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CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

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SENIOR VISUALISER  
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CA VIJAY GOSAIN

GENERAL MANAGER (ADMIN)  
AJITH KUMAR LR

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For correspondence and advertising:  
504-505, 5th Floor, Sheeta House  
Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019  
Tel: 011 41029079, 41029979  
Email: publications@gillindia.com

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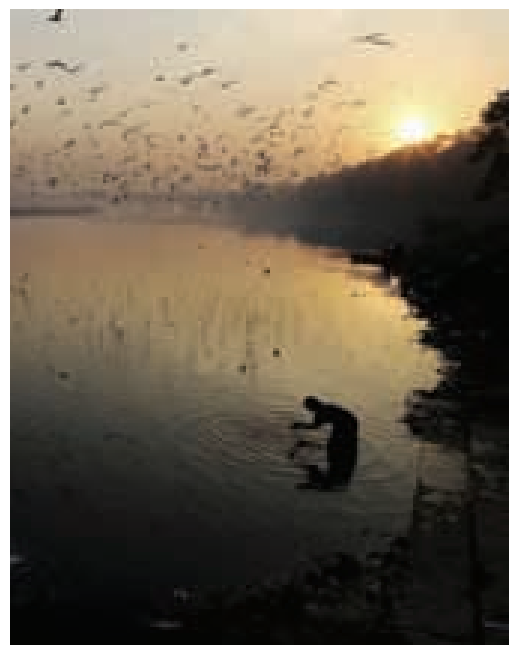
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**Lufthansa**

# CULTURAL POTPOURRI



In conversation with Dr. Sumita Misra,  
Principal Secretary Tourism, Haryana, on  
Surajkund Mela 2016

## TT BUREAU

### **Q. Please tell us about the new attraction at the Surajkund International Craft Mela – 2016?**

The Surajkund International Crafts Mela offers a lifetime experience where one can explore an exquisite mix of thatched huts, folksongs, flamboyant colours, ornate crafts and aroma of different cuisines.

The 30<sup>th</sup> edition of the Mela is to be held from 1st to 15th February, 2016, and it will showcase the heritage crafts of India in a large scale and also make an effort to reach out to the craftspersons from far flung areas of the country. In addition to this, there will also be a variety of cultural programmes in the evening and day performances. Efforts are being made to introduce hot air balloon rides during the forthcoming Mela.

Also the existing infrastructure is being given a facelift and new facilities will be added for the convenience of visitors and craftspersons. More safety related steps are also being undertaken with special emphasis on disaster management. Installation of high-tech CCTV cameras and superior fire-fighting equipment is in progress. As part of the Swacch Bharat campaign, high standards of cleanliness will be maintained in the Mela premises.





**Q. What are the plans for promotion of the event? How much foot fall do you expect at the Surajkund International Craft Mela - 2016?**

A comprehensive media plan has been chalked out in advance to promote the Mela through every possible medium. Extensive publicity of the mega event is done through FM radio channels, TV commercials, Digital Screens at Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport and commercial hubs of Delhi, inside Delhi Metro trains, SMS campaign and Social Media, besides advertising in print media.

In 2015, the highest ever footfall of 12.00 lakh visitors including 1.60 lakh foreigners was recorded during the Mela. In 2016, we are confident to surpass this record, as new attractions are being added, which will draw more visitors to the Mela.

**Q. Please highlight the importance of Theme State & Partner Nation?**

The concept of Theme State was envisioned broadly with a view to promote art, craft and cuisine of every state of India with special focus being on one particular State every year. It is for the first time since its formation as a separate state that Telangana will be participating as the Theme State in the Surajkund Mela-2016.

Since 2006, foreign countries started showing interest to showcase their culture, crafts and cuisine in the Mela. So this was just the beginning of an international branding for the Mela. A record number of 20 countries participated in the 29th Surajkund International Crafts Mela-2015 and Lebanon took part as the Partner Nation.



# Q&A

## ART OF GIFTING

In conversation with  
**Kushal Agrawal**

Co-Founder, Giftxoxo.com, Bengaluru

**Q. How did the concept of Giftxoxo come into being?**

Giftxoxo, three years back spotted a big gap in the gifting ecosystem. People were fed up of the regular products which were exchanged as gifts. These gifts were either recycled and passed on or remained unused for a long period. The whole concept of gifting was taking a hit as the basic premise behind gifting was to delight the receiver and it was not happening. Then we came up with the concept of Experiences.

Experiences are conceptualised with a basic thought that everyone wants their special occasions like anniversary, birthday, first date etc. to be an unforgettable affair and pine for an exclusive treatment. People want to try different things like flying a plane, becoming a DJ, learning cocktail mixing, Golfing, horse riding etc. but to do these things they have to invest so much time and energy to arrange every bit of it and still get unsatisfactory results. There were also no means of gifting these activities to anyone. We solved this problem through our concept of Experiences and today Giftxoxo has the largest collection of such extraordinary Experiences not found anywhere else in India.

Each Experience is hand-picked from the best and most trusted brands. Curation of Experiences is done very meticulously with lot of background research and analysis. Various factors like place prominence, people perception, safety, uniqueness, exclusivity, value for money etc. are taken into consideration while creating Experiences. Team Giftxoxo keeps on hunting for interesting places in your city, from restaurants to flight simulators, from eccentric to opulent, and work with them to

create experiences that are too incredible to forget.

We say that products would be forgotten but memories will stay forever so "Gift Memories, Not Things"

**Q. As of now, which segment of Giftxoxo is the most popular?**

We have wide variety of Experiences spreading across categories and cities. In Bangalore most popular is Microlight plane flying Experience, In Mumbai people love the Dine on a Yacht Experiences whereas in Delhi people love the Limo ride coupled with the dinner in 5 star hotels. Overall Gourmet and Adventure segments are the one which are very popular. Our corporate clients go for Getaways and wellness primarily.

**Q. What is the reach of Giftxoxo's customer base?**

With its unique proposition of Experiences, the company has delighted more than 650+ corporate clients and 1 lac+ B2C customers through its portfolio of more than 2000 amazing Experiences spread across India. We try to reach out to the mass through different media. Our corporate clients use it for various functions like Rewards and Recognition, Loyalty rewards, Long services awards, trade schemes etc. They really appreciate it as there is newness in the concept and we also offer choice with it as we gift it in a choice box format with 8-10 experiences for users to choose any one of them. Now the onus of selection is shifted to the receiver from the gift giver. Similarly our B2C customers use it for various occasions like Friend's wedding, Anniversary, Rakhi etc.





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City	Date	Time	Venue
Kolkata	18 January, Monday	10:00 - 14:00	The Oberoi
Delhi	19 January, Tuesday	10:00 - 16:00	Le Meridien
Hyderabad	21 January, Thursday	10:00 - 14:00	The Park Hyatt
Mumbai	22 January, Friday	10:00 - 16:00	The Palladium

# Q&A

## TRAVEL SOLUTIONS

In conversation with  
**Meenu Sachdeva**

Co-Founder & Managing Director  
of TI Infotech



### **Q. Tell us something about your organisation?**

TI Infotech Pvt Ltd is a premier travel technology company with a focussed approach on delivering quality services. The company is promoted by a dynamic team of highly skilled and experienced professionals having an extensive experience in providing customised technology solutions across various business verticals. The company has made inroads in the field of customised solutions for the travel and tourism domain, ERP implementation and support, custom application development, IT consulting and e-commerce solutions. Being a CMMi level 3 Appraised company, we follow 'A Total Solution Approach' in providing technology solutions to our global clients.

### **Q. When talking about technology solutions for travel and tourism, how has TI Infotech worked towards it?**

TI Infotech always focusses on highly qualitative, timely delivered and cost-effective solutions. TI's portfolio of solution offerings include Travel Assist – a comprehensive destination

management software that enables an organisation to efficiently manage complete tour cycle from enquiry to product planning to profitable operations to accounting to MIS suite for all levels of business and Travel Cloud Suite - a real time web based booking engine with transaction capability, real time inventory with instant pricing, booking status and confirmation online. Our world class comprehensive software solutions and support services to our global clients gives them a resilient reason to keep coming back to us.

### **Q. Where do you think our country stands in terms of understanding digital media?**

The colossal Indian market is changing fast and India is becoming more digitally connected. The percentage of Indian consumers going online and on mobile are increasing. People spend more time online, internet accessibility is increasing and the mobile usage is intensifying. Today, the digital media has taken a game-changing upgrade over the traditional media. India has almost crossed the transition phase of analogue media over digital media platform. Owing to digital platform, I understand my target audience much better and my market segmentation is ever more precise than before.

### **Q. Please share your latest achievements.**

We have recently been awarded with 'Best Technology Solution Provider' and 'Best Software Solution Provider' titles. Our endeavor is always to embrace latest technologies which can bring in value proposition to our existing and prospective clients.

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## SLOVENIA'S CAPITAL SET TO WELCOME INTERCONTINENTAL® LJUBLJANA

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), one of the world's leading hotel companies together with Delta Holding announced the signing of InterContinental Ljubljana. Opening in 2017, the 165-room hotel will operate under a management agreement with IHG, representing the continuation of a long-term partnership between the two companies that was first established in 2007. Delta Holding and IHG also have a management agreement in place for Crowne Plaza Belgrade.

Hylko Versteeg, Director of Development, Southern Europe, IHG said: "We're thrilled to have signed InterContinental Ljubljana in Slovenia which is a key city for us. InterContinental Hotels & Resorts is an international brand that is dedicated to providing diverse and enriching experiences for guests. The brand has seen great momentum across Europe this year with InterContinental Ljubljana marking the fourth hotel signing as we continue our expansion across the region. We very much look forward to growing our partnership with Delta Holding and increasing our portfolio of quality brands in Slovenia."

Marija Desivojević Cvetkovic, Vice President of Strategy and Development, Delta Holding said: "Delta cooperates with the world's leading companies and our relationship with IHG is of great importance to our company. This InterContinental hotel, along with IHG's worldwide reputation will provide guests with the highest quality rooms, leisure facilities and restaurants served by the best people offering world class service. We're confident this fantastic hotel will be the perfect choice for international and domestic travellers visiting Slovenia."



## HOMO NALEDI EXPECTED TO BOOST TOURISM

Homo Naledi was unveiled as a brand new species unearthed from the largest deposit of fossils ever found on the African continent. Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom recently announced that government has allocated R22 million for the renovation of Maropeng, the Visitor's Centre at the Cradle of Humankind, where the fossils were discovered.

"It is development of sites like this that will distinguish us from other countries and put us on the map," said Minister Hanekom when he talked to one of South Africa's leading radio stations, Talk Radio 702's John Robbie.

In addition to the Visitor centre, Maropeng has a fully equipped conference centre, a 24-bedroom boutique hotel, several eateries and a bar, a Kiddies' Cave, and an outdoor amphitheatre that can seat up to 5,000 people. There is also affordable accommodation for students and tour groups at Hominid House. The Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site is one of eight South African World Heritage Sites. It is the world's richest hominin site, home to around 40 per cent of the world's human ancestor fossils.



## KTO CELEBRATES KOREAN NIGHT 2015

Two hundred members of New Delhi's travel trade and media converged at the Hyatt Regency hotel recently to celebrate South Korea at 'Korean Night 2015'. The highlight of the event was a performance called Jump, which amalgamates martial arts with dance choreography and comedy, making for an entertaining show.

Korea is going all out to showcase its young, hip side to the discerning Indian traveller through initiatives in the B2B and B2C space. The event was honoured by the presence of HE Cho Hyun, Ambassador of Republic of Korea to India, who addressed the evening along with Guldeep Sahani, President OTOAI. The key players of the travel fraternity such as TUI INDIA, Cox & Kings and Mercury Travels were also present at the event.

Byungsun Lee, Director Korea Tourism Organization says, "I've noticed a growing interest in Korea tourism from various parts of India. Korea is gradually moving to the top of the destination charts of new and potential destinations for the Indian traveller. Over the past five years, the number of Indian tourists to Korea has increased by more than 70 per cent. I am glad to announce that by the end of this year the total number of Indian travellers to Korea is expected to exceed 1,50,000 for the first time."





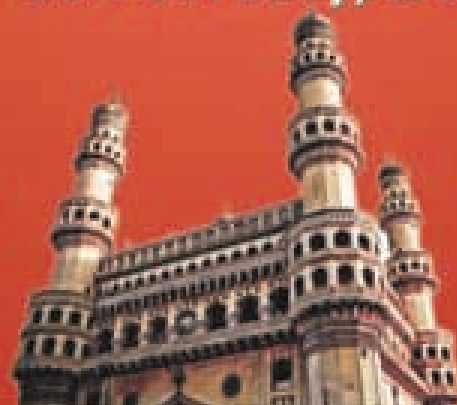


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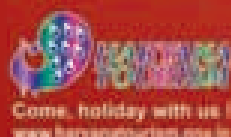


# Surajkund International Crafts Mela

Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana  
1-15 February, 2016



**A confluence of crafts, cultures & cuisines  
at Surajkund !**



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## THAILAND FETES RECORD 29 MILLIONTH VISITOR FOR 2015

The Thai tourism industry hit a new record with the arrival of the 29 millionth visitor today, surpassing the projected target of 28.8 million and still counting.

Elena Slobodian, from Russia Federation, the 29 millionth tourist, also dubbed 'Thailand's Luckiest Visitor', was greeted at Suvarnabhumi Airport with a warm welcoming ceremony by senior executives of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Airports of Thailand (AOT), the Immigration Bureau, Thai Airways International and True Corporation. Elena Slobodian was pleasantly surprised to receive two economy-class return tickets on Thai Airways from her original destination to Thailand, valid for one year; a voucher for a five-night stay at luxury accommodation; a mobile phone with a 4G sim-card and seven-day Internet usage for use during the trip; as well as the "Thailand's Luckiest Visitor" certificate from TAT.

Juthaporn Rerngronasa, Deputy Governor for International Marketing (Europe, Africa, Middle East and Americas), Tourism Authority of Thailand said, "This historic achievement is a tribute to all those who work in travel and tourism, all the way from the rank and file employees at the grassroots level up to the senior executives. Our visitors and guests visit Thailand because of their confidence in our ability to deliver quality services with impressive total experiences. And it is the hospitality of the Thai people who make this possible."

According to the preliminary figures released by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, Thailand welcomed a total of 28.3 million visitors during 1<sup>st</sup> January – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015, generating a tourism revenue of 1.357 trillion baht.



## MONACO GOVERNMENT TOURIST AND CONVENTION BUREAU HOSTS ROAD SHOWS IN MUMBAI AND DELHI

Monaco Government Tourist & Convention Bureau prime objective has been to carve out a niche market among the Indian travellers and further enhance its positioning as one of the world's most desirable destinations. In order to further educate the Indian travel trade, corporates about the destination and facilitate interaction with the delegation from Monaco and private sector, roadshow was organised respectively in Mumbai and Delhi.

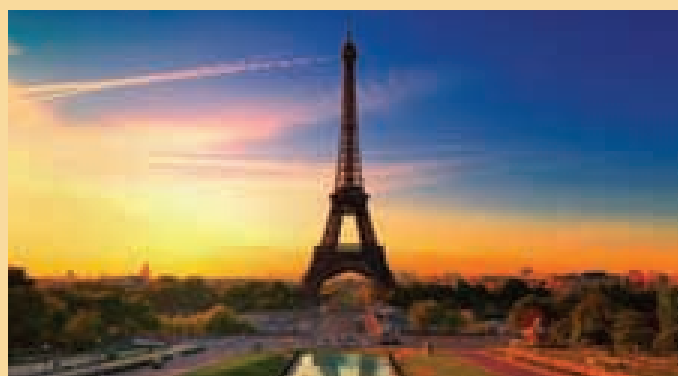
Guy Antognelli, Deputy General Manager, Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority said, "India is an important market for us with a prominent increase in the tourist arrivals in day-visitors, room-nights and MICE movements. India is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Asian market after Japan. The road show gives us the platform to interact with the right mix of audience looking for newer holiday destinations. Monaco has everything what a well informed high end Indian traveller aspires for. The picturesque views, romantic abundance, and stupendous landscapes, it offers magnificent holiday options for the discerning Indian traveller."



## AMWAY ORGANISES INCENTIVE TRIP TO FRANCE

A delegation of 2200 Amway India distributors visited France in the second week of December as part of an incentive movement organised by the multinational company. The CEO of Amway India and the Regional President also formed part of the group. Members of the delegation visited Paris from 14-17 December and a group of 150 visited Nice in the Riviera before the Parisian sojourn.

A group of top performing Amway distributors enjoyed a stay in Nice in the Riviera before visiting Paris. This group of 150 visitors were accommodated at the Hyatt and had the opportunity to enjoy the city and its environs. A gala dinner was organised at Prince Rainier's private car museum in Monaco which was a first for an Indian incentive.



## TOURISM FIJI AND FIJI AIRWAYS ORGANISES FAM TRIP

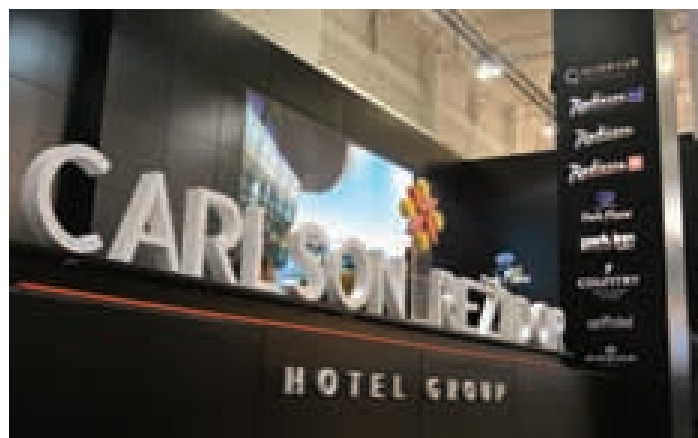


Tourism Fiji and Fiji Airways hosted eight travel agents, from five different cities, for a familiarisation trip, to Fiji from 7<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2015. The group travelled to different regions and islands in Fiji and stayed at properties popular in the Indian market. Apart from site inspections, the itinerary included various cultural activities and experiences that set Fiji apart from other beach destinations.

