

Dear Readers,

As we reconnect after this life-altering pandemic, we bear in mind that we are coming to you reshaped and you to us. All of us have almost certainly been transformed by our individual and collective experiences. Covid overturned our world, changed the way we worked— and the way we lived.

The desire to seek solace and escape to a sanctuary has always resonated with Isprava's core values. All our homes are built on the principles of offering a unique and enriching lifestyle to our homeowners. Of respecting nature through sustainable practices. Of creating bespoke homes where luxury is integrated seamlessly into the experience. Of following the tenets of mindful living. Our iconic Goa properties have set exceptional standards of sustainably built, custom-designed homes—Estate de Alta Palmeira and Estate de Frangipani are just a couple of examples of this. And in 2020, we were able to articulate these principles in our Alibaug properties as well. Its clean air, green surroundings and proximity to Mumbai were a perfect recipe for our next destination. Our thoughtfully built homes in Alibaug provide comfort as much as they do luxury, community as much as they do exclusivity. The response we received has encouraged us to continue building more homes here for you.

Then there is our sister company Lohono Stays, which is dedicated to renting out the most beautiful villas combined with world-class service. It, too, has been an amazing sanctuary for families through the pandemic. They were able to escape crowded cities, live freely, breathe clean air and provide their children with a safe outdoor environment where they could play—running free in the gardens or splashing in the private pools. One thing that truly shone through the last few years was the tenacity of human spirit. People dug deep and found the strength to carry on living and persevering towards professional, creative and personal goals. The influencers whose stories we have featured in this edition do all that and so much more. Like the always-inspiring Sangita Kathiwada, who has done it all in the creative space, from launching a fashion label to championing traditional craft and transforming the interiors of her hunting lodge. Then there is artist Dia Mehta Bhupal; we spoke to her to know more about her extraordinary installations and portfolio of photographs. Business magnate and Isprava's board member Nadir Godrej explores his creative side through evocative poetry, while Samyukta Nair sits down for a chat about her entrepreneurial endeavours. This edition is packed with a multitude of features of people and their passions. We hope diving into its pages inspires you to craft unique stories of your own.

We hope this edition serves as a little escape for you , taking you back to your own memories or inspiring you to make some new ones. As the world finds its new rhythm , we look forward to bringing you newer editions , keeping you in the loop and always an insider.



Nibhrant Shah
Founder & CEO of Isprava and Lohono Stays

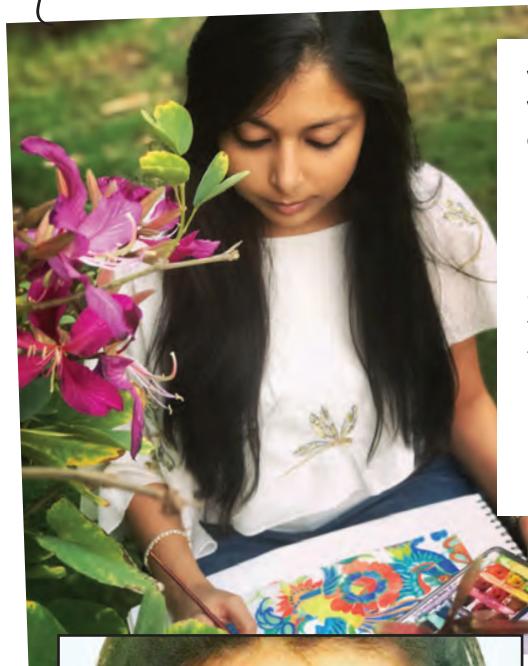


Dhimaan Shah
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{ contributors }

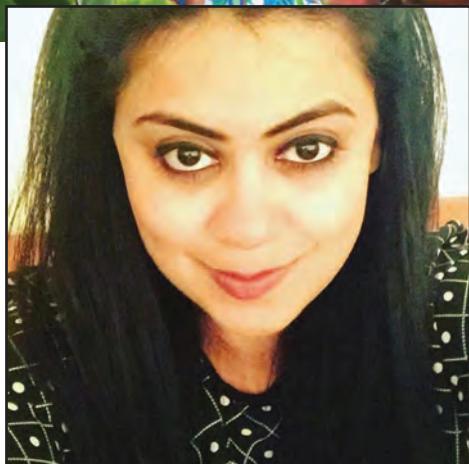
Getting candid with Isprava's inner circle on their goals and how they contributed to shaping this issue into a true page-turner



WHO: MALEKA SHAH PATEL

WHAT THEY DO: Founder of The Wander Ink

GOALS: I am not one to consciously make goals, but my vision is filled with dreams and I definitely hope to achieve them. Right now, The Wander Ink is a one-person dream and vision. Very soon I hope to make it a team of passionate people. I want to expand my stationery line and continue being part of really exciting collaborations. I also want to find the perfect balance between work and play. But most importantly, the wanderer within me can't wait to make up for all the travel lost since the pandemic began, so that I can continue doing what I love most: illustrating my travel experiences, just like I did for the Israel and Jordan story in this issue. I hope it inspires you to go there, when it is safe again, and experience the magic I did.



WHO: KINJAL VORA

WHAT THEY DO: Writer, Founder of The Writer's Block

GOALS: The one goal to achieve my other goals is to stop procrastinating and pursue my dreams, whether it's in my career, life or relationships. I want to make small changes that will make big differences, pushing myself harder than ever before. Writing for this edition of The Isprava Insider has been a joyful experience. From ideating story concepts to interviewing interesting personalities and illuminating their stories through the power of words — it has been amazing. Until next time...

WHO: TARANA SHETH SABHARWAL

WHAT THEY DO: Creative Consultant

GOALS: I plan to be more in the now. I intend to be more present. Life is short, decades pass us by and we end up, just being. I hope to change that for me, at least for a little while. I want to do, I want to be. For this magazine, I have done what you see... designing every page with as much love for the brand as I have ever felt.



WHO: TANYA BREJA

WHAT THEY DO: Marketing Professional

GOALS: I want to focus on self-development and self-care. Travel, when it is possible again, learn new skills, read, spend time on my health, fitness, and do things every week to pamper myself. In this issue, I have contributed to the hustle... curating the list of all the right influencers, putting all the pieces of the puzzle together in terms of design, content and getting the best people on board to create this masterpiece! Hope you enjoy it.

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Living area, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

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A story of FIRSTS

From being the founder of one of the country's first multi-designer stores to her first renovation project that transformed a royal hunting lodge into an upscale retreat, Sangita Kathiwada gets candid with us on her journey of firsts

Fashion connoisseur. Graphic designer. Interior decorator. Jewellery designer. Photographer. Sangita Kathiwada is a woman of many talents. When she first established her brand *Mélange*, she wasn't following any fashion trends or trying to make a point. She was simply doing what she knew, understood and above all, loved. She was putting together a well-curated, hand-picked selection of accessories and textiles in a place that appealed to her sensibilities. Little did she know that she was creating a fashion revolution of sorts! Ever since she was a little girl studying in a school in Indore, Sangita had a creative streak. She was a thinker. No matter what projects she took on, she would always think outside the box, wondering how she could convert those small school projects into larger ones and have a positive impact on more people. In fact, she reminisces, "When I was a baby, my family would give me a piece of fabric to play with when I'd cry. And I would just play with it for hours, without shedding a single tear!" It's no wonder then that in 1992, she went on to set up India's premier fashion house *Mélange*, in a 100-year old wine cellar in



Mumbai. “We sold out within the first three days of opening!” she says.

It must be noted—at a time when sustainability was not all the rage, Sangita launched a brand that took an environmentally conscious approach to fashion. Think bamboo hangers, unstructured garments and breathtaking outfits made from cotton and silk. In fact, for the brand’s first anniversary, she put together a khadi fashion show at the Royal Opera House. Not only did she work with designers like Ramesh Nair and Hemant Trivedi, who were then at the nascent stages of their respective careers, but she also ensured that the experience was impactful in every way, by draping the red velvet seats in white khadi, among other things. She has always been a proponent of this fabric. For Sangita, a sustainable approach to fashion was, more than anything else, a way of life. Her efforts at creating such khadi collections have been instrumental in giving this hand spun Indian fabric, international appeal.

Mélange was also one of India’s first multi-designer stores. Sangita’s innate sense of style and her eye for aesthetics allowed her to spot talent that had never showcased their work before. She became a mentor to every designer who joined her fold. In fact, some of today’s most iconic and popular designers, including Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Savio John, Priyadarshini Rao, the late Wendell Rodricks and Sanjay Garg, to name a few, were first noticed by Sangita. Suffice to say that Mélange and Sangita have both been forces to reckon with. A few years ago, the Altamont Road store completed 25 wonderful years of fashion with a conscience. The store, which features unconventional outfits crafted from khadi, cotton and linen, has always seemed to draw in a diverse set of shoppers—families with old money from the posh areas of Napean Sea Road and Altamont



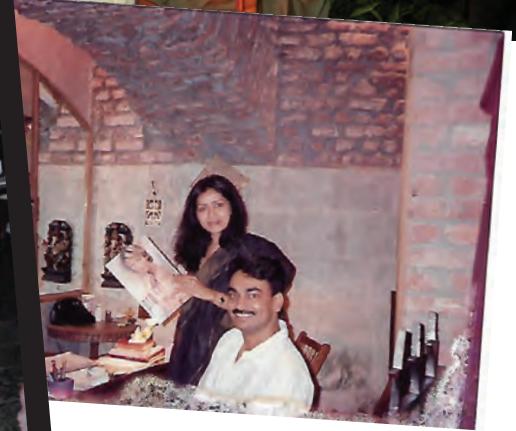
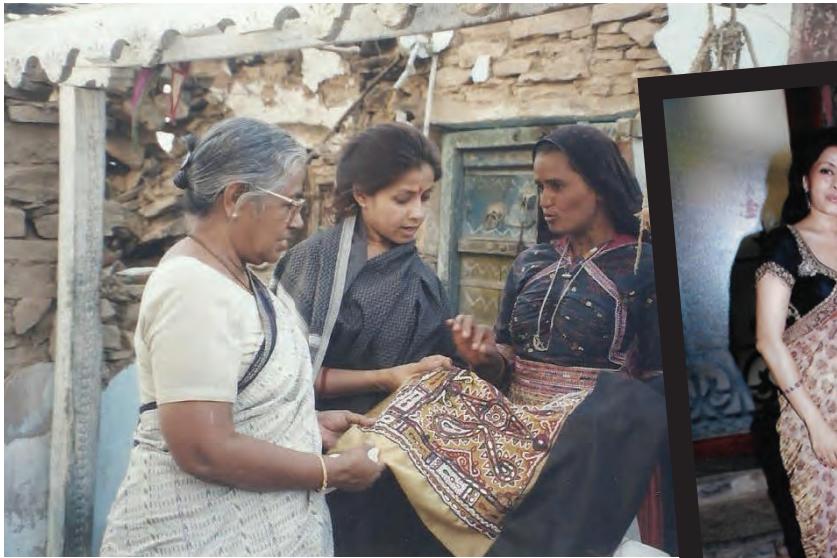
Road, talented textile artists from Japan, filmmakers from across the globe and Bollywood stars the like of Jaya Bachchan and Shabana Azmi. Even veteran actor Neena Gupta confessed to travelling all the way from Juhu to Altamont Road twice a month, because there was no other place that she liked better for tunics and saris, and for silhouettes that sat just right. “Manish Malhotra also liked to drop by and draw inspiration from the non-embroidered outfits at the store. In fact, he chose a specific garment from here and styled it with a costume for the film *Rangeela*,” adds Sangita.

But what truly sets this exceptionally gifted woman apart, is the manner in which she thinks—not just about her brand, but about the many capable artisans who made all of this possible for her. When Mélange opened its doors and became a resounding success practically overnight, Sangita was overwhelmed, to →



IN {fashion+art+design}

KEEPING UP IN STYLE AND DETAIL



say the least. She realised that the craftsmen were the ones who were to be credited with the praise that was pouring her way. So, she got talking with her uncle, Mr Kamal Morarka and decided to set up the Morarka Foundation to bridge the gap between urban people and rural audiences, so that users could directly interact with the artisans and better understand the entire process of design.

If you thought it all ended there, think again. Being the powerhouse of talent that she is, Sangita wonderfully restored her late husband's family's royal hunting lodge into a luxurious retreat. The 105-year-old Kathiwada Raaj Mahal in Madhya Pradesh is nestled amidst 120 acres of lush, privately owned farmlands. And it reflects Sangita's design expertise in every way. "Each room at the Mahal features

specially woven textiles. The dining room is kitted with art deco dining chairs, which I chanced upon in my mother-in-law, the Princess of Limbdi's, trousseau trunks!" Her efforts also include using five different kinds of marble in the bathrooms at the Mahal, creating a beautiful breakfast room at what was once the driveway and using seven kinds of tweed from Bhagalpur, in the library. She also curates yoga and wellness retreats that are popular haunts among some of the most renowned artists, authors, photographers and culinary experts.

She's dynamic. She's magnanimous. And she has big dreams that she aims to fulfil at top speed. Truly, there's no stopping her! 

SNIPPETS FROM SANGITA'S JOURNEY

Mélange's letterheads, carry bags and visiting cards are made of recycled paper.

When the now popular designer Ramesh Nair walked into her cabin years ago to show her his creations, Sangita took one look and told him that he would be in Paris someday.

Instead of cut flowers, Sangita enjoys collecting fallen flowers from her garden and putting them in a copper bowl with water.

In 1998, Sangita launched The Window, an art gallery right across Mélange, which debuted with as many as 16 not-for-sale exhibitions.

Her most cherished piece of clothing is a handmade tribal jacket with Nasa shells that she purchased in Oman.

She worked with Ketan Mehta as the creative director for his film titled *Rang Rasiya*, which was based on the life of Raja Ravi Verma.





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the
MASTER *of*
THE MINIMAL

“Simple moments make the biggest statements” —heiress, socialite and artist extraordinaire Dia Mehta Bhupal’s mantra rings true in everything she does

IN {fashion+art+design}

KEEPING UP IN STYLE AND DETAIL

Below: Dia Mehta Bhupa's creation



It takes Dia Mehta Bhupal anywhere between 12 to 20 months to craft one of her astonishing installations. And that's no surprise. With the amount of thought and insight that goes behind each project, the final creation speaks louder than words can describe. Dia, originally from Mumbai, today works and practices in Hyderabad, India. She hails from the prestigious Parsons School of Design in New York and graduated with a BFA in photography in 2006.

The artist extraordinaire effortlessly combines the roles of an architect, designer, crafts-person and photographer in the work she does, and while for most, the day-to-day involves the seemingly mundane, for Dia it's the small things that matter, the simple things that build up and become a part of each day, the connections and varied perceptions that inspire her, and the work she does. In her practice, she's a force to reckon, creating fine art conceptual images. "I spend a lot of time thinking about what the image will be, and yet, a lot of what I do happens by accident. And as much as I plan, there is still so much that I cannot control," quips Dia.

Evoking the transitional nature of



Above: Dia Mehta Bhupal in her studio

spaces such as cinema halls, waiting rooms, book stores and more, onlookers begin seeing her creations as patterns rather than plain jane spaces. She explains, “As an artist, I work with the ‘constructed image’, primarily public places, cornering you to a contemplative experience limiting one to observe, reflect and experience the basic realities. In a world saturated with manipulated or mediated images, my work re-evaluates the potential of the photographic medium. The images do not simply

depict the world around us, but actively participate in its construction.”

Unapologetically passionate about what she does, Dia makes herself a part of the entire process: she herself constructs the larger than life sets from the ground up and then photographs them. Throughout her journey she has always questioned the notion of how one connects through the visual medium, how one reads images. “I feel that it’s the images of our subconscious that form our connections with the world. We are constantly bombarded with images, and we might not even register everything we see, but still we decipher the elements.” Through her photographs Dia believes that she brings to life a feeling of familiarity. It makes one stop and think, either about their past experiences with that space or the perception of the space, and she believes everyone reacts to each image in their own unique way.

But perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of Dia’s work is the materials used—like finely spun magazine paper rolls—used with the intention of deconstructing images of aspiration. Her images are repurposed, created with wasted paper, magazines, newspapers, old cardboard boxes, and the like. It is the use of these materials that further aids the narrative of her work. Look closely and each image reveals the intricate detail: each colour is found in a trashed magazine and cut into a strip and twirled individually, after which rolls are crafted to create a structure. Each roll comes with its own text to create myriad stories from different cultures, time periods and genres, eventually creating a unique environment, she adds, “A parallel to the randomness of individuals experiencing public spaces.”

Dia’s body of work is a reflective process, capturing energy in transition from one experience to another. It is her personal belief that these veiled experiences are the ones that are in fact the most profound. “Over the years I have been greatly influenced by experiences of diversity and duality in concord of having to exist between them. Through geographical relocation, cultural disparities, religious incongruities, ethnic and gender divergence, philosophical extremes along with intellectual and spiritual aspiration, I have grappled paradoxes and learned how to celebrate the moments in between,” explains Dia.

We can’t wait for what’s next. 



*{with every milestone
comes a new beginning}*

Isprava ranks 89th in Financial Times (FT) London and Nikkei Asia's list of Asia Pacific's top 500 fastest-growing companies of the year 2021.

Incessant hard work, focused capabilities and a spirit of resilience has led us to achieving this milestone today.

Rank	Brand	Country
86	GA technologies	Japan
87	SuperOx Japan	Japan
88	HOEC	India
89	Isprava	India
90	Grain	Singapore
91	Indiabulls Ventures	India

the WORLD OF GEMOLOGY *decoded*

A connoisseur of jewelled art, Richa Goyal Sikri, owner of Isprava's Monforte F, is driven by her passion for all things precious and treasure-worthy

She considers herself an addict who is living from one dazzling hit to the next. An expert in every sense of the word, what enthused Richa to start her epic 'Gem Journeys' was her love for coloured gemstones and admittance to the fact that she didn't know enough. Her fear of possible fraud and a desire to be an educated consumer is what motivated her to study, explore, and learn. "The journey started primarily for selfish reasons, but today has morphed into a new way of life." With a background in business planning, distribution, sales and marketing for airlines and luxury travel brands, for Richa, travel has always been an occupational hazard. In 2013 she started her educational visits to gem mines, manufacturing hubs, combining her love for gemology, history and design. The objective was simple, to show connoisseurs and lovers of gems and jewellery (like herself) how jewellery is made and gain some knowledge from some of the best craftsmen in the world who supply to top international brands. "That first trip was an incredible learning experience and since then I have been conducting a few journeys every year. Some to



Sri Lanka, some to Thailand and Jaipur. I have also travelled as far as Colombia and Zambia (to visit the world's largest emerald mine)."

With each trip, Richa's desire to learn more grew, which led her to attain formal education →



and a degree from the world renowned Gemmological Institute of America (GIA). Simultaneously, she started researching the history of jewellery design and documenting her views and insights on Instagram in 2017.

Within a few years, her unique brand of storytelling has garnered a loyal and engaged audience of over 47,400 followers. “The original intention of this account was to have an online scrapbook of sorts to keep track of what I was learning. The educative style of storytelling, which demystifies the complexities of the gem and jewellery world is something that developed over time. From the start, I was committed to not boost my posts or let commerce dictate the narrative.” And the rest as they say is history. “One of the joys of the account is that it has connected me with wonderful people who love gems and jewellery, and want to learn. It also brought me closer to some of the most talented artists in the industry,” she explains.

Today, Richa is recognised in the industry as an accomplished journalist. She writes extensively for consumer publications like

Robb Report, Harper’s Bazaar, India Today Spice and ELLE on gems and jewellery. Her research on the business side has led her to regularly write for apex trade publications like Rapaport magazine and InColor (International Coloured Gemstone Association) on responsible sourcing, gem mining and marketing.

Her work transcends journalism to create digital storytelling campaigns for brands and associations in the sector; deliver talks at industry conferences and create content for museum exhibitions (Art Science Museum, Singapore) and prestigious gem and jewellery shows (GemGenève).

We wish Richa luck in all her future endeavours in the world of gems and jewellery. 

TIPS FROM RICHA ON YOUR NEXT GEM-STUDED INVESTMENT:

1. Buy the highest quality in what your budget permits; with each year the supply of top-grade material is diminishing.

2. Buy untreated gems. I would prefer to buy an untreated red spinel instead of a glass-filled ruby.

3. When it comes to jewellery, focus on quality of craftsmanship and originality in design — while it may seem like fun to get an original Cartier design copied (lord knows we’ve all been there), the long-standing value of an original creation will always outweigh the copy of an internationally recognised one.



'Bigger is better' or 'Less is more'? What's your mantra?

Do you prefer simplicity in all its glory or are you a fan of having things in abundance? Perhaps you're a little bit of both? Isprava's here to help you find the answer to that one looming question — are you a minimalist or a maximalist?

1. What would draw your eye at a fashion store?

- a. Monochrome hues and outfits in washes of beige, grey or white
- b. Vibrant ensembles and chunky jewellery
- c. The basics (jeans and tees) that you can pair with other things from your wardrobe

2. How would you describe your work-station?

- a. Filled with cutesy knick-knacks and ornaments that you've picked up from dozens of different places
- b. Organised to a fault, with not even a ruler out of place
- c. Cute, with framed pictures or quotes, and a few useful items including pen-stands and notebooks

3. How do you pack for a holiday?

- a. You carry everything! Extra outfit options, a whole set of shoes, trinkets to change along with your outfit, the works!
- b. You take only what you think you absolutely need. You have a checklist and use that to pack efficiently
- c. You throw in your best picks and fill your bag with whatever fits and are okay with leaving behind the rest

4. What does a party at your place look like?

- a. It's like a carnival! Bright fairy lights, a table that's groaning under the weight of multiple plates of food, flower arrangements, tons of

- people and your best tableware
- b. It's classy! Matching napkins, probably a colour theme for the party decorations, finger food and a limited guest list
- c. It's cosy! You order in some pizza, gather all your close friends, string up some fairy lights, put on music that you think everyone will love and play games

5. If you had to draw up a list of things you'd like on your birthday, it would include...

- a. Luxurious perfumes, travel tickets, beautiful clothes, colourful home decor pieces or luxe skincare products
- b. Something that you would use and really need (this could be anything from a new hair-straightener to a new laptop sleeve)
- c. A gift card, so you get to pick and choose

6. How would you describe yourself as a traveller?

- a. The go-everywhere, do-everything, see-everything kind
- b. The one with a ready list of important places to see, with designated timelines written against each, who likes to come back and spend quality time at the hotel, too
- c. The backpacker

7. What kind of home interiors appeal to you?

- a. An interesting mix of bold colours, quirky textures and mismatched seating
- b. Sleek, defined lines, neutral colours that →

soothe the eyes and tons of smart storage space
c. A space doused in pastels, with ample space that's not too cluttered, but boasts its fair share of ornamentation

8. At a bookstore, which one of these books would you pick up?

- a. A graphic colouring book for adults
- b. *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: the Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* by Marie Kondō
- c. Comic books with plenty of action

9. Do you hold on to things?

- a. Yes! You hoard everything from restaurant bills after a successful meeting to empty wrappers and travel receipts that mean something significant
- b. You can't stand clutter, so you simply cannot hold on to anything that you don't need
- c. You hold on to a few things that are special, but always trash the rest

10. If you had to describe your style quotient in one word, it would be...

- a. Eclectic
- b. Elegant
- c. Casual

11. How do you shop?

- a. If you like it, you buy it! No second thoughts or detailed analysis
- b. You don't like buying things you have no need for and will spend agonising minutes thinking about whether you really need what you see
- c. You put everything into your trolley and make the final decision at the billing counter

12. What does your ideal ice-cream cone/cup look like?

- a. It has to have three scoops, rainbow sprinkles, marshmallows and/or M&Ms
- b. A single scoop of your favourite flavour with maybe just one topping will do
- c. It can be a new flavour; you're willing to experiment. You'll take two scoops

DECODE YOUR PERSONALITY

Mostly a's: You're an unapologetic maximalist

You're not afraid to go bold. You love bright colours, exciting experiences and pretty things. Your space reflects your spirit—it's colourful, quirky and full of character. Oh and you don't have one favourite colour. You love them all and it shows in your fashion choices, your home and just about everything else. To you, 'carpe diem' is not just a phrase, it's something that you live by. All you want to do is to experience all the beautiful things that life has to offer. And isn't that an excellent way to live?

