

2019-2020



ISPRAVA®

the ISPRAVA *insider*

VOLUME FOUR

IN THIS VOLUME, WE
REVEAL THE LATEST JEWEL
IN OUR COLLECTION
OF LUXURY HOMES, ALONG
WITH THE INSIDER'S
ACCOUNT ON THE FINEST
IN THE WORLD OF FOOD,
FASHION, DESIGN AND TECH



Dear Readers,

As we stand at the threshold of one of the most exciting decades in a long time, we are continuously reminded of the gratitude that we feel towards the opportunities that lie before us. With the world post pandemic, people are feeling a true sense of hope, happiness and growth. We have changed the way we approach our day to day lives and we have recalibrated our priorities.

It is with this sense of optimism that we write to you. We at Isprava and Lohono have had a productive 2022. We have been fortunate to have Madhavan Menon, Managing Director, Thomas Cook India, join our board of directors. We have handed over our highest number of homes in a year, taking our total number of homes delivered to 160.

Our largest Estate to date Estate de Frangipani spread across nearly an acre of land in Assagao, Goa and built over ~10,000 sq.ft. was handed over to the proud homeowners. In addition to being an incredibly beautiful home, Estate de Frangipani is a testament to the recalibration of people's priorities sprawling gardens for their children to spend time in, larger spaces to celebrate in with their friends and plenty of greenery for their families to breathe better air. It is our pleasure to present the Estate to you in greater detail in this edition of *The Insider*.

We also delivered our first home in Alibaug RiyuVann Estate. Spread across 1.5 acres of land, this sprawling estate has been designed to be a special home for a large family. With 5 ensuite bedrooms, a home office, a private swimming pool, tree house, jacuzzi, sprawling gardens and a dedicated games area for children, Riyuvann Estate is an oasis of calm from the hectic city life.

Meanwhile, Lohono Stays has also grown exponentially in 2022. From 53 properties in 2021, Lohono Stays now has nearly 200 homes in India and an additional 250 homes across Southeast Asia. We have expanded to several new locations including Kashmir, Mussoorie, Kanatal, Dehradun, Kasauli, Bhimtal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and many more.

For this edition of *The Isprava Insider*, we invited the incredibly talented Priyanka Khanna to be the Editor of the magazine. In addition to adding a layer of freshness to the content, she also curated an immersive array of stories for you to enjoy. From architecture to interiors, food and design, fashion, technology, health and wellness, this edition has it all. We canvassed the beautiful state of Goa to bring you the most unique experiences and insider information. We requested some of our homeowners to share their stories and we asked some of the most creative people in Goa why they made this beautiful state their home.

We hope that you dive deep into this edition of the magazine and come out with the same sense of excitement and happiness as we did while creating it. This edition put us in a 'sunshine state of mind' and we are excited for you to feel the same way. We look forward to bringing you many more editions of *The Isprava Insider* and want to thank each one of you readers for being the inspiration for this magazine.



Nibhrant Shah
Founder & CEO of Isprava and Lohono Stays



Dhimaan Shah
Founder & COO of Isprava and Lohono Stays



I’m writing this note at my desk on a monsoon day in Mumbai, my windows streaking with rain, the cacophony of traffic below indicating the inevitable pile-ups on the water-logged roads. In many ways, it’s just another business-as-usual, rainy Tuesday—the kids are at school, my husband is at work, I’ve just finished a Physique 57 class with a dozen women, and my favourite nail salon 1010, cannot accommodate my last-minute manicure request. And I couldn’t be more grateful for my very routine morning.

For many people, the past two Augusts and the months before and after were spent in a state of lockdown-induced limbo. For the privileged, these two years were a blur of virtual schooling and endless Zooms punctuated by banana bread baking sessions and Dalgona coffee breaks. For some, it involved a lucky escape from city living, the chance to plant yourself in more idyllic climes, while for others it saw an appreciation of the local—of exploring and appreciating neighborhoods in great detail, or planning quick escapes to Covid-safe places closer to home with family and loved ones.

And while the pandemic isn’t over yet, I think it’s safe to say that what we’ve mastered in the last few years—besides the ability to

seamlessly work from anywhere—is an appreciation of coming together with those we love. And if it’s in a beautifully designed villa on an exotic shore, then we’ve hit the jackpot.

When Isprava’s very charismatic brothers and co-founders Nibhrant and Dhimaan Shah asked me to reinvent their magazine, *Isprava Insider*, I was immediately intrigued. It wasn’t only because I’ve known the brothers for years and seen the exponential growth of Isprava and its partner brand Lohono Stays or the fact that their board and investors boast some of the country’s most agile minds. It also wasn’t due to the fact that I had just submitted my novel and I missed flexing that editorial muscle (the *carte blanche* the Shahs offered me would be catnip to any editor). It was because they have really transformed so many urban families’ approach to the way they live and travel, as well as the passion and focus to detail they bring to their homes and the way of life in which they believe.

Using a team of arguably this country’s most talented writers, photographers, art director and stylists, we approached this project with a mission to provide a strong local ‘insider’ flavour. Our wish is for every homeowner or visitor to reach their villa (whether it’s in Assagao or Coonoor, Bali or the Maldives) and flip through these pages to get a front-row seat to what everyone is talking about in the world of art, design, food, fashion and travel.

In the digital world we live in, the joy of print (and the act of reading a physical magazine) is one that is being slowly rediscovered. So enjoy this pause, pull up that chair, grab that drink and flip through the pages we have created. Plan your ideal Goan itinerary (from the meals to eat to the bars to visit), learn a little more about the country’s most talented young artists, glean some inspiration from the hottest fashion and design trends and plan your next trip (or home) with our features on the newest properties on offer.

I hope you will enjoy reading these pages as much as we’ve enjoyed putting them together.

Priyanka Khanna
PRIYANKA R KHANNA
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PHOTO: HASHIM BADANI

The Contributors –Team Isprava

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Executive – Marketing
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Who: Gauri Devidayal, co-founder of Food Matters Group, podcast host, and travel and food writer.
What: On India going organic, in 'From farm to table'.

The talent that made this issue



Who: Arsh Sayed, photographer.
What: Shooting the cover and home in 'A life less ordinary'.



Who: Jasreen Mayal Khanna, author, travel writer, mum to a toddler and visiting professor at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.
What: Profiling Goa's coolest creatives in 'Fertile ground'.



Who: Megha Mahindru, writer and editor, former features director at *Vogue* India.
What: Waxing poetically on the Goa she loves and the off-beat trails to really discover in the sunshine state, in 'Road less travelled'.



Who: Naheed Driver, Former fashion stylist at *Vogue* India.
What: Styling the cover and feature 'A life less ordinary'.



Who: Gayatri Rangachari Shah, journalist, author and contributing editor at *Architectural Digest* India.
What: Uncovering gallerists' picks of names to watch for in 'The artists to place your bets on'.

Who: Rujuta Vaidya, fashion journalist and the former digital editor at *Vogue* India.
What: Uncovering easy labels in 'Be kind, unwind', the latest in fitness and tech in 'Work it out', and featuring the country's hottest activewear labels in 'Who run the world?'



Who: Avanti Dalal, multimedia journalist and beauty expert.
What: Profiling the global Indians creating the hottest beauty brands in 'Between two worlds'.



Who: Kimi Dangor, a fashion journalist, commentator and brand consultant.
What: Showing a new side of Goa for children in 'On the wild side'.

Who: Srimoyi Bhattacharya, founder of Peepul Consulting and the author of the PR playbook *Pitch Perfect*.
What: Sharing her secrets in 'An insider's guide to shopping in Goa'.



Who: Neharika Manjani, writer and content consultant.
What: Books as design in 'Shelf life', decoding 'The rise and rise of raffia', tablescaping in 'Turning tables' and profiling Isprava home owners in 'A brightness of being'.

Who: Joanna Lobo, freelance travel, food, culture and lifestyle writer.
What: On eating and drinking in the sunshine state, in 'The 25 dishes you have to eat in Goa' and 'The buzz on Goa's bars'.



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The serene backdrop of the Estate de Frangipani in Goa is the perfect foil for the textural beauty and vibrancy of resort wear. As we ease back into a routine, pause, take a deep breath and remember that magic is found in the stolen moments. Photographed by Arsh Sayed. Styled by Naheed Driver

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Nowhere are the cashews—or life, for that matter—sweeter than in Goa. Under the shade of the mango tree, there is no other languid way to pass time than to sit on your balcao, preferably with a rosé in hand, and watch the world go by, writes Megha Mahindru

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Over the past few years, we've seen a rise in global Indians creating beauty brands rooted

in ayurveda-inspired traditions. Avanti Dalal profiles the ones making headlines

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Woven bags, which used to make a fleeting appearance during the summer, are now enjoying a more permanent position in our wardrobes. Neharika Manjani charts the reasons behind their rise

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Even for the most jaded, it is the excitement of discovery, the opening of the mind, the joy of new experiences that really underscore the beauty which exploring the world brings. After all, what could be more thrilling than the promise of new adventures?

PHOTO: ARSH SAYED



< ROSHINI VADEHRA,
VADEHRA ART GALLERY,
NEW DELHI
ARTIST: SHRIMANTI
SAHA

"In Shrimanti's paintings, a combination of expressive dreams and literary narratives create landscapes with organic forms and fragmented architecture inhabited by both humans and animals. The works take inspiration from sources like history and art history, literature, mythology and comic books, science fiction, philosophy, miniature paintings, architecture, film and news reports, as well as memory, conversations and personal experiences. She works like a writer, exploring themes of identity, gender, violence and exploitation, focusing on symbolism and storytelling. Yet the significance of the narrative remains open-ended, lending itself to the viewer's own story and interpretation as well."

@vadehraartgallery; @Wshrimantisaha



^ SREE GOSWAMI,
PROJECT 88, MUMBAI
ARTIST: AMOL K PATIL

"I am intrigued by how Amol's practice traverses visual, conceptual, kinetic, and performance art, each seamlessly building upon the other. Amol carefully deconstructs layers of labour, seen through the lens of caste. He engages with materials from construction sites, machines and cranes in the Mumbai harbour. I am very excited about his project at Documenta 15 in Kassel, Germany, a performance which strives to continue the legacy of powada, an inherited tradition amongst the lowest castes of India over the past 300 years, a Shahiri tradition that evolved to become a unique protest against social injustice, a work of contemporary art in and of itself. Amol engages with his family archive through old cassette recordings of his father, a theatre activist, and handwritten songs by his grandfather, a powada poet."

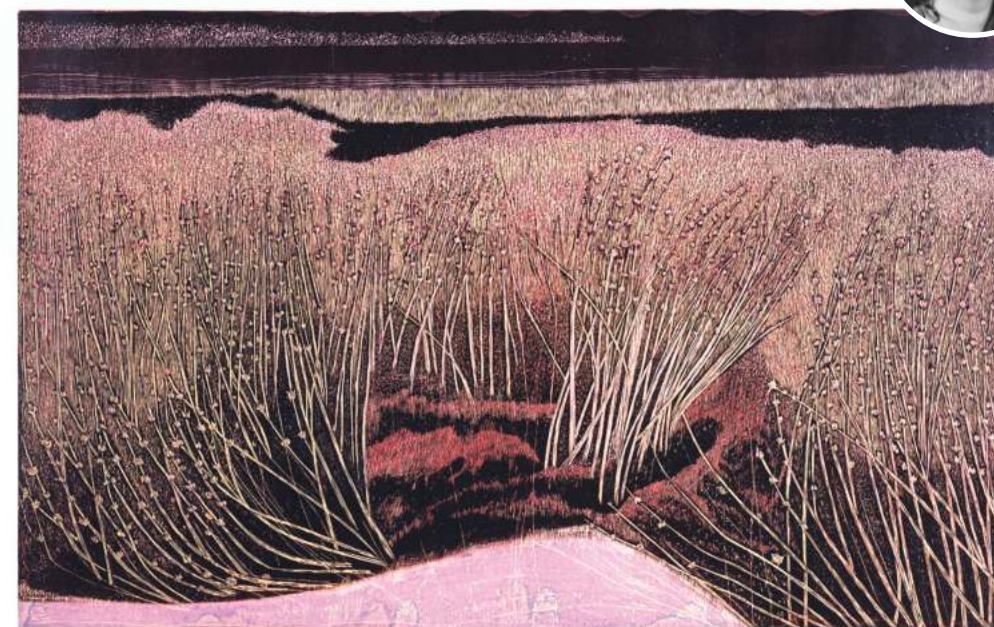
@project88mumbai; @amolkpatil



< HENA KAPADIA,
TARQ, MUMBAI
ARTIST: SOGHRA
KHURASANI

"Soghra has been working extensively with printmaking as a medium since completing her Master's degree from Baroda in 2011. The Lalit Kala Akademi award-winning artist works with landscape as a metaphor for the urgent issues that preoccupy her. Her current series is a testament to her technical skill as a woodcut printmaker. Soghra's works are a sensitive and an exacting commentary on contemporary India—how the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns have affected all aspects of our lives, from the way we eat to the way we dissent—as the artist perceives it."

@tarqmumbai; @soghrakurasani >



The artists to place your bets on

India's leading gallerists each identify one artist likely to make an impact on the way we view art. By Gayatri Rangachari Shah

The past two decades have seen India's art scene grow exponentially: new galleries, auction houses, private museums and collectors, a turnover of ₹880.9 crore in 2021 in auction sales by Artery India's State of the Art Market report (versus ₹559.7 crore in the 2019-2020 financial year) and solid sales during the recent fraught years. 2022's

India Art Fair further demonstrated that buyer sentiment is strong. Globally too, the art market has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, generating \$65.1 billion in sales, according to the latest Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market report. A roster of gifted artists, increased public engagement through programming at institutions and more arts coverage have helped drive interest with a new demographic: millennials and Gen Z. But for many, navigating this world can be complex. How do you start? Spot new talent? Build a robust collection? Take the advice of Roshini Vadehra of Delhi's Vadehra Art Gallery: "Focus on educating yourself. There is no replacement for conversations in person, viewing exhibitions on-site and reading real books." Keeping that in mind, we speak to nine leading gallerists across the country and ask them to pick the artist whose works they are most excited about.

ART, DESIGN & CULTURE



< MORT CHATTERJEE,
CHATTERJEE & LAL, MUMBAI
ARTIST: ARSHI IRSHAD AHMADZAI

"We first came across Arshi's work when she became an INLAKS Fine Art awardee. It was immediately obvious to us that she possessed a unique artistic voice: her art presents urgent themes articulated with an economy of line and colour. Viewers are invited into the intimate inner world of the artist as she moves between small-scale and monumental works. We have found that Arshi's works attract a large range of viewers and are able to function at multiple registers. This may be because the artist herself has lived in numerous cities and countries and has had to make herself understood in many different social contexts."

@chatterjeeandlal; @arshi_ahmadzai

> ATYAAN JUNGALWALA,
CHEMOULD COLABA, MUMBAI
ARTIST: RITHIKA PANDEY

"Rithika caught my attention with her use of saturated colours and references to mythological characters. The recurring theme of fictional characters in her works of the Bloomdidos, reflect varied emotional states. She makes these characters come alive through body language, motion and depth on a canvas where figures appear two-dimensionally."

Her practice draws from the personal, mythological and scientific to navigate the mystical spaces within our human entanglements. Her painted worlds become sacred spaces, holding events where boundaries are transgressed and transformations are imminent. Rithika's work highlights the nature of companionship and recovery, and opens up allegorical possibilities of a future that goes beyond apocalypse as an end point."

@chemouldcolaba; @chashmishkahiki

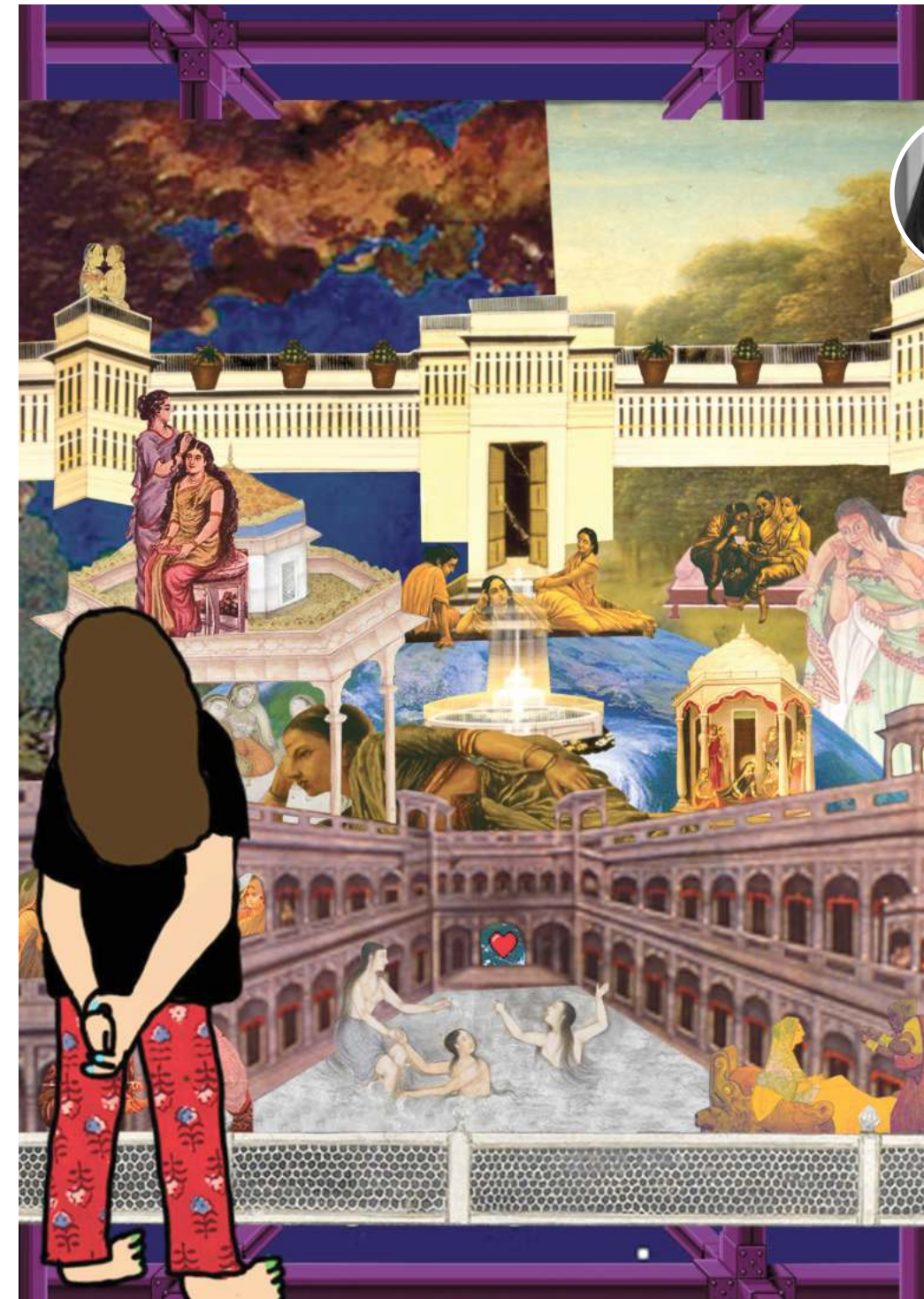
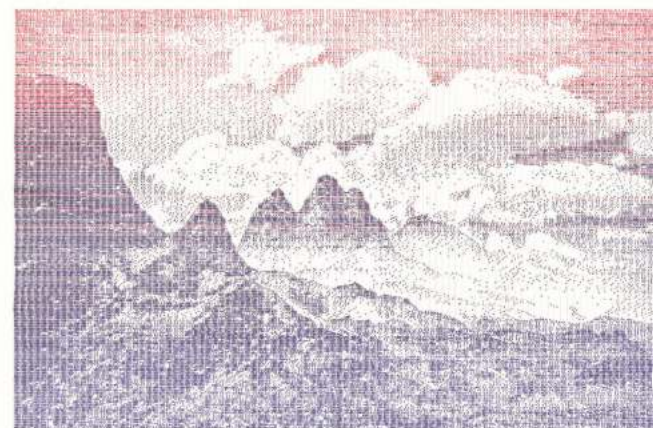


< ASHWIN THADANI,
GALERIE ISA, MUMBAI
ARTIST: IAN MALHOTRA

"I find the practice of Ian's work most intriguing. Ian is a British-Indian artist whose work explores the transmission and translation of visual information, often mimicking digital methods of reproduction through labour-intensive analogue processes. At first glance it looks like a digital print, until you go closer and see that every line and dot is drawn painstakingly, mimicking digital methods. Some

works drawn by hand parody that of an inkjet printer, while others use systems mimicking scanners, photocopiers or digital cameras and are performed as timed exercises in self-testing. Ian's work challenges norms and is fresh and enticing."