## CATCH THE SEASON WITH CARLSON REZIDOR

Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, one of the world's largest and most dynamic hotel groups, is offering all travelers 25 per cent off Best Available Rates with the Catch the Season promotion. The Catch the Season booking period is from November 2, 2015, to January 31, 2016 and the promotion is applicable for participating Carlson Rezidor hotels across Asia Pacific. Stays have to be completed between November 2, 2015, and February 29, 2016.

"This is a great opportunity for business travellers to put themselves on the fast track to Club Carlson Elite status," said Sandy Russell, vice president, Commercial Operations, Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. "With Catch the Season, we have made it more rewarding than ever to choose Carlson Rezidor hotels. It's our way of thanking our loyal guests for their continued support and making their hectic travel schedules work harder for them."



## ITDC TAKES CLEAN INDIA DRIVE AT QUTUB MINAR

In line with Prime Minister's Clean India Initiative Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management (AIH&TM), a premier hospitality training institute under the HRD division of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), recently organised a cleanliness awareness campaign at Qutab Minar for domestic as well as foreign tourists. As a part of the awareness campaign, the students from AIH&TM enacted a Street play on the campaign's theme 'Clean India.'

Present on the occasion were Anup K Chatterji (GM-HRD and Principal AIH&TM), Divya Singh (Senior Manager-HRD), Pradeep Khanna (AM-HRD), Bharati Bajaj (AM-HRD), Rohit Sharma (AM-HRD), Saurabh Siddhu (Chef-HRD), Sapna Kaintura (AM-HRD), and others. The officials of ITDC also took a pledge along with the students of Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management and the tourists present at the monument to keep Qutab Minar premise clean and hygienic. Stress was given to educate the tourists and citizens to keep the premise of this historical monument clean.

Speaking on the occasion Anup K Chatterji, GM-HRD, ITDC and Principal AIH&TM stated that "Qutab Minar is our adopted CSR monument under the aegis of Centre's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and with continuous support and guidance of Umang Narula, C&MD-ITDC and Piyush Tiwari, Dir (C&M) ITDC, we are proactively involved and committed to provide a clean environment at Qutub Minar."



## VISITFLANDERS CONCLUDES EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

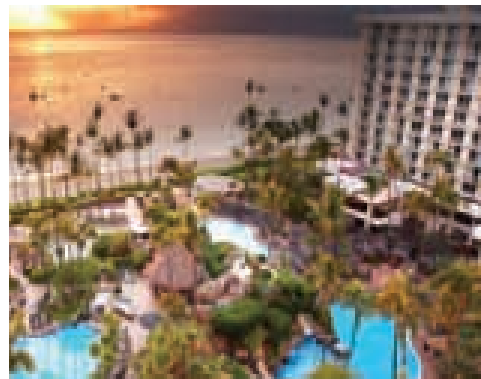
VISITFLANDERS, the tourism promotion organisation for the region of Flanders and Brussels (Belgium), organised a series of 'Fabulous Flanders' educational seminars for travel agents in Hyderabad, Chandigarh and Pune in December 2015. The objective of these seminars was to reach out to travel trade fraternity and showcase the new products and tourism attractions that Flanders and Brussels has on offer for Indian visitors.

Sunil Puri, Managing Director – Representative Office for Tourism Flanders and Brussels (Belgium) said, "Whether you're interested in Art and Design, History and Architecture, Beer, Fashion, Cycling, Chocolate and other culinary delights, or are looking for a romantic weekend Flanders has it all. Through the 'Fabulous Flanders' educational seminars, our intention was to reach out to our travel partners in these cities and thus introduce them to the various offerings of the destination which will further help them create personalized packages".

## STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST AND UBER ANNOUNCE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide and Uber recently announced a strategic partnership to offer travellers a unique way to earn rewards. Starwood Preferred Guest (SPG) members who ride with Uber, can earn Starpoints with every Uber ride, as part of the global partnership which was launched earlier this year in markets where Uber operates, including the United States, China, Brazil, Europe and now in India. Two new initiatives - SPG Uber Free Rides which offers free Uber rides to Starwood hotels & resorts guests and SPG Uber Ride & Dine, an exclusive campaign for Indian members, offers food and beverage discounts as well as cash credit.

"India is an excellent market to continue to promote this partnership with Uber. This innovative offer is just another way that Starwood is combining high tech and high touch to enhance our guests' travel experience," said Irene Lin, Vice President, Distribution, Loyalty & Partnerships, Asia Pacific, Starwood Hotels & Resorts. "The partnership has been well received among SPG members worldwide and I am sure it would be the same in India."



## VFS GLOBAL INAUGURATES LARGEST VISA APPLICATION CENTRE IN ASIA



*Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of Tourism and Culture along with Vinay Malhotra, COO, VFS Global and senior dignitaries inaugurate VFS Global's Visa Application Centre at Shivaji Stadium*

VFS Global is pleased to announce the inauguration of its new Visa Application Centre in New Delhi, India, recently. The centre was formally inaugurated by Ambassadors, High Commissioners and senior diplomats.

With a total of 153 counters, the centre is equipped to process in excess of 12,000 visa applications per day. Ensuring smooth movement, service, and monitoring of applications within a contiguous space, the centre sets a new standard for visa application centres globally in service innovation, design and security.

Speaking about the centre, Zubin Karkaria, CEO – Kuoni Group and CEO – VFS Global, said, "We are proud to launch services at our flagship centre, which is a representation of our efforts to provide best-in-class services to visa applicants in India and around the world. As we continue to witness a steady rise in travel to and from the country, we are confident of our efforts to ensure a seamless experience for travellers, by integrating technology and security into the visa application process."

## IATA JOINT BANK GUARANTEE SCHEME IS BACK

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) is happy to inform that the Joint Bank Guarantee Scheme has finally got the nod after intense perusal since the past two years. The Joint Bank Guarantee Scheme is pioneered by TAAI for over 20 years.

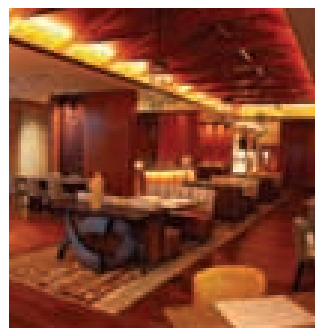
TAAI is now delighted to inform you that, PA Conference has approved the Joint Bank Guarantee effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. We are the first country in the world to offer Joint Bank Guarantee Scheme to our members as an alternate mode of financial security to IATA. This historic accomplishment has been termed as a big success.

## SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, BENGALURU DEBUTS THREE NEW RESTAURANTS

Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru recently launched its most-awaited 18<sup>th</sup> floor with fine food and beverage offerings at three new restaurants – Caprese, Saffron and Yatai, its Mediterranean, Indian and Japanese speciality restaurants, respectively.

Perfectly positioned to offer the experience of sky-high dining amidst beautiful views and the Bengaluru weather, level 18 of Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru is the ideal destination for fine food, conversation and a memorable culinary experience.

"Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru is to become the ideal destination for fine food and beverage from around the globe. With our five restaurants, we offer a host of global cuisines presented by our multicultural chefs, who assure an experience of authentic cuisine amidst beautiful views and a lively ambience," said Jens Corder, the hotel's General Manager.



## COX & KINGS WINS BIG AT WTA

Cox & Kings Ltd, one of the leading holidays and education travel groups having operations in 22 countries across continents, has won the World's Leading Luxury Tour Operator award at the World Travel Awards Finale held at the Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort in Morocco.

Peter Kerkar, Director, Cox & Kings stated, "Successfully operating a luxury tour requires unparalleled excellence, and this award testifies just that. We have been at the forefront of providing luxury holiday experiences to discerning class of travellers across the world, and this award further reinforces our commitment to delight the customer with our expertise and luxury offerings."

World Travel Awards President Graham Cooke said: "Each of our Grand Finale nominees has been recognised as a regional leader during our Grand Tour 2015, and this evening we were able to salute the best of the best – the elite of international tourism."

WTA was established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all sectors of the tourism industry.





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# ORIENTAL SPLENDOUR

In conversation with Richard Baker, Executive Vice President,  
Operations Director – Asia, Mandarin Oriental

TT BUREAU



## How important is the Indian market for the Mandarin Oriental Group?

India is a growing and an important market for the Group, it is an obvious gap in our current portfolio. We would love to have a hotel in this destination, but it takes time to find the right partners and location.

## What is the Asia footprint of the group including new openings?

Having grown from a well-respected Asian hotel company into a global brand, the Group now operates or has under development, 47 hotels representing 11,000 rooms in 25 countries, with 21 hotels in Asia, 10 in The Americas and 16 in Europe, Middle East and North Africa. In addition, the Group operates or has under development, 17 Residences at Mandarin Oriental connected to its properties. You can view all of our locations by visiting [www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com).

## What are the challenges of the Asia market?

There are challenges in every market in which we operate. Asia is a diverse area with many different regions, cultures and market conditions. It is therefore difficult to talk about it as a whole. It is very important that we work with excellent local partners in order to understand these varied conditions.

## APPOINTMENTS



**SUNIL GUPTA** has taken over as the Chief Executive Officer of WelcomHeritage Hotels. He brings along an experience of 30 years in the hospitality industry and is associated with ITC Hotels since 1995. He has served at various positions at ITC Hotels in the span of 20 years. For the past seven years, he was the General Manager at ITC Rajputana, Jaipur and after this rich tenure he has now been appointed as the CEO of WelcomHeritage Hotels.



**ABDUL NASIR AHMED SHAIKH** has been recently appointed as the General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan. With a Bachelor's degree in Hotel Management and Catering Operations, Shaikh comes with over 15 years of experience in the hospitality sector. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Chakan Pune, he was the Director of Operations at Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre where he led the operations teams to drive sales and service to excellence.



**PARMEET SINGH NAYAR** has been appointed as the General Manager at Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi. With a broad spectrum of hospitality experience for over two decades, Nayar, has played a crucial role in operations, renovations, re-positioning and assisting in brand augmentation and expansion for many prestigious hotels. Nayar will be responsible for the entire hotel operations at Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi and lead the hotel to continually delight its guests.

## KERALA REGISTERS STEADY GROWTH OF EUROPEAN TOURISTS IN 2015

Tourist arrivals from Europe have registered a respectable 4.8 per cent increase until October despite Euro zone recovery losing steam in 2015. A total of 420,247 European travellers arrived in the state between January and October 2015 compared to 401,063 during 2014 amid many West European countries struggling to protect their economies in the aftermath of the Greek debt crisis and the downturn in China. More number of tourists continued to arrive in Kerala in 2014, even from countries like Italy, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Germany, whose less than expected economic growth is worrying financial analysts.

"Europe remains the number one traditional market for Kerala while we have been able to create strong markets in several countries abroad along with finding new ones," said state Tourism Minister AP Anilkumar.

"The tourism industry in our state, which has been built over the last many decades by the strong commitment of the governments, the participation of the common people and the lasting will of the private sector, will always strive harder to achieve higher growth," the Minister added.

The foreign tourist arrivals in the country are expected to register a significant growth this year in the backdrop of the economic slowdown in Europe and in many emerging economies. According to figures, the country has witnessed a growth of 4.5 per cent in foreign tourist arrivals between January and August 15 last year.



# CORPORATE CONNECT





# THE DISTINGUISHED LEADER

**Raj Rana**, CEO, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor, speaks to Today's Traveller about brand, commitment and more

## TT BUREAU

### How does effective leadership help in building the Carlson Rezidor brand in the region?

Strong brands and effective leadership have contributed to the pole position Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group enjoys in India today. Our leadership position has been built on the strength of our brands and talent in the company. Effective leadership is about having long term vision to appreciate the potential of a market. It is about having 'Staying Power' to overcome cyclical challenges and Team

Power' to execute the vision. Carlson Rezidor has benefited from stable leadership that has been steadfast in its vision and goals. I am confident we will continue to fortress our position and accelerate our growth.

An effective leader makes strategic choices to maximize shareholder value, striking a good balance between scale from incremental growth and quality assurance expected by guests. Leaders do many things all day but at the end of the day what matters is the quality of decisions one makes. Effective leaders have the ability to decipher the information, but when need be, are able to set aside the analytics and go with their gut because that is what differentiates one from someone who is making a decision on pure analytics. Well informed decision making yet relying on your experience and 'gut feel' comes with certain risk but taking balanced risk is essential for growth. Effective leaders have the courage to walk the extra mile to strike a deal and also have the courage to walk away from a deal that looks too good to be true; sometimes no deal is a better option.

Strategic decisions have to be executed but a leader cannot do it alone; as famously said by Helen Keller, "I know you alone can do it but you cannot do it alone." An effective leader surrounds oneself with talent. Caring for talent, bringing the team together, rallying them behind the vision, brings

strategy to life. Each and every employee including those at the shop floor level must understand the company's vision and his or her role in contributing to its achievement. Sharing this vision and articulating it to internal and external stakeholders is an important trait of an effective leader.

When I speak to newly hired management trainees in our organization, I often tell them they are being hired as managers, but that I expect each of them to be a leader. As they say Managers "make" other people do, Leaders make others "want" to do.

**What are the strengths that you bring to India after a successful stint overseas?**

I was born and brought up in India, it is where my roots are and I am very proud of that. All my schooling and initial years happened in India, then I was fortunate enough in 1991 to go abroad and learn the international ways of doing business. Now I am full circle back in India, which I consider a privilege as well as a bright spot in my career, as India presents the opportunity to contribute back not only to the business but also to the country I was born in.

What I learnt during my tenure overseas is that entrepreneurial spirit is essential, a good leader has to be a good business man; after all in the hotel business, owners put their trust in us for the assets worth billions of dollars. Good corporate governance can bring out the best of the entrepreneurial spirit by facilitating processes for efficiency and effectiveness. That said, I believe process should not come in the way of the progress and adaptability to the circumstances is essential.

Business is an important glue of the social fabric as it provides job opportunities, particularly in hotel industry where many jobs are at entry level. A hotel that operates on a street corner uplifts the area and its commerce and opens doors, not just for its guests but also for career aspiring youth.

I firmly believe the quality of



the partners you do business with and relationships based on win-win fundamentals is essential to building long term value. Business commercials have to be value enhancing for both parties. We in Carlson choose partners with common ideologies, and that has helped us endure testing times. The quality of relationship, be it with hotel owners, guest or employees is what brings them back!

**As CEO, South Asia, heading one of the world's largest and most dynamic Hotel Groups, how do you intend to keep the aggressive momentum in expansion plans and revenue growth for the region?**

Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group is one of the world's largest and most dynamic hotel groups and includes more than 1,370 hotels in operation and under development with footprint spanning 110 countries and territories. The Carlson Rezidor portfolio includes a powerful set of global brands: Quorvus Collection, Radisson Blu®, Radisson®, Radisson RED, Park Plaza®, Park Inn® by Radisson and Country Inns & Suites By CarlsonSM.

We are very optimistic about India's future because of the size of its economy and domestic customer driven consumption by its young population base. Our success in the country is reflected in our unprecedented growth

and development. We want to continue this momentum by expansion of our category-defining brands across Tier 1, Tier 2 and emerging Tier 3 markets. We intend to have a hotel in every major city in India, with landmark hotels in every state capital. We aspire to continue driving value to our owners who choose to invest in our brands. Our target is to have more than 170 hotels in operation and pipeline by 2020.

As part of our aggressive growth strategy in India, we have introduced two new brands, Quorvus Collection and Radisson Red. Quorvus Collection showcases expertly-curated modern luxury hotels that are inspired by the lifestyle of the contemporary global traveller, while Radisson Red is an upscale Lifestyle Select brand targeted at millennial-minded individuals.

We intend to continue our growth by way of management, selective franchising and conversions. The introduction of new business models and contracts has already yielded us new projects in strategic locations. On the strength of our relationships, we continue working with our existing partners and find new strategic partners to accelerate expansion of our footprint. We are confident maintaining close alignment with our owners' objectives and flexible approach respecting the business nuances of India will drive our success.

# SPANISH RETREAT

Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I, enjoys an iconic position in the city of Barcelona, as one of the most important leisure and business retreat

TT BUREAU

The Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I is set in 25,000 sq.m of land, with breathtaking 19<sup>th</sup> century gardens and unparalleled views of the stunning Barcelona skyline. This luxurious urban hotel provides a tranquil retreat in the heart of this celebrated Spanish city. With a central location on the prestigious Avenida Diagonal and excellent transport links as well as a shuttle service to city centre, the Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I excels as both an impressive hub for business and a memorable base for exploring Barcelona and wider Catalonia. On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I has started an extensive renovation program that will rejuvenate and upgrade the iconic property. This significant face-lift includes the hotel atrium, the lobby as well as all guest rooms.

Richmond Design Hospitality, the prestigious London design studio with great recognition and a wide set range of experiences in hotel design and decoration, are the designers who have been designated to convert the hotel into its new look and feel.

The hotel is however open throughout the refurbishment and continues to provide the same excellence of service with minimal impact to guests.

#### ACCOMMODATION

The Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I offers a choice of nine room types, ranging from quiet and spacious standard rooms to the unique Royal Suite Polo, which features a spacious living room – complete with grand piano – a Jacuzzi and stunning views across to the Royal Polo Club. The rooms are crafted for perfection, comfortable and elegant; they are specially crafted for pampering guests.

The hotel with its 394 double rooms and 38 exclusive suites has all been carefully designed to satisfy the guests' needs – every room benefits from plush bedding, a spacious bathroom,

fast internet access, individually controlled air conditioning, mini-bar and other thoughtful amenities included to create an atmosphere of understated elegance and serenity – ideal for business and relaxation alike.

#### DINING

Dining at The Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I is an experience like no other. The hotel provides some restaurants and bars which dish out sumptuous local and international cuisines, as well as delicious, perfectly mixed cocktails to please every palate.

The Terrace is nestled in a charming, ivy-clad pergola overlooking the hotel garden and pool and offers delicious drinks and an enticing selection of appetizers, tapas, salads and rice dishes, as well as fresh meat and fish cooked before your eyes on the restaurant's barbecue. It is only opened during spring/summer seasons. The Polo Restaurant on the other hand serves breakfast regularly and also offers sumptuous local and international lunch and dinner. For casual eating, Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I has the Lobby Bar, it serves a casual menu a la carte prepared with local ingredients and a large selection of beverages. The Pool Bar of the hotel is where guests can relax in an informal ambience.

