a serious reward for those practically living in their aisle seat (see box, right).

But as in life, some relationships aren't forever. When it's time to move on, asking for a 'status match' can be a fast-track to enjoying creature comforts somewhere new.

"Is the grass really greener somewhere else?" ponders Mark Ross-Smith, CEO at StatusMatch – a business that helps high-value travellers switch allegiances. "Well, yes... sometimes," he teases. He suggests four key times where a status match proves highly valuable. The biggest drivers are moving to a new city or when an employer significantly changes its travel policy. But dissatisfaction with the status

LIFETIME PERKS

BA Executive Club has Gold membership for life if you earn 35,000 Tier Points throughout your lifetime. (That's effectively lifetime oneworld Emerald.) They don't have lifetime status for the lower ranks, though.

Finnair Plus has Lifetime Gold (oneworld Sapphire, earned at three million lifetime tier points) and Lifetime Platinum (oneworld Emerald, given at five million tier points).

Lufthansa Miles & More has Frequent Traveller Lifetime at 30,000 Qualifying Points (Star Alliance Silver), and Senator Lifetime at 40,000 Qualifying Points (Star Alliance Gold).

Qantas has Lifetime Silver (oneworld Ruby), Lifetime Gold (oneworld Sapphire) and contentiously, given it's so ridiculously stratospheric to even get close, Lifetime Platinum (oneworld Emerald).

AA, Delta and United all also offer lifetime status through their million miler ranks as well.

quo, or just the itch to try something new, can be great times to pounce.

No single alliance has the entire world covered, though. Your favourite alliance might be solid at home, but less strong as you venture further abroad. In fact, you could have the highest possible frequent flyer card and still be barred from a lounge. SkyTeam, for instance, only grants lounge access when travelling

internationally. Hop on Air France from Paris to Toulouse and the lounge is off-limits. On this, SkyTeam CEO Patrick Roux says: "Loyalty is a key priority for SkyTeam and our members this year. As such, some evolutions are being studied and could be announced in the next months."

WHICH AIRLINE ALLIANCE IS BEST?

Business travel is never 'one size fits all' – the same is true of alliances. But what makes each one stand out?

No doubt, a tweak to that international-only quirk of SkyTeam would be well-received. But its network and membership base is rather strong across the UK and Europe. London-based Virgin Atlantic is the alliance's newest edition – recently marking its first anniversary in SkyTeam. There's also founding member Air France, joined by KLM in the Netherlands, Spain's Air Europa, Czech Airlines, Italy's ITA Airways and TAROM of Romania. For travel to, from and within these countries, SkyTeam has the edge. Further afield, members including China Eastern, Korean Air, Delta and Vietnam Airlines provide attractive networks and connectivity.

But then, there's Star Alliance. The world's first airline alliance is also the largest, sporting 26 members. Nine of those are based in Europe, giving Star Alliance an even greater presence across the region. European members include Greece's Aegean Airlines, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Croatia Airlines, LOT Polish Airlines, Lufthansa, Scandinavian Airlines, SWISS and TAP Air Portugal. More broadly, Air Canada, Japan's All Nippon Airways (ANA), Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines, United Airlines and others bring individual strengths. Its members serve 1,200 airports, providing the greatest opportunities for earning and spending miles, and for frequent flyer recognition. SkyTeam and Star Alliance treat status similarly. There's a lead-in level, followed by core benefits at the 'main' elite

tier – SkyTeam Elite Plus and Star Alliance Gold, respectively. But some frequent travellers dislike this approach, as there’s nothing higher to aim for. You could be a Singapore Airlines KrisFlyer Gold, PPS Club or Solitaire PPS Club member, but when you fly across Star Alliance, the treatment is effectively the same through Star Alliance Gold.

That’s where oneworld sets itself apart. Rather than two tiers, oneworld has three. While oneworld Sapphire is broadly equivalent to SkyTeam Elite Plus and Star Alliance Gold, oneworld Emerald is a cut above.

Naturally, lounge access is part of the parcel. But at key airports, Emerald cardholders are treated to an even better lounge than their Sapphire counterparts. Quite often, that’s a first class lounge – even if flying economy. Comparatively, alliance-wide recognition with SkyTeam and Star Alliance is capped to business class lounges instead. Emerald members also get that little

bit extra: more checked baggage, separate fast-track queues or higher boarding priority... the list goes on.

On a personal note, I’ve held top-tier status with all three global alliances, but it’s oneworld Emerald that keeps me hooked. Sure, there’s access to The First Wing at London Heathrow. But no matter how often I fly, nothing beats waltzing into a first class lounge. With oneworld, I get that experience even if I’m booked on the lowest-cost economy ticket – it’s a massive drawcard.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Is it time for a fourth global alliance to shake things up? Some have tried – but with a twist.

Ten years ago, Etihad kicked off a quasi-alliance of its own, dubbed Etihad Airways Partners (EAP). Launched with five such partners, its goals aligned

I’ve held top-tier status with all three alliances, but it’s oneworld Emerald that keeps me hooked

with the ‘big three’. Frequent flyer cards from participating airlines carried EAP branding, with tier levels and benefits standardised for consistency. Etihad didn’t view this as a true ‘fourth alliance’ though – EAP member Airberlin was simultaneously in oneworld.

Traditionally, alliances target global travellers within the full-service market. But other alliances exist with more modest ambitions and customer bases. Vanilla Alliance brings together five airlines based around the Indian Ocean with the aim of better local connectivity. U-FLY Alliance is the first group of exclusively low-cost carriers, spread across China and Korea. Value Alliance has a similar remit with a larger footprint. Scoot, Singapore Airlines’ low-cost offshoot, is among its members.

For oneworld, SkyTeam and Star Alliance though, things have been busy. Oneworld will soon welcome Oman Air into its family – and possibly Hawaiian Airlines. There’s also talk ITA Airways could shift from SkyTeam to Star Alliance in a deal with Lufthansa Group. One of Star Alliance’s founding members, SAS, plans to do the reverse: hopping to SkyTeam as it inks a tie-up with Air France and KLM.

Alliance-branded lounges are also gaining importance. Oneworld debuted its first two locations in early 2024, at Seoul’s Incheon Airport and Amsterdam Schiphol. Last year, Star Alliance opened an additional lounge at Paris’ Charles de Gaulle Airport for travellers venturing beyond the Schengen Area. SkyTeam similarly revealed a lounge in São Paulo in 2023, but no longer offers a branded lounge at London Heathrow – home to newest member Virgin Atlantic. Branded lounges “offer a very good proposition for customers in markets served by lots of SkyTeam carriers but without a home airline,” SkyTeam’s Roux reflects. “We are certainly planning to open more in future. Watch this space.” We certainly shall. **BTI**



AUGMENTED ESCAPES

The Metamorphosis of Travel: Augmented Reality's Reign in Tourism

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WORDS ANITHYA BALACHANDRAN

Augmented Reality (AR) stands as the vanguard of a new era in travel and tourism, deftly weaving digital ingenuity into the fabric of our wanderlust-driven adventures. From intricately layered maps to bespoke recommendations, the sphere of AR in tourism burgeons with promise, poised to disrupt and elevate the industry. Forecasts predict a meteoric rise, with the virtual tourism market projected to burgeon at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 30.2 per cent by 2028, reaching a zenith valuation of \$23.5 billion. Undoubtedly, the landscape of tourism undergoes a profound metamorphosis, propelling brands towards relevance amidst the tempest of competition.

In the crucible of AR's innovation, the convergence

of physical and digital realms births a pantheon of immersive experiences. The fulcrum of this transformative technology elevates customer satisfaction while incubating novel avenues for marketing and revenue generation within the travel domain.

The fulcrum of this transformative technology elevates customer satisfaction

FACILITATING SEAMLESS SOJOURNS:

AR emerges as the guiding star helping travel operators provide enhanced services, unfurling the cartographic tapestry of simplified navigation and on-demand destination enlightenment. Language barriers evaporate as AR becomes the universal translator, rendering travel an idyllic journey of comprehension and connectivity.

