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Asia's Top **Destinations** Hospitality Reviews

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Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to another vibrant edition of Travel Links, proudly counted among India's Top 10 Luxury Travel Trade Magazines. Each issue is a passport to discovery, designed for professionals and passionate travellers alike who appreciate the finer details of the travel and hospitality world. In this edition, we celebrate the richness of Asia's top destinations, bring you exclusive conversations with international thought leaders, and share immersive hospitality experiences that define what it means to travel with purpose and luxury.

Asia, in all its diversity and dynamism, stands at the forefront of global travel today. From the ancient cultural corridors of Japan and the spiritual serenity of Bhutan, to the futuristic UAE and the renewed luxury of Dubai—this region continues to enchant, evolve, and expand our travel imaginations. We believe in going beyond checklists to uncover the essence of a place, and this edition is a tribute to that spirit.

This issue is also special for the insightful interviews we've had the opportunity to conduct with senior international leaders from the travel and tourism industry. Their voices—full of vision, resilience, and innovation—shed light on the evolving patterns of luxury travel, the growing importance of sustainability, and how the industry is adapting to new-age travellers. Their stories are not just about numbers and trends; they are about people, purpose, and pushing the boundaries of what travel can mean.

Our hospitality reviews continue to offer our readers an insider's look into some of the finest hotels, resorts, and retreats. Whether it's a newly launched urban oasis or a heritage haven reimaged for the modern guest, we assess each experience with the care and detail that our discerning audience deserves. These reviews go beyond aesthetics—they delve into service, design philosophy, guest experience, and the unique stories that each property embodies.

At Travel Links, our commitment remains clear: to present travel as a transformative journey. As a B2B luxury magazine, we recognize our responsibility to both inspire and inform—to bridge the gap between industry insight and traveller experience. We stand at the crossroads of luxury, sustainability, and conscious exploration, and it is our endeavour to spotlight voices, venues, and visions that resonate with these values.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. As always, we invite you to turn each page with curiosity and wonder. Here's to discovering new perspectives, building global connections, and continuing to redefine the art of travel.

Payal Sahni

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MR. VIPUL GUPTA, DIRECTOR, THE METROPOLITAN HOTEL & SPA

Ms. Elena Orland is the Director of the Tourism Office of Spain

Ms. Elena Orland is the Director of the Tourism Office of Spain and Tourism Counselor at the Embassy of Spain in India. She holds degrees in Law and Information Sciences from the Complutense University of Madrid. She has been a senior Government official of the Spanish Civil Service since 1998, specializing in Public Administration and Management. Throughout her distinguished career, Elena has focused on sustainability in economic activities and environmental management, working extensively within the Spanish Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenges. She has also served as an advisor to the High Commissioner of the Parliament of Spain (Ombudsman) on these critical issues. We at “Travel Links” talk to her about ever changing tourism dynamics and evolving travel experiences. By **Payal Sahni**

Q Spain offers a rich mix of history, culture, and modern attractions. What are the top five must-visit places that you would recommend to Indian travellers?

It may seem like an exaggeration, but it's not possible to choose just 5 places in Spain that a tourist cannot miss. I would recommend to select these places according to the time of year. For the spring, beyond Madrid and Barcelona I would suggest to visit Sevilla, Córdoba, or Cáceres, where you can enjoy traditional spring festivals. The Moors and Christians Parade in Alcoi is extremely popular too. Additionally, some activity close to nature is a must, as the fields in Spain are filled with flowers. Just a road day trip from the main cities in Castilla León, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura o Andalucía will allow you to enjoy extraordinarily beautiful landscapes and discover cultural heritage that's off the beaten track. Best selfies guaranteed!

Q How important is the Indian travel market for Spain? Have you seen a rise in Indian tourists in recent years?

India is a very important travel market for Spain. For the market segment that prefers to travel to Europe, Spain continues to be one of the top destinations. Spain received approximately 230,000 Indian visitors in 2024. And as per the latest available data, we received approximately 10,700 Indian visits in January 2025, compared to around 8,600 in



January 2024, which represents an increase of approximately 24%. We expect the trend to continue in 2025 as well. However, as much as the visitor numbers matter, Spain is aiming to improve the quality of tourism. In this regard, Indian tourists display excellent performance in Spain, with the average spending per Indian traveller (approximately 2,600 euros) exceeding that of the tourists from rest of the markets.

Q Spain is known for its diverse culinary experiences. What are the top Spanish dishes or food experiences that Indian travellers should not miss?

Just like Indians, Spaniards are passionate about gastronomy too, and having a meal is a



social and family activity. One such example is tapas, a way of enjoying food with family and friends that Spain has exported to the rest of the world. You can tapear (i.e. have tapas) in all the cities and towns of Spain, but the Basque Country has elevated the tapa to an art form. An extremely popular dish is cocido, which is made with legumes and has different versions depending on the region: cocido madrileño (from Madrid), pote asturiano (from Asturias), puchero andaluz (from Andalucía), and so on. And of course, there are variety of rice dishes - either dry (paella), very typical on the Valencian and Balearic coasts), or soupy (arroz caldoso) - in northern Spain). You have thousands of options for all budgets - from charming little taverns to Michelin star restaurants.



Q Beyond mainstream tourism, Spain offers unique experiences like music festivals, flamenco, wine tourism, and adventure sports. Could you highlight some niche experiences that appeal to Indian tourists?

Another similarity between Indians and Spaniards is how much we love music and festivals. Every season has its own - from the Carnivals in February to the Semana Santa (Holy Week) and Gay Parade in the spring, from cheerful Christmas Markets in winter to colorful Andalusian festivals in summer. In fact, during this season, even the smallest of Andalusia villages celebrate a festival in their own unique way!

When it comes to music, Spain has a variety of musical styles. And most popular one at international level is of course Flamenco. The best season to enjoy flamenco festivals would be summer. The Jerez Festival in Cádiz and the Las Minas Festival in Murcia are especially quite noteworthy. Even in Madrid, you can attend the Suma Flamenca or visit a tablao flamenco.

The wine culture in Spain is inseparably linked to gastronomy. To showcase all the cultural and natural variety associated with wine, you can follow one of the Wine Routes. For example, the Ribera del Duero Wine Route, stretching over 115 km with the Douro River as its constant travelling companion, blends the tradition of the winemaking families with the Castilian gastronomy and avant-garde architecture. You can further experience a diverse variety of Spanish wines on various routes such as Rias Baixas Wine Route in northern Spain or Ribera del Guadiana Wine and Cava Route in Extremadura, just to name a few.

Besides, nature offers countless possibilities, from trekking in a Natural Park or cycling in a green trail to birdwatching (with more than 600 species) or stargazing in the most clear skies of the world, in the Canary Islands. More adventurous travelers will also find places for climbing, canoeing or skiing in the mountainous regions such as Picos de Europa or Pyrenees. For example, The Caminito del Rey in Málaga could be a superb experience - a breathtaking walkway suspended along steep cliffs, offering a mix of adrenaline and spectacular views.

Indian travellers love culture-rich



Q experiences. How does Spain promote its rich history, music, and traditions to Indian visitors?

If you are looking for a perfect mix of history, culture and premium experiences, Paradores Nacionales - a public chain of luxury hotels - offers unique stays in magnificent historic or natural landmarks such as castles, convents or national parks. The beauty of Granada Parador (inside the Alhambra) or Ronda Parador is beyond words. There are almost a hundred Paradores in Spain and the lesser known ones are by no means any less

spectacular. For example, the Parador in Argomaniz (Basque Country), located in a building dating back to 1712, is an elegant Renaissance palace with views the plains of Alava and the Sierra de Gorbea.

Q How is Spain promoting itself in the Indian market? Are there any campaigns or special initiatives planned for 2025-26?

We feel that Indian traveller, just like many international travellers, are becoming more and more aware of responsible tourism. And Spanish public administrations and



tourism sector are strongly committed to move progressively towards more sustainable travel. So, yes, sustainability is one of our key priorities. Therefore, in our various planned activities - offline and online - we want to provide visibility to the lesser-known, yet premium destinations, the extremely good Spanish railway infrastructure (having carbon neutral network), the exemplary deployment of renewable energies and the commitment of hospitality sector to meet sustainability criteria.


Q Collaboration is key in tourism growth. Are there any strategic partnerships between Spain and Indian tour operators, airlines, or influencers?

The tourism sector in India boasts such professionalism and competitiveness that each stakeholder/partner always contributes something different in our promotional efforts, which in turn provides great visibility and reach for the Spanish destinations. Our strategy is to opt for diversification.

We have had some wonderful opportunities to work with the leading tour operators in the Indian market. This kind of collaboration, either through on-ground events in Indian cities or familiarization trips to various regions of Spain, presents a perfect win-win opportunity for us and for our industry partners.

Q In the digital era, how important is print media in Spain's tourism marketing strategy? Does Tourism Spain still invest in travel magazines and print campaigns in India?

Yes, referring our earlier mentioned objectives, we do consider print media as one of the key tools to reach a broader audience. In spite of exponential growth in digital content, I believe the print publications continue to maintain their own identity and charm in the Indian market.

Besides, for certain segments of travellers who may not be as digitally connected or prefer offline sources of information, the print newspapers and magazines play a vital role when it comes to obtaining information. Many tourists still appreciate to hold a guidebook or map while travelling and enjoy the experience of getting inspiration from printed media. 

Mr. Radhey Tawar, CCO, Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts

As the Chief Commercial Officer of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, Radhey Tawar oversees the development and execution of the company's integrated commercial strategy, including the identification of new products and markets, revenue growth across all lines of business, brand marketing, global corporate reputation through public relations, and the extensive digital ecosystem as well as establishing a global sales network. In collaboration with the other executive leadership team members, Radhey is involved in all Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts customer experience touch points. He plays an integral role in the brand's transition to being a luxury operator. Besides spending quality time with his wife and three boys, Radhey loves outdoor running and is always up for a challenge participating in half or full marathons. Mr. Radhey's interaction with Travel Links Magazine. By **Payal Sahni**

Q Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts has established itself as a prominent brand in the luxury hospitality space. What are the key strategies behind your commercial success?

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts' commercial success is rooted in a multi-faceted strategy focusing on several key areas. Cinnamon Life – City of Dreams Sri Lanka is the flagship integrated resort, positioning itself as the premier MICE, leisure, and entertainment hub in South Asia. The Cinnamon DISCOVERY loyalty program enhances guest experiences and fosters repeat business through personalized offerings. Experiential hospitality is another core focus, crafting immersive stays that connect travellers with Sri Lanka's rich cultural and natural heritage. Sustainability is vital, with initiatives such as reducing single-use plastics and conservation efforts through Cinnamon Nature Trails. Additionally, the Sri Lanka Conference Ambassador Programme, launched in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau and SriLankan Airlines promotes Sri Lanka as a premier MICE destination for international conferences, thereby strengthening the country's position. This comprehensive approach enables Cinnamon to stand out in the highly competitive global hospitality market.

Q Can you share insights into your current expansion plans? Are there any new destinations or properties in the pipeline?

Cinnamon's most significant expansion effort is Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams Sri Lanka, which opened in October 2024, aiming to transform Colombo into a world-class tourism and business destination. The recent launch of Kandy Myst by Cinnamon further strengthens the brand's presence. The company continues to explore growth



opportunities in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, focusing on leisure, adventure, MICE, and luxury offerings while expanding its loyalty program footprint globally. In addition, Cinnamon is committed to human capital development by expanding the Cinnamon Hospitality Academy to ensure a steady pipeline of talent for the industry.

Q With growing competition in the luxury travel segment, how do Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts differentiate itself from other premium hospitality brands?

Cinnamon differentiates itself through three key pillars. Firstly, its deep destination expertise and focus on authentic experiences allow guests to engage with Sri Lanka's heritage, culture, and biodiversity beyond standard luxury stays. Secondly, Cinnamon Life – City of Dreams Sri Lanka integrates high-end hospitality, entertainment, and business tourism, offering a unique proposition for travellers. Lastly, the brand's commitment to sustainability and community engagement sets it apart, focusing on local empowerment, conservation, and responsible tourism practices, making it a preferred choice for experience-driven travelers.

Sustainability and conscious luxury

Q are becoming crucial factors for modern travellers. How does Cinnamon integrate these values into its operations?

Sustainability is at the core of Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts' operations, reflected in various initiatives that align with modern travellers' expectations for conscious luxury. The brand has eliminated single-use plastics and invested in sustainable bottling plants in partnership with Nordaq. Energy efficiency measures, including renewable energy solutions and water conservation programs, further contribute to sustainability goals. Additionally, the company supports local economies through fair employment, skills training, and heritage conservation, ensuring that tourism growth benefits both the environment and local communities. The Cinnamon Nature Trails program also plays a significant role by offering eco-conscious wildlife experiences while actively supporting conservation efforts.

Q What are some of the most unique experiences that guests can expect at your flagship properties?

Cinnamon offers unique guest experiences across its flagship properties. Cinnamon Life – City of Dreams presents an urban escape blending entertainment, culinary excellence, and business facilities. Cinnamon Bentota Beach's Signature Selection provides a wellness retreat designed for digital detox and JOMO (Joy of Missing Out) travel. The brand's wildlife and nature experiences



include luxury leopard safaris at Cinnamon Wild Yala and witnessing the world's largest elephant gathering at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana. Immersive culinary journeys, such as authentic Sri Lankan farm-to-table dining experiences, further enrich guests' stays. Each property delivers more than just accommodation—it offers a journey of discovery.

Q How does your brand approach promotions and marketing strategies to attract luxury travellers, especially in the Indian market?

Cinnamon's approach to promotions and

marketing is heavily focused on data-driven personalization and strategic partnerships. The Cinnamon DISCOVERY loyalty program leverages its GHA network to tap into over 30 million high-value travelers worldwide. The brand also engages micro-influencers and social media marketing to create authentic storytelling. A strong focus on MICE and bleisure travel positions Colombo as a preferred destination for Indian corporate travelers and wedding groups. Experience-led campaigns showcase curated travel itineraries, highlighting Sri Lanka's hidden gems and off-the-beaten-path destinations. Given India's importance as a key market, Cinnamon's customized marketing strategies ensure continued relevance and appeal to discerning travellers.