@galerie_isa @ian.malhotra



< ISHETA SALGAOCAR,
SUNAPARANTA, GOA
CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
ARTIST: AFRAH SHAFIQ

"Afrah is a multidisciplinary artist based in Goa. I find her work inspiring and thought-provoking in its ability to push viewers to question the reality around them. Her work emerges from deep, long-term engagements with archives, stories and other fugitive material across collections, both institutional and informal. Her practice often involves investigating the expansive nature of women's cultural history: her works are richly layered and sourced from a variety of material that include lithographs, oleographs, paintings, folk art, oil paintings and photographs. The visual material she accumulates is then stitched together and transformed into interactive web experiences. Historical study plays a big role in her work. Afrah is interested in the rupturing of existing narratives, 'searching' for the invisible, and creating subversive, speculative new ways of looking at the familiar."

@sunaparanta_goa;
@loveandotheroutdoorgames

> ASHISH ANAND,
DAG, NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, NEW YORK
ARTIST: MADHVI PAREKH

"Some artists have to wait a lifetime to get their due, even though their talent is acknowledged early in their careers. Madhvi, a self-taught painter with a unique voice that recalls folk modernism, has remained true to her practice for over five decades. Her retrospective, organised by DAG, and the recent Christian Dior haute couture show in Paris, where her paintings were transformed into tapestries for a runway backdrop, have renewed focus on her work."

@dag.world





Shelf life

Books, the unsung heroes of home decor, come with transformative powers. Neharika Manjani asks experts how best to style them

If you look around, you'll find that several everyday items have the ability to multitask as decor. A simple ceramic jug when filled with the right kind of flowers turns into a centrepiece, pretty patterned plates make for great wall art and the books you love, if placed strategically, tell tales of a different kind—they give guests subtle glimpses into your personality and preferences. But the art of using books as decor is no mean feat, so we reached out to experts for a step-by-step guide on how to curate bookshelves and other unconventional spaces with your favourite reads.

ON THE SAME PAGE

Before you dive right in and start stacking your shelves with books, it's important to first determine the overall aesthetic. "This could be by texture (earthy or metallic), category (classic or contemporary) or vibe (minimal or maximalist)," explains interior stylist and decorator Samir Wadekar. Karan Shandilya, principal architect of The Last Goldfish Design Studio, shares a similar starting point. "We always ensure that bookshelves are curated in a way that they blend with the surroundings. For example, instead of placing them at eye level, you can place them higher. In the past, we've created shelves above a dining table," he says, highlighting a strategy that works for smaller spaces that can't accommodate a set of shelves or a big bookcase.

PHOTO: TALIB CHITALWALA, ISHITA SITWALA INTERIOR STYLING: SAMIR WADEKAR



FALLING INTO PLACE

Once you've zeroed in on the aesthetic, the next step is to gather all the books and group them by genre. "Creating a group of books on a specific subject such as art or travel can bring your personal taste into the display," says Wadekar. For those who find this task daunting, there's a simpler way to segregate. "You can also divide books by colour, as it makes the shelves pop," says Sonam Jhavar, who runs her eponymous interior design firm in Mumbai. The aforementioned exercises, however, are only effective if the books are positioned correctly. Conventionally, many would veer towards a vertical arrangement for practical reasons, but the end result isn't always easy on the eye. "Move away from the idea that books can only be placed vertically. Position a few horizontally and if you have some with quirky covers, they can even be front facing," adds Jhavar.



THE LITTLE THINGS

Type 'shelfie' on Pinterest and your screen will quickly fill up with images which suggest that the best bookshelves are never made of books alone—they have breaks in the form of varied objects. "We add accent pieces such as small planters, overflowing money plants, bookends and ceramic vases to interrupt a continuous flow of books. Depending on the length and width of the shelf, we've also added lamps in between to create soft, diffused lighting," says Shandilya. Another interesting addition is art. "I love scattering small artworks across a long bookshelf. Sometimes, removing a few shelves and hanging large paintings can add a dramatic effect," says Wadekar. For those who prefer something a little more personal, he also has a lesser-known trick. "It's important to have a wide variety of objects which can often work as conversation starters. For example, filling a glass bowl with coins, matchboxes or corks from your travels," he says. There's another technique that can be relied on to break monotony. "In case you're feeling adventurous, add patterns or colour to the back of your bookshelf with wallpaper or paint in vibrant hues," says Jhavar. >


Personalise a bookshelf by adding curios, mementos and interesting elements. A brightly hued bookshelf adds a further pop to your room. Bedside tables are a great place to add books, styled simply with a vase and a photograph

ART, DESIGN & CULTURE

Cosy nooks are elevated by the addition of a few strategically placed books



BONUS POINTS

It's important, however, to note that books don't belong on shelves alone. They can also befriend coffee tables, countertops and compact rooms. "Books can be the most versatile decorating accessory and you can place them in any corner of your home. I've stacked a bunch of thick books to style a side table. Taschen has a series of massive books that are sold along with an easel and Assouline has some of the most graphic and magical cover art. These help in adding a burst of colour to side tables, coffee tables or even a small space such as a powder room or a den," says Wadekar. Shandilya attests to the transformative effect that books can have on the simplest and most unexpected parts of one's home. "Whether it's a comic book, novel or a magazine, books will always add charm to any room. When used correctly, they can transform the dynamics of a space," he concludes. 

"Move away from the idea that books can only be placed vertically. Position a few horizontally..."

— SONAM JHAVAR,
INTERIOR DESIGNER



ON THE TABLE

We filtered our favourite coffee-table books by personality

IF YOU LOVE FASHION

The Impossible Collection of Fashion by Valerie Steele.
Renowned fashion historian Steele showcases a selection of the 20th century's most iconic dresses from the likes of Dior, Valentino and Pucci.

IF YOU LOVE TO TRAVEL

Jaipur Splendor by Moez Singh
Penned by writer, producer and director Singh, this book is a beautiful tribute to the Pink City.

IF YOU LOVE INTERIORS

The Big Book of Chic by Miles Redd

The inside of this tome is even chicer than the outside—it acquaints you with interior designer Miles Redd's signature aesthetic, which is frequently defined as 'cosy glamour'.

IF YOU LOVE FOOD

The Missoni Family Cookbook by Francesco Maccapani Missoni
The Missoni family is just as famous for its feasts as it is for its fashion. This 240-page book reveals some of its favourite recipes.

All of the above books are published by Assouline and available to purchase at [Assouline.com](https://www.assouline.com)



The gateway to a finer life awaits you at
Isprava's Alibaug

+91-8080808797 | info@isprava.com | www.isprava.com



Kashyap wears many hats. He's a chef, columnist and food stylist who has also created his own limited-edition range of handmade tableware

< THE WHIMSICAL TABLE BY EESHAAN KASHYAP

"When you're setting a table, try not to match everything. The arrangement should reflect you, not the brands that you buy. I sometimes begin with a colour story where I assemble different shades of the same colour with various materials. If my table is inspired by a theme, I ensure it is engaging and that everyone is having fun at the table. I get all my essentials from flea markets around the world and local craft fairs, or from a few of my favourite brands such as No-Mad and Summerill & Bishop. I also commission a lot of sets. In addition to this, I love bringing objects like fruits, twigs or stones to the centre of the table for a sense of surprise and whimsy. Long dinner candles are a great way to add charm to a centrepiece too, but for a daytime table I love flowers. To give it a personal touch, I opt for items that serve as conversation starters. Some of my favourite finishing touches are photo frames, hand-painted menus, personalised notes, small gifts, monogrammed dinner napkins, flowers that the people on the table love, and champagne or wine bottles etched with special dates."



^ THE VINTAGE TABLE BY RANJI KELEKAR

"With any table, the most important thing is how you mix and match different elements to make it look like a feast for your guests. The way I do this is by choosing a light or cream coloured base that almost serves as a blank canvas and allows me to play around with the one-off pieces that I have. Personally, I enjoy working with lots of vintage items, wild flowers, fruits or greens on my tables—it could even be shrubs cut from the garden or the road. I think my favourite centrepiece of all time is a metal wire chandelier with flowers on it. Other than this, I also like using large Wedgwood Jasperware as the highlight. To sum it up, I love a maximalist table which brings together unexpected items. It's my style."



Interior stylist Kelekar is based out of Goa, where he runs a studio that stocks the most exquisite tableware



Desai runs Altair Decor, an experiential wedding design company which lists several celebrity couples on its client roster



< THE FESTIVE TABLE BY JANKI DESAI

"For me, there's no fixed formula. It's the occasion and the venue that inspire the tablescape. In addition to this, the time of the event is also a huge factor in choosing the colours and elements. However, when I purchase pieces for a table, I tend to do a mix. While I get charger plates, crockery and cutlery from one lifestyle store (Good Earth, Nicobar and Home Centre), the table mats, napkins and linen are sourced locally—it's the best way to incorporate the art and flavour of a region. When it comes to the centrepiece, flowers usually go well with everything. I bring them in last as they should be as fresh as possible. A good centrepiece should have height but shouldn't block other guests. It's about the complete experience: the set-up, the food and the company." >

Turning tables

There's nothing as inviting as a table curated with care. Neharika Manjani delves into the making of a memorable tablescape

The best kind of tables have character. Not only are they filled with good food, but they also leave room for pieces that paint vivid pictures. When it comes to curating a table, however, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. Aesthetes everywhere are challenging convention by incorporating unexpected accent

pieces, combining atypical colours and using the simplest things that surround them to make compelling centrepieces. While this freedom can be exciting, it can also be daunting for first-timers. Keeping that in mind, we sought the help of the best in the business and asked them to take us through the ever-evolving art of tablescaping.

PHOTO: RUCHIKA RADHAKRISHNA TYABJI (RANJI)

ART, DESIGN & CULTURE



Mehta is the creative designer and curator for Fringe Food, which specialises in tablescapes, personalised grazing boards and food curation



< THE EARTHY TABLE BY NATASHA MEHTA

"I start with a theme and then zero in on the props. I use fresh vegetables and fruits as centrepieces—leaves and candles can fill in the empty spaces between them while bowls, plates or even glasses can be used to place them at different heights. I then pick out the crockery, serving platters and table linen. For tablecloths, I love Fabindia, West Elm and Zara Home. Another key element is wooden serving sets. They look lovely and also go with almost every cuisine. Once the table has been set, I love doodling on it. This could be on paper or directly on the crockery, depending on the overall aesthetic I've chosen.

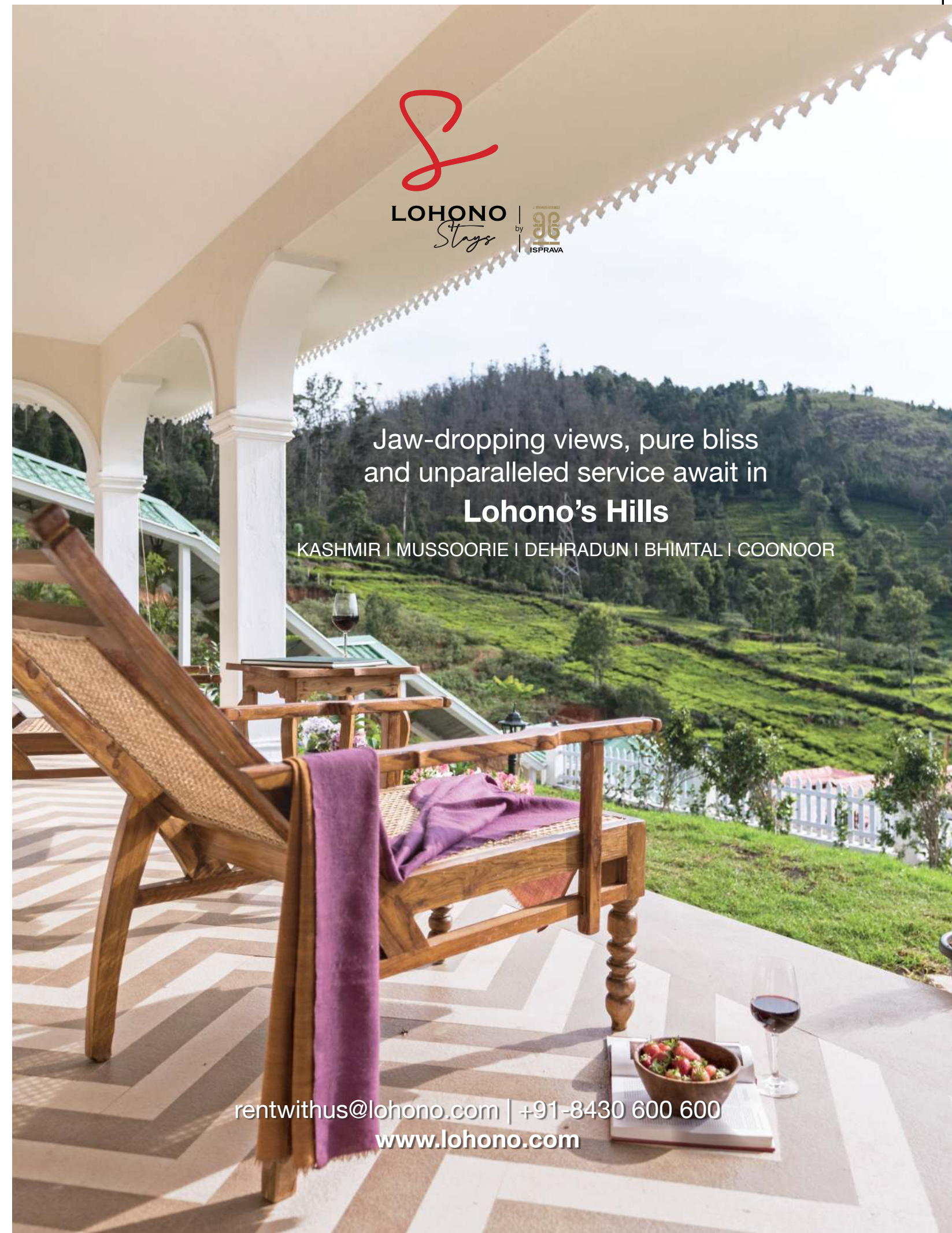


Kothari, the founder of Mumbai-based Dining Couture, curates tables and conducts workshops on table styling



< THE ORNATE TABLE BY AMI KOTHARI

"When I put together a plan for a table, I first search my craft cupboard and crockery unit for inspiration. I happily break many rules while styling my tables—I love experimenting with unusual colour combinations. I do, however, prefer the setting to reflect the menu, the overall decor of the space and the event at hand. If it's a festival that's being celebrated, I would include some key items. For example, diyas for Diwali and eggs or bunnies for Easter. If it's an evening table, I like adding candles or fairy lights to set the mood. Apart from this, I routinely complete my tables with flowers—for freshness, elegance, colour and texture—and other personalised elements like place cards or pictures to mark seating."



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This sprawling estate features four spacious bedrooms, manicured lawns, multiple lounge areas and a whimsical gazebo that is ideal for high tea. It can accommodate large groups and also offers thoughtful elements like a cosy fireplace and a terrace bar
Villa Albany, Coonoor
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Planning your escape

From Alibaug to the Maldives, from the hills of Coonoor to the beaches of Goa, whether you are planning a family reunion or a bachelorette party, whichever your destination or occasion, here is a round-up for our favourite Lohono properties for you to make some magical memories

BEST FOR NATURE LOVERS

ALBANY COTTAGE, COONOR

Located in the most picturesque part of Wellington, Coonoor, Albany Cottage, built by Isprava, stands at an altitude of 6,000ft.

Enjoy: This four-bedroom home is beautifully decorated in rich silks and earthy tones. With several lounge areas, a cosy fireplace and a sprawling lawn, it is ideal for some quiet time. The gazebo has the most charming view and is the perfect spot for tea and cake, while the terrace bar allows you to enjoy an evening cocktail under a starry, smog-free sky.

Explore: Go for a long walk in the area and enjoy the fresh air and lush landscape, go golfing at the Wellington Golf Course or rent a car for a quick trip to Ooty. >





BEST FOR A ROMANTIC GETAWAY

VILLA AMILLA, MALDIVES

It doesn't get more romantic than the Maldives. This property is surrounded by clean, warm water and snow-white sand, with groves of coconut palms and fragrant flowers, making it worth a visit.

Enjoy: Serene modern rooms including water villas with facilities such as fine dining, a fantastic spa and a large swimming pool. Guests can pre-select food items to be stocked at the villa while a selection of books and DVDs, a Playstation 4 and board games will keep you entertained indoors.

Explore: Enjoy water sports. Go glamping or get sporty with a game of football, badminton, volleyball, table tennis, frisbee or pétanque. Book a slot at the artist's studio or a session with a tennis pro managed by Lux Tennis at an extra charge. And if self care is on the agenda, take a Pilates class and then spend the day unwinding at the spa.

These luxe villa residences boast a beautiful beachfront location. Each villa offers four bedrooms, a private pool and plenty of living space for rest and relaxation. The resort also offers other activities including water sports, fishing, personal training, a kids club and more.
Villa Amilla, Maldives
Available on rent at www.lohono.com



This Mediterranean style pet-friendly home is kitted out with five plush bedrooms with stunning sea views, a separate games room and a tasteful living and dining room. There are also sit-outs and balconies for reading, dining or stargazing and a terrace bar for evening soirées
Villa Sacri Borod Hill 8, Goa
Available on rent at www.lohono.com



BEST FOR A BACHELORETTE

VILLA SACRI BOROD HILL 8, GOA

Overlooking the shimmering sea at Ashwem, Sacri Borod Hill 8 is a magnificent Mediterranean-style villa. Enveloped by dense greenery and comprising five spacious bedrooms, this luxurious home is the ideal space to unwind.

Enjoy: With a private pool, a games room and proximity to the beach, the villa lends itself perfectly to a memorable getaway with friends or family. The villa offers multiple al-fresco dining and seating options, ask our staff to mix you some lethal cocktails or pamper you with local favourites.

Explore: Head down to the pristine Ashwem beach for some sun and sand or plan a girls' day out at one of the many spas in the area. [06](#)



The future of travel

For nearly two years, most of the world stood still. As borders closed and flights were grounded, the travel and tourism industry came to a grinding halt. As the world returns to a somewhat pre-pandemic normal and 'revenge travel' goes into overdrive, will the lessons of the past change how we explore in the future? **Madhavan Menon**, Managing Director, Thomas Cook India, shares his predictions

It's all about a unique experience

Consumers have become more discerning about the quality of their break. The special deals that were offered by many hospitality players last year and early this year, have partly resulted in a greater awareness of the luxuries that are on offer. Consumers will look to reputed brands for these experiences and they will do ample research before their trips. Consumers will also be willing to do away with conventional hotel experiences. In this context, I see weekend stays, holiday homes, exclusive resorts and boutique brands that can offer interesting novel concepts, winning.

