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AMANDA JOY PURAVANKARA
Executive Director
Provident Housing Limited

Dear Readers,

They say a building is just steel and stone until life breathes into it. But before the first curtain flutters in the breeze or the first cup of chai steams on a balcony, there's a dream. Raw, bold, and sometimes a little crazy.

Lately, I've been thinking about the why behind what we do. It's not just about structures touching the sky or lobbies gleaming with polish. It's about what happens inside those spaces. The quiet moments of solitude. The bursts of laughter over impromptu dance-offs in the living room. The everyday, the mundane, the magic – all wrapped into one.

So, here's to the architects of daydreams and the builders of realities. To everyone who's ever walked through one of our doors and thought, "Yes, this is where my story begins." Because in the end, the greatest foundation we can ever build is one that supports your life's little joys and big leaps.

Welcome to this quarter's issue. I hope it inspires you to dream, dare, and most importantly, dwell in wonder.

Amanda Joy

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Winter Issue 2024
contents



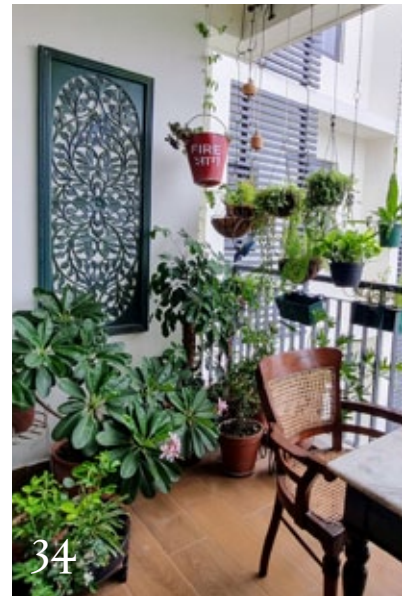
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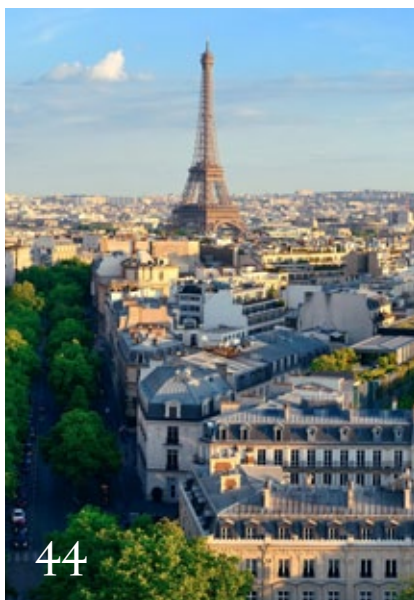
14



30



34



44

The A List - Trending
 Right Now..... 10

ENRICH

The Best Things Anyone Ever
 Said About... Happiness 14

Inspiration Board: Because you are
 what you read, watch and think..... 18

Founder's Formula:
 5 Daily practices that have shaped
 my leadership journey..... 24

Kavit Nehra Fitness Faves 25

Book Extract: A kiss in Kashmir 26

DECORATE

Sofa, So Good: 5 Stunning Sofa Styles
 to Elevate Your Home30

Eclectic Elegance:
 Journalist Manjul Misra's Kolkata
 Home is a Sensory Delight34

Snug as a Hug:
 An Ode to Quilts 40

EXPLORE

The Best of Paris 44

Buffalo: New York Without
 the New York50

Mount Hutt: Canterbury,
 New Zealand..... 53

The Monument:
 A Towering Tribute To
 The Great Fire Of London54



56



70



74

DISCOVER

Guardians of the Green:
Meet Reeshna Pardhi
Nature's Protector..... 74

Take a Kora Walk.....77

Lafaani: Weaving Tradition
with Sustainability..... 78

Inked: From ancient rituals
to celebrity trends, tattoos
can bewild, wonderful and
sometimes weird..... 80

STAY

A Homely Stay in Assam..... 84

Sleep among the vines:
7 unique winery stays 88

The House in the Forest96

INDULGE

Starring Cinnamon 56

Pappardelle:
Italy's Showstopper Pasta..... 60

Winter Warmers:
By Swapnadeep Mukherjee,
Executive Chef, The Metropolitan
Hotel & Spa, Delhi..... 62

A Sip of History:
Jakarta's Spice Trail Comes Alive
at Four Seasons Bengaluru..... 64

Loy Krathong Lights: Up at Four
Seasons' Far & East..... 68

Croissant French Perfection:
Bake Yourself A Buttery,
Flaky Slice of Heaven..... 70



88



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Please Recycle This Paper

editor's note



Dear Readers,

Winter is a season of contrasts – a chill in the air but warmth in the heart, longer nights yet brighter celebrations. As we wrap up the year, our latest issue is designed to reflect all those moments that make this season special.