Mostly b's: You're a true-blue minimalist

You like things that are simple but tasteful. Neutral hues, simple meals, clean spaces and smart storage solutions are your kryptonite. You're practical, super organised and aren't eager to be on the move from the minute you wake up to the minute you go to bed. You take life at a more relaxed pace, only because you've already finished planning out everything! You can't stand wastage and will only take and keep what you can eat or will use. You're a simple person with simple needs, living in a beautifully simple space that spells elegance in every possible way.

Mostly c's: You're a bit of both

You do things in moderation. You're experimental and fun but also think through all of your decisions. You don't like waste but you want to splurge on a little something for yourself every now and then. You like to travel but only a few short holidays in a year or two really long ones. You love fancy meals in fancy restaurants but are just as okay with eating a simple home-cooked meal. Your space is a reflection of both maximalism and minimalism—all sleek lines and neutral hues paired with pillows or frames in pops of bold colour. Suffice to say that you've successfully straddled the two lifestyles and *that*, we think, is a skill in itself!



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Around the world of interiors

A mover and shaker of interior design, Laila Bijlani Malpani's career takes her across the globe and keeps her inspired every step of the way

Artistically inclined from a very young age, Laila's penchant for art and design dates back to the early 1980s. The story goes: her parents who were budding art collectors had invited famed Indian art gallerist, collector and connoisseur Kekoo Gandhi, who pioneered the promotion of Indian modern art from the 1940s, to their house to ask of his inputs on how to display the works of art they had been collecting over the years. Nine-year-old Laila enthusiastically followed them around the house and even offered her opinions when asked. It was then that the legendary Kekoo Gandhi himself exclaimed that he wasn't required with a natural like Laila around. And the rest as they say is history! But anecdotes aside, Laila confesses, "I have been attracted to all forms of design for as long as I can remember. Be it art, fashion or even spatial design.

I don't think a single person or event has shaped me as much as the travel that my parents exposed us to growing up. It was fascinating to observe the amazing art, varied cultures and destinations, and this of course clocks back to a time when Indian design was going through a renaissance of sorts."

Her nascent, prodigious passion soon enough transcended into a full-fledged, prestigious career. She graduated from the Inchbald School of Design, London by the age of 21 and right off the bat landed a job with the legendary Sunita Pitambar. She started off as an intern and eventually headed her own design team. She shares, "It was one of the most enriching experiences of my career. I got to learn so much from one of the most talented people India had seen. From buying art at Sotheby's auctions to tapestries in Paris, I was involved in designing homes for some of the most well heeled in the world, from Michael and Shakira Caine in London to industrialists in Dubai, Kathmandu, Delhi and Mumbai."

Fast forward to years and her passion for design

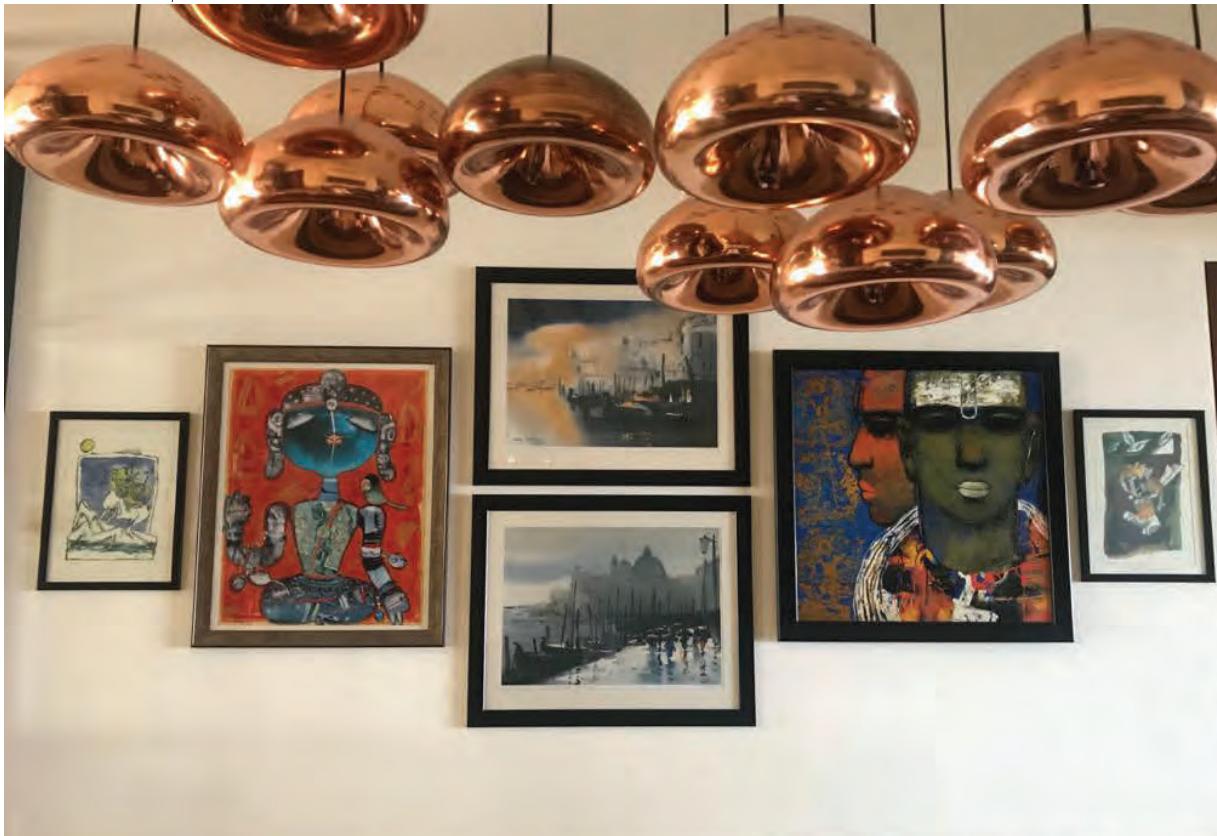


led to a brush with fashion styling within the film and advertising industries, followed by Laila launching and successfully running a fashion label. After that, life took Laila to New York where she had a brief stint with a top interior management firm to style spaces. She recently moved back to India with her family and her reignited love for interiors compelled her to launch her very own boutique interior design firm that exemplifies her varied experiences and exposures to design of all forms. Her eponymous brand focusses on bringing luxury, style and comfort to each project while maintaining the values and sensibilities of each client. She explains, "I try to utilise texture, colour, proportion and shape in a unique manner, and I pride myself on perfectly balancing heritage and modernity, resulting in spaces that are aesthetically beautiful and enticingly inviting."

As a design practice, Laila's policy is not to be 'brand led' but rather responsive to a client's desires. She emphasises, "I work hard NOT to have a signature look and instead prefer to address the client's wishes and requirements on an individual basis. I believe this keeps me fresh and in touch with all sorts of skill sets and styles. I can be doing restoration work in the morning, shabby chic at lunchtime and a contemporary penthouse in the evening! The best design, I believe, is when you marry more than one style to make it eclectic." Reminiscing about her own journey, Laila confesses that she especially loves to work with clients who have collected art over the years and small objects from their travels. It provides more than a 'designer look' and tells a story about the person and their lives. "I love that part of individualism."

As for her favourite space to design, Laila reveals it's the living room, since that is the most important room in a family's home. It is where everyone spends time together and it is also the room that one would entertain in and becomes the focal point of the house. She loves spaces where design can take centre stage and be most impactful. But she also confesses that she enjoys designing bathrooms.

When asked about her most defining moment or project as an interior designer, Laila shares another anecdote, "I wouldn't say defining but one of the most interesting projects I worked on years ago was for an industrialist in Delhi. He was so married to the project that he slept on-site on the charpoy most of the year that we worked. He would call me every day at 6 am to discuss his ideas. On a whim, we would take off to Paris, London or Italy to pick up pieces or order furniture for his project. I actually went to the Baccarat factory to order 18 identical chandeliers for this home. It was a crazy, surreal experience because of its challenges and how highly demanding the client was, but also oddly and immensely satisfying because of his strive for perfectionism. We didn't give up till every detail was immaculate. I may have aged a little →



during the process but I honed my skill set and it was one of the most memorable experiences to be thrown into the chaos and frenzy of design in different parts of the world.”

Apart from Laila’s lovely anecdotes, in terms of the future of design, we ask the designer what, in her opinion, are the key design trends to look out for. She quickly announces the most important thing of the moment—sustainability—and emphasises how it

is the need of the hour. Here in India, sustainability has always been a part of the fabric of our society, “repurposed furniture, wood and artefacts are not only stunning when mixed with modern materials, but also aids in saving our planet. Win-win!”

We at Isprava couldn’t agree more with Laila, and have always been at the forefront of driving sustainability through all our projects. 

LAILA’S TIPS ON HOW TO REVAMP YOUR FAVOURITE SPACE!

Colour is a great way! So repainting your space using an interesting colour on a single wall or even on all the walls is fun, painless as well as easy on the pocket.

1

Wallpaper is also an easy, quick and effortless solution to transform something old and boring into something new and vibrant.

2

Adding a rug to a floor can quickly liven up a space and make it appear fresh and new.

3

Decluttering and reorganising is key, especially in kitchens and bathrooms.

4

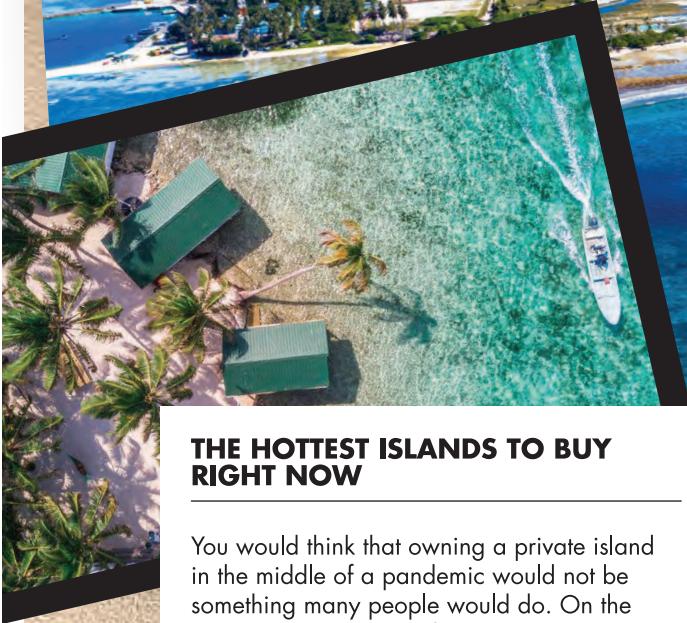
A pretty potted plant or two can add so much to a space, not to mention in city homes, it also gives you that fresh breath of air!

5



3 secrets of owning a private island

The COVID-19 pandemic has definitely spotlighted the importance of owning a private space that's both self-sufficient and helps you maintain a distance from the rest of the world – and owning a private island perfectly ticks these boxes. Here are a few secrets to know if you're toying with the idea.



THE HOTTEST ISLANDS TO BUY RIGHT NOW

You would think that owning a private island in the middle of a pandemic would not be something many people would do. On the contrary, stats suggest that people are now more interested than ever in acquiring a space that allows them to self-isolate in peace. In fact, a small island just off the coast of Finland happened to be for sale for less than €100,000. The hottest destinations at the moment happen to be the South Pacific, the Caribbean and remote spots of Europe and the USA. Because of the pandemic, people aren't very picky about locations anymore. So, British buyers who were obsessed with buying Greek islands, are now content to isolate themselves in the Seychelles or the Irish Sea, whereas Americans and Canadians are more interested in the South Pacific. Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific islands are relatively virus-free, making them popular picks.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BREAK THE BANK

No, you don't need to be a billionaire to buy yourself a swish private island. If you can invest in a really good car, you can just as easily invest in your own slice of paradise. There's Inchconnachan, a 103-acre island covered with oaks, 30 miles north of Glasgow that could be yours for about \$649,000. If the Caribbean has your heart, there's Long Caye, a 650-acre tropical island where you can go snorkelling, kayaking and more, available for \$59,000. Reminiscent of Martha's Vineyard, Canada's unspoiled Big Tancook Island is also an excellent spot, just 6 miles from the renowned Chester Yacht Club, selling for a price of \$68,104.43. If you're looking at bank loans, note that banks don't typically finance private islands. So, if you aren't planning to live on the island full time, you can think of adding in a rental property to ease off a bit of the financial strain. Even Necker Island, a popular luxury private island, is rented out by Sir Richard Branson.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS KEY

Lesson learned from the pandemic—being self-sufficient is the only way to be. So, when you're scouting potential islands for sale, make sure of a couple of things. For starters, the island needs to have good agricultural potential. Additionally, make sure that you as an owner will be allowed to grow your own vegetables and keep your own animals. From organic sewage to solar panels, a well and a satellite for the internet, you will need your island to have everything. If it's a saltwater island, you will also need a well with desalination. Many places do offer virtual tours though, so keep your eyes peeled and ask as many questions as possible.



An illustrative escape to Jordan and Israel

Countless drool-worthy falafels, the most unique brewed beers (with the coolest graphic art labels) juxtaposed with the holiest sites in the world, ancient architectural marvels and a sea that you literally just keep floating on no matter what you do. Maleka Shah Patel's on-road adventure across Jordan and Israel was both delicious and divine, soulful and sinful(ly) memorable.

The artist who also goes by the name The Wander Ink transports us there through her illustrations, reminiscing about some of her favourite things about her jaunt and revealing her art travel diary of memories...

FIRST STOP...

أهلاً حبيبي...

WADI RUM FOR A DESERT CAMPING EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER

Wadi Rum, located just four hours away from Amman, literally means 'Valley of Sand', and it is here where one can witness great cliffs of red sandstone towering over a terrain of sand and natural rock formations. "It's also where the 1962 movie, *Lawrence of Arabia* was filmed, and more recently Matt Damon's *The Martian*... those red dunes you see in the movie, they are from Wadi Rum," Maleka says. She continues, "It is easy to lose all sense of time and place, as you traverse across the relentlessly red wadi, riding on a camel or in the back of a roofless jeep, encountering a vastness that is all-encompassing. It really is life-altering, especially for an artist like me." But perhaps the most interesting part of Wadi Rum was the Bedouin experience: which involved staying over night in tents. "The best ones are called the Martian Tents, they are transparent and you can spend all night staring at the carpet of stars in the uninterrupted sky. But if you want a more rugged experience, opt for the Bedouins—these are literally beds in tents in the middle of nowhere." Maleka advises booking in advance, as the tents usually sell out quickly, and you don't want to miss this experience.

“My favourite thing to do when I travel is to soak up everything around me and then pour it all out through my art.”

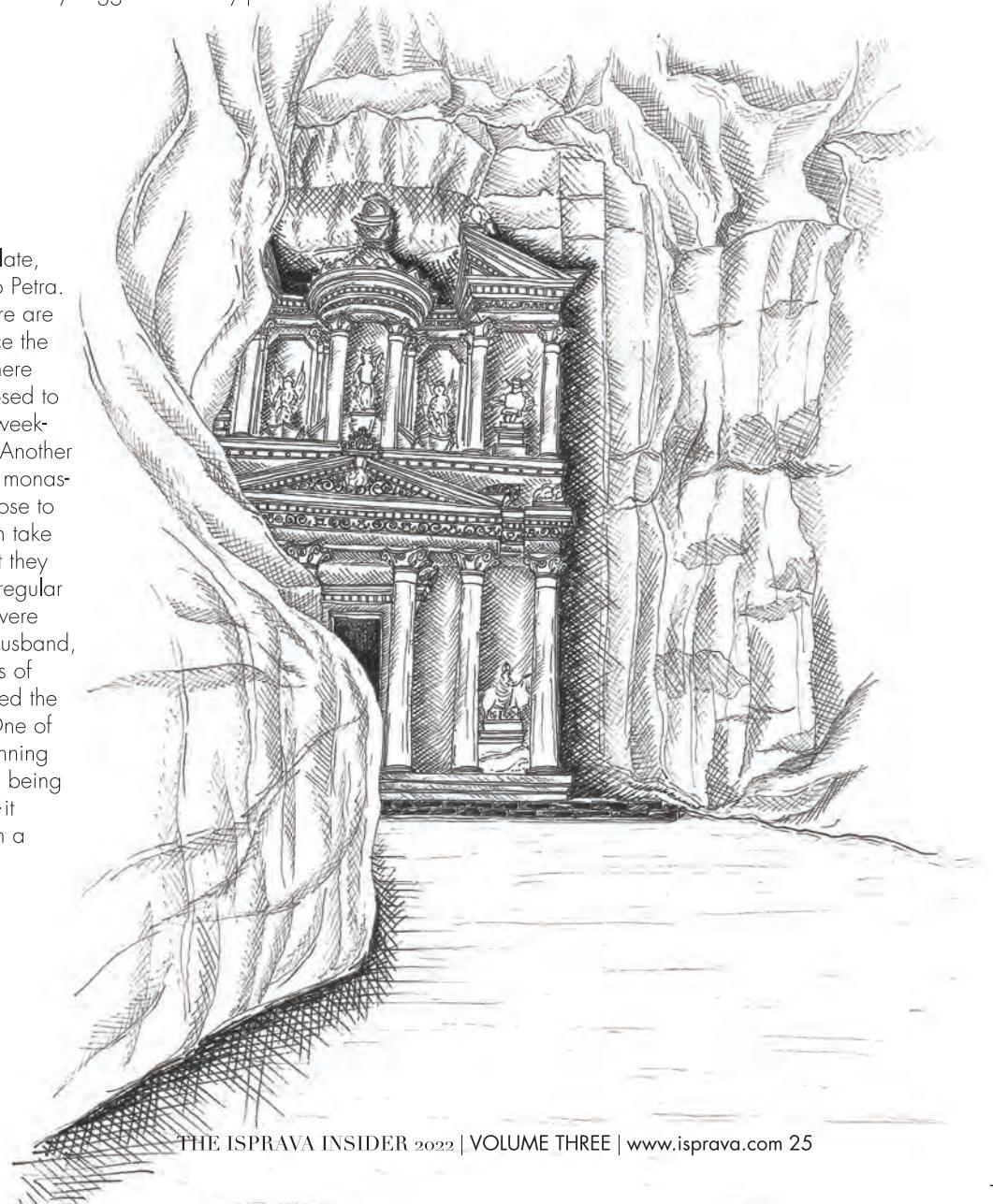
PETRA BY NIGHT



The ancient city of Petra is one of the most celebrated of Jordan's destinations. Maleka instantly advises, "Do it both by day and by night. Undoubtedly, it is like two different destinations between morning and night. So do both." By night, you will see a narrow walkway that runs in-between a massive wadi with imposing rock formations on either side. The walkway, as she describes, is lit with paper lanterns all along the way. "It was so surreal, because all you can see are the stars above you, the silhouettes of the wadi rocks around you, the illuminated walkway leading you forward, and nothing else." When Maleka arrives at the end of the walkway, and Petra's main site reveals itself through a slit in the earth, she is left awestruck. In front of her stands the all-famous treasury drowned in a red light, lit up by thousands of lanterns. She remembers, "All you want to do is stop and stare. We did a lot of that, just thinking about the sheer imagination it took to build such a masterpiece." She ended her day at the 2,000-year-old Nabataean tomb which has been transformed into a cave bar. Petra is known as the rose red city of the Nabataeans, an ancient Arabian tribe. Maleka also indulged in the local Nabataean cuisine and had Nabataean Sawani, which is lamb cooked with Jordan Valley veggies in a clay pot in the oven served with rice.