Q Personalization and curated experiences are now at the heart of luxury travel. How does Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts enhance guest experiences through customization?

Personalization and curated experiences are fundamental to Cinnamon's hospitality approach. The Cinnamon DISCOVERY program offers tier-based benefits, recognition, and exclusive experiences for loyal guests. Bespoke itineraries, from private dining to guided wildlife safaris, are crafted to cater to individual preferences. Culinary personalization allows guests to enjoy custom meal plans curated by top chefs. Additionally, technology integration, such as AI-driven guest preference tracking,



Mr. Romit Theophilus

Mr. Romit Theophilus is the Director India for the German National Tourist Office (GNTO). He is responsible for promoting Germany as a desirable leisure travel destination. Mr. Theophilus talks to Travel Links Magazine and shares the insights about the destination and promotional work for the Indian market. By Payal Sahni

Q Can you share what are your key responsibilities and focus areas?

My work involves spearheading campaigns and initiatives to increase the number of Indian tourists visiting Germany. I work to strengthen relationships with the Indian travel trade industry and the Press personals Pan India. I am also the

Managing Director at Airplus Travel Services Pvt. Ltd., which represents the German National Tourist office in India. I have been involved in increasing the amount of overnight stays of Indian tourists visiting Germany.

What are some of the key tourism

Q strategies that the German National Tourism Organisation is currently working on?

The German National Tourist Office is actively pursuing several key tourism strategies, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and digitalization. This involves promoting eco-friendly travel options and raising awareness of responsible tourism and improving the sustainability of tourism through tools like the "Sustainable Development Goals".

GNTB is embracing digital technologies to enhance the tourist experience. This includes utilizing immersive technologies like virtual and augmented reality, as well as artificial intelligence applications. Foremost our core focus is on the working on open data projects, to make German tourism offerings more visible on AI based marketing platforms. GNTO, India jointly with GNTB is developing targeted marketing campaigns to attract specific segments of travellers, such as those interested in cultural experiences and showcasing the diversity of Germany's tourism offerings, including its cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and urban attractions.

Q Could you highlight any major campaigns that GNTB is running to attract international travellers, particularly from India?

Our promotional strategy in India is multi-faceted, this includes digital marketing, partnerships with travel agencies, B2C Publications, Press media interactions, and our own travel events. The potential for growth is substantial, driven by India's expanding middle class and the desire for unique travel experiences. Our key campaign for 2025, "Culture land Germany"



is central to our efforts, we are showcasing Germany's rich cultural heritage through digital marketing, travel trade partnerships, and media outreach. We are highlighting the country's historical landmarks, artistic treasures, and vibrant cultural events, appealing to the discerning Indian traveller. Secondly, we are relaunching "Embrace German Nature," which corresponds perfectly with our sustainability practices. We are promoting Germany's natural beauty and outdoor activities, emphasizing eco-friendly tourism and responsible travel. Through media trips and marketing activities, we are showcasing sustainable practices and encouraging travellers to explore Germany's natural wonders responsibly. We are also promoting travel to German regions that have implemented sustainable practices. Thirdly, we are launching a new campaign focused on "honeymooners", combining all-season activities to appeal to the Indian audience. This campaign will showcase Germany's romantic destinations, offering a blend of cultural experiences, outdoor adventures, and luxurious accommodations. We believe this campaign has significant potential to attract couples seeking memorable honeymoon experiences.

How significant is the Indian market for





influences potential tourists' perceptions of what Germany offers. Through travel programs, documentaries, online videos, and social media posts, media can inspire travel and set trends. Positive portrayals can make Germany a "must-visit" location.

Q Beyond iconic cities like Berlin and Munich, which lesser-known destinations in Germany do you think deserve more attention from global travellers?

The most popular destinations for Indian visitors in Germany continue to be a blend of historical cities and scenic regions. Munich, with its Bavarian charm and proximity to the Alps, remains a top choice, followed by Berlin's vibrant culture and history, Frankfurt's connectivity, Heidelberg's romantic allure, the picturesque Romantic Road, Cologne's iconic cathedral, Hamburg's maritime flair, the Black Forest's natural beauty, Baden Baden for its top-notch Spa's and wellness options and Nuremberg and Dresden, especially during the festive season. These are some of the few regions that offer a diverse range of experiences that appeal to a broad spectrum of Indian travellers.

Q Germany is known for its rich food culture. What are some of the best culinary experiences that visitors should not miss?

Germany's culinary scene offers a diverse range of experiences from traditional Bavarian dishes often accompanied by local beer in a beer garden to enjoying a dish of mashed potatoes, applesauce, and black pudding, and relishing regional wines in the famous Rhein Region. Germany boasts an incredible variety of breads. If visiting during the holiday season, travellers can experience the magical atmosphere of German Christmas markets, where one can enjoy Glühwein (mulled wine), Lebkuchen (gingerbread), and other festive treats. Germany also has a thriving fine dining scene, with numerous Michelin-starred restaurants offering innovative cuisine and exceptional dining experiences. Exploring German wine regions, particularly along the Rhine and Moselle rivers, and sample Riesling and other local wines. If visiting during the spring, enjoy white asparagus, a seasonal delicacy served with various accompaniments. Each region has its own unique speciality.



Q How is Germany embracing sustainable and conscious travel, and what initiatives is GNTB promoting to encourage eco-friendly tourism?

Climate change is a global concern, however we are working with our partners to promote eco-friendly accommodations and activities. Our goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability by focusing on responsible travel and adapting to the changing climate.

Q What advice would you give to travellers looking to experience Germany beyond the usual tourist trail, with more immersive and authentic experiences?

To truly experience Germany beyond the typical tourist routes and have more immersive and authentic experiences, we would advise travellers to prioritize regional exploration and local interaction. Instead of focusing solely on major cities, seek out

smaller towns and villages, where you can encounter traditional German life. Delve into the regional culinary scene, moving beyond standard tourist fare to savour local specialties in family-run restaurants and markets. Actively participate in local festivals and events, as these provide invaluable insights into regional culture. Embrace local transportation, such as regional trains and buses, and consider staying in guesthouses or apartments to foster more personal connections. Making an effort to learn basic German phrases will greatly enhance your interactions with locals. Furthermore, seeking out immersive experiences like local workshops, exploring natural landscapes, and supporting local businesses will contribute to a more authentic and meaningful journey. By traveling mindfully and respecting local customs, you can create lasting memories and gain a deeper understanding of Germany's diverse culture. [\[1\]](#)

In talks with Mitalee Karmarkar

Mitalee Karmarkar, Marketing and Communications Manager: MEISEA, South African Tourism. She is a seasoned marketing and communications leader. With over 15 years of experience in brand strategy, public relations, and Business development, she is currently heading marketing, communications, And public relations for South African Tourism across India, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, she has been instrumental in enhancing Brand visibility, reshaping market perceptions, and driving consumer Engagement. Her expertise lies in crafting compelling narratives and Integrated campaigns that resonate with modern, digital-first Audiences. By **Payal Sahni**

Q How important is the Indian market for South African tourism, and what unique opportunities does it offer?

India is the 7th largest source market for South Africa globally and the second largest in the Asia-Pacific region with a rapidly expanding outbound travel sector, India presents immense potential for international tourism, driven by a growing middle class, rising disposable income, and an increasing appetite for diverse travel experiences.

While South Africa is renowned for its incredible wildlife safaris, its appeal to Indian travellers extends far beyond, offering adventure tourism, luxury getaways, cultural experiences, and MICE opportunities. This makes India a key priority market for us. Our commitment to strengthening this relationship is further supported by strong trade and diplomatic ties between the two nations, fostering even greater travel opportunities.

In 2024, South Africa welcomed 75,541 visitors from India achieving 80% of its pre covid numbers, with an impressive 63.6% originating from Mumbai, underscoring the city's significant outbound travel potential.

Q What are the key strategies South African Tourism is implementing to attract more Indian travellers?

Over the past five years, we have seen a shift from traditional holidays to immersive, experience-led travel, particularly among Gen Z and millennials. Recognising this evolution, we launched the More & More

campaign, curating tailored itineraries that highlight South Africa's hidden gems and lesser-explored provinces in collaboration with Indian influencers.

Bollywood and cricket, two of India's greatest passions, remain at the heart of our strategic approach, fostering deeper cultural connections with Indian travellers. With South Africa set to host the Cricket World Cup



in 2027, the country's tourism department is working to boost awareness among Indian travellers. Additionally, given the strong influence of films in shaping travel choices, South Africa is leveraging this connection to attract more visitors.

Further, we are actively engaging with Indian tour operators, who have been our invaluable partners. To capitalise on growing demand, we recently hosted our annual three-city roadshow in 2025 across Delhi, Chennai, and Mumbai, bringing together over 41 exhibitors offering everything from luxury stays to adventure and family-friendly experiences.

MICE tourism is also a key focus for us, through our Learn SA workshops — an instrumental initiative aimed at educating travel agents, particularly in Tier II and Tier III cities, highlighting South Africa's diverse offerings. Additionally, we strategically launched our deal-driven campaigns during India's peak festive season, providing competitive flight options, making South Africa even more accessible. Through these initiatives, we continue to strengthen relationships with both travel trade partners and Indian travellers, firmly positioning South Africa as a premier destination for leisure, adventure, and business travel.

Q Are there any developments regarding easier visa access or multi-entry visas for Indian travellers? How does South Africa compare to other destinations in terms of accessibility?

Yes, and gladly so, we previously faced



visa-related challenges, but these now been resolved with the launch of the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS). Today, we are significantly streamlining the visa process for Indian travellers, making South Africa more accessible than ever. Spearheaded by the Department of Home Affairs, this initiative ensures visas are now processed within just three working days, with a substantial reduction in required documentation. Currently, 65 tour operators are enrolled under the scheme, including 14 from India, all of whom have undergone a rigorous vetting process before being appointed.

Beyond expediting visa approvals, TTOS simplifies group visa applications by providing a dedicated team of adjudicators for faster and more efficient processing. Since its implementation, we have seen a notable increase in visa applications submitted through these participating travel agents, reinforcing the scheme's positive impact. Looking ahead, we are actively encouraging more Indian tour operators to join Phase II of the initiative, further enhancing accessibility and strengthening South Africa's position as a preferred destination for Indian travellers.

Q With long-haul travel becoming more competitive, are there any plans to improve air connectivity between India and South Africa?

This is the second major issue we are addressing, enhancing air connectivity between India and South Africa a key priority for us. Recently, during our 2025 Roadshow in India, South African Airways was among the 41 exhibitors, aiming to assess market

demand and explore the feasibility of introducing direct flights for the Indian market. I am optimistic that these efforts will yield positive outcomes. Additionally, we had South Africa's Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille who visited India last year and engaged with key Indian airlines to discuss potential code-sharing partnerships, further bridging the connectivity gap. We will continue to collaborate closely with airline partners and stakeholders to facilitate more seamless travel options for Indian tourists.

Q South Africa offers wildlife, adventure, luxury, and cultural tourism. How do you plan to

position the country uniquely for Indian travellers?

Indian travellers have a strong appetite for adventure—while they may be hesitant at first, they quickly embrace exhilarating experiences such as shark cage diving, the world's highest bungee jump, and microlight flying. Beyond these, South Africa offers over 3,000 adventure activities, providing Indian visitors with experiences that extend far beyond wildlife safaris. The country's diverse landscapes make it a paradise for road trips, self-drive holidays, and scenic train journeys, all of which are gaining popularity among Indian tourists. South Africa's vibrant cities, rich cultural heritage,





and dynamic culinary scene further add to its appeal, with Indian-friendly cuisine becoming increasingly accessible.

Additionally, we are actively promoting wine tourism by showcasing the breathtaking vineyards of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, and Constantia. These regions offer exceptional tasting experiences and luxury stays, adding yet another dimension to South Africa's diverse travel offerings. With so much to explore, we continue to position South Africa as the ultimate destination for Indian travellers seeking adventure, culture, and unique experiences.

Q How is South African Tourism promoting sustainable and conscious travel experiences?

At South African Tourism, we believe that travel should be both inspiring and responsible. Our commitment to sustainable and conscious tourism ensures that visitors have meaningful experiences while making

a positive impact on the environment and local communities.

As the global travel industry embraces responsible tourism, South Africa is at the forefront, offering eco-conscious experiences that allow travellers to engage deeply with nature and culture. We actively promote eco-friendly accommodations, conservation-driven wildlife encounters, and responsible tourism initiatives that protect our breathtaking landscapes and diverse ecosystems.

Beyond sustainability, we are committed to uplifting local communities. From supporting marine conservation projects and ethical farm stays to offering township tours that provide authentic cultural insights while directly benefiting local businesses, we ensure that tourism contributes to economic empowerment. By collaborating with small enterprises, local artisans, and grassroots organizations, we create immersive travel opportunities that allow visitors to



experience the real South Africa while giving back.

Sustainable tourism is not just a trend—it is the future of travel. At South African Tourism, we are dedicated to ensuring that every journey through our country is one of adventure, culture, and natural beauty, while also fostering a sense of purpose and responsibility.

Q With rising competition from other long-haul destinations, what are South Africa's key advantages?

South Africa continues to shine as a top long-haul destination, even with growing competition. The country keeps making travel smoother and more accessible, with recent visa reforms like the new Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system and the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS) helping to simplify the process.

But it's not just about convenience South Africa offers something for everyone. Whether you're after world-class wildlife safaris, stunning beaches, buzzing cities, or rich cultural heritage, there's no shortage of incredible experiences. On top of that, it's becoming a go-to spot for business events, with top-notch venues, great infrastructure, and plenty of leisure activities to round off a work trip.

With its natural beauty, warm hospitality, and endless things to see and do, South Africa remains a must-visit destination for travellers from around the world.

Q If you had to recommend five must-visit places or experiences in South Africa, what would they be?