PERSONALISATION REDEFINED:

At the crucible of engagement lies the sanctum of personalisation, wherein





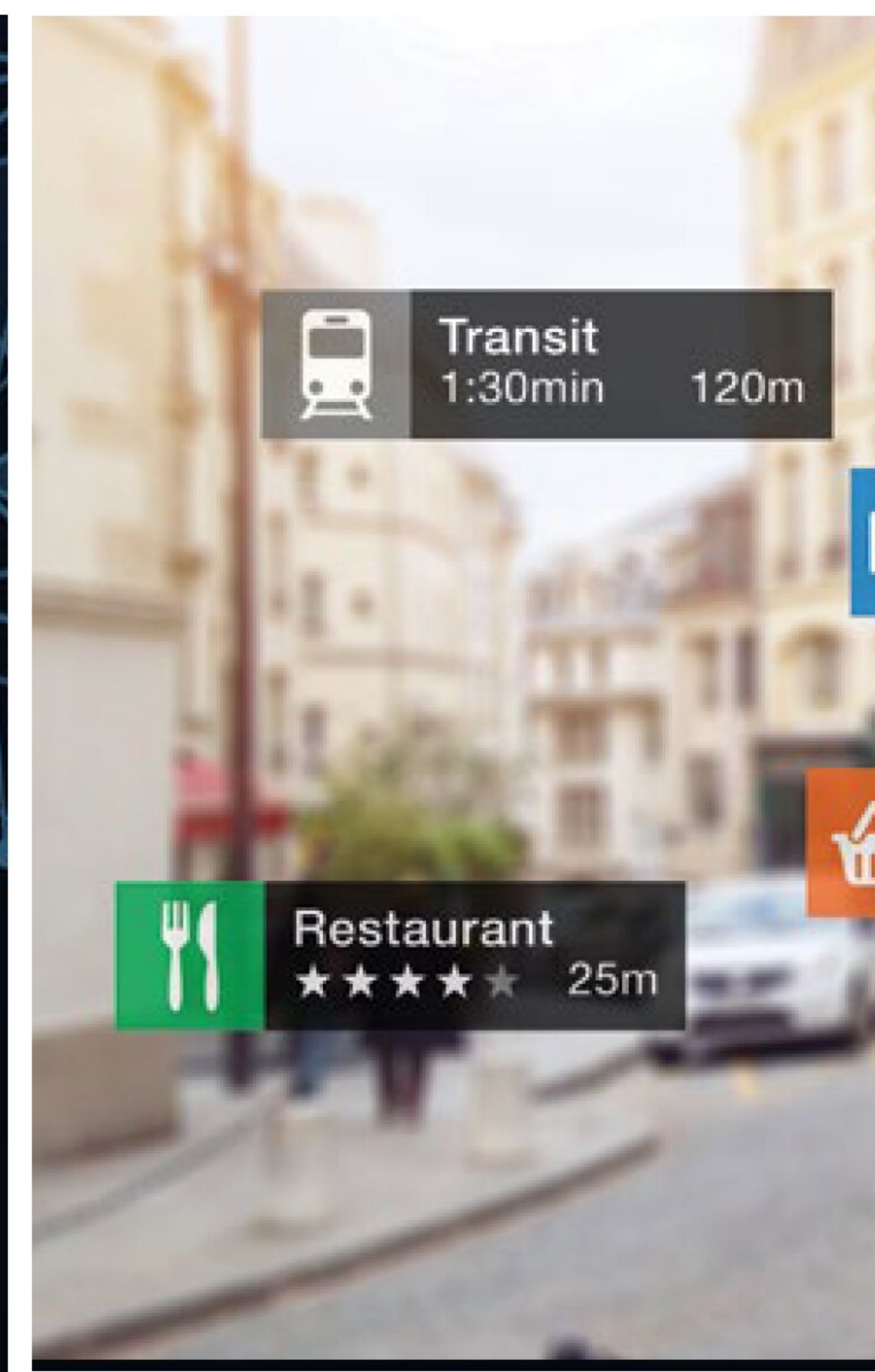
AR emerges as the architect sculpting bespoke journeys. Through the prism of AR, travel morphs into an exquisite collection of tailored experiences, fostering a symbiotic nexus of satisfaction and loyalty.

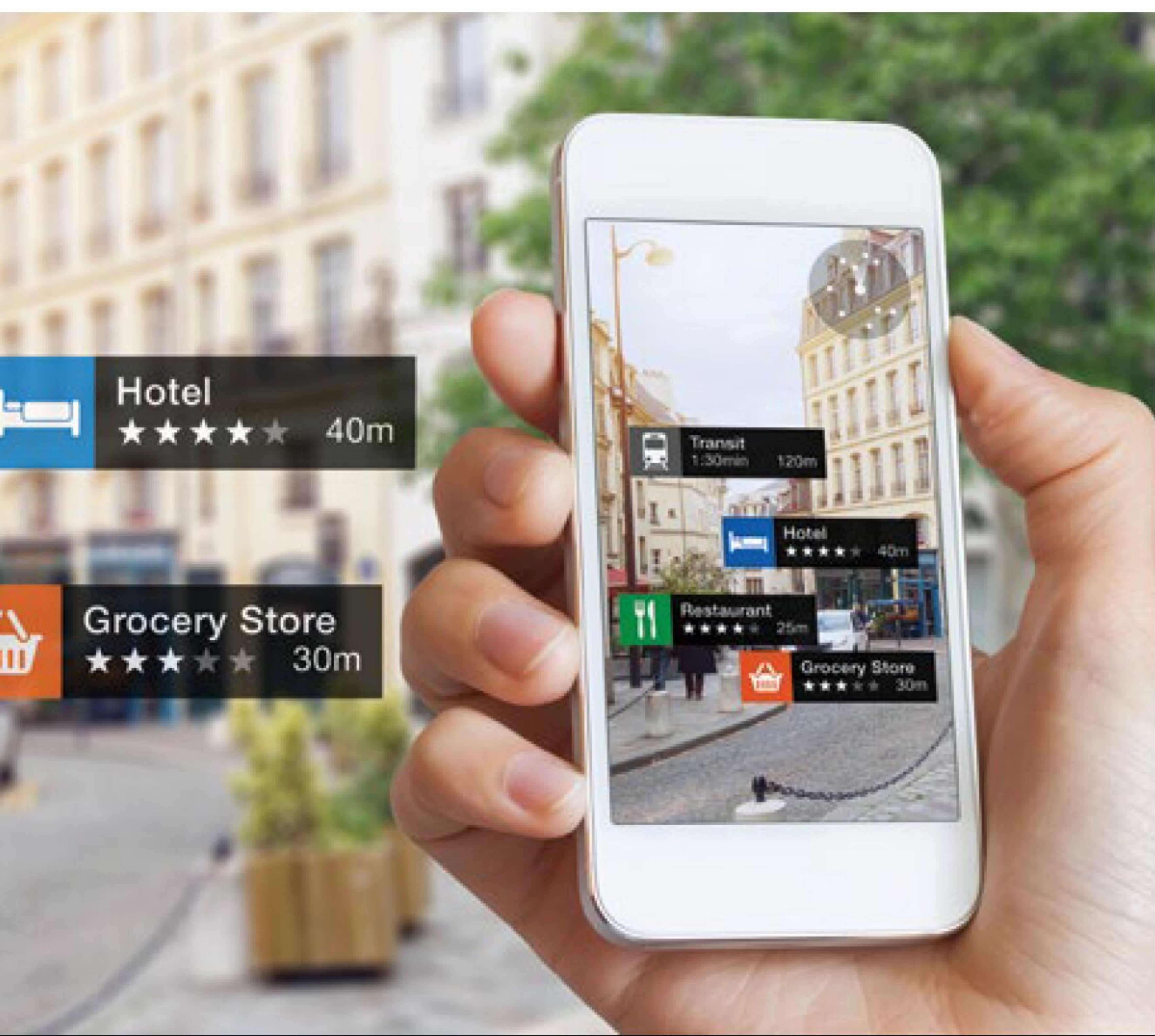
REVENUE STREAMS ENHANCED:

Utilising AR streamlines service information, empowering field technicians to efficiently and precisely carry out tasks, thereby increasing first-time fix rates and subsequently, elevating customer satisfaction levels. This enhanced satisfaction plays a pivotal role in bolstering brand reputation, particularly in the fiercely competitive global travel industry, and opens up opportunities for upselling aftermarket services, which can substantially boost profit margins. By harnessing AR, service organisations can effectively expand their expertise, driving revenue growth and improving product profitability..

BESPOKE ADVENTURES

AR revolutionises the exploration paradigm, allowing virtual adventurers to journey through the cobblestone streets of yore and the bustling thoroughfares of today. Immersed in the chronicles of history, travellers engage in dynamic historical reenactments and captivating vignettes, deepening their understanding of global heritage.