...AND PETRA BY DAY

The next day, while the world slept until late, Maleka started her day at 6 am to go to Petra. "When you go early in the morning, there are very few people so you get to experience the whole treasury in seclusion and ease. There were literally just 15 of us there as opposed to many hundreds later on in the day. On week-days, almost 4,000 people visit Petra." Another fabulous site in the ancient capital is the monastery, which Maleka and her husband chose to trek to, climbing 900-odd steps. You can take a donkey but her husband was adamant they walk. "It was a very tough climb, with irregular steps and a steep terrain. It felt like we were climbing up 100 floors. I even told my husband, if I make it up, you owe me two holidays of my choice after this. But when we reached the top, we instantly knew it was worth it. One of the highlights of this trek, besides the stunning monastery itself, was on climbing down, being welcomed by fresh pomegranate juice—it simply is the best thing to have after such a strenuous hike." →



Jerusalem

- Old city of Jerusalem
- Western wall & its tunnels - place a prayer between the cracks
- Temple Mount & dome of the Rock - holiest site in Judaism
- Dominus Fretus church & Mount of Olives - church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Via Dolorosa - church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Church of All Nations
- Tomb of Virgin Mary
- Tower of David Museum
- Mahane Yehuda Market
- Wander the streets of the old city
- Have fresh pomegranate juice
- The Jewish Quarter - Hurva Synagogue
- The Christian quarter
- Meorav Yerushalmi in Jerusalem
- Mixed grill
- Gatsby cocktail room

Tel Aviv

- Banana beach, Gordon Fisherman beach
- Carmel Market & kerem Hataim
- BARS: M.A.S.H, Molly Blooms, Betty Ford, Abraxas, The Minzar, Brewhouse, Banana beach
- Falafel Hakosem - (Sells Taybeh beer)
- Jaffa flea market - try Onza restaurant for local beers or Puaa
- Abu Hassan - Hummus
- Old city of Jaffa - port - old man & the Sea
- Tel Aviv Port - Yahalom
- Bicicletta - beer garden
- Arte for Gelato
- Sarona market
- Block - clubbing or Sputnik or Radio ERG
- Rothschild boulevard
- Ha kosem - falafel
- Beer Garden
- Benedict - breakfast or Cafe Sheleg
- Florentine for night life & bars
- Neve Zedek for cute shops & coffee
- Tel Aviv Pub Crawl or Rothschild 12, Port Said, BuXa, Speakeasy, Tangier, Hoodna (deep fried mineal nuggets), bar, Satchmo, Porter & sons, Ha Moz.
- Rabin square
- Jaffa bars: Shafa bar, Beit Kaudinoff
- TRY: arak - anise-flavoured shot with grapefruit juice.
- SpicHaus - pharmacy themed bar - 18:00 to 20:30 - happy hours
- L'Entrecote @ Rothschild street - lunch & after

Bethlehem

- Bethlehem - church of the Nativity
- Gals Bakery & Patisserie
- Ein El Wadi - Lebanese lunch

Masada

- Masada - [The mountain fortress] the record - speakeasy bar

Haifa

- Haifa - Baha'i gardens - view of Sea of Galilee

Nazareth

- Nazareth - Basilica of the Annunciation
- Abu Ashraf - lunch (5730)
- Beit Shean - national park and Beit Alpha Synagogue

List of must-try foods

- Msabbaha - diff type of (ISRAEL) hummus
- Shakshuka
- Falafels - (AI Quds) (JORDAN)
- Moutabel - eggplant dip (Hashem restaurant)
- Hummus & Fattet Hummus
- Labneh (combination of bread soaked in both in hummus)
- Galayet Bandora - tomato based
- Warak Enab (stuffed grape leaves) & Kousa Mahshi (stuffed zucchini)
- Tabbouleh - salad / Arabic salad
- Ful Medames - fava beans & olive oil
- Chicken liver
- Manakish or Manaesh
- Bidoul Mofleh Tea shop
- View from the High Palace of Sacrifice
- Kaek bread sandwich
- Mujdara - rice & lentils
- Shawarma
- Pock some food for the day
- Oriental restaurant
- Bidoul Mofleh Tea shop
- View from the High Palace of Sacrifice

Petra

- Deep narrow gorge of Siq
- Treasury square
- Petra by night - buy tickets there & only happens MON, WED & THURS. park opens at 6am
- Monastery for the view
- Reach super early to beat the crowds
- * hike to the viewpoint above the treasury along the path of the Royal Tombs - find tea shop
- Take the King's highway from Amman to Petra - scenic route
- Crusader castles of Karak & Shobak on the way
- Go to the Cave Bar - in a 2000-year-old Nabatean rock tomb - @ Petra Guest house

Jerash

- Day trip from Amman - 50 kms
- start at Hadrian's Gate
- Forum, Temple of Artemis & North theatre of Jerash
- Re-enactment of the Hippodrome
- Cost of local guide - not more than 20JOD.
- Lunch at Lebanese House

Wardi Rum

- stay overnight in a tent - Bedouin experience
- Lawrence's spring & ruins of the house

Dead Sea

- float in the healing waters - 431m below sea level.

Mt. Nebo & Baptism site

- where Moses saw the promised Land - Memorial viewpoint
- Byzantium Church - amazing mosaics
- Narrow waters separating Israel & Jordan

Jibid

- Salabeddin Bakery for Kaek sandwiches
- Soups - Soug Jara, & Hareesh Souk el - Khadra, & Farmer's market
- Carakale brewing co. - BEER!
- King Abdullah Mosque, Hussein mosque - market behind it
- Hashem street - local food.
- The Citadel & Hand of Hercules
- Hashem restaurant - falafels
- Rumi - cafe in Amman - try the tea!
- Jasmine house - restaurant in a 1950's villa
- Rosa Damascena - syrian food - mohammara
- Sufra - Jordanian cuisine
- Reem cafeteria for shawarma - red & white awning
- open till late.
- Al Quds - falafel on Rainbow street
- Habibah knafeh for khunafa - local goats cheese dessert
- Rainbow street
- Al - Balad - old town - most shops closed on Fridays
- connects to the Citadel & Theatre.
- Soug Bukharia.



LOCAL BEERS TO TRY: Alexander, Taybeh, Darang Camel, Jerns beer factory, in Tayaf, Malka, Beer Pazaaz

Shish kebabs, Kofta Bi Tahini (bread & chicken), Kibbeh Bi Laban

Mansaf (rice, lamb & jameed), Maqluba (chicken on the bottom, rice on top & then flipped over)

Blue fig on Cantaloupe bar - 5-4 Happy hours

La Calle - 6-8 Pm, Zarb (Bedouin meat roast)

Hareesh - semolina, cream, coconut dessert

Mint tea, Turkish coffee

Zalatar - Butter cookie with sesame

Knafah / kurafa, Mulukiyah - green herb dish

AMMAN CONTD. (1) La Calle - 6-8 Pm, (2) JJs & Cube

OTR-off (1) JJs & Cube (2) JJs & Cube

NIGHTCLUBS (1) JJs & Cube (2) JJs & Cube



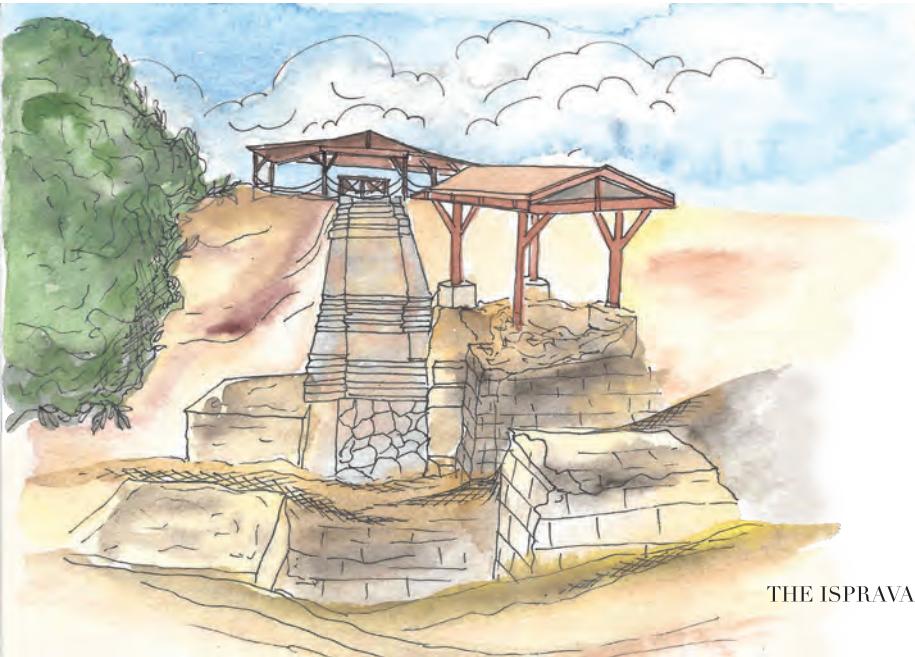
LOCAL BEER IS ALWAYS THE BEST IDEA...

Even though Jordan is only about 90,000 square kilometres in size, it has it all: historical attractions, religious sites, otherworldly landscapes, a cosmopolitan vibe, and some of the best beers Maleka has ever had. So it's no surprise then that the first thing she and her husband did when they arrived was have a beer. "We landed in Amman, also known as the 'White City' because it is mostly built from limestone, and started the day with a delicious, crisp local Jordanian beer called Carakale," quips Maleka. Later on in the course of their trip, they would visit the Carakale Brewery situated in the middle of nowhere with a beautiful mountain backdrop, entirely secluded and serene. Every beer at this brewery featured the most unheard-of combinations. For instance, The Fig Deal was a fig and chamomile pilsner while Dead Sea-rious, another brew the couple swore by, featured the most intriguing amalgamation of Dead Sea salts, pink grapefruit and coriander. Red Sea-rious highlighted pomegranate, a Jordan-famous fruit and red oranges. The couple confess that the beers were amazing, but what really caught The Wander Ink's eye was the funky artwork on the bottles, an instant source of inspiration for Maleka.

4

RUINS AND HOLY SITES

Make day trips to holy sites in Jordan like Jerash, known for its well-preserved Roman ruins. And definitely don't miss out on Mt. Nebo—the summit from where it is believed that Moses saw the Promised Land for the very first time. "When you stand at this memorial view point, on a clear day, you can almost see as far as Jerusalem," quips Maleka. Then, continue further to the baptism site of Jesus on the Jordan side of the Jordan river, known as Bethany beyond the Jordan. Maleka says, "Quite incredibly, the Jordan river used to flow through this site around 2,000 years ago, and when the waters would flow by, it would form a natural cross, between five churches. People still come in large groups to get baptised here." Tourists can access the Jordan river waters from both Israel and Jordan but the actual baptism site of Jesus is only accessible from Jordan.

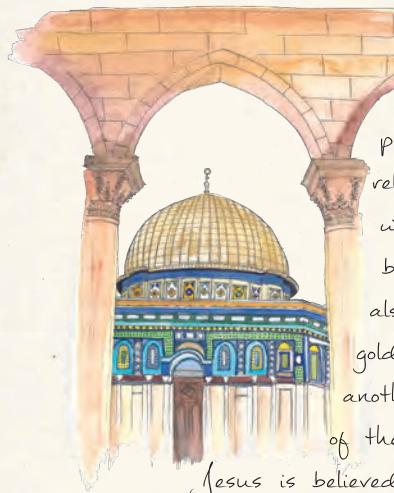
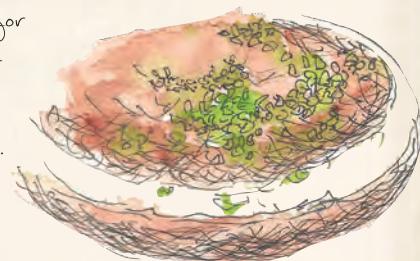


FOOD & DRINK

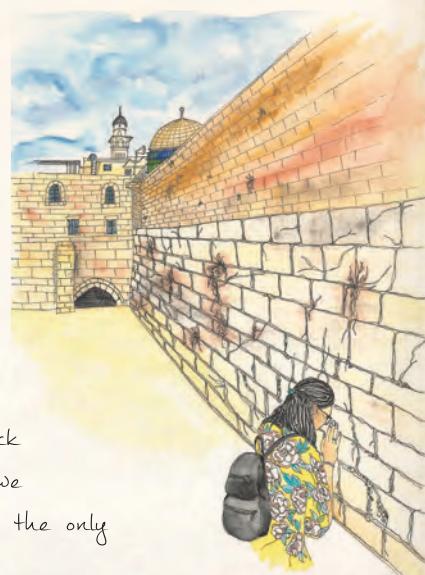
"Jordan was just a dream come true. Every bite of the way," gushes Maleka. In Amman, she insists you must visit a restaurant called Sufra. It is a quaint little place with cute interiors and beautiful flowers. She ordered the Mansaf here, a popular Jordanian dish which features lamb cooked in a sauce of fermented dried yogurt called jameed, and is served with rice. As for the best Lebanese food of the trip, for Maleka it was lunch at a place called the Lebanese House in Jerash. She ordered the hummus with meat, a fresh feta salad, parsley hummus and falafel. We are already drooling! She and her husband also enjoyed an evening of bar hopping on Rainbow Street in Amman—a vibrant area dotted by some of the city's finest bars and restaurants. On this street, eat the most famous falafel at Al Ouds and go to Cantaloup, a rooftop bar that offers a captivating view of all of Amman, even the Citadel at a distance. →

SHALOM ISRAEL, YOU WERE DIFFERENT. YOU WERE AMAZING.

A 45-minute immigration process per person, a single bridge crossover from Jordan, and we arrived in Israel. Our first stop and main base for the trip was Tel Aviv. We were living in a lovely area called Florentine, complete with hippy bars and cute coffee shops. Mate was a great place where we tried a new beer called Barbar and a local drink called Arak, a star-anise-flavoured shot which surprisingly tastes good with grape fruit juice. Knafeh Bar, known for its amazing knafeh, a dessert made of local goat cheese was another win. The crepe joint in Florentine called Bretonne was heaven, and next to it, Falafel Ben-Hur had some of the best falafels we had. Apart from Florentine, the nightlife across Tel Aviv is pretty engulfing. We ended up visiting a lot of watering holes like an underground bar called Sputnik. We even stole an empty beer bottle from here to keep as a souvenir. The Beer Shop was another favourite of ours, with around 30 beers on tap. Others to note include: The Beer Garden, The Brew House. Port sa'id, Buxa, a pharmacy-themed bar called Spice Haux, Porter & Sons, Tangier, Jasper Johns and many more. Eating and drinking are some of our favourite things. But onto Israel's historical charms...



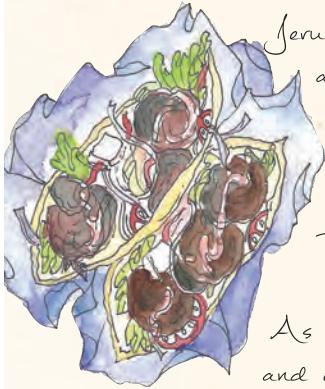
On the first day of the Israel leg we drove to Jerusalem. We entered through the Jaffa Gate, and made our way to Temple Mount. This holy place seemed to be a confluence of religious faiths. It is the second-most religious site for Jewish faith, and it is considered that it is where the world began. It is also the most important site for Muslims, as it is believed to be where Prophet Muhammad began his ascent to heaven. It also holds some importance in the Christian faith. I really admired the gold dome and mosaics, true beauty from another era. Next we entered the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This is where Jesus is believed to be buried, and they have an entire enclosure inside the church that can be visited by tourists. The mosaics here looked like paintings from afar, but were actually mosaics depicting certain scenes from the Bible, and featuring a million elements and pictures. In this church, there is the angel's stone, which is a fragment of the rock believed to have sealed Jesus's burial tomb. It is also believed that the oil on the stone keeps surfacing naturally, and has a rose-like smell. We brought back a paper napkin dipped in that oil as a blessing keepsake. Finally we went to the Western Wall, the holiest Jewish place of worship, and the only



“Every travel experience is enriched with so much learning. It could be a flavour, an architectural marvel, a local belief, or even a science.”

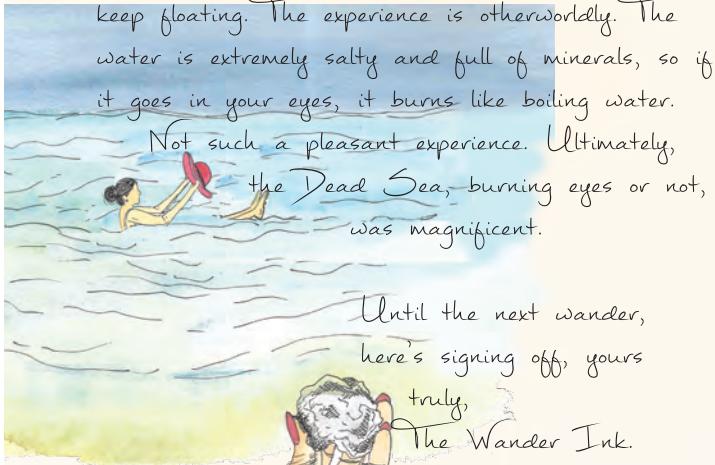
remains of the second temple of Jerusalem. It is believed that if you leave behind a written prayer in the cracks of the Western Wall, it comes true. You can place anything: your dreams, your sorrows, anything. It is a mechanism of sharing. And I shared too.

The next day we took a day trip to Nazareth to see the Basilica of Annunciation. This is where an angel told Virgin Mary that she was pregnant with Jesus. The Basilica has amazing mosaics, but the true beauty of the mosaics lie in that each country has its own representation of Jesus and Virgin Mary. From Mexico to Spain, India to Brazil, Japan, Peru and more... each depict their own unique version. Our long day ended with Nazareth beer, a local wheat beer. This is what bliss is. The day after Jerusalem we went to Haifa, known for the Baha'i Gardens. The gardens are massive and majestic, with a lot of greens and florals. From the top of the gardens you get a view of the Sea of Galilee. In this area, we gorged on the falafels at Falafel Hazkenim. Oh and the most decadent roasted beef sandwich at Abu Shkara only for me. Finally we had dessert at Gal's bakery.



As for the ultimate highlight of my Israel trip, besides the yummy food and excellent beer, above and beyond the holy sites and architectural structures, was the one in a million experience of floating in the

Dead Sea. Accessible both from Israel and Jordan, it is the lowest point on earth, 418 m below sea level. Once you enter, you literally just keep floating. The experience is otherworldly. The water is extremely salty and full of minerals, so if it goes in your eyes, it burns like boiling water.



Not such a pleasant experience. Ultimately, the Dead Sea, burning eyes or not, was magnificent.

Until the next wander,
here's signing off, yours



truly,
The Wander Ink.



Maleka Shah Patel has created all the beautiful illustrations in this story. For more information about her and her work, please visit her on Instagram @thewanderink

A page out of Maleka's travel diary...





What kind of traveller are you?

Are you the curious, ask-too-many-questions kind or the oblivious go-with-the-flow kind of tourist, the thrill-seeking adventurer or the luxury connoisseur? Isprava helps you decode your travel style and personality, and points you in the right direction on the map—because we all know we need it now more than ever before!

Q1. What draws you to a destination the most?

- a. Cool bars, clubs and food
- b. The people, culture and history, the sights, venues and amazing Instagram opportunities
- c. The luxury
- d. The shopping and city vibes

Q2. Who would you prefer as your travel buddy?

- a. A group of friends
- b. Just you and your bestie
- c. Your S/O
- d. You prefer to wing it solo

Q3. What is usually your reason to travel?

- a. To explore food and drink from around the world
- b. To meet new, interesting people from diverse cultures and make new friends
- c. To relax, luxuriate, pamper yourself
- d. To find yourself and reset from mundane everyday routine

Q4. How often in a year do you travel?

- a. Three short holidays or two long ones. Need to make up for this year!
- b. Always on the road. Or used to be at least in pre-pandemic times.
- c. Every chance you get! Can't wait any longer!
- d. Rarely, only when on a sabbatical or all of the sudden, out of nowhere

Q5. What's your packing style?

- a. You carry your whole world with you: an outfit for every occasion; extra luggage, yes please
- b. You are a last-minute packer, and end up throwing in whatever you can see around you. The rest, you shop
- c. You are a very planned and organised packer
- d. You are a very efficient packer, and carry only what is absolute necessary in a small cabin-sized bag

Q6. What kind of accommodation do you seek on your travels?

- a. A cool, chic rental villa with a pool where everyone can stay under one roof
- b. A hip hostel or heritage boutique hotel
- c. A super-luxury hotel
- d. A tent, hotel room, hostel bunk bed, homestay, anything would do

Q7. Where would you prefer to eat on a holiday?

- a. Street food, local pub, beach bar
- b. An authentic restaurant recommended by a local
- c. A five-star suggested by the hotel concierge
- d. A home-cooked meal by a local or something to grab and go

Q8. What is your favourite drink on a trip?

- a. The coolest local brews and crafty cocktails
- b. A local wine or local tea
- c. A glass of sparkling
- d. Lots of water

Q9. What area of a destination would you prefer living around?

- a. Very central, next to all the cool places and easily accessible via public transport
- b. In a cultural, quaint yet bustling zone
- c. Close enough to all the important places, far away from all the hustle
- d. Secluded and miles away from civilisation or just on the outskirts of the city

Q10. What's one travel item you can't live without?

- a. Your gadgets—phone, camera, Kindle, earphones
- b. Your travel journal
- c. Your handbag and mask!
- d. Your sunglasses

Q11. What souvenir would you typically bring back from your travels?

- a. A beer mug
- b. Stationery or some artisanal food or vintage showpiece
- c. An luxury item from an outlet mall
- d. A tan

Q12. If there was only one bucket list experience you could have, what would it be?

- a. A socially distanced live concert
- b. A local feast amongst new local friends from a beautiful vantage point
- c. Spend a week on a private island
- d. Go skydiving or scuba-diving

DECODE YOUR TRAVELLER PERSONALITY

Mostly a's: The energetic do-it-all

You are the kind of traveller that needs a holiday to recover from your holiday. You like to travel in groups with like-minded people and hop from place to place, ensuring you do it all in the time that you have. You're a foodie and love to try different and unique cuisines, local foods and drinks and are always the life of a party, even in a destination where they speak another language. You always find a way to communicate and blend in with the crowd. Bachelor parties are your favourite kind of travel and the next place your compass is pointing to is Ibiza or Dubai!

Mostly b's: The exploring pilgrim

You are a culture vulture who likes to imbibe the localness of a destination through its food, people, museums and unique attractions. You don't need many people around you to enjoy a holiday, and you are always eager to make new, local friends. You enjoy road trips as you believe that is the best way to get to know a place, inside and out. You enjoy the little quirks and intimate experiences that a destination offers, like an evening of wine and cheese tasting, or learning how to cook a local delicacy. Your favourite kind of travel is a historical journey through an ancient destination with heritage and a story; the next destination for you is Rome or Rajasthan!

Mostly c's: The luxe lover

You like romanticising a destination, appreciating the finer things it has on offer. Your idea of travel is to truly treat yourself to the greatest luxuries and indulge endlessly. From where you live to the food you eat to the items you shop and the experiences you capture, everything must be planned and pristine. Afternoon teas, lazing in lush gardens, taking time out for the spa, fine dining—these are just a few of the things you enjoy, especially when you have a special someone to share these moments with. Your favourite kind of travel is honeymoons and romantic escapades and the next destination on your radar is France or Maldives!

Mostly d's: The independent adventurer

You are the happy-go-lucky, flexible, solo, laid-back traveller. As much as you seek thrill, you don't mind doing nothing and just sitting back and taking it all in. You prefer making your own stories and coming back home to share all the cool things you did on your own and all the amazing discoveries you uncovered. Whether it is a city or a mountain, a beach or a village, you find your place anywhere you go. Your preferred kind of travel is the unplanned, spontaneous, take-off-and-go type and the next place you should visit is Machu Picchu or Kashmir.

THE LUXURY HOLIDAY HOME, A NEW PERSPECTIVE

by Mohit Gujral

Getting to know more about the realms of real estate in India from no other than Mohit Gujral—ex-CEO of DLF Ltd., advisor to the board at Isprava and a true veteran in the real estate space

The demand for luxury holiday homes has certainly increased in the recent past. This is thanks to several reasons, such as new lifestyle desires and infrastructural advancements in the country. There has even been a shift, where many individuals are looking to make homes away from the city their first home. But what customers are seeking now more than ever before are trusted brands that can cater to multifaceted requirements, going beyond ordinary expectations. Since we love what we do, and we love gaining insight about the industry, we decided to get a fresh perspective by a true veteran in the real estate space—in conversation with Mohit Gujral.

Q1. What are the key factors supporting demand for luxury second homes in India?

Luxury second homes as a concept is something that has been present globally for a long time. In India, the concept was prevalent with a very small segment of society. Purchasing power, acquiring and managing these homes was initially difficult as the locations had below par infrastructure and accessibility, without reliable resources to help brands manage them.

As India has progressed, more spending per capita, enhanced infrastructure, airport connectivity and technology have increased significantly in non-urban towns, and there has

been a large shift towards the Indian countryside. This has led to an increase in the new home purchases in non-urban cities and towns across the country.

There has been a growing urban phenomenon of moving out of big cities due to increased levels of pollution, the spread of seasonal diseases like malaria and dengue, and also work-life balance. In fact, the pandemic has acted like a catalyst to really open people's eyes to the need to make this shift.