This question is a bit challenging to answer, given that South Africa has so much to offer, and every visit brings something new to experience. However, for first-time travellers to South Africa, one should definitely visit the Garden Route is a stunning coastal stretch with lush forests and charming towns. For those seeking an adrenaline rush, shark diving in Gansbaai offers a chance to see great white sharks up close. Wine lovers can discover the Cape Winelands, home to world-class vineyards in Stellenbosch and Franschhoek. Wildlife enthusiasts should not miss Kruger National Park, a must-visit safari destination offering sightings of the Big Five. Meanwhile, Knysna, with its serene lagoon and iconic Knysna Heads, is perfect for a peaceful nature retreat. [\[1\]](#)

PROMOTION

Revolutionizing Baggage Protection

Since its launch, Asego TrackMate has made waves in the travel industry, quickly becoming a game-changer amongst travellers. Post launching travel protection plans featuring TrackMate, as a bundled product, the response from travel agents and travellers has been overwhelmingly positive. In fact, 70% of travel protection plans issued include TrackMate, reinstating its widespread acceptance and demand.

Travel agents across India have embraced TrackMate, recognizing it as a unique offering that enhances their service portfolio. Many have expressed a growing interest in a standalone version of the product, acknowledging its potential to cater to a wider customer base and the convenience it offers in terms of real-time baggage tracking.

First-of-Its-Kind in the Market

Asego TrackMate is the first solution of its kind, offering a comprehensive baggage-tracking service backed by seamless compensation benefits. Unlike conventional travel protection plans that may include baggage protection as a sub-feature, TrackMate provides a guaranteed compensation of up to ₹66,000 for up to 2 bags if luggage remains missing for 96 hours post-arrival, ensuring travellers are never left stranded.

Asego TrackMate stands apart as a bundled product, elevating the overall value proposition for travel agents and their customers. The ability to offer real-time baggage tracking and proactive updates makes it an indispensable addition to any travel plan. Agents are leveraging this exclusive solution to differentiate themselves in the market, reinforcing their commitment to providing an exceptional travel experience for their customers.

What's Next? TrackMate as a standalone offering

Considering the robust demand and positive industry feedback, Asego is exploring the possibility of offering TrackMate as a standalone product. This will offer travellers even greater flexibility, allowing them to opt for this essential baggage protection service independently of their travel protection plans.

TrackMate's Impact: Transforming the Way Travellers Experience Baggage Protection

As Asego continues to innovate and refine travel protection standards, TrackMate's remarkable reception in the market underscores its necessity in today's travel landscape. The travel industry is evolving, and with rising concerns over mishandled baggage, TrackMate has positioned itself as an indispensable tool for travel agents and their customers alike.

Stay tuned for more updates on TrackMate's journey as it continues to set new benchmarks in travel protection!

Note: Assistance services are provided by Asego Global Assistance Private Limited. Please note that insurance is underwritten by an IRDAI authorised underwriter. TrackMate is powered by a third-party provider. Insurance is a subject matter of solicitation. The content expressed in this article is for information purposes only and it does not accept any liability of any sort unless confirmed by an authorized representative of Asego. [\[1\]](#)



South Africa Tourism Strengthens Ties with the Indian Market

By Payal Sahni

South Africa is making significant strides in promoting itself as a top destination for Indian travellers, reinforcing its commitment to the market through a high-profile roadshow in Delhi. The event, attended by key stakeholders from the travel and hospitality industry, showcased South Africa's diverse offerings, highlighting its adventure, wildlife, luxury, and cultural experiences that resonate strongly with Indian tourists.

With India being one of the fastest-growing outbound travel markets, South Africa Tourism is focusing on increasing arrivals by emphasizing its unique selling points—stunning landscapes, thrilling safaris, world-class hospitality, and seamless travel experiences. Representatives at the roadshow emphasized how South Africa is more than just a wildlife destination, offering urban luxury in Cape Town, heritage-rich explorations in Johannesburg, and adrenaline-pumping activities in regions like the Garden Route.

A major highlight is the ease of travel, with well-connected flights and streamlined visa processes making South Africa an accessible destination for Indian travellers. The cost-effectiveness of experiences—whether it's a Big Five safari, vineyard tours in Stellenbosch, or exploring the vibrant nightlife of Durban—positions South Africa as an attractive option for families, honeymooners, and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) travellers.

South African DMCs and tourism boards also outlined special initiatives to boost Indian arrivals, such as increased

marketing collaborations, and experiential travel campaigns that showcase the country beyond the conventional routes. The roadshow served as a platform to foster stronger trade relations, with the tourism board actively engaging with travel agents and media to further South Africa's brand positioning in India.

With an ever-growing demand for immersive and offbeat travel, South Africa continues to redefine its presence in the Indian market.

We at Travel Links talk to the few partners who help and support SA Tourism:

About Travel Twist

At Travel Twist, curiosity is our compass. As a premier luxury boutique travel consultancy, we transcend the traditional role of a travel advisor, becoming a trusted confidant for our guests. Our passion for exploring the world and uncovering new destinations inspires us to craft bespoke, leisurely adventures for those eager to



embark on their winding journeys.

We craft personalized travel experiences that transform into cherished, lifelong memories, designed for those eager to venture beyond the ordinary and uncover the true essence of a destination. Each journey we curate is a celebration of life's beauty, igniting a sense of wonder and passion in every guest's heart.

Harjit Singh- Travel Twist

Founder & Chief of Guest Experience. He Talks to Travel Links and lets us know more about himself.

With a keen eye for detail and a passion for delivering unparalleled service, I specialize in luxury travel and lifestyle hospitality. My career of 25 years is dedicated to curating extraordinary experiences that exceed expectations and create lasting memories.

In the realm of luxury hospitality, every moment matters. I leverage my extensive experience to blend innovative strategies with a deep understanding of guests' desires, ensuring that each interaction is personalized and every stay is remarkable.

Whether it's through bespoke travel arrangements or crafting immersive lifestyle experiences, my goal is to elevate the standard of luxury hospitality, transforming ordinary moments into extraordinary ones.

Unlocking the Potential of the Indian Market for South Africa

The Indian outbound travel market is one of the fastest-growing in the world, and South Africa has positioned itself as a premier destination for Indian travellers. With deep historical ties, a shared love for cricket, and a growing demand for unique experiences,

South Africa continues to attract Indian tourists in increasing numbers. From thrilling wildlife safaris and breath-taking landscapes to luxurious getaways and rich cultural encounters, the country offers a diverse and unforgettable travel experience.

Key USPs: What Sets South Africa Apart

South Africa offers a perfect blend of adventure, nature, and luxury, making it an exceptional destination for Indian travellers. From exhilarating Big Five safaris in Kruger National Park to the breath-taking landscapes of the Garden Route and the vibrant energy of Cape Town, the country presents a diverse array of experiences.

With the availability of vegetarian-friendly options and warm hospitality, Indian travellers feel right at home. South Africa also stands out for its bespoke honeymoon packages, thrilling activities like shark cage diving and the luxurious Rovos Rail, catering to a wide range of traveller preferences.

Special Initiatives & Hospitality Offerings

To enhance the experience of Indian travellers, we have introduced customized

itineraries designed to cater to their unique preferences. These include honeymoon programs, carefully curated family vacations, and luxury safaris with personalized services.

Our collaborations with local hospitality partners ensure that Indian guests feel at home, with chefs trained in Indian culinary traditions and dedicated staff providing exceptional customer service. From authentic Indian cuisine to culturally



familiar experiences, every detail is thoughtfully arranged to create a seamless and memorable stay.

Ease of Travel & Cost Considerations

South Africa offers excellent value for Indian travellers, combining affordability with world-class experiences. With competitive airfare options and an e-visa system in place, visiting the country has never been more convenient.

Luxury accommodations are available at a wide range of price points, with comfortable stays starting from USD 500 per night, depending on the level of experience and exclusivity. Additionally, adventure tours and wildlife safaris cater to different budgets, ensuring that South Africa remains an accessible and attractive destination for all types of travellers.

ABOUT ACE CONNECT

Ace Connect is a professional consulting firm specializing in sales, marketing, and PR for niche travel destinations. Founded by Alpa Jani, we focus on building a sustainable presence, visibility, and growth for unique





products in the Indian market. With a deep understanding of trade dynamics and traveller preferences, we enable brands to maximize their reach and impact.

The company believes in transparency, being candid about its partner's business desire, while mapping it to the trends and temperaments.

Importance of the Indian Market for South Africa

India is a key source market for South Africa, with travellers seeking immersive experiences, adventure tourism, and luxury stays. South Africa's diverse landscapes, wildlife, and cultural richness resonate deeply with Indian travellers, making it a highly sought-after destination. Ace Connect plays a pivotal role in strengthening South Africa's presence in India by tailoring marketing strategies and fostering meaningful trade partnerships.

Key USPs That Sets Ace connect Apart

- **Deep Market Expertise** – With over two decades of experience, Ace Connect understands the nuances of the Indian traveller and their preferences for destinations like South Africa.
- **Strong Industry Network** – Our established relationships with key trade partners, tour operators, and hospitality providers ensure increased visibility

and conversion.

Targeted Sales & Marketing Strategies – We develop customized promotional campaigns that drive awareness and growth for South African destinations in India.

Special Initiatives Taken

Sustainable Tourism & CSR Initiatives – We actively promote responsible travel and environmental conservation. Through our partnership with Grow Trees, we plant a tree every quarter on behalf of our clients, contributing to a greener planet.

Trade Engagement Programs – We actively participate at roadshows and trade shows conduct familiarization trips, and training sessions to educate Indian travel agents and consumers about our clients diverse offerings.

Hospitality Clients & Special Offerings

Ace Connect works closely with luxury lodges, safari resorts, and exclusive hotels in South Africa to design exclusive itineraries for Indian travellers. We specialize in creating:

- * **Wildlife Safaris** – Tailored safari experiences at premier game reserves.
- * **Unique Experiences** – stays and gourmet trails, flowers safaris and matine 5 safaris
- * **MICE** – Personalized experiences for corporate events and incentive



Southern Africa 360: Crafting Luxury Adventures in Southern Africa

As a dedicated travel specialist at Southern Africa 360, passion for authentic cultural experiences and sustainable adventure tourism drives the creation of unforgettable journeys across the Southern Hemisphere. With extensive experience in curating personalized itineraries, Southern Africa 360 specializes in transforming travel dreams into reality while ensuring clients experience the perfect balance of excitement and comfort.

Southern Africa 360 has established itself as a premier Destination Management Company in the region, with a growing footprint in the Indian market. The focus on adventure tourism throughout the Southern Hemisphere has positioned the company as experts in showcasing the diverse landscapes, wildlife encounters, and cultural experiences that make this region truly unique.

The Rising Indian Market

The Indian tourism market represents one of the most significant growth opportunities for Southern Africa 360. In 2023, the company facilitated trips for over 4,500 Indian tourists to Southern Africa. Despite a slower start in 2024 due to the Indian elections, Southern Africa 360 has already welcomed 2,350 travellers year-to-date and projects this number to grow to approximately 5,700 by year-end—a remarkable 48% increase year-over-year.

Southern Africa 360's Indian travellers come from diverse source markets, including India, Sri Lanka, the UK, USA, and Canada, reflecting the global reach of the Indian diaspora. The second half of 2024 promises continued growth, particularly during October and November, with December being especially popular among honeymooners.

Key USPs: Affordable Luxury

What sets Southern Africa 360 apart is the commitment to affordable luxury. The company believes extraordinary experiences shouldn't come with



extraordinary price tags. By leveraging extensive local knowledge and partnerships, Southern Africa 360 delivers premium adventures that offer exceptional value without compromising on quality or authenticity.

Special Initiatives

Southern Africa 360 has developed targeted programs specifically for Indian guests, including vegetarian and vegan culinary experiences throughout all adventure packages, multilingual guides familiar with Indian cultural nuances, and specially designed family adventure packages that cater to multi-generational travel—a preference observed among Indian clientele.

Hospitality Client Offerings

For hospitality clients, Southern Africa 360 offers exclusive partnership opportunities with customized packages featuring special rates, priority access to seasonal events, and bespoke cultural experiences that can be branded for their customers. [\[i\]](#)

Redefining Luxury: What Affluent UAE Travellers Are Craving Now

By Ayushi Anand

In a region known for its appetite for extravagance and sophistication, it would be easy to assume that luxury for affluent UAE travellers still means the biggest suite, the flashiest car, or the highest-thread-count sheets. But that assumption no longer holds true.

Today's high-net-worth traveller from the UAE is seeking more than status symbols. They're chasing meaning. They want curated authenticity, cultural depth, transformative experiences, and emotional value — all delivered with seamless service and discretion. And in 2025, this shift is more than a trend; it's a redefinition of what luxury truly means.

This story unpacks the desires, destinations, booking behaviours, and emerging patterns that are shaping luxury travel for the UAE's affluent audience — backed by data, expert insights and trade-facing observations to help the industry pivot with precision.

The Context: A Market Ready to Spend, Differently

The UAE is one of the world's most lucrative outbound travel markets. According to Statista, the outbound tourism expenditure of the UAE is projected to surpass \$33.5 billion USD by 2026, with high-income households accounting for a dominant share.

In 2023, Skyscanner's Travel Trends report noted that travellers from the UAE were among the most willing in the world to spend more on travel in the coming years — not just for luxury hotels, but for unique, tailored experiences. Marriott Bonvoy's 2025 Ticket to Travel report reinforces this: 54% of UAE travellers plan to take

more holidays this year, and 40% prefer "meaningful" vacations over material luxuries.

So, what exactly are they looking for now?

1. The New Definition of Luxury

Luxury used to be about what you have; now it's about how you feel.

Personalisation Is Paramount

Affluent travellers from the UAE are increasingly seeking bespoke journeys — ones that reflect their interests, values, and even their mood. Luxury means itineraries that aren't "off the shelf." It means remembering dietary preferences, knowing how many staff to assign to a private villa, and crafting micro-experiences, like a perfume-making workshop in Provence or an after-hours gallery tour in Florence.