Some of the salient features of the hotel are, 432 guestrooms, including the largest Royal Suite in town; convenience of having a privately owned Convention Centre Palau of Congresses de Catalonia linked to the Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I, with capacity up to 2,000 delegates; shuttle service to Barcelona city centre; free access to Fitness Centre, indoor and outside pools; executive Lounge offering a full range of VIP services; complimentary WIFI in all guestrooms and common areas; stunning private gardens offering outside marquees and 2 swimming pools venues; deluxe Spa and Fitness facilities by the unique Royal Polo Club Company.







# LUXURY RECREATED

In conversation with **Franck Sibille**, General Manager, Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I

**TT BUREAU**

**(Q) Is India an important market for Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I? Why?**

In general terms, India is likely to be one of the outbound countries with the most remarkable growth (annual increase of 10 per cent, that is, 21 million travels in 2016). Therefore "the growth potential is very high", states Franck Sibille, General Manager of the Hotel. And moreover we are seeing an increase in revenue in relation to MICE travel within the Indian market as the seasonality to which they travel relates to our low season therefore compensating and balancing our year round revenue

**(Q) What unique products and services do you offer for Indian leisure and luxury travellers?**

We mainly adapt our service to Indian Market with our food by adding Indian cuisine for breakfast and additional amenities such as kettles and two bottles of water in the room.

**(Q) What are the trends that you noticed in the preferences of Indian travellers visiting Spain?**

Leisure travel is not a product of luxury but rather considered a necessity to consolidate one's energy. The change in mindset is manifest in young India, a different attitude to travel and an enthusiasm for the business of travel. Furthermore, they have high visibility afforded to India by its economic success, the tourism industry's constant search for new destinations and to some extent, improvement in getting visa letter and better air connectivity within Europe - all this makes the future trends.







# Celebrating Visit China Year in India 2016

**Sanya, Hainan**

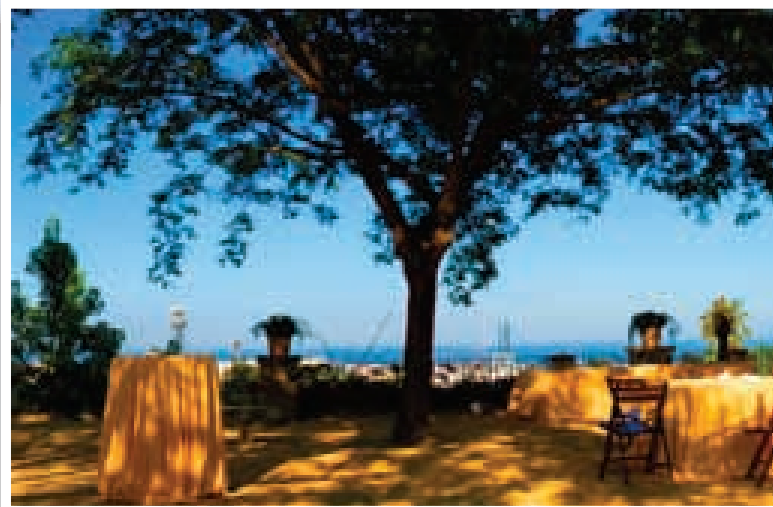


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# MEDITERRANEAN CHARM



Hotel Miramar Barcelona creates a lasting impression with its splendid location and luxurious disposition

#### TT BUREAU

The Hotel Miramar Barcelona is a blend of classicism and innovation. Built on the occasion of the Universal Exposition of 1929 held in Barcelona, this palace was inaugurated by King Alfonso XIII and looks back at a long history, which is told from his long stint as host of the Spanish Radio and Television broadcasting studies, from 1959 to 1983. The hotel conserves the original façade of the palace built on this site in 1929 and is located on the majestic mountain of Montjuïc, offering spectacular views over the city of Barcelona and the Mediterranean Sea. The hotel grounds offer unique retreats as the Patio de los Naranjos and the Garden of tipuanas which viewpoints allow contemplate the sea and the city.

Guests staying at the hotel are welcomed by the silence of the sea, leaving the cacophony of the city behind. Guests can opt to stay at the Gran Suite Mediterránea, which is exclusively designed for comfort and tranquillity. This is an extraordinary space with a private living room, a wide dressing room and a luxurious bathroom. The Suite Miramar Barcelona is yet another option for comfortable and luxurious stay. This wide suite includes an elegant living area designed to do some work or simply, enjoy some relaxed moments.

The Premium rooms are impeccably design. They are bright, spacious and comfortable, and guests will be amazed when they discover their private terrace with amazing views of Barcelona or the Mediterranean. Also, there are the deluxe rooms that are elegantly designed and having enough sunlight filling up the room.

Gastronomically, dining at the Miramar Barcelona is not just eating but an experience of a lifetime. Restaurant Forestier offers the opportunity to enjoy a delicious Mediterranean cuisine while enjoying the tranquil views of the gardens and the Mediterranean Sea. The Lobby bar is an excellent meeting point for visitors. It has large windows that offer magnificent views of the Forestier Gardens and the Mediterranean. The Pool Bar on the other hand offers snacks, tapas, salads and a wide variety of refreshments and delicious cocktails, while enjoying the natural environment of the outdoor swimming pool and its spectacular ocean views.

Hotel Miramar Barcelona also has beautiful settings available for weddings. These include, the private, landscaped area, kiosk-type structured, Azulete; the Patio De Los Naranjos, a historic patio with an authentic Mediterranean atmosphere; the Salón Mediterráneo, which is a transparent structure that offers views of the hotel's swimming pool; and the alluring, Patio De Las Tipuanas, located in the high ground of the hotel, it is an elegant, spacious garden with spectacular views of Barcelona and the Mediterranean. The patio is flanked by attractive South-American Rosewood trees (Tipuanas).

Along with this, the hotel also offers venues for MICE events.



# SCENIC LUXURY

In conversation with **Issac Mestre**, General Manager, Hotel Miramar Barcelona

TT BUREAU



## What products and services do you offer and how would it appeal to Indian travellers?

The Miramar Barcelona hotel inspires something very special, from its location on the mountain of Montjuïc, the views over the city and the Mediterranean Sea offer a framework of exceptional beauty and they are really amazing. It is the definition of tranquillity in a cosmopolitan city full of opportunities. It is an intimate and exquisitely delicate placid hotel just 10-minutes from the city centre.

A luxury and innovative hotel with an excellent service, The Miramar Barcelona is where guests can experience the delicious gastronomy of our cuisine in Forestier Restaurant or enjoy our wellness centre after a drink in the lobby bar with piano music during the week-end nights.

## India has emerged as a favourite MICE market for outbound movements for many countries. What is your take on this?

We have a small hotel, ideal for small/medium size meetings; we have six meeting rooms of different capacities and two of them especially suitable for special events such as, presentations, product launches, weddings and gala dinners/lunches.

Our new meeting room Mediterráneo, next to the swimming pool, has become the perfect venue suitable for all kind of events, especially weddings, and offers a spectacular view over the Mediterranean. We think the hotel could be perfect for the Indian Market because we are very flexible and we can adapt to their special requirements.

## How would you like to tap into the India outbound luxury segment?

In the MICE segment we can affirm that all our events are unique and have something special and different. We have had special events that took the hotel in exclusivity and customised completely. This kind of events are possible in a hotel with our features. They can combine all kind of activities here, indoors or outdoors, with stunning surroundings.



# SCENIC LUXURY

In conversation with **Isaac Mestre**, General Manager, Hotel Miramar Barcelona

TT BUREAU



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# Winters in Himachal!



Unforgettable  
*Himachal*



Winter is one of the best time to visit Himachal. The beauty is worth seeing in the snow-clad hills of Manali, Shimla, Mcleodganj, Dalhousie & Khajjiar. It's time to enjoy the exciting adventures here and fun-filled experiences.

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Home Stay facility is also available in Rural Areas of Himachal Pradesh

# LUXURY AT BARCELONA

The thriving Spanish city of Barcelona comes alive with the Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona, where guests can get a taste of luxury

## TT BUREAU

Located in the famous Passeig de Garcia shopping district, the Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona, is a personification of the city's vibrant culture and illustrious history. Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona, is housed in the re-development of an elegant mid-20th Century building. The hotel with its 120-rooms and suites offers highly stylised and spectacularly creative interiors in contemporary design by internationally renowned Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola. The hotel also offers exceptional services and facilities including an award-winning spa, innovative dining at BistrEau and two Michelin-starred dining at Moments.

Hotel Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona has also added 18 new



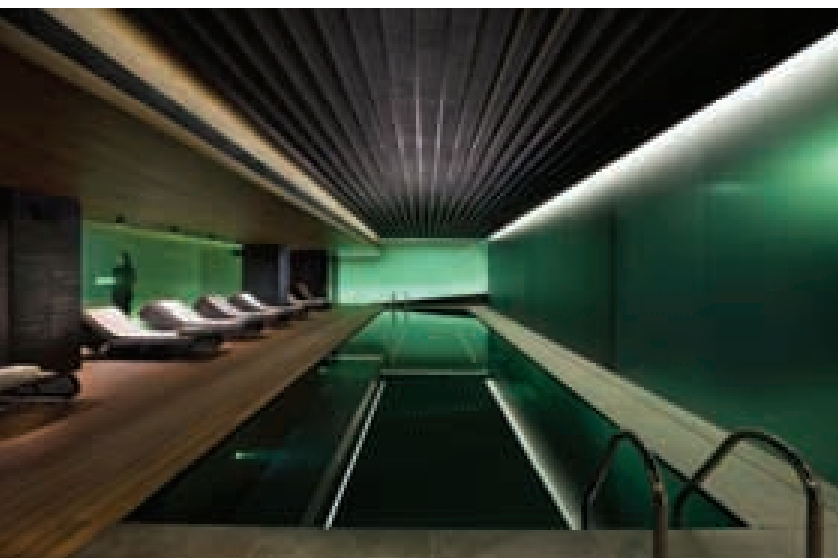
suites and four rooms since April, 2014. The luxurious suites enjoy the addition of balconies overlooking Passeig de Gràcia and the famous modernist landmark building from Gaudí, Casa Batlló, or the hotel's peaceful Mimosa garden. All rooms and suites are equipped with the latest in sophisticated technology and entertainment facilities that the Group is renowned for. The Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona Penthouse Suite measures an impressive 236sq.m; covering an extensive 236sq.m the suite includes two bedrooms, a living room, two outdoor terraces and an elegant dining room that seats eight, making it the perfect venue for a relaxed and intimate gathering with guests.

The hotel offers luxury in every detail, this includes a 24-hour personalised butler service for guests staying in all our suites – The Penthouse Suite, Mandarin Junior Suite, Barcelona Suite, Premier Terrace Suite, Premier Suite, Terrace Suite, Deluxe Suite and Boulevard Junior Suite.

The hotel offers some signature restaurants offering world cuisine. At Moments, the authentic Catalan restaurant, renowned chef Carme Ruscalleda, holder of seven Michelin stars, is the director, while the kitchen is headed by Ruscalleda's son, Raül Balam, who has worked with the chef for years. The restaurant







was awarded its second Michelin star during the hotel's third anniversary. Moments offers neo-traditional Catalan cuisine based on top-quality ingredients, presented in an innovative way. BistrEau by Chef of the Sea, Ángel León, is a seafood bistro located at the heart of the hotel, where you can become acquainted with the cuisine of one of the best chefs in Spain. This place is ideal for those who want to experiment and explore different textures and flavours; BistrEau by Ángel León boasts a splendid a la carte menu and also a quicker offer at lunchtime. The extensive wine list stands out for the Jerez wines that go perfectly with Ángel León's seafood cuisine. La Mesa, which can hold just 12 guests, is a unique and unforgettable gastronomic experience that has a tasting menu of 15 plates, chef Ángel León, takes diners on a journey of the sea, presenting dishes that will delight through their amazing and unique flavours, and stunning presentation.

At the Banker's Bar: Cocktails with a Twist, guests can enjoy a selection of unique cocktails. The design incorporates the original safes from the Banker's Bar pays homage to the history of the hotel's building, which formerly housed bank's vault as part



of the décor, creating an interesting and evocative atmosphere in which to enjoy classic cocktails. Mimosa: An Oasis in the City is a lush, green 660sq.m terrace, located within the hotel's courtyard, has been jointly designed by Patricia Urquiola and landscape designer Bet Figueras. From midday until dusk, guests can relax on the Mimosa terrace. In addition to these, there is also Terrat, rooftop terrace on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor which offers 360° panoramic views, offering guests a wide variety of beverages and a delicious selection of light bites, including summer-perfect cold dishes from Lima and Tokyo while enjoying the gentle Barcelona breeze.

The Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona, also allows guests to rejuvenate and relax through their spa. The 1,000sq.m Spa at Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona, offers a wide range of holistic rejuvenation and relaxation as well as luxurious water and heat therapies in a tranquil, meditative setting. Incorporating the most comprehensive range of wellness, beauty and massage treatments in Barcelona, the spa features life-enhancing signature programmes created exclusively by Mandarin Oriental.



# JAIPUR'S PREFERRED DESTINATION



Today's Traveller speaks to  
**Ashwani K Goela**, General Manager,  
Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road

## TT BUREAU

### Tell us about the MICE facilities?

Ideally located in close proximity to the airport and in the business hub of Sitapura, Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road, is the latest addition to the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). With 218 well-appointed rooms and suites complemented by 'power' breakfasts and uninterrupted internet connectivity, we promise the essence of warmth. Our five eclectic dining options including House of Han, The Chinese Restaurant coupled with service excellence, ensures an ideal culinary ambience. Our indoor and outdoor banquet venues offer flexible meeting options that can accommodate up to 1,200 guests. Spread across 19,500sq.ft, our expansive and pillarless banquet venues come with excellent service by our Crowne Meeting experts. We are proud recipient of "Best Upcoming Business Hotel in the City" by Today's Traveller Awards and four other industry awards within two months of trading.



### **What are the facilities that your hotel offers to Luxury and Leisure Travellers?**

Crowne Plaza Jaipur Tonk Road, offers exceptional facilities and services that address the needs of both leisure guests and business travellers.

The hotel offers the Sohum Spa, Gymnasium and The Lounge, along with a series of well-equipped business facilities and banquet hall of 19,500sq. ft for meeting, conference and events. Also, we have a personal butler service, which offers the ultimate in luxury for guests. We have concierge service for guests to get close to the culture, fine dining and shopping locales.

The hotel provides 24 hours in-room dining facilities. There is also a kid's corner with various activities available.

### **What are the options for corporate visitors to entertain their guests?**

Encapsulating a sense of warmth, our indoor and outdoor banquet venues offer flexible meeting options that can accommodate up to 1,200 guests. Spread across 19,500 sq.ft, our expansive and pillarless banquet venues are coupled with service excellence by our Crowne Meeting experts. Here we offer state-of-the-art technology, uninterrupted internet



connectivity and well-appointed break-out rooms. Comfortable space, customised themed menus and two-hour response time to cater to every business need, are reasons enough for guests to choose Crowne Plaza Jaipur.

To break away from a hectic routine, re-energise at our fully-equipped recreational facilities or explore popular tourist attractions like Choki Dhani and more.

### **How has been the year 2015 for Indian hospitality Industry as a whole?**

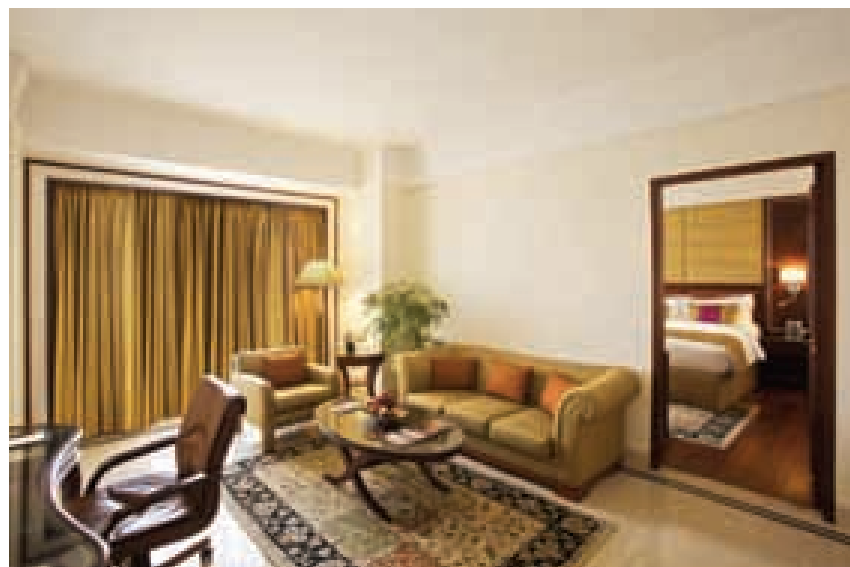
2015 was expected to be a revival year for the industry with international markets opening doors to Indian economy. With new central government's efforts to bring reforms to Indian business scenarios and extra focus towards tourism, the year has shown improvements for the Indian hospitality industry. eVisa facility has

now been extended to around 150 countries and this is a great initiative to improve inbound tourism in the country. Also, domestic and business travel did see improvements as well.

### **What will be high on the agenda for you in 2016? What kinds of developments and challenges are you expecting in 2016?**

The main agenda would be to establish the hotel as a preferred destination to meet and celebrate in Jaipur. Our focus would definitely remain on customers and guest satisfaction, we really cannot ignore the financial implication. GST is something that we are definitely looking at which will come as a big respite for all our customers and patrons. Apart from the same, we are also looking at improvised air connectivity from Southeast Asia and European nations to improve tourist traffic and international MICE for the city.