The work-cation is here to stay

The biggest change resulting from the pandemic has been the hybrid working environment. Digital nomads have become an important consumer—and they have the flexibility to plan and work from the remotest of locations. All this is going to result in greater demand for all segments such as driving holidays, staycations, weekend breaks, resorts, short-haul and long-haul holidays. Combine this with adventure tourism, cycling, motorbike and sailing holidays, cruises and more, and you have a completely new horizon for this industry.

I believe all these changes will attract new players to the industry who will set new standards and, at the same time, well-known brands will benefit from the increased demand. In the next few years, I predict a sustained boom for the travel, tourism and hospitality industry—one like never before. ☺☺

One of the biggest casualties of the pandemic was the tourism and hospitality industry, having been literally shut down for almost 15 months. It resulted in customers as well as travel experts and operators having to rewrite the playbook. Indeed, the industry will never be the same again. But as we emerge from the pandemic, we are witnessing a new reality:

Frequent mini breaks will trump one long annual break

We're witnessing a boom in both domestic and international tourism as well as in the hospitality industry, driven by so-called 'revenge tourism'. Consumer behaviour has changed dramatically over this 15-month period in many ways. The biggest is the realisation that frequent mini breaks are the new norm, rather than taking one long annual break.

Spontaneity is the new name of the game

The presence of online content as well as seamless booking capabilities—either online or through a phone call—has made it easier to make snap decisions on taking a break rather than the conventional route of planning a holiday.

PHOTO: JAY MODI



In March 2014, Devidayal took a small group of people to The Table Farm in Alibaug where they harvested the produce that was then used to make their lunch. Since then, excursions to the farm in Alibaug have been consistently sold out

From farm to table

What's really on your plate? And where does it come from? Gauri Devidayal, the woman behind some of our favourite Mumbai restaurants and The Table Farm in Alibaug, sheds light on produce and provenance, organic farming and building a real farm-to-table ecosystem



"To understand why provenance is so important to chefs, one needs to unravel the food philosophy behind ingredient-driven menus"

— GAURI DEVIDAYAL



I'm fresh off a flight from California, the OG of the farm-to-table movement, championed by Alice Waters, who opened Chez Panisse in the early 1970s and was notorious for serving just one perfect peach with a knife for dessert. Fifty years later, the movement not only continues there, but is thriving. 'Organic' is no longer counterculture, it's as mainstream as it gets. Almost every restaurant I had dined at, between Los Angeles and San Francisco, paid homage to the farms from which it sources its ingredients. But doesn't all produce come from some farm or the other? So what's all the fuss about?

To understand why provenance is so important to chefs, one needs to unravel the food philosophy behind ingredient-driven menus. I had the privilege of dining at Nopa in San Francisco, which is a restaurant that simply describes itself as specialising in "simple food created with seasonal ingredients sourced from local purveyors". To really get under the skin of this, I accompanied production chef Sean Eastwood to the renowned Ferry Plaza Farmers Market.

We spent a few hours that morning walking around several stalls with a large trolley that needed to be repeatedly loaded with crates overflowing with fresh produce, followed by multiple trips unloading it into Eastwood's van. I asked him why he needed to come and personally buy produce from the market three times a week and why the farmers and vendors couldn't just

supply him at the restaurant directly, like we do in India. He explained, quite categorically, that if you want the good stuff you have to come and get it. There's limited supply and demand is high.

The produce comes from small, local and regional farmers and ranchers, many of whom are certified organic. Being chemical-free means there's scope for more spoilage of the crop due to pests and it also takes longer for produce to grow naturally when the process isn't expedited using chemical fertilisers. All this results in it being considerably more expensive. But these very farmers are trustworthy sources of crops that are bursting with flavour and variety and which are sustainably farmed, ensuring that natural resources are not destroyed in the process. The microclimate of California has farms predominantly located within close proximity to the markets, which means the harvest has travelled a relatively short distance, thus reducing the environmental impact.

I saw a sincere relationship and exchange between the farmers and Eastwood, who seemed equally vested in each other's success. Seasonally changing, locally-sourced, ingredient-driven menus are an outcome of this symbiotic relationship between farmers and chefs. Across the board, most restaurant menus I came across were short, yet hard to choose from because one knew everything was made from the best of the season, even if it meant a single peach.

India, on the other hand, hasn't even begun to scratch the surface. About ten years ago, every second restaurant started labelling itself as a farm-to-table concept. Sure, all produce comes from some farm or the other, but did chefs truly know the farmers or where they're located? Or what went into the soil and which seeds were >

FOOD

used? And whether it was sustainable, organic, natural, chemical-free? Had the middleman been eliminated and were they sourcing directly? Highly unlikely and therefore not quite the movement here that is now second nature in California.

It was this very misinformation that led me to do the first walk-through at The Table Farm in Alibaug, just across the bay from Mumbai, where we grow a lot of the produce that our restaurant, The Table, uses. In March 2014, we took our first small batch of people to the farm and got them to do everything from mixing manure and cocopeat, to making plant beds and sowing seeds, even harvesting the produce for our chefs to make a farm-fresh lunch. It gave them a whole new perspective on the tomato salad that was served with freshly made pesto pasta and sautéed spinach, considering the tomatoes had been handpicked by the diners themselves. Having an awareness of not just where and how your produce is grown but also an appreciation for the labour involved in harvesting, cleaning and cooking can result in a seismic shift in the dining experience.



Restaurants and chefs have a significant responsibility in contributing to building this awareness, but the unfortunate reality is that most are not able to make the switch to a more sustainable source for their produce. Pricing is the key roadblock in a largely price-sensitive economy. That's why this remains an urban phenomenon and you can probably count the number of restaurants that are doing this on both hands, including Masque, Edible Archives and Sequel, to name a few.

But all is not lost. Incidentally, India is one of the largest exporters of organic produce globally. Closer home, e-commerce brand Zama Organics is trying to bridge the distance between the source of chemical-free produce and the consumer, whether it's direct to consumers through its website, or via restaurants and grocery chains. Its founder Shriya Naheta Wadhwa explains that Zama's ethos is to promote clean eating by making quality, sustainably grown produce more accessible and taking care of the process of identifying and vetting passionate farmers and artisans, as well as the logistical aspect of making it available to the consumer. Interestingly, she also highlights that during the peak season for certain fruits and vegetables, the price on Zama's website is the same if not less than what's available at the local vegetable vendor. She recognises the challenge of being faced with an audience that assumes organic equates with expensive, has bargaining in their blood, and wants instant gratification, but is

confident that a slow but steady change is under way as the consumer becomes more health conscious.

This sentiment is echoed by Aindrila Mitra, editor-in-chief, *Travel + Leisure* India & South Asia, who introduced a category for Best Farm to Table experience at the magazine's Delicious Dining Awards 2022. She explained that conscious travel is one of the pillars for the publication, and with that comes conscious living, conscious dining and conscious consumption. The current trend of sustainable living—whether it's what you consume or where and how you travel—is a result of the Indian consumer generally being more mindful than before.

Similarly, a vision to bring the farm ecosystem closer to its end consumer and offer a deeper understanding of where our food comes from, who grows it and the impact of our food choices is what led chef Thomas Zacharias to trade in his post as chef partner of The Bombay Canteen for becoming a start-up founder of The Locavore. He acknowledges that we have a long road ahead in making consumers care—whether about themselves, the farmer or the environment—but that we can no longer turn a blind eye.

It's the circle of life that we eventually find our way back to all the things that are good for us. Life began on farms before urbanisation and processed foods took over our kitchens. And today, multiple stakeholders are going back to the grassroots to feed us in the most delicious, sustainable way. In the words of chef Laurence Jossel: a great restaurant is a sum of its parts.

And the provenance of its produce is an integral part. Here's to those peaches, with no cream. ☺

“It's the circle of life that we eventually find our way back to all the things that are good for us”
— GAURI DEVIDAYAL



Last year, India reportedly produced over 300,000 tonnes of coffee, making it one of the largest coffee exporters globally, with over 70 percent of its produce sold abroad

Gathering steam

Single-estate, pineapple, banana-fermented, even cold-smoked beans—the coffee scene in India is constantly upgrading itself. Sonal Ved reports on the burgeoning trend

For decades, we looked to our cousins who visited us in summer from abroad to get our hands on great quality coffee, cheese, gin and chocolate. But in the last few years, Indian entrepreneurs making these products have levelled up to the extent that home-grown artisanal products are beating their international counterparts. Case in point are Eleftheria's brunost, which won big at the World Cheese Awards, Kerala-based chocolatier Paul & Mike, which became the first Indian company to win a silver at the International Chocolate Awards, and the Indian coffee estate Jumboor Estate from

northern Coorg which was voted as Best of the Best by Ernesto Illy International Coffee Awards last year.

Simultaneously, India reportedly produced over 300,000 tonnes of coffee, making it one of the largest coffee exporters globally, with over 70 percent of its produce sold abroad. These facts go on to say how there has been a remarkable shift in the quality of our beans, from winning at international panels to having them being fit for the international market. Read on to find the best places to get your coffee supply, how to make your drink right and the best coffee-drinking spots in the country. >

GROUND YOURSELF

Whether you like your coffee plain Jane or with some fanfare, these four cafes across India are firm favourites

G-Shot, Goa

This all-day roastery makes gourmet coffee using its own beans procured from partner farms and serves wholesome sourdough toasts, brunch meals comprising German potato salad, a French omelette, oven-roasted veggie soup, and more. Its rotational menu offers standard coffees but also hot-brewed coffee cherry tea, orange-zested mocha made with Mason & Co's chocolate, espresso tonic, and more. [@gshotcoffeeandcafe](#)

Subko, Mumbai

This is a specialty coffee shop that takes its beans very seriously while also doubling up as a craft bakery. While you can pick from its iced cask-barrel-aged coffee, flat white or cappuccino, the cold South Indian filter coffee stands apart. Besides a bakery section and drinks, Subko also sells brewing equipment, made-to-order coffee beans, tote bags and bottled brews. [@subkocoffee](#)

Lavonne Cafe, Bengaluru

A patisserie and boulangerie that is also an airy cafe is the place to get a sun-kissed brunch. Pick from the stellar coffee menu and pair it with sourdough toasts, seasonal smoothies, flapjacks, a brûléed fig and beet salad, or brown butter and sage sauce fettuccine, among other gourmet



eats. For best results, combine any of these with the Vietnamese iced coffee. [@lavonnecafe](#)

Halli Berri Cafe, Chikmagalur

This blink-and-you'll-miss-it cafe in Chikmagalur is situated on a plantation and serves home-grown coffee. The menu features lots of classic house blends roasted in small batches for greater complexity. On the food menu there is a special bitter orange rind cheesecake made from oranges fresh off its farm, tender bamboo shoot and fenugreek seed mango curry, or chicken curry with crushed bella (jaggery) made using spices picked from its plant nursery. [@halliberriliving](#)

ONE COFFEE, FOUR WAYS

Depending on how strong, mild, velvety or smooth you prefer your cuppa to be, these four coffee-brewing methods are worth experimenting with

French press

This is the quickest way to get cafe-like coffee at home. A French press calls for you to immerse coffee grounds in hot water and then push these grounds down to the bottom of the jug with a metal press. This makes the coffee full-bodied, smooth, and non-acidic.

Siphon coffee

Also known as 'vacuum brewing', this method requires a siphon that has a top container filled with grounds and a bottom container filled with water. By heating the water container, the pressure from the vapour encourages the water to rise, where it mixes with the coffee grounds.

Moka pot

A moka pot is stovetop coffee-making equipment. It was invented by an Italian engineer, Alfonso Bialetti, and has since been an Italian cultural staple. The pot has a bottom chamber that contains water to create steam, and this steam passes through the coffee grounds and releases intense, not-too-strong coffee into the top chamber.

Cold brew

Here, the steeping process is dependent on chilled water and not icing a hot coffee. Coffee grounds are steeped in water overnight and then strained. Add a dash of condensed milk for best results.



COOL BEANS

From paying homage to the ancient Indian style of making coffee via a brass filter to growing their beans in a regenerative forest, these four coffee brands in India are making waves

Bhava

This Karnataka-based brand is encouraging the modern Indian coffee drinker to experiment with South Indian style filter coffee and focuses on all things local. Its dabara set, which makes for an ideal wedding present, features a brass cup and a tumbler used to pour and cool the piping hot coffee alongside a decoction maker. Its coffee can be brewed in a French press or as an espresso, in a moka pot, or any other style you prefer. [Bhavaearth.com](#)

Tulum Coffee

Founder Pallav Haria ideated this brand's ethos in Brazil, learnt the trade in Mexico and set up



shop in India. Whether you like your coffee with chocolatey notes, dark caramel undertones, fresh fruit flavours or a complex fermented tinge, Tulum's menu offers it all. Its standout coffee is a banana-fermented variant, which is in sync with the global trend of fermenting beans with fruits to give them a unique tone. Tulum also offers a six-month subscription where you can choose one coffee you love or leave it up to them to surprise you. [Tulum.coffee](#)

Marc's Coffee

Its beans are picked from the best coffee estates in the country: in Wayanad in Kerala, Baba Budan Giri in Karnataka, and the Shevaroy Hills in Tamil Nadu, among other locales. Marc's Coffee stocks beans of various potencies such as light, medium and dark. The coffee geek can also register for the masterclass that teaches the foundation of coffee appreciation, cupping and brewing methods, the nuances of molecular coffee, and other advanced courses. [Marcscoffees.com](#)

Araku Coffee

Coming from the regenerative forests of Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh, Araku's coffee can be described as beans with a cause. Araku works with the indigenous tribes of the region to help grow organic beans without artificial irrigation. The label works on a human chain model where farmers work directly with biodiversity experts and consumers without any middlemen. The coffee, while so far available only in India and Europe with a store in Paris, has recently launched in the US (New Jersey, Texas, California, Florida and Arizona). [Arakucoffee.in](#)



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* Actual picture of a home in Castello Vaddo, Goa

A bespoke octagonal chandelier hangs in the living room that features an arched double-height ceiling

Behind the Doors: Estate de Frangipani

In Isprava's most ambitious home yet, global influences come together in harmony

“While I had an idea of how the house would look, I was so blown away when it all finally came together. The Isprava team really did a fantastic job of creating an aesthetic that fits our personalities – the house practically compels me to a state of calm. Even now, every time I come to the house, I get the same sense of awe as when I first walked in.”

— VARUN TALUKDAR, HOMEOWNER



Above: Opening onto the outdoors, the ground floor guest bedroom features a secluded entrance to access the glass house. **Opposite page:** The main highlight of the living room is the arched double-height ceiling with a custom designed chandelier.





“The spaces we loved creating the most were the living and dining areas. This is because their design presented us with a unique challenge. We had to work on connecting the two spaces, yet find a way to maintain distinct design identities for each of the rooms. This is why the living area has a double-height ceiling, while the dining area has a single-height.”

— PARESH PANCHAL, PRINCIPAL DESIGNER



Opposite page, top: Indulge in picnics by the poolside with a lavish spread. *Opposite page, bottom:* A small, winding pathway leads you to a nature-inspired glass house tucked away in a corner. *Above:* A dining room that seamlessly flows into the outdoors.



In the Master bedroom,
French chateau inspired
architecture fuses with
traditional Portuguese
design and African elements

“The core design aesthetic of this Estate was French Chateau. However, we also wanted to stay true to our signature Isprava aesthetic of incorporating regional influences, i.e. Goan-Portuguese style. We worked tirelessly to blend elements from various cultures. For instance, in addition to modern Portuguese influences, we also found ourselves strongly drawn to African design accents. Together, with all these elements, we have managed to create a truly harmonious and modern design tapestry that reflects a global identity but retains an overarching French Chateau look.”

— DHIMAAN SHAH, FOUNDER AND COO OF ISPRAVA AND LOHONO STAYS



Above: Hand-carved wall tiles by craftsmen from Rajasthan in the ground floor guest washroom. **Opposite page:** Surrounded by lush greenery, the glass house is an excellent place to enjoy a cup of tea.





“We at Isprava think of ourselves as a design-led lifestyle brand with a wide range of sensibilities—classic to contemporary, rustic to chic, organic to manicured. Estate de Frangipani like all our creations goes beyond just its beauty. We profile our customers, focus on materiality, and give as much importance to function and usability as to design. Hence, an equal amount of focus was given to the comfort of the mattresses as to the individual mouldings on the arched ceiling. And an equal amount of time was spent designing the rooms for the dogs as the room for the owners.”

— NIBHRANT SHAH, FOUNDER AND CEO OF ISPRAVA AND LOHONO STAYS



Opposite page, top: A dreamy courtyard displays French architectural elements such as the charming Juliet balcony. *Opposite page, bottom:* Using a melange of bright hues—pinks, ochres, and a stunning macaron pattern—this pool house delivers a vibrant energy. *Above:* A spacious washroom that offers a changing section as well as an elegant sitting area.



Moving further inside, we are greeted with a single-height foyer that features a large, round console with a solid wood carved base and an Italian marble top, completed with leather details and artistically adorned with candles and a hanging lamp



His and her basins in the Master washroom were remodelled using vintage bird feeders and mounted against hand-carved Spanish / Portuguese tiles

This home is available on rent at www.lohono.com

Spread over nearly 40,000 sq.ft., Estate de Frangipani is undoubtedly Isprava's crown jewel, both for its scale as well as its unique design aesthetic. The villa, on a 3,600 sq.m. plot in the heart of balmy Assagao, Goa, is home to former Miss India Universe Puja Gupta Talukdar and her husband, Varun, a finance professional, as well as their dogs, Thor and Groot.

The five-bedroom home took over 18 months to complete and followed a clear client brief. On the Talukdars' mood board was a home that seamlessly blended the hallmarks of a modern-day French chateau along with Spanish influences while paying homage to Goa's Portuguese style through unique detailing. Adding to the mix, the house has been styled with decorative pieces and artworks with African roots. The outcome is a home that embodies a confluence of cultures and has influences of global design, but still keeps the clients' mood board firmly in mind.

Architecturally, this home features some incredibly unique elements, which posed numerous challenges to the design team and ensured the most skilled artisans and craftsmen were hired. Case in point: the double-height ceiling with a 30 ft. arch in the living room; the expansion of the first floor master, which entailed recreating the exterior framework of the house; adding a Juliet balcony, further reinforcing a chateau signature; and extending the ground level balcony to open out onto the expansive lawn and a pathway that leads to the glass house.

The living and dining areas too needed to be connected seamlessly while still maintaining distinct design identities for each of the rooms. It took using a bend curve element, precise moulding patterns and the installation of a 250kg light fixture to achieve the desired harmony.

Using a colour palette of whites, neutrals and creams to create a coherent story, leather-finished Italian marble for the floor spaces and grooves, and locally sourced Shabad yellow limestone material

in a brick pattern, the overall effect of the home is airy and light-filled, making it an oasis of calm.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

1. A colossal handcrafted wooden-bead chandelier hanging from a double-height ceiling welcomes us into the home and is a stunning ornamental element even when not illuminated.

2. An all-white colour palette in the powder room, right from the floor tiles that have a marble finish to the walls that are awash with an Indian Patent Stone (IPS) style coat. Adding to this room's larger-than-life design language is the double-height ceiling, its carved arched elements, a wash basin that was formerly a 150-year-old bird bath and two giant 10ft by 5ft chandeliers.

3. The palatial living and dining spaces seamlessly flow into one another and are filled with natural light, amplifying the elegance of the contemporary and traditional design elements. A hand-selected mother-of-pearl table was specially commissioned to complement the double-height space with beautiful lighting fixtures that adorn the arched ceiling in the living room.