The pandemic has also helped formalise the work-from-home culture which is now much more of an accepted form of working. The advancement of technology in the non-urban towns has allowed for people to continue to be at work without the guilt of not finding the need to be physically present at the office, but being able to be accessible via calls, and when required, to be able to get to an airport within a few hours to reach their destination if they physically need to be present.

Q2. Which are the popular locations for luxury homes in India?

Goa in India has been a Riviera for Indians, NRIs and international tourists for a very long time. While locations near urban cities, like Alibaug for Mumbai, are popular. Locations in Kerala and Srinagar are growing in popularity, with more people looking to acquire homes here.

There will be emerging destinations for luxury home markets apart from the ones already established, like the Nilgiris in the south; Shimla, Mussoorie and Kasuli in the north; Shillong, Darjeeling and more in the east.

However, in my view, as Indians continue to discover and explore more remote locations, they will look at other Indian destinations. Since the connectivity is improving any location which is two to two-and-a-half hours' drive away from an airport is enabling people to consider far-flung locations. And as reputed and branded operators enter these locations, their popularity will continue to grow. The main influencer for a location, in my opinion, is good local infrastructure, reasonable connectivity to an airport and good technology.

Q3. What is the demographic of luxury home buyers that you have seen? Has there been a demographic shift since the pandemic?

There has been a growing demographic of

the younger generation who are looking to acquire homes in non-urban locations as their first home. This demographic is asset light, very focused on the environment and focused on achieving a work-life balance. With growing infrastructure of recognised schools and an education system, coupled with the pandemic installing a mindset of work from home, the younger generation is increasingly exploring homes in such locations. We have definitely observed a shift in the demographic of purchasers.

Q4. What are the trends that you are witnessing in the luxury home space?

Some of the trends I am seeing include an increased amount of time being spent in these homes. This is more prevalent given the pandemic-influenced shift to a work-from-home culture and getting a work-life balance playing a key role. Another exciting trend is that people are looking for homes that have excellent technology, home automation and a hassle-free maintenance service. Home-owners are also driven by a customised end-to-end service that takes care of their needs to build the home, maintain it at a high level and also offer the opportunity to rent it out and earn additional income. What's more, with new income avenues, we will see more HNIs being created from the field of IT. And while Mumbai and Delhi have always been home to the second-generation rich, new locations will emerge as new millionaires emerge from difference cities.

Q5. Do you see demand for luxury homes growing in India over the next few years?

Yes, I think, as the Indian economy continues to grow, people will have increased desires for enhancing their lifestyle. Earlier, second-home purchasers used to be a fraction of first-home owners. But now, with the growing importance of work-life balance and work from home, locations that were holiday home destinations are becoming first homes for the younger generation. Coupled with the propensity to spend more, the added benefits of brands offering maintenance and upkeep of these homes, as well as additional rental income, are making homes in these locations much more attractive.



Luxury holiday homes have been given a new lease of life

Q6. Will more real estate brands expand operations in country-side locations as potential markets?

Infrastructure in India has significantly improved across telecom and wi-fi services, highway and airport connectivity. Therefore, boundaries are becoming opaque. As long as you can get to an airport for medical emergencies—the need to travel if a loved one requires medical care—the need to stay in an urban town or city is no longer a criteria. Also, the growing education facilities for children in these locations are making countryside living much more attractive.

Each location is different and offers a different experience. As real estate brands start to create enhanced experiences in each location and differentiate themselves, they will be able to demand a premium and will start to enter these markets.

Q7. What are some of the challenges in the luxury home market?

One of the challenges that luxury home purchasers face in non-urban locations is the whole legal process to be followed, including clean land titles, panchayat requirements and local approvals to register the sale. When you purchase a home in the city you live in, your understanding of these processes and procedures are far more, and you have access directly or through contacts to people—lawyers, bankers, tax consultants—who can advise you. There is a larger learning curve in any market that you are physically not present in and therefore, experienced real estate partners that you can trust will make the process of purchasing a home in the countryside far more convenient. A home buyer will feel safe and secure with someone they can trust.

Another challenge is to be able to build a home and furnish it. As we know there are local permissions that are required, local suppliers and local materials that need to be procured. Again, handing this part of the process over to an established niche brand that understands the market well, can smoothen the purchasing process as well as potentially even expedite the finished product as they are locally present to manage the entire journey.

IN{perspective}
THE ONES ON THE ISPRAVA RADAR



THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLLERCOASTER OF DREAMS

From a rich legacy to a love for fearlessly experimenting, **Samyukta Nair**, heiress of Leela Hotels, talks to us about her diverse launches, and how she continues to break boundaries wherever her path leads her

She was told by her grandfather to always stand for something or else one runs the risk of falling for and failing at everything—and that has been the guiding light for Samyukta Nair. Her entrepreneurial spirit has been brewing inside her from a very young age, and in no way has she taken any shortcuts to her pinnacles of success and fame. She says, “I’ve learnt to have unwavering faith in myself, read as much as I can, and listen to everything said to me, but at the end of it, come to my own decisions. The most important realisation has been I have to be accountable, successful or not, failing is always an option. Albeit tough, finding the courage to begin is the most important. We are surrounded by a world that will tell us how tough the odds are, but in that moment, all one must learn to do is to look inwards, believe and make a beginning, because that is a force very few can contend with.” And so she began, her journey on an entrepreneurial rollercoaster that has had its twists and turns, peaks and slopes.

Her legacy may be a sparkling one, but Samyukta has always forged her own path, building on her own accomplishments, not resting on her laurels. Her family founded The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts, but she knew from an early age that it wasn’t mandatory for her to follow suit. After she pursued an undergraduate degree in sociology and psychology, and a master’s in international business from the UK, she returned home bright-eyed and raring to go. She started as an apprentice to her mother, Madhu, who, at the time, was director of design and operations for The Leela. Working on the pre-opening of The Leela Palace Udaipur and The Leela Palace Chennai was something she thoroughly enjoyed, and it even paved her path to attending Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne for an executive MBA in hospitality management.

While Samyukta had an almost natural affinity for the world of hospitality, her inner desire to do something on her own when she returned from Switzerland took precedence and propelled her to create great, fearlessly diverse things. She came back and noticed a distinct lack of sleepwear for Indian women that was aesthetically pleasing and that emphasised comfort. This is what led her to start Dandelion at the end of 2014. Her father’s prior experience in garment export was remarkably helpful to Samyukta. “Dandelion was born on a prayer and with a bit of sweat and polish,” she says. They collaborated on another project when, in 2016, an opportunity presented itself for the father-daughter duo to work together, over an investment in London which resulted in the opening of Jamavar London. “Given that he [my dad] was so instrumental in creating Jamavar as a concept at The Leela in 2000, we wanted to create a stand-alone experience for the brand beyond the confines of the hotels or the country. And with Indian food being so widely accepted in the UK, Mount Street in Mayfair proved to be the ideal location. Complementing us further, the market was ready for something new but also rooted in tradition. Shortly after Jamavar, we opened Bombay Bustle, our second restaurant on Maddox Street, which offers a more home-style regional approach to Indian cuisine,” explains Samyukta. Finally, her inherent enjoyment towards fashion and design, fuelled by her childhood influences, seeded within her a dream to create an intimate retail experience. It was between the time of the opening of Jamavar and Bombay Bustle in London, that she stumbled upon the perfect site in Colaba, Mumbai that lent itself to this dream, and that was the beginning of her next venture, Clove. She emphasises, “All my ventures are facets of my personality and seem to have serendipitously found me, for which I am incredibly grateful.” And we couldn’t agree more. →

IN{perspective}
THE ONES ON THE ISPRAVA RADAR





All of Samyukta's enterprises have planted within them the seeds of hope, success, creativity, passion, perseverance, uniqueness and soul, with the intention of sprouting inspiration each time anyone enters either of her establishments—all of which are a testament of the hard work Samyukta put into them. For instance, Jamavar London takes a holistic approach to Indian cuisine. Its kitchen, led by Executive Chef Surender Mohan, brings to life dishes that showcase the various flavours of the royal kitchens of the north along with succulent options from the rivers and shores of the south. It reflects the essence of its Indian siblings, but at the same time, the concept is evolved and adapted to suit the sophisticated palate of London diners. Sharing small plates is an exclusive addition to Jamavar London along with signature classics such as Jamavar Dal, Old Delhi Butter Chicken and Lobster Neeruli. "Many dishes on the menu are those that I grew up eating and have been personally taught to Surender by my grandmother, Leela, an ace gourmand," explains Samyukta. Furthermore, the art of design is beautifully showcased in this space on Mount Street, Mayfair. It is set across two floors and designed by Fabled Studio. Taking inspiration from the viceroys' house in New Delhi, the restaurant features accents that draw on ancient Indian games, with Chaturanga dining tables combined with the vibrant colours of Jamavar shawls, rainforest emperor marbles, dark timber panelling, as well as a mirror-embellished bar in celebration of the Indian textile techniques. The restaurant also features a private dining room with beautiful views of a homegrown botanical garden.

Most recently, Samyukta conceptualised another restaurant called MiMi Mei Fair—also known to be Mayfair's best-kept secret. This time, moving away from Indian cuisine, the restaurant takes its guests on an anecdotal journey reflecting flavoursome cuisines from China. →

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THE ONES ON THE ISPRAVA RADAR



The kitchen is run by Executive Chef Peter Ho and it highlights authentic and innovative dishes from Hong Kong, Singapore and mainland China. The three-storey restaurant is beautifully situated within a Georgian townhouse with six resplendent rooms, all thoughtfully designed by Fabled Studio's Tom Strother in collaboration with Samyukta herself. This place revisits the charms of an old-world China juxtaposed by an elegant setting in modern-day London.

Clove was another exemplary example of Samyukta's passions coming to form, and it connected her upbringing in hospitality to her two loves: design and India. It celebrated craftsmanship and innovation of India at work. Unfortunately, in November 2020, the doors of Clove were closed. "It lives on in our hearts and minds, and is sure to make a comeback in a brand new avatar someday," says Samyukta.

Her primary inspiration that led to all her achievements has been her family. She gushes, "Being an only child, I owe a lot to my parents. My mother, though an incredibly tough boss, taught me everything I know about the arts, design, attention to detail and what being a thorough professional entails. I like to think of my father as my biggest critic and my most ardent supporter. His presence is a source of great reassurance, and I am constantly learning from him. Lastly, my grandfather, Captain Nair, had an integral part to play in who I am today. I am so inspired by him for his vision and his daringness, a man who always landed on his feet, and was a paragon of generosity and good humour." She continues to elaborate how incredibly lucky she is to have a family that supported her desire of forging a path of her own, even though they had laid a pretty solid golden brick road. But she admits, "It isn't always easy, and there are days when the going gets tough. When that happens, I always think back to why I started. I am encouraged by the power of my dreams, because when I reflect even in my wildest moments, I wouldn't have thought it would all come together so beautifully. Most importantly, I realise that this is only the beginning and I am only just getting started!" 



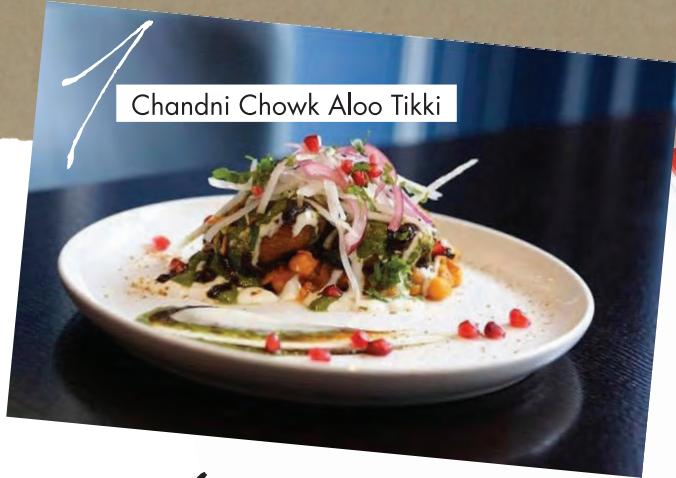


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THE ONES ON THE ISPRAVA RADAR

SAMYUKTA'S TOP 5 DISHES FROM JAMAVAR, LONDON, AND THE THINGS YOU SHOULD INDULGE IN ON YOUR NEXT VISIT!

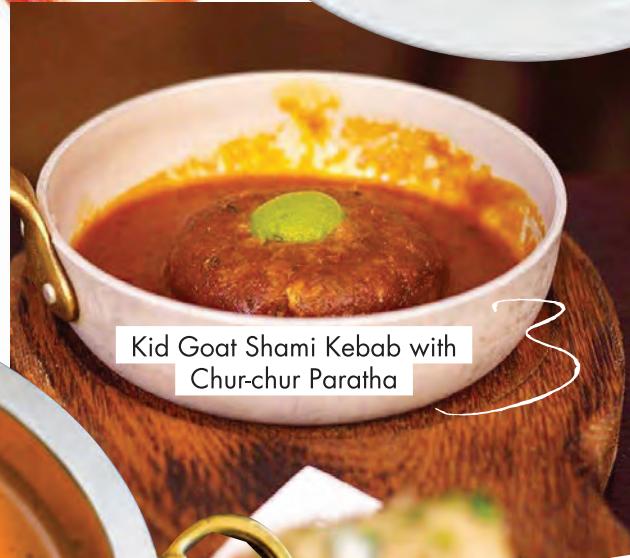
1 Chandni Chowk Aloo Tikki



2 Tellicherry Pepper & Garlic Soft Shell Crab



3 Kid Goat Shami Kebab with Chur-chur Paratha



4 Old Delhi Butter Chicken



5 Duck Seekh Kebab



Success

A POEM BY NADIR GODREJ

Fulfilling dreams is what I guess
Most would define as success.
And so I think there is no way
That someone else can have a say,
Deciding if you do succeed.
For surely those of us who heed
Our inner voice and do our thing
Will find that it is bound to bring
Much satisfaction and success
And if perhaps the achievement's less
We know a good attempt was made
And that the game was fairly played.
And then we could pick up our gear
Wipe, from our cheek, a little tear
And give the game another try

Until we learn how to fly.
For doing well in a groove
Leaves you little chance to prove
What you might well have been
If at your passion you could win.
For playing safe, is playing low,
You'll never know where you could go.
I was asked how in college days,
Success was seen in different ways.
My focus then was all on learning
With little thought spent on earning.
My college days were free of strife
And not as tough as real life.
Then in exams I could excel
And so I thought I could do well.

Nadir Godrej is the Chairman of Godrej Industries, one of India's largest and most reputed business groups. He is an esteemed board member of Isprava and an excellent poet

Carrier pigeons are trained for homing
My instincts then favoured roaming.
Five colleges I then attended
My stay might well have been extended.
In those days I was often guided
By my brother who then decided
It was high time that I came home
And finally I ceased to roam.
How society defined success,
I was asked and I must confess
If I knew then, I can't recall.
I don't think I thought much at all
Of how others thought of success
A nice job and family, I guess,
Is what most folks at that time thought.

But that is not what I sought.
And though I did the routine chore
I always found it quite a bore.
For science is what I liked to do.
I got my thrill from something new.
Perhaps I hadn't changed my ways
I was still living college days!
My biggest thrill was invention
Though, of course, I must mention,
Most credit goes to the team
My role was more to choose the theme
And show the way when they got stuck
And with their skill and a little luck
We got some patents and did new things
And this I find always brings

To me immense satisfaction.
I was never a man of action

But one of contemplation.
And in my estimation
It is the successful pact,
I made with colleagues, who could act,
That got me where I am today.
And so I confidently say
You can succeed at any scheme
If you have a balanced team
Where different skills are brought on board
And members all work in accord.
But listening to this my story
Don't think that all was hunky dory.
For if you try to be bold

You may be left out in the cold.
Perhaps I was a little brisk
In brushing off the clear risk
In making olefin from oil
Which hardly seems worth the toil.
I had no idea what was in store-
One year we lost 80 Crore.
And yet we could turn it around
The business now is very sound.
This tale has been described before
If anyone wants to know more
Please raise your hand or call or shout.
A copy will be handed out.
In conclusion I would like to state
There is no cause for you to wait

Ignore the trite dictates of fashion
And freely follow what is your passion.
Always stay true to your creed
And then you are bound to succeed.

IN{perspective}

THE ONES ON THE ISPRAVA RADAR



BEAMING NEW BEGINNINGS

Beam Health's Alekha Engineer helps us set new goals with the best ways to improve fitness, health and one's state of mind, with balance being the key ingredient

What better way to kickstart your fitness regime than with Beam Health by your side. And with balance being the main mantra, Alekha shows us the path to being healthier and happier. It is the cornerstone of her venture, BEAM—a health and wellness company that helps you achieve optimal health through nutritional therapy. This new year will be less about fad diets and more about focusing on self-care. “At BEAM, we focus on bio-individuality, keeping in mind that each client’s

“...IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO LEARN TO APPRECIATE FOOD FOR WHAT IT CAN DO FOR YOU, TO FEEL PROUD OF THE THINGS MY BODY CAN ACHIEVE AND TO THINK ABOUT HEALTH IN A LONG-TERM AND BALANCED WAY.”

nutritional needs vary and that based on our unique traits, we respond to food differently,” explains Alekha. She goes on to explain how this rings true for each client’s lifestyle, movement habits, the way their home is set up and other such factors. At BEAM, they are therefore very careful in tailor-making each plan so specifically that it is relevant, balanced and most importantly enjoyable as opposed to being a burden. The ultimate goal is to give people a sustainable approach to eating and staying healthy in life.

Speaking about her own experience in finding the ideal, equi-liberalised formula to wellness, Alekha explains, “I spent a lot of years in the cycle that a lot of people find themselves in today—trying extreme diets or very gruelling workout regimes to reach that aspirational target weight or size, and I never quite felt satisfied with what I had achieved. It took me a long time to learn to appreciate food for what it can do for you, to feel proud of the things my body can achieve and to think about health in a long-term and balanced way.” And it was this personal experience and realisation

that propelled Alekha to introduce this kind of paradigm shift with BEAM—by really focusing on improving the quality of people’s lives through nutrition and movement. She gained experience in the fitness industry for a few years and went on to get certified as a nutrition therapist, forging the foundation of BEAM.

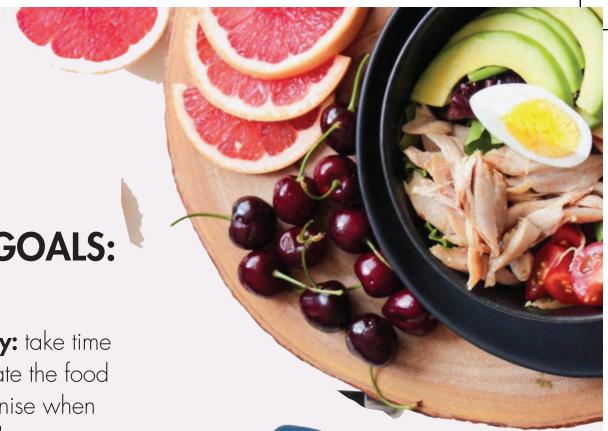
Alekha operates with a multi-pronged approach towards achieving a healthy lifestyle, staying conscious of the fact that finding balance is an ongoing and evolutionary process. “Our lives and priorities are always changing, and so it is really about deciding that health is a priority and finding ways to improve it at every stage that is paramount,” she exclaims. She believes that balance means something different to each person depending on where they are in their lives. It could be small adjustments like incorporating more walking, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, getting up and stretching at regular intervals, finding ways to build more whole foods into your diet by swapping packaged snacks for something fresh or even sleeping an extra half hour—small habit changes go a long, long way. “One of the things I always tell clients is that if your health routine is causing you stress, it’s time to reassess,” says Alekha. While making changes towards better health is not always easy, it should definitely give you a sense of happiness and satisfaction. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution, but according to Alekha, there are still a few universal things that would work well for most people. 

ALEKHA’S GOALS:

1. To eat mindfully: take time to chew, appreciate the food I eat and recognise when I am full.

2. To work on strength and posture: particularly in smaller muscles and areas I haven’t paid enough attention to in the past.

3. To stick to a morning ritual of movements and mind-sets: I recently listened to a great podcast about how to incorporate this each morning. So whether I have five minutes or an hour, I am determined to make this a habit.



ALEKHA’S UNIVERSAL APPROACH TO HEALTH:

Homemade food for the win:

Made at home can go a long way instead of eating out all the time. To make it extra interesting, join a Zoom food class and make a new recipe every week!

Staying active:

With the new work-from-home and doing-everything-from-home routine, it is more crucial than ever before to stay active. So spend at least 10 minutes stretching in the morning. Go for a walk whenever possible. Try working at a standing desk, instead of all curled up in bed. Incorporating regular movement into your day will make a big difference to your overall health!

Sleep is everything:

If you aren’t already getting seven hours of sleep, change that now! Seven hours is the ideal amount of uninterrupted shut eye you need. Equally important are the hours you pick. The best way to ensure you sleep soundly and correctly, is to put away all electronic devices and dim the lights one hour before you intend on sleeping. Initiating a short meditation practice also would help. Better sleep always leads to better stress management and subsequently, better health!





GIVING BACK

Built with a mission to inspire hope, spread the joy of education and propagate real change, Gayatri Ghadiok, an award-winning doctor, and her husband, Dr. Rajen Ghadiok, the forces behind Rohini Ghadiok Foundation, give everyone a reason to smile

This is the story of a great, important cause, born of immense inspiration and designed to help transform the future of the world. The Rohini Ghadiok Foundation, a Delhi-based, not-for-profit, non-government organisation, was established to honour the great memory of sociologist, activist, feminist and human rights practitioner, Rohini, who sadly passed away in 2011 at the age of 31. The mandate of the Rohini Ghadiok Foundation,

‘Empowerment through Education’ is guided by Rohini’s ideology that education should be a basic right; her commitment to enable the underserved was inimitable. She was an immense source of strength and today continues to inspire, ever-propelling her parents, Gayatri and Rajen, to take her great work forward.

The organisation aims to contribute towards making a just and egalitarian society, to inspire hope and lend a hand, to support institutions and aid students through educational, technical and vocational training programme. The foundation works with institutions to educate, train and strengthen the underprivileged and help them empower themselves. Remembering Rohini, Gayatri says, “She taught us to live free, love life and extend ourselves beyond what we think we can do. There is no greater gift we can offer than coming together and taking a pledge to extend her ideologies, her beliefs and her determination.” The proud parents are doing just that.

As trained medical practitioners, Gayatri and Rajen have an entrenched sense of empathy and compassion, with a compelling need to help those around them. While practising pathology, Gayatri trained to become a counsellor and volunteered at a free counselling centre that was built with



a mission to inspire hope, spread the joy of education and propagate real change. Gayatri Ghadiok, an award-winning doctor and her husband, Rajen Ghadiok, the forces behind Rohini Ghadiok Foundation, give everyone a reason to smile. Rajen, besides his work as an anaesthesiologist, set up a charitable clinic in a remote part of South Delhi, where, for decades, he offered free medical aid to the underprivileged. These inherent values of compassion, generosity and giving back to society were translated to their children as well, and so, it was no surprise when Rohini chose to pursue a career in sociology. In her short but meaningful life, her work in India ranged from training trainers for establishing governance and authority at the grass-roots level, working with local governing bodies and panchayati systems at the district level, policy-making and advocacy, and later, even working for women's law and development for the Asia-Pacific region. Her passion was relentless and fervour unmatched, and it is this enthusiasm to affect change that gave the Ghadiok family the courage to embark on this very tough and arduous journey with the foundation. Adversity pushed them to seek answers and to find the strength they had either taken for granted or perhaps did not know they possessed.