Privacy Over Publicity

Post-COVID, privacy has become priceless. Travellers from the Gulf are opting for secluded resorts, private jets, remote villas and exclusive-use lodges. Not only does this guarantee safety and discretion, but it aligns with cultural preferences for modesty and quiet luxury.

Cultural and Spiritual Connection

The affluent UAE traveller increasingly sees travel as a way to connect with history, identity and faith. This might involve Islamic heritage tours, calligraphy workshops, or visiting Sufi shrines in Central Asia — experiences that foster a sense of belonging and reflection.

2. Emerging Destination Preferences Beyond the Usual Suspects

London, Paris and the Maldives still top outbound bookings from the UAE — but a shift is underway.

- According to Expedia's Unpack '25 report, 49% of UAE travellers are seeking lesser-known, less-crowded destinations.
- Countries like Georgia, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan are climbing the charts due to cultural proximity, visa ease and rich heritage.
- Puglia, the Azores, Slovenia, and the Dolomites are emerging as new European favourites for summer escapes.

These destinations offer a potent mix: natural beauty, culinary charm, and



cultural discovery, without the noise of mass tourism.

Seasonality-Driven Travel

Seasonal migration is key. In the summer, luxury chalets in the Swiss and French Alps, Scandinavian lakefronts, and Japanese mountain ryokans are in high demand. In winter, sun-chasers head to South Africa, Zanzibar, or Thailand — where opulence meets nature.

3. Likes and Dislikes: A Deeper Look What They Love

- **Halal-Friendly Services:** From Michelin-starred restaurants with halal menus to prayer rooms in luxury resorts, cultural sensitivity wins loyalty.
- **Tech-Enabled Seamlessness:** They expect AI-driven concierge services, WhatsApp-based customer care, and biometric boarding — but still value human touch.
- **Design and Aesthetic Sophistication:** Spaces must be beautiful, minimalist or ornate, but always photogenic. The “Instagrammability” factor continues to influence choice.
- **Curated Exclusivity:** Experiences that feel like secrets — a hidden tea ceremony in Kyoto, or a private dinner in the Sahara under the stars — resonate deeply.

What They Avoid

- Crowds and cookie-cutter packages.

- Poor cultural alignment — such as destinations that overlook halal requirements or staff that are unaware of modesty norms.
- Over-promising, under-delivering. High expectations mean zero tolerance for delayed services, unresponsive concierge teams, or poor hygiene.

4. The Rise of Wellness and Sustainability

Luxury is no longer indulgence for indulgence’s sake. It now intersects with self-care and environmental consciousness.

Wellness as a Lifestyle

Affluent travellers are seeking transformational wellness: not just spa weekends, but entire retreats devoted to healing and longevity. This includes:

- Ayurveda clinics in Kerala
- High-altitude detox programs in the Alps
- Sound therapy in Iceland
- Female-only wellness escapes in Bali

According to the Global Wellness Institute, the wellness tourism market is expected to reach \$1.3 trillion by 2025, and the Gulf states are among the top contributors to that growth.

Sustainability Matters

While not always vocal about it, many UAE travellers are choosing brands that reflect eco-conscious values — provided it doesn’t

mean compromising on comfort. A luxury eco-resort in Costa Rica or a solar-powered safari camp in Botswana ticks all the boxes: exclusivity, experience, and ethics.

5. Booking Behaviour and Decision-Making

The affluent UAE traveller is digitally fluent but emotionally driven. Social media platforms — particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube — are used for inspiration, but actual bookings are often made through boutique travel advisors or luxury DMCs.

What They Expect from Travel Partners

- 24/7 support via WhatsApp or Telegram
- Itinerary customisation, including special religious or dietary needs
- Visa assistance, fast-tracked airport services, private transport
- The ability to pivot — last-minute changes are common, especially for high-profile clients

Who Makes the Decisions?

- Among family travellers, women often lead trip planning — especially when it comes to wellness, culture, and shopping.
- For solo travellers or small groups, younger affluent professionals (ages 28–40) are now key decision-makers and seek edgy, socially shareable experiences.



- High-net-worth retirees focus on comfort, healthcare access, and immersive exploration — like month-long Mediterranean cruises or spiritual retreats.

6. Islamic Values and Cultural Resonance

Luxury for UAE travellers must also respect Islamic values, whether implicitly or explicitly.

- Properties that offer private pools, gender-segregated spa hours, or alcohol-free minibars are appreciated.
- Destinations with Muslim-friendly tourism infrastructure — such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, and parts of Spain — continue to attract high-end travellers from the region.
- Destinations that offer Islamic architecture, Andalusian heritage, or even halal wine tastings (like in Uzbekistan) are increasingly included in bespoke itineraries.

7. The Role of Travel Advisors: From Agent to Curator

For trade professionals, the role is shifting from seller to experience architect. Simply knowing five-star hotels is not enough. Deep destination knowledge, supplier relationships, and the ability to anticipate preferences are crucial.

The most successful advisors:

- Build lasting relationships, not one-off sales
- Focus on value, not volume
- Offer surprise and delight elements: a birthday balloon ride, a private museum opening, a handwritten welcome note from the hotel GM

8. Case Study: How Italy Is Adapting to Gulf Luxury Travellers

Italy’s tourism board has rolled out a new strategy in 2025 to attract more high-end visitors from the Gulf:

- Collaborations with Emirati travel influencers to spotlight hidden towns like Matera and Lake Orta
- Launch of Arabic-language concierge

- services at select five-star properties
 - Special Ramadan offerings at properties in Venice, Milan, and Rome
- As a result, bookings from the UAE to Italy grew by 27% year-on-year in Q1 2025.

Conclusion:

A Mindset Shift with Massive Implications

The affluent UAE traveller of 2025 is curious, conscious, and deeply connected to culture and value. They’re redefining what luxury means — not as a checklist of amenities, but as an unfolding, immersive narrative that mirrors their identity and aspirations.

For the global travel trade, this is a call to evolve. It’s time to build products that are flexible, emotionally intelligent, and designed for resonance — not just revenue. In this reimagined luxury landscape, success lies in understanding not just where your clients want to go, but why they want to go there.

Because for the UAE’s new luxury traveller, the true souvenir isn’t the designer shopping bag — it’s the story they get to tell when they come home.

Where Are UAE Travellers Going in 2025? Top Destinations, Trends & Mindsets

By Payal Sahni & Ayushi Ananad

Culture-rich, conscious and customised — UAE travellers are reshaping global travel trends in 2025.

In a region where luxury is the norm and wanderlust comes with a passport full of visa stamps, UAE travellers are charting new territory in 2025. While Dubai and Abu Dhabi continue to thrive as inbound tourism hubs, the outbound story is just as compelling — and evolving fast. The UAE's residents, a unique blend of affluent Emiratis and globally connected expats, are now seeking travel experiences that are richer in culture, deeper in connection and far more personalised than the typical city break or shopping spree. According to the Hilton 2025 Travel Trends Report, the top two reasons for leisure travel are spending quality time with friends and family (45%) and resting and recharging (42%).

“London holds a special place in my heart — my husband studied there, so every trip feels like revisiting a personal chapter. While we love the city's timeless charm, we often explore its quieter corners that tourists miss. Recently, we returned from Courchevel, where we rented a villa — it was the perfect blend of luxury and seclusion,” shared **Aliesha Brar Malik**, Founder and Creative Director, Booboo Land, Dubai.

From Familiar to Uncharted

Gone are the days when the UAE travel calendar revolved around London, Paris and Bangkok. In 2025, **Turkey, Japan, Georgia, South Korea, the Maldives and India** are climbing the charts as favoured destinations. Cultural proximity, visa ease and a growing appetite for immersive experiences are key drivers behind this shift.

“Destinations like the **Maldives, Bali, Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, South Africa and the USA** are topping



the list for **UAE** travellers. There is also a growing preference for exploring **off-the-beaten-path locations** that offer unique and memorable experiences,” mentions the **musafir.com Travel Trends Report 2025**.

Emerging secondary cities and lesser-known destinations are also gaining ground. Think **Cappadocia over Istanbul, Kanazawa over Tokyo, or Rishikesh instead of Goa** — these choices reflect a maturing market looking for stories rather than selfies, and experiences over itineraries.

Travel as Identity

For many in the UAE, especially among its younger millennial and Gen Z travellers, travel is no longer a break from routine — it's a form of self-expression, identity-building and emotional investment. Travel plans are increasingly being influenced by values: sustainability, spirituality, cultural

authenticity, and even personal wellness.

Amal Hassan, a 32-year-old marketing executive from Sharjah, shared, “I used to chase bucket-list places. Now, I find myself looking for places that help me slow down. Last summer, I joined a meditation retreat in Ubud. It changed the way I think about time and purpose.”

This evolution is echoed in the offerings by travel designers and DMCs (Destination Management Companies), who are now curating emotion-driven itineraries — combining wellness with culinary experiences, architecture tours with community interactions, and luxury with responsible tourism.

The Ramadan and Summer Travel Effect

Seasonal travel remains a major influencer. With Ramadan ending in early March this year, outbound bookings surged in April —

especially for short-haul destinations like the **Maldives, Azerbaijan and Sri Lanka**. Travel agents are also bracing for a second wave of outbound movement during the long summer break, as families seek cooler climates and meaningful escapes.

Wellness, Spirituality and Storytelling

Interestingly, a growing segment of UAE travellers are turning inward — favouring **wellness retreats, spiritual travel and conscious tourism** over fast-paced itineraries. Destinations offering spa therapies, yoga, clean cuisine and serene surroundings — such as **Bali, Kerala, Bhutan and the Northern Emirates** — are attracting both younger travellers and retirees. And unlike before, this isn't a “detox then re-tox” trend. It's a shift in mindset.

There is a new appetite for travel that **heals, transforms and connects**. This is especially relevant in a post-pandemic world, where emotional wellbeing and inner peace are just as important as five-star hospitality.

Digital Bookings vs. Traditional Agents

Social media and influencer-driven discovery are now central to the travel planning process. TikTok and Instagram reels serve as both inspiration and information. However, trusted travel advisors and agencies still play a vital role — especially for multi-generational holidays, private group travel, or high-spend custom trips involving luxury lodges, visa processing, and exclusive experiences.

What's also emerging is a hybrid booking culture, where travellers start online but rely on experts to refine and execute the final itinerary.

Tailoring the Product for UAE Travellers

For destinations, hotels and tourism boards hoping to attract UAE outbound travellers, product tailoring is key. This includes:

- Halal certification and prayer spaces
- Family-focused experiences and Arabic-speaking guides
- Private villa options
- Visa facilitation support
- Curated content marketed via Gulf-based influencers

Destinations that are quick to adapt — and culturally respect — these preferences are seeing strong returns.

From Dubai, With Curiosity

At **ATM Dubai 2025**, the energy of the UAE's travel industry is palpable. It's not just about showcasing offerings — it's about storytelling, identity, and connection. As a magazine born in this region and dedicated to **conscious luxury and immersive experiences**, Travel Links is proud to spotlight the voices, values and voyages that are shaping the future of outbound travel.

We've spoken to hoteliers in Kyoto who are adding halal menus, villa operators in Tuscany who are hiring Arabic-speaking

staff, and healing centres in Sri Lanka designing exclusive wellness packages for UAE travellers. The message is clear — the world is listening.

A Market in Motion

The UAE's outbound market is young, high-spending, experience-driven and digitally savvy. But more than that, it's emotionally motivated. The modern UAE traveller wants a journey that aligns with their values, celebrates their identity and connects them to the world on a more human level.

And for the global travel trade, the message is clear: if you're not evolving your product for the UAE market, you're leaving money — and meaning — on the table.



Coastal Adventures and Underwater Wonders in Saudi

Saudi offers pristine sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters, among the world's most beautiful and untouched shorelines of Red Sea. Golden sands stretch for miles, kissed by rushing waves and breathtaking sunsets. The waters shimmer in countless shades of blue and silver, untouched by crowds, offering pure serenity and nature at its finest.

Marine Marvels

Saudi Red Sea is perfect for beach lovers and adventure seekers. Snorkel through vibrant coral reefs, dive into marine life-filled waters, or swim with playful dolphins. For divers, it offers ancient underwater caverns, with Jeddah's shoreline being a top spot for cave diving. It's also a vital spawning ground for manta rays and sharks, some reaching seven meters wide. About 20 percent of the Red Sea's fish are rare, including the Black Marlin, the world's fastest fish at 109 km/h, and the endangered Napoleon fish, known as the Queen of the Coral Reef.



Benefits of Swimming

Saudi Red Sea is about 35% saltier than most waters, offering health benefits like improved circulation and detoxification. Swimmers and divers enjoy warm waters year-round, with surface temperatures near Jeddah ranging from the upper 70s°F in winter to the high 80s°F in summer. Since 2017, the Saudi Red Sea has hosted Women's Dive Day each summer, with Pink Bubbles Divers supporting female divers in the region.



Swim with sharks in Sharm Obhur

Sharm Obhur in northern Jeddah is a top diving spot, where you might swim alongside turtles, dolphins, lionfish, and eels. The deeper you go, the more unique marine life you'll discover. For an extra thrill, try cage diving with sharks—it's a safe and exciting experience where a small group is lowered 1.7 meters underwater to watch sharks up close, without any risk.

For Relaxed Holidays

For a relaxed beach adventure, try speedboats, paddleboats, kayaking, or windsurfing. If you're in the mood to unwind, simply lounge on the beach and watch the breathtaking sunset paint the sky in ever-changing colours.

Island Hopping

Tiran, Gumah, Sindalah, Ummahat are names of some of the most pristine islands in the Saudi Red Sea. Take a break and go explore these breathtaking islands that feature their very own beaches of white sand, crystal-clear waters, and an abundance of marine life and colourful coral reefs that seem to have jumped right out of a National Geographic magazine.

Foodie Haven

Let's face it, great food is most critical on every holiday. The coastal towns of the Saudi Red Sea whip up fresh seafood that will have you wanting more. Fish, prawns, crabs, lobsters, and various other catch of the day are brought in fresh and grilled to perfection using the finest ingredients daily.

So, what are you waiting for?
Bring your sunscreen and your flippers, and head to
the Saudi Red Sea.