4. The outhouse also serves as an office and has a distinctive design identity. The outhouse flooring features a melange of dark pink, brown, yellow,

cream, burgundy, grey and white macaron, while the walls are doused in white. We purposefully introduced colour to crucial locations, such as this section, where a dark pink colour unit announces its bold and blush presence and lends the space its distinctive design characteristics. Since the villa is in Goa, the idea was to create an unconventional workplace environment.

This home is available on rent at www.lohono.com

"I'm so appreciative of how well the house has come together. The open floor plans and color tones inside are really soothing, and from every corner of the house we have this incredible vista of the Assagao valley, which always brings me to this fantastic headspace and at peace. My favourite part of the house has to be the patio by the pool. It's quite a view, and I always find myself there listening to music with my boys while enjoying the peace and quiet."

— PUJA TALUKDAR, HOMEOWNER

Behind the Doors: Villa Brisa

At Villa Brisa, texture and materiality take centre stage in this contemporary ode to the Portuguese aesthetic.

Nestled in Goa's Anjuna on a 10,500 sq.ft. plot of land lies Villa Brisa. The four-bedroom home was designed as a modern Portuguese retreat for Rajeev Vyas and took 19 months to complete.

Deviating from the traditional Portuguese design colours, here, a palette of beige, cream, yellow and blue come together, while elements of the aesthetic such as tiles (the main door has blue tiles panelled above), flooring and the structure of the home were maintained. The home is a play on textures and materials in a herringbone pattern—the materiality ranges from Shahabad stones and rough marble laid in a mosaic format to polished wood and terrazzo. The entire design of the home started evolving from this rough and polished stone look, while the kitchen features terrazzo flooring. The wall surfaces are plain white with niches here and there to enhance depth.

The living and dining area feature expansive double-height ceilings from which 10 ft. modern brass chandeliers are suspended. The den or games room is on the first floor and you can look into the living and dining area from here.

With the colour palette of the whole home being white, beige and cream, the use of wood adds further warmth. The client's brief was that the home should look light and airy and exude warmth. The first floor features two bedrooms and the games room. >





The sprawling, semi-covered sit out opens up to the azure pool overlooking swaying coconut trees and lush paddy fields

In the bedrooms, white and yellow and white and blue are the dominant colours. The designers played around with the curtains, using sheer curtains over the floor-to-ceiling windows to bring in the beautiful landscape. The high walls of the compound allow for privacy while also protecting from direct sunlight, thereby suffusing the room with beautiful golden light.

The other bedroom has a thatched roof that is 1.5 times higher than a normal roof. With this incredible height, a wooden four-poster bed and interesting hanging light fixtures add to the drama and scale of the room.

Outside, the designers focused on a

tropical mood board with the landscaping, adding decorative lamps, a pond and elements of a fish and wave design to bring in the surrounding water bodies. The landscape gives an ‘infinity’ effect because there is no construction or any structures around. It instead flows into unmarred greenery with views of paddy fields and swaying coconut trees.

Highlights: Herringbone patterned flooring in the living room that continues from the floor to the wall. The herringbone used here consists of broken chips—more than 10,000 stones—that were physically hand-cut and hand-pasted in a certain format, even on the walls. >



Guest Bedroom, Villa Brisa

“Sukoon is the word that came to my mind when I first saw Villa Brisa—harmonious, serene, and a warm home surrounded by sprawling views of the paddy fields and the lush Anjuna hills on the other side.”

— RAJEEV VYAS,
HOME OWNER



Dining Room, Villa Brisa



Den, Villa Brisa



Façade, Villa Brisa



Guest Bedroom, Villa Brisa




Living Room, Villa Brisa



Staircase: Everything from the risers to handlers is in wood. There are plain white walls with polished Burma teak wood with a larger-than-life chandelier hanging above.

Swimming pool: Usually, pools have a 1.2 metre step to get in, but here there are end-to-end steps on the shorter length of the swimming pool, giving the feeling that you are walking straight into the pool. The pool overlooks lush paddy fields and gives a sense of an infinity pool.

The details: While the entire home has an underlying concept of Modern Portuguese style, we wanted to go a little offbeat with the artefacts. We used Arabesque elements in terms of sculptures in the niches on the walls, vases, and so on. To tie in the whole look, we had a larger-than-life rug in a modern design.

The terrace: The terrace area is a nice, cosy semi-covered area with a bar and seating that overlooks the landscape. 



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A woman with long dark hair is reclining on an orange velvet sofa in a bright, airy living room. She is wearing a vibrant jumpsuit with a bold floral pattern in shades of purple, red, and orange. Her head is tilted back, and her eyes are closed, suggesting a state of relaxation or meditation. The room features high ceilings with white arched columns and large windows that let in natural light. A wooden coffee table is visible in the foreground, and a white sofa is in the background.

A life less ordinary

The serene backdrop of Isprava's Estate de Frangipani in Goa is the perfect foil for the textural beauty and vibrancy of resort wear. As we ease back into a routine, pause, take a deep breath and remember that magic is found in the stolen moments. So colour your life with extraordinary experiences wherever and whenever you may find them

Photographed by: Arsh Sayed

Styled by: Naheed Driver

Living Room, Estate de Frangipani

Cape, top, pants; all
Izsi (@izsi_india).
Necklaces, ring;
both **Love Letter**
(@studioloveletter)



Living Room, Estate de Frangipani
Cape, top, pants; all **Izsi** (@izsi_india). Necklaces, ring; both **Love Letter** (@studioloveletter)



Entrance Foyer, Estate de Frangipani
Top, skirt; both **Malie** (@malie.official). Rings, **Zevar King Jewellery** (@zevarking)

Guest Bedroom, Estate de Frangipani
Knit dress, **Zara** (@zara).
Necklace, **Love Letter**
(@studioloveletter).
Rings, **Zevor King**
Jewellery (@zevarking)





Semi-covered Sit-out, Estate de Frangipani

Knit dress, **Zara** (@zara).
 Necklace, **Love Letter**
 (@studioloveletter).
 Rings, **Zevar King**
Jewellery (@zevarking)



Passageway, Estate de Frangipani

Dress, **Malie** (@malie.official). Shoes, **Zara** (@zara)



Poolside, Estate de Frangipani

Bikini, cover up; both **essgee** (@essgee_shop). Necklaces, rings; both **Love Letter** (@studioloveletter)

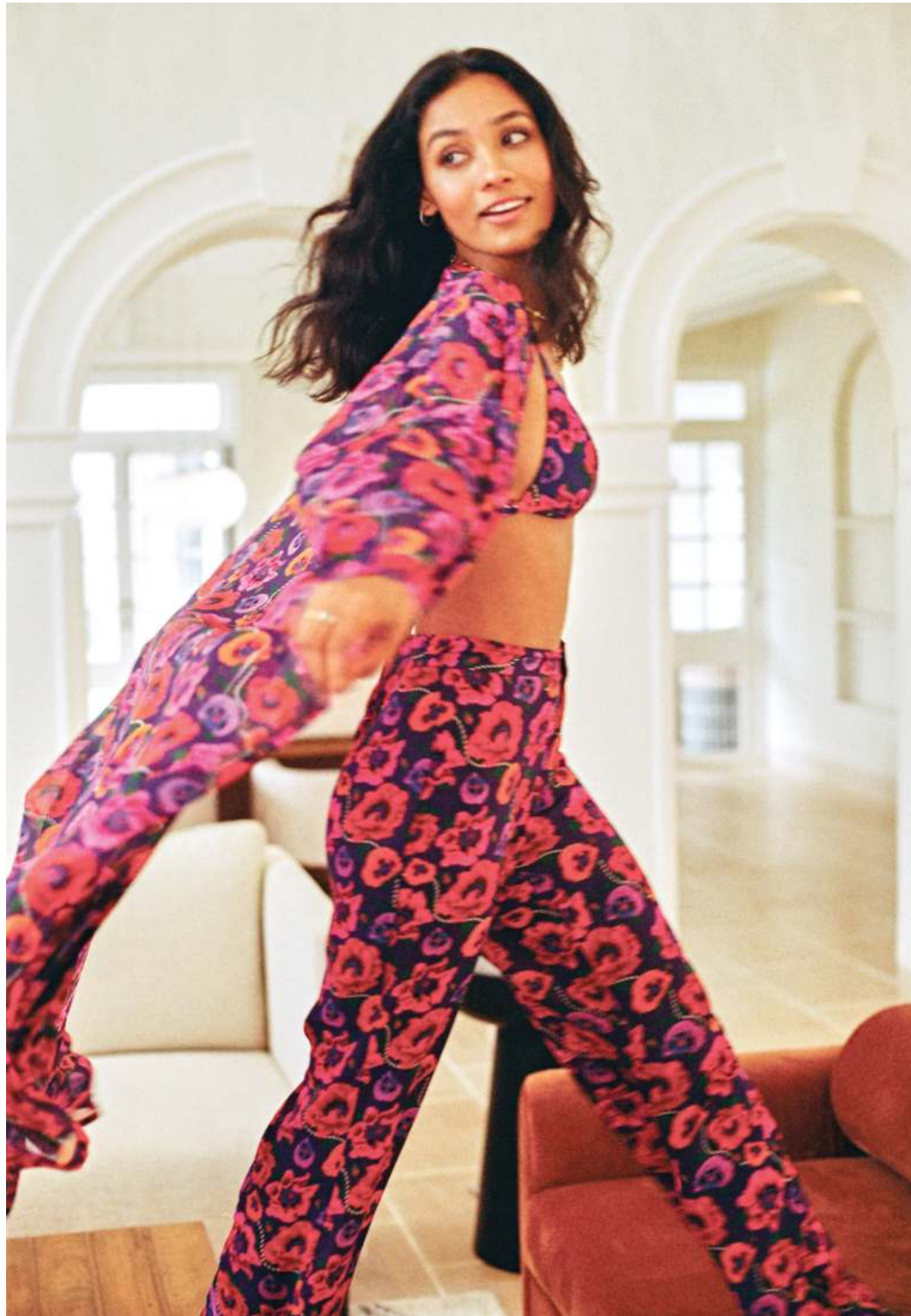


Dining Area, Estate de Frangipani

Dress, **Zara** (@zara). Necklaces, ring; both **Love Letter** (@studioloveletter). Shoes, **Aldo** (aldo_shoes)



By The Pool, Estate de Frangipani
Swimsuit, **OOKIOH**
(@ookioh). Necklaces,
both **Love Letter**
(@studioloveletter)



Living Room, Estate de Frangipani
Cape, top, pants; all **Izsi** (@izsi_india). Necklaces, ring; both **Love Letter** (@studioloveletter)



Terrace, Estate de Frangipani



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Fine living

Nowhere are the cashews—or life, for that matter—sweeter than in Goa. Under the shade of the mango tree, there is no other languid way to pass time than to sit on your balcao, preferably with a rosé in hand, and watch the world go by, writes Megha Mahindru

Goa's **beaches, bars and balmy air** have attracted tourists in flowing kaftans to its shores every year. But what makes the **sunny state** distinct and desirable is not only its **architectural wealth** that spans its various conquests or its sun-dappled **laterite homes** (seen in **colours** straight out of candyland), or even the rich array of **cuisines** that reflects its **multicultural** inhabitants. Goa, beyond its touristy pin codes, opens up a land of rolling fields, **fragrant forests** and **coconut tree-lined** esplanades where it's the **stillness** that speaks volumes. Here, an **old-world charm** coexists with the **cosmopolitan**. Peel back the **layers of history** and Goa reveals a **unique microcosm** where scrawny-necked barflies continue to visit antique bars, old ladies dexterously knot **pork sausages** for sale at Mapusa's grand **Friday Market**, the local poder (baker, in **Konkani**) cycles around the neighbourhood with freshly **baked breads**, and the popular **salsa nights** prove that no one here is born with two left feet.

Most recently, the pandemic made city dwellers **warm up to Goa** even more and enjoy a rare **change of pace**, but Goa has always **attracted creatives** over the years. Whether for its **all-night raves** or its **killer views**, artists, chefs, **designers**, bartenders, authors and **musicians** all come searching not just for an **analogue bohemian life** but an **alternative** place where imagination, ingenuity and **introspection** come naturally. Flip through to meet the people and places that are cementing Goa's reputation as the **nouveau hippie utopia**.

Megha Mahindru is a writer and editor who escaped city life for idyllic Goa way before the pandemic, and like so many before her, found magic in the susegad way of life





Road less travelled

Replace the overdone and overrun with fresh travel alternatives that offer a new lens to the sunny state. By Megha Mahindru

For a long time, Goa, with its beaches and bars that offer a way to float through the miasma of modern existence, has been the perfect antidote for worn-out city dwellers. Here, the mood is always OOO (out-of-office) and the balmy air is filled with the sweet promise that delights even the most demanding of people. But scratch deeper and you will find novel ways to explore the unexplored.

Made for inveterate travellers, our pick of immersive travel experiences are culturally

authentic, architecturally alive and naturally powerful. They combine revelry with revelation by presenting a Goa that most guidebooks never seem to capture. Here is our list of nine experiences beyond the casinos, bars and beaches.

Time-travel to Goa from the Portuguese era Soul Travelling (ST), a travel company started by childhood friends Kedar Borkar and Varun Hegde, captures Chandor, the first-known capital of Goa, well through an itinerary packed with home visits,

Soul Travelling shows you the beauty of traditional Portuguese architecture and design. If you opt for chasing waterfalls with The Local Beat, no geotagging will be allowed. Chef Avinash Martins brings his farm and sea-to-table approach with C'est L'avi, a personalised dining experience

village folklore, local delicacies and interactions with residents. On this three-hour excursion, you can witness Goan houses as old as 800 years, bedecked with shell windows and featuring grand ballroom halls and airy balcaos, where the strange linger of Portuguese noir continues to cling. While this tour is a must for the design-minded, food-focused travellers may find ST's tribal food trail most rewarding. [Soultravelling.in](#)

Plan a picnic while chasing waterfalls

Eight years ago, Mackinlay Barreto, marketing executive and prodigal son, returned home and started The Local Beat (TLB) in 2017 to offer slow travellers an intimate view of isolated corners of Goa. His niche is mindful experiences over mass tourism, and it's the reason why geotagging-happy social media influencers are not part of his burgeoning clientele. "I don't want to make this a commercial enterprise. I like to personally recommend places for a group as I do not think one size fits all," says Barreto whose itineraries span little-known places in the Goan hinterlands, which are otherwise off limits to tourists. Far from the rabble of boisterous tourists and the clogged arteries of Baga, Calangute and Candolim, here, simple pleasures and centuries-old rhythms seem to offer an authentic slice of *susegad* life. Orchestrating riverside picnics and forest swims, conducting visits to heritage mansions and local taverns, and planning cliff-jumping experiences to the emerald-coloured waters are among the variety of unexpected pleasures you can sample with TLB. Each experience also ends with a homespun local

meal—think fried fish, tambdi bhaji with local rice and feni cocktails—so even when the thrill is over, the taste still lingers.

[@thelocalbeat_goa](#)

Try a Table in the Hills

Chef Avinash Martins's culinary flair has made his modern Goan restaurant Cavatina a popular spot with both locals and tourists alike. In 2021, he started a pandemic project, turning his 240-acre ancestral farm into a chef's table. C'est L'avi in South Goa's Velim village is where farm- and sea-to-table is the mandate. Here, the chef exemplifies his near-zero-kilometre approach by sourcing fresh ingredients and executing a menu with great creativity. "I'd say it's a two-kilometre approach—everything either grows at the farm or is sourced locally," says Martins, whose vegetables come directly from his garden and the seafood—mussels, oysters and buttery soft-shell baby crab—come from the neighbouring waters of Cabo de Rama and Assolna. Open only for lunch and reserved just for a group of diners (at least 48 hours in advance) Martins's menu is seasonal and ever-changing, and the experience is private and personalised. "Foodwise, the DNA is the same. Cavatina is a restaurant experience while this is where nature and food come together," he says of his inventive Goan dishes such as mussels with love apples and wasabi, black rice pancakes, and jackfruit sorpotel with coconut toddy sannas. Suffice to say, it will leave you semi comatose.

[@tableinthehills](#) >



Try a floating feni lunch

In Goa, it could be said that the funkier the smell, the tastier the reward. The small state prides itself on its smelly offerings such as jackfruit as well as cashews and its favourite distilled iteration, feni. Feni man Hansel Vaz, the owner of Cazulo Feni, has made it his mission to take the state’s local drink to a global audience. “Around 2006, my family’s feni business was as good as dead. It was then that I decided to return from New Zealand, motivated to make feni funky again,” says the former geologist. “I realised that the world is ready to experiment with new spirits now,” he says, pointing at the popularity of Mezcal in recent times. “Feni is the only spirit that is distilled directly to drinking strength,” says Vaz, who, at Fazenda Cazulo in South Goa, regales guests with many such pieces of trivia and stories of the signature spirit over an intimate feni tasting session after a foraging trail through his estate. Here, guests can even sign up for a dinner experience cued with a Fado performance at what is said to be the world’s first feni cellar. Vaz’s mise-en-place brings alive an assortment of choriz pao (Goan pork sausage with bread), rissois de camarão (prawn patties), sanñas (steamed rice cakes) and pinagre (a dessert made of roasted rice, coconut and jaggery) to the table and is designed to pair with his equally fascinating line-up of feni cocktails. [App.urbanaut.in/spot/luxury-water-experience-at-fazenda-cazulo](#)

Go dolphin-watching at sea

The reason why a trip with Puja Mitra and Roshan Gonsalves trumps any other is that the social impact entrepreneurs often begin their tours at sea with a comprehensive talk about dolphins and their habitat. With Terra Conscious (TC), a responsible travel and conservation education enterprise which offers everything from kayaking in the mangroves to forest cycling trails, the picture-book moments are plenty, but the space to share knowledge and experience is priceless. “With Terra Conscious, our aim is to work towards highlighting Goa’s marine and coastal biodiversity and redefining how we can interact with it. We work to build responsible livelihoods for local communities,” says Mitra, who holds an MSc in Biodiversity, Conservation and Management from the University of Oxford, and started her ethical marine tourism practice on learning that dolphin safaris are classified as ‘water sports’ in Goa, without suitable nature-based regulations. Her two-and-a-half-hour Ocean Biodiversity Experience covers all aspects of ocean life—including the people and creatures that depend on it—while sensitising tourists to marine wildlife and the need to conserve these ecosystems. Other wildlife enthusiasts may want to book a tour with Mrugaya Xpeditions, where naturalists Parag Rangnekar and Omkar Dharwadkar take you through the forest on wildlife trails to spot endemic residents such as beautiful venomous snakes and birds. [Terraconscious.com](#); [Mrugayaxpeditions.com](#)



Where else but in Goa can you dine at a floating feni table courtesy Hansel Vaz? Filled with architecture, design, food and nature, there’s a Goa for everyone



There’s more to Goa than just beaches, bars and casinos. Make It Happen plans walking tours of the Latin Quarter

Get hooked to fishing

Samuel Almeida aka [@thegoanfriend](#) lives up to his moniker of being that affable insider who shares with visitors an authentic piece of Goan life. The 28-year-old finance and banking grad started his solo travel project pre-pandemic, in 2019, after leaving his job in Mumbai and returning to his home state. “The idea is to teach someone who has never fished before and to show them Goa from my perspective,” he says. Besides monsoon treks, his most-booked experiences are his fishing and crab-hunting ones, where gazing at the panorama of land, sea, and sky can yield a delicious reward. His two-hour fishing expeditions, held across North and South Goa, are suitable across levels of experience. “We like to keep it sustainable, so we do selected fishing, which means only keeping the catch you need. The smaller fish are released back into the water,” adds Almeida, who also provides equipment as part of the experience. For families, he also organises ‘Catch and Cook’ affairs that allow travellers to sample what they scored in a spellbinding setting such as an off-the-grid cave. [Thegoanfriend.com](#)