THE PLIGHT AND REALITY OF EDUCATION AVAILABILITY TODAY...

Educate a child, believes the Rohini Ghadiok Foundation, and you have the power to influence the very fabric of society. The change begins here, with us. Both Gayatri and Rajen have strong thoughts on the power of education. There's no argument that it is indeed a fundamental right of every child to be given an education that can enable them to understand the ways of the world, to offer them basic comprehension for a functioning life, and help them make informed decisions to pave a path for themselves. They concur, "Education is the tool with which a child carves out his or her future and determines its outcome. To deny them this fundamental right is to deny them the opportunity for a fair and just life." They continue to explain, "While the government recognises the need for basic education through the establishment of the Right To Education (RTE) Act, it unfortunately is unable to see its fruitful outcome in its implementation."

WHAT DOES THE GOVERNMENT'S RTE ACT ENTAIL...

It mandates that private schools accept 25 per cent of their admitted students from the economically weaker sections (EWS) of society and provide elementary education to children in the 6-to-14-year age bracket. The RTE has been instituted with goodwill, but its implementation has not been as was hoped. The challenge remains in the integration of these EWS students both at the academic and psycho-so-



cial level. Most children admitted under RTE come from backgrounds where opportunities, behaviour and social patterns are vastly different from the other 75 per cent of students in their peer group. This eventually leads to poor academic performance, low self-esteem, lack of interest and motivation, disruptive behaviour, and a high risk of drop-outs from school. Gayatri and Rajen point out, "Expecting these children to integrate with the mainstream is asking for the impossible, unless special efforts are made to help them. One of the major factors in them finding school a challenge is that they cannot comprehend English—the medium of instruction. The resultant isolation and a reluctance and hesitancy to participate in class discussions further worsen the situation."

RGF TO THE RESCUE...

That's where Rohini's foundation comes in. RGF recognised these challenges and initiated 'Bridging the Gap' and 'Bridging the Gap+', both affirmative-action programmes targeted at underprivileged children, all first-generation learners hailing from urban slums and admitted to schools through the RTE. The programmes at the foundation are multi dimensional and combine English language strengthening (reading, writing, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and speaking) and appropriate social and life skills.

THE WAY IT WORKS...

Meeting thrice a week after school hours, students from grades 1 through 5 are taught the basics of the English language and those in grades 6,7 and 8 are taught math, science and English. Before each class begins, the students are served a protein-rich lunch. The teachers and volunteers then work with them in structured one-on-one interventions, supported by aids that help with the conceptual understanding of the basics. The 90-minute session is concluded with 10 minutes dedicated to practising mindfulness and discussing relevant topics to strengthen the children's life skills and enable them to interact confidently with their peers. →



THE PROGRESS OF RGF..

The foundation was set up in 2012 and began its functioning by supporting a class of 33 little children in grade 3 of the Parikrama Foundation School in Bengaluru. Today, all those students have graduated and are pursuing various professions in diverse fields. When the pilot programme of ‘Bridging the Gap’ was launched in 2014, there were only 20 students enrolled from one single school. In the span of six years, more than 750 students from the EWS have benefitted and the programme has been extended to other schools as well.

Currently, there are 270 students between grades 1 and 7 in ‘Bridging the Gap’ and ‘Bridging the Gap+’ across two schools in Delhi. Over the years, RGF has collected books and resources to create a modest library and encourage all its students to use the facility to enhance their reading skills—an initiative that has been much appreciated by the students. The programmes are diligently monitored by documenting the individual progress of each student and providing detailed feedback on their performance with the appropriate corrective measures needed. Since the initiation of these programmes, participating schools have reported a significant improvement in their academic performance, with many students showing increased confidence and participation in class discussions and heightened social interaction. In fact, on popular demand from the parents of the students, RGF has also initiated adult literacy classes, catering primarily to the mothers of the students, teaching them English to enable them to confidently in-

teract with other parents, school teachers as well as their own children. In addition to these ongoing programmes at the school level, RGF has also collaborated with Ambedkar University, Delhi, to establish a fellowship that supports M.Phil graduates of the Development Practice Programme. The aim is to encourage a cohort of young professionals to work directly with and among the rural poor and facilitate a sustained transformation in their lives. Since 2012, the fellowship has been granted to eight students who have worked across the field to develop their research and offer in-depth analysis of their findings. While some have used this as a launchpad to further their study at an international level, others have enforced their work to develop further insights in the development sector in India. We couldn’t be more inspired with all the great work the Rohini Ghadiok Foundation has done. Now it’s your turn to make a difference and spread the joy..⁹⁸

Unveiling soon

THE CHAPTER

— BY ISPRAVA —

To know more

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IN *{isprava's world}*
WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA



View from Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

LIFE IN THE NILGIRIS AT ALBANY COTTAGE

Step into a fairytale world surrounded by
the magic of the Nilgiris at this whimsical
colonial-style cottage

Located in the idyllic tea-garden town of Wellington, Coonoor, Albany Cottage, with its pristine white facade, rolling green lawns and colourful flowers will look right at home in an Enid Blyton book! Offering easy access to the sprawling Wellington Golf Course, this elegant property with its colonial British air, comes with four bedrooms, an independent water source and an enchanting garden. Better still, Coimbatore is a mere 90 minutes away, which means you can always head out at a moment's notice to explore the city's many offerings. At Albany Cottage, you can expect to find the privacy and exclusivity that come with an Isprava home, along with the holiday experience of a lifetime.→

IN *{isprava's world}*
WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA





Living area, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

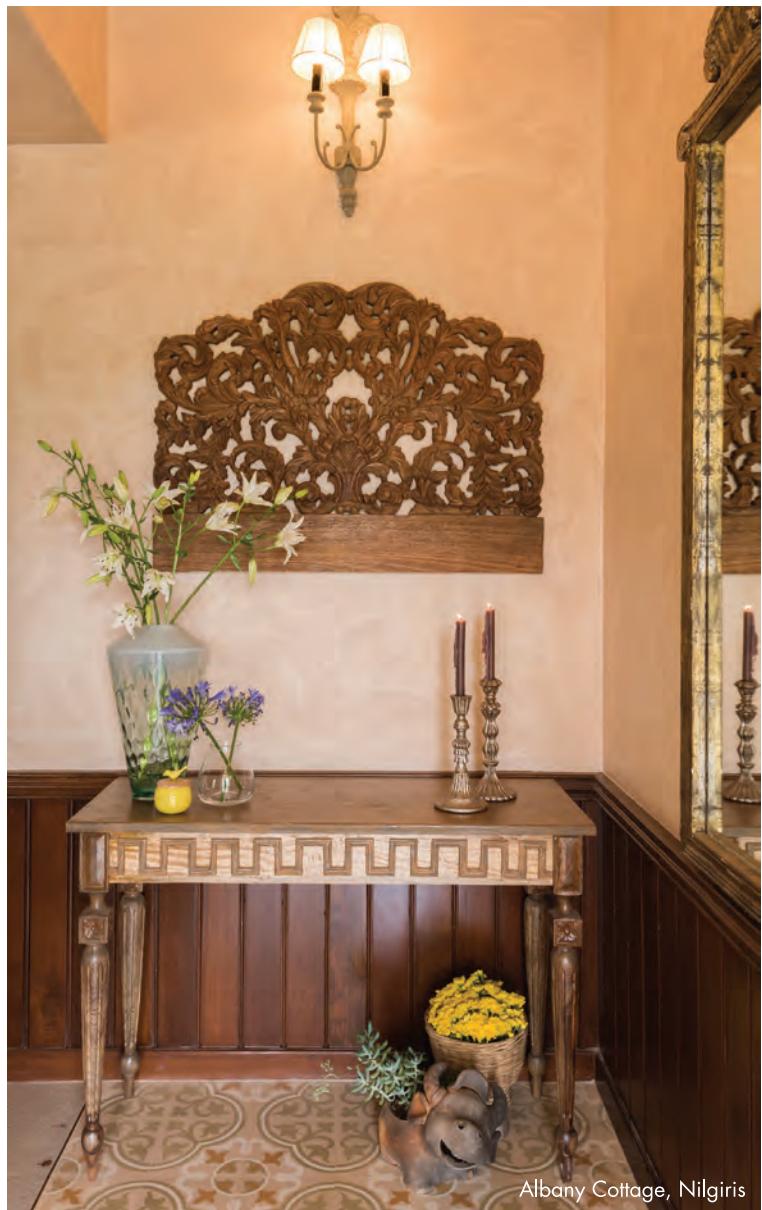
IN *{isprava's world}*

WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA





Outdoor sitting, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris



Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

IN *{isprava's world}*

WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA



Bathroom, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris



As with all Isprava properties, Albany Cottage too, blends in beautifully with its environs. Without disturbing the natural lay of the land, the designers have ensured that the design seamlessly fits in with the area it is built in the midst of. As you arrive, you will witness the harmony of plastered walls juxtaposed with exposed natural stone, all set against beautifully manicured lawns. Even the powder rooms, turned out in refreshing shades of green, are designed to mimic the lush Nilgiris just outside the windows.

From the inside, the cottage opens out onto stunning vistas. We suggest taking your hot cuppa out to one of the generously arranged sit-outs to revel in the spectacular views every morning or as the sun begins to set. →



Bedroom, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

IN *{isprava's world}*
WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA





Façade, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

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WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA



Fireplace in the living room, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris



A cosy niche in the guest bedroom, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris

IN *{isprava's world}*
WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA



Bedroom, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris



Bathroom, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris



Dining area, Albany Cottage, Nilgiris



A predominantly colonial-style home, Albany Cottage is awash in the comforting hues of beige, green and white. Its four bedrooms are tastefully furnished and will see to your every need, with each one featuring different tiles and furniture that's richly upholstered in bright silks. The double-mercerised sheets and satin pillow covers enhance the sense of luxury. As you swing the carefully refurbished doors of the cottage open and shut, you might find yourself stopping and taking note—after all, they're heritage pieces that once sat pretty in old British government offices, mansions and post offices. While potted plants infuse the home with layers of warmth and colour, the curated selection of French furniture bring both character and style.

At Albany Cottage, no detail is too small. Every little piece here has been consciously chosen, to elevate the space's sharp sense of style. So, while the landings have smart wooden floors and wooden stairs, the living room is laid out with stone-like tiles in soft gold stripes. As you saunter through the rooms, take note of the endearing reindeer sculptures and tastefully carved art pieces, handpicked in order to make the house feel like home. The dainty gazebo at the property too, is a rich study in detail and the perfect spot to enjoy English-style tea, cakes and finger sandwiches.

The perfect blend of contemporary and old-world charm, Albany Cottage truly does offer the best of both worlds. The perfect escape from the trappings of the quotidian, it is where the beauty of nature and the most luxurious amenities unite, to lull you into a quiet state of bliss. Once you set foot in magical Albany Cottage, you may never want to leave. ⁰⁶

Elevated Living. Elevated Luxury. Elevated Experiences.
Elevated Estates. Elevated Lohono.

PRESENTING

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*A selection of curated, invite-only estates
for the discerning traveller*



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THE LOHONO PROMISE

When you choose Lohono Stays, you're signing up for a unique experience. From Goa to Coonoor, Karjat to Alibaug, Lonavala to Panchgani, and even Bali, Phuket and Koh Samui—every villa sits in the most beautiful environs and presents a perfect blend of excellent design and impeccable hospitality

Gorgeous homes that have been handpicked amongst the most beautiful. Indulgent and immersive experiences that will both inspire and delight. Thoughtful hospitality that goes beyond the ordinary. Popular and easy-to-access locations promising the most breathtaking views. And the chance to fall in love with a home that seems as though it were designed just for you. This is the Lohono experience, and just a few of the reasons why Lohono Stays is one of the pre-eminent choices for those looking for a quick, memorable getaway.

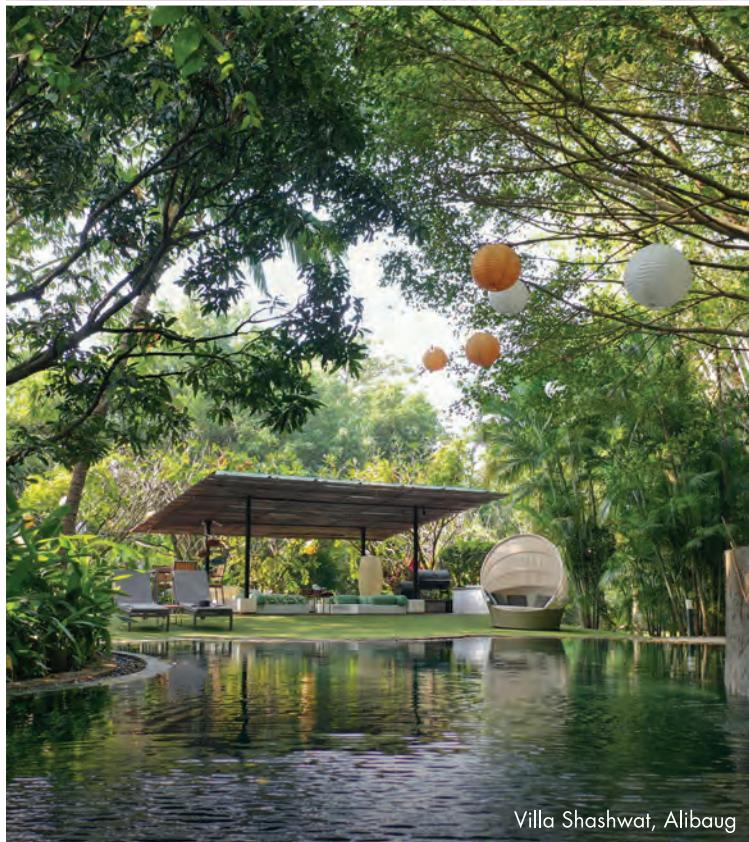
Nandi Farm, Karjat

IN *{isprava's world}*

WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA



Isprava Albany Cottage, Coonoor



Villa Shashwat, Alibaug

Keeping in mind every traveller's desire to be able to plan an easy escape with minimal stress, Lohono's existing collection of stand-alone villas in locations like Goa, Lonavala, Alibaug and Karjat hit all the right notes, especially amongst city dwellers. If you live in Mumbai or Pune, a few hours in the car will find you smitten as you pull up to these private villa hideaways in Lonavala, Alibaug and Karjat. And a quick flight will transport you to the sea of options Lohono has waiting for you in Goa—leaving you utterly spoilt for choice. With the 'villa life' currently taking precedence over other travel options, Lohono is expanding its map to the very popular hill stations of Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani. In fact, the first Lohono home in Panchgani is one of the most historic homes in the area—set inside a colonial Parsi villa built by a British serviceman, and fitted with modern amenities. It is the perfect juxtaposition of old-world charm and new-age luxury. And it is slated to enthrall all of its visitors. You'll see. What's more,

Lohono has its eyes and heart set on north India as well, with breathtaking destinations like Kasauli, Mussoorie, Shimla and Mashobra that will soon have coveted Lohono addresses.

But no matter what you choose, know that Lohono’s wonderfully designed holiday homes are where you can make memories of a lifetime. Every Lohono home is family friendly and thoughtfully equipped: from private pools to swanky kitchens, manicured lawns and special areas for children. Perfectly designed down to the last detail (read: cosy corners and plenty of windows), these homes are where you will discover what ‘lohono’ really means. Crafted to offer you relaxation and respite from the ordinary—everything, right from the most perfect view to the most perfect rooms, matters. Think unending vistas of mountains

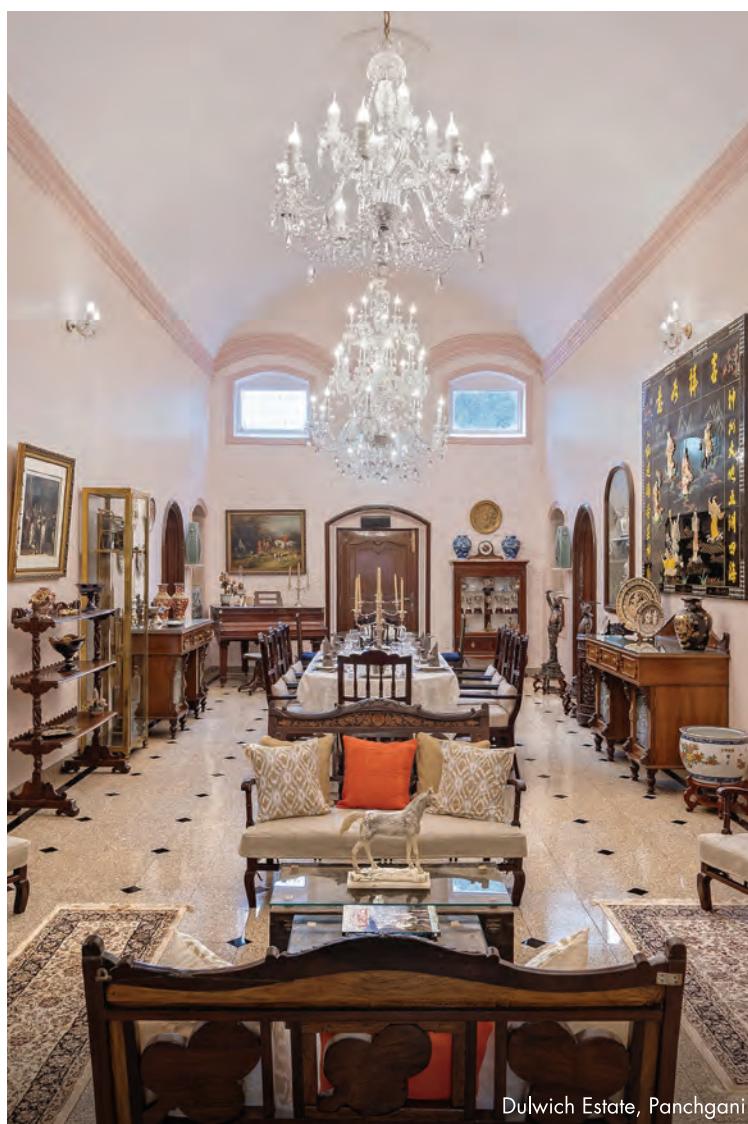


Isprava Monforte Villa I, Goa



Villa Alborz, Lonavala

and lakes, or fields of boundless greenery coupled with an array of intuitive hospitality services and the magical opportunity at every villa to work, celebrate or indulge in everything you deserve. This is exactly why we like to call it your, “home away from home”—a spot that truly enables you to feel comfortable and peaceful, surrounded by attentive and friendly staff, with nothing to disturb you. If that wasn’t enough, every holiday home under the Lohono Stays umbrella has a quirky little something of its own—a fairytale-esque gazebo for tea and cakes or an age-old banyan tree with a charpoy laid underneath for an afternoon siesta. There’s also natural beauty wherever you look, guaranteed to leave you with tons of pictures for the ‘gram’. What more could you possibly need? →



Dulwich Estate, Panchgani

IN *{isprava's world}*

WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA

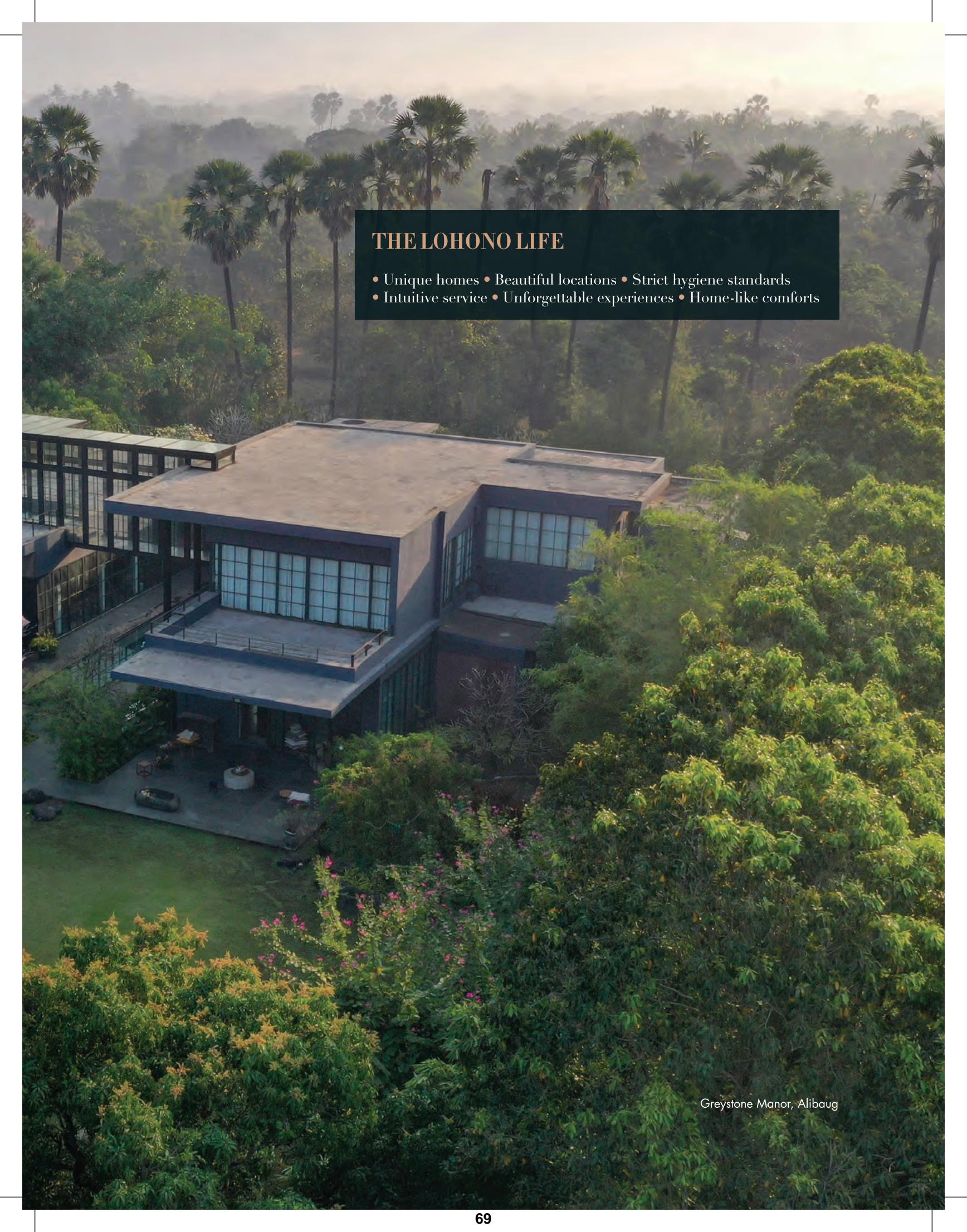
Lohono always strives to deliver. To make your holiday experience that much more unforgettable, the Lohono team is always ready with the right recommendations, activities, hot chocolate and pool toys for the kids. The team also has all the right contacts to make a dinner reservation at that local restaurant you've had on your wishlist. Or better yet, they can organise a unique gastronomical experience in the privacy of your own Lohono villa—from gourmet barbecues to elegant table spreads, an evening of tapas and cocktails or even a five-course fine dining indulgence to remember.