All information available on www.VisitSaudi.com/en

Fawzan Fareid talks to Travel Links

Fawzan Fareid, Regional Manager for India, Bangladesh & Nepal - SriLankan Airlines' talks to Travel Links about his role, his vision and objectives, promotional strategies to boost and elevate the flying experience. By **Payal Sahni**



Q As the Regional Manager of SriLankan Airlines, what are your key responsibilities in overseeing operations in your region?

Primarily, I manage a team of 11 Territory Managers to ensure we deliver the expected passenger and cargo revenue targets assigned to the region. This involves closely monitoring market trends, competition, and both regional and global economic conditions to identify revenue opportunities and develop and implement regional sales and marketing strategies to achieve the desired results.

In a rapidly growing airline market such as India, it is highly important to dedicate considerable time to maintaining strong relationships with travel agents, travel-

related associations/governing bodies, corporate houses, and government entities to ensure smooth and seamless operations.

Our objective is to sell an "experience" to all our guests rather than just an air ticket. To achieve this, I must ensure my team across India, Bangladesh, and Nepal possesses adequate customer handling knowledge and experience in managing unforeseen situations. Maintaining close contact with the team and monitoring their service standards through mentorship is vital.

Brand presence in the Indian market is a priority. Marketing our brand through media and participating in trade shows and fairs is aligned with the "Brand Sri Lanka" identity as the national carrier. Our

objective is to work hand in hand with Sri Lanka Tourism.

Above all, it is my responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our guests and compliance with aviation laws and civil aviation regulations by fostering strong relationships with the relevant authorities.

How do you manage airline partnerships, route development, and overall market growth?

As a Regional Manager overseeing airline partnerships, route development, and market growth, the approach must be holistic, strategically driven, and adaptable. Globally, airlines focus on partnerships through codeshare agreements or airline alliances to strengthen their network on international routes. However, the Indian market is distinct. With its rapid aviation growth, every airline is eager to establish partnerships with Indian carriers. In this context, SriLankan Airlines has maintained a longstanding codeshare and Special Prorate Agreement (SPA) with Air India to enhance feeder traffic to and from secondary cities.

Teams from both airlines periodically review performance, trade flows, tourism potential, connectivity gaps, and renegotiate terms to reflect market changes. The overall objective of this exercise is to sustain trunk routes with the right segment mix on-board. Our partnerships are not limited to airlines; we also focus on expanding distribution, OTA penetration, and corporate tie-ups to drive revenue.

Q What strategies do you implement to enhance SriLankan Airlines' brand presence in competitive markets?



SriLankan Airlines' brand presence requires a multi-faceted strategy that leverages digital platforms, territory-based local insights, and unique service offerings. Like most airlines, we heavily depend on digital campaigns. Running territory-specific campaigns and leveraging influencers and bloggers to share their experiences are fast-growing components of modern marketing. Our enhanced multilingual online portal is an example of our next-level brand marketing. Creating a seamless booking experience, right through to meal selection, in one's own language is a unique proposition we are proud of. Having said that, this area requires thoughtful planning. Identifying market segments, age brackets, and purchase patterns is essential. Travellers, particularly from the Indian subcontinent, still prefer to speak to an agency representative for tour arrangements, so conventional marketing strategies remain highly relevant. Regular engagement with top business producers in each territory through joint promotions and



marketing campaigns, customized packages for the MICE segment via our holiday arm, SriLankan Holidays, and its franchise offices across metro cities in India, as well as familiarization trips for top-performing agents and decision-makers, are all part of our strategy to convert partners into brand ambassadors.

Q How do you ensure customer satisfaction and service excellence for passengers flying with SriLankan Airlines?

As mentioned earlier, my team and I focus on selling an “experience” rather than a ticket. Whether on the ground or at 38,000 feet, our greatest strength is our exceptionally friendly ground and cabin crew. Our teams undergo in-depth customer service, safety, and security training at our IATA-accredited International Aviation Academy to ensure a holistic approach across all customer touchpoints. From the booking stage, we offer an intuitive, multilingual website and mobile app for a seamless experience. Our AI-driven chatbot, “Yaana,” assists guests with real-time information. Prompt updates via SMS, email, and app notifications keep guests informed about booking confirmations, flight changes, and travel advisories.

We place strong emphasis on check-in efficiency, offering exclusive business class check-in and dedicated baggage drop counters. At Colombo Airport, our self-service kiosks minimize wait times. Our “Serendib” and “Serandiva” lounges offer a premium experience to Business Class guests and OneWorld Alliance’s top-tier frequent travellers.

Onboard, our Business Class guests are treated to an authentic three-choice meal service — even on short-haul flights such as Chennai-Colombo or Thiruvananthapuram-Colombo — while Economy Class passengers are offered a hot snack and beverage of their choice. Our onboard entertainment system features multilingual options, including regional favourites for Indian travellers.

SriLankan Airlines’ service excellence was recognized with the “Leading International Airline in South Asia” award at the South Asian Travel Awards 2024, a testament to our commitment to guest satisfaction at every stage of the journey.

Can you share any recent initiatives or



Q improvements introduced under your leadership to optimize operational efficiency?

We have progressively increased our frequencies to key metro cities in India. For example, we now operate triple daily flights to Chennai, double daily to Delhi, 10 services to Bengaluru, and 16 to Mumbai, alongside increasing services to Tiruchirappalli and Madurai to 8 and 6 per week, respectively. Additionally, we plan to launch services to Ahmedabad within this year.

This expansion underscores our commitment to strengthening our presence in India, with an aim to reach 95 weekly services to India winter 2025. Our goal is to achieve operational excellence through improved schedule alignment and enhanced connectivity.

In 2024, we initiated the global rollout

of our New Distribution Capability (NDC) agent booking portal, “SriLankan Direct Connect,” starting with India. This platform allows travel agents to access our reservation system directly, bypassing traditional Global Distribution Systems (GDS). This offers richer content, ancillary services, and personalized offers for our loyal agents. In 2025, we plan to extend NDC access to sub-agencies at selected locations, with a rollout targeted for May 2025.

Q What role does print media, including travel trade magazines like Travel Links and others, play in your overall marketing and advertising strategy?

Travel print media still plays a vital role in our brand marketing strategy. While readership declined post-pandemic,

we’ve observed steady recovery. Given the current socio-economic climate, we’ve aligned most mid- and short-term campaigns to web and social media. However, trade travel magazines allow us to reach specific target audiences, especially through advertorials and feature articles, which provide deeper brand engagement.

Q How much of your annual marketing budget is allocated for print media versus digital campaigns?

Budget allocation is generally based on the specific requirements of each territory and is adjusted as we progress through the financial year. Some territories benefit more from digital advertising, while others require a greater focus on print media.

For instance, segments like sports tourism, student travellers, and senior citizens embarking on pilgrim tours require strong print media support. On the other hand, solo female travellers and younger audiences can be effectively targeted through digital and social platforms.

Q What factors influence your decision in choosing publications for advertising SriLankan Airlines?

We adopt a niche marketing approach to promote our prime destination — Sri Lanka — along with other connecting cities on our network. Colombo’s strategic location in the Indian Ocean allows for seamless connections between the Indian Subcontinent, the Far East, Australia, and the Maldives.

We cater to a variety of passenger segments: leisure travellers, MICE, VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives), students, sports spectators, pilgrims, and honeymooners. Our media choices are driven by the publication’s audience reach and relevance to the segment we wish to engage, ensuring that each campaign delivers maximum impact.

Q How is SriLankan Airlines working to attract more travellers from India, given the strong travel ties between both countries?

Sri Lanka is now a visa-free destination for



Indian nationals. Indian tourists can arrive in Sri Lanka and proceed through regular immigration channels to obtain a 30-day on-arrival visa stamp, making the process seamless and hassle-free.

As the only airline operating from 9 prominent Indian cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, and Madurai) to Colombo, we promote this ease of access through our trade partners and media.

In 2024, tourist arrivals from India surged to 417,000, representing 20% of total inbound visitors and a 37% increase over 2023. We expect this positive trend to continue in 2025, supported by our targeted marketing campaigns, including the highly successful “Ramayana Trail” initiative launched in November 2024, which significantly boosted both the destination and brand visibility in India.

The recent state visit of Indian Prime Minister Hon. Shri Narendra Modi is expected to further enhance the visibility of

Sri Lanka as a destination, and SriLankan Airlines remains committed to expanding air connectivity and strengthening ties between India and Sri Lanka.

Q Apart from India, which key international markets are you focusing on, and what initiatives are in place to boost tourism and connectivity?

As the national carrier, we are committed to promoting tourism to Sri Lanka from all our network countries. Under my purview, Bangladesh and Nepal are key focus markets. Bangladesh is currently among the top 15 source markets for Sri Lanka. We’ve developed plans to double this number by promoting medical and wellness tourism, destination weddings, honeymoons, and Sri Lanka-Maldives combination tours, which are especially popular.

Given Nepal’s significance as the birthplace of Gautama Buddha, we continue to promote religious and pilgrim tours between Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Mr. Vipul Gupta, Director, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa

Mr. Vipul Gupta, Director, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi (aka THE MET) has been a part of the THE MET since 25 years. A mentor and a guiding force to his team, Mr. Gupta has contributed in laying the building blocks of the five star deluxe property. Mr. Gupta completed his Master of Business Administration from the University of Southern California in the early 90's. He later involved himself in design, construction, development and operational issues of the Hotel project. Post the completion of THE MET project, he got involved in the hotel's management aspects like image building, branding, brand positioning and brand creation of the hotel and its sub – brands like Sakura, Chutney, Bar + Tandoor, NeoVeda Spa, Craft House and other outlets. As he talks to Travel Links about the growth and journey: By **Payal Sahni**

Q Congratulations on 25 years of The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa! What has been the most rewarding part of this journey for you?

Thank you! For me, the most rewarding part of this glorious journey is the successful completion of 25 years of The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa. During these years, I have been involved from conceptualizing, opening, building it as a brand, revenue management, and then also seeing the hotel to undergo a journey of transformation with its makeover. I'll say this whole journey has been the most rewarding, wherein, I have learnt through dealing with people from all walks of life. It has been challenging yet satisfying one, and am glad that all connected to this journey are happy to be part of our brand whether it's our customers, associates, employees, stakeholders, etc.

Q Over the years, The Metropolitan has built a distinct identity in Delhi's hospitality landscape. What would you say defines its niche?

Our luxury hotel is strategically and centrally located on Bangla Sahib Road in Connaught Place, New Delhi's premier business and shopping district, and is steps away from most of the corporate and financial centres, ministries, embassies and the exhibition/trade fair venues. It is the perfect destination for an international traveller looking for an easy access to doing business, shopping and tourist activities in New Delhi. Also, the Hotel is equipped with all the modern facilities yet have a unique Indian accent across, showing flavours and cultures of India to International travellers at various levels in the hotel through food, rooms and designs.

Q How do you strike a balance between offering a luxurious experience for guests while maintaining a unique and personalized touch?

Today travellers are looking for experiences beyond just



accommodation. Here, we give choices to the guests. They can choose from elegant Deluxe Rooms, Club Rooms and Suites as per their need. We offer luxury, comfort, personalized services and modern amenities like high speed wi-fi, electronic safes, fully stocked minibar and a spacious bathroom to make stay a memorable one. For maintaining a unique and personalised touch, we use technology majorly for the hotel experience both in room, before and after the trip. We also use Social networks, other digital tools, and TripAdvisor in particular; as we have seen great impact on customers due to this platform. This has led to more transparency and, overall, to an improved quality of the services provided by the hotel. Apart from these, we keep curating different events and promotions at hotel outlets; be it a Spa event, food festival, musical event, fashion shows and much more to lure guests at the hotel.

Q The hospitality industry has evolved tremendously in the past two decades. What are some key trends you have observed, and how has The Metropolitan adapted?

The modern consumer is not looking for a standardized industrialized product. He is looking for a fun time at a nice place. When it comes to F & B, there is a demand for Experimental drinks and innovative dishes. Our excellent chefs constantly work on the menu and serve delicious and unique meal to our guests. When it comes to Room Service, few factors which we always follow is quick, hygienic, food with proper temperature, attention to details; unobtrusive, intuitive service; and most of all customization gives more pleasurable experience.

Apart from this, another trend that I have observed is that Branded chain hotels have successful loyalty programmes, but Standalones are free to take a more modern approach. Instead of an old-fashioned points based system, we have the flexibility to create loyalty based on immediate value or discounts. As an independent property, we are flexible. We work on creativity & identity instead of adhering standardized brand guide lines that lack local relevance.