AR democratises travel, making previously inaccessible destinations within reach for discovery

AUGMENTING ACCESSIBILITY

AR's commitment to inclusivity transcends mobility barriers, extending an open invitation to all to explore. By overcoming physical limitations, AR democratises travel, making previously inaccessible destinations within reach for discovery.

REVOLUTIONISING RETAIL:

Through AR's lens, souvenir shopping transcends the ordinary, transforming into an immersive journey enriched with exclusive discounts and enticing promotions.

Augmented Reality distinguishes itself from Virtual Reality by augmenting rather than replacing real-world elements, crafting immersive experiences by overlaying digital components onto existing environments. Essentially, AR alters and enriches individuals' perceptions of their physical surroundings through specialised devices. Pokémon Go stands as a watershed moment in AR's evolution, transforming from a mere game into a phenomenon that compelled players to venture outdoors, fostering movement and exploration.

Augmented reality travel apps harness various functionalities to enhance the user experience. Leveraging real-time object recognition, AR technology identifies specific objects through the device's camera and triggers corresponding virtual content. Subsequently, digital overlays seamlessly integrate with the user's view, offering interactive elements that enliven their exploration. Users can engage with these virtual elements overlaid on their physical environment, creating a dynamic and interactive experience. Additionally, AR facilitates real-time data integration, enriching the travel experience with timely and relevant information, thus augmenting the user's understanding and enjoyment of their surroundings. ⁸¹¹

Sipping SUNSHINE

Cool Summer Cocktails to Beat the Heat

WORDS KHURSHEED MISTRY

As the mercury climbs and the sun scorches in the sky, there's no better time to indulge in the refreshing bliss of summer cocktails. With each sip, these concoctions evoke a tantalising essence of the season, offering delightful blends of flavours that provide respite from the blazing heat. From invigorating citrus infusions to refreshing tropical delights bursting with exotic fruits, the world of summer cocktails is a brilliant array of taste sensations waiting to be enjoyed and explored.

Whether hosting a barbecue, lounging by the poolside, enjoying a sunset soirée with friends, or unwinding after a long day, summer cocktails add a touch of festivity, colour, and flavour to all occasions. Join us as we embark on a journey through an assortment of irresistible and unique beverages, guaranteed to quench your thirst and elevate summer gatherings to new heights of enjoyment!



ENGLISH GARDEN COCKTAIL

The English Garden Cocktail is a refreshing drink, perfect for sipping on a warm day or during luncheons. Combining gin, elderflower liqueur, apple and cucumber, the ingredients are characteristically British. The cocktail's harmoniously blended floral notes and refreshing apple-lime zest will create a dance of delightful flavours as you savour it.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 2

50ml gin.
25ml elderflower liqueur.
75ml apple juice preferably not concentrated.
10ml lime juice and cucumber ribbons, to serve.

METHOD

Shake all the ingredients except the cucumber and ice. Strain into a tall glass filled with a large handful of fresh or crushed ice. Stir well and decorate it with a strip of peeled cucumber.



FROSÉ

The birth of Frosé can be attributed to Bar Primi in New York, where in the summer of 2016, they crafted this recipe by transforming rosé into a grown-up slushie. This innovative blend eventually emerged as the perfect summer drink, marking a trendsetting addition to the beverage scene.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 4-6

1 bottle of dark-coloured rosé.
Citrus-flavoured or regular vodka.
300gm frozen strawberries or other fruits like watermelon or peaches hulled and halved.
Sugar syrup is to be added as required.
Juice of 1 lemon.

METHOD

Combine all the ingredients in a blender. Pour into a freezer-safe container. Take it out after six hours or freeze it overnight and then re-blend it to get a slushy consistency.

FROZEN WATERMELON MARGARITA

The inception of frozen margaritas traces back to La Jolla, and Albert Hernandez Sr. who revolutionized this preparation in 1947 by blending the ingredients. This novel rendition incorporating watermelon infuses a sweeter flavour and a vibrant hue, to the classic cocktail.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 4-6

800g watermelon, deseeded and cut into cubes.
125ml white tequila.
75ml triple sec.
2 limes, zested and juiced, plus a wedge for the rim.
2 tsp honey.
1-2 cups of ice

METHOD

Put the watermelon pieces in a freezer-proof container and freeze overnight until solid. The next day, prepare the rim of the glasses by running a lime wedge around it before dipping it in the salt. When you want to serve, put the frozen watermelon, tequila, triple sec, lime juice, ice and honey in a blender and puree until smooth. Pour the drink into the glasses.



MANGO AND PINEAPPLE MOJITO

The predecessor to the Mojito was a libation inspired by Sir Francis Drake during his voyage to Cuba and aptly dubbed El Draque. One of their crew, clearly a culinary genius, stumbled upon mixing lime and rum. As rum replaced the potent firewater or aguardiente, the Mojito emerged as a timeless concoction!

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 4

1 ripe mango, diced.
1 cup pineapple chunks.
1/4 cup fresh mint leaves.
1/4 cup lime juice.
1/4 cup sugar syrup.
1 cup white rum. Ice cubes and about 600ml of sparkling water.

METHOD

Blend diced mango, pineapple chunks, mint leaves, lime juice, and sugar syrup until smooth. Crush the remaining mint leaves in a pitcher to release their flavour. Add the blended mixture and white rum and stir. Fill glasses with ice and pour in the mixture. Top with sparkling water, and garnish with a mint sprig.



PASSION FRUIT MARTINI

The martini cocktail has undergone various iterations throughout its existence. Some credit the invention to bartender Jerry Thomas at the Occidental Hotel in San Francisco in the 1860s. Others attribute it to bartender Martini di Taggia at the Knickerbocker Hotel in New York in 1911, where it was believed to be served to billionaire John D. Rockefeller.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 2

2 deseeded and halved ripe passion fruits with a crinkly appearance.

60ml vodka.

30ml passoa.

1 tbsp lime juice.

1 tbsp sugar syrup. A handful of ice and Prosecco, to serve.

METHOD

Add one passion fruit to a cocktail shaker glass. Pour in the vodka, passoa, lime juice, and sugar syrup. Toss in a generous handful of ice and shake vigorously. Strain the mixture into two martini glasses, then slowly pour prosecco to top them off. Finally, garnish each glass with half a passion fruit.



PIMM'S NO. 1 CUP

James Pimm, a South London fishmonger opened an Oyster House between 1823 and 1840 and sought to stand out with a unique gin-based liqueur to accompany oysters. His concoction blended gin, herbs, spices, fruit, and quinine, aiding digestion. With a low alcohol content and delightful flavour, it became very popular and one of the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament's signature drinks.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 1

50 ml Pimm's No.1.
150 ml lemonade.
2 sliced strawberries.
2 orange wheels/wedges.
2 slices cucumber.
1 sprig of mint and ice cubes

METHOD

Fill a highball glass with ice cubes. Pour in Pimm's No. 1 and lemonade. Drop in slices of strawberries, orange, and cucumber. Give it a gentle stir, then top it off with a sprig of mint. Serve with a paper straw for an extra touch of elegance.

PINK GIN SPRITZ

Pink gin is thought to have originated among British sailors in the Royal Navy during the 18th or early 19th century. To alleviate seasickness, sailors were administered a blend of gin and Angostura bitters. The bitters were believed to soothe the stomach, while gin improved their taste. This concoction gained popularity among sailors and eventually found its way to wider audiences.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 1

50ml of premium Pink Gin of your choice.
150ml of lemonade.
25ml Prosecco.
2 halved or cut fresh strawberries and few ice cubes.

METHOD

Fill a large wine glass with ice. Mix in the Pink Gin and lemonade. Gently top it with Prosecco and stir. Garnish with fresh strawberries.





SEA BREEZE

The Sea Breeze cocktail originated in the early 1920s or 1930s in the United States as a variation of the Cape Codder. Known for its versatility, this cocktail can be made with various spirits, making it a favourite for experimenting with different ingredients. Whether served as a classic cocktail or as a punch, its enduring popularity remains unmatched.

INGREDIENTS - SERVES 2

50ml vodka.
100ml cranberry juice.
50ml grapefruit juice.
Some ice and a thin slice of lime

METHOD

In a highball glass with ice, combine vodka, cranberry juice, and grapefruit juice. Stir gently to blend the flavours harmoniously. Garnish with a lime wheel which adds a citrusy twist that balances this refreshing concoction.