Besides, Lohono's on-ground team will provide you with nothing less than the royal treatment. Watch as your every wish and desire is attended to with utmost enthusiasm, be it the urge to cook in your villa's kitchen with organic produce or a sudden desire to enjoy a fun excursion—either to local outposts, stunning sunset points, hikes to architectural marvels, or fun sights around, all ending with a picnic under star-spangled skies. Think appointments

with a masseuse, masterclasses with experts in mixology, baking, and art and culture trails through the local village that can be arranged just as easily as a bespoke celebration or a party conceptualised and planned for your guests. That's the Lohono promise—nothing is impossible! Not when it comes to you. And with intimate celebrations and weddings quickly becoming the new accepted normal, Lohono's exquisite villas form the perfect venue! Big or small, every occasion can be made as dreamy as you desire in the luxury of your own private and secure bubble of bliss. Whether it's an anniversary soirée or a CXO retreat, our dedicated Lohono team will help you plan the most unforgettable affairs, down to the very last detail—from decor to entertainment, catering to booking the most ideal villas in multiples for larger groups.

Did we mention that at these holiday homes, you will always wake up to a delicious breakfast spread put together by Lohono's expert staff? Talk about the good life!

For more information, call +918430600600, email rent@lohono.com or visit www.lohono.com



THE LOHONO LIFE

- Unique homes • Beautiful locations • Strict hygiene standards
- Intuitive service • Unforgettable experiences • Home-like comforts

Greystone Manor, Alibaug

IN *{isprava's world}*
WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA

WHEREVER YOU GO, LOHONO FOLLOWS

Once you get used to the Lohono way of life, it's hard to leave it behind. Now, when you travel overseas, you don't have to!

Having successfully brought the highly coveted Lohono experience to multiple spots across India, we thought, why stop there? Especially now, with the aching desire to travel again, we wanted to take Lohono beyond our borders and set up the quintessential experience across the globe. Even though, for the moment, we have to wait before the world heals, if you're anything like us, we know that the second the borders open up and it is safe again, you will want to make a beeline for the airport to go almost anywhere. Good thing we have our exotic villas waiting for you in nearby international locations like Koh Samui, Phuket and Bali.





Lime Samui, Koh Samui

That feeling of boarding a plane, with unfamiliar adventures ahead of us, it's already giving us the feels. Our aim is to bring every single traveller a surreal luxury travel experience that's far beyond what they have ever imagined. Also, as a first-time traveller in the post-pandemic world, a private villa removed from the crowds that one would expect at a luxury hotel is a calming option. We can't wait to curate the coolest holidays where we can fulfil your sudden urges to go rock-climbing or even skydiving, or your curious desires to discover a local family-owned fromagerie where you can chat with the owner over hot cups of tea with social distancing long behind us. We believe that this dream isn't too far away. But until then, we always have something to look forward to.

Book your next getaway with Lohono now at www.lohono.com



Baan Paa Talee Estate, Phuket

IN *{isprava's world}*
WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA

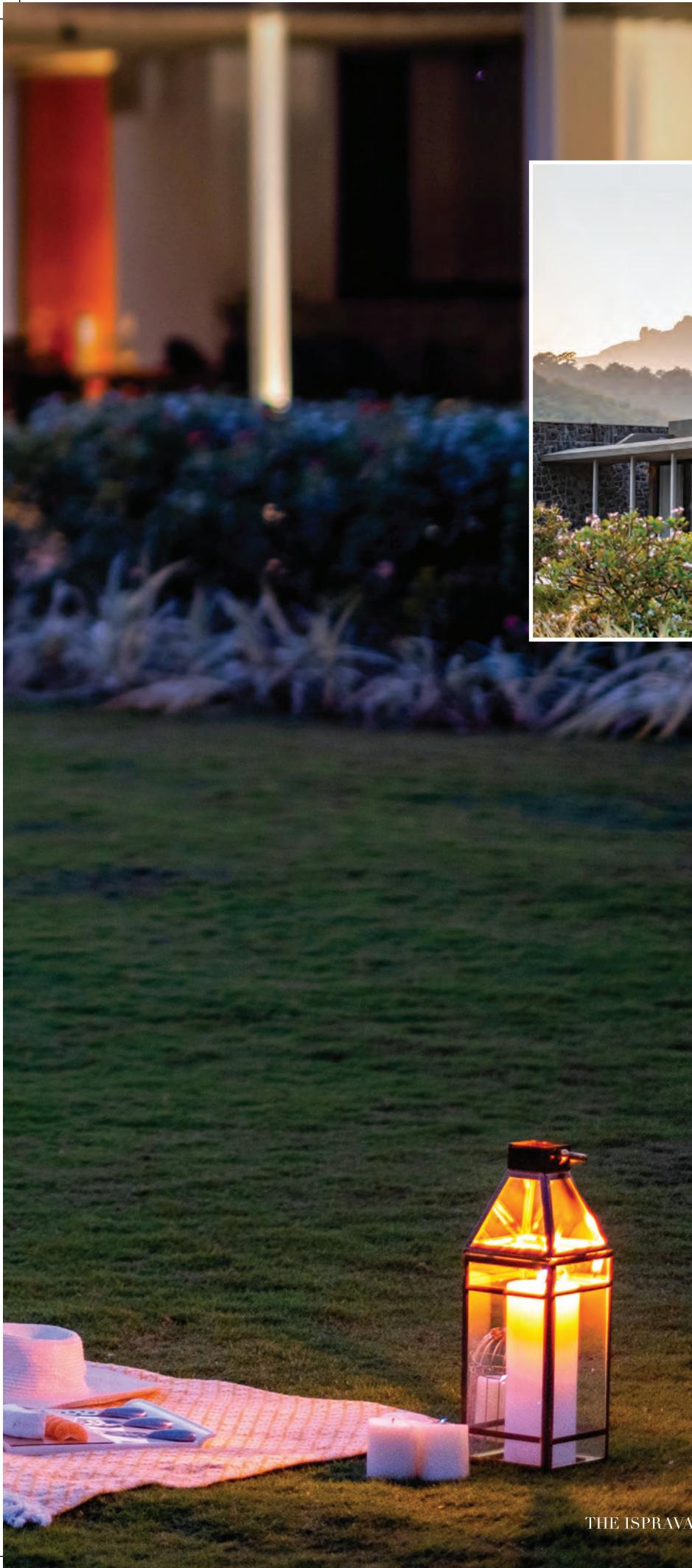
IT DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN LOHONO BLACK

If you thought you knew what to expect from luxury, think again.
Lohono Black redefines it all

At Lohono, we never stop dreaming big. And we never want you to either. With that in mind, we decided to elevate the luxury villa experience and introduce to you a new segment called Lohono Black. Built on the foundation of everything Lohono Stays offers, Lohono Black goes even further in lavishing you with luxury and experiences that seem almost unreal. We endeavour to bring you a selection of curated, invite-only, one-of-a-kind estates designed for the discerning traveller, and connoisseur of the good life. Imagined as abodes of limitless luxu-

ry, every estate has its own charm, its own adventures, its own secrets and its own story. And while each of us have our own perceptions of luxury—whether it is in the form of five-star hospitality or beautifully designed intimate spaces—at Lohono Black we offer you the best of everything. Most importantly, we offer you peace of mind in every way: from car transfers to concierge services and hygiene and safety standards that surpass expectations—so that you can do what you truly came for—and create memories that will last you a lifetime.





All of this comes to reality in the form of absolutely breathtaking estates that go on for acres. Where butlers intuitively have your wishes fulfilled before you even think of them. From chef-curated multi-cuisine meals that will leave you in awe to a dedicated wellness team who will redefine your wellness goals and have you coming back for more, having every whim and fancy answered is a lifestyle at Lohono Black, and expecting the unexpected is the norm. The amenities and luxuries leave you spoilt for choice on how to spend every relaxing and indulgent moment within a Lohono Black estate. Whether it is tucked up in bed that feels like you are floating on a soft and fluffy cloud or it is sitting by the poolside listening to your favourite tunes, taking in the unmatched views that surround you. If a celebration is on the cards, whether you want to throw your eight-year-old the best birthday bash ever, or have a special women's day spa weekend honouring the most inspiring women in your life, not only is the estate a venue that your guests will gush about long after they leave its charm, but our dedicated Lohono Black team will curate the most bespoke experiences beyond your imagination: from karaoke nights to horse riding followed by luxe high teas. This is just one example of how your dream is our command at Lohono Black.

IN *isprava's world*

WHAT'S NEW AND BUZZING WITH ISPRAVA

ELEVATED LUXURY WITH LOHONO BLACK

- One-of-a-kind estates • Butler service • Chef-curated multi-cuisine meals
- Dedicated wellness team • Car transfer service • Concierge service
- Hotel-quality bed & bath linen • Bespoke events & experiences
- Enhanced hygiene & safety measures

Swimming Pool, Casa Rivière, Karjat

To put all of this in perspective, we are so excited to reveal our first Lohono Black home—the glorious Casa Rivière. Located in Karjat, this private estate of five bedrooms and eight bathrooms is perched on a 12-acre property on the edge of a lake and a dramatic landscape designed to take your breath away. One foot in, and you will see how the indoors and outdoors seamlessly blend together. The interior design is a work of art, thoughtfully curated with handpicked artefacts and furniture to exemplify the Lohono aesthetic. The long list of amenities is truly impressive—from full sized sports courts that will make every tennis, cricket, basketball and badminton enthusiast excited to horse rides and freshwater fishing opportunities for the adventurous, a stunning swimming



Living Area, Casa Rivière, Karjat

pool for those looking to indulge in some time under the sun, to projectors and popcorn carts for those cosy nights in. You can fill your days with cycling, archery or segway rides, compete in friendly tournaments of table tennis, foosball, pool, carrom, chess or take your pick from a variety of popular board games. For the seekers of calm and peace, enjoy garden trails, birdwatching, dog walking and more. If you choose to leave the estate, the Lohono Black guest relations team will happily organise treks and excursions to nearby forts, temples, caves and villages. They can also arrange a golf day at the 9 Aces Golf Greens & Academy, located just 15 minutes away.

Can it get any better? Come experience Lohono Black to find out.

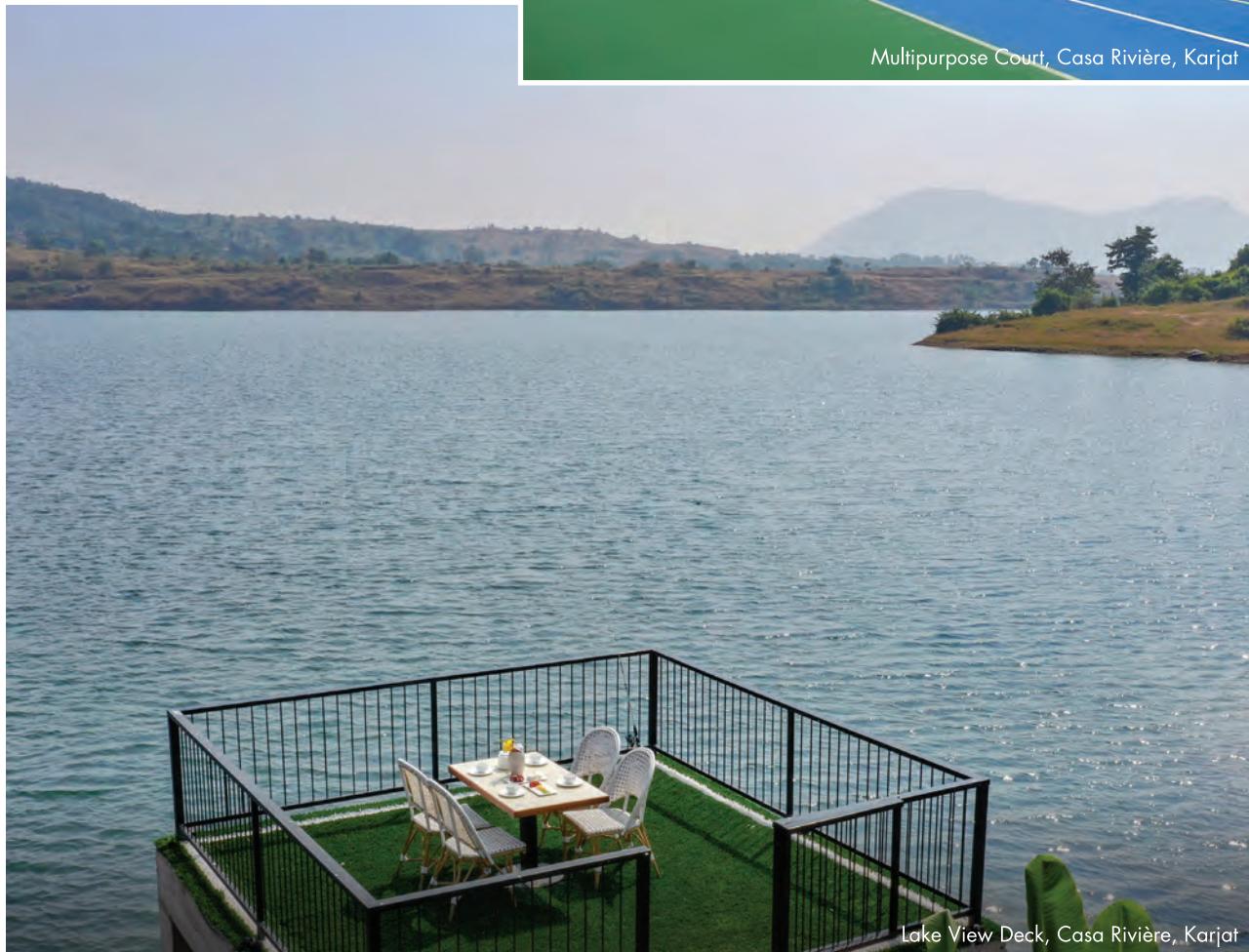
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Bedroom, Casa Rivière, Karjat



Multipurpose Court, Casa Rivière, Karjat



Lake View Deck, Casa Rivière, Karjat

IN{*indulgence*}

SWEARING BY THE BEST IN FOOD AND DRINK



India INSPIRED CUISINE

Impressing audiences everywhere with 'India-inspired' fare, Hunger Inc's The Bombay Canteen and O Pedro are doing the most unique of things in the culinary industry, taking its loyal following on a rollercoaster ride of flavours and uniting the world, one unique plate at a time

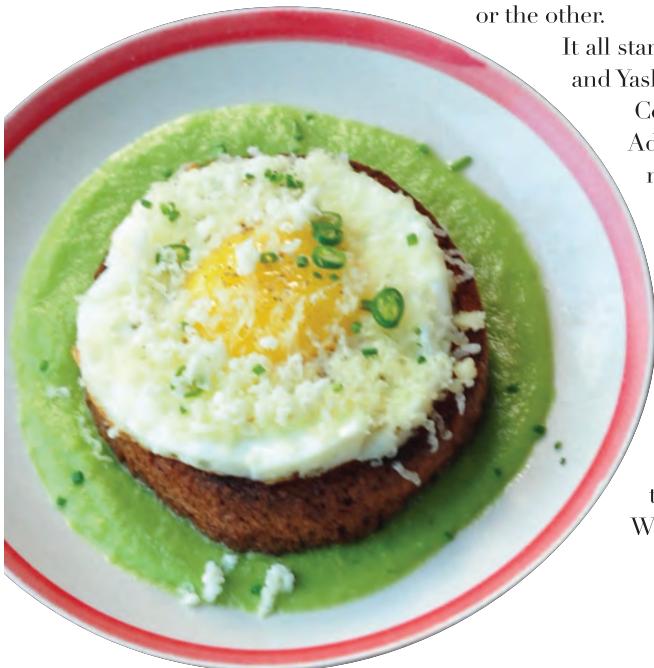
A dream, a passion, an idea, something fun that would stand out—this was the secret recipe to Sameer and Yash's entrepreneurial venture, Hunger Inc, the company known for two of the most buzzing restaurants in Bombay—The Bombay Canteen and O Pedro. In conversation with the two guys, we learned about their journey, how travel inspires everything they do, how the old and new can come together and create something entirely different, yet nostalgically relatable, as well as how everything is India-inspired for them, one way or the other.

It all started way back when Sameer and Yash were classmates at

Cornell's School of Hotel Administration. After Cornell, they went their separate ways: Sameer worked in New York and Yash, in Chicago and Singapore. But they stayed in touch and continued to envision their dream of doing something interesting when they returned to India. "We started thinking about this in 2012. We just wanted to open a →



WHO: Yash Bhanage and Sameer Seth
WHAT: The founders of The Hunger Inc
WOWS: The Bombay Sweet Shop in Byculla, Mumbai is one of their sweetest ventures



IN{indulgence}

SWEARING BY THE BEST IN FOOD AND DRINK

restaurant of our own, and do something that sets us apart. As we started wading through ideas, we recalled what we noticed when we were working abroad. In those markets people were always seeking comfort food, but in a re-imagined sense. We noticed how people were responding to unique concepts and how they were going out with the intention of not just eating, but indulging in an experience. And so that struck a chord for us. We thought that was a natural progression that would hit India sooner or later.” Sameer goes on to explain, “In 2012, if you went out for Indian food in Bombay or Delhi, the chances were that you knew your order before even stepping out of your house. You knew in advance that it was going to be some version of north Indian Mughlai food, and that butter chicken and dal makhani would be a part of your meal which you would eat and then go home. There would be no experience beyond the potentially good food that you would go out for. Additionally, India is so vast, with so many regions and states, and so much to offer in terms of cuisine, flavours, ingredients and more. We realised that no restaurant at that time captured this ethos and it became a sort of a starting point for us wherein we thought why can’t we do something pertaining to these overlooked states and regions, play with memories of what we grew up eating and transform it all into an unforgettable experience. As the idea evolved in our minds, I pitched it to the late Chef Floyd Cardoz, who I was working with in New York, and he came on board as well,” they say.

After the late Chef Floyd joined the duo, Chef Thomas Zacharias also became part of the team and it was these four who formed the core team of Hunger Inc. But no matter how big or trivial the decision, the culture around Hunger Inc was one of inclusivity and involvement. Even things like menus would be debated with the design partners, architecture firm, PR firm and more. The guys describe the story of Hunger Inc as “a village coming together”. It isn’t one man’s show or one group of individuals, but rather a lot of people and groups of people who have come together to evolve ideas and put their blood, sweat and tears into something so that it is where it is today. “For us, we think we bring the X factor by building a very strong team. From day one, we wanted to build a team that would stay with us for a long time. That forms the core of what we are



able to do. Because any idea is only as good as the execution behind it. Anyone can come up with 10 different ideas. But people won’t come back to a restaurant if it isn’t going to be consistent. So setting the systems in place, and having a loyal team in place are the things that allow consistency to exist alongside creativity, and that has been the back-end of Hunger Inc” explains Yash.

The cornerstone of The Bombay Canteen and essentially Hunger Inc became about celebrating India, and being

proud of India in every way, shape or form. This formed the fundamental ethos of The Bombay Canteen. “That concept segues into the food, drink, ambience, service, experience, social media and communication of The Bombay Canteen—it all centres on us being proud of India. At the same time, it wasn’t about making it preachy, but instead making it fun. We wanted to make it approachable so that people would connect with it. In our initial days we played a lot with nostalgia, like memories of

growing up, memories of old Bombay and that slowly evolved into using traditions of Indian cuisine and food from all over the country. Today The Bombay Canteen, through its menus, celebrates the diversity of regional Indian food and that is what forms the foundation of everything. In fact, we were one of the first restaurants doing seasonally changing menus,” explain Sameer and Yash. The menus of The Bombay Canteen are certainly not what one would call ordinary. They tell a story through the menu and that concept initiated from their cocktail menus. Along with their design partners, Please See Us, Sameer and Yash decided to tell stories of Bombay, connecting back to drinks which would encourage people to shift away from something standard or familiar. “So again, we tried looking at innovative ways of connecting with our guests, and being able to tell stories really became the ethos of the company. This evolved in many many ways, through food collaborations, bar takeovers, cocktail menus, seasonally changing menus, even through what we do for the community like our 15th August Independence Day dawaat. All of these things connect back to the central thought of being proud of India and wanting to celebrate it in every way,” says Sameer.

After two roaring years of The Bombay Canteen, Sameer and Yash felt that they were in a good place with an ambitious team, and that is when they started thinking about their next project, which came to life in the form of O Pedro. It took them almost a year of research

before it came to fruition, working with the same partners, but this time, it proved to be an even more immersive experience because they all travelled together. “Travel forms a huge component of everything we do. Unless you don’t actually experience what it is that you want →



IN{indulgence}

SWEARING BY THE BEST IN FOOD AND DRINK



to create, you will not effectively be able to connect the dots to create that genuine experience. When we arrived in Goa, we realised that it suffered from so many stereotypes: like it's only about its beaches or the best food in Goa is only fish and rice. So we made a list of these stereotypes and started to break them all. We basically decided to tell the stories of Goa which were different. And we also discovered that the diversity of food in Goa is amazing. The various communities from the Saraswat Brahmins to the Catholics to the Portuguese, they all may be using the same ingredients, but they have completely different ways of using it. Goa is one of the only states, because of its Portuguese heritage, culturally and visually, to have such a different landscape to be inspired from and we wanted to bring that back," explain the boys.

Additionally, on the beverage side of things, there are very few areas of India which historically have distillation as a part of their culture. Goa is one of the few that has distilled drinks like feni and urak, a fermented cashew juice distilled just once, not as potent as feni but just as intoxicating. It is all these stories and experiences that became the cornerstone of O Pedro. Of course they added their own unique spin to it all. "The philosophy while rooted in tradition, for both O Pedro and The Bombay Canteen, is about adding your own twist to the tale, and telling the story in a slightly different way so that it becomes relevant in today's day and age. I don't think we are doing anything brand new, per se. For example, butter chicken has been around forever. We debated endlessly about putting up butter chicken in our Bombay Canteen menu because of the stereotypes that exist. But we decided to do the old differently: some months ago, we launched it in a way where the chicken is cooked in a technique called 'en crouste', where it is covered in dough and roasted in that, and then served table side, cut up and then the sauce is poured. And another way we have done it is by using green tomatoes instead of red ones when they are in season, adding a whole new level of tartness to the flavour. So it is inspired by the original, but we are seasonally changing it up and using what's available at the time. Taking the traditional and adding a spin to it is really philosophically the cornerstone of Hunger Inc and it will continue to be" quips Sameer.