First up, if you're yearning for a little travel inspiration, our Paris primer will whisk you away to cobbled streets, twinkling lights, and buttery croissants. Whether it's your first time in the City of Lights or a return visit, there's something for every dreamer.

For those who love the idea of slowing down, we've packed in a hearty serving of comfort food. Think warm bowls of goodness and recipes that feel like a hug. Perfect for a lazy afternoon or a festive gathering with your favourite people.

Need a dose of motivation to step into the new year? Our stories on living your best life offer that gentle nudge – to take chances, chase joy, and celebrate the little things. And don't miss the book extract in this issue; it's all about second chances and fresh beginnings, just in time for your own.

As the year winds down, we hope this issue gives you moments to pause, savour, and celebrate. Here's to a season of reflection, joy, and new adventures waiting just around the corner.

Happy reading!

Shubhra



Sanjeev Shetty

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The **A** List

TRENDING RIGHT NOW



LUCARIS MUSE COLLECTION

Designed to elevate the wine experience for discerning drinkers, the new crystalware collection offers a captivating blend of modern luxury and innovative design.

CHILENUT WALNUTS

Known worldwide for their excellent quality, Chilean walnuts are celebrated for their light colour, freshness, and high yield. With exports to over 70 countries, these walnuts are becoming increasingly popular in India.



ZIGZAG VODKA

With carbon, silver, platinum and gold filtering, ZigZag offers a clean and crisp vodka.





OLDEST BREAD

Turkish Airlines has introduced 'The World's Oldest Bread' to its in-flight service menu. Served heated and in a special bag with butter and olive oil before meal service, the bread is new to the airline's in-flight service, but well-established in Turkish history.



UBER PET

Uber ridesharing app has launched Uber Pet in Bengaluru, allowing riders to bring their beloved pets along for the ride. With this new reserve-only service, pet owners can now enjoy stress-free travel with their furry companions, whether it's a quick trip to the vet or an outing to their favourite pet-friendly café.



NEW BALANCE'S TIMELESS 550S

The 550's low top, streamlined silhouette offers a clean take on the heavy-duty designs of the late '80s, while the dependable synthetic suede upper construction is a classic look in any era.



an ode to Linen

Aeka is a planet- positive brand that consists of linen sarees and separates. The endeavour at Aeka was to empower the wearer to lend her personality and style to the garment.

We work with breathable fabrics and relaxed silhouettes and believe in slow fashion and living.



aeka

BY ANUPRIYA

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ENRICH

TAKE TIME TO NURTURE THE MOST IMPORTANT
PERSON IN YOUR LIFE—YOU!





THE BEST THINGS ANYONE
EVER SAID ABOUT...
HAPPINESS

**“FOLKS ARE
USUALLY ABOUT
AS HAPPY AS THEY
MAKE THEIR MINDS
UP TO BE.”**

- Abraham Lincoln

**“HAPPINESS
SHARED IS
HAPPINESS
DOUBLED.”**

- Swedish Proverb

**“THERE IS ONLY
ONE HAPPINESS
IN THIS WORLD.
TO LOVE AND
BE LOVED.”**

- George Sands

**“MISERY MIGHT
LOVE COMPANY, BUT
SO DOES JOY. AND
JOY THROWS MUCH
BETTER PARTIES.”**

- Billy Ivey

**“HAPPINESS IS A
JOURNEY, NOT A
DESTINATION.”**

- Gautam Buddha

**“HAPPINESS IS A
WARM PUPPY.”**

- Charles Schultz

**“HAPPINESS IS NOT
A GOAL. IT IS A BY-
PRODUCT OF A LIFE
WELL LIVED.”**

- Eleanor Roosevelt

**“THE BEST WAY TO
CHEER YOURSELF UP
IS TO CHEER SOMEONE
ELSE UP.”**

- Mark Twain

**“BEING HAPPY NEVER
GOES OUT OF STYLE.”**

- Lily Pulitzer

THE HAPPINESS JOURNAL

Take a moment to pause, breathe, and dive into what happiness means to you. Grab a pen, settle in, and let these prompts help you explore your personal journey to joy. Remember, your answers are just for you, so be as open and real as you like.

1. A LITTLE SUNSHINE MOMENT:

Describe a small, everyday moment that recently made you smile. What was special about it?

Answer: _____

2. LETTER TO SELF:

Write one sentence to yourself, as if you're encouraging a close friend. What do you need to hear right now?

Answer: _____

3. WHAT COLOURS MAKE YOU HAPPY?

Think of a time when you felt truly happy. What colors would you use to paint that memory?

Answer: _____

4. HAPPY TUNES:

List three songs that always lift your mood, and why each one holds a special place in your heart.

Song #1: _____

Song #2: _____

Song #3: _____

5. ADVENTURE AWAITS:

Imagine you're planning a day filled with activities that make you feel alive. Where would you go? What would you do?

Answer: _____

6. FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Describe a memory with family or friends that brings you joy every time you think about it.