Azerbaijan Unveiled

Business Traveller India speaks to Florina Sengstschmid, CEO of Azerbaijan Tourism to understand the tourism board's plans, growth trajectory and more

WORDS FLORINA SENGSTSCHMID -
CEO OF AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD

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WHAT STRATEGIES IS THE AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD IMPLEMENTING TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES WHILE ENSURING ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Azerbaijan is taking a multifaceted approach to promoting sustainable tourism practices while ensuring economic growth. At its core, sustainable tourism is a central theme in our strategy, underlining a commitment to engaging both the tourism industry and travellers in promoting shared responsibility. We have developed an action plan for Sustainable Tourism Development, aiming to establish a regulatory framework which involves familiarising industry stakeholders with recognising sustainable practices through certification. The implementation begins with comprehensive destination audits, in the northern region, to assess the current status and chart detailed action plans. A pivotal aspect of the strategy involves community engagement from local communities that are integral to the tourism experience, and benefit economically while preserving heritage sites and cultural values. Disputes concerning heritage preservation are resolved in favour of local communities. Basgal village is a great example of historical

restoration and transformation into a vibrant tourism hub. Nestled amidst the picturesque foothills of the majestic Caucasus Mountains, Basgal was an abandoned village merely five years ago. Our restoration journey began by ensuring basic necessities, subsequently, preserving and enhancing the village's cultural heritage. Important landmarks such as hammams and ancient mosques were restored. Basgal's allure extends beyond its historical treasures. The cultural experiences with hiking trails have garnered widespread acclaim, attracting outdoor enthusiasts from far and wide. Furthermore, as a pivotal point along the Silk Road, Basgal offers a unique glimpse into the creation of traditional silk head scarves known as kelaghayi, adding an extra layer of richness to its tapestry of experiences. Initiatives like the Slow Food Travel program exemplify efforts to preserve traditional methods and products, connecting local producers with hospitality businesses. Additionally, this year we debuted at the Slow Wine Fair in Bologna, Italy as the popularity of our wines is growing fast. Azerbaijan is also developing several hiking trails, eco-friendly activities like butterfly watching, and cultural renovations across various regions. These initiatives promote sustainable practices and also enrich the tourism offerings, by

enhancing visitor experiences. We actively promote nature-based tourism including birdwatching and hiking. Cultural heritage sites like the Khinalig village, which is a newly inscribed UNESCO site, and the Köç Yolu offer immersive experiences. Overall, the Azerbaijan Tourism Board's holistic approach to sustainable tourism encompasses regulatory frameworks, community engagement, local empowerment, and innovative experiences, ensuring a balanced economy of environmental preservation and conserving cultural heritage.

HOW DOES AZERBAIJAN TOURISM PLAN TO LEVERAGE DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT?

We are strategically integrating digital platforms and technology, including AI, to enhance visitor experiences and engagement. The tourism board is developing an AI-backed chatbot to provide travellers with quick, detailed, and relevant information. This innovative tool, currently in the testing phase, will empower travellers to access a wide range of resources, from uncovering hidden gems to locating vegetarian-friendly restaurants, all at their fingertips.

Additionally, AI is leveraged for data insights, project documentation, coding assistance for developers, and content creation, streamlining processes and improving efficiency. Looking ahead, the tourism board plans to introduce an AI trip planner, offering personalised travel itineraries based on tourists' preferences and interests. The Azerbaijan Tourism Board is aware of the environmental impact and emphasises critical evaluation in its implementation, ensuring that technological advancements align with sustainable practices and contribute positively to the tourism industry.

WHAT INITIATIVES IS THE AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD UNDERTAKING TO DIVERSIFY ITS TOURISM OFFERINGS BEYOND TRADITIONAL ATTRACTIONS?

The versatility of Azerbaijan has been used as the basis for the country's positioning under the tagline: 'Take Another Look', which aims to position the country as an alluring destination for travellers seeking a unique experience beyond the typical tourist spots. Azerbaijan's unique geographical position as a crossroads between East and West has fostered a rich variety of cultures and ethnicities across its landscape. This diversity translates into experiences ranging from immersive city breaks, a safe environment for solo women travellers to a thriving wellness culture, family-friendly nature excursions, vibrant culinary journeys, thrilling adventures, and a burgeoning wedding industry. In recent years, Baku has been re-discovered as a perfect setting for a dream wedding for Indian tourists - a city rich in ancient landmarks and captivating sea views with professionals to make it all for you. Azerbaijan's enchanting backdrop offers couples a variety of options, from modern cityscapes to mountain retreats, historic venues, and riverside extravaganzas. Baku, the cosmopolitan capital, boasts a selection of high-end hotels to elevate everyone's wedding experience. The trend of shooting Indian cinematography masterpieces in Azerbaijan has been continuing, with approximately 10 movies being filmed in recent years here.

CAN YOU SPEAK OF THE EFFORTS BEING MADE TO FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS WITH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TOUR OPERATORS TO INCREASE

TOURISM TO AZERBAIJAN?

Efforts to create partnerships with international travel agencies and tour operators to increase tourism to Azerbaijan have been robust in targeting the Indian market which remains one of our core markets. We have developed a set of plans for the upcoming year such as publicity, and awareness about Azerbaijan as a premier travel destination. These initiatives include organising targeted roadshows, seminars, exhibitions, and presentations that showcase the diverse tourism offerings of Azerbaijan. Also, in 2024, we plan to establish a representative office and organise destination seminars to increase awareness and recognition of Azerbaijan in the cities new to us. Furthermore, we will continue



to collaborate with Azerbaijan Airlines and IndiGo Airlines, with their direct flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Baku. In cultivating partnerships with business-to-business (B2B) companies, we will facilitate strategic meetings with the leaders or representatives of these organisations, building dialogues and collaborations aimed at driving tourism growth between the two countries. Through these concerted efforts, we endeavour to deepen trade relations, expand market presence, and position Azerbaijan as a top choice for Indian travellers.

IN LIGHT OF CURRENT GLOBAL EVENTS, HOW IS THE AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD ADAPTING ITS MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT TOURISTS WHILE ENSURING SAFETY AND SECURITY?

Azerbaijan located between Europe and Asia, is a land of dramatic landscapes, ancient culture and 21st-century ambition. The

Great Silk Road has left here a legacy of tolerance, multiculturalism and incredible hospitality. The country boasts a diverse and multicultural population, with many villages and towns serving as melting pots of different ethnic groups. Azerbaijan takes pride in their multicultural and secular society, embracing the myriad traditions and customs that coexist harmoniously. Azerbaijan attracts travellers to explore its multifaceted identity and revel in the richness of its cultural tapestry, all within the framework of a safe and secure environment that prioritises the well-being of both locals and visitors alike.

WHAT UPCOMING PROJECTS OR DEVELOPMENTS CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE FROM THE AZERBAIJAN TOURISM BOARD IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE COUNTRY'S APPEAL AS A TOURIST DESTINATION?

The Azerbaijan Tourism Board focuses on creating enriching experiences reflective of Azerbaijan's diversity, with an emphasis on product development, digital innovation, and sustainability.

As we chart our course for the coming years, our focus remains on enhancing our brand proposition through immersive experiences across culture, nature, wellness and health, and business events. In addition to our ongoing efforts within these brand propositions, we are dedicated to attracting more globally significant events to our country, such as the already scheduled COP29 and Urban Forum 2026, alongside prestigious sports events like the Formula 1 city race.

To drive tourism development, we prioritise bolstering the entire tourism value chain. This entails fostering more public-private partnerships, attracting investments, and supporting tourism education to address industry challenges. Our strategies include enhancing sustainability through regulatory frameworks, national certification schemes, and destination audits to further build sustainable ecosystems. Collaborations with global tourism organisations and initiatives like the 'Hotel and Sustainability Basics' program promote sustainable practices. On the demand side, we engage global audiences through international marketing, branding, and media channels guided by our comprehensive Marketing Strategy for 2024-2026. **BTI**

TUMI

Asra Small Crossbody in Purple Sunset



Crafted from luxurious sateen material, this petite accessory seamlessly transitions from day to night with ease. Its modern twist handle and refined hardware exude sophistication. Internal features include a zip pocket, pleated open pocket with snap closure, key leash, and TUMI Tracer for added security. Externally, it boasts a zip entry to the main compartment, a back open pocket with microfibre lining and magnetic snap closure, as well as a hidden O-ring for crossbody strap attachment. Complete with a removable and adjustable leather crossbody strap, this piece effortlessly combines style and functionality for the discerning individual. **tumi.in**

TIME STOPPER

HARRY WINSTON

HISTOIRE DE TOURBILLON 10



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Histoire de Tourbillon 10 commemorates the 10th anniversary of Harry Winston's esteemed collection, dedicated to the pinnacle of contemporary horology. A groundbreaking milestone, this timepiece showcases four individual tourbillons, a first in Harry Winston's distinguished history. Crafted from luxurious 18K white gold, it represents a culmination of precision and innovation in haute horlogerie. harrywinston.com

the report

**Tried,
Tested,
Tasted.**

TRIED AND TESTED HOTELS & RESTAURANTS

Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel
The Legacy House at Rosewood Hong Kong
Steigenberger Hotel Am Kanzleramt Berlin
Roganic Hong Kong
Baan Phraya at Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok
Berners Tavern at The London Edition
Salathip Thai Restaurant at Shangri-La Bangkok

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Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel



BACKGROUND Opened in 1975 as the Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel & Conference Centre with 555 rooms, expanded in 1984 and 1988, reaching 1,050 rooms. In January 2020, one building became the Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel, while the others remained Sheraton, showcasing a new dual-brand concept, post-renovation.