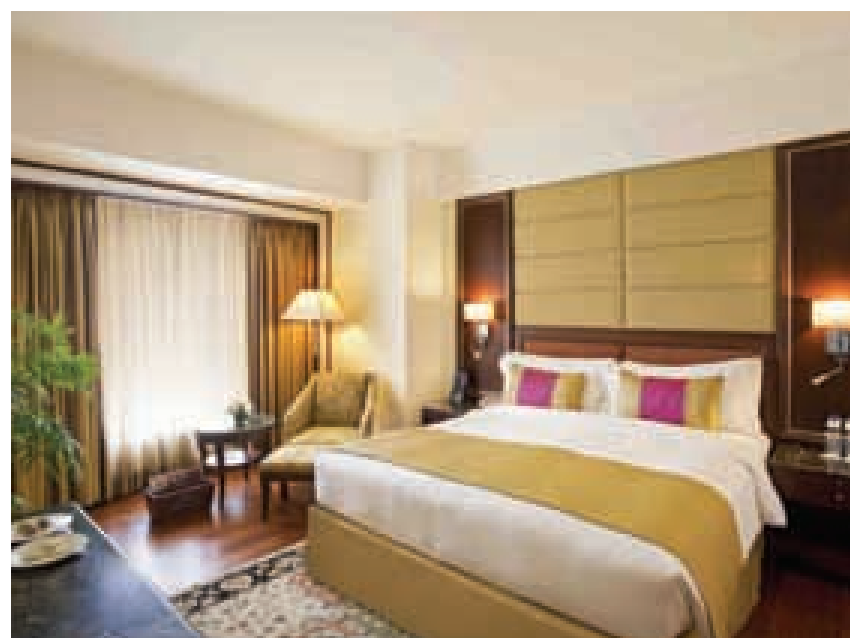




# URBAN LUXURY

Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place, is South Delhi's preferred destination for fine dining and luxurious stay

TT BUREAU



The Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place, is one of the premier five-star Hotels in South Delhi, boasting an ambiance of harmony and elegance. Overlooking the renowned Lotus Temple, the hotel stands as a true icon of leisure with international standards of hospitality. One of the most important reasons for the hotel's popularity is the dining experiences on the offering. Besides this, The Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place, also happens to be the perfect location for corporate lunches, meetings, and conferences. Here are the fine dining and staying options that are made available for guests in the Eros Hotel, Nehru Place, New Delhi.

The Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place, surpasses all quintessential expectations that are attributed to a five-star accommodation in Delhi. Keeping specific choices, budget and

expectation in mind, the hotel offers rooms that perfectly cater to both business and leisure travellers. A pleasant ambiance can be uniformly found throughout each of the 218-guest rooms and suites.

The Guests rooms are stylish, comfortable and air-conditioned, equipped with the latest in technology and ergonomic comfort for maximum convenience. Guests can stay connected with high-speed internet access at the large work desk, watch a movie on the LCD TV and refresh in the elegant bathroom with a range of luxurious amenities. Facilities include, daily local newspapers, four bottles of water on a per day basis, personal safe in each room, tea/ Coffee units in each room, Wi-Fi in the room on additional charge and DVD player. The King Executive Room and the Twin Executive Room are the hotel's top-of-the-line business facilities. Guests can browse



the internet with high-speed internet access at the large work desk, watch a movie on the LCD TV, relish a complimentary breakfast and refresh in the elegant bathroom with a range of luxury amenities. The Executive Suites have the option of King or Twin bed, separate living area with sofa sitting, wooden flooring and equipped with latest technology, access to the coveted Executive Lounge, offers various in-room luxurious amenities to make your stay a memorable one. The room also has high-speed internet access at the large work desk, an elegant bathroom with a range of luxury amenities and exclusive access to the Executive Lounge, with complimentary breakfast, canapés and evening cocktails.



## DINING

At Blooms, guests can enjoy a laid back sunny Sunday brunch at the lawns of Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place. The Winter Sunday brunch at the Blooms scores points for its fabulous poolside setting with lush greens soaking up the warmth of afternoon sun. Guests can enjoy a luxurious multi-cuisine spread of Indian, Chinese, Mediterranean and continental delicacies while partaking in an array of activities which are arranged for the entire family. Singh Sahib – the cuisine of undivided Punjab has the robust flavours of one of the most popular and eccentric cuisines around the world, bringing to you authentic Punjabi dishes from across the interior regions of Punjab, covering both India and Pakistan. Singh Sahib at Eros Hotel, New Delhi, Nehru Place takes you through the wondrous highways of Punjab, offering you spicy curries and piping hot tandoors. The restaurant also has live bands playing. At the Empress of China, guests can explore the finest of Chinese cuisines along with a selection of fine wines in the elegant and sophisticated ambience. The restaurant's signature includes, the Peking Duck, the Drunken Chicken and as well as the Beijing Duck. The restaurant has Dim Sum Lunch, Champagne and Dim Sum menu.

The hotel also has numerous facilities for MICE events, meetings, conferences and weddings.



# Q&A

## Re-defining MICE

In conversation with

## Santanu Guha Roy

General Manager, Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Alibaug



### What are the MICE activities offered by the Hotel? How does it help to improve the bottom line?

An off-site location, a cocktail evening followed by DJ or a Gala Dinner...does that sound familiar for a corporate off-site? If the format is the same across, does the location or a hotel make a difference? How does it generate ROI for the capital expended by it, in its human capital? Today, while technology has shrunk the world in size, it also has taken people away from each other. One to one interaction is limited and so is bonding – which is so important to have an effective team which performs better and generates profits for its organization.

It's for this very reason that corporates want every event to make a difference and want the overall experience to leave an indelible mark on the participants. The focus is on an experience rather than just holding an off-site. Radisson Blu Alibaug has events designed specifically to take care of the human aspects.

Spread over 16 acres, the resort has an ideal and peaceful setting to hold meetings and conferences, it also has plenty of open areas set amidst landscaped gardens, interspersed water bodies that set the perfect background to hold an outdoor event or team gathering. The settings are perfect to help teams spend time with each other and bond with each other.

We also have a new concept based on guest experiences and is aptly named, 'Experience Meetings.' Here we take care of the smallest detail of a conference wherein we have conference rooms which are not the traditional banquet / board meeting rooms, but rooms with bright colours and different seating set ups that make the delegates open up.

Experience Meetings provide a high-quality and unique product offering consistently across our hotel portfolio. Experience Meetings provide solution orientated services intended to exceed the expectations of our customers. Three core components of any experience meetings are –

- Brain Food – an innovative and responsible food and beverage solution developed by skilled chefs and nutritionists.
- Brain Box – a breakout room designed to elevate efficiency and stimulate creativity
- Free high-speed, wireless Internet access for all meeting delegates

There are games like board games that are provided to encourage participants to take a break and brain storm over a game. The food itself is specifically designed to make sure that the participants while being well fed are at the same time well nourished, energetic and alert through out the conference.

This is an experience that is found only in Radisson Hotels across India and this has been very enthusiastically received by our corporate guests and the increasing numbers are very clear in their verdict that this is making a difference. For us it helps in attracting more corporates who want to hold Experience Meetings off-site and thus it contributes to our bottom lines as well, it's a win win situation for both the corporate and us.

# THE ASHOK

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AND EVERYTHING ELSE

IT'S A HOTEL LIKE NO OTHER



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# CORPORATE JET-SETTERS

**KALA RAYAPROLU**  
**DIRECTOR – GLOBAL TRAVEL &  
RELATED SERVICES,  
ARICENT, GURGAON**

**Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?**

I was awe-struck by the Grand Canyon in the U.S. It has to be one of the most memorable trips I have ever taken.

**Q: You dream of going to?**

Well, there are so many places that one wishes to go to. I can think of – Machu Picchu in Peru, Alaska, The Yukon in Canada (to see the Northern Lights), Gangotri, The Char Dham, the list is endless!

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

All the Middle Eastern Carriers are brilliant!

**Q: Best hotel experience and why?**

I have stayed in many beautiful properties. One that comes to mind is the Taj Westend, in Bengaluru. It is such a beautiful property, full of lush greenery, bang in the middle of an extremely busy city. I had a beautiful room and just loved my stay there.

**Q: A place you plan to visit again?**

I would love to go back to South Africa and Australia. I have a few places that I need to visit there!

**Q: A family vacation that stands out?**

My first travel by air! It was a South India tour by air that my dad took us on! It was a Fokker Friendship flight, which today seems so unreal, given the level of commercial aircrafts we have today.

**Q: Your best holiday with friends?**

We had gone on a TAAI trip to Doha. It was hosted by Qatar and Abu Al Bakr of Qatar personally ensured that we had a fabulous time!

**Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?**

I liked food at The Sheraton, Brigade Road, Bengaluru; The Renaissance, Mumbai; The Grand Central, Mumbai and several others. They have chefs who take dining experience to a whole new level, absolutely outstanding! And as far as simple food goes, it was organic vegetarian food that was absolutely delicious. And this was in a budget hotel (Bharat Inn) in Uttarakhand. Very simple cuisine that I just loved!

**Q: What to watch out for while travelling?**

Travelling presents various things. Depending on the time of the destination (night or day), I may or may not watch too much. I like to ensure that I optimise my time on the ground.

**Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?**

On personal trips, I chill and don't let little delays and minor issues destroy the trip and dictate my enjoyment levels! When you do this, the fun and enjoyment quotient increases exponentially!





# CORPORATE JET-SETTERS

**DEEPAK GUPTA**  
**MANAGER – ADMINISTRATION & HR**  
**FASHION AND YOU, GURGAON**

**Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?**

I was enamoured by the beauty of Kashmir, as we know it is known as, "heaven on earth," and this is absolutely true. I have the fondest memories of Kashmir.

**Q: You dream of going to?**

I would love to go to Chittorgarh Fort, Rajasthan, India. It is one of the largest forts of India and is part of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Also, I would love to visit Western Australia for its natural beauty.

**Q: Favourite airline and why?**

I have always had good experiences with Indigo, and also they provide the best prices and are available for almost every place.

**Q: Best hotel experience and why?**

Hotel Paradise in Srinagar was just a wonderful experience. The staff was very mindful and took the utmost care of their guests. We had a great stay there, without any glitches.

**Q: A place you plan to visit again?**

I would simply want to be back to the natural surroundings of Gulmarg, Kashmir. It is very peaceful there, and that is all you need sometimes.

**Q: A family vacation that stands out?**

We had taken a family trip to Goa one time and it was very enjoyable. There was something for everyone, all age groups can easily blend in and find their fun activity. We had a great time.

**Q: Your best holiday with friends:**

Agyatvaas near Narkanda in Himachal Pradesh, but as we know, anywhere with friends would turn out to be fun. So of course, it was great.

**Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?**

I enjoy all types of cuisine, but the vegetarian food at Hotel Paradise, Srinagar, was fantastic.

**Q: What to watch out for while travelling?**

I am always interested to know the facts and see the famous places of any destination, so that is important.

**Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?**

It is important not to hurry, try not to be disturbed, because you are on a short trip, so relax and enjoy the trip.

# VACATIONS WITH EUROPAMUNDO

A world of tours and new ideas...  
visit Europe with Europamundo, simply  
the best

## TT BUREAU

**F**ounded over 20 years back, Europamundo has grown at an average rate of 20 per cent annually. It is now a JTB group company. Today, Europamundo carries over 125,000 tourists annually from 22 Spanish or Portuguese speaking countries and is one of the largest coach tour operators in the world.

It is perhaps one of the only coach tour operator companies in the world affiliated to the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) and it is also affiliated to WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council). It is committed to sustainable tourism and is one of the very few coach tour operators who actively seek to eliminate its CO2 foot print. Through the Europamundo Foundation the company contributes a portion of the value of the tours to support NGOs engaged in developments of communities including in India.

### SALIENT FEATURES – TRAVELLERS

- 'In City' hotels with easy access to public transportation
- Daily buffet breakfasts
- Full itineraries included city sightseeing and admission to important attractions
- Inter city drives are not just a city to city link. The route is a trip – not transportation; there are stops at interesting places like Hamelin, Pied Piper fame, Verona of Romeo & Juliet fame and more.
- Programmes offer versatility which permits an extent of customisation:
  - Start and stop where you want – join from city where you have the cheapest airfare or on the date that fits you the best.
  - You can join a part of a tour – no need to purchase an entire package. This is a great possibility for joint vacations with relatives in Europe.
  - If you have business or family along the route, you can make a break and join the following departure (most tours will have weekly or bi-weekly departures).
  - Add extra days before or after your tour – with immediate booking confirmation.
  - In major cities, passengers are given courtesy evening transfers to lively downtown areas where they have the opportunity to experience the evening environment and option to dine at Indian, Chinese, Thai and Continental restaurants or fast food joints. Travellers are provided two hours in the city

centre and should some wish to stay longer, they can take a short taxi ride at nominal cost. For the "Die hard Indian meal only" customers, it is essential to state: Indian dinners will always be a possibility in the area of the evening transfer.

- Gratuities and land tour insurance is included in the tour price.
- Each traveller has access to the "My trip" application which provides complete transparency of the tour details. This application gives the travellers a possibility to retrieve and download all possible information on their booked trip, photos and videos from the trip, guide books and an access to meet fellow travellers on a social network.
- Children are welcome! No age limitations.
- There are group discounts, child discounts, senior citizens discount, triple discounts

### SALIENT FEATURES – TRAVEL AGENTS

- It is a pure B2B model; final bookings can only be made through travel agents.
- Air tickets, medical insurance, visa documentation etc. has to be processed through travel agents.
- The travel Agent would be guided through a dynamic online system where trips can be quoted and pre-booked. The system is really versatile and user friendly and you are cordially invited to experience it at one of our distributor's offices or at [www.europamundo.com](http://www.europamundo.com).
- Cancellation policies are considerate
- Numerous programmes in Europe, USA and Mexico to choose from, well beyond, what is offered in the market. Duration can vary from 5 to 20 days. More programmes will be introduced gradually.
- Departures all year around – weekly or bi-weekly
- Assurance that every listed departure is guaranteed so air bookings can be done well in advance on a planned basis and avoid deviation charges. In today's context, such bookings often work out more economical.



# MTM+LLTM NEW DELHI 2015 SETS NEW BENCHMARKS

Huge participation, intense MICE activity and sound business apart, the 11th MTM and 5th LLTM presented a clinical analysis on Corporate Travel Outlook 2016 and Business Movement – the driver of travel



## TT BUREAU

**H**uge participation, intense MICE activity and sound business apart, the 11th MTM and 5th LLTM presented a clinical analysis on Corporate Travel Outlook 2016 and Business Movement – the driver of travel.

With a cross section of exhibitors and a footfall of over 400 visitors, the recently concluded MTM+LLTM New Delhi saw an influx of noted delegates and elite professionals, rendering the mart a success.

The MTM+LLTM organised by OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd at The Ashok, New Delhi on December 17, 2015 took

cognisance of new developments in Corporate Travel, the emerging trends challenges and how to deal with them. The MTM+LLTM mart was attended by varied exhibitors which included national tourism boards, state tourism boards, hotels, airlines, travel technology, car rental companies, destination management companies, tour operators, and a number of travel service providers as well as over 400 buyers that included corporate travel purchasers, travel agents, PCOs, event planners and wedding planners.

A galaxy of industry veterans came in attendance to the event that included

Subhash Goyal, President, IATO; Ashwani Kakkar, Exec Vice Chairman, Mercury Travels; Rajan Sehgal, Chairman - TAAI –NR; Praveen Chugh, Vice President, TAFI; Pankaj Nagpal, Director – National Board & Chairman – NI Region, ETAA; Jyoti Kapoor President ADTOI; Basanta Rajkumar, Executive Director, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board.

The theme for the event was Corporate Travel Outlook 2016 with MICE and Business movements being the biggest driver of travel. Kamal Gill, Director, OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd, delivered her welcome address, with the highlight: "For India, in 2014, the total



contribution of Travel and Tourism to the GDP was Rs 7,642.5 billion (6.7 per cent of total GDP). This is projected to grow by 7.5 per cent in 2015 and eventually reach Rs 16,587.2 billion (7.6 per cent of total GDP) in a decade's time.

"For 2016, much of the demand for corporate travel will be dependent on the performance of the economies, mainly in China and India followed by Europe," she pointed out.

The event kick started with the morning seminar that included a panel discussion on, 'Corporate Travel Outlook 2016.' The panel comprised of Sameer Saxena, Group Manager – Property

Administration, Mercer; Kala Rayaprolu, Director – Global Travel & Related Services, Aricent; Amit Kaul, Head – Corporate Real Estate & Administration, Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Insurance Company Ltd; Rajan Verma, Dy. General Manager, JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd and Ankush Bindra, Manager- Travel & Visa, Ericsson India Global Services Pvt Ltd.

Ashwini Kakkar, Executive Vice Chariman, Mercury Travels was the keynote speaker for the day as he went on to deliver a compelling address on business travel and how it would act as a lead indicator in determining a nation's economy, GDP growth and future. He



#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER



*It must be understood that business travel more than any other business segment, is a lead indicator of economic activity in any country. India last year saw corporate travel activities to the tune of USD 28 billion.*

— Ashwini Kakkar  
Executive Vice Chariman, Mercury Travels



*For 2016, much of the demand for corporate travel will be dependent on the performance of the economies, mainly in China and India, followed by Europe*

— Kamal Gill  
Director, OptiMICE Events Pvt Ltd

concluded with an advice to all sellers and buyers to change with time or to face obsolescence.

There were audio-visual presentations on behalf of our Platinum Partner – Jharkhand Tourism; Smart City Partner – Lavasa and Gold Partners – J&K Tourism and Manipur Tourism.

As always, the event had a strong attendance of corporates. Some of the top dignitaries that graced the event were from Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd; JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd; JK Cement Ltd., Jubilant FoodWorks Ltd.; Tata Teleservices Ltd; TATA Motors Ltd, Accretive Health India, Aircel, Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles Ltd. among many others.











## GLIMPSES OF THE MART






Platinum Partner      Smart City Partner

Gold Partners

Feature State      Gift Partner      Hotel Partner





## BUYER FEEDBACK

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

Events like these help in keeping pace with a fast moving industry like the Travel and Hospitality industry. It also helps to connect and network with industry peers which eventually results in significant benefits and savings for the organisation that we work with. MTM+LLTM is one such event where a lot of views, ideas and information on best practices were exchanged and knowledge shared to benefit the participants. They also help organisations and suppliers close RFPs and gain from their time spent at the venue.

**Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?** The mart was a great attempt to bring the supplier and buyer fraternity together. It also helped since it had the Reverse Market Place segment included which ensured we actually got time with suppliers who were looking for business.

### Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?

While the mart had a good mix of all the fraternity, I was particularly impressed with the efforts to put together the various categories into the event. I hope to conclude some discussed business at the Mart.

*Kala Rayaprolu  
Director*

*Global Travel and Related Services*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

The MTM+LLTM proved to be a ground for great networking, meeting industry stakeholders and decision-makers face –to –face, knowledge sharing about new products, location and new global developments was an integral part of the mart. Have had the opportunity of meeting over 50 exhibitors from a diverse range and industry sectors

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

The opportunity to network with key decision-makers and stakeholders on an exciting and informative platform was definitely my big gain from the event.

### Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?

Interactions with Carlson Group, Giftxoxo.com, Tourism Office of Jordon, Spain, Mauritius and Starwood among others will definitely prove to be beneficial in the long run.

*Parvin Khurana  
Associate Vice President - Facilities  
OSC Services Private Ltd*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

MTM provides a bigger platform to meet and interact with industry players. Besides, the advantage of getting everyone under one roof and meeting all brands at one place and at

one time, is a great advantage. We also get better deals and more information for our requirements. We are able to meet the decision makers and genuine brands at marts like the MTM+LLTM.

*Jai Tondak  
Director  
CSG*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

We have got new vendors for our employee engagement programmes / Training programmes.

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

We were able to know about different locations which were untouched by us, to be explored in the future.

### Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?

For hotels and gift programmes, we are discussing with the exhibitors we met at the mart.

*Praveen K Goel  
Assistant Vice President  
IndiaMART InterMESH Ltd*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

MTM+LLTM not only helps us in developing our knowledge on multiplicity of products and services, but also supports uniformly in imparting current market updates. I especially like the Reverse Market Place which allows buyers and sellers to interact with each other on a common platform.

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

The Mart supports and helps in exploring new hotels, gather information on various destinations as well as new vendors so we can create the wow factor in our upcoming MICE movements. We greatly explored these opportunities at the mart.

### Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?

Interaction with people from various travel verticals, support us to explore more opportunities in trying out new venues and new destinations for MICE activities.

*Kaushal Gupta  
Manager - Administration  
VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

The mart was helpful as it had a very strong Industry visibility with all multiple services captured in one arena.

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

Newer products, destinations and a strong backing of the

Tourism boards were definitely great takeaways from the mart.

### Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?

Personally, interactions with the tourism boards have been very positive thereby opening up new frontiers for MICE travel and vastly different destinations.

*SANJOY RAY  
Head - Real Estate and Projects  
AIRCEL*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

The complex idea of bringing buyers and sellers under one roof was executed effortlessly and it was a wonderful initiative.

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

Personally, it was definitely enlightening for me to be updated with the various travel related new initiative and value add services offered, which are being taken by Travel & MICE industries, which we as buyers were unaware of.

*Shitij Soin  
Senior Manager - Purchase and Administration  
Corbus*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

Face to face interaction with major airlines and hotel representatives will help us in many ways for day to day business transactions. Also the one to one discussion session at The Reverse Market Place was an added advantage.

*Mr. Deepak Jain  
Vice President- HR  
Transport Corporation of India*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

It gave us a single platform to interact with hotels, car rentals and airlines – and so the mart proved to be useful.

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

Interactions with car rentals proved to be very beneficial.

### Which is the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?

I definitely look forward to exploring opportunities with Starwood Group of Hotels.

*Balender Dubey  
Associate Manager - Admin  
Stryker*

### In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?

The mart is an easy platform that brings the buyers and sellers together.

### Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?

## BUYER FEEDBACK

I think the mart offers big opportunities in terms of the variety of services offered to the clients which is very beneficial.

**Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?**  
Personally hotels and resorts is what I explored. I expect to do business with some shortlisted exhibitors.

*Capt John Joseph  
Senior Vice President- Infrastructure and Facilities  
Steria*

**In which way was the MTM+LLTM 2015 useful for you?**  
MTM is the best way for networking with corporates, agents, airlines and hoteliers among others in the travel industry.

**Of the various opportunities that the mart offered to the buyers, what was your biggest takeaway?**  
The biggest takeaway for me would be positive networking at the mart and my interaction with hoteliers.

**Which are the significant business leads out of the airlines, hotels, destinations, DMCs and ground handlers available at the MTM+LLTM?**

I definitely look forward to exploring my interactions and closing some business with the various hotels present at the mart.

*Neha Saxena  
Associate Manager – Travel Desk  
Square Yards*

## LUCKY DIP







REVERSE MARKETPLACE



## SELLER FEEDBACK

### SELLER FEEDBACK

Excellent event. We are happy we have participated in your event. It is very good and we are getting a very good response. The corporate enquiries and the interest from the travel trade are most encouraging and we are happy about how this event is conceptualised and organised. Very good event indeed.

*Manoj Kumar Mahato,  
Regional Manager, Delhi, Jharcraft,  
Government of Jharkhand*

Lavasa has been coming to the event regularly every year and we participate both in Delhi and Mumbai. We have always found that the event has been useful to us, in terms of not only MICE but also creating awareness in the trade and to mark our presence. Even this year we found that our expectations are met by the event and we will follow up with all the new corporate contacts we have made. We have in fact also renewed some of our old corporate ties, who have already worked with us at Lavasa, so great experience!

*Bhupesh Kumar,  
Assistant Vice President, Tourism,  
Lavasa Corporation Limited*

I usually attend most of the festival to represent our department, but the type of arrangements here are very good. I enjoyed the MTM&LLTM. Very good event. In future, if possible, this should be extended to two days. Corporate attendance is high and the travel agent enquiries are serious.

*Pauzakham Tonsing,  
Representing Manipur Tourism,  
Government of Manipur*

I was talking to my colleagues here, and we were saying that we are very happy with MTM&LLTM. The select audience and corporate profile provides us an excellent opportunity to interact with people, so it is really good. We are happy.

*Pamela Kachroo,  
Tourist Officer,  
Jammu and Kashmir Tourism*

Basically, I think it is a good opportunity for us to meet serious corporate and travel trade people and talk to them and let them know what all we are doing, and all the different initiatives that we are taking. Here through this event we can engage with them. The Reverse Marketplace is a good concept because it helps us to understand, not only to tell people what we have to offer, but also understand from them their requirements and what kind of problems they might face. A corporate may not always be your customer but we can also learn why they are not our customers,

why they do not hold more events in our state and so on. I think it was well organised and we had an excellent experience.

*Roshni Puri,  
Manager – Project, Punjab Heritage and Tourism  
Promotion Board,  
Government of Punjab*

It was a very good opportunity for us. It allowed us to introduce Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan Airways in the tourism market of India. We also met many MICE professionals and many corporate purchasers. Most of them showed interest in our country. In fact we have many queries and we are in talks with them to visit Uzbekistan and to send their groups, incentives, even family here. So, we would like to say that if you can organise this kind of events more often, then it would be an opportunity not only for airlines but for other corporates to get in touch and get more experience. Everything was well planned and I was 100 percent satisfied.

*Atabek Atabaev,  
Country Manager,  
Uzbekistan Airways*

The event has been well organised, we met relevant partners, both from the corporate sector and as well as the travel and trade industry, so it has been useful for us.

*Manas Sinha,  
Director, India,  
Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts*

We regularly interact with travel agents who are attending each road-show and event. So it is good to meet corporate decision makers. Our main focus here is on the corporate houses. In the first half it was a bit slow, but now we are getting good numbers.

*Rahul Dewan,  
Ashish Pandey,  
Sales Manager,  
Jordan Tourism*

We have got queries at MTM&LLTM from the corporate houses and the travel trade. Many of them are for the events team, and we hope to take these queries from here and get them closed as soon as possible. I think it's been perfect, everyone has enjoyed, thank you very much for a good event. We hope to be a part of this next year as well.

*Senior Sales Manager,  
Shangri-la's – Eros Hotel, New Delhi*

It is a good show. We have been able to meet lots of corporate houses and many agents, with whom we have not been interacting with, and we can see some serious people who have come here. So it is not just any kind of MICE event which is happening. We have seen some serious people coming here with queries, and we happen to close a query today itself. So it's fantastic, and we will look forward to visit it once again.

*Karan Abrol,  
Sales Manager,  
Eros Hotel, Nehru Place*

The experience is good; we have got good leads, good corporate leads as well as a few travel trade ones. Buyers saw the product, they enquired about Premium Economy, which we have recently launched ex- Delhi, so overall it is a good experience. Well organised, no complaints.

*Sourav Karnik,  
Sales Manager — Northern India,  
Singapore Airlines*

It was over all a very good event. People were very much interested in our property and it is a great platform which is given by MTM & LLTM once again to our hotel. Thank you so much.

*Namrata Salaria,  
Director of Sales, Events,  
Country Inn and Suites by Carlson, Sahibabad*

It has been really a great event - lots of people, lots of footfall, lot of sales interaction, so that's a good thing. It is very good to connect to new people and get new ideas, what all they can offer. When we pitch to others they are really interested in giftxoxo's concept of experiential gifting, so that's what we like. MTM & LLTM is well organised, well delivered in a great ambience.

*Tarsh Midha,  
Marketing Manager,  
Giftxoxo.com*

The experience has been really good; we got lots of opportunities to connect with buyers across various verticals. So we've met hoteliers, we've met travel and tour operators, a lot of people you wouldn't have otherwise met together, all coming under one umbrella. It is an excellent event.

*Sarika Panchhi,  
Representing UK07 Films*





*Accretive Health (Best Training Programme For Employees/Associates)*



*Aircel Ltd (Training Programme For Employees/Associates)*



*Annik Technology (Best Incentive Programme for Employees/ Associates)*

# and the AWARD goes to...



## MTM Corporate Star Awards

The MTM Corporate Star Awards has over the years recognised corporate excellence in MICE activities. The recipients are recognised for their brilliant commitment in the field of incentive and training programmes for their distributors/dealers and their employees/associates that motivates the next generation of talent. The awardees benchmark standards for corporate leadership and motivation.



*Bisleri International (Best Incentive Programme For Distributors/Dealers)*



*Canara HSBC OBC (Most well planned Business Travel)*



*Continental India (Best Training Programme For Employees/Associates)*



*Ericsson India (Best Training Programme For Employees/Associates)*



*Espire Infolabs (Most well planned Business Travel)*



*IndiaMART InterMESH (Most Well Planned Business Travel)*



*J. K. Cement (Best Incentive Programme for Distributors / Dealers)*



*J.K. Lakshmi Cement (Best Incentive Programme For Distributors/Dealers)*



*Jubilant FoodWorks (Best Incentive Programme For Employees/Associates)*



Lava International (Best Incentive Programme for Distributors / Dealers)



Mercer (Most well planned Business Travel)



Nagarro Software (Most Well Planned Business Travel)



Newgen Software Technologies (Most Well Planned Business Travel)



OSC Services (Best Incentive Programme For Employees/Associates)



Square Yards (Most Well Planned Business Travel)



Steria (Most Well Planned Business Travel)



Stryker India (Best Incentive Programme For Distributors/Dealers)



TATA Motors (Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme)



Tata Teleservices (Most Well Planned Business Travel)



TCI (Best Training Programme For Employees/Associates)



Tupperware India (Best Incentive Programme For Distributors/Dealers)



VE Commercial Vehicles (Most Well Planned Business Travel)



EXL Services (Most well planned Business Travel)



Fujitsu Consulting India (Best Meeting/Exhibition Programme)

## NETWORKING WINE EVENING



# CORPORATE TRAVEL OUTLOOK

## 2016



The biggest driver of travel-business movement - is fast-tracking its way to a healthy bottom line. On the flipside, corporate travel has disruptive trends in store...

### KAMAL GILL

**T**he demand for business travel in 2016 is certainly back in a big way. Be prepared for big corporate movements. Additionally, be prepared for disruptive trends that can easily throw a spanner in the works. The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) points out that with the dwindling winds of the global financial crisis no longer blowing companies off course, budgetary allocations for business travel have returned to the company ledger in a major way. GBTA forecasts that companies around the world will spend \$1.25 Trillion on business travel alone in 2016.

GBTA goes on record to say: Across the globe, only modest increases are expected in cost per attendee per day and group size, with the exception of Asia Pacific which will see a 5 per cent increase in cost and an 11 per cent increase in group size.

Strong demand from China and India is the major driver for the region's increasing cost and group sizes.

For India, in 2014, the total contribution of Travel and Tourism to the GDP was Rs 7,642.5 billion (6.7 per cent of total GDP). This is projected to grow by 7.5 per cent in 2015, and eventually reach Rs 16,587.2 billion (7.6 per cent of total GDP) in a decade's time, according to World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC's) Economic Impact 2015-India report. The highly populated nation offers a massive potential for outbound as well as domestic travel. Given the growth in GDP as well as private financial consumption, the number of departures is forecasted to reach 24.4 million by 2018.

Ashwini Kakkar, Executive Vice Chairman, Mercury Travels points out, "Research by GBTA clearly says that the corporate travel market across the globe is a USD 1.25 trillion industry. Industry leaders are obviously US and China. US is credited with having USD 280 billion of corporate travel every single year which means almost a billion dollars on every working day, including Saturday. China is a very close second at USD 250 billion a year."

Continues Kakkar, "India is approximately one tenth the size of both these players and India last year saw around USD 28 billion of corporate travel activities. Growth rates in India are possibly the highest growth rates in the world. What is estimated over the next 4-5 years is that India will grow at 13 per cent per annum in the corporate travel arena and at this growth rate by the end of 2018 the run rate for India will be USD 50 billion of corporate travel activity in a year. This huge growth portends well for not only the travel and tourism industry or at least the overall hospitality travel industry but also places a different kind of pressure on the corporates to buy USD 50 billion worth of corporate travel."

The other significant difference between the Indian industry and the rest of the global industry is 90 per cent of India's corporate travel business is domestic dominated and only 10 per cent is international and over a period of time this is likely to change substantially because in about a decade this is likely to look like 75 per cent domestic and 25 per cent international.

"On an average," reports Kakkar, "more than half of Indian corporate travellers undertake 4 to 5 trips a year. More than 50 per cent of our travellers combine business with leisure. They expect the best in class... a WiFi operative hotel, WiFi in airplanes or even in cars or taxis and a whole slew of technological things to be available to them. More than 50 percent of corporate travellers spend on good board, food, shopping, they opt for the lowest travel time between two destinations and are rated amongst the worst cribbers in the whole world."

More than 53 per cent of the world's population is starting to live in large cities and it is expected that by the end of this decade there will be 30 megacities around the world, each one with a population of more than 10 million people, informs Kakkar. Of these, possibly 5 megacities might be in India. Megacity to megacity transfers will dictate what happens and Asia is going to be the crucible of global corporate travel. China estimates that by the end of the decade they will have 130 million corporate travellers. The Indian traveller according to one study will spend on an average USD 4501 per trip in 2016.

It is estimated that within the next 10 years over 50 per cent on the unicorn companies which have sales and value of more than a billion dollars a year will be based out of the emerging markets. The management of corporate bookings in the cases of these companies will dictate the global corporate travel market trends.

## OUTLOOK & TRENDS FOR 2016

The top-line pricing outlook for air, hotel and ground in 2016 is surprisingly stable. But when you dig deeper, the data reveals global hot spots of demand. For 2016, India, China, Colombia, Mexico, Singapore and Australia are projected to top the list. But while the total market has risen dramatically, the expenditures are taking different forms with employers saying yes to more travel, but pinching pennies when it comes to cost per trip.

Centralized booking systems are now the norm in the corporate world, and on-the-road expenses often must meet rigorous qualifications to be fully reimbursed. Upgrades to hotel rooms and cabin classes of flights are some of the first perks to be removed in this brave new world. But experts say that these same penny-pinching businesses are leaving a potential goldmine of savings unexplored. This is being leveraged in the sharing economy by players like Airbnb and Uber — which could be a threat to traditional travel and hotel bookings.

For 2016, much of the demand for corporate travel will be dependent on the performance of the economies, mainly in US, China and India followed by Europe.

## TECHNOLOGY AS A GAME CHANGER

Reveals Ashwini Kakkar, "It must be understood that business travel more than any other more than any other business segment is a lead indicator of economic activity in any country. When radical business concepts lead by technology in travel become an accepted norm, it's time to be alert and adopt new technology or perish."

2016 is likely to see technology as a major disrupter in how travel business is conducted, the selection of vendors and how it can be used to address safety concerns of corporate houses and their employees.

Endorses Kala Rayaprolu, Director – Global Travel & Related Services, Aricent, India, "Technology is definitely the way forward. A lot of travel MNCs have integrated the latest technology in their working mechanism to bring about positive growth. Focussing on technology would also help bring about advancements in the field of safety, security, in terms of tracking suppliers in an open market scenario, and of course connectivity with our staff especially for our corporate to contact headquarters in emergencies."

Similarly, going digital will be a given in corporate and individual travel. Online bookings make up about 40 per cent





of total travel bookings. Corporate managers are going digital to keep tab of executives and their itineraries in one place by adopting corporate booking tools (CBT) to streamline the process. 73 per cent of corporate travel companies have already implemented these tools.

Small and mid-sized hotels are beginning to develop an online presence. Digital searches – especially on mobile devices – show dramatic increase. 80 per cent of local searches on mobile devices convert to purchase.

Recognising the massive unorganised hotel market, companies such as Stay Bazar, OYO Rooms, Zostel and Zo Rooms, WudStay, FabHotels, Treebo, etc are riding on the back of technology and providing App-based conveniences.