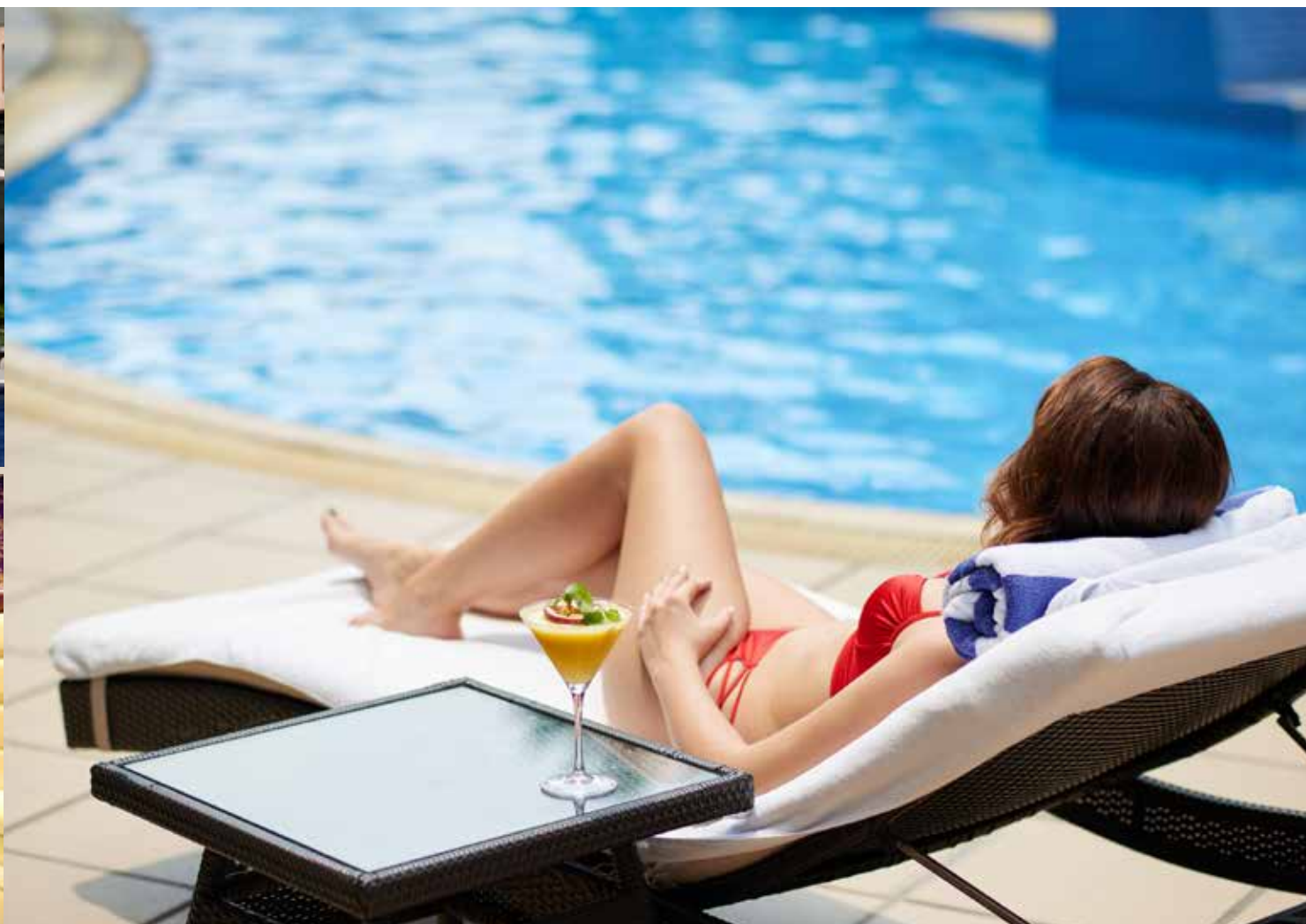
However, no matter whatever the trend is, we are here to make the customer experience better. That is the whole idea in the first place, to make our customers want to come back and drink coffee or eat at our restaurants, or book again at our hotel!

5.Sustainability and conscious luxury are becoming increasingly important in the travel industry. How does The Metropolitan incorporate these aspects into its operations?

We as an independent luxury Hotel went into a complete refurbishment and took an integrated effort to enhance and innovate environment friendly management systems in overall operations

keeping at par with any of the world's best environment friendly hotels, and in turn gave a whole new meaning to luxury. We have EcoMet program inspired from both Ancient Vedic and Modern Science and even certified with ISO14001:2004, an Environment Management System Certification given by an internationally recognized certification body, which implies that our Hotel abides by all environment policies and objectives, and expresses the concern towards Environment, Society, Guests, Staff, Visitors and Public at large. We have implemented policies, procedures, systems and equipment based on three 'R's – reduce, reuse and recycle

We encourage employees to show concern to the environment and to contribute towards it dedicatedly and even to spread this message to friends and family. We are consciously promoting Responsible Luxury to guests without comprising on their unparalleled experience at the Five star deluxe Hotel.



Q Can you share any upcoming innovations or expansions planned for the hotel? What's next for The Metropolitan?

In near future, we are looking at the expansion of our brand or sub brands, and are scouting opportunities for the same. While the major overhaul happened in 2010 during commonwealth games, and now, as and when the hotel demands, new avatar will be in pipeline soon.

Q As a leader in the industry, what are some key challenges you've faced, and how have you overcome them?

I feel one of the major challenge in my 25 years that I never heard or witnessed something like that was Covid time. Covid was declared pandemic in 2020. Didn't know how to cope with it or even get out of the situation. Hospitality and Travel Industry were badly affected. Everything was completely shut for a longer duration. All strategy to keep up the hotel operations on with limited resources



seemed difficult. But we survived and came out stronger with people's support whom we dealt internally and externally with. We retained our employees when most of the hotels were in the process of lay off. It is not easy to survive in a tough competition in Delhi but we, a standalone independent hotel is not only thriving but is also growing and outperforming chain hotels post covid.

Q Many iconic hotels have a strong culinary identity. How does Chutney Bar + Tandoor contribute to The Metropolitan's guest experience?

Agreed, but we not only have Chutney, Bar + Tandoor, but also our iconic award-winning Japanese restaurant, Sakura. Am proud that we are the pioneers in bringing Japanese cuisine to India 25 years ago. Keeping my vision ahead in food sector, that is how, we conceptualized Chutney, Bar + Tandoor, an award-winning Indian specialty restaurant that takes wholesome Indian meal to another level. It serves authentic Indian cuisine in a contemporary style offering classical dishes and comfort foods from all the regions of India. It is famous for serving various home-made chutneys prepared from rare fruits, vegetables and herbs paired with the main food. The top Chefs bring an unparalleled taste with a contemporary twist. It is a new kind of stylish Indian restaurant, smart but not stuffy. The modern ambience of Chutney, gives a contemporary yet intimate relaxed charm which is different from other restaurants.

Q The hospitality industry thrives on guest satisfaction. How do you ensure that your team maintains high service standards while delivering a warm, memorable experience?

To meet the guest expectations and to enable them to have various experiences within the Hotel, we primarily focus on taking guest feedback, monitoring, and analysing feedback of local and international guests. Feedback of these guests who are from different culture, race, religion, taste, etc helps us in analysing the way forward and improving as per that. We also have enhanced software that maintains guest's history and helps us in being pro-active on guest's needs, likings, disliking and any kind of requests. Constant interaction and constant state of the improvement ensures guest satisfaction. And I would say, guest coming back is the biggest thank you and that we are doing things correctly!

Q Looking ahead, where do you see The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa in the next 5-10 years? Are there any new ventures or markets you're looking to explore?

As mentioned above, we may expand the hotel and the outlets in various ways. Planning is still in the process. We continue to thrive as a brand, compete with biggest brands that have come to Delhi with tough competition and continue to create our niche with loyal customers.

Sawantwadi Palace: Blending Tradition with Modern Luxury

By Payal Sahni

Famous for its ancient fortunes like grand forts and lovely temples, India attracts people and travelers from all around the world. This has been changing in recent times though. Many of these historical locations have become fancy hotels that combine old-world luxury with modern-day conveniences for guests. This transition does not just preserve the tradition related to these iconic places but also provides travelers with a distinctive experience of living in India's royal past while enjoying all the advantages of contemporary luxuries in these properties.

One such remarkable example is Sawantwadi Palace, India's only chef-owned palace which is now transformed into a luxurious resort located in the heart of Maharashtra that used to be a symbol of traditionalism and bravery.

Location

Situated in the Sindhudurg district, on the Goa-Maharashtra border, this historic palace attracts tourists and travellers with its timeless allure and promises of a truly regal experience where we are greeted by lush green forests, beautiful lakes, and peaceful landscapes. Known as the "land of the artists," Sawantwadi is an important part of the Konkan area, which is located on India's mid-western coast. This palace is a perfect getaway from the fast city life and is just an hour away from the bustling beaches of Goa.

History

The palace's construction began back in 1795 by the then-ruler Khem Sawant III. It has been home to the royal Sawant Bhonsle



family for generations, who have had a significant influence on the development of the area's architecture and culture.

The Sawant Bhonsle belonged to the Sisodiya Rajput family from Udaipur. The Kingdom of the Sawant Bhonsle dynasty was founded by Khem Sawant I in 1627. He along with his nephew Khem Sawant II with the army of 12000 defeated Kudal Deshastha, took possession of their land and later established themselves at Narendra Hill, the region where the palace is situated. Rajesaheb Khem Sawant VI and his family are the ones who currently reside in the Palace.

The smallest things are given great attention at the Sawantwadi Palace. Although they are never in your direct line of sight, the staff is always available. In a town like Sawantwadi, finding this kind of understated friendliness combined with creative, unconventional cuisine was a surprise for us.

Hotel stands as a testament to our family's dreams, preserving history while offering a luxurious retreat for modern travellers. They invite guests to join us on a culinary journey back in time, experiencing the enchantment of royal living.

Architecture

Talking about the architecture of the Sawantwadi Palace is a perfect example of cultural fusion. It beautifully portrays its English arches with a touch of regional craftsmanship. The two-story palace is famous for its ethnic and minimal charm



The decision to convert part of Sawantwadi Palace into a boutique hotel was a lifelong dream realized at the perfect moment, fueled by the passion for hospitality and culinary arts. Lakham and Shradha, both from hospitality backgrounds, shared a vision to share the palace's grandeur with the world. Inspired by the shared commitment to exceptional guest experiences, their journey

was further shaped by our personal story of envisioning a restaurant venture in Goa.

However, their ambitions expanded, leading them to create a haven where guests could savour flavours and immerse in regional culture. Shradha's unwavering support and dedication were pivotal, infusing charm into every aspect of the hotel.

Today, Sawantwadi Palace Boutique Art

which makes it a must-see attraction in Sawantwadi. With its turrets, chandeliers, jharokas, and winding, narrow passageways, the palace is an exception in the context of typical palace architecture.

Grand domes, spacious courtyards, and intricate sculptures flourish in this palace, which was primarily constructed out of red laterite stone from the area. Walking in



these parts of the palace reflects a bygone era of elegance and wealth, telling a story of past times. Large gardens and tall trees surround the palace, adding to its majestic appearance. With its prime location facing the coconut trees and the artificial lake known as Moti Talav, which was built in 1874, the palace enjoys an unparalleled view of Narendra Hill.

Our Experience

During our visit to the Sawantwadi Palace, we were we enjoyed leisure of slow life experiences , engaging in sky watch, birds chirping, spiritual mantras during our

walks, swim by the pool at leisure, getting engrossed in museum and arts activities, playing games, reading books, walking by the lake and the cultural experience that the property offered.

Ganjifa Artwork

Another captivating feature of this palace that we came across during our visit is the use of Ganjifa Artwork, a Persian card game that became famous in the region in the early 19th century. This art is intricately engraved on the walls and rooms of the palace exemplifying a beautiful merger of art and history.



About the Owners: Lakham and Shraddha

Every revolution starts with a few people who dare to imagine a vision, and in the case of Sawantwadi Palace, these individuals are Lakham and Shraddha, a young couple and part of the royal family of Sawantwadi. They are known for their hospitality and creating beautiful personalised experiences for their guests and tourists. We were struck by their warmth and enthusiasm during our conversation, which is a sign of their deep-rooted ties to the Palace.

Lakham was born into the royal family of Sawantwadi and the connection he had



with his heritage was very strong while still a young boy. On completion of his hospitality management studies, he returned home to fulfill a dream of turning the palace into a reputable destination. This way, he makes sure that guests have an opportunity to enjoy regal kind of hospitality that is famous for Sawantwadi through meticulous attention to every detail.

Shraddha, affectionately known as the ever-smiling Princess of Sawantwadi, is not only renowned for her cooking prowess but also for her advocacy of traditional art and craft industries. Her culinary skills, honed through the use of local ingredients, have



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enriched the palace menu, offering visitors a diverse array of Malvani and global delicacies. Beyond her culinary endeavors, Shraddha breaks societal norms with her radiant smile. In a culture where women are often expected to maintain a reserved poise, her smile serves as a powerful symbol of approachability and connection. It has enabled her to break barriers effortlessly, fostering instant connections with the people of Sawantwadi. Indeed, her smile is her superpower, bridging gaps and enhancing the cultural scene at the palace.

Amenities

During our visit to the Sawantwadi Palace, we were awestruck by the experiences and amenities the property offered. Whether someone prefers a village lunch or a private meal in the center of the Amboli ghats, everything is designed to showcase the region's rich cultural legacy. With luxurious accommodations offering expansive views of the courtyard and revitalizing spa treatments, Sawantwadi Palace provides a plethora of amenities for a journey that will never be forgotten. Guests can participate in workshops focused on culture, stroll around the beautiful surroundings, or just unwind by the pool.

Food

Another feature of this region is its food. During our visit, we were exposed to the rich local flavours of Sindhugarh which offer a wide range of regional glimpses that are fit for the global palette. Led by the owners and culinary geniuses, Lakham and Shraddha, the menu draws inspiration from the Malvani traditional cuisine and international fine dining experiences to satisfy your needs.

The palace offers dishes that have Western culinary secrets mixed with Sawantwadi flavours. One such dish is the Sawantwadi Po'Boy, an ingenious combination inspired as much by American as Asian eating habits. It has as its main ingredient a French roll bread that contains rava prawn, Vietnamese pickles, and a hot sauce known as Sriracha; to crown it all there is a dash of Thetcha butter for that local feel plus SolKadhi sauce.

The Sawantwadi Special Eggs Benedict has a fusion of coconut chili chutney, fried curry leaves, and poached eggs on house-baked Croissant buns and served with



classic Hollandaise sauce.

The smallest things are given great attention at the Sawantwadi Palace. Although they are never in your direct line of sight, the staff is always available. In a town like Sawantwadi, finding this kind of understated friendliness combined with creative, unconventional cuisine was a surprise for us.

Environmental Commitment

Today the world places significant importance on environmental awareness and sustainability; Lakham and Shraddha are dedicated stewards of Sawantwadi Palace where they make an effort to reduce the negative effects of this establishment on the environment. There are some measures taken ranging from greenways to projects aimed at maintaining its original look. Visiting the place makes us perceive how much those living there love the environment to the extent of sacrificing anything they have including their happiness.

Guest's Reviews

The Sawantwadi Palace has received outstanding reviews from visitors, who often highlight the seamless blend of historical charm and modern luxury.