WHAT'S IT LIKE The Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel, a chic retreat with innovative spaces and a welcoming lobby concept provides guests with a residential-like atmosphere.

WHERE IS IT The Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel is directly linked to Terminal 1 and the ICE train station, ensuring easy access to Frankfurt city centre in approximately 20 minutes via various public transport options. Guests can explore the vibrant city, known for its iconic skyline, the River Main, bustling shopping districts, diverse culture, and renowned museums, all easily reachable from the hotel's convenient location.

ROOMS With 136 Deluxe and 71 Executive Rooms, the hotel provides a perfect blend of comfort for business and leisure travellers. I stayed in the expansive and

luxurious Executive Room, covering 29 sqm, equipped with a cosy living area, a contemporary bathroom, a plush bed with quality mattress and pillows, and an array of luxury amenities, my accommodation ensured a truly enjoyable stay. The room also gave me access to the exclusive M Club lounge on the ninth floor.

FOOD AND DRINK Restaurant Flavors boasts an elegant ambience and an open show kitchen where chefs craft delicious dishes. I kickstarted my day with vegetable juice, yoghurt with grapes, and an egg white omelette, finishing off with a cappuccino. Following a busy day of meetings, I unwound at the M Club with a glass of red wine and a cheese platter, enjoying its inviting atmosphere created by modern design and stylish furniture.

MEETINGS Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel collaborates with Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel & Conference Centre, offering 58 shared meeting rooms. This partnership provides approximately 4,000 sqm of space for events and celebrations. From intimate gatherings and grand events accommodating up to 1,200 guests, diverse options are available. Certified planners help to meticulously orchestrate events, ensuring that each detail is flawlessly executed.

BEST FOR

Its excellent location and facilities.

DON'T MISS

The F&B options and unique event spaces.

PRICE

Internet rates are upwards of ₹ 12,646

CONTACT

Hugo-Eckener-Ring 15, Airport / Terminal 1
60549 Frankfurt am Main Germany

[marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)

[frankfurtairportmarriott](https://www.instagram.com/frankfurtairportmarriott)



From intimate gatherings and grand events accommodating up to 1,200 guests, diverse options are available.

LEISURE The 400 sqm fitness and recreation area offers various activities and is equipped with modern equipment. Guests can relax in different saunas, a steam bath, or indulge in a variety of massages at the day spa Sky Lounge. The fitness centre ensures round-the-clock relaxation opportunities.

VERDICT The Frankfurt Airport Marriott Hotel offers a convenient and luxurious stay for discerning business and leisure guests. A walking distance away from the airport, it ensures easy access for travellers on the go.

Ravi Lalwani

The Legacy House at Rosewood Hong Kong



HOURS

Lunch: 12:00 noon - 2:30 p.m. daily

DINNER

6 p.m. - 10 p.m. daily Late Night (Monday only)

PRICE

HKD 3,880 per person

CONTACT

[rosewoodhotels.com](https://www.rosewoodhotels.com)

@thelegacyhousehk

Intricate cooking techniques distinguish these offerings, deftly balancing flavours and textures.

dried Tangerine peel, steamed vegetable dumplings, bamboo pith, and black truffle. A double-boiled brassica soup, conpoy, mushroom, wok-fried mantis shrimp, olive, black bean, poached baby spinach, fish curd, tomato soup, shredded chicken, Inaniwa Udon, and chicken broth. Dessert comprised chilled sago cream with mango and pomelo, a sinful delight. The array of flavours left me beyond satisfied!

Notably, Chef Li Chi Wai presented me with a special creation, Deep Fried Duck, which left a lasting impression. Innovating upon tradition, he infused the duck with tangy tangerine essence. The duck undergoes meticulous preparation, including cooking with dried tangerine peel, shredding, and encasing in mashed taro before frying. The mashed taro lends a delightful nuttiness to the succulent duck, while the aged tangerine peel adds a subtle herbal note, harmonising beautifully with the robust flavours of taro and duck meat.

VERDICT Each dish showcased exquisite flavours and textures, making it a truly memorable and unparalleled dining experience.

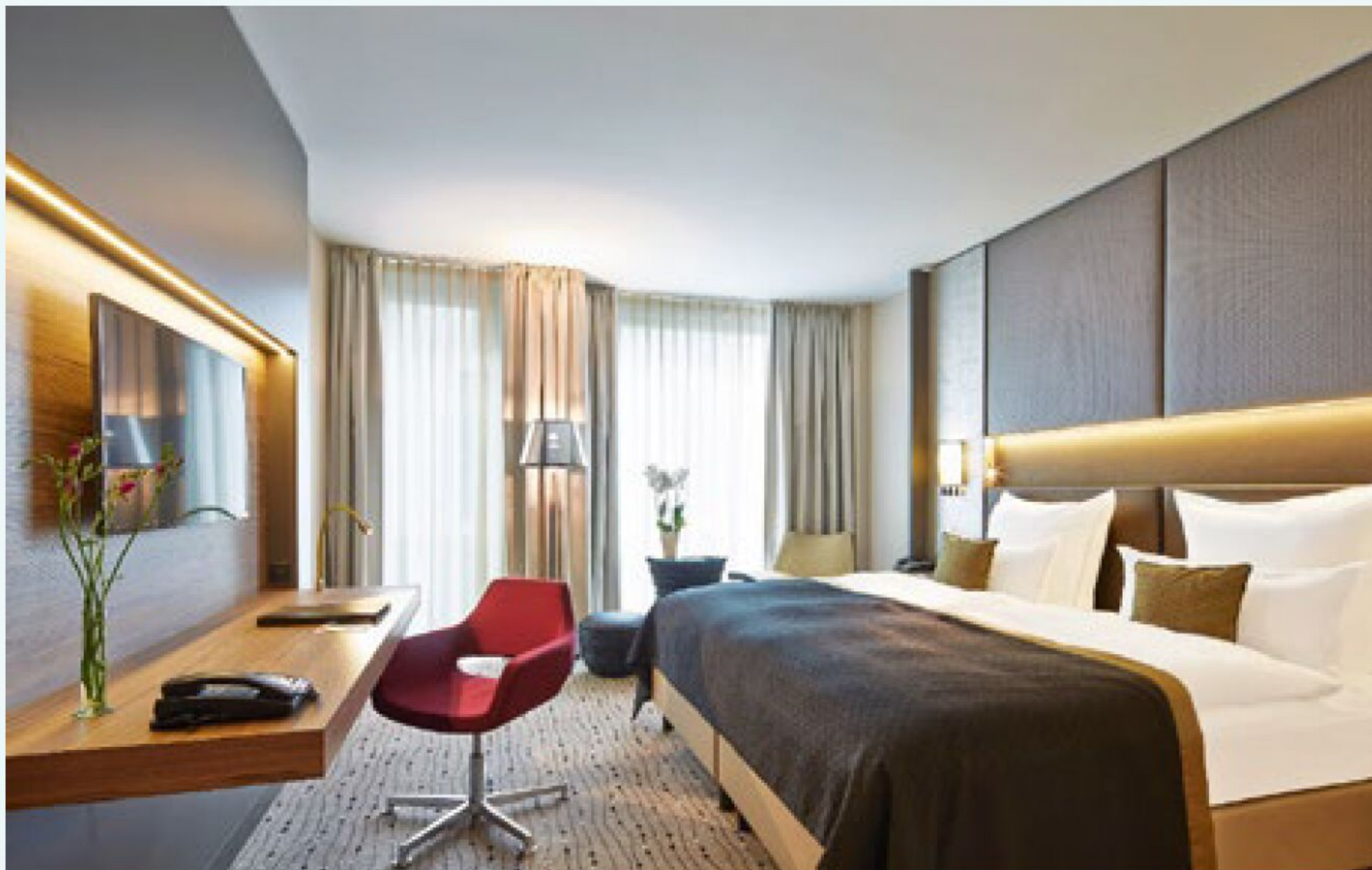
Ravi Lalwani



The Legacy House stands as a flagship Cantonese restaurant cocooned within the prestigious Rosewood Hong Kong. Its menu seamlessly intertwines classic Cantonese dishes with seasonal Shunde delicacies, a nod to the Cheng family's Guangdong heritage. Intricate cooking techniques distinguish these offerings, deftly balancing flavours and textures. The restaurant's chic main dining area and seven exclusive private rooms afford panoramic views of Victoria Dockside.