Assessing 2016 trends, Sameer Saxena, MRICS, Group Manager – Property Administration, Mercer India points out, “We can say that the corporate market looks positive and an average growth rate of over 10 per cent is certain across most businesses. There is a possibility of even 20 or 30 per cent growth in some industry verticals. While 2015 has been a fairly cautious year but 2016

#### FACTORS MOST LIKELY TO IMPACT TRAVEL IN 2016:

- Travel risks include terror, threat to travel security, as well as outbreaks of disease, and natural disasters.
- Oil prices.
- Accelerated travel growth due to popularity of destinations like India, China, Colombia, Mexico, Singapore and Australia.
- Sluggish economy in Brazil, Russia and China.
- Airbnb and Uber working to grow their appeal as an option for business travellers.
- Mobile communications and traveller tracking becoming a key part of travel programs.

will be a year filled with cautious optimism. With ‘Make in India’, coming into its own and pushing for development at one end and with IT companies looking up, it appears to be a bright year ahead — provided safety concerns of travellers are addressed in a much better way. The corporate travel market is maturing. Organisations are moving to India with the encouragement of “Make in India” government philosophy coming into existence. For IT companies it looks to be a bright year. A trend to watch out for is ‘trust deficit’. This is something which I think the travel industry and corporates have to work upon as transparency will be a pre-requisite in corporate travel business.”

Technology is the tool which will see increasing traction as corporate houses move towards transparency as a pre-requisite for vendor selection. Corporate clients are increasingly tracking secondary, or incidental expenses. Like meals, car rentals and mobile services. In the Asia Pacific region, these expenses count for between 10-14 per cent of a client’s travel budget. Corporate travel managers are thus looking for providers that will have a transparent spread sheet which account for all incidentals including add-on meals, or car services.



Emphasizing a similar outlook, Ankush Bindra, Manager – Travel & Visa, Ericsson India Global Services Pvt. Ltd says, “Trends for 2016 definitely show a fall in the average air ticket prices. More online booking tools which provide competitive price analysis should be introduced to utilise the same. The market is definitely set to be more transparent thus allowing corporates to provide more value to their employees.”

The preference among corporate houses for travel by low-cost carriers comes as no surprise. Up to 73 per cent of corporate customers have increased their use of low-cost carriers.

The trend to look out for in 2016 according to Amit Kaul, Head- Corporate Real Estate & Administration, Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce is a push for Meetings and Incentives. Says Kaul, “The major trend that would dictate the market, in 2016, would be an increase in MICE activities and internal fiscal discipline within corporations. Apart from security, another critical factor that should be taken into consideration for 2016 would be the fiscal discipline and transparency between companies and their travel partners and also internally – within the company.”

Bringing the ground realities into focus, Rajan Verma, Dy.General Manager, JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd says, “There has to be an equal balance between technology and human touch. Today a simple dealer or stockist sitting on the border of Pakistan may aspire to travel to Australia with his family. Digitally, it becomes a challenge to connect with him and a human link or chain must be established. Hence, technology is definitely restricted on some platforms and human engagement becomes essential.”

#### HOW HOTELS ARE EXPECTED TO FARE IN 2016

Globally, 2016 will show an increase in hotel prices by 3 per cent because demand is overtaking supply in every major global region. While India is still struggling with room rates, it should even out by the end of 2016. Domestic demand in case of India continues to be higher, with more than a billion domestic tourist visits and about 7 million FTAs. India, after China, is considered one of the most lucrative hotel markets in the world and has the second largest construction pipeline in Asia.



Large global brands, consequently, remain committed to India. The luxury and upscale market is shifting focus to domestic demand while building international brand recognition as well as by promoting their luxury properties as destinations. Budget hotels are best placed currently on rate and occupancies due to demand for value which branded owners in this space provide in plenty.

#### CORPORATE TRAVEL FORECAST - 2016 AND BEYOND

**In a keynote address at the 11<sup>th</sup> MICE Travel Mart & Luxury and Leisure Mart in New Delhi, Ashwini Kakkar, Executive Vice Chairman, Mercury Travels brought to life a scintillating visual of a radically changing travel world. Some highlights of his speech:**

It must be understood that business travel more than any other more than any other business segment is a lead indicator of economic activity in any country. There are game changers here... wonderful examples of companies that are emerging virtually out of the wood work with radical business concepts. Apple the biggest mobile phone company in the world does not manufacture a single mobile nor owns a single factory; Uber, the biggest taxi company in the world does not own even one car or even one taxi and Airbnb the biggest hotel company in the world does not own or operate a single hotel room. And what is even more interesting is the valuation of these companies. Uber is valued at USD 60 billion. Airbnb is valued at USD 30 billion.

Similarly in a period of less than three weeks two major amalgamations have been announced — Accor has acquired Raffles, Fairmont and Swissotel and Marriott and Starwood have merged to operate 1.1 million rooms across 100 countries. So this is radical.

These kind of changes are going to have a very far reaching and profound impact on our entire industry and all of us have to rethink not only business models but the way we will start to do business with hotels, with car companies and with even airlines and so on because consolidation is not very far away. How does this over all change impact the corporate travel industry?

#### EMERGING DISRUPTIVE TRAVEL PATTERNS

At a strategic global level there are several big disruptive changes — demographic changes, millennial, women and seniors, the advent of mobiles as to how we travel, business spends going up but credit vanishing over the next 2-3 years, depersonalization happening, new mega cities and new distribution capability emerging.

The first big disruptive trend is the demographic change in the corporate business traveler from that of the current senior manager to the millennial corporate traveler, aged between 16 years and 30 years. The millennial spends 3.2 hrs a day on his mobile phone with 25 per cent of corporate travel bookings in the US coming from the mobile phones of millennial.

The millennial want WiFi everywhere, grab and go meals, Uber on their phones, Airbnb, cashless payments systems and so on. However 52 per cent of travel agents around the world are reporting higher bookings from millennial. As high as 30 per cent of millennial confirm that they are booking exclusively through travel agents. So what's going on?

The second big change is women travellers who constitute 25 per cent of all travelers. These numbers will multiply nine times in the next 15 years. And their needs are different. They want safety and security, cleanliness, fitness, connectivity and precise planning.

The third big change is seniors. These are people who are 50 years and above and in fairly senior positions. This segment will grow six times in the next 15 years.

The other disrupter is technology. Around the world 16 per cent of consumer time is spent mobile online devices. Yahoo has reported that 67 per cent of their customer access yahoo from mobile phones. People use their mobile phones to book activities either pre-trip, in-trip or post-trip. Three fourth use mobiles for in-location services like booking a restaurant and about one third use their mobile as the single instrument for checking into a hotel, for security and passing the gates at the airport. Devices are getting faster, more durable and adding more features

Another disruptive trend is spends. These are going to increase hugely but credit is dead.

The other disrupter is de-personalisation and will be lead by a whole slew of things including artificial intelligence. It is estimated that in the next 10 years, 60 billion devices will be connected to our systems through our mobile phones for examples. As a result the individual customer is going to demand a single end to end solution. Ancillary sales are going to be pushed up to levels which are higher than primary sales. Everything will be through and by technology.

The last big trend is new distribution capabilities also referred popularly as NDC and this is a new initiative of IATA which at one level has the potential to sound the death knell of the travel distribution industry as we know it.

A lot of radical changes are on the horizon especially in the managed corporate travel business and both the buyers and the sellers need to change along with these changes.

# AVIATION



## PROMOTIONAL OFFER FROM AIR CANADA AND FAIRMONT HOTELS TO CELEBRATE LAUNCH

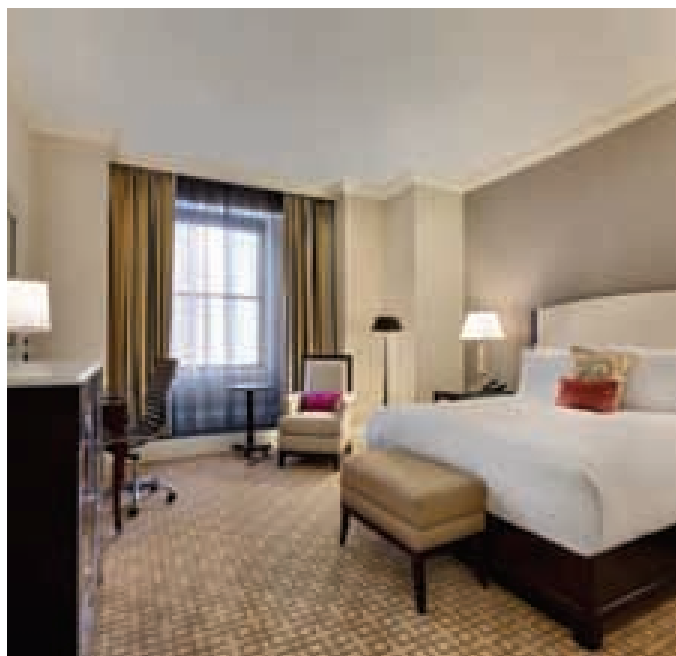


Air Canada successfully launched the Dreamliner 787 direct non-stop flight between New Delhi and Toronto on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015. As announced earlier the airline would work towards ensuring not only a smooth flight but special value add offers with preferred partners.

The first of these offers is now being rolled out along with Canadian headquartered Fairmont Hotels, a leader in the global hospitality industry, with a distinctive collection and a worldwide reputation for excellence. The group has been very active in India both in terms of expanding the Indian portfolio as also promoting global destinations.

For passengers travelling on Executive Business or Premium Economy on Air Canada's direct flight to Toronto from New Delhi the offer entails a 15 per cent discount on the Best Available rate at the Fairmont, Royal York in Toronto. The offer is valid till 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

Arun Pandeya, Country Head – Indian Subcontinent, Air Canada said, "We are very happy to be able to make this great offer with Fairmont and this is just the beginning of a number of promotions. He added, "Both



Fairmont and Air Canada are keen to work closely with their travel partners and hence this special offer is commissionable to all our travel partners and operators."

Tekla Maira, Director Global Sales India at Fairmont Hotels & Resorts commented, "This is a great opportunity to partner with a leading global airline like Air Canada. We do believe our products complement each other and this offer is just the first step going ahead." She also said, "The Fairmont Royal York hotel is located in downtown Toronto and ideal for both a business and leisure traveller."





## LUFTHANSA ADDS THREE NEW LONG-HAUL DREAM DESTINATIONS

Even at Lufthansa, this doesn't happen very often: by adding flights from Frankfurt to three new long-haul destinations to the network in a single week, Lufthansa passengers now have the opportunity to fly directly with one of Europe's biggest airlines from Frankfurt to the dream destinations of Cancún, Mexico, Malé, in the Maldives, and Mauritius.

Lufthansa has tailor-made these flights to suit private travellers, which has paid off. Cancún, Malé and Mauritius are just three of several new holiday destinations Lufthansa has added to its network in the last few months, with Tampa, Florida and Nairobi, Kenya being added in late September and late October respectively. In March 2016, flights to Panama City, Panama will begin.

The aircraft used for these flights – equipped with a FlyNet broadband connection – is the Airbus A340-300, with seats spread over three different travel classes. Out of a total of 298 seats, 18 are in Business Class, 19 in Premium Economy and 261 in Economy.



## SPICE JET LAUNCHES SPICEVACATIONS.COM

SpiceJet, one of India's favourite budget airlines rolled out an end-to-end travel solutions platform, SpiceVacations.com, offering customised travel packages thereby rendering a more suave experience to customers who can avail various services while planning their holiday, at no added cost to make it a Red.Hot.Spicy experience.

SpiceVacations.com offers a comprehensive platform for customers to choose from thousands of travel packages, spread over a vast network of domestic and international destinations. The deals have been specifically designed in consultation with holiday experts thus easing the holiday planning exercise and adding finesse to the end holiday experience.

Customers need to simply decide on the theme of their vacation, say – pilgrimage, honeymoon or a wildlife tour and the platform throws open a wide variety of deals in terms of the location, hotel arrangements, local sight-seeing tours, car rentals among others. Customers can also hand-pick the service features to customise their deal packs to best suit their needs and preferences.

The platform also comes with a special feature where in customers, just with a minimal deposit, which is refundable, can book and hold a booking for up to 48-hours to review with acquaintances.

"We want to ensure our customers have a 'Red.Hot.Spicy' experience every single time they venture out for a trip then may it be a long leisure escape or a brief business tour. SpiceVacations.com has been designed as a one-stop shop offering enviable travel deals for you to pick and choose from amongst the best the industry can offer and its unique customisation features adds that extra finesse to your planning exercise enabling you to experience the perfect holiday every single time." said Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet.

## BA INTRODUCES FESTIVE FARES FROM INDIA TO THE UK, US & CANADA

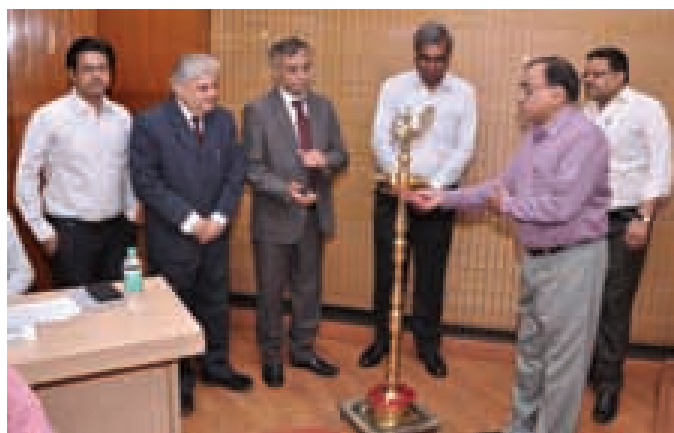
British Airways is delighted to announce a fantastic New Year festive offer for its customers from India to these destinations with all-inclusive fares starting from just INR 44,340. The offer is available on flights booked in Club World (Business), World Traveller Plus (Premium Economy) and World Traveller (Economy) for sale period up till 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 and for outbound travel period until 30 June 2016. With this special offer, British Airways is putting its entire UK and North America network on sale.

Moran Birger, British Airways' Regional Commercial Manager, South Asia said, "Our celebratory sale offers a perfect opportunity for our customers to meet their loved ones in the UK, USA or Canada. Customers can plan their travel much in advance and benefit from these special fares. Our codeshare with American Airlines offers our customers an extensive worldwide network. In addition, British Airways' award-winning home, Terminal 5, at Heathrow Airport ensures seamless travel experience for customers making flight connections via London."



## INDIAN AVIATION ACADEMY CONDUCTS "LAND MANAGEMENT" TRAINING PROGRAMME

The four days training programme on "Land Management" conducted at Indian Aviation Academy, New Delhi was inaugurated by S Suresh, Member (Finance). The course was attended by Senior Executives of Airports Authority of India (AAI) from all over India. This Programme has enhanced the knowledge and will benefit the organisation in consolidating land records / data and protection and eviction of AAI Land. Member (Finance) in his inaugural address emphasised that land is a very important resource and should be managed well for the present as well as future needs of the organisation.



S Suresh, Member (Finance), Airports Authority of India lighting the lamp while inaugurating the Land Management Training Programme at Indian Aviation Academy, NIAMAR, Society Campus, Gurgaon Road, New Delhi. Also seen in the are senior officers of AAI.

# TIME FLIES WHEN YOU FLY TURKISH



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# EXPLORER







# A PASSAGE TO



*"So far as I am able to judge,  
nothing has been left undone,  
either by man or nature,  
to make India  
the most extraordinary country  
that the sun visits on his rounds."*

*— Mark Twain*

Take a note out from India's unexplored places, cities and villages that are largely untouched and are fine examples of a charming nation

**ARKA ROY CHOWDHURY**

India, in all its majesty is geographically vast and diverse, thereby, attracting tourists from all over the world every year. But as most places go, India too is widely known for all of its quintessential experiences – from the north Indian high Himalayas, to the southern Western Ghats. Most often, tourists tend to overlook places that aren't vividly advertised by the very many channels of media. But, for a nation like India, it would be interesting to know that there are many locations which are hidden under the grid, largely unexplored and untouched. Take a look at some of the obscure locales of India.



## MAJULI



The largest river island of the world, Majuli, is a paradise on earth. Located on the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra River, Majuli is a stunning proclamation of God's creation. The unparalleled scenic beauty of Majuli is reason enough for tourists to go back to the island time and again. Here at Majuli, away from the technological world, you could rent a bicycle and partake in bird-watching tours, as the island is home to nearly 100 species of birds. Majuli is also known for its Vaishnavite followers, a befitting tradition in tune with its sublime locales. There are 22 'satras' or institutes where devotees assemble. Majuli has two main villages – Kamalbari and Garamur. An interesting facet of Majuli is that the island is constantly being eroded by the river Brahmaputra. Of its original 1,250sq.km area, in 2001 it was recorded to have only 421.65sq.km left, a beautiful tragedy that must be witnessed by your own eyes.

A far cry from the beaches of Goa, this beach village is located in the district of Alappuzha. The beach in this region is known as Marari Beach and is largely known for fishing. Mararikulam's beautiful tropical climate allows it to receive two monsoons, the North West and the North East. It is just that kind of place where you would want to laze around in utmost privacy, where the human mind takes refuge in nature. Visitors would be in for a pleasant surprise to see houses made of thatched roofs and ecological practices, glorifying the simple coastal life. This is the quintessential soul-search for those who are looking to get away from everything trendy and tiresome.

## MARARIKULAM



## SUNDARBANS



If you wish to abandon the cacophony of Kolkata, then walk into the largest mangrove forest of the world. Declared as a World Heritage Site, the Sundarbans stretch 80km long into the Indian and Bangladeshi hinterlands from the coast. This is also the largest reserve for the famous Royal Bengal Tigers. To visit the Sundarbans you have to go to Canning from Kolkata from where there are launch services available. Exploring Sundarbans would require you to hire boats and if luck prevails, then you are in for a fascinating wildlife treat. Interestingly here you can visit the nearby villages and explore their culture and tradition. Visitors can also go to Sunderbands from the Bangladesh side, which will perhaps, present them with denser forests.

## MASHOBRA



A small town in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh, it is a beautiful sleepy town perfect for a quiet vacation. The town is full of Himalayan cedar, wild strawberries and orchards. Tourists could enjoy a nice day out in Carignano, a beautiful picnic spot. Interestingly, here is a villa of an Italian photographer which was transformed into a weekend resort in 1920. Needless to say, this serene hill town is just the right place for someone looking for a quiet time, or for couples. Mashobra is also part of Shimla Reserve Forest sanctuary and catchment area; therefore, you can expect a wide range of flora and fauna in this region. While beautiful rhododendrons are dotted across the place, exotic birds take flight to delight the sky. What else could one ask for!