Guests consistently praise the welcoming atmosphere and the rooms adorned with local designs. Many appreciate the exceptional hospitality, noting the attentive hosting by the royal family and the diverse menu that offers a unique culinary experience. Visitors frequently mention the interactive Ganjifa art workshops and the delectable thali, often calling it the best meal of their trip. The preservation of heritage and the outstanding food, especially the 10-course meal, are other commonly mentioned highlights. Guests describe the palace as a must-visit, emphasizing the excellent food, beautiful central courtyard, and the perfect blend of coziness and luxury. The thoughtful restoration work by the royal family is also highly praised, along with

The Sawantwadi Palace has received outstanding reviews from visitors, who often highlight the seamless blend of historical charm and modern luxury. Guests consistently praise the welcoming atmosphere and the rooms adorned with local designs.

the personalized service and culinary delights. Many reviewers highlight the authenticity and rich taste of the food, reflecting a consensus of exceptional experiences that make Sawantwadi Palace a highly recommended destination for travelers seeking a royal retreat.

Conclusion

Our visit to Sawantwadi Palace has been a journey back in time, as history intertwines with modern comfort. The palace has been carefully restored and Lakham and



Shraddha are very warm and friendly, making it a unique place to stay where their royal heritage is preserved while giving an unforgettable experience for the guests.

Going forward, Sawantwadi Palace aims to enhance guest experiences through greater use of sustainable practices and increased cultural content. Moreover, they want to enhance the status of the local arts which include Ganjifa; additionally, new initiatives will be introduced to honor Sawantwadi's rich customs. They are also considering how best to make this palace

greener so that its beauty and past remain intact for years to come.

Sawantwadi Palace is committed to combining tradition and luxuriousness so that guests would fully explore the royal legacy while enjoying top-class facilities. This continuity is embodied in its exceptional dining options, enlightening cultural programs or tranquil surrounding environment. Thus, Sawantwadi Palace remains an emblem of heritage and hospitality that invites tourists into timeless retreats. [u](#)



Cavelosim Beach Hotel: A Perfect Luxury Escape

By Payal Sahni

The Radisson Blu Resort Goa Cavelossim Beach located on the coast of the world-famous Cavelossim Beach, nestles as an epitome of peace and noble taste among the lively palette of Goa. The hotel combines Goan architectural traditions with its Portuguese-like exterior. This allows the guests not only to live in such a place but also to feel rejuvenated after staying there.

Once we arrived, we were engulfed into luxury and class where everything has been thought over to make your stay unforgettable.

Outside this resort, lies the beauty that is Goa, waiting for adventure enthusiasts who want to learn about its heritage and scenic marvels. There are so many things one can enjoy starting from historic Old Goa to picturesque landscapes of Cabo de Rama Fort. If you desire tranquility, then this property is a perfect place for you.

Location

The resort benefits from one of the finest positions on Goa's famous Cavelossim Beach. This property is an oasis with a foot in two camps for its guests: it's a peaceful retreat by the beach and a well-placed resort for sightseeing opportunities nearby. Ease of travel is guaranteed, as the Dabolim International Airport is nearby, which means that guests coming to or leaving from this place will have no difficulties during their 45-minute drive towards the airport.

This makes it a destination of choice



for both international tourists who wish to experience tropical weather and domestic visitors craving a piece of heaven within their confines. The hotel makes it easy for you to take your comfort zone right up to the coastlines of the Arabian Sea. If someone is ready to immerse in the culture, participate in outdoor activities, or simply sunbathe by the beaches; then this property is your perfect link to an unforgettable Goan experience.

Architecture

The architecture of the resort effortlessly blends traditional Goan design elements with the distinctive beauty of Portuguese colonial aesthetics, resulting in a captivating visual tapestry that reflects the rich cultural heritage of the region.

During our trip, we witnessed the



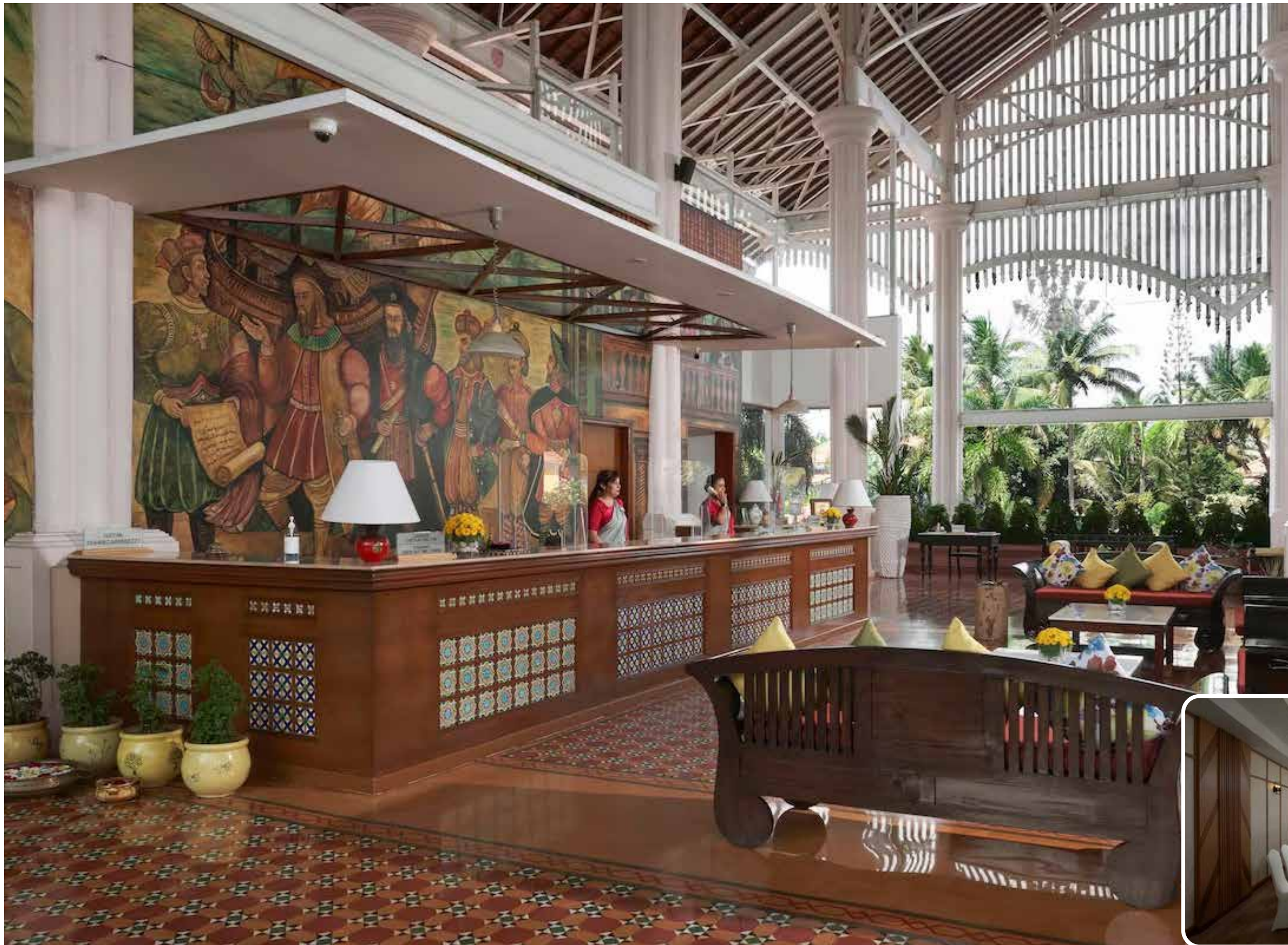
property's smooth merging of luxury and nature with an elegant touch of Goan culture and heritage. The architectural beauty continues to unfold, with spacious interiors adorned with traditional Goan furnishings, Portuguese-inspired decor, and modern amenities that cater to the needs of the guests and travelers. It is a meticulously curated setting – from soaring ceilings and breezy verandas to intricately made fittings and sweeping views of the Arabian Sea – intended to place it as an architectural jewel in Goa.

Accommodation Facilities

With 132 well-appointed rooms and suites, each coming with a private balcony offering panoramic views of the Arabian Sea or the resort's lush surroundings, guests are treated to a serene and luxurious retreat.

From in-room minibars and high-speed internet access to flat-screen TVs and cozy seating areas, every detail is thoughtfully curated to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable stay. During our visit, we requested some personalization for our stay and we were amazed to see that the property





ensures that every guest feels welcomed and well-catered.

Our experience

From multi coloured villas, manicured gardens to walk, insta-worthy corners, swim at leisure, romantic dinner under the stars, night live band, dance all night long, walk by the beach; we came with endless pleasant memories in our stay this property.

Amenities

A variety of services for guests can be found at the resort, which is designed to make our stay excellent and memorable. With a calm atmosphere, Ayurvedic therapy and soothing massages in the SOHUM spa help guests to rejuvenate while they are on holiday while the free-form outdoor swimming pool in tropical gardens ensures that relaxation and recreation are part of the hotel experience.

We took time to prepare our timetable for the whole trip and luckily for us, the staff were quite kind enough to ensure that all our needs were met as per what we had requested from them thereby making my trip memorable and my experience amazing. Additionally, other facilities within the property include room service, laundry services, and concierge assistance which create a smooth experience during one's stay.

Culinary Experience

With four distinct on-site restaurants, guests are treated to a wide range of culinary delicacies that celebrate the rich heritage of Goa and offer intricate international cuisines. Upper Deck, the resort's all-day dining coffee shop, welcomes guests with its tempting buffet spreads and à la carte





options, showcasing a fusion of global flavors prepared with locally sourced ingredients, ensuring every meal is a feast.

For a taste of coastal delights and a modern fusion of Goan cuisine, The Table offers an amazing dining experience where fresh seafood and local ingredients take center stage. You can experience authentic Greece and Mediterranean cuisine at Greco.

Completing the culinary journey is The Sagres Lounge Bar, where guests unwind themselves with handcrafted cocktails and panoramic views of the beach which works like an icing on the cake. These varieties and delicacies surely added life to our overall experience at the property.

Events and Management

Unforgettable gatherings, like weddings, are transformed into enchanted moments at the resort by the breathtaking beach and marvelous architecture.

With 6,000 square feet of elegantly decorated event space, the resort provides a lovely backdrop for events of all kinds, complete with covered banquet halls and expansive grounds. Every event, whether it's a vow renewing under the golden glow of a Goan sunset or a ballroom dance party, is carefully planned and carried out by a committed team of experts.



The location turns ideas into reality with the help of a skilled staff of caterers, event coordinators, and vendors, making every celebration truly an exceptional event that guests will cherish for a lifetime.

Nearby Attractions

Within reach lies famous attractions and tourist destinations like the UNESCO-listed Basilica of Bom Jesus, a testament to the region's colonial past. Cabo de Rama Fort offers panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and insight into the historic significance of Goa. Nature lovers can find respite at Salaulim Dam, where mesmerizing waterfalls and scenic vistas call, or escape

to the secluded beauty of Butterfly Beach, where lush greenery and exotic butterflies create an idyllic retreat. The resort is at an ideal location from where you can easily go out and see the rich and varied landscape of the region.

Conclusion

The Radisson Blu Resort gloriously stands out as a strong symbol of luxury and serenity along the peaceful shores and beaches of Cavelossim. With its stirring mix of Goan architecture and Portuguese charm, the resort welcomes guests to have a memorable retreat amidst the timeless beauty of coastal Goa. www.radissonblu.com

PROMOTION

neoVeda Spa, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi

neoVeda Spa at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, draws on the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and gives it a modern twist to redefine rejuvenation

After making its presence felt at Craft House, luxury lifestyle store at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, with its mind and body healing and relaxing products, neoVeda Spa welcomes you to a new dimension in the world of health, wellbeing and fitness. neoVeda Spa, based on the concept of new Ayurveda showcases the modern translation of ancient Indian knowledge of life and well-being and takes you on a journey of self-discovery. This epitome of luxury encapsulates the time-honoured powers of Ayurveda with a modern influence to heal and restore, relax and invigorate. It is a heaven of peace and tranquility set in a contemporary ambience, for those who wish to rejuvenate body, mind and spirit. An exclusive paradise filled with exotic aromas, essential oils, spice and floral fragrances, designed to enhance and optimize the total "mind-body experience" and peel away the layers of daily stress. Serene surrounding of plush 7000 sq. ft. area embraces modern and chic designs



set in warm earthy and calming aqua tones and is a lavish spa retreat for inner being. The Spa is home to a state-of-the-art gym and offers an array of classic and modern treatments, massages, scrubs, wraps, facials, baths, foot and hand care, slimming, toning and firming techniques. The five treatment

Spa rooms have distinctive themes, big and spacious. Marma room has a Kalari massage set up, Ananda room is stylized for Shirodhara treatment, Prana room is for volcanic Hot Stone massage, Jiva room is for practicing Thai massage and there is a huge couple room, well decorated is the Kama room. There is a spacious lounge where one can wait, relax and indulge in some reading before or after the therapy.

neoVeda Spa offers luxurious collection of time-tested ancient and traditional healing remedies and treatments whilst incorporating the latest international wellness trends to provide the guest an authentic and holistic experience. The signature therapies like neoVeda Journey, neoVeda Signature, Energy Equalizer with Volcanic Hot Stone, Vedic Journey and THE MET Indulgence are a combination of beauty concepts of the ancient India and modern research. Explore a world especially devoted to awakening your senses and giving you SIMPLY DIVINE experience.

website: www.hotelmetdelhi.com



Unveiling Asia's The Most Coveted Asian Destinations for 2025

Team TL

Asia, a continent rich in cultural heritage, mesmerising landscapes, and culinary wonders, continues to captivate travellers with its unique blend of ancient traditions and modern marvels. Travel enthusiasts are seeking destinations that offer authenticity, lesser-explored regions, and unforgettable experiences. From the grandeur of the Silk Road to the futuristic skylines of the Middle East, these handpicked destinations promise an extraordinary journey filled with history, gastronomy, and adventure.

Dubai: A Visionary Metropolis of Extravagance

Dubai is synonymous with luxury, innovation, and world-class attractions. From sky-high architectural wonders to pristine beaches and thrilling desert safaris, Dubai offers a dynamic mix of adventure, culture, and indulgence.