My dinner featured a vast and meticulously crafted Tasting Menu including steamed pork dumplings, whole Abalone fish dumplings, fungi,

Steigenberger Hotel Am Kanzleramt Berlin



BACKGROUND Steigenberger Hotel Am Kanzleramt Berlin an epitome of luxury and elegance in Berlin's heart, is adjacent to the Chancellery. Boasting opulent accommodations and impeccable service, it offers a sophisticated retreat for discerning travellers.

WHAT'S IT LIKE The upscale hotel offers perfection, modern amenities, fine dining options, proximity to iconic landmarks and the essence of luxury for an unforgettable experience in Germany's vibrant capital, where every detail is meticulously curated to exceed expectations.

WHERE IS IT The hotel is conveniently situated near the Hauptbahnhof Central railway station, offering stunning views of the Federal Chancellery and the Spree. One can explore the capital's numerous attractions effortlessly, with key landmarks such as Platz der Republik just 850 meters away, and the iconic Brandenburger Tor within a leisurely one-and-a-half-kilometre stroll.

ROOMS The hotel boasts 339 air-conditioned and soundproofed rooms, with 24 luxurious suites, ensuring a comfortable stay for guests. During my visit, I stayed in



the spacious Superior Room, ranging from 29 to 34 sqm, offering serene views of the courtyard. Modern amenities, such as a flat-screen TV, wifi, a safe, a minibar, and coffee as well as tea-making facilities, were provided, ensuring the utmost comfort throughout my stay.

FOOD AND DRINK I indulged in a delightful breakfast relishing fried eggs, yoghurt with fresh fruits, and a cappuccino at Ella which exudes a down-to-earth charm. On the bright side, Bar No. 5 stands out with its stylish design, welcoming atmosphere, imaginative lighting, and a tempting selection of Berlin beer, delicious dishes, or bartender's choice cocktails for a refreshing experience.

MEETINGS The ground floor event area,

BEST FOR

Its central location and exceptional services.

DON'T MISS

The versatile event spaces and services.

PRICE

Internet rates are upwards of ₹ 15,363

CONTACT

Ella-Trebe-Straße 5 10557 Berlin Germany

[hrewards.com](https://www.hrewards.com)

[@steigenbergerhotels](https://www.instagram.com/steigenbergerhotels)

Boasting opulent accommodations and impeccable service, it offers a sophisticated retreat for discerning travellers.

along with ten seminar and group rooms, offers approximately 2,400 sqm of space for conferences, exhibitions, meetings, and exclusive celebrations hosting up to 480 participants. Equipped with modern amenities all venues ensure a conducive environment. The professional event team takes care of planning every detail to ensure that all occasions are successful.

LEISURE At the Wellness & Spa Centre, the Sky Lounge provides a tranquil escape amidst the urban bustle. One can indulge in relaxation with options like a steam bath or one of the three saunas, ranging from 60 to 90°C. Guests can unwind in relaxation rooms or on the terrace. Whether opting for a full-body massage, facial treatment, or personal training session in the fitness studio, the spa caters to every need.

VERDICT My stay at Steigenberger Hotel Am Kanzleramt Berlin Mitte was nothing short of exceptional. From the warm welcome to the impeccable service, every aspect exceeded my expectations. Overall, a truly memorable experience enriched with luxury and sophistication.

Ravi Lalwani

Roganic Hong Kong



HOURS

LUNCH: Tuesday—Sunday. Last orders at 1:30pm

DINNER: Tuesday—Sunday. Last orders at 9:00pm

PRICE

Approximately HKD 1,180 per person

CONTACT

reservations@roganic.com.hk

@roganichongkong

Embracing a philosophy of locality and sustainability, each dish showcased locally sourced, organic ingredients.

Roganic Hong Kong a culinary gem, a labour of love by Chef and restaurateur Simon Rogan, is ensconced in the vibrant heart of Causeway Bay. It boasts a delectable array of dishes, multifunctional private dining spaces, a captivating kitchen counter, and a bar featuring a rotating selection of seasonal cocktails. Embracing a philosophy of locality and sustainability, the dishes feature locally sourced, organic ingredients.

During my visit to this eclectic establishment, I relished a sumptuous full-tasting menu. The exquisite cured Spanish mackerel and sand carrot tart adorned with fennel pollen and calendula as well as the unforgettable Fuseau artichoke and whipped ragstone, showcased a remarkable fusion of flavours. The truffle pudding, caramelized in birch sap enhanced with fermented black garlic and aged corral inn, was a revelation. Sunrise tomatoes paired with nasturtium and cod roe, and the May queen potato from Yunnan served in onion ashes, were incredible. The barbecued hen of the woods, bathed in miso butter and fermented horseradish, followed by succulent scallops from Hokkaido, epitomised culinary excellence. The



Dayboat seabass, stuffed with Manila clams and moon kee watercress, was a masterpiece of flavour and texture. The crowning glory was a 14-day aged duck, accompanied by young yellow moon carrots and a sauce infused with mountain marigold vinegar and frozen Tunworth cheese. Dessert offerings, such as Ruby red strawberries with buttermilk and plantation Earl Grey cream, and a unique Fig leaf mousse paired with compressed pink lady

apple infused with fig leaf essence, left me spellbound! Each course was expertly paired with exceptional white and red wines, enhancing the experience to perfection.

VERDICT Roganic Hong Kong elevated the dining experience to unparalleled heights, leaving an indelible mark with its fusion of culinary innovation and unforgettable hospitality.

Ravi Lalwani

Baan Phraya at Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok



HOURS

Pre-dinner Drink
5pm - 6pm (Outdoor Terrace)

Dinner
6pm - 11pm (Friday to Tuesday)

PRICE

THB 4,200 + taxes per person
Wine pairing add-on: THB 3,200 + taxes
per person

CONTACT

mandarinoriental.com

@mo_bangkok

Baan Phraya, an early 19th-century Thai house, offers a transformative dining experience under the skilful guidance of Chef Pom Phatchara. Nestled riverside this historic gem redefines Thai cuisine. Chef Pom, hailing from Yasothom in Northeast Thailand, infuses the spirit of heritage culinary techniques into each dish, drawing from cherished memories of her grandmother whom she considers her guiding light and inspiration. Chef Pom crafts an eclectic menu, honouring forgotten culinary masterpieces with modern flair through exquisite dishes and quintessential Thai hospitality, bringing the essence of home to life.

At Baan Phraya, I immersed myself in Thailand's vibrant flavours, savouring a special nine-course tasting menu featuring reinvented classics paired with excellent red wine. Rediscovering Baan Phraya's iconic grilled river prawn, enhanced with savoury tomalley and hints of tangy tamarind and chilli, was a delight. In this exclusive menu, available for a limited time, each course is a kaleidoscope of divine sensations.

Exotic dishes like finger root infused with Mandarin Oriental Bangkok's organic mulberry honey, pineapple relish with pickled turnip and crispy wild kale leaf with garcinia powder, along with stir-fried Northern-style riceberry, showcased culinary excellence. From Thai honeycomb biscuits with crab roe to smoked Andaman



Chef Pom's expertise shines through each dish, creating a culinary journey to savour.

scallops, each dish was a revelation.

The decadent journey continued with mangrove red snapper roasted with garden herbs, grilled Surat Thani river prawn, and marinated Wagyu beef in red curry, paired flawlessly with steamed organic jasmine rice. Ending with homemade Thai sweets, the dining experience was a culinary voyage to paradise.

VERDICT As a passionate epicure, I strongly recommend Baan Phraya's exhilarating gastronomic experience on all culinary aficionados' must-try list.