## VRINDAVAN



Located in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, Vrindavan is largely revered by Hindus, as it is where Lord Krishna spent his childhood days. There are dozens of temples dotted across the place where pilgrims flock to every year, but the charm of Vrindavan lies in its serenity. Vrindavan is also where Mira Bai spent her days in a temple which is known as "Pracheen Mira Bai Temple." While you are here at Vrindavan, you should also visit the Yamuna River which flows through this pious land. Some of the important religious destinations of Vrindavan include, Govind Dev Temple, Iskcon Temple, Kesi Ghat, Bankey Bihari Temple, Shahji Temple and Rangaji Temple. By far one of India's most characteristic city, where devotees come to feel the intoxicating love of Lord Krishna, Vrindavan can be an eye-opener for those who are looking to taste the true India.



## TARKARLI



A village with an attractive beach, Tarkarli is located in the Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. The stunning beach is surrounded by coconut palms and casuarinas, where peace and tranquillity is abounded. The beach is located at the meeting point of the Karli River and the Arabian Sea, and is by far one of the most romantic beaches you will ever explore. While sunbathing on the sandy beaches, you will constantly be in the company of fisherman casting their giant nets into the river; fishing is a year-round activity of this place. Visitors can also enjoy water activities such as, snorkelling, scuba diving, boating, white water rafting and water rides. In fact the place also has a scuba diving centre, known as, Indian Institute of Scuba Diving and Aquatic Sports. It has a dedicated 25ft deep pool for Scuba diving training, underwater research and commercial shooting.

Located in Madhya Pradesh, Mandu was originally the fort capital of the Parmar rulers of Malwa. With its historical background, the city of Mandu is today a fine example of the Mughal era architecture. Rulers of Mandu had once built exquisite palaces, such as, the Jahaz and Hindola Mahals, while building ornamental canals, baths and pavilions, as well. The city of Mandu is a favourite of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites as it is full of such important archaeological marvels. Some of the important sites of Mandu include, Rupmati's Pavilion, Nil Kanth Palace, Hoshang's Tomb (reputed to be the oldest marble structure of India), the Jama Masjid, Baz Bahadur's Palace, and more. It is a historical gem that should be of great importance for tourists wanting to see the history of the country.

## MANDU



## THE LEELA EXPANDS WITH THIRD LUXURY HOTEL IN DELHI NCR

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts recently announced a new addition to the group's luxury portfolio with the reflagging of Ambience Group's five-star deluxe hotel in East Delhi. Renamed 'The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi,' the 480-room property offers one of the largest conference and event space in India.

Commenting on the development, Rajiv Kaul, President, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts said: "The addition of The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel Delhi to our portfolio further consolidates our presence in the Delhi-NCR region and underscores our asset light growth strategy. The hotel is designed to offer a seamless experience for large conferences, weddings, exhibitions, product launches to guests from here and overseas. As India emerges as a significant destination for world-class banqueting, conventions and events, this property shall further assist in making Delhi a preferred upscale MICE destination."

The property is helmed by Jaideep Anand, an experienced hotelier with over three decades with leading hotel groups. Anand brings an immaculate reputation for excellence in hotel operations, food and beverage and wellness.



## PARK INN BY RADISSON DEBUTS IN AMRITSAR

Park Inn By Radisson Amritsar Airport, has opened its doors to welcome international and domestic travellers to experience its warm and friendly hospitality. Park Inn By Radisson hotels are set apart by their, 'Adding Color to LifeSsaM' guest service, designed to make stays fun, comfortable and uncomplicated.

"We are excited to announce the opening of Park Inn By Radisson Amritsar Airport. This is our ninth hotel in the state of Punjab. The hotel brings to Amritsar a bright, bold, fresh and energetic mid-market brand that provides great value. With this addition, Carlson Rezidor in India has 74 hotels in operation and 39 in the pipeline," said Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group.

Rajan Gill, Owner of Park Inn By Radisson Amritsar Airport said,

"We already have the Radisson Blu Amritsar in partnership with the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. We are very happy with our relationship with Carlson and are confident their management expertise will enable the hotel to outperform its competitors. I look forward to a mutually rewarding long-term relationship with the group."



## KUALA LUMPUR TO WELCOME MULTIPLE HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS HOTELS

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) recently announced the signing of management agreements with leading Malaysian company, the Winbond Group, to develop two new Holiday Inn Express hotels in the capital city of Malaysia: Holiday Inn Express Kuala Lumpur City Centre and Holiday Inn Express & Suites Kuala Lumpur Ampang.

Set to open in 2016, the 383-room Holiday Inn Express Kuala Lumpur City Centre will be built on the site of the existing Menara ING office tower and Holiday Inn Express & Suites Kuala Lumpur Ampang, is set to open in 2018, will feature 240 rooms and 60 suites, catering to both short and long-term stays in the city at an affordable price.

Leanne Harwood, Vice President, Operations, South East Asia, IHG said: "One of the main attractions of any Holiday Inn Express hotel is its excellent location at great value, and that is exactly what will make Holiday Inn Express Kuala Lumpur City Centre and Holiday Inn Express & Suites Kuala Lumpur Ampang excellent choices for guests."

Commenting on the partnership, Datuk Dr Tang Yong Chew, Managing Director, Winbond Group, said: "We're very confident in partnering with IHG to develop two Holiday Inn Express hotels in the vibrant city of Kuala Lumpur. The brand is one of the fastest growing hotel brands in the world and its limited-service offering is exactly what the locale needs. It also supports our strategy to continue diversifying our company's portfolio and part of this is to develop quality hotels in some of the country's best locations."





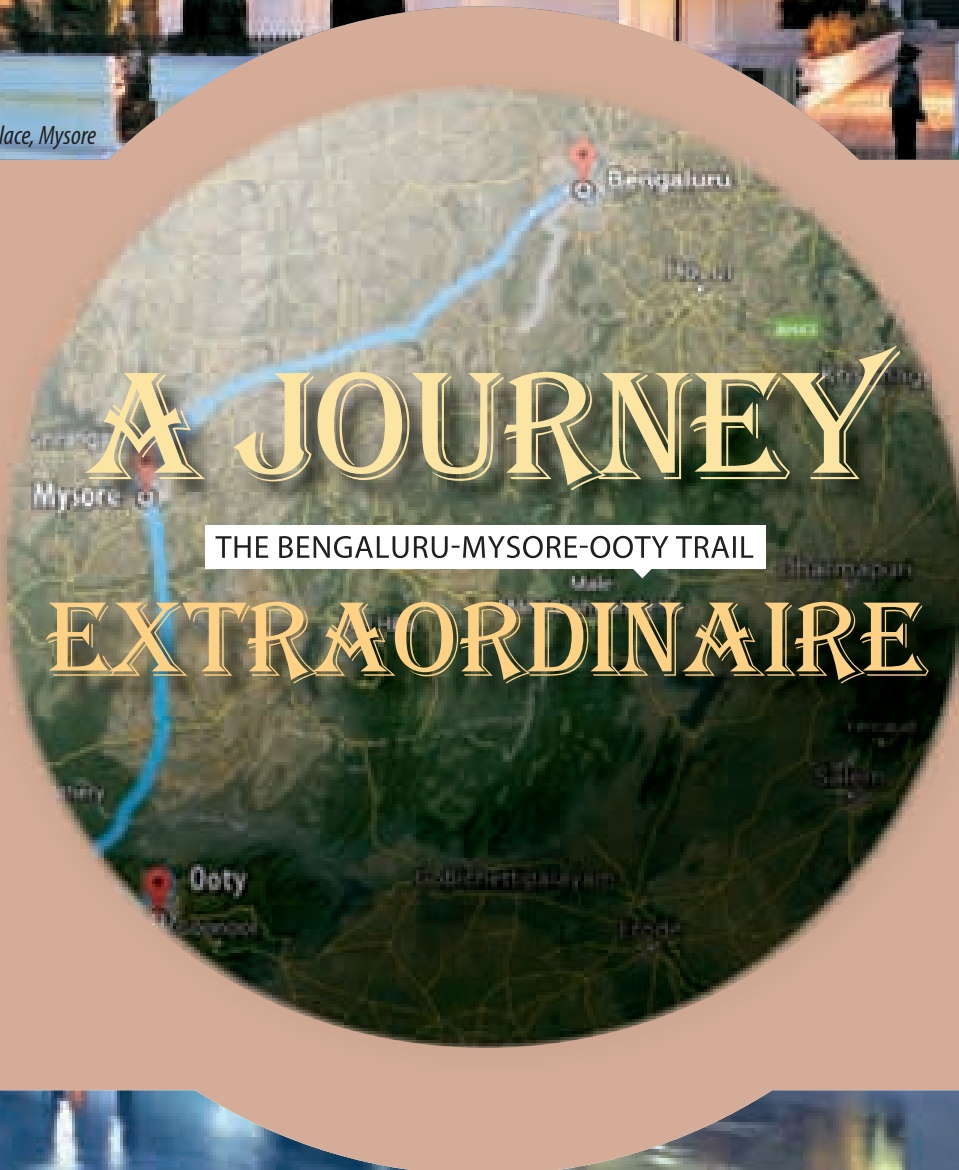
Fortune JP Palace, Mysore

## The journey... is the destination

The quintessential Indian travel is not complete without a visit to the South Indian states that have diverse cultures amalgamating to form a splendid manifestation of India.

A must-visit South Indian trail is that of Bengaluru-Mysore-Ooty, which holds some beautiful destinations. Discover these beautiful locales with some of the most comfortable stays provided by Fortune Hotels and WelcomHeritage Hotels.

From the IT hub of Bengaluru to the verdant hill town of Ooty, this South Indian trail offers myriad experiences. Each destination offers some of the most unique experiences – the famous Brigade Road for shoppers and the Palace of Bengaluru in Bengaluru; the Chamundi Hills and Kukkarahalli Lake in Mysore; while in Ooty, you can take a train ride on the famous Nilgiri Mountain Railway and later visit the Mudumalai National Park.





## BENGALURU

The capital of Karnataka, Bengaluru, popularly known as the "Silicon Valley of India," is well-known for its green spaces and jubilant night life. With a royal history to its credit, the city is a reflection of India's past and the modern Internet generation.

### MY FORTUNE, BENGALURU



With a premier downtown business address on Richmond Road, My Fortune, Bengaluru, is a stylish hotel that offers spirited and efficient service to the savvy traveller. Located adjacent to MG Road and Brigade Road, the 115-room hotel is central to prime shopping, entertainment and commercial areas of the city.

**Distance from:** International Airport: 39 km | MG Road: 0.5 km | Brigade Road: 2 km | Nearest Metro Station: 0.5 km | Cubbon Park: 4 km | Ulsoor Lake: 2.4 km

**Packages starting @ Rs 6,499/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.

### FORTUNE SELECT JP COSMOS, BENGALURU



Situated in the heart of Bengaluru city, just off Cunningham Road behind the famous Sigma Mall, Fortune Select JP Cosmos is just 2 km from MG Road. The upscale, contemporary hotel offers 134-smart and well furnished rooms along with an excellent range of guest facilities tailored to give the best of services to the discerning new age traveller.

**Distance from:** International Airport: 32 km | MG Road: 2 km | Brigade Road: 2 km | Ulsoor Lake: 3 km | Cubbon Park: 1.5 km | Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace: 5.5 km | UB City (Shopping Mall): 2 km

**Packages starting @ Rs 5,299/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.

### FORTUNE SELECT TRINITY, BENGALURU

From bustling markets to glittering skyscrapers – Fortune Select Trinity, Bengaluru, invites guests to discover them all. This is an upscale, contemporary business hotel in Whitefield, the IT hub of Bengaluru that offers 142-rooms along with a host of dining, meeting and recreation options to the guests.

**Distance from:** International Airport: 45 km | MG Road: 16 km | Brigade Road: 15 km | Phoenix Market City: 4 km | Forum Value Mall: 7 km | Ascendas Park Square Mall: 5 km | Cubbon Park:

18 km | Ulsoor Lake: 13 km | Bangalore Palace: 17 km | Lalbagh: 18 km | Tipu Sultan's Palace: 20 km

**Packages starting @ Rs 4,599/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.



My Fortune, Bengaluru

### Bangalore Golf Club

The oldest golf course outside the British Isles, the golf club stands out for its beautiful design and layout. Located at Sankey Road, High Grounds, Bangalore, this par-70, 18-hole golf course is spread across an area of 60 acres. The club hosts the oldest continuing inter-club tournament in the world.



Fortune Select JP Cosmos, Bengaluru



Fortune Select Trinity, Bengaluru





## FORTUNE PARK JP CELESTIAL, BENGALURU

Fortune Park JP Celestial, Bengaluru, complements the modern lifestyle of the city. The hotel is placed in close proximity to the lush green Bengaluru Race Course and Commercial Business District on MG Road. This contemporary full-service hotel in Bengaluru is designed for the new-age traveller seeking a relaxing stay with enjoyable meals and a range of guest facilities.

**Distance from:** International Airport: 38 km | Railway Station: 1 km | M.G. Road: 4 km | Mantri Mall: 1 km | Bangalore Palace: 5 km | Tipu Sultan's Palace: 5 km

**Packages starting @ Rs 3,899/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.



Fortune Park JP Celestial, Bengaluru

## MYSORE

The third largest city of Karnataka was once the capital of the Mysore Princely Kingdom, and has today earned the sobriquet of being the cultural capital of Karnataka. Famed for its Mysore silk, the city is a royal testimony of a culturally rich South India.

## FORTUNE JP PALACE, MYSORE

Fortune JP Palace makes you experience the charm of Mysore amidst warm hospitality. A first class, full service hotel with a palatial architecture and interiors that reflect the timeless beauty of Mysore, it captures the heritage of the historical city like no other modern structure. Strategically located opposite the Government House, the 108-room hotel has good connectivity to all nearby tourist destinations including the Mysore Palace which is just 2 km away from the hotel.

**Distance from:** Mysore Airport: 12 km | Railway Station: 3 km | Mysore Palace: 2 km | Chamundi Hill: 11.5 km | Brindavan Garden: 19 km | Rail Museum: 3 km | Bandipur National Park (Day Trip): 79 km

**Packages starting @ Rs 5,999/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.



Fortune JP Palace, Mysore



## Dasara

Celebrate: Mysuru Dasara, the "Nadahabba" or the State-Festival of the State of Karnataka. Also called as "Navaratri" meaning Nine-Nights, it is a 10-day festival, celebrated with utmost pomp and gaiety in the city of Mysuru. The Dasara festivities have a very long and rich history of more than 400 years.

## OOTY

Located in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu, this sublime hill station was founded by the British of the Madras Presidency during the days of the Raj. Ooty, surrounded by the Blue Mountains or Nilgiri Hills, offers great lakes, dense forests, sprawling grasslands, miles of tea gardens and eucalyptus trees.



## FORTUNE RESORT SULLIVAN COURT, OOTY

Set on the gentle slopes of Ooty, amidst lush green lawns and a colorful patterned garden, Fortune Resort Sullivan Court, Ooty is a modern-day tribute to John Sullivan, who founded the scenic town in 1821. This beautiful family resort offers a choice of 67-rooms with most of them providing scenic view of the slopes and is an ideal getaway for a fun-filled vacation.

**Distance from:** Coimbatore Airport: 100 km (3 hour drive) | Ooty Railway Station: 2 km | Rose Garden: Walking distance | City Centre/ Commercial Street: 1 km | Botanical Garden: 2 km | Ooty Lake: 4 km | Tea Factories: 6 km

**Packages starting @ Rs 7,799/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of breakfast. Taxes extra.

## National Parks

There are two national parks situated on the Nilgiri Mountains near Ooty. The Mudumalai National Park and the Mukurthi National Park are home for Indian elephants, tigers and as many as 226 different species of birds. The latter is an integral part of India's first international bio-sphere reserve.



Fortune Resort Sullivan Court, Ooty



## WELCOMHERITAGE FERRNHILLS ROYALE PALACE – OOTY

WelcomHeritage Ferrnhills Royale Palace, the summer palace of the Mysore Maharajas was built in 1844 by Capt F Cotton. The palace is superbly finished with Burmese teak, featuring a magnificent ballroom with a highly valued ornamental papier-mâché ceiling.

**Distance from:** Airport: The hotel is 100 km from Coimbatore airport. Railway Station: The hotel is 47 km from Mettupalayam railway station & 90 km from Coimbatore railway station.

**Packages starting from Rs. 10,500/-\*** per night inclusive of Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner and All Applicable Taxes.



WelcomHeritage Ferrnhills Royale Palace

## SANDUR

Sandur is a town in Bellary District in the Indian state of Karnataka. It has an average elevation of 1853 ft,

Sandur was once upon a time an erstwhile princely state. The Sandur valley is like a giant fortress, with an impressive range of hills, with two natural gateways or narrow gorges on either side, connected by a forest stream called Narihalla.

## WELCOMHERITAGE SHIVAVILAS PALACE – SANDUR, KARNATAKA

WelcomHeritage Shivavilas Palace, known as 'The Palace' was rebuilt in 1941 and stands as a testimony to the kingdom of Sandur. The palace built on 20 acres, has two floors of about 20,000 sq.ft each and houses 12 residential rooms which include two large Suites, a regular Suite and nine Deluxe Rooms. It is only 40kms away from the World Heritage Site of Hampi.

**Distance from:** Airport: The hotel is 310 km from Bengaluru International airport and 180 km from Hubli Airport. Railway Station: The hotel is 32 km from Hospet railway station and 171 km Hubli railway station.

**Packages starting from Rs. 4,500/-\*** per night on double occupancy, inclusive of all meals, Taxes Extra.



### The Ooty Flower Show

The flower show attracts over 3,00,000 tourists each year from all over the world. Every year around 15000 potted flowering plants are showcased that constitute 150 varieties of flowers. More than 50 varieties of potted plants, 150 varieties of cut flowers, various kinds of tropical, temperate vegetables and fruits are exhibited here.