Stroll through the vibrant Latin Quarter

Combining the joy of slow travel through experiences such as village strolls, art walks, music history, food tastings and island escapes, Make It Happen (MIH) is a curated experiential travel company that conducts short excursions in Goa as well as in Diu and Coonoor. “What differentiates us from other services is that we are not about showcasing off-beat places,” clarifies co-founder Murali Shankaran. “We basically connect travellers to the local community to see a familiar destination with new eyes through our unique storytelling approach.” MIH’s co-founder Maria Victor kick-started its heritage experiences in Goa around 2015. With the help of a team of historians, anthropologists, archaeologists and members of the local community, it has carved multiple experiences ranging from exploring Panaji’s graffitied walls to settling into a quiet village tour of Olaulim and even ferry rides to explore the quaint, multicultural Divar Island. MIH’s most popular one, a walk through Panaji’s candy-coloured Latin Quarter, is a heritage walk that combines art, music and culinary experiences >

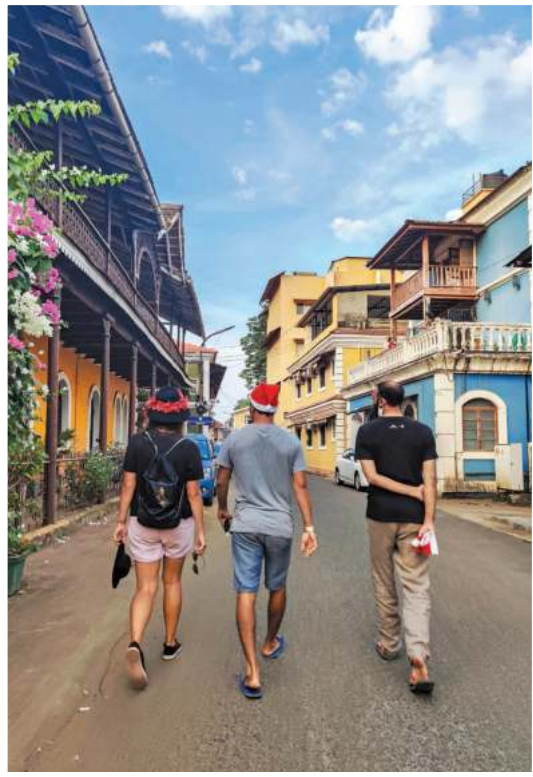


PHOTO: MOHAN KUMAR KORAPATH



to expose a vibrant city that even repeat travellers won't mind revisiting.
[Makeithappen.co.in/tours/fontainhas-heritage-walk](https://makeithappen.co.in/tours/fontainhas-heritage-walk)

Take a big dose of adrenaline and try coasteering

Former journalist and editor Ashwin Tombat, 63, debuted the sport of coasteering in India just before the pandemic as part of Adventure Breaks (AB), which he launched with his partner Kim Sabir in 2015. The extreme sport, which originated in Wales, may not have many takers yet, which is why AB also curates a host of other experiences such as trekking, sailing and kayaking through Goa's mangroves. "We specialise in ocean treks and we have developed routes that take you through hillsides around the sea," says Tombat. Off season, when Goa feels wonderfully sleepy and uncrowded, activities like sailing and kayaking (you can also book kayaking at [Naturecraftadventures.com](https://naturecraftadventures.com)) are a relaxing way to explore the state's natural bounty away from its beaches. Paddle through narrow channels

and you will soon find yourself immersed in the sound of crickets.
[Adventurebreaks.in/coasteering](https://adventurebreaks.in/coasteering)

Try camping under the stars

With no mobile reception, the only sound you will hear at a hillock near Valpoi, where Bipin Bhosale and Pooja Rani of Khoj-aa! Adventures have been pitching tents and orchestrating blissful camping nights in nature, is the clarion call of the hornbills in the evening and nightjars at night, accompanied by the humming of crickets. In the morning, a short nature walk leads you to a beautiful stream as the group explores the neighbouring village for a local breakfast. The duo are also Wilderness First Aid-certified nature guides, so each of the trips—whether it's the child-friendly young explorers' club or easier nature strolls for retirees and even family picnics in the wild—pay utmost heed to safety. "The best part about Goa is that your backyard can be a forest," says Rani, who also specialises in curating seasonal trails as well as bespoke ones across North and South Goa.
[Khojaao.com](https://khojaao.com)

Camp under the stars with Khoj-aa! Adventures or opt for a spot of kayaking with Terra Conscious.

"The best part about Goa is that your backyard can be a forest"

— POOJA RANI,
KHOJ-AAO!
ADVENTURES



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* Actual picture of Villa Branco, Goa

Fertile ground

Goa’s coolest bar owners, designers and artists tell us why the sunshine state is an oasis for creative minds. By Jasreen Mayal Khanna

It’s a truth universally acknowledged that every place needs a strong band of creatives—individuals who not only take inspiration from their surroundings but also bring new ideas and perspectives to them. With its gorgeous beaches, tropical hideaways and susegad-led pace, Goa has long been a mecca for thinkers, artists, writers and designers. And in the past two years, as the pandemic has led to a further influx of those looking for less mundane and more inspired living, this community has only grown in spades.

For this issue, we’ve rounded up the coolest creative minds, some born-and-bred Goans, others part-time residents and full-time entrepreneurs who have found their home and have built a community that supports their pursuits. These are designers, genius chefs, brilliant mixologists and more, who are changing the design, culture and dining scene in Goa.

And who better than these folks to give you some Goa intel? From foraging in forests to international film festivals and feni distillery tours, these insiders reveal their favourite experiences that will show you a hidden side to this eternally golden destination.

< **ANJALI MODY**
FOUNDER & CREATIVE HEAD OF
JOSMO STUDIO

Mody spent a part of her childhood in Goa but moved here permanently at the age of 31, when she and her husband wanted a slower pace of life and found Goa to be the perfect place to foster their personal and professional growth. She launched Josmo Studio soon after, and today, she runs Goa’s premier furniture studio with 85 employees, a 6,000sqft store and a 30,000sqft manufacturing facility. She currently resides in her family home in Nerul with her husband and twin babies. “When I lived in Mumbai, the pace of the city had control over me, but here it’s the opposite,” she says, despite still working 12-hour days through the week. She takes regular breaks, sometimes heading to the beach in the middle of the week, while on other days she switches off her phone. “Goa is grounded in the elements and we’re lucky to be surrounded by beaches, forests and waterfalls,” says Mody. “I always envisioned bringing up my kids around nature and trees and mud, close to the earth. Goa did that for me and I hope it does the same for my kids.”

Her Goa: Mody’s newly-revamped store in Porvorim has something for every home. She recommends trekking to old Goa to see the ruins and old churches, as well as to the waterfalls which flourish in the rainy season. “Adventure seekers should explore that aspect of Goa. Twice every monsoon, I arm-twist my friends and family into packing a picnic and heading to a waterfall. It’s simply splendid.”



^ **AVINASH MARTINS**
CHEF-FOUNDER, CAVATINA & C’EST L’AVI

Martins is the force behind Cavatina in Benaulim and also C’est L’Avi, a specialty dining experience (also known as Table in the Hills) located on a 200-acre mountain estate. Martins is from Velim, a historical village located in the Salcette district that is surrounded by beach, sea, river and mountains. His favourite childhood memories are walking through the village with his grandmother, sharing meals with the toddy tappers, pickling seafood and mangoes in the summer and making pork sausages before the monsoon. While he’s cognisant of Goa’s immense cultural and culinary heritage, for Martins, its true heroes are its everyday artisans. “Every aspect of Goa and its people inspire me every day! My artisans are my heroes and I love to celebrate them and include them in my story. It’s not me, it’s we.”

His Goa: “I live for food, but the culinary scene in Goa is very commercial now. My recommendations are not fancy, but places that serve authentic food. Try the thaali at Mother’s Recipe which is a rather rundown place in Betul that offers home-style Goan dishes to its patrons. Pinto bar in Cabo de Rama is a tiny place but it serves the freshest seafood. There’s also a whole lot of culinary legacy in the forests and hinterlands of Goa. I run mindful tours here for guests who travel sensitively and can appreciate the offerings.” >



^ SACHA MENDES
STYLIST AND OWNER OF SACHA'S SHOP

Mendes started out as an editorial stylist, eventually moving back home to start a resort wear boutique in Panaji. Her brilliant curation of clothing, accessories and home goods became so popular, she now has a second outpost in Assagao, where she lives, and where her husband's restaurant, the popular Tamil Table is based. "Goa is home. I was born and brought up here, so my roots run deep. It's a paradise state and will continue to be if we look after her with love and respect. There's something so refreshingly real and honest in the way lives are lived here." For Mendes, Goa brings peace and clarity of the mind, which helps her thrive creatively. Her favourite part is the meaningful conversations and community interactions—she loves spending time with her father and his friends, listening to their stories.

Her Goa: "Spend an afternoon in Assagao, a sweet village in North Goa with shops, restaurants and interesting people. Have a meal at Tamil Table and do a spot of shopping at Sacha's Shop. If you choose to go south, stop by Vivenda Dos Palhacos, a very special boutique hotel inside a heritage 100-year-old structure."



< NISHANT SALDANHA
ARTIST AND CO-CURATOR, THE AMCHE MOLLEM CAMPAIGN

A trained artist who practises drawing and photography, Saldanha creates surrealist comics and posters as well as animated films and also works on long-duration photo-and-text projects to document the ecology, economy and culture of his home state of Goa. It is precisely why he supports the Amche Mollem campaign, with an aim to protect a section of Goa's Western Ghats from deforestation. The deliberate pace of life in Goa was very attractive to Saldanha when he was trying to find his rhythm and voice as an artist. Besides the lush, nurturing natural beauty, what makes Goa compelling, is the often unexplored community spirit. "Understanding Goa helps me to understand the factors that influence my own world view and outlook," he says. "I live in Reis Magos, Bardez, because my family is historically from here. Living across the river from Panaji gives me easy access to the city and Goa's capital is central to my work as a location, a backdrop and a place of inspiration."

His Goa: "Walk through Panaji city to experience chance encounters, conversations and observations. The International Film Festival of India also takes place here every year and its curation is really the best of international cinema. Also, contrary to popular belief, I think the monsoons are the best time to visit Goa for its wet, green, lush, introspective atmosphere. It is often a time of rest and a time where new ideas are born."

PHOTO: COLSTON JULIAN (SACHA)

JAGVIR MATHAROO AND MARTINO CARAMIA
DESIGNERS & CREATIVE DIRECTORS OF THE FLAME STORE, ELEVATION AND MAISON DU VOYAGE, GOA

"An eclectic mix of people from around the world have made Goa their home, making it one of the most interesting places to live within India," says Matharoo. Along with his partner Caramia he runs a popular clothing line, Flame. Matharoo resides in a 300-year-old Portuguese home in the quiet neighbourhood of Parra, a small simple village in North Goa, tucked away from popular restaurants but close to their studio and stores. Both Matharoo and Caramia love living and working amidst nature and they especially delight in Goa's verdant forests and blissful seascapes. The inspiring dialogues among Goa's creative community has a deep impact on their work and sustainability initiatives.

Their Goa: "Visit the Friday market in Mapusa. It's a chaotic, bustling space where you'll discover local produce, vintage jewellery, eye-catching pottery and much more. The Serendipity Arts Festival in December is a must-see as well. It takes place in Panaji, which has undergone a huge revival as of late. Our favourite eatery for Goan food is an unassuming spot in Nerul called Bhatti Village. And on Sundays, you'll find us enjoying sundowners with friends at Ashwem." >



GOA GUIDE: *The Sunshine State*



^ **SAFFRON WIEHL**
ARTIST & ILLUSTRATOR

Wiehl studied art and illustration in Australia, but decided to return to Goa to build a career. Her preferred medium is watercolours and her work is inspired by the natural beauty of Goa as well as by her late mother Shireen Mody, who was also a painter. “My earliest memories are around the age of four or five, when I would watch my mum in her studio and mimic how she would paint,” she says. “I remember she did a series of paddy fields and she would be standing at her big easel—I had my mini one—trying to get the shades of the blades of grass right.” You’ll find Wiehl collecting odd bits and pieces from her natural surroundings—bones, shells, stones, wood—and when she’s not scouring the earth, she’s revelling in the surrounding artistic community.

Her Goa: “Stop by my gallery, Studio Arpora. Visit the Saturday Night Market to discover Goan designers like Tia and Dadablui and make it a point to discover all the best fish curry places.”



< **ARIJIT BOSE**
BAR AND BEVERAGE SPECIALIST

After running a top-ranked bar in Singapore, Bose wanted to make his own mark. In 2020, he moved to South Goa and opened what has now become one of the country’s most talked about bars: Tesouro by Firefly. After living near the bar in Betalbatim for two years, he recently moved to Dona Paula to focus on his new project, an experimental lab in Panaji. Bose has found a microcosm of entrepreneurs including farmers, specialty manufacturers and distillers here. His team goes to forest farms and forages with experts to source hyper-local and seasonal produce—something he doesn’t believe he can do anywhere else in India. “I’m an outsider but have been accepted by the food and beverage community in Goa, and that acceptance makes it a sunshine state for me,” he says. Life in Goa also brings him much-needed balance. He cycles and surfs during his time off and says that the absence of a daily, traffic-filled commute ensures he has the mindspace to innovate and play with new ideas.

His Goa: “If there’s one experience I can recommend it’s a tour of the Cazulo feni distillery (sign up on Urbanaut). You’ll get to see a 300-year-old technique in action, learn about the heritage of feni and sample delicious cocktails and snacks with your feet immersed in a pond (with fish nibbling on them). Follow this up by going to South Goa’s ancient tavernas. Just sip on urrak-Limca or feni-soda and enjoy the atmosphere. These places are slowly going to die out, so enjoy them while they’re alive.”

> **PRAYAAG AKBAR**
NOVELIST AND PROFESSOR AT KREA UNIVERSITY

Akbar’s first novel, *Leila*, is a poignant, dystopian tale that was adapted for Netflix by filmmaker Deepa Mehta. In 2019, when his son was six months old, he and his wife Shanta moved from Bombay to Goa in search of a quiet place to work and raise their firstborn. They found a lovely home in the serene farming village of Ucassaim, located between Aldona and Moira, which suited Akbar, to work on his second manuscript. “Goa is such a warm, welcoming place. The people here can be very open-hearted if you choose to engage with the community in a meaningful way,” he says. “We have neighbours whose families have lived in Ucassaim for a hundred years. When we first moved here we would go on walks with our son and I realised that Goans love kids. That’s how we made friends in the community. It’s the people here that bring the sunshine for me.” Akbar also credits the state with opening up his imagination as a writer. “I had all these ideas of wanting to write a certain kind of book. My first one was a dark, dystopian novel—a very serious first book. I thought I’d always be writing those kinds [of books]. Coming to Goa helped me see that there’s a whole range of possibilities open to me as a writer. Living here helped me see more of myself, perhaps, and find different parts of myself that I could bring to the page.”

His Goa: “Miguel’s in Panaji. It’s a wonderful experience with great food and cocktails, warm interiors, an open kitchen and friendly team. It has the right vibe for an evening out.” 🍷



PHOTO: ROHIT CHOPRA (PRAWAG)



IDA - BOUTIQUE BAR & KITCHEN, VAGATOR

This family-run garden restaurant boasts a bar counter repurposed from an old boat. From here, you can set sail on a cocktail journey that includes home-made shrubs, liqueurs, salts and infused gins and vodkas. Try the Mary To Maria, a take on the classic Bloody Mary, with bacon and kairi leaves, inspired by aam panna and buttermilk.

9326746848; @idagoa

The buzz on Goa's bars

Where to get your fill of cocktails, local liquors and innovative mixes. By Joanna Lobo

Goa has always been a drinkers' paradise, offering affordable libations and cute and captivating places in which to enjoy them. The last few years have seen a rise in the number of bars, some of them giving a facelift to the tavernas of yore via cocktails and a growing spotlight on local drinks like urrak and feni.

The list of Goa's best bars runs long, so we left the task of picking the best of the list to award committees and decided to go with our personal favourites. This selection includes places that experiment with cocktails as well as pretty spaces that are worth lingering at over a drink or two.



TESOURO BY FIREFLY, COLVA

It's been voted India's best bar by *Man's World* and Tulleeho (and the fourth best by Asia's 50 Best Bars) and that's because it takes its cocktails seriously. It's not just about mixing drinks either—there's a proper cocktail programme that involves new techniques, flavours and some good feni. The bar recently also made cocktails with forest-foraged ingredients. Standouts here include the Feni Patoleo and the signature Midnight Brekkie with vermouth and peanut butter.

9834875596; @bartesouro



FOR THE RECORD VINYL BAR, PANAJI

India's first bar dedicated to vinyl, this place champions local liquors and little-known spirits such as Indian agave and cane spirit. The focus is on seasonal fare with a menu that also pays tribute to the diversity of fermentation. Its owner, Buland Shukla, recently debuted a floral botanical feni that pairs well with the sourdough pizzas and pides on offer. There's also a private listening room decorated with some stunning vintage records. And yes, the establishment is pet-friendly.

7507472587; @ftr_vinylbar >



JAMMING GOAT, UTORDA AND CALANGUTE

The beach bar has two locations in Goa: Utorda and Jamming Goat 3.0 at Calangute. Both places serve modern Indian fare with exciting fruity cocktails (including some with feni). Sip on the innovatively named Sudden Orgasm or the Purple Perspective with bourbon and a berry cloud.

9945905817/9049002817; @jamminggoat

GOA GUIDE: *The Sunshine State*



ESCOBAR, ASSAGAO

This converted tavern shot to fame after being recognised as one of the best bars in the country by *Man's World* and Tulleeho. It serves local gins and craft beers as well as urrak and feni and hosts tattoo pop-ups too. There's also a skate park at the back. There are also regular takeovers here, where different liquor companies are invited to come and serve cocktails.

7972818233; @esco_bargoa



THE FLYING GOAT, ANJUNA

A cafe, bar and bookstore, this place does it all. Ask nicely and you can tour its garden which provides the botanicals used in the drinks, including a Pandan Banana Old Fashioned with caramelised banana and pandan extract, the G.O.A.T Spritz with mint-infused gin, and a Nero Highball with fermented pineapple and mint nero.

9820772399; @theflyinggoat.goa



HIDEAWAY CAFÉ AND BAR, VAGATOR

While this performance space-cum-café and bar has always been known for its fun musical nights and laid-back vibe, its cocktails are turning heads too. Try the Milk Punch Riverdale, the Encantar with limoncello and pistachio horchata, and Bell Peppers with coconut and vodka.

9049097014; @hideaway.goa



THE DEN BAR & LOUNGE, NAVELIM

This SoGo (South Goan) bar and lounge offers good food, premium cigars and handcrafted cocktails, such as a Tobacco Old Fashioned with tobacco sugar and a Morning Glory Fizz with absinthe. You can enjoy these in the exclusive smoking room, which also offers patrons a cigar and cocktail pairing.

7709436339; @thedenloungegoa



GIN JOINT, MANDREM

This speakeasy comes from the people behind Verandah and it's a hillside joint dedicated to gin. In this tiny space, under antique chandeliers, you can try local Indian gins mixed with floral syrups and organic herbs. Try the Lavender Collins or the signature Manga Martini.

9503105092; @ginjointgoa

PETISCO, PANAJI

This gastro bar serves up delicious small plates and hosts live music and karaoke nights. But for many folks, it's the cocktails that are the stars here—from the Panji Classic, a fantastic clarified urrak cocktail, to the seasonal gin creation Coco Ambo.