Ravi Lalwani



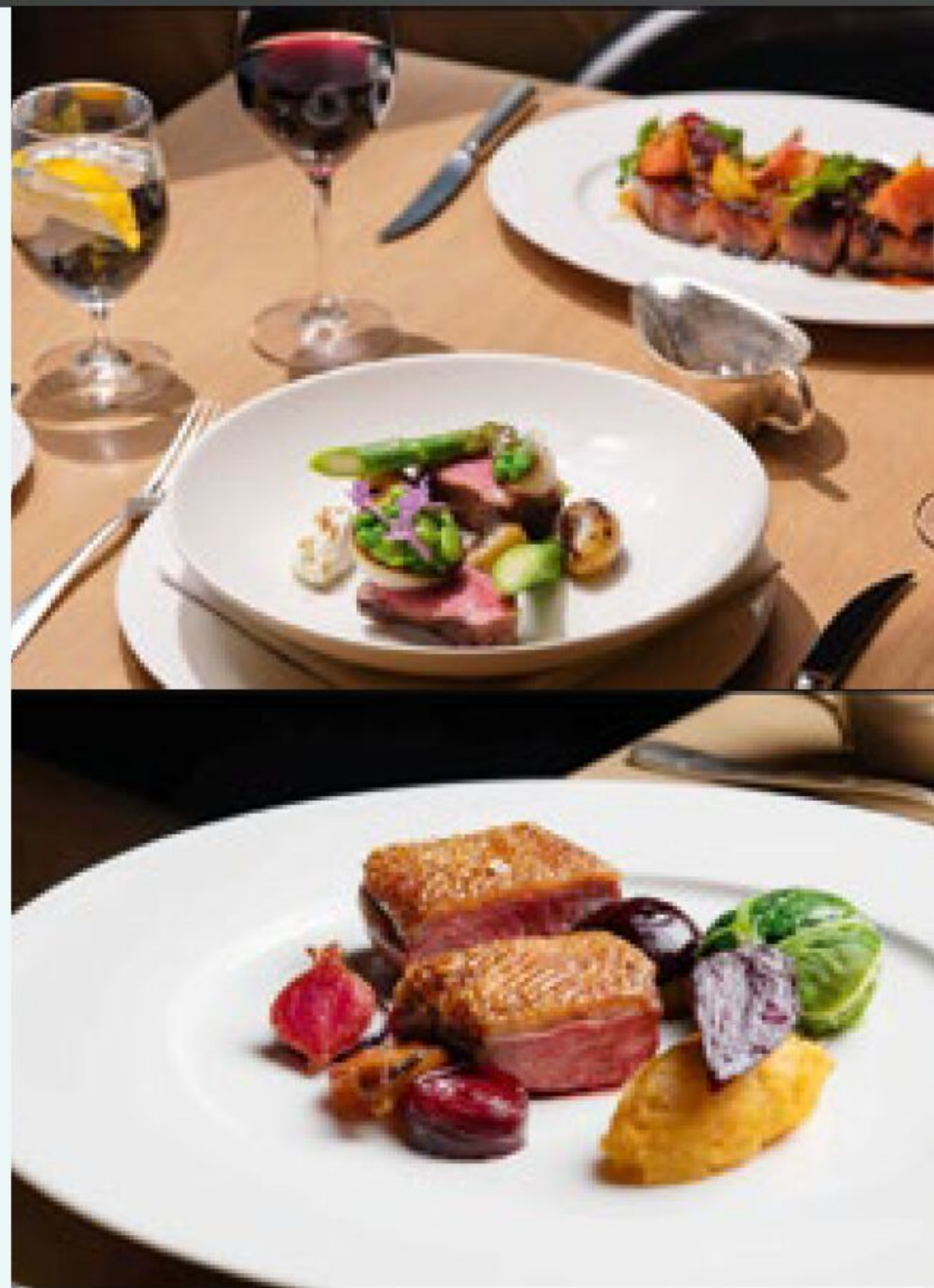
Berners Tavern at The London Edition



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In the heart of London, Berners Tavern stands as a pinnacle of culinary excellence under the stewardship of Michelin-starred chef Jason Atherton. This revered establishment seamlessly amalgamates historical allure with modern sophistication, offering an all-day dining experience that showcases seasonal, contemporary British fare. Every dish is crafted with meticulous attention to detail, utilising only the finest ingredients sourced from the British Isles. The menu evolves with the seasons, ensuring a dynamic culinary journey for patrons.

Furthermore, the establishment features a Private Dining Room which is ideal for an intimate setting for up to 12 guests. The space features a modern, long dark walnut table complemented by rose-upholstered chairs, all set beneath an original historic skylight with atmospheric lighting. During my recent visit to Berners Tavern, I had the pleasure of immersing myself in a culinary journey filled with exquisite flavours and impeccable presentation. To commence the evening, I opted for a glass of rich Italian red wine, setting the tone for what proved to be a remarkable dining experience. The Berners Tavern Waldorf Salad was a standout starter, featuring a delightful combination of pickled walnuts, crispy brown anchovies crumble, sun-



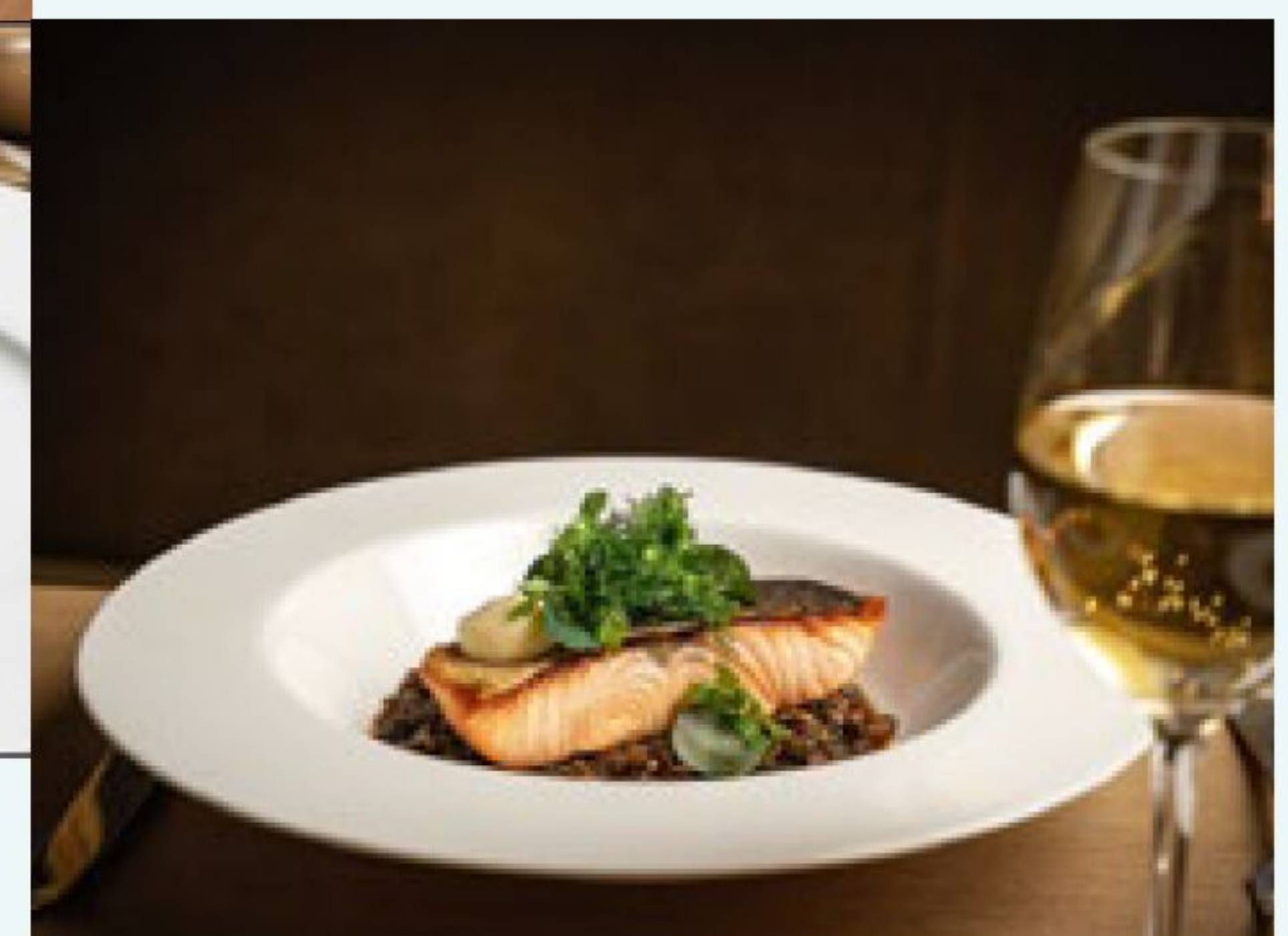
dried tomatoes, and a decadent blue cheese dressing that tantalised the palate. For the main course, I indulged in the succulent roasted lemon sole, expertly paired with royal blue prawns, crushed potato, parsley, and a subtle hint of lemon, all perfectly complemented by a side of roasted tender stem broccoli. To conclude this culinary journey on a high, I savoured a single shot of espresso, revelling in the lingering nuances of flavour that capped off an evening of unparalleled gastronomic delight at Berners Tavern.