WelcomHeritage Ferrnhills Royale Palace



WelcomHeritage Shivavilas Palace, Sandur



WelcomHeritage  
Shivavilas Palace,  
Sandur



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# ABSOLUTE JHARKHAND

The indigenous tribal communities of Jharkhand lends an aura of beautiful mysticism to this widely unexplored state

## TT BUREAU

Located in the eastern part of India, Jharkhand is known for its vast mineral wealth, extensive tribal culture and natural splendour. The state is largely visited by tourists from all over the country and abroad, who wish to experience indigenous culture and traditions. Needless to say that the state has everything – temples, wild

life sanctuaries, waterfalls and lucid rivers – allowing tourists to explore this largely unexplored land. Interestingly, the presence of over 30 tribal communities here has contributed to the art and craft of the state, along with the indigenous tribal culture. Let us take a look at some of the unexplored places of Jharkhand, along with its tribal culture and craft.

## DESTINATIONS

### Tagore Hill

Tagore Hill or Morabadi Hill is situated in the heart of Ranchi, and is popular as a 'meditation point.' The hill is a serene spot, whose main attraction is Shantidham. It is widely believed that Shantidham, which was built by Jyotindranath Tagore, was used by Rabindranath Tagore as a writing retreat. Tagore incidentally wrote many of his poems here at this spot. Today it attracts large number of tourists from neighbouring states every year, it serves as a great spot for visitors to just sit and contemplate. The hill also has a Ramakrishna Mission at its foot.

### Patratu Dam

A small town, 40km away from Ranchi, Patratu hosts the famous Patratu Dam. This dam which was constructed to store the Nalkari River water is the main attraction for tourists who come here. The total storage capacity of the







dam is 81q.m. To reach the dam, visitors have to go through the Patratu valley which makes for the perfect road trip, with its long and winding roads. Visitors would also be amazed to see the stunning views of natural Jharkhand all around them. Visitors can enjoy spectacular views of the dam from hills along the Pithouria-Patratu stretch.

### HANDICRAFTS

The 30-tribal communities of Jharkhand have contributed largely to the art and craft of the state. Art historians have noted that the oldest cave painting in India, known as, 'scroll paintings,' is the indigenous art of a Jharkhand tribe known as the Shabars. The state has also seen discoveries of great importance, from Stone Age tools from the Hazaribagh district, to rock paintings and cave painting in the Sati hills, dating back to over 10,000 years. It is quite clear that with such a deep historical links the state would produce some of the most exquisite handicrafts.

The tribal communities use bamboo, wood, metal craft and stone craft for their handicrafts. Jharkhand is also famous for Pitkar and Madhubani paintings. 'Tasar' silk, which is abundant in the state is widely used in garments and is much sought after in the country. Abstract wooden toys crafted in the village of Toupadana are famous all over the country.

### TRIBAL CULTURES

As much as 29 per cent of Jharkhand is tribal population, with the four major tribes being, the Santhals, Oraons, Mundas and Hos.

To enjoy the tribal cultures, visitors can take a trip to the Tribal Research Institute and Museum, located at the Chota Nagpur. Also, if you head towards the Santhal Parganas, in the north-east of the state, you will come to experience a whole new world, untouched by technology and glamour. In the Palamou and Latehar districts, you could find one of the oldest tribal communities, known as the Asurs. It is of vital importance

to note here, that the tribal dance of Chhou is a widely popular dance form originating from the tribes of Jharkhand. Chhou dance is performed with masks.





# WINTER BY THE LAKE

Odisha's Chilika Lake offers tranquillity like no other; enliven your dream vacation here



The winter months present itself in the garb of quietude, with low hanging clouds and endless fog engulfing human lives. It is however during this season, when magnificent migratory birds come to visit the largest brackish water coastal lake in the world, Lake Chilika. Close to 170 species of birds come from across the world to seek refuge in this beautiful lake, thereby, transforming it into a never-seen-before, charming water body. Lake Chilika is spread over Puri, Kurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha, and is your answer to a melancholic winter.

Branded as the 'queen of natural beauty,' the Chilika Lake allures tourists from different corners of the country. The multitudes of offerings, you get to enjoy at the lake, make Chilika one of the most-sought-after tourist places in Odisha. The shallow waters of the lake enclose an immense area of marshes, lowlands, and islands. It was in 1981, when the Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance, under the Ramsar Convention.

The serene environs of Chilika would transport you to an altogether different world—of utter peace. Away from the din of city life, the vast, picturesque expanse of the blue water creates a soothing effect on your mind and body. The endless stretches of Chilika are quite popular among tourists, particularly those looking for an idyllic gateway to tranquillity.

The Chilika Lake is studded with a number of islands that offer breathtaking beauty. These islands are a must-visit if

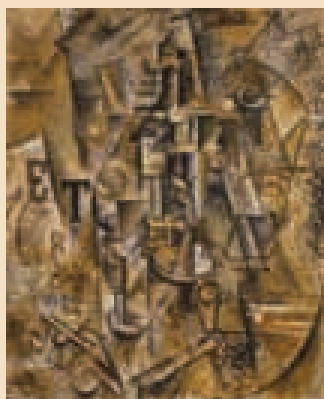
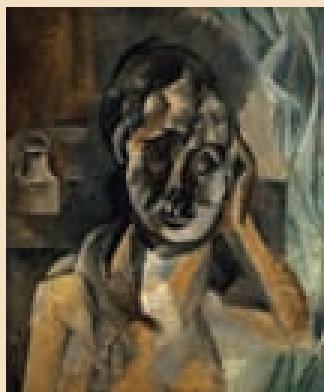
you want to view breathtaking sunrise and sunset. Some of the impressive islands that you must include in your itinerary while visiting to the Chilika Lake are Kalijai Island, Honeymoon Island, Breakfast Island, Birds Island, Nalabana (Island of Reeds) and Parikud Island. Nalaban Island has been classified as a Bird Sanctuary under the Wildlife Protection Act, and this also means that the lake is also home to a diverse range of aquatic life, including 225 species of fish and the Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella Brevirostris*).

If you are a bird watcher or love being in the company of the winged friends, Chilika would never disappoint you, particularly during the winters when the lake flutters with thousands of migratory birds. Popular among them are Flamingo; White-bellied Sea Eagle; Brahminy Kite; Spot-billed Pelican; Bar-headed Goose; Openbill Stork; Spoonbill; Brahimny Duck; Wigeon; Pintail; Shoveller; Ibis; Stilt; Heron; Egret; Avocet; Gull; Tern and King Fisher. Apart from the migratory birds, a large number of indigenous birds of varied hues flock at the lake, creating a symphony of colours.

Chital and Black Buck roam freely on the scrubby shores of the lake. Watching Dolphins gambolling playfully in the foam of the churning waters at the Chilika Lake is indeed a visual delight for the tourists.

To flaunt your adventurous time, you can opt from a range of exciting water-based activities. If you wish to race along the endless expanse of the lake, fast-paced water boats will serve you the best. And, those interested in just gently gliding over the ripples, must go for pedal boats. You can also enjoy angling at the lake, which is home to a rich variety of aquatic fauna.





# PICASSO'S BARCELONA... AND MORE

Barcelona delights with golden all-day sunshine, delicious alfresco dining in charming locales and hidden town squares where street musicians strum melodies on Spanish guitars





## KAMAL GILL

Early mornings in Barcelona are a painter's dream and if you were to see the water-colour landscapes come alive in a Picasso world...you would never be able to see the beautiful city through any other lens. Hallowed grounds are these...the site of Picasso's first studio, the gallery where he held his first exhibition, the café he used to frequent with his artist friends and the Picasso Museum which contains nearly 4000 works from Picasso's early career. Anecdotes about Picasso's time in Barcelona are enchanting and to the believer they deliver a truth that charms its way into creating memories that haunt.

Barcelona delights with some stunning weather, golden all-day sunshine and delicious alfresco dining in charming locales. Surprises come in the shape of architecture that takes your breath away...not in mere scale and vision but in the fact that it sits so easily at every street corner and blends effortlessly with the city landscape.

Yes, this city belongs as much to Antoni Gaudí, if one is to

go by his magnificent unfinished masterpiece La Sagrada Família (Holy Family Cathedral) or Park Güell now a UNESCO Heritage Site, with its wonderful stone structures, eye-catching tile-work and captivating buildings. The city is studded with Gaudí splendour... Barcelona was certainly his muse. There is Casa Batlló, another Gaudí masterpiece built in his signature style of fluid graceful contours or the riveting La Pedrera or Casa Milà, with its wavy stone facade and sculptures on the roof of a block of flats or the Casa Batlló – another Gaudí masterpiece.

Catalonia's vibrant capital, Barcelona has an atmospheric medieval quarter, the Barri Gòtic, with an almost magical Old World ambience, but is even more famous for its Modernist architecture. Although Antoni Gaudí left a lasting mark on Barcelona with his avant-garde Surrealist buildings, there is a quaint charm to this sea side city with its Mediterranean flavour.

There's much to choose from. You have Barcelona's splendid outdoors...sandy beaches and the Waterfront, nature trails, morning photography tours and a fascinating walk around the Gothic Quarter with its labyrinth of hidden streets, wonderful architecture and charming squares. Stroll down the narrow,





### **BASILICA DE LA SAGRADA FAMILIA**

One of Europe's most unconventional churches, this spectacular basilica is jaw-droppingly spectacular. The UNESCO-listed Basilica de la Sagrada Família dominates its surroundings with 18 soaring towers. Antoni Gaudí was commissioned in 1883 to design this basilica as a neo-Gothic church. But instead, he created a signature example of his famous surrealistic Art Nouveau architecture, altering and adding to the plans as work progressed. Although Gaudí had originally forecasted between ten and fifteen years, the church was never completed. And nobody knows whether or when it will ever be completed. Gaudí best captured the essence of his architectural masterpiece when he described it as an ode to God, adding, "my client is not in a hurry."



winding streets of La Rambla and visit the lively Boqueria market, with its displays of colorful fruit and vegetables, Iberian hams hanging in rows, fabulous fresh seafood, cheeses and chocolates. Linger over leisurely meals on outdoor terraces at the Harbour. Wander aimlessly and find hidden town squares where street musicians strum melodies on Spanish guitars.

You can take the hop on hop off tours, visit the oldest amusement park in Spain with the original rides, navigable lakes and waterfalls. You can move onto tapas and bar hopping with selections like beer and tapas or vermouth and tapas or more inventive ones depending on your sense of adventure. It is interesting to introduce yourself to the art of buying tapas and tasting a delicious selection of these famous Spanish appetizers at the best tapas bars in town.

The shop-till-you-drop tours have you winding your way through wide hi-end shopping districts with leafy avenues and the longest mall – the gargantuan L'illa Diagonal mall, housing 170 shops and restaurants, two 4-star hotels and a sports centre.

Barcelona's nightlife is varied – with open air cinemas, live dj sets on rooftops, and paradise beach bars dotted all over the city. The nightlife on offer in the bars, restaurants and dance clubs are cosmopolitan and world class, while the Flamenco dance evenings are a sensory must-have experience. The great party scene in Barcelona are the Erasmus parties which throw in special theme nights from as simple as 'Love Mondays' at Opium Mar or the ironically named 'Crappy Tuesday' at Apollo.

The action is mostly found around La Rambla, the wide boulevard arching from Placa de Catalunya to the Port Vell. It is great fun to see street entertainers wowing the crowds - mime artists, clowns, acrobats, magicians and live music jam sessions, jazz music, blues and rock bands. Port Vell itself has a modern complex of 5 clubs and bars at the top – which stay open till 5 am. Port Olympic has a Casino and many fun bars and clubs around the Marina .

In a city as magical and mysterious as Barcelona, there's



plenty to savour that goes beyond the ordinary, experiences that stay with you long after you've left.

In closing, an experience not to be missed is a visit to Parc del Labirint in Hortalast. Few tourists ever make it as far as the Parc del Labirint, and if you do, then this green space is a great place to enjoy. As you may have guessed, the centrepiece is its wonderfully intricate maze, designed in the 18th Century by the architect Domenico Bagutti, a wonderful place to lose both yourself and the crowds.

## BARCELONA'S MUST-SEE LIST

**Catedral-Barri Gòtic (Cathedral Gothic Quarter):** Barcelona Cathedral houses the tomb of Saint Eulalia along with a number of paintings and valuable metalwork. The Cathedral is the most important building in the Gothic Quarter.

**Port Vell:** The picturesque old harbour, a popular tourist area with many attractions, including sea-food restaurants.

**Port Olímpic:** This entertainment and leisure zone has become a popular area. Most people come here to enjoy the nightlife on offer in the bars, restaurants and dance clubs.

**La Sagrada Familia (Holy Family Cathedral):** Antoni Gaudí's magnificent unfinished masterpiece.

**Park Güell:** Designed by Gaudí and declared a Heritage Site by UNESCO. The park contains amazing stone structures, stunning tiling and fascinating buildings.

**Tibidabo:** This hill is Barcelona's highest point, so you can see the whole city from here. There is also an impressive modernist church, called Sagrat Cor (Sacred Heart), a planetarium and the oldest amusement park in Spain (complete with original rides).

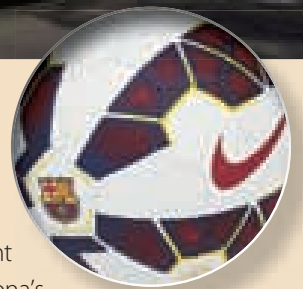
**La Pedrera or Casa Milà, (in Passeig de Gracia):** A block of flats with a wavy stone facade and sculptures on the roof, designed



by Antoni Gaudí and designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

**Casa Batlló (in Passeig de Gracia):** Another Gaudí masterpiece built in his signature style in which fluid lines and organic forms replace straight lines and right angles. Passeig de Gracia is Barcelona's most elegant and architecturally interesting avenue.

**L'illa Diagonal:** A gargantuan mall housing 170 shops and restaurants, two 4-star hotels, and a sports center. The shops include Diesel, Miss Sixty, Lacoste, Zara and the flagship store of Barcelona fashion house, Custo.





**Avinguda Diagonal:** One of Barcelona's most important avenues. It cuts the city in two, diagonally from west to east, hence the name.

## THE BARCELONA HOP ON HOP OFF BUS TOUR

The Barcelona Hop-On, Hop-Off tour allows you to discover the many attractions of this delightful city at your own pace.

This extensive tour covers all the highlights of the city in two great routes, from the unique Gaudi architecture to the lively beaches; all of Barcelona is covered with this hop-on, hop-off tour.

With one ticket, you can hop on and off as many times as you wish, change route, or just sit and enjoy the view from the state-of-the-art open-top bus. While on the bus you can learn about the city's rich culture and history with audio commentary offered in 12 languages.

Wow factor: FREE WIFI on board the hop-on hop-off bus.



## FLAMENCO EXPERIENCE AT TABLAO CORDOBÉS

Tablao Cordobés is located in the heart of Las Ramblas and is one of Barcelona's best Flamenco Clubs. Witnessing the passion and beauty of Flamenco is a must-do in Spain.

Barcelona's Tablao Cordobés is a living, vibrant school of Flamenco. It has become one of the most important dance schools, achieving international recognition.

Founded in 1970, "Tablao Cordobés," is considered to be a very demanding form of Flamenco style. Great Flamenco figures such as Farruco, Camarón, Manuela Carrasco, Mila de Vargas and Lole y Manuel have performed here. Flamenco is one of the most famous Spanish art form. It is an intimate and passionate dance and witnessing the beauty of Flamenco is a must-do in Spain.

Choose the dinner option to enjoy sumptuous local delicacies before the show. If you do choose the sumptuous dinner option, it will come from a typical Spanish and Mediterranean kitchen. The Buffet consists of cold plates (salads and entrée), hot plates (stews of meat and fish, specialty in paella) and a great assortment of delicious desserts.

After an evening at the Tablao Cordobés you will come away with a strong flavour and understanding of Spanish culture.

**Wow Factor:** The high octane energy that connects dancer with viewer.



# PICK OF THE MONTH

Pick your favourite from this month's all-new collection of books, games, audio CDs and DVDs

## BOOK: LEADING

The legendary Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson brings forth this essential book for not just United fans but the football world as a whole. Highly revered for his impeccable managerial skills, Ferguson breaks down his 38 record breaking years of management, from Scotland to Manchester. He reveals some key tools that he used to deliver to keep his career successful. The book co-written by Michael Moritz covers Ferguson's entire football career and is look into the pivotal leadership decisions of an astonishing career.



**Genre (s): Sports**



## MUSIC: HOZIER

Taking the music world by a storm, Irish singer, Andrew Hozier-Byrne released his debut album Hozier. The album shot off creating a buzz, with his single, "Take me to Church," and went on to get positive reviews from all quarters. The singer with his soulful voice takes listeners to an alley of complete darkness and calmness. Mostly brushing on the side of the blues, Hozier manages to blend in some R&B into his music. The Irishman is supposedly, the next big thing to watch out for in the music world. The album has a total of 13 songs, each with its own characteristic style.

**Genre (s): Indie Rock, Soul, Blues**

## DVD: MR. HOLMES

Based on the famous character, Sherlock Holmes, the movie revolves around Holmes, after his return from a research trip in Japan, where he has witnessed the devastating effects of nuclear warfare. The movie stars renowned actor, Sir Ian McKellen in the role of Sherlock Holmes, who is old and has his housekeeper and her young son for company. Holmes soon starts to revisit the unsolved case which had forced him to retire, and in the process searches for the mysteries of life and love. Needless to say it is a must buy for Sherlock Holmes fans.



**Genre (s): Crime Drama Mystery**

## GAME: PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2016

Enjoy an exciting game of soccer with the all new Pro Evolution Soccer 2016 (PES). The game this time is bigger and more advanced than before as the edition focuses on game play and allowing players to have new characteristics. The game also features a rehashed Master League and as well as other well-defined enhancements for a perfect experience. PES 2016 will also feature all the UEFA club competitions, which includes, Champions League, Super Cup and Europa League. The game can be played in single-player and multi-player mode.

**Genre (s): Sports**



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# TURKISH AIRLINES CELEBRATES THE REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