8010521438; @petiscogoa





1 ANGRY BEEF SALAD AT PING'S BIA HOI, SANGOLDA

There's nothing to be angry about at this bowl of cold salad. This Asian restaurant serves good baos, noodles and dumplings, but it is the Angry Beef Salad that is one of its best dishes. Thinly cut pieces of beef, delicately flavoured, paired with fresh greens, some red amaranthus and a punchy dressing of coriander, lime and chilli. [@pingsgoa](#)

2 TOMATO SALAD AT BOMRAS, ANJUNA

Chef Bawmra Jap's wildly popular Bomras is known for its experimental Asian food that's fresh, simple and high on flavour. Among the bestsellers is the seemingly simple tomato salad, which has been on the menu since the beginning. The salad has blanched and chopped tomatoes highlighted with fish sauce and dried shrimp, and is infused with oil and topped with crispy ginger. [@bomrasgoa](#)



3 ALMOND CROISSANT AT BABA AU RHUM, ANJUNA

This restaurant, cafe and bakery serves fresh breads and croissants. One of its most popular baked items is the almond croissant, oozing a rich almond cream and topped with a generous sliver of almonds. While it also serves a pain au chocolat as well as an indulgent butter version, the almond croissant is a hot favourite. You can find these goodies at Cream Choc outlets. [@babaurhumcafe.goa](#)

4 BHAJI PAO AT CAFÉ TATO, PANJIM, PATTO AND MARGAÕ

This iconic Goan chain has been known for feeding people a filling breakfast since the early 1900s. Its bhaji pao and chai are still a staple feature for many regulars. Options include the sukhi (dry), alsande (cow pea), patal (dried peas), tamat (tomato) and of course, mixed bhaji. [@cafe_tato](#); [@cafetatoatto](#) >



5 BAKED FISH AT PALACIO DO DEAÕ, QUEPEM

At this restored 18th-century house you can learn the storied history of the town and then settle in for a set Indo-Portuguese meal. There is no menu, but the food served includes little-known Portuguese dishes made with fresh fish and vegetables sourced from the garden. The baked fish, usually chonak, is delicious, as is the fish in a simple butter-garlic preparation. [@palaciododeao](#)

The 25 dishes you have to eat in Goa

There has never been a better time to be a diner in Goa. In the last few years, it has seen an influx of new talent in the kitchen, innovations in cuisine and inspired dining experiences. Food writer Joanna Lobo highlights the must-have meals

Smoked burgers, chicken cafreal, xinaneo fry, smoothie bowls, tortillas, ramen bowls, sushi, pizza—the Goa of 2022 has a lot on its plate, quite literally.

There's no better time to be in everyone's favourite pandemic destination. The food industry is thriving, with restaurants and cafes opening every other week, even if the trend is skewed more towards Indian and global fare rather than Goan food. These days, you can find different kinds of cuisines in the state—while Asian is still a favourite, Mexican, Spanish and Mediterranean are finding favour too. Want a taste of Goa? Bookmark these dishes for your next visit.



7

BEEF BURGER AT BURGER FACTORY, ANJUNA, MORJIM AND NERUL

It's one of the best places to get a big, juicy burger with all the trimmings. On the menu are pork, chicken, beef and veggie burgers, but the bestseller is the beef version, with a choice of accompaniments that include mango, avocado, pomegranate, guacamole, blue cheese, bacon, BBQ sauce and more. [@burgerfactorygoa](#)



11

CHIMICHURRI CHICKEN AT PETISCO, PANAJI

The small plates at this restaurant are imaginative and high on flavour. Go for the chimichurri chicken, a plate piled high with juicy chicken bits and the goodness of mint and other herbs, olive oil, vinegar and orange wedges, accompanied by a warm sweet potato salad. [@petiscogoa](#)

12

CLASSIC PLATTER AT CUEBEBAR, VAGATOR

This restaurant is popular for its smoked meats and delicious burgers. Sample its fare by ordering its Classic Platter, which features quarter-pound versions of four classics: pulled pork, beef brisket, pork belly and pork ribs. It's served with bread, coleslaw, bean mash, potato salad and honey butter. [@cuebebargoa](#)

13

CRAB XEC XEC BISQUE AT CAVATINA, BENAULIM

Chef Avinash Martins is working hard to put Goan food on the map by infusing modern techniques with traditional preparations. He calls his sensibility one with a "local heart, global soul". His menu is seasonal and employs many local ingredients. His cooking ethos is most evident in the much-loved Crab Xec Xec Bisque, a delicately flavoured sweet and meaty crab soup served with a crab cake. [@cavatinagoa](#)

BEEF PEPPER ROAST AT PETER TAVERN, UCASSAIM

Once a tavern and now a happening bar that runs packed every evening, Peter Tavern serves a limited menu of which the choris (Goan pork sausage) fries make for a good accompaniment to local brews. And the newest addition to the menu is a good one too: tender slices of roast beef with a nice peppery bite. [@petertaverngoa](#)



9

CANTINE FRIED CHICK'UN AT CANTINE INDIENNE, PALOLEM

The fried chicken at this plant-based restaurant is unlike any other. Inspired by KFC chicken wings, this vegan dish uses organic oyster mushrooms grown by its sister venture, OG Mushrooms. The dish is served with coleslaw and homemade hot sauce. The restaurant serves Tanjore cuisine and there's even an artisanal food store on-site. [@cantine_indienne](#)



CUTLET PAO AT D' SILVA FAST FOOD, MIRAMAR

This place is a regular stop for people visiting Miramar Beach. The most-asked order being its cutlet pao—local bread packed with a thin, rava-crumbed and fried slice of beef with a chicken curry drizzled like sauce on top, and shredded cabbage. There's also a chicken version available. [Tel: 9822158338/9881731205](#)



14

EGGS BENEDICT ROAST BEEF SANDWICH AT MON PETIT FRERE CAFE, COLVA

What makes a roast beef sandwich better? Topping it with perfectly cooked eggs Benedict and a creamy hollandaise. This small outdoor cafe believes in breakfast all day and serves sandwiches, pancakes and eggs. The benny here comes on toasted sourdough bread and is best washed down with iced tea or followed by a slice of banana-date-walnut cake. [@mon_petit_frere_cafe >](#)

15

10

CHIA, GOJI BERRY, ACAI BERRY BOWL AT BEAN ME UP, VAGATOR

This award-winning vegan restaurant has an expansive menu of smoothies, juices, salads, sandwiches, pasta and sattvic food. And this pretty, Insta-worthy smoothie bowl has chia seeds with coconut milk, acai berries, fruit and berries topped with raw cacao nibs. [@beanmeup.goa](#)

16 FISH THALI AT KOKNI KANTEEN, PANAJI

This institution offers the best kind of introduction to Goan food. Its fish thali includes fish curry, fried fish, kismur, sol kadi, a vegetable dish and pickle. It also serves a commendable vegetarian thali. @koknikanteengoa

18 KIMCHI PIZZA AT FOR THE RECORD-VINYL BAR, PANAJI

It's a pairing that should be turning more heads than the pineapple-on-pizza debacle. At FTR, the menu pays homage to fermented foods of all kinds, and this is most evident in the Kimchi Pizza. The beautifully crusty sourdough pizza is spicy, with a nice pickled bite—and has as many fans as the mussel-bharta foam jugalbandi and the black garlic tart. @ftr_vinylbar

19 ROS OMELETTE AT MUMMAI, PANAJI

The humble street staple is lovingly treated at this family-run restaurant which serves home-style Goan food. While the tongue roast pao and weekend specials are delicious, Mummai does three different versions of ros omelette—two eggs beaten into a fluffy masala omelette and served with either beef kheema, sorpotel, or chicken xacuti. @mummai.in



17 GOLDEN PINEAPPLE COCONUT CURRY AT THE MILL, PALOLEM

Imagine a coconut-rich curry served inside a tender coconut, with a portion of coconut cauliflower rice on the side. It's a dish that would appeal to any coconut lover, and is one of the many inventive dishes served at this cute little cafe by the beach. @themillpalolem



20 NAGA PORK CURRY AT MEIPHUNG, BAGA

The state's first Naga restaurant offers a great insight into a little-known cuisine. Among the eatery's many beef and pork dishes is the Smoked Naga Pork Curry with pork ribs and the tang of fermented bamboo shoot. @meiphungoriental

21 PORK SUCKLING CABIDELA AT NOSTALGIA, RAIA

This landmark restaurant was founded by the late chef Fernando da Costa and is now run by his wife, Margarida Tavora. This typical Portuguese-Goan dish is a rich, dark pork stew that uses pig's blood to flavour and thicken the dish. It's something that is rarely eaten today and even rarer to find in a restaurant. If this sounds too extreme for you, try the salted ox tongue, the bacalhau and the sorpotel. @fernandosnostalgia



25 SALMON WITH TRUFFLE PONZU DRESSING AT MAKUTSU, PANAJI

At the yakitori bar, along with dainty plates of seared offal and seafood and meat, this dish stands out because of its dressing. A spicy, tangy, umami-laden ponzu dressing with hints of truffle adds depth and flavour to rare salmon, with fried onions, garlic, scallion greens and nori ribbons adding texture. @makutsugoa



22 PRAWN BUTTER GARLIC AT KISMOOR, SANGOLDA

Though best known for its stellar fish thali and innovatively titled swing, Mood Swing, the unexpected favourite at this restaurant is the simple combination of butter, garlic and prawns. The dish has juicy prawns bathed in a creamy mixture of butter and garlic, served with rice and buttered bread, making it the ultimate cheat dish. @kismoor

23 STUFFED MUD CRAB AT THE LAZY GOOSE, NERUL

This riverside restaurant takes its crabs seriously. Its delightfully named dish of Scrumptious Baby Baked Stuffed Mud Crabs is a creamy treat. In addition, the restaurant serves its mud crabs with butter chilli garlic, recheado, and pepper. @thelazygoosegoa

24 TURKISH EGGS AT BENO, BENAULIM

This pretty, open-air space favours breakfast but also serves burgers, poi sandwiches and drinks. For a great breakfast, look beyond the omelettes and opt for its Turkish Eggs. If you have room, try the croissants too. @beno.goa



On the wild side

When it comes to activities for children, there’s more to Goa than just beach days and bike rides, says Kimi Dangor



If your idea of a Goa trip with kids is centred on building sandcastles and collecting sea shells on the sea shore, allow us to throw some waterfalls, a couple of tents and even a handful of critters into the mix. While current monsoon showers may mean the beach shacks take a break, a whole new side of Goa comes alive as the rain gods carpet the ground in green.

Come ‘season’ time, October will bring cooler climes and crisper days to pitch tents under the stars, or spot painted storks and purple herons. Away from the quintessential old-world churches and overcrowded tourist attractions, a bunch of

passionate professionals now offer a multitude of experiences that will see your kids chase waterfalls and butterflies.

EARTH HOUR

With the climate crisis becoming an inevitable point of discussion in schools and at home, it’s time your children explored the ecological side of Goa, acquainted themselves with its unique flora and fauna, and learnt to appreciate its geological gems. And the sunny state has so much to offer, what with its rich forest cover and sanctuaries like Cotigao, Bondla, Netravali, Mhadei, Mollem, and Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, to name but a few.

Above: Young explorers on the Tambdi-Surla trek, courtesy Beatroute Explorers. *Opposite page:* Neisha, Keith Fernandes’ niece, shows off her bounty on a nature walk. Kids go dolphin spotting with Konkan Explorers



Keith Fernandes, founder and lead adventurer at Beatroute Explorers (Tel: 9011502875) often takes his nieces (aged six and nine) along for explorations, and this gives him the unique insight to create his company’s family-oriented packages. With the Western Ghats offering plenty of waterfall views within its protected sanctuaries, there are great spots for waterfall trekking. “We prefer to take children above the age of six on such adventures, but it’s also based entirely on the parents’ comfort level,” says Fernandes. While plenty of waterfalls are seasonal, there are many that are accessible through the year like Dudhsagar Falls in Mollem and others in Chorla Ghats. While monsoon camping trips can be enjoyed in Mollem via a tie-up with the forest department, Beatroute also organises year-round overnight camping trips in parts of North Goa, where juniors help pitch tents, aid in collecting firewood, learn how to build fires and keep an eye out for wild animals, among other things.

STAY AFLOAT

While the Sahyadris beckon in the wet months with the promise of waterfall adventures, quarry-dipping and forest picnics, Goa’s network of mangroves and creeks, born from the criss-crossing of its six rivers, is teeming through the year. While boat rides through the mangroves are an experience in themselves, many, like Beatroute and Konkan Explorers (Tel: 9689313506), also offer the opportunity to go tandem kayaking with children to explore this wondrous ecosystem. Keep an eye out for kingfishers, cormorants, herons, crabs, some otters and even the occasional crocodile as you explore the biodiversity of the region. And if you can’t resist the call of the open ocean, there’s the option to go dolphin-spotting off Goa’s many beaches or even indulge in a



spot of scuba diving. Fernandes, a certified scuba diving instructor, conducts training courses or even curated fun dives for children nine years of age and above.

LIVE AND LEARN

Also exploring the neighbourhood with a keen eye and an encyclopaedic knowledge of plants are Roussel and Maryanne Lobo of Plant Walks Goa (Tel: 9423474705/9823603875). Apart from their beginner-level walk titled ‘Conversations with Nature’, the duo also conducts more advanced walks, talking about local vegetation and medicinal plants in areas like Socorro, Camurim and Assagao. Their focus on biodiversity means kids get to learn about birds, insects and butterflies, and even make their own DIY hand wash.

BUGS BINGO

From the Malabar tree nymph (Goa’s state butterfly), common Jezebel, plain tiger to Tamil catseye, clipper and commander, snooping around Cotigao Butterfly Park and the Butterfly Conservatory of Goa, located in Ponda, will yield rich results. But Fernandes and his team believe a rendezvous with the winged creatures can also be enjoyed on most of their nature trails in forest reserves.

For ornithological enthusiasts, Beatroute also organises birdwatching trips to Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary on Chorao Island, which is accessible through the year. While you will be happy spotting the drongos, mynahs, curlews, kites, woodpeckers and kingfishers all year round, migratory birds like the grey ibis, purple heron, painted stork and Asian openbill can be seen only from October to March. [☞](#)

With the climate crisis becoming an inevitable point of discussion... it’s time your children explored the ecological side of Goa

A brightness of being

Your surroundings can mould your mood. Goa, many will attest, has what it takes to make you feel both alive and at ease. Neharika Manjani asks city dwellers with second homes there to share what fuels their sunshine state of mind

It's difficult to settle on a single phrase which succinctly sums up all that Goa stands for today. But if there's one that's used most frequently it's 'the sunshine state of India'. This descriptor draws from two things: Goa's sun-dappled shores that instantly warm you up from the inside, and the sunny disposition of its inhabitants that's almost contagious. As soon as you arrive, you catch a sense of calm and carefreeness that grounds you and lifts you in equal measure. And it's this feeling in particular that's sacred to many, especially those who are growing tired of the cacophony of city life. Several city dwellers are steadily setting up second homes in Goa because it's where they find both a lightness and a brightness of being. A few Isprava homeowners share what it is about Goa that helps them slip into a sunshine state of mind.

WHO: PUJA GUPTA TALUKDAR
HOME: ESTATE DE FRANGIPANI
HER SUNSHINE STATE OF MIND: NATURE

Few are successful at finding a foolproof formula for happiness, but Puja Gupta Talukdar, former Miss India Universe, has not only found what brings her unbridled joy but has also factored it into her home in Goa. The sprawling space that features soaring ceilings, she says, is a sanctuary replete with areas where she can indulge in the activities that bring her peace. "My favourite part of our home in Goa is the glasshouse overlooking my butterfly garden. It's where I practise art and meditation. The house also has a gym, a massage table and a steam room. I love a good workout and a massage," says Gupta Talukdar. In addition to this, she and her husband also enjoy spending their days by the pool with their furry, four-legged family members Thor and Groot. This unhurried pace of life and lack of agenda, Gupta Talukdar adds, is what she loves most about her days in Goa. "City life is hectic. You know everyone there and there's always some work to get to. In Goa, there is no agenda. It's just me, my dogs and all the nature that surrounds our home. This can calm you down on its own," says Gupta Talukdar, a homebody and animal lover whose ultimate goal is to set up an NGO for animals in Goa. >

PUJA GUPTA TALUKDAR'S
GOA PLAYLIST

'The Animal Song' by Savage Garden
'Nocturne in E flat major, Op.9 No.2' by
Frédéric Chopin
'Awaara Bhanwre' by A.R. Rahman



GOA GUIDE: *The Sunshine State*



WHO: DEEPAK AND KAVITA GOYAL
HOME: VILLA USHUAIA
THEIR SUNSHINE STATE OF MIND: SIMPLICITY

Deepak and Kavita Goyal’s ties with Goa run deep. The Mumbai-based couple have made their way to its sunny shores for two and a half decades. What draws the duo back is Goa’s simplicity. “I find Goa a little imperfect. I enjoy spending time at shacks. What I love is that there’s not much around them apart from a stunning view of the sea,” says Deepak. Kavita seconds this sentiment—she says it drives their decision to stay in Goa when the destination is at its quietest: “There’s something magical about the monsoons in Goa.” Their visits offer respite from the rigidity of a typical work day in Mumbai. “In Mumbai, I wake up by 6am, hit the gym by 7am and then I’m at work by 9.30am. The best part about Goa is that it makes me forget about my stress and work,” says Deepak, who, as the Chief Business Officer of Tanla Solutions Ltd, often has his hands full. “I love that I can cycle across the street. You can’t do that in a busy city,” says Kavita. All this further prompted them to build a home of their own there—one that’s filled with colour, creativity and a sense of calm. “I love the gazebo and the terrace. It offers views of the whole house and the greenery that surrounds it,” says Kavita, highlighting how she finds solace in her home.

THE GOYALS’ GO-TOS

- Mustard Cafe for Bengali food
- Vinayak Family Restaurant for an authentic Goan meal
- Fisherman’s Hut for peace and quiet
- Felix for its cosy vibe and drinks



WHO: NEALE MURRAY
HOME: CASTELLO VADDO, VILLA 1
HIS SUNSHINE STATE OF MIND: CULTURE AND CONNECTION

Neale Murray wears many hats. One of them is co-owner and founder of Izumi, a restaurant that draws large crowds for its authentic Japanese fare in both Mumbai and Goa. Its expansive Assagao outlet, which opened its doors earlier this year, also happens to be just a stone’s throw from Murray’s home, a space that exudes serenity. “The minute I walk into my home there’s a calm that descends on me,” says Murray. Featuring large French windows overlooking lush gardens and a palette of greys and greens, the contemporary yet cosy property is where he’s able to slow down and savour quality time with his family. “In Mumbai, everybody is scurrying around with their own things. In Goa, on the other hand, you tend to spend more time together as a family. Investing in a home in Goa also had to do with being able to connect with people. Goa has a social fabric and there are many interesting things I can get involved in. What appeals to me is the sense of culture here and the fact that people are fighting hard to keep their traditions and communities alive.”