HOURS
MONDAY - SATURDAY
Breakfast: 7am - 10am Lunch: 12pm - 3pm
Dinner: 5pm - 10pm
SUNDAY
Breakfast: 7am - 10am
Sunday Roast: 12pm - 3pm
Dinner: 6pm - 10pm

PRICE
Approximately £136 per person

CONTACT
bernerstavern.com
@bernerstavern

Every dish is crafted with meticulous attention to detail, utilizing only the finest ingredients sourced from the British Isles.



VERDICT

Berners Tavern at The London Edition is the epitome of culinary excellence in London and each dish is a testament to culinary artistry. The ambience exudes elegance, making it perfect for any occasion. It is a must-visit destination for discerning diners seeking an unforgettable gastronomic journey in the heart of London.

Ravi Lalwani

Salathip Thai Restaurant at Shangri-La Bangkok



Nestled along the banks of the majestic Chao Phraya River lies Salathip Thai Restaurant, a culinary gem offering a quintessential Thai dining experience. Stepping into its Thai-style teak pavilions, one is immediately transported to a realm where tradition meets elegance.

During my recent visit, I opted for outdoor seating, a decision I did not regret. The panoramic view of the river was simply breathtaking, providing the perfect backdrop for a memorable evening. As the sun dipped below the horizon, the ambience was further enhanced by the rhythmic movements of traditional dancers, followed by a captivating performance by the Garuda dancers. The attentive staff ensured that every aspect of my dining experience was impeccable, from their warm greetings to their prompt service throughout the evening.

To complement the enchanting setting, I indulged in a glass of red wine, which perfectly accompanied the array of

delectable dishes. The Yum Som O Pu Nim, a pomelo salad featuring soft shell crabs, roasted coconut, and crispy shallots, enamoured my taste buds with its burst of flavours and textures.

For the main course, I savoured the Pad Thai Thai Khem Chaiya, a stir-fried medley of Thai noodles and mixed seafood, elevated by the tangy tamarind sauce and a salted duck egg. Each bite was a harmonious blend of sweet, sour, and savoury notes, showcasing the chef's mastery of Thai cuisine.

The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the crispy-fried Giant Tiger Prawn, served with a luscious tamarind sauce and accompanied by fragrant sticky rice. The succulent prawns, perfectly cooked to golden perfection, provided a delightful contrast to the sticky rice, resulting in a symphony of flavours that lingered long after the last bite.

My dining experience at Salathip was nothing short of extraordinary. From the



The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the crispy-fried Giant Tiger Prawn, served with a luscious tamarind sauce

HOURS

Monday-Sunday: 6 pm - 10 pm

PRICE

Approximately 2,320 Thai Baht per person

CONTACT

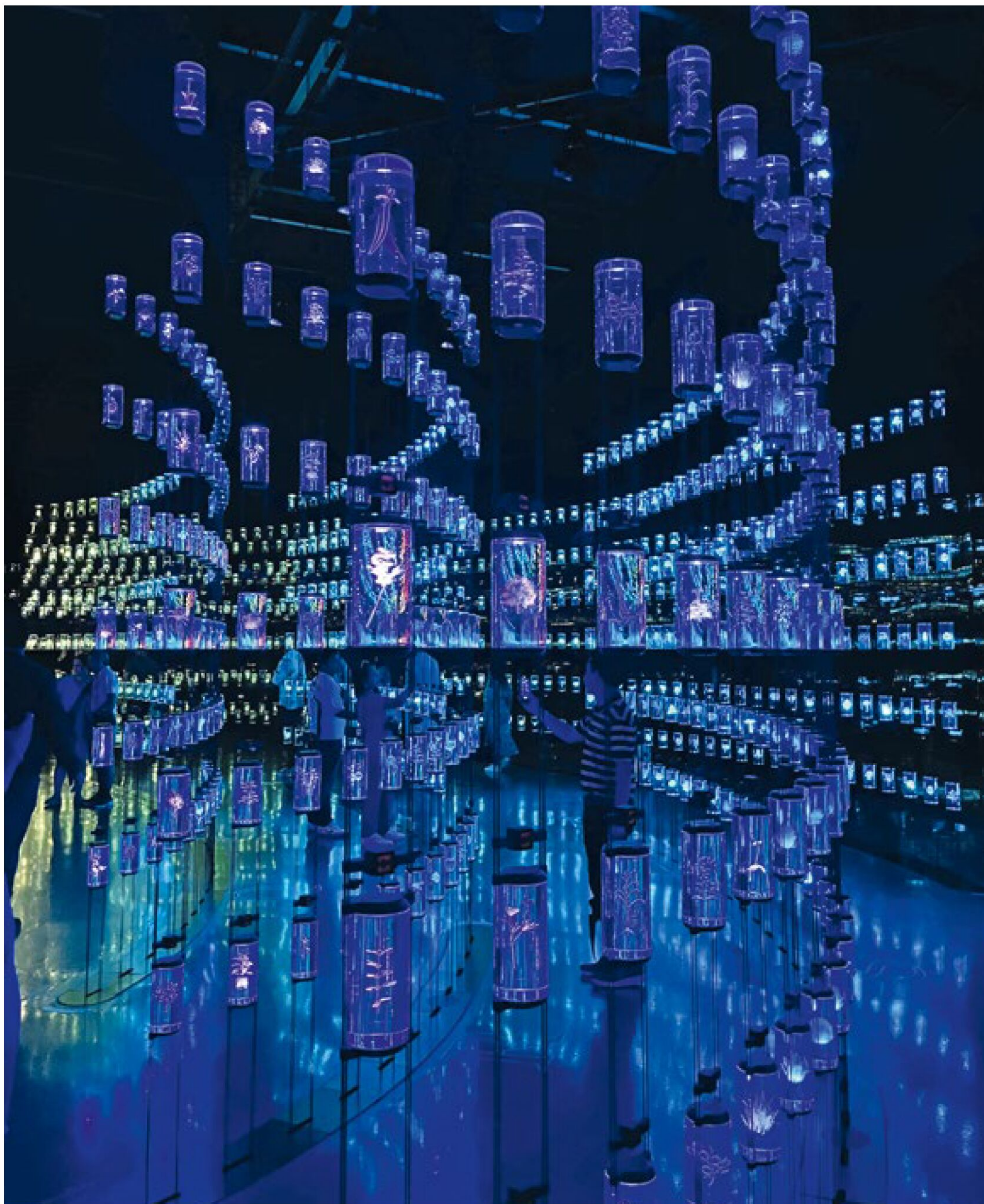
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tranquil ambience to the impeccable service and exquisite cuisine, every element surpassed my expectations. Whether you're a connoisseur of Thai cuisine or simply seeking a memorable dining experience by the river, Salathip is a destination not to be missed.

VERDICT Salathip Thai Restaurant offers an unforgettable dining experience with exquisite cuisine, stunning riverside views, and captivating cultural performances, making it a must-visit for lovers of authentic Thai cuisine and immersive ambience.

Ravi Lalwani



The DNA Library: Capturing Biodiversity

Raj Ajay Pandya, a passionate traveller, photographed this captivating image using his iPhone 13 at The DNA Library within Dubai's Museum of the Future. Superflux introduces 'The Library,' an interactive exhibit portraying Earth's biodiversity through a vast installation and immersive ecological archive. Representing life in a spectrum of colours and ordered perspectives, evokes a profound narrative. Rooted in Superflux's More-than-Human Manifesto and its mission to address future uncertainties, the installation explores the interconnectedness of humanity with other life forms and our responsibilities towards them.



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