Why Visit?

- **Iconic Landmarks:** Burj Khalifa, Palm Jumeirah, and the Dubai Marina skyline.
- **Retail Paradise:** Shop at The Dubai Mall and traditional souks.
- **Culinary Excellence:** Relish Emirati cuisine, including Al Harees and Machbous.
- **Best Time to Visit:** November to March, when the weather is pleasant.

Seven-Day Itinerary

1. **Downtown Dubai (2 Nights):** Visit Burj Khalifa, Dubai Fountain, and explore the Dubai Mall.

2. **Palm Jumeirah & Marina (2 Nights):** Relax at Jumeirah Beach and dine at rooftop restaurants.

3. **Desert Safari & Old Dubai (2 Nights):** Experience dune bashing and explore Al Fahidi Historical District.

4. **Day Trip to Abu Dhabi (1 Night):** Visit Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Singapore: The Ultimate Urban Playground

Singapore is a vibrant island city-state known for its seamless fusion of culture, nature, and

cutting-edge technology.

Why Visit?

- **Futuristic Attractions:** Gardens by the Bay, Marina Bay Sands, and Sentosa Island.

- **Gastronomic Delights:** Enjoy chilli crab, Hainanese chicken rice, and laksa.

- **Best Time to Visit:** February to April, when the climate is most comfortable.

- **Seven-Day Itinerary:**

- **Marina Bay (2 Nights):** Visit Merlion Park and enjoy the night skyline.



- **Sentosa Island (2 Nights):** Explore Universal Studios and Adventure Cove Waterpark.

- **Little India & Chinatown (2 Nights):** Experience cultural districts and street food.

- **Day Trip to Pulau Ubin (1 Night):** Explore Singapore's rustic island getaway.

Ras Al Khaimah: The Adventure Capital of the UAE

For those seeking adrenaline-fueled experiences alongside luxury, Ras Al Khaimah offers a unique desert and mountain landscape perfect for adventure seekers.

Why Visit?

- **Outdoor Adventures:** Jebel Jais zipline, desert safaris, and mountain trekking.
- **Luxury Resorts:** Stay at world-class beachside properties.

- **Cultural Heritage:** Explore Dhayah Fort and Jazirat Al Hamra.

- **Best Time to Visit:** October to April for outdoor activities.

Seven-Day Itinerary:

1. **Al Hamra & Marjan Island (2 Nights):** Relax at luxury resorts and enjoy the beaches.
2. **Jebel Jais & Hajar Mountains (2 Nights):** Experience the world's longest zipline.
3. **Old Town RAK (2 Nights):** Visit the National Museum and spice souks.
4. **Day Trip to Fujairah (1 Night):** Explore Al-Bidyah Mosque and beach dive sites.

Bahrain: A Blend of Heritage and Modernity

Bahrain is an Arabian Gulf gem that seamlessly blends rich history with contemporary attractions.

Why Visit?

- **Cultural Landmarks:** Bahrain Fort, Manama Souq, and Al-Fateh Mosque.

- **Pearl Diving Heritage:** Discover Bahrain's pearling industry and UNESCO sites.

- **Best Time to Visit:** October to March for pleasant weather.

- **Seven-Day Itinerary:**

1. **Manama (3 Nights):** Explore Bab Al Bahrain and dine at the Souq.
2. **Muharraq (2 Nights):** Visit the Bahrain Pearling Trail and traditional houses.
3. **Desert & Beach Resorts (2 Nights):** Enjoy





Al Areen Wildlife Park and the Formula 1 circuit.

Uzbekistan: A Journey along the Legendary Silk Road

Uzbekistan is a land of mesmerising architecture, bustling bazaars, and age-old traditions, offering a glimpse into the grandeur of the Silk Road.

Why Visit?

- **Architectural Grandeur:** The Registan Square in Samarkand, the Ark Fortress in Bukhara, and the walled city of Khiva are historical masterpieces.
- **Culinary Treasures:** Savour plov, non (traditional bread), and samsa.
- **Best Time to Visit:** April to June and September to October.



Seven-Day Itinerary:

1. **Tashkent (2 Nights):** Visit the Chorsu Bazaar and Amir Timur Square.
2. **Samarkand (2 Nights):** Marvel at Registan Square and Shah-i-Zinda.
3. **Bukhara (2 Nights):** Discover the Ark Fortress and savour manty dumplings.
4. **Khiva (1 Night):** Explore Ichan Kala and enjoy local halva.

Kazakhstan: Where Modernity Meets Untamed Beauty

A land of contrasts, Kazakhstan offers futuristic cities and dramatic landscapes.

Why Visit?

- **Natural Marvels:** Charyn Canyon's



breathtaking scenery rivals the Grand Canyon.

- **Gastronomic Adventures:** Try beshbarmak and boursaks.
- **Best Time to Visit:** May to June and September.

Seven-Day Itinerary:

1. **Almaty (2 Nights):** Visit Panfilov Park and try kurt cheese.
2. **Charyn Canyon (2 Nights):** Enjoy rock formations and regional cuisine.
3. **Nur-Sultan (2 Nights):** Explore Bayterek Tower and taste kazy sausage.
4. **Return to Almaty (1 Night):** Wrap up with zhauburek.

Bhutan: The Last Shangri-La

A spiritual retreat offering breath-taking landscapes and rich traditions.

Why Visit?

- **Cultural Immersion:** Visit Tiger's Nest Monastery.
- **Culinary Delights:** Try ema datshi and butter tea.
- **Best Time to Visit:** March-May and September-November.

Seven-Day Itinerary:

1. **Paro (2 Nights):** Trek to Tiger's Nest and enjoy Bhutanese red rice.
2. **Thimphu (3 Nights):** Explore Tashichho Dzong.
3. **Punakha (2 Nights):** Visit Punakha Dzong.

With ever-evolving travel infrastructure and cultural festivities, 2025 presents an opportunity to explore Asia's treasures. Whether seeking futuristic cities, desert escapades, or Silk Road wonders, Asia offers unparalleled experiences. 🌏



Mandrem Beach Resort, A Coastal Haven in Goa-Radisson Individuals retreats

What is it that defines excellent experience from an ordinary one?

Well for us it is:

Slow and relaxing

Unconventional luxury which is personalised and not like a typical hotel.

By Payal Sahni

The best luxury suite, laid back, quiet, curated meals made when you order, beach walks right out of your window, fresh cup of cappuccino, private swimming pool, shop till you drop just at a walking distance, river view on the other side, no noise or ho-lala, turtles to watch, bar under the starts at your service. What more could one ask for?? That us enjoyable luxury for us where we do not live by the time table, rather we become one with the vibe of the place.

Set in the calm atmosphere of Mandrem Beach in North Goa, Mandrem Beach Resort is all about luxury and peace at its best. As someone who goes there a lot, we have grown to love the still feel and real wonder of Mandrem Beach. It's not like other places. Mandrem is a quiet spot, giving you a true beach feel. Mandrem has soft, fine sands and blue seas, making it perfect for a restful time away. The way to the beach—maybe a chill walk or a river ride—makes it even more fun.

In this beach heaven, Mandrem Beach Resort is a mark of class, with fine rooms, great help, and things to do that fit right in with the natural look. Every trip there shows why Mandrem Beach resort is special—a place giving you times you'll never forget.

Mandrem Beach appeared peaceful to us when we first stepped on the fine white sands and the light blue waters. It was known to be an attractive point of natural

beauty and restfulness away from the fast-paced life. What makes Mandrem so special is its clean beauty which provides a place to unwind with nature and its inner self.

Location and Accessibility

Ideally located about 28 kilometers from Manohar International Airport and Thivim Railway Station, the property promises

a hassle-free, easy trip for tired tourists looking for some relaxing beach time. We were able to start our revitalizing adventure without any problems because there were cabs, rental cars, and buses all within a kilometer of this lovely beach.

Accommodation and Facilities

When we visited Mandrem Beach Resort,

we were thrilled to find a luxurious haven hidden amidst the calm beauty of Goa's coastline. Every area, from the roomy luxury suites with their plunge pools overlooking the stunning coastline to the tastefully furnished rooms, emanated a feeling of grandeur and serenity that charmed me right away.

Our Luxury suite which was the best

one in the property had white soft curtains and pure linen cloth over the bed, which made it so romantic, sea green wall to give you a calm feel, larger than one room was the bathroom, and exquisite coffee machine which we usually do not find even in good hotels besides other amenities. It was more like a comfortable villa.

We found myself taking advantage

of the resort's amenities during my visit. There was never a dull moment, whether enjoying the gorgeous pool, playing friendly activities at the indoor games arena, or going on outside sports activities like cricket and beach volleyball. The yoga sessions on the beach served as an oasis of relaxation where we could rest and recover while listening to the soothing sound of the





waves. All in all, we had an amazing week at Mandrem Beach Resort, with plenty of luxurious, restful moments and unmatched generosity that will never be forgotten.

Food

Visiting Mandrem Beach Resort was such a great experience when it came to food. We found Sunset Cove, a poolside restaurant within this facility serving Goanese, Asian as well as Continental foodstuffs. The first thing that struck me when we entered this place was the calm environment; combined with an extensive view of the Arabian Ocean creating an unforgettable dinner experience.

Sunset Cove had a wide selection of food and drinks, ranging from delicious breakfasts to exquisite dishes of various types. The flavors on each plate were well-matched.

Event Spaces and Banquet Facilities

Mandrem Beach Resort's breathtaking views and versatility amazed us with its event spaces and banquet facilities. A spacious banquet hall that spanned more than 1800 square feet served as a backdrop for the river and beach landscapes that made it perfect for many types of functions. When it came to seating arrangements in this hall, to which 120 people could easily fit at once: there were different options such as theater-style seating with chairs all facing one direction or U-shaped seating disposition while other tables had been arranged close together forming what we call clustered seating for group discussion purposes. In this banquet hall, there were alternative arrangements for 120 people.

Also, the large beach lawns created an amazing environment for open-air

activities that provided a panoramic view of the Arabian Sea. It spanned a large area, with a capacity of around 200 people, and was very suitable for hosting evening events such as sundowners.

The resort is committed to providing excellent venue facilities and did its best to make sure that everything was perfect for our hosts at their special moments.

Nearby Attractions and Activities

We had a pleasant stay at Mandrem Beach Resort and found numerous interesting places and things to see nearby. During our stay at Mandrem Beach Resort, we were delighted to discover a myriad of local sights and things to do only a short distance. Arambol Beach and Ashwem Beach were near our accommodation, fascinating us

FOUR ISSUES AT THE COST OF 3

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with their clean shorelines and peaceful atmosphere. We had an opportunity to see turtles laying eggs on the shorelines of some beaches close by including Morjim, Galgibag, and Agonda beaches. And this was one of those rare things that happen just once in a lifetime and would always be cherished.

Commitment to the Society
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is taken

very seriously at Mandrem Beach Resort with sustainable practices being closely woven into its operations to have a positive impact on the environment and community around it. The resort is involved in several programs and projects that are all aimed at reducing the amounts of CO2 it releases to the atmosphere as well as discouraging the use of environmentally unfriendly items while simultaneously providing financial

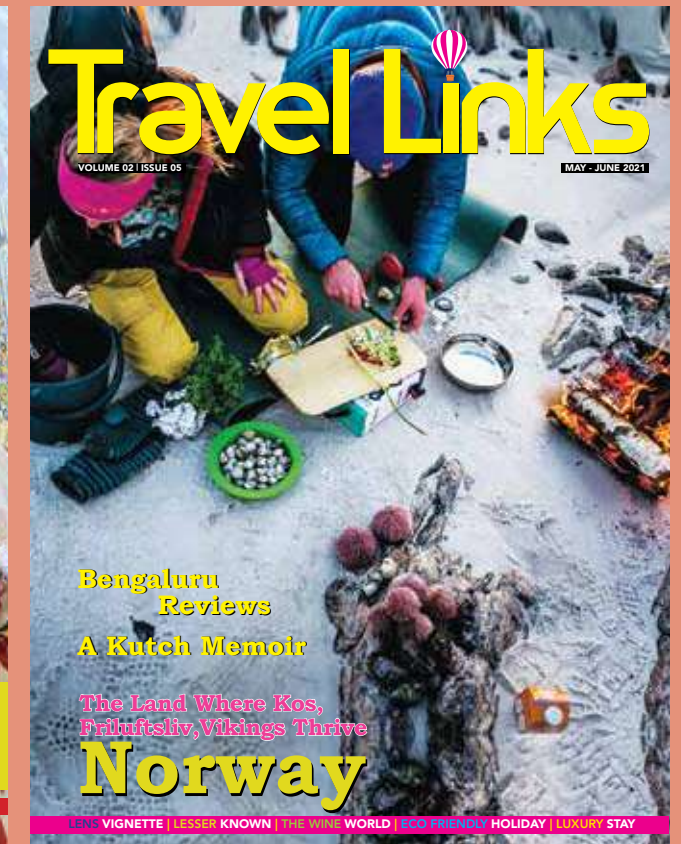
support for people living within its vicinity off employment generated by environment-friendly procedures so reducing the levels of poverty within such regions. This ranges from cutting down on power usage through various ways that save electricity consumption and revising waste disposal options.

They also support local craftsmen and regional talent to preserve and present the authentic culture and practices of Goa.

Conclusion

To sum up, our experience at Mandrem Beach Resort was a testament to both the Radisson Hotel Group's dedication to quality and the timeless appeal of Goa's breathtaking coastline. As we think back on our trip, it's clear that Mandrem Beach Resort is still reshaping the travel and luxury industries, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who has the honour of experiencing its unmatched hospitality.

In this beach heaven, Mandrem Beach Resort is a mark of class, with fine rooms, great help, and things to do that fit right in with the natural look. Every trip there shows why Mandrem Beach resort is special—a place giving you times you'll never forget.



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Saudi
Welcome
to Arabia



Spectacular Saudi

Discover the heart of Arabia – golden dunes, futuristic cityscapes, and breathtaking nature



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