NEALE MURRAY’S NOTES

- Sappadu for authentic South Indian food
- Ciao Bella for a hearty Italian meal
- Izumi for its 26-foot-long, buzzing bar and cool cocktails
- There for the most succulent meats

WHO: RAHUL CHARI
HOME: CASTELLO VADDO, VILLA 6
HIS SUNSHINE STATE OF MIND: EXPLORATION

For Rahul Chari, co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of digital payments platform PhonePe, Goa has the power to make him pause. “In Goa, life slows down in a very positive way. It’s where you can appreciate the little things like sipping coffee instead of grabbing one, watching the sunset or walking by the river. Goa encourages you to be patient and really take your time,” he says. With soft pastels on the inside and lively greens on the outside, his home, which lets in a whole lot of natural light, is made for mindful moments like these. “The master bedroom has a balcony with views of the pool on one side and a valley on the other. You can drink your morning tea there while watching the birds—and sometimes even the monkeys—that call this part of the valley their home. It’s really special,” he says. Goa is also where he consciously carves out time for play. “We are a family of foodies, and the culinary scene in Goa is outstanding. We ensure that we burn some of these calories by climbing up to Chapora Fort and then trekking down to Princess Dream Beach. Recently, we also discovered Divar Island and loved our time cycling around the area.” >

RAHUL CHARI’S TIPS

- Dine at Gunpowder, Jamun and Burger Factory
- Indulge in almond croissants at Mojigao
- Cycle from Assagao to Siolim





WHO: RUCHIKA VYAS
HOME: VILLA BRISA
HER SUNSHINE STATE
OF MIND: SOLITUDE

Ruchika Vyas, a stylist and the owner of Mumbai-based cookie baking business House of Cookies, has discovered that Goa has all the ingredients to make alone time effective and enjoyable. “I’ve lived in cities like Mumbai and London for most of my life, and Goa has such ease in comparison. Everybody isn’t always hustling and the quality of life is better. You have access to open spaces, cleaner air, beaches and lush greenery,” she says. Her airy Portuguese-style home, located in the heart of Anjuna, adds to this experience. “My house is an oasis of calm. I wake up to the view of rice fields, birds chirping, cows grazing, and sometimes, peacocks dancing,” she says. While there are many common areas where groups can gather, it’s just as easy to come upon a quiet spot. “We’ve visited the house with different groups of friends and family and we’ve created a lot of beautiful memories. But some of the most special times are when I go by myself. It’s when I get to soak in all the beauty and tranquillity that my home and Goa has to offer,” she explains. “In Goa, I start my day with meditation and journaling, followed by either yoga or a workout and a quick swim. I then get in a few hours of work and in the evening I head to the beach to catch the sunset,” she says of her days that make ample room for rest and reflection. ☺

**RUCHIKA VYAS’S
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Makutsu for the most delicious yakitori
Grind Bar, G-Shot or Babka for coffee,
a quick snack or dessert
For The Record Vinyl Bar for cocktails
and your favourite music on vinyl
Joseph Bar for great food, drinks and
ambience with a local flair
Cream Choc for freshly made gelato



An insider’s guide to shopping in Goa

For author and strategic communications advisor Srimoyi Bhattacharya, moving to Goa brought a new kind of retail therapy—one that celebrated craft, innovation and global influences. Here’s her guide

GOA GUIDE: *The Sunshine State*



Top: Plates at Spinning Wheel Ceramics. Above: Ceramics at Mayank Jain Pottery. Opposite page: The curation at 280 Siolim is a peek into designer Savio Jon's world

When I moved to Goa, dreaming up my slow life, I also conjured another idyllic illusion—less malls, less stores, and hence, less shopping. Little did I know that landing in our smallest state would give me an all-access pass to the largest number of concept stores.

Here are a few of my favourite ones that are always brimming with new drops of temptation. The stores that have my heart are the ones that don't feel like traditional brick-and-mortar establishments: most of them are in gorgeous villas nestled in the natural beauty that makes up my new home.

You might feel like you are walking into someone's residence (which is sometimes the case), stepping into a dining space where retail therapy serves as the best dessert, or you may even end up spending the afternoon chatting with the boutique owner. The best part about shopping in Goa is that you never know what you might get. My advice? Linger a while, soak it all in, and happy...not-so-slow shopping!

280 Siolim: Savio Jon

Owning a dress by the iconic designer Savio Jon is bringing home a bit of that easy elegance with the pride of a 'handmade in Goa' tag. Deconstructed and playful, it is fashion that you will cherish through the seasons. What's more, Jon has extended his aesthetic to a concept store that is as eclectic as his body of work. Discoveries may include African wax fabrics or indie labels from Copenhagen to Tokyo, all of which act as little windows into Jon's imagination. 280 Fernandes Vaddo, Siolim; 9822101722

Maison du Voyage x the Flame store

An outpost of the founders of the famed Flame stores, Maison du Voyage is the truest reflection of creative forces Martino Caramia and Jagvir Matharoo's travel and design inspiration. From Bauhaus to Art Deco, you are taken into a treasure trove beyond the tropics with striking pieces from

collaborators and artists across the world—a dress from Paris, a tee from Belgium, accessories from Spain thrown in with some vintage ikats...it's always a joyful whirlwind, and a very personal one at that. @theflamestore

Rangeela

You'll want to move into this blissfully leafy courtyard. Beloved by aesthetes, Rangeela's indoor-outdoor space is as charming as its artefacts, which include everything from tribal art to contemporary pieces. My favourites are Wood and Salt's stylish homeware, bread boards and cheese boards. #13, Anjuna Mapusa Road, near Gunpowder Restaurant, Saunta Vaddo, Gumal Vaddo, Assagao

No Nasties

I love the motto, a "no-fuss, planet-first closet". And No Nasties has been committedly doing so for over a decade. If you are looking for your everyday dress or your comfort tee, this is the place for 100 percent organic, fair-trade and vegan clothing. House No 46, Saunta Vaddo, Anjuna Mapusa Road, opposite Gunpowder Restaurant, Assagao

Adhvan

A recent addition to the Assagao bevy of stores, designer Vikram Phadnis has curated a resort line which dials up the usual kaftan with fun accessories and handcrafted artefacts. House No. 04, Souta Vaddo, Near Mustard Cafe, Assagao

Ranji's

You are drawn into Ranji Kelekar's aesthetic world which effortlessly blends many styles, from antique textiles to vintage British tableware. And the cherry on the pie is Kelekar's ever-welcoming dining room, where you may sit for a coffee and enjoy the best company. @ranjigoa

Van Andel and Peace at The Cheshire Cat Goa

Kees van Andel and Karen Peace are the incredibly accomplished owners of their eponymous fine-jewellery brand Van Andel and Peace. Having settled in Goa for about two decades, their workmanship is of the highest quality—each piece is unique and created by hand with carefully selected gemstones. @vanandelandpeace

Salty Lulla

Creative head Carolina Paez decided to spotlight young talent and women designers under one roof and recently opened her store in Parra, making this area a new shopping hub. From basket bags to unique fragrances, her belief stands strongly in her selection, which is mainly sustainable labels. @saltylullabycaropaez



The inside-outside feel at Rangeela

Spinning Wheel Ceramics

In my quest to find a new set of ceramic plates, I stumbled upon Spinning Wheel Ceramics, which is the wonderful Neela's platform for functional and accent pieces. Visit this appointment-only studio in the gorgeous village of Carona and you will share her joy with every piece that comes from the kiln to your home. @spinningwheelceramics

Mayank Jain Pottery

Ceramic artist Mayank Jain's studio is in the heart of Moira, where he also hosts workshops. Jain works with stoneware clay and likes to use natural elements around him, such as glazes made with clay dug from the fields near the studio, wood ash from trees in the garden, rust from old metal sheets and dust from laterite stones and rocks. 622, 1, Atafondem, Moira; @mayankjainpottery

Villa Asana

In the quaint village of Nachinola, Villa Asana brings together hand-crafted rustic furniture for indoors and outdoors, a lovely collection of linens, and some great gift ideas. Pinto Road, Nachinola; 9821330292

Saudades

Walk into this stately mansion in the heart of

Sangolda and straight into the grandeur of a colonial-style paradise. If you're looking for a statement piece, the furniture and the art here is meticulously restored to functional purpose. Its founder Moorthy's eye and knowledge is legendary. His ability to restore a very personal selection of furniture and artefacts makes Saudades a destination steeped in history and priceless Dutch, British, Portuguese and Indian furniture and art. 83, Chogm Road, opposite Mãe de Deus Chapel, Porvorim, Sangolda

Paper Boat Collective

This is another concept store that is high on my list for discovering new labels with an ethical DNA. Expect designs for men and women, homeware and accessories...and to shop your heart out, H No. 248 Bella Vista, near Alua Resort, Sangolda

Sacha's Shop

Located in Sacha Mendes's ancestral home in Panaji, her concept store is a cabinet of curiosities that stocks everything from edgy resort wear to vintage collectibles, alchemy oils and fine fragrances. You can expect to find cool Indian labels like Small Shop, Aish, Maku, 11.11/eleven eleven, Péro, Naushad Ali and The Perfume Library, to name a few. Sacha's Shop has opened its sister store in Assagao at the Tamil Table Restaurant with an extended curation of all things beautiful. Swami Vivekananda Road, Panaji; @sachatheshopkeeper

Coco Leni

Need a pair of new sunglasses for your beach run? Well, as Goa would have it, even your lovely shades can be eco-friendly. With both great design and craftsmanship, Coco Leni's lets you custom-make your frames at a fabulous price. 3-24, Doctor Jack de Sequeira Road, Caranzalem, Dona Paula

Terravida

A hand-painted ceramic bowl in the shape of a rooster that always makes my guests smile proudly adorns my kitchen shelf. It's like this mascot for a sunny way of life. At Terravida, you can find vibrant tableware sets and collections (with dreamy names) and I love its Portuguese-inspired illustrations and rustic-chic look. It's a great address for gifts and tablescapists. RWJ+HHR, Terravida, Rua 31 de Janeiro, Fontainhas (quarter), Altinho, Panaji; @terravidagoa

Sotohaus SotoDecor

Award-winning Swiss designers Sonja and Thomas's brand is a kaleidoscopic delight—their art, lighting and furniture have this 3D effect that interplays light and material in ingenious ways. They make use of handmade papers and natural materials like leaves and petals to create pieces, using acrylic sheets as a canvas and a self-developed lacquer technique which is the signature feature of any Sotodecor piece. Estate, Plot No. 103, Pilerne Industrial, Pilerne; @sotohaus21

Between two worlds

Over the past few years, we've seen a rise in global Indians creating beauty brands rooted in Ayurveda-inspired traditions. Avanti Dalal profiles the ones making headlines



The global beauty landscape is changing—and it's about time. Today, the shelves of Sephora and other global stores stock products rooted in ayurveda, #hairoilingtrends on Tiktok, and celebrities and influencers espouse the benefits of traditional Indian routines. So it's only natural that a large number of

entrepreneurs behind the buzziest brands are South Asians reclaiming their cultural heritage, modernising and re-introducing Indian beauty traditions to the world. These entrepreneurs grew up making turmeric face masks in their kitchens and spent summers getting hair-oil massages from their grandmas. Then, they spun these childhood routines into brands that

speak to their identity but also meet the modern beauty consumer where they are, creating products with active ingredients that they can prove really work. What these savvy entrepreneurs are saying is that you don't have to choose between clinical labels and cultural, storytelling-driven brands. You can get both if you know where to look.

PHOTO: CAROLINA HERRERA



SHAZ & KIKS CO-FOUNDERS: KIKU CHAUDHURI AND SHAZ RAJASHEKAR

Founded by two sisters, the brand aims to give consumers the ease and efficiency of modern formulas with ingredients like shikakai, amla and neem, which Indian families have been using for years. Their launch product aimed to innovate hair oiling—that most romanticised of original Indian beauty rituals—which promises to leave you relaxed with your hair feeling moisturised and elastic. But the lather-rinse cycle is another story when you often have to overwash to get the residue out, leaving your strands more parched than they were before. Enter, the Scalp+Hair Prewash, a whipped, creamy oil-based mask that saturates easily and washes out the same way. "It brings nostalgia, love and shared memories with your grandma, aunties and mum to the fore, so for it to finally be fully understood outside of our community feels like such a big accomplishment," says Chaudhuri.

Sunshine state of mind: "Being sisters, one of the reasons we started the brand was so that we would have more excuses to hang out with each other." [Shazandkiks.com](https://shazandkiks.com) @shazandkiks



SQUIGS FOUNDER: NIKITA CHARUZA

Charuza has been concocting formulas in her kitchen for the longest time, whipping up face masks and ayurvedic hair oils to cure what ailed her. "I wanted to create shelf-stable versions of these DIY products I grew up using that are still effective and enjoyable," she says of her just-launched Gen Z-focused line that centres on happy head care and not just hair care (she wants to tackle the skin on your scalp and your face too). The Double Shot Face Serum includes hyaluronic acid, niacinamide and squalane as well as tulsi, turmeric and neem extract—a true example of her dual identities colliding. "The beauty industry can feel so alienating and isolating at times, especially with the concept of what 'perfection' and 'beauty' is as a person of colour," she says. To combat that, the formulas and packaging are an instant serotonin boost, echoing her raison d'être—beauty should be fun, and it should be for everyone.

Sunshine state of mind: "I'm happiest when I'm with my family, going out for long walks, and doing my haircare and skincare routines which is my safe space." [Squigsbeauty.com](https://squigsbeauty.com) @squigsbeauty >



HEALTH & WELLNESS



UMA OILS
FOUNDER: SHRANKHLA HOLECEK



It might feel like today's younger generations would want nothing to do with OG traditions, but Holecek thinks that there's more in common than you think. "Ayurveda naturally relies on principles that today's millennial and Gen Z audiences care about—hyper-awareness of clean ingredients, the demand for transparency in personal care, sustainability and a focus on overall physical and mental health," she says. Holecek was raised in India, where her ancestors were ayurvedic doctors who crafted botanical oils on their farm in Chhattisgarh for centuries. She took these learnings and spun them into super potent, targeted formulations for masks, oils, toners and creams.

Sunshine state of mind: "I love exploring other cultures and being close to nature. I've also learned that a regular workout is very important for my overall mood and peace of mind. And finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that I really enjoy a glass or two of great red wine while trying to practise the spirit of ayurvedic moderation, even though I'm not always successful!"
Umaoils.com
@umaails

MAULI RITUALS
FOUNDER: ANITA KAUSHAL

A deep knowledge of ayurveda is steeped in her family history, but Kaushal knew that she wanted to give consumers a sophisticated experience with the same ingredients she'd always loved. "Having been born and brought up in the UK, we had a sensibility for British refinement but a respect for India's wisdom," she says. Retailers told her that her products might be too ayurveda-focused in the beginning, but the pandemic brought with it a newer wave of respect for rituals. The end result? A brand that offers skincare, haircare, supplements and sleep-related products with rich actives and sensorial fragrance blends that soothe from the inside-out as well as the other way around.

Sunshine state of mind: "If I had to choose a place or feeling, it would be with family and friends, but I'd be able to magically step away for a bit to be by myself near the ocean's edge or deep in a forest."
Maulirituals.com
@maulirituals



SAHAJAN
FOUNDER: LISA MATTAM

Sahajan's founder is out to prove that the science of her ancestors matches up to modern science—you don't have to pick between the ritual and the result. The former pharmaceutical executive knew that clinical testing was key—the audience wouldn't care about fancy packaging or luxurious-feeling formulas if she couldn't deliver on what it promised on the back of the bottle. Mattam is also making sure to take back what is hers. "No longer can brands suggest that they 'discovered' turmeric or ashwagandha, because the South Asian diaspora will hold them accountable," she says. The end result? A collection of masks, cleansers, serums, oils and balms that really do their job.

Sunshine state of mind: "My father's home in Kerala is a dream to me. I haven't been there for some time, but it is my family, my culture and the beauty of Kerala all rolled into one."
Sahajan.com
@sahajanskincare



FABLE & MANE
CO-FOUNDERS: AKASH AND NIKITA MEHTA

The Fable & Mane HoliRoots Hair Oil is essentially the same mix of oils and herbs you likely used as a child, but the formula is light as air, non-greasy and with a floral scent. That's the true beauty of a beauty brand that is created for comfort and efficiency while keeping the ingredients unchanged. "People are searching for more meaning and balance in their life, so it makes sense to look to India for its holistic remedies that have been proven for over 5,000 years," says Nikita.

Sunshine state of mind: "Our hair-oiling train with our mum when we go home. It helps us reconnect, reminisce and switch off."
Fableandmane.com
@fableandmane



RANAVAT
FOUNDER: MICHELLE RANAVAT

Ranavat's Fortifying Hair Serum had a 3,500-person waiting list when the product was unavailable, which is a testament to the fan-following it has now amassed. Or take the brand's Resurfacing Saffron Masque. It is inspired by the traditional blend you mix up and apply at home, but when bottled up, it's been elevated to a marmalade-like base formula with floating saffron threads, turmeric and fast-acting fruit acids. Your face won't turn yellow and you won't have to deal with the clean-up after. And that's the whole point. You don't have to sacrifice comfort for a formula your skin or hair needs.

Sunshine state of mind: "Connecting with our customers makes me happy. We really do get some incredible stories and I truly feel like I am a part of people's lives."
Ranavat.com
@ranavat

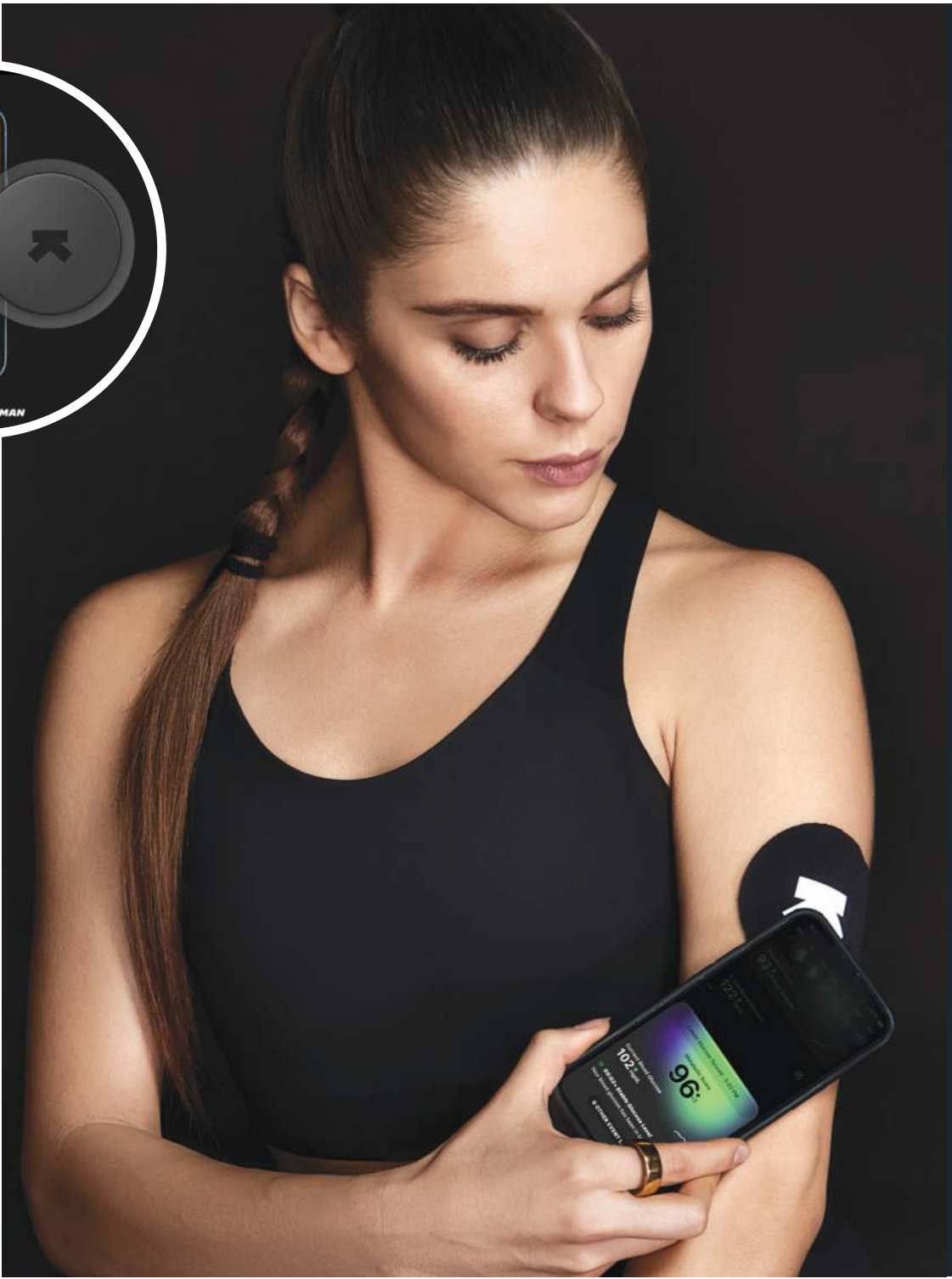




Work it out

What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. When you're pushing your limits on the workout floor after a long day at the office or trying to balance out an indulgent vacation, let these innovations in healthtech help you build a better version of yourself, says Rujuta Vaidya

From artificial intelligence-backed apps to virtual reality gaming parlours, tech is an inseparable part of our lives in 2022. So, to mould complex programming into intuitive gadgetry that improves the human lifespan is an obvious outcome of the exponential surge in health tech. And for those of us hit by a new realisation to be more careful with our bodies, these innovations come in the form of reassurance and bragging rights. Who here isn't guilty of indulging in a competitive activity ring completion within a closed group? And why should a vacation or staycation set back your lifestyle? Investing in the right wearable tech will ensure that no matter where you are, your goals are met.