As for the spaces, The Bombay Canteen is a meeting point of the old and the new. It represents the old colonial Bombay with its stones, cement tiles, colours of materials, the usage of wood on the tables, all of which is juxtaposed with glass-and-steel installations that represent new Bombay and its construction. "We even incorporated art deco stained glass. You see a lot of stained glass in Bombay but not usually ever in an art deco style. Art deco is very symptomatic of Bombay because it was all the rage in the 1940's and 50's and became a signature of the city. Bombay has the most number of art deco building in the world after Miami, something which is little known in the larger narrative of the city and that is what we chose to bring to the centre stage." O Pedro on the other hand has a facade →



IN{indulgence}

SWEARING BY THE BEST IN FOOD AND DRINK

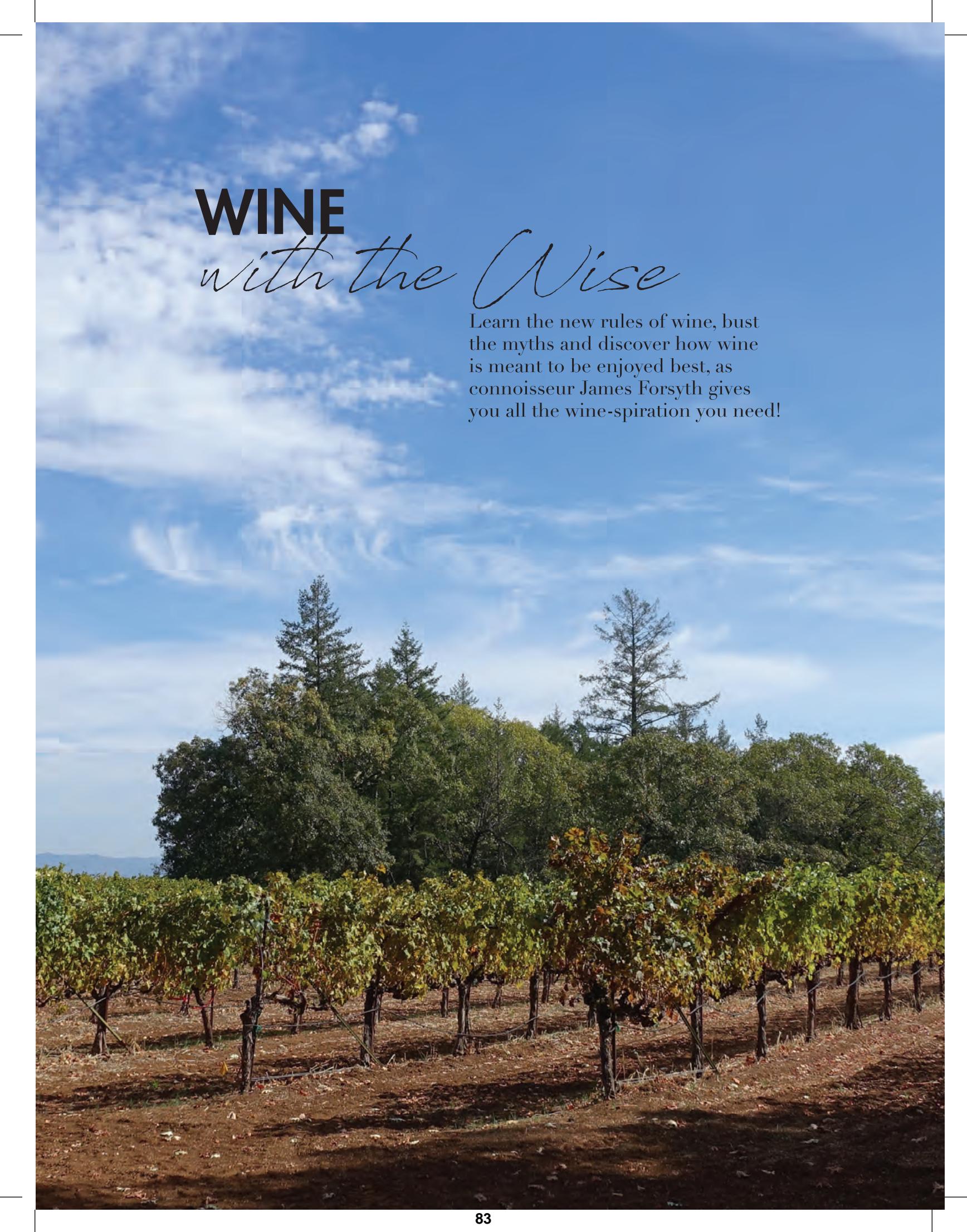
overlooking frangipanis in the corporate Bandra Kurla Complex. The idea behind its design was to play up the homely feel, like coming to a Goan home, but in a very unique way. “We stayed away from the ‘beach shack’ sort of inferences of what we imagine Goa to be and instead stuck to more Portuguese-style arches and used that in the main dining room. There were a lot of haciendas and bars in Goa, the sort of one-man-run shops that are wooden and become a place where they will know you and know what drink you are going to have, and that went on to become the inspiration for the O Pedro bar; that is the feeling we wanted to create through our bar,” they describe. If you visit either of the restaurants you will notice accessorisation and little tid bits, all of which have a story behind it. “So if the guest is interested in knowing the stories, they can delve into it. But at the end of the day, it all comes together to offer a sense of warmth, which makes you feel like you are walking into a place that has been there for a long time, and makes you want to spend hours there, because that’s what makes you feel comfortable. Our hope and dream is that both these restaurants pass the test of time which is also a reason why we stray away from ‘design trends’ when it comes to our spaces, style, food or drinks. Because you don’t want something that is here today, gone tomorrow. We rather have a timeless quality,” they explain.

The Hunger Inc further forayed into the realms of sweets, confectioneries and India’s beloved mithais. They created a wonderland-inspired factory space where guests could come and witness the magic of their favourite Indian sweets (with a twist) in the making. The creativity spun within this space is next to none: with weekly favourites, limited edition flavours, nostalgic concoctions, gift hampers... the list is endless. The Hunger Inc, through these three hotspots is doing some incredible things, including some international tours. “Food is like the new music. Everyone wants to know their chefs, have an opinion on the food that they are eating, and everyone knows their food much more intimately than ever before. Social media has brought the world closer. But we wanted to take the work we do and spread it around the world in person. It has been an interesting experience. The first pop-up we did was in Singapore at a restaurant called Cheek



by Jowl. That same year we did a pop-up in Sri Lanka and in February this year. O Pedro opened up, in New York, and is going to be on for four months at a restaurant called Intersect by Lexus. The Bombay Canteen also went to Singapore in February. The whole idea is taking our pride for India overseas and getting a chance to showcase our creativity. It is amazing to be able to break the stereotype of Indian food abroad, and the versatility and diversity of ingredients is something that has been very well received,” explain Sameer and Yash.

The best thing about Hunger Inc is that they always have something new up their sleeve. “We change things up every two months. We don’t like keeping things status quo. This forms another pillar of what Hunger Inc does.” From new menus every season to new adventures every step of the way— we can’t wait for what’s next. [@hungerinc](#)



WINE

with the Wise

Learn the new rules of wine, bust the myths and discover how wine is meant to be enjoyed best, as connoisseur James Forsyth gives you all the wine-spiration you need!



WHO: James Forsyth

WHAT: A wine connoisseur and executive vice president of Vinous in New York, launched alongside famed wine critic Antonio Galloni. Vinous holds a leadership position in wine media and information.

WOWS: James is a recipient of the WSET/IWSC Future 50 Award for his significant contributions to the wine industry

HOW TO PICK THE PERFECT WINE FOR YOUR PALETTE...

Wine is both subject to objective and subjective elements. From the objective standpoint, just the way food should not be burned, wine is similar. There are countless types of wine but within these types there are some wines that are made better than others. Therefore, the starting point should be to look for wines of a sufficient quality, irrespective of type. You may love red wine from Burgundy, which is made with the grape Pinot Noir, but a badly made Pinot will bring no pleasure. The subjective side of wine comes down to taste. Some may like their food spicy, others will prefer it milder. Both are reasonable. To choose the wines that are perfect for your palette, you first need to know your palette. You should explore a range of wines and begin to build a picture of your preferences. Over time, you will start to get a

“I consider someone to be a connoisseur when they have a good knowledge of a region, the main producers, the types of wine that each makes and an ability to appreciate the nuances of certain wines. With wine, you can’t know everything, but knowing enough to have a deep appreciation of it makes you a connoisseur.

I’m happy to be one!”

— James Forsyth

sense of what wines are perfect for you. The answer may be that a great many different types of wines are ideal, and that you appreciate them for their own merits. Or you may be drawn to particular grapes or styles. There is no wrong answer, as long as the wines you are drinking are of sufficient quality.

Conclusion: Quality over everything else.

HOW TO DRINK WINE THE RIGHT WAY...

DON'T overfill your glass. Wine isn't water and the glass isn't just there to hold the wine. Instead, wine should fill only roughly the bottom third of the glass. With this size pour, the glass can help enhance the aromatics of the wine. DO hold your wine glass from the stem and not the bowl. It is classier, won't leave fingerprints on the glass, and you won't end up warming the wine with your hand. DO smell the aroma of the wine before taking your first sip. Smell is the nuanced sense with the ability to register and recall countless aromas. Smell is more sophisticated than the five basic tastes, so give it a chance. DO be aware that wine is there to be enjoyed rather than to quench thirst. Therefore

take small sips versus big gulps. Good wine is complicated, so give it time to intrigue you.

Conclusion: Take time, smell before you sip and hold your glass the classy way; by the stem.

THE TRICKS TO CHOOSING A GOOD WINE...

With so many thousands of wines available, choosing a bottle can be difficult. According to some surveys, the vast majority of wines are chosen because of the label! However, that approach is not recommended. The content of the bottle is what counts, of course. But you may enjoy different wines at different times. So when you're choosing a wine, start by asking yourself the most basic question: what sort of wine do you want to drink? A fruity or structured red, or an aromatic or tropical white? This question informs where in a wine store or on the wine list you should start looking. At this point, the number one rule kicks in—you are best off focussing on the producer first. The reason →



is that a quality-minded producer will make a good wine across their entire range. But the challenge with this rule is how is one to know whether a producer is good or not, if you haven't heard of them. That's where publications and apps like Vinous or Delectable can be helpful. Critics at Vinous are famous for being the greatest experts in the world for the regions they cover. Each one tastes around 5,000 wines a year, and offers their trusted, independent perspective on these wines on the website for subscribers. As with anything, someone knows more than you. The good news is that the people who know the most about wine share their views online for a quick and easy reference.

Conclusion: Mood and wine producer take precedence over all else. To know more, listen to the experts!

BUILDING A GREAT COLLECTION OF WINE AND STORING IT RIGHT IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS DRINKING IT...

There are a few rules that you can follow to build a wine cellar. Firstly, when you are building your cellar, choose a third of the wines to drink within the next five years—there's not much point to buying wine if you can't enjoy

any of it. The next third of the wines should be ones that hit maturity in 5 to 10 years. Time will fly by and then you'll have some lovely wines that are ready to drink. The final third should be longer-aged wines. Barolo, Bordeaux and Burgundy are great choices. You might want to drink some of them younger but they'll create the bedrock of your cellar for years to come. Secondly, go for the classics: good producers from established regions. Combine these two rules and you'll have a great collection of wines that will enable you to drink well for years to come. That is, as long as the wines are stored well. Wine is a natural product and heat can damage it. A wine stored well might last for decades, maturing and improving with age. However, a few hours of extreme heat can damage a wine forever. Ideally, wine should be stored at 12 to 18 degrees C. If you're building a wine collection, it is worth making sure that you can store your wines appropriately.

Conclusion: Drink some, age the rest and enjoy later. But store at appropriate temperatures to ensure its life. Heat is an instant killer.

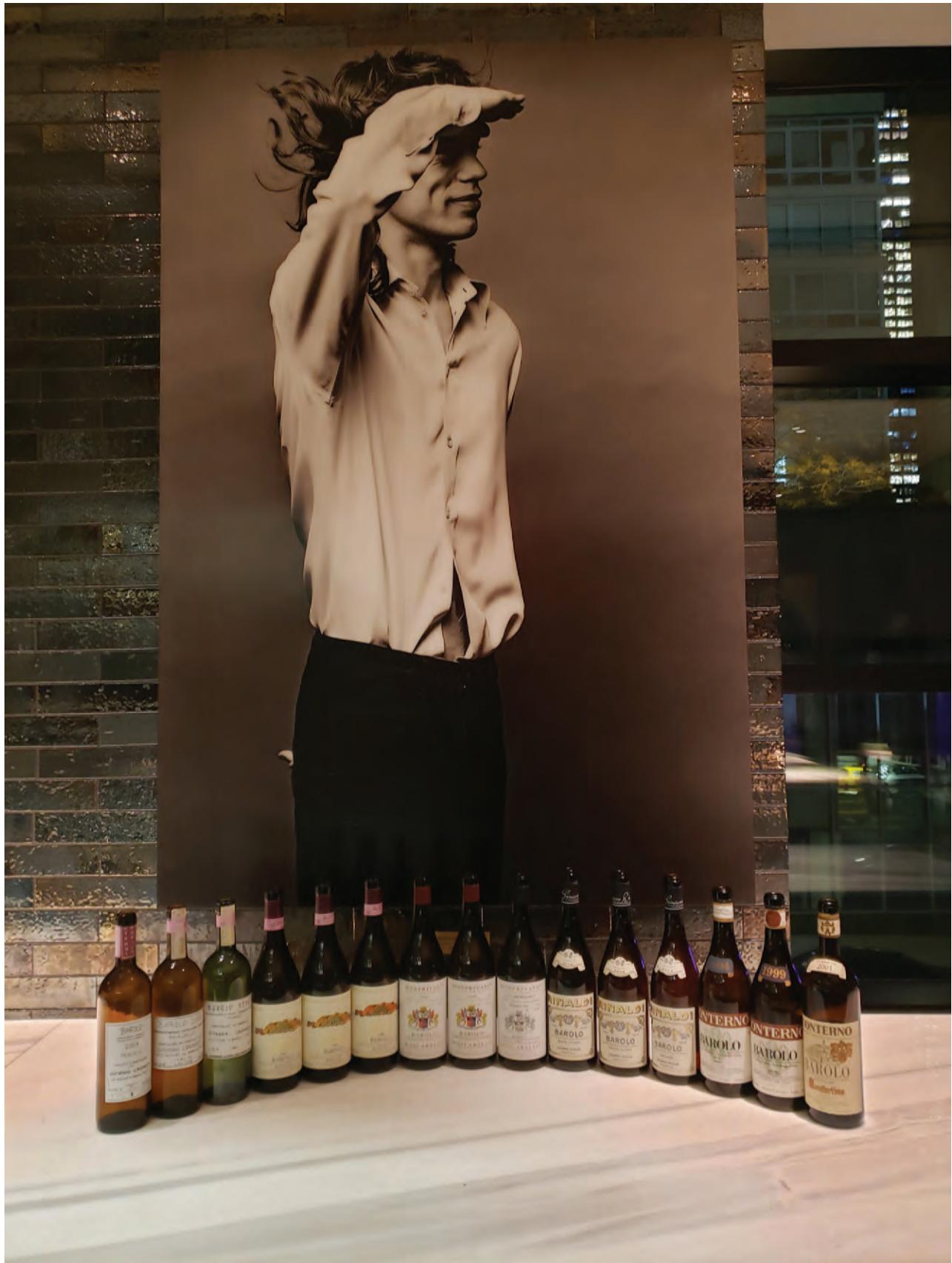
THE WINE 'RULES' THAT HAVE BEEN MADE TO BE BROKEN...

1. Drink Champagne from flutes.

Wrong: Champagne should be enjoyed from a normal white wine glass, not flutes. Champagne, like any other wine, can display nuanced aromatics. Flutes restrict this important part of the wine.

2. Serve red wine warm.

Wrong: The ideal temperature for red wine is actually pretty cool. →



“I like a great many different sorts of wine, but my favourite is Barolo. This is a wine made from Nebbiolo from the Barolo region in Piedmont, Italy. Nebbiolo is a wonderful grape. In the *Vinous grape guide*, it is described as having ‘extraordinary aromatic presence’. Finely sculpted fruit and firm beams of tannin are the backbone of Nebbiolo-based wines. Rose petal, tar, cherry, plum, licorice are some of the many signatures. In short, good Barolos have great structure but aren’t remotely heavy. Also, the interesting thing about Barolos is that most of the reference point wines come from single vineyards, and these particular sites can be tasted in the wines. This means that the more you get to know the wines and understand the sites from which the wines emerge, the more there is to learn.”



If you're tasting a wine and want it to be warmer, you can warm the wine in your hands. Serve a wine too warm and you'll be hard-pressed to cool it down.

3. Only drink white wine with fish. Wrong: Don't think in terms of red or white, fish or meat but rather what each is like. For example, salmon is oily and rich. Pinot Noir is light and bright. A great combination to have together.

Conclusion: Don't follow rumoured trends, understand facts.

FOOD AND WINE PAIRING ADVICE...

There are essentially two ways to approach pairing food with wine. The first is to choose wines that complement food. In other words, choose a wine that is very different to the food but where the combination is made better. For example, the spice of an aromatic curry is complemented by the sweetness of a Riesling. The second is to choose a wine that is congruent to a dish. In this instance, the wine has similar attributes to the food. A rich stew will go nicely with a fruity Syrah.

Conclusion: Study the differences and similarities between the food you eat and the wine you intend to drink and combine appropriately:

TO NAVIGATE THE WORLD OF WINES YOU NEED A FEW THINGS...

1. A trusted source of information. Subscribers to Vinous can look up 300,000 wine reviews and read articles on all the latest vintages from all the major wine regions. Having the expertise of the most trusted wine critics in the world at your fingertips means that you will only make good wine choices, while learning about the context and background that make wine so interesting.

2. A good wine retailer or wine merchant.

Ideally, the merchant should be one with whom you can build a good relationship over time. This will help you get better service and better access to allocated wines.

3. Like-minded people with whom to share your wines. Wine is social and has endless possibilities for exploration. Take this journey with others.

Conclusion: Wine is always had better in good company; with the right information by your side and a good retailer to source from.

All we have to say now is cheers! 

IN{indulgence}

SWEARING BY THE BEST IN FOOD AND DRINK



WHO: Radhika Shastry

WHAT: Founder of Cafe Diem, a reputed restaurant in Coonoor, the Nilgiris

WOWS: The deck at Cafe Diem has an unmatched view of the Nilgiris. Also, the food menu is expansive and she guarantees fresh produce, straight from her garden

carpe diem
/,ka:peɪ 'di:em, 'di:em/

Latin, 'seize the day!'

From corporate job to dream cafe, Radhika Shastry followed the beat of her heart and the taste of her passion all the way to Isprava's favourite Indian hill station, Coonoor

She moved from the city to a hilly countryside paradise. Away from the fast-paced corporate world as managing director of Resort Condominiums International, Bengaluru into the languid realm of relaxation and dreams. Radhika Shastry did a 'carpe diem' in every sense of the word, seizing the moment, and discovering her inherent passion for cooking and food in the glorious hill town of Coonoor. "The decision to settle down in Coonoor was a no-brainer, and those who have visited this town, will understand why I say that. It still retains an old-world charm and isn't polluted by new-age malls and multiplexes—if we need, we get our shopping fix in Bengaluru or Coimbatore. The local community is a cosmopolitan mix of wonderful people from all over the country. People who have been there and done that—authors, artists, corporate achievers, people from the three armed forces, retired businessmen and women, lawyers, bankers—Coonoor



has them all. An eclectic mix that makes it an affable community to live with,” explains Radhika. From the lush landscape of Coonoor with its clean, crisp air

to the temperate, year-round pleasant weather, there’s much to love about Coonoor. And what Radhika particularly appreciates is the small-town culture where everyone knows everyone and entertaining means meeting in people’s homes and getting together in gardens for elaborate lunches or cute tea parties or rendezvous at the club. Radhika admits, “For those of us who live in the Nilgiris, having house guests is a regular occurrence. To take guests out to a lovely place for coffee or a meal was quite a challenge. There were a few places, but we could do with more. My passion gave me the impetus to create a space that people would love to bring their friends and guests to with pride, and be assured of experiences they would cherish long after they left.”

As with any transition, Radhika took her time to find her bearings in Coonoor. It was

a remarkable shift from a busy, chaotic life to a more slow, peaceful day and night. She was looking for things to keep herself engaged. Bridge and golf, two extremely quintessential activities that are part of Coonoor’s legacy, were up for contention. However, with no understanding of either, she had to find something else that she would love to do, and thus came to life the idea of Cafe Diem. Furthering this prospect, Radhika had a beautiful backyard that would set the perfect scene for a quaint cafe where people could visit to have a nice meal whilst enjoying a great view—something that wasn’t the run of the mill and quite unique. The choice of location for Cafe Diem therefore came by default. The backyard was not developed at the time, but it had the most spectacular view of the Bandisholai Forest and the tea gardens beyond. Radhika knew she could create something here that would take people’s breath away. And she did exactly that. “Every aspect of Cafe Diem reflects my passion for travel and adventure. The eclectic interiors with pieces handpicked from across the world gives it character and a unique charm. There are several conversation pieces right on your table, from the table mats to the →



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IN{indulgence}

SWEARING BY THE BEST IN FOOD AND DRINK

salt shakers, coasters and even the demure water bottles clad in dainty aprons. The interiors essentially reflect the quaintness of Coonoor and the quirkiness of my personality,” explains Radhika. Ask her her favourite spot in the cafe and she promptly retorts, “The cafe deck with its unmatched view of the Nilgiris—at the risk of sounding pompous, I have to say, that it has to be one of the best views in this little town.”

The name of the cafe stems from her own belief in the philosophy of ‘carpe diem’: that it is important to live in the present moment and enjoy it rather than brood about the past or live in past glory. Similarly, fretting about the future serves no purpose either. Instead, do what your heart prompts, follow your passion and you can’t go wrong. And that is exactly what Radhika did. “I am proud to have created this little piece that is now frequently referred to as a ‘gem’ of the Nilgiris, both by visitors and locals alike,” quips Radhika. Cafe Diem is a unique gem indeed—it has even created a niche for itself by offering exquisite international all-vegetarian fare. One of the reasons to go down this route was Radhika’s extensive travels abroad, where she ate delicious vegetarian food. She realised that there is so much variety in vegetarian food that is simply unexplored because a large population of people believe that meat is tastier or required to complete a meal. But her opinion was that vegetarian food can be equally tasty, if not better. In fact, lately, many people have been giving up meat, turning to veganism and other such lifestyle shifts for a variety of reasons. Another compelling motivation was that the Nilgiris was a haven for fresh vegetables and fruits, so much so that even hard-core self-proclaimed carnivores speak highly of the produce. And finally, most importantly, every-



thing that is served at the cafe is personally tasted by Radhika, who herself is a vegetarian, “I empathise with fellow vegetarians who crave for international cuisine that is authentic. Some say that they are reassured that there is no possibility of cross contamination from a non-vegetarian kitchen. These concerns are real, and we have addressed them by providing the Cafe Diem option.”