▲ ULTRAHUMAN

Logging every meal and then doing the vague maths of macros and calories can get tiring at times. Enter Ultrahuman, the new metabolic tracker on the block whose heavy marketing has convinced even me to join the wait list. This tracker brands you with a patch that's typically stuck on your upper arm. A quick tap of the sensor-controlled sticker gives you a reading of your glucose levels and the resultant metrics share insights on burning fat, reducing oxidation and, more importantly, how to eat better. Each sensor can be used for a duration of 14 days. Ultrahuman monitors interstitial fluid, and a hollow needle in the sensor makes a tiny prick in your body to be able to understand your system. @ultrahumanhq



◀ APPLE WATCH

The world is divided into those who can't live without the Apple Watch and others who roll their eyes at them. If you belong to the former camp you will find yourself drawn to the Series 7 version of the now iconic watch. With inbuilt ECG and blood monitor apps as well as fall detection, the Apple Watch is leaps and bounds ahead in terms of safety. With a plethora of watch charms and belts in the market, the Apple Watch can be your go-to even outside the gym. @apple

▶ PELOTON HEART RATE BAND

Peloton broke our hearts in the fateful episode of *And Just Like That* in which Big suffered a major cardiac arrest. But should we now stop spinning because of one pop-culture moment? Well, if it sits uneasy in your heart to get on an exercise bike again, do so with the help of a Peloton Heart Rate Band. This nifty little piece of equipment is compatible with all Peloton equipment as well as with third party apps. Although the bikes aren't easy to get your hands on in India, this band is a simple way to help you optimise the intensity of your workouts. @onepeloton



◀ WHOOP

Whoop is the Fitbit of 2022. Designed to monitor your sleep and activity, what's unique to Whoop is the measurement of strain you're going through. When training, this score helps keep track of the potential you could reach, based on your vitals, or when to call it a day. For those obsessed with their health, the Whoop band is an essential buy. You can keep track of your recovery too. @whoop



▼ SUPERNATURAL

Meta's recent acquisition of the app Supernatural has made the tech giant even more addictive in the fourth dimension of augmented reality. If you're armed with the right hardware, you can work out and have an immersive experience that ranges from boxing to flow that can be customised as per your requirements. Music is an inbuilt feature of the platform. It's almost like watching a movie, or gaming, without turning into an actual couch potato. Trust us, it doesn't get better than this. @getsupernatural

▼ OURA RING

Approved by Kim Kardashian, and with a limited-edition release with Gucci, the Oura Ring ranks high on our list of must-haves. This fitness tracker is straight out of a sci-fi novel and logs everything from your sleep and activity, to recovery, temperature, heart rate, stress and more. The key to maintaining a balanced lifestyle is restful sleep—a commodity that's in plenty when you're young and slowly starts to evade us as we age. The ring can also gauge your period accurately and will get more intuitive as you use it more frequently. For those tough on themselves, the ring's Rest feature tracks if you are overexerted and adjusts your daily goals based on the readings. Plus, you can access guided meditations, breathwork and more from the Oura ecosystem. @ouraring86



The rise and rise of raffia

Woven bags, which used to make a fleeting appearance during the summer, are now enjoying a more permanent position in our wardrobes. Neharika Manjani charts the reasons behind their rise



COURTESY ETRO

In the past, if you studied the anatomy of It bags, you would learn that they all have one element in common: supple, exotic leather. Lately, however, the accessories attaining cult status also employ unconventional ingredients, which often have humble origins. And while labels are now largely experimenting with the likes of PVC, canvas and nylon, there is one other material that even the most storied fashion houses have their sights set on: raffia. A natural fibre derived from dry palm leaves, raffia is increasingly being used by heavyweight, high-street and home-grown names to create basket-like bags that were once synonymous with summer but are now becoming a year-round staple.

From the many iterations available to the factors fuelling their rise, here's everything you need to know about the influencer-approved item that's swiftly cementing its presence across countless collections and closets.

THE ORIGINS

The earliest versions of woven bags can be traced back to the 1960s—it was around this time that Jane Birkin famously discovered them. What was actually a fisherman's basket procured from a small village in Portugal was soon seen by the actor-singer's side almost everywhere she went—she's known to have carried it to the airport and to the market too. Over the last few decades, her trademark accessory has been routinely reimagined, but there's something that sets the current offerings apart and makes them more popular than their predecessors. "Raffia bags have been around for a while. They were mostly used as picnic baskets or beach bags, but today they've gained popularity because designers and weavers are working hand in hand to create disruptive shapes with vibrant colours," says Sonam Shah, Co-founder of Straw, a conscious platform that houses the works of artisans and brands from across the globe.

THE UPGRADES

There's an abundance of evidence that supports Shah's point of view. Sift through Instagram and it won't be long before you're acquainted with the most sought-after renditions of raffia bags. Spanish label Loewe serves up both classic and colourful options complete with leather trimmings and a supersized logo. For those who are open to shifting shapes, Saint Laurent has a small circular version while Anya Hindmarch offers ones inspired by the silhouettes of marine animals. If you're looking for something roomy but not rigid, Prada makes a flexible and foldable iteration that's

suited to someone who likes to travel light. And closer home, local labels are also delivering their take on the style. Nomada is a great source for cool raffia clutches, Rara Avis has bucket bags bearing happy hues and fun finishing touches like tassels. The variety also increases the compatibility of these bags which now feel as at home in a busy city as they do on far-flung shores. Fashion insiders have been spotted teaming them with everything from sharply tailored separates to breezy summer dresses and billowing kaftans. "Raffia bags are no longer solely seen as summer bags. We've seen people carrying them during the day, for a night out and for festive occasions too," adds Shah.

THE ECO-CONSCIOUS EDGE

Increased versatility isn't the only reason that raffia bags are raking in a large number of followers. Their ubiquity can also be credited to consumers' growing appetite for eco-conscious experiments. Raffia, which is biodegradable and durable, is very welcome in a world that's slowly but steadily inching towards alternative materials that are kind to the environment. "The reason behind the sudden popularity of raffia bags and accessories is an increased awareness about the advantages of using natural materials," says Rara Avis's Sonal Verma, who has long worked with raffia to create bags and belts. Sanaa Ruia, Co-founder of accessory label Nomada, attests to this shift in perspective. "The fashion industry is moving towards adopting a more conscious approach in terms of practices as well as design. People now know what goes into the products they buy, and they want pieces that are made from ethically-sourced materials," adds Ruia, highlighting why raffia is likely to continue forging the foundation of many accessories in the future.



Raffia totes are great hold-alls. Above: Versions from Anya Hindmarch, Loewe and Nomada. Left: Influencers Fleur Raffan and Milda Gud, sport this style. Opposite page: Etro, Resort 2023

ON THE HOME FRONT

Natural materials lend a rustic and relaxed touch to any room

1. When it comes to baskets that double up as wall decor, more is merrier
2. Keep the contents of your coffee table tidy with a tray
3. Count on patterned pouffes in this material to add character



Be kind, unwind

Nostalgic prints, comfortable fabrics, and detailing—this new wave of lounge and resort wear labels takes pride in slow living, says Rujuta Vaidya



Above, from left: Looks from Studio Rigu and Kardo. Opposite page: SAND by Shirin

For a long time, the last word in fashion came from the West. But as we untangle our minds from the grips of seasonality and virality, new design voices in the country emerge who are kinder to the environment and our bodies. Life after the lockdowns has made us reflect on the impositions we tied ourselves to. Black for cocktail dressing, casuals on weekends and formals through the week are now dictums of a bygone time. Several creatives made the choice to continue to work remotely with tweaks to their lifestyles, and as more workplaces embrace a hybrid system there's opportunity to experiment with your wardrobe. Catch up for a work meeting in a printed co-ord set or step out for a culture-filled art walk in the city evening in a breezy kaftan. A relaxed jumpsuit paired with smart accessories will take you from that co-working space to your weekend getaway. The point is to feel at ease with one's evolving style, and these labels are acing the game.

THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

Riya Gupta's label Studio Rigu (@studiorigu) affirms this thought. "We strive to bring confidence and happiness to women's wardrobes through the artful use of colour and original prints. Each size-inclusive collection is designed with real women

in mind and is made to fit, function and feel good so that women can use them as a tool to feel like the best version of themselves each day." Studio Rigu's separates are fashioned out of vegan silk which take the form of draped togas, slouchy suits and dramatic kaftan tops dyed in rich hues.

There's a sense of multifacetedness to this clothing. Like the wearers themselves, they take on many forms. At Ituvana (@ituvana) the design philosophy stems from the innate acceptance of the fact that energy can flow from one to another. Lylah Shaw's background in performing arts inspires her sense of construction. "The majority of our silhouettes are of one size, versatile and can be styled in different ways, encouraging more longevity. Our signature tie-up dhoti pants can also be worn as a dress and styled endlessly," says the founder, who has previously worked with Donna Karan. Sari dresses, kaftan dresses and pyjama sets from the label are perfect for a relaxed vacation with a hint of celebration.

"With an effortlessly inclusive design language, we've built a niche for women of all shapes and sizes to recognise the brand as their own," says Twinkle Hanspal (@twinklehanspal), whose eponymous brand of elevated separates are perfect for a poolside mehendi or an anniversary dinner.

MINDFULLY YOURS

As we collectively move towards conscious choices with our wardrobes, the fabrics that make our clothing play an important role. Shirin Mann's >

"The majority of our silhouettes are of one size, versatile and can be styled in different ways..."

— **LYLAH SHAW, ITUVANA**



Above, from left:
Looks from Khajoor
and Itr

SAND (which stands for Such A Nice Day, (@sand_byshirin)) plays with ecological textiles made from aloe vera, eucalyptus, rose, soybean protein and banana, along with organic linens, cottons and luxe jerseys. The versatility of these fabrics keeps wearers cool in sweltering weather and snug as the mercury drops. “India is one of the largest exporters of finished linen, but it isn’t consumed enough domestically. We wanted to change that perspective, educate the consumers about its benefits and replace the high usage of polyester. I also wanted to showcase how beautifully it falls on our bodies.” Mann highlights the Capri dress, the Budapest set and the Florida dress from SAND’s latest collection ‘Eunio’ as bestsellers.

For Khyati Pande of Itr (@itr_by_khyatipande), the idea of clothing is one with creating comfort in chaos. “The basic building blocks of Itr’s minimal handcrafted wardrobe essentials are rooted towards creating garments that are unbiased—in seasons, trends or time. What might often seem simple has indeed had a long journey through many humble human hands and is crafted with caring patience and attention to detail. It is often perceived that slow or sustainable clothing comes with a heavy price tag, but we aim to make owning an impeccably finished garment crafted from a handmade fabric more approachable.” The label’s languid silhouettes transport you to a mindspace of ease. From strappy lace tops to



voluminous skirts, each piece reminds you of an endless summer wardrobe. As Pande puts it, these are clothes that “hug you back”.

Muskan Soni of Khajoor (@khajoor.studio) works with artisanal communities across the landscape of India to come up with unique prints in unconventional hues. “While being an artisanal luxury clothing brand exploring the warm emotions behind our brand name, what sets Khajoor apart is the fact that we are always focusing on our core values—being considerate of the environment we live in and working with different craft communities all over India. From using indigenous raw materials to eco-friendly dyeing, we try our best to use sustainable raw materials, processes and alternatives that live in harmony with nature,” she says. “From our previous collections, we have received a lot of love for our sweaters, vests and scarves, which are naturally dyed from elements like onion skins and walnut bark and hand-knitted by the women artisans of Himachal Pradesh. From our new summer collection ‘Bageecha’, our dresses and co-ord sets are hot sellers, with fresh, vibrant hand-block prints on vegan silk.”

If you’re on the lookout for resort wear that transcends gender, Rikki Kher’s Kardo (@thisiskardo) fits the bill. The perfect answer to modern India resort wear, Kardo’s sets channel effortless cool like none other. What sets them apart? “We were one of the first brands to reimagine traditional Indian textiles in contemporary ways and take that to the international market. We don’t follow trends; we do things our way, work really hard and stay true to our desire to make our work transparent by celebrating the craftspeople and artisans who are involved in our clothing.”

Who run the world?

As activewear becomes an increasingly important category in the country, running this business means quick learning. Rujuta Vaidya speaks to the founders of four labels on what it means to hit the ground running



FASHION

Preventive healthcare, personalised fitness programmes, mental health days—the pandemic whipped the lax into taking their health seriously. Simultaneously rose the need to dress oneself on Zoom for a group class. Yoga pants got more creative, sports bras needed to be more functional and the boring dark hues of scholastic gym wear just had to go. But there was more to it than just a passing trend. VCs and e-commerce platforms saw an opportunity in this growing segment. Nykaa Fashion launched Nykd while BlissClub raised \$15 million in funding. Athletic clothing is big business and women are taking over. The trailblazers who are committed to the cause of raising the bar of activewear in India tell us more.

START ANYWHERE

“My life really transformed when movement and fitness became a part of my journey and I began to believe in the power of it, which drove me to want to launch a brand that could do the same for women. So everything we do, whether it’s marketing on-ground, the content on social media, the women that we work with—our entire goal is to introduce women to either a new form of movement or introduce women to other like-minded women. We wish to build a community so they have a place that they can feel safe, that they can fall in love with,” says Aneesha Labroo of Kica (@kicaactive), explaining the premise behind delving into activewear with her brand. After returning from the US in 2016, starting Kica was a no-brainer for her.

Ria Mittal (20) and Shreya Mittal (18) founded Cava (@cava_athleisure) as a hobby. As a student of fashion management, Ria took up the challenge of starting a business in the midst of the pandemic with her sibling in tow. “The fact that the parent organisation has been in the garment export business for over 25 years gives us leverage to the best contacts of suppliers and a technical know-how of the production and manufacturing process,” she says. Cava’s co-ord sets in Gen-Z-favourite browns, beiges and highlighter hues are Instagram hits that are favoured by the likes of actors Kiara Advani and Tara Sutaria.

“We get feedback like ‘Once I wear a pair of Cava joggers, I’m a customer for life’ and ‘We wait for our joggers to come back from the wash and literally wear them every second day.’” Reviews matter, and the young entrepreneurs at Cava are all about soaking it in. “The validation from customers about our products and the kind of demand we have seen in this market reassured



A look from Ochre. Opposite page: Kica

us of being on the right track. From small milestones like building our own website, setting up a team and manufacturing facility and being on-boarded on multiple marketplaces, to the big ones—like having celebrities wear and endorse our products—we are so grateful for it all.”

LIVE AND LEARN

To be young and in charge is not always taken well. For the co-founders at Cava, getting their orders fulfilled was a task. “Being two young sisters in a very traditional industry that has been following the same practices of manufacturing and sourcing for years was not easy. For suppliers and vendors to take us seriously, following up on deadlines and deliveries on time was challenging,” says Ria. Kanupriya Mundhra, Co-founder and COO, Aastey (@liveaastey) shares that no success is too small. “One milestone was when we received our first set of sample products from vendors. The other was when we finally had the Aastey Facebook page, which was stuck for months due to a technical issue. We were proud of pulling it off without any previous experience.”

“Our entire goal is to introduce women to either a new form of movement or introduce women to other like-minded women”

- ANEESHA LABROO, KICA



From Left: Looks from Aastey and Cava



Starting businesses in an uncertain environment is a risk, but it also offers learnings that no classroom can teach. “The second wave of Covid hit early this year when we were growing and about to launch our first unisex capsule. We were pretty disheartened with the market, with the increased turnaround time with vendors, and with everything else that impacted the operational aspect of our business during the peak of the pandemic. However, the tremendous response to our capsule launch, despite massive blockers and a slight delay, was a turning point in our journey. It humbled us, taught us how to believe in what we’re building, and never to underestimate the power of planning,” says Radhika Shanker, co-founder of Ochre (@ochreathletica).

YOU BETTER WERK IT

Performance wear needs to come through with quality. Unlike picking a delicate crystal slip for a party or buying a pair of earrings, athletic fashion has to be primarily utilitarian. Aditi Kakkar, Co-founder of Ochre, adds to that thought: “We are a small-batch label. We produce lower quantities and are more mindful towards our production processes. One thing I’ve noticed in my two decades of being an athlete is that the quality of activewear available in the market is very feeble. I have found myself purchasing new tights every six months as they couldn’t live up to my training

lifestyle. On the contrary, my Ochre tights are still in good condition, even after having used them for over a year. Our tights are squat-proof (not see-through and flimsy), high-waist and body-hugging.” “The road to success is not without its hurdles. Even I would think twice before switching over to a new brand, as activewear is quite technical and no two pairs of tights are alike. As a smaller and newer brand, we have a lower stock threshold, making our costs higher and margins lower. Many times, we are not able to compete with bigger brands and their pricing model whilst justifying our quality and lasting nature,” she shares.

At Aastey, product-centricity takes precedence over trends. “We design these products after months of research on the problems that women face in their everyday lives. So whether it is the inconvenience of tailoring or carrying a bag, we address it, and that’s why our tribe loves it,” Jeevika Tyagi, its Co-founder and CEO, tells us. “We have created fabrics like Aastey flex and Aastey lux. The former combines recycled polyester and spandex, while the latter is organically sourced cotton. We have up to sixteen sizes and lengths for our gender-fluid jacket and leggings. In the athleisure space, size inclusivity is long overdue. As a brand, Aastey is here to solve this problem because everyone deserves to feel beautiful regardless of their height or size.”

While the hustle to the top is never easy, these entrepreneurs and their growing businesses show that meeting your goals on your terms is a reward that can’t be substituted. ☑

“We design these products after months of research on the problems that women face in their everyday lives”

— JEEVIKA TYAGI, AASTEY

TURNING POINT



PHOTOGRAPHED BY: Hashim Badani

WHY WE TRAVEL

On a rare, grey, rainy day in Ladakh, photographer and intrepid traveller Hashim Badani came across an unusual sight: an in-progress Polo match. With the majestic Karakoram range as a surreal backdrop, glossy horses nimbly sped across the field, their lithe riders swinging their mallets in rhythmic harmony. It is believed that Polo, the sport beloved by royalty, was brought to Ladakh in the 17th century by King Jamyang Namgyal (whose second wife was a Balti princess) and continues to this day with the support of a few amateur polo clubs.

While Ladakh is known for many things, including its breathtaking natural landscape, the knowledge of Polo as a sport in the mountain region serves to highlight why we all travel. Even for the most jaded, it is the excitement of discovery, the opening of the mind, the joy of new experiences that really underscores the beauty which exploring the world brings. The past two years only heightened this almost primal need for adventure within us all. Now, as we stamp our passports, pack our bags and create itineraries for places near and far, we go forth with a newfound gratitude for the ability to be able to see more of our country and this world. After all, what could be more thrilling than the promise of new adventures?

Bon voyage!