Speaking about the food, some of the popular Cafe Diem favourites and the one’s you need to bookmark are:

1. The pumpkin coconut soup is a big favourite amongst the cafe’s patrons.
2. The thin sourdough artisanal pizzas, with exotic topping combinations like goat cheese, figs, honey and chilli oil, or bean curd, mushrooms, potatoes and olives or mascarpone feta and in-house produced sundried tomatoes, are winners.
3. Savoury cakes featuring pesto, feta, olives and roasted pimentos or goat cheese, walnuts and raisins is something most have never tried before. This is served with a salad on the side and can double up as a healthy dessert as well. Radhika excitedly reports, “I once had a senior corporate executive from Mumbai text me to check if I could send him a regular supply of our savoury cakes!”
4. The cafe’s pomegranate cheesecake is known to be able to give any cheesecake in the world stiff competition.
5. The homemade whole wheat pastas are fresh, soft and al dente.
6. And finally, Radhika’s personal favourite is the absolutely divine onion and cheese tart.

So, seize the moment, visit Coonoor’s Cafe Diem and bon appetite! ☺





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IN {beauty and happiness}

IN THE EYE OF THE READER



BEAUTY WITH A MISSION

She is only in her late 20s but Iman Allana has already made a significant mark as a beauty entrepreneur and a champion of women's empowerment. Here's everything you need to know about her, from her mission to her beauty regimen and more...

One hat, many feathers is possibly the most appropriate way to describe beauty entrepreneur-social worker-intrigued investor, Iman Allana. And that too, at such a young age. But she humbly claims she still has a long way to go. At the crux of it, balance is what she strives to achieve every day, while admitting that when she was younger, discipline in timing wasn't her strongest suit. But what she does consider a strength today is an undying penchant to



learn more and more in every arena. She claims she has learned a lot in her journey so far, from other founders and young business entrepreneurs, about the challenges one faces and the need for unflinching dedication if one wishes to succeed. "This has greatly inspired and shaped a lot of my thinking" she shares. She goes on to reveal that looking into early-stage start-ups in the consumer segment, as she has done, can be greatly enjoyable, even addictive, "As an investor, it gives me the opportunity to learn a little more about different industries and different business models, so it is always an interesting conversation. In fact, it can be a good break from the business I am looking into or working on." But beyond her investment strategies and learnings, and her volunteering jaunts at NGOs supported by her family's foundation, at the core of it, Iman is a business woman with great aptitude, creativity and vision. So where did her journey begin?

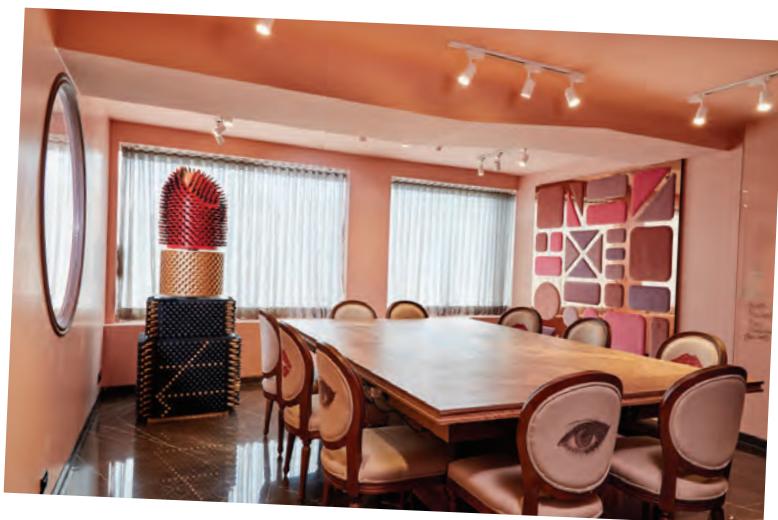
It was while Iman was pursuing her master's in luxury brand management at Regents University in London that she realised her passion for business in retail and consumer brands. At that time, 2016 and 2017, there were a plethora of young beauty brands that suddenly sprouted and became successful, growing exponentially with savvy social media presence and building a cult-like following among the millennial consumer audience. This charged Iman's interest and convinced her that beauty was definitely an interesting industry to explore. "What dawned on me is that India, home to half a billion beautiful women, was



yet to create a brand that crossed borders and was truly global in every sense. Something that was desired by people all over, still attainable." And with Bollyglow, that's exactly what she did.

She tapped into the idea that beauty products were enjoying increased attention and beauty-designated online selling platforms, tutorials and pop culture trends were important factors driving consumption in this segment. And finally, after so very long, the perception that 'foreign brands' are superior to homegrown ones was changing thanks to new offerings and innovation with domestic brands, such as Bollyglow. All of Bollyglow's products are formulated or fully made in Italy by leading manufacturers that cater to other leading beauty brands. Iman, through her venture, sells these products at an affordable price point—with the desire to create accessible priced luxury products. Iman truly "democratised beauty" through Bollyglow. "For the longest time in retail, there was a perception of quality being associated with high pricing. A notion that is being greatly challenged today across industries with examples like Uber. The goal of Bollyglow was to house all verticals of beauty and personal care by providing our customers unparalleled quality and functional products at an accessible price point—beauty for all, without breaking the bank."

Not only did Iman build a successful business that highlighted innovation, creativity and accessible price points, she went one step further by making it a business with heart and soul. "Growing up, superheroes for me were →



IN {beauty and happiness}

IN THE EYE OF THE READER

businesses and the people that spearheaded them. I firmly believe in the fact that new-age companies have a big responsibility and such an immense ability to impact communities either with their product or service or through the message they are trying to convey or causes they align themselves to." In that regard, Iman hopes to be able to empower women not just through accessibly priced beauty products, but also by serving as an inspiration for other young women aspiring to start a business. She explains, "With a predominantly female team driving the brand, we hope to be the brand that women see as an encouraging vehicle for entrepreneurship. We want to work with independent beauty therapists and makeup artists and cultivate as well as harness relations with that community in such a way that they benefit monetarily by associating with Bollyglow. Furthermore, we want young interns to work at Bollyglow, looking to gain some experience as they start their career adventures."

Like all great adventures, all of this didn't come easy for Iman. Bollyglow for her was essentially about reconnecting with India after spending around 12 years abroad, and it turned out to be one of her steepest learning curves yet. From understanding the corporate landscape, recruiting, GST to knowing about import duties, registration processes, the list goes on! She admits, "There have been certain challenging times, when things seemed immovable or moving at a staggeringly slow speed. That naturally made me feel doubtful. But thanks to my family, I have constantly stayed encouraged. My brothers have been instrumental in guiding me on how to approach retailer contracts, creating margins and building the



right team." Iman has even created a beautiful space that represents everything Bollyglow is, and had it designed by celebrity interior designer, Gauri Khan. "The office is truly a dream and it has elements of beauty at every turn. The conference table is a fantastic parquet wooden table with cosmetic brushes digitally printed on it. The installations are fun too—there's a 'blush' wall which is a floor-to-ceiling metallic mirror with suede patches indicative of a blusher palette. The work stations are spacious and have design elements like barcodes and nail polishes painted on them. The most special piece is the giant lipstick installation with thousands of removable mini lipsticks. Gauri Khan really made my vision a reality."

With so much accomplished already, what are Iman's goals

moving forward? She quickly responds, "One primary goal is to definitely be the healthiest version of myself, focus more on well-being without work getting in the way. Other than that, I want to grow Bollyglow into a beauty and personal care power player, and hopefully expand our presence across different verticals, and expand the brand's international footprint. But most importantly, my personal mission is to continue to encourage women in business in India and give them the right information, education and inspiration to live their dreams come true." We wish Iman all the best in achieving her goals! 

IMAN'S SKIN CARE REGIME AND YOUR INSTANT BEAUTY

- Keep it simple! I cleanse, tone and moisturise at night and in the morning.
- I adore the skincare brand Biologique Recherche for its emphasis on simplicity and natural ingredients.
- I use SPF daily, in the winter too!
- I try to get a BR facial whenever I am in London, which is again simple in practice and mainly hydrating!



DEFINING DECADENCE AS HAPPINESS

Happiness is a state of mind they say. Arpana Punjabi finds happiness in food, luxury, travel and the unique experiences life brings her. Isprava measures her happiness quotient

Anyone who meets this happy soul would instantly feel the joy she emanates. Arpana Punjabi spills, "I am generally a happy person and making others happy is what gives me immense peace. We have one life to live, let's do it smiling." This philosophy of spreading happiness coupled with the fact that most like Arpana seek happiness in food, one of the greatest joys of life, is what enabled Arpana to start her blog, Whatmakesappyhappy. "I have grown up seeing my parents entertain lavishly at home. Our delicious dining table was my mother's pride and joy, and everyone always looked forward to these parties. I observed my mom giving out all her contacts when people would ask. Be it food, dessert or anything. By the time I started entertaining guests, I noticed how so many women were so secretive about their contacts, and to be honest, I found it entirely absurd! Whatmakesappyhappy was born literally out of my sheer desire to spread the word of so many wonderful gourmet contacts." Arpana has her own little black book with a list of covetable contacts. She realised that she lives in a city that is a treasure trove of fantastic delights and through her blog she wanted to make sure to spread the word.



Besides making others happy, what makes Arpana happy? She emphatically exclaims: "FOOD! I am a sucker for home cooked food since I grew up with a mother who could replicate Cordon Bleu dishes in our very own kitchen." From Arpana's blog, Whatmakesappyhappy, you can pick out amazing recipes and options ranging from non-vegetarian, vegetarian to vegan, gluten-free to keto-friendly, sugar-free and more. The next thing that sparks her smile is travel. As for happiness in luxury, she says, "My ultimate luxury is an Isprava home. The Goa properties are simply seven star with every little detail taken care of. I will never forget the big box of the infamous Isprackies that were waiting to welcome me at Villa Capela. Thank you Nibhrant, that was one of our finest family vacations." 📖

APPY'S HAPPINESS FORMULA FOR YOU:

A happy state of mind is vital.

Honesty and a practical approach to life are good ways to progress.

One must talk their problems out and not keep them bottled in.

Travel, eat, meditate, work hard and just always strive to be a better human.

I am a strong believer in The Secret. It truly works, and it changed a lot in my life.

IN{collection}

TOP PICKS IN FOOD, GIFTS, TV AND MORE

HEALTHY ON THE GO HOT PICKS

Battling those 4 pm hunger pangs without resorting to something easy and unhealthy can be really stressful. But not anymore! We pick out our bests in every category from crunchy to nutty, sweet to savoury, that promise equal proportions of healthiness and tastiness — mid-day binge away

BEST NUT

Almonds are the perfect on-the-move snack. They are easy to carry and fill you up quite quickly. They are a great source of energy, and are heart-healthy, containing unsaturated fats, fibre, Omega-3 fatty acids and Vitamin E. Since they are so delicious, it is easy to go overboard on almonds, but if you portion control, pack them in grab-and-go bags, you'll be fine. If you prefer almonds with slightly more punch, you can get the nut in a variety of tasty flavours too like wasabi, soy and chilli.

Dark chocolate, nuts and sea salt is a decadent yet healthy combination of ingredients and when brought together in a bar, it makes for the perfect afternoon snack when hunger strikes. Packed with fibre and protein, a bar like this is really satisfying and a great pick-me-up treat when you're battling long hours of work.

BEST SWEET

BEST CRUNCH

While all of us have a weak spot for those greasy vending machine potato chips, TERRA Chips are a tasty and much healthier option that will leave you with no regrets. They are made with a blend of real vegetables, including sweet potato, parsnip, yucca and more and also contain zero cholesterol, trans fat or artificial flavours and preservatives. This is the best way to satiate the crunchy + salty cravings.



Dried blueberries are your best friend for when you get hungry and want to binge a little. They pack a nutritional punch, are low in sodium and calories, offering 127 calories per one-quarter cup and contain no cholesterol. Furthermore, they contain nutrients that are important for your health. You can enjoy this fruit in a variety of ways—from making a smoothie to adding them to hot oatmeal or just eating them on their own.

BEST FRUIT



Hummus is healthy and easy to prepare, with its star ingredient of chickpeas, which provide the body with protein and complex carbs, the sesame seeds and curds add a bit of calcium and the olive oil supplies heart-friendly fat. You can eat hummus with a few sticks of lavash or with cucumber or carrot sticks if you want to avoid bread, making for an extremely fulfilling snack.

BEST SAVOURY

Reinventing super grains for the 21st century healthy eater is Soulfull. They provide a wide range of healthy snacking options that are easy to carry and eat, like ragi bites, millet cereals, an on-the-go shake called Smoothix, and ready-to-cook millet meals.

BEST DIP





THE ULTIMATE GIFTING GUIDE

Gift-giving is an art that must come from the heart! The Luxe Box, a personalised luxury gifting service, founded and curated by stylist and image consultant Hina Omer Ahmed, exemplifies this statement in every thoughtful bundle of joy it creates. Today, they write to you, equipping you with all the gifting tips and tricks you will ever need. You're welcome!

Dear gift giver,

There are so many occasions in a year, so many reasons to gift your loved ones. From birthdays to wedding anniversaries, farewell parties to bridal parties, graduation-day celebrations to festive occasions—the list is endless. But sometimes, one does not even need a reason or occasion to pull out the wrapping paper. If this year is anything to go by, gifts are welcome every single day to make it brighter! It could just be a random gesture to express how much you care. The whole concept of gifting is joyous, wherein it also gives the gift giver, who is you, equal joy as it does the recipient. And that is something we at The Luxe Box identify with deeply. We therefore try our best to make the otherwise thought to be complex and exhausting process of gifting, something to look forward to, with our carefully curated services. The most common thing we hear when it comes to gifting is “how do we gift someone something who has everything.” The challenge of mastering the art of gifting is actually to go back to the simplicity of it. And so we gift you all the tips we have in our box for meaningful gifting...



1

Remember, it's all about the recipient. So when you are picking something out, you have to be conscious of their tastes and lifestyle. Constantly ask yourself questions when you think of an item that they would like. Even if the gift is something as simple as a candle, it should be about the kind of fragrance they love. Do they entertain a lot? If so, maybe one statement candle for the living room would be ideal. Do they meditate a lot? Then perhaps go for a gently scented spa candle.



2

Keep it simple. Sometimes trying too hard to be too unique could backfire and generate an undesired effect. Simple yet thoughtful, that should be your formula. Some cool ideas include: a pair of vintage earrings, a coffee table book on a subject of their interest, a memorable picture framed beautifully. Think simple and a million ideas will emerge. Don't let it get too complicated.



5

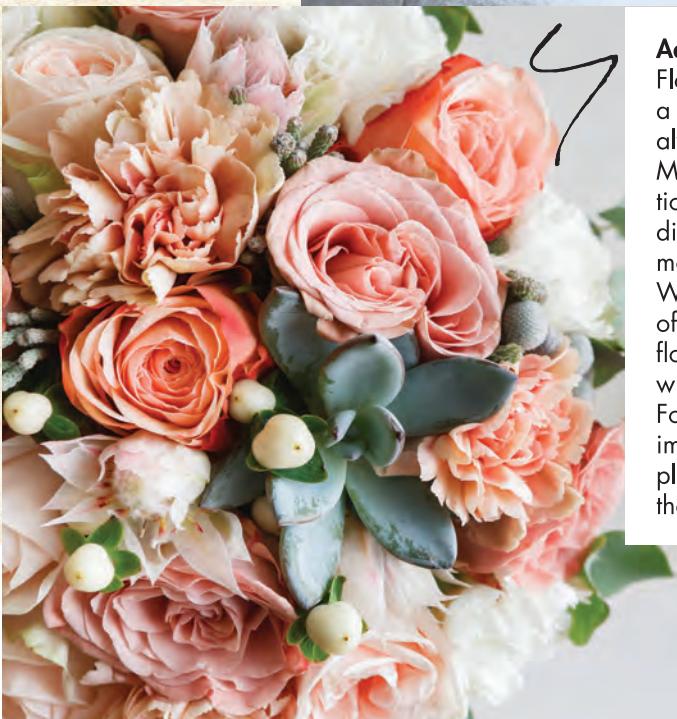
Don't forget, men love to be pampered too. Gifting men has always been seen as a challenge, but don't get intimidated by it. They love to be spoiled just as much, whether they admit it or not. So shower them with luxurious grooming products, custom leather, on-trend fashion buys, those new sneakers that have just dropped or gadgets and gizmos on their wish list. →

Gift experiences. No one can have too many of them as every new experience creates an opportunity for new memories. Some of our best gifted experiences are: a weekend getaway to a luxury spa, concert tickets or a class where you can learn something new together and spend quality time as well.



3

Add a floral touch. Flowers are always a failsafe. They are always a good idea. Maybe not in isolation, but as an addition they definitely make an impact. Whether it's a bunch of flowers or a few floral cuttings, you'll win hearts for sure. For a more lasting impact, add a herb plant or a succulent they can tend to.



4

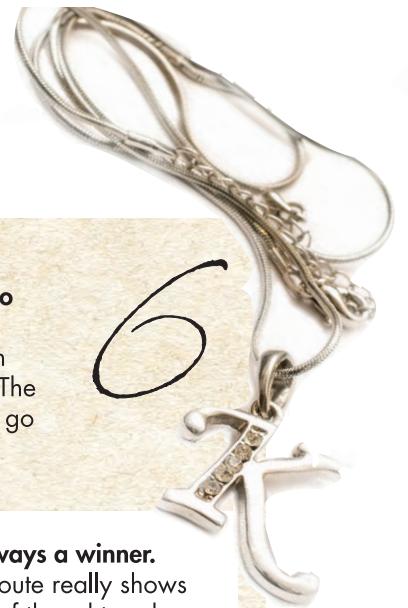


IN{collection}

TOP PICKS IN FOOD, GIFTS, TV AND MORE



Play with colour and texture when it comes to packaging. Go pastel or pop in your wrapping or gift box choices, and finish it off with beautiful grosgrain or double satin ribbons. The effort you take in these small details tends to go a long way in showing how much you care.



Personalisation is always a winner. Going the bespoke route really shows that you've put a lot of thought and attention to detail in the gift. So if you have time on your hands, whether it's luggage tags, a bottle of bubbly or linen, try and monogram the gift for that extra affectionate touch.



A note speaks a million words. Genuine, heartfelt notes complete any gift to perfection. Share a favourite quote, anecdote or even an Instagram hashtag to set the tone. A note will truly be treasured for life and may even outlast the actual gift.



Let your gift tell a story. A gift that references a story shared between people isn't only priceless, but it is timeless and inimitable as well. It is something that no one else could have ever given them and something that the recipient will always go back to and cherish. It could be a food item you both enjoy from the first time you met, or flight tickets back to a place you explored together.



Give yourself time. Even though gifting tends to be a last-minute adventure for most, you will feel more fulfilled if you spend a little time to think of something that would be meaningful, thoughtful and truly appreciated. We recommend that you keep a calendar or journal of important events and celebrations, and even of the random days



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you just feel like giving.
Happy Gifting!
Love, The Luxe Box

THE AGE OF THE APPS

Nowadays, there's an app for app-solutely anything you can think of—there's probably even an app for enhancing your thinking! Here's our hot picks for every iOS and Android user out there...

When the world went into lockdown mode, we dove into the digital world head-first. Apps became our new social buddy, food and grocery deliverer, late-night date, all-time entertainer, variety news source, and so much more. Apps continue to reign even as the world is slowly opening up. Here are a few apps that every phone deserves to download, from the unique to the helpful and even the life-and-skill-enhancing ones...

BORZO

This same-day courier service once known as wefast is life-saving. You can send any kind of item on the spur of the moment, or schedule your delivery/pick-up as per your convenience. It's quick, economical and saves you from any hassle, especially when you are lazy to step out or have an emergency delivery. **The bonus:** The app is super user-friendly.

FABULOUS

Did you know it only takes 21 days to form a habit, but even then many of us falter. A fabulous app is here to ensure that the habit sticks—fittingly called Fabulous! This interactive app helps you with fitness, sleep, productivity, you name it! It challenges you to complete daily self-improvement activities that will, by habit, change your life.

CALM

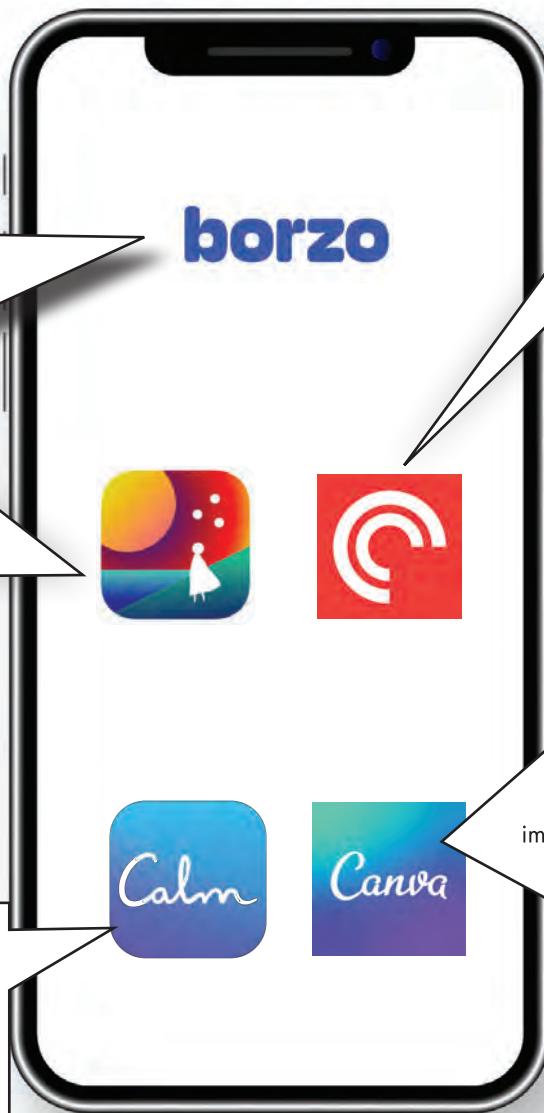
Everyone could use a little meditation with the years we've had. This app is the perfect gateway to achieve that sense of calm. This free app provides short, guided sessions on everything from anxiety reduction to improved sleep, breaking bad habits, gratitude and more.

POCKET CASTS

If you like discovering great podcasts and managing the ones you listen to—there's an app that can do all of that and more. It's like the Spotify of podcasts. You can browse by networks, categories, charts, favourites etc. You can queue them up and play them back on the fly. Fully loaded with a ton of features to make your podcast listening experience first class—download this winner today!

CANVA

This app is your shortcut to achieving all the graphic designing dreams you've ever had without hiring a pro. The free and intuitive graphic design app can help you get what you want—from good-looking Instagram posts to quirky birthday invites, professional-level presentations, cool brochures, fun gift cards, immersive posters and more—in minutes. It offers a wide variety of template layouts, photos, fonts, elements, illustrations and so much more that you can choose from to create that applause-worthy design. The best part: when you use Canva on your phone, you can save your work directly to your camera roll in a single click, and within seconds!



IN{retrospect}

OUR GUESTS AND THEIR MEMORIES

THANK YOU FOR THE MEMORIES LOHONO

They came, they saw, they loved. Lohono's guests capture their best memories