Answer: _____

7. A HAPPY FUTURE MEMORY:

Picture yourself in the future, living a happy day. What are you doing, who is with you, and what is bringing you joy?

Answer: _____

8. A MOMENT OF PEACE:

Write about a time when you felt at peace. What were you doing? Where were you?

Answer: _____

9. WHAT SPARKS JOY IN YOUR EVERYDAY?

Think about small, simple pleasures—a good cup of chai, a walk in the garden. What are the little things that bring you a moment of happiness?

Answer: _____

10. A HAPPINESS MANTRA:

Create a short mantra or phrase that reminds you of your happy place. Write it here to read whenever you need a lift.

Mantra: _____

Always About You: Building Dreams, Shaping Lives.

We are often asked “What drives you?” Our answer is simple. We are “Always about you.”

Since 1975, we’ve always put you, our customer, at the centre of our universe. We know your home is more than just a place to live - it’s the heart of your life. For nearly five decades, we’ve made it our mission to ensure it feels that way.

Our customer-centricity has made us one of India’s most admired and trusted real estate brands. We innovate at every step, deliver on time, and constantly raise the bar. Yet, no matter how far we’ve come, our journey always begins with people, with you.

This philosophy has also enabled us to break new ground. From introducing theme-centric

lifestyle communities to affordable housing solutions, innovation has been our hallmark. It has earned us numerous awards and the trust of countless families across India.

At Purva, we understand that every customer is unique, and so are their dreams. For those seeking to elevate their living experience, our residential towers combine spacious homes with thoughtful amenities and vibrant communities. For those who value privacy and tranquility, our elite villa enclaves offer serene escapes. And for those with global aspirations, our WorldHome Collection ushers in the future of living - integrating state-of-the-art technology with luxury to create extraordinary spaces.



PURAVANKARA



Blending bold designs, effortless luxury, new technology, and natural beauty, our projects inspire people to discover their best lives.

“We innovate at every step, deliver on time, and constantly raise the bar. Yet, no matter how far we’ve come, our journey always begins with people, with you”.

Today, the impact of our philosophy is clear. Over 2 lakh happy families call our projects home, living vibrant and meaningful lives. We’ve delivered over 50 million square feet. And we’re present in 9 cities. We’ve come a long way since 1975.

As we look to the future in a rapidly changing world, we remain committed to our founding principle: Always about you. Our commitment also extends to creating thriving

cultures for our employees, promoting education, and contributing to environmental sustainability. Whatever we do, we remind ourselves that we’re not just building spaces; we’re shaping worlds where people feel free to pursue their dreams.

So, what’s your dream? At Purva, we’re ready to build it with you.

PURVA
ALWAYS ABOUT YOU

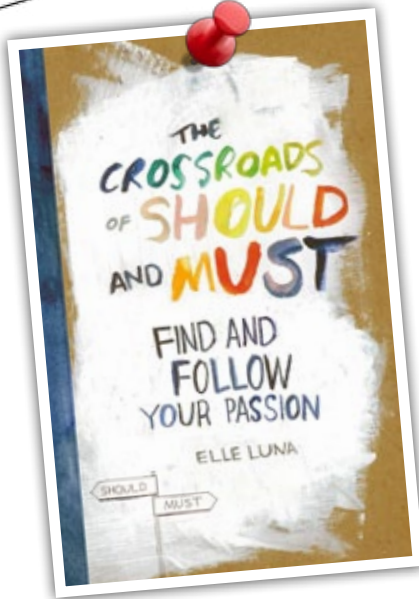
INSPIRATION BOARD

BECAUSE YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ,
WATCH AND THINK

Read 

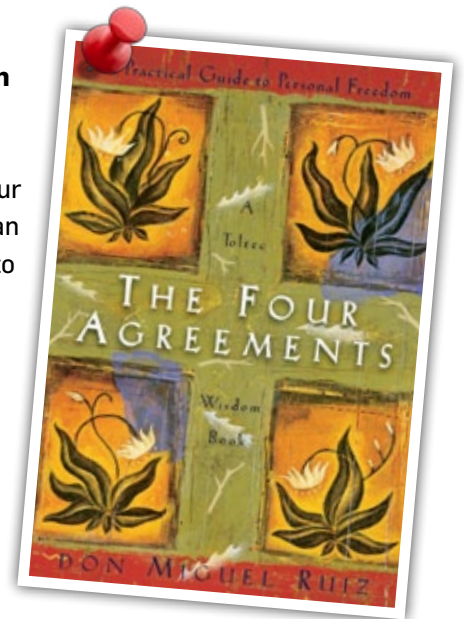
The Crossroads of Should and Must by Elle Luna

This book is a call to follow your inner voice. With a blend of creative insights and honest questions, it encourages readers to distinguish between the life they “should” live and the life they truly desire.



The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz

Simple but potent, this book outlines four “agreements” you can make with yourself to live a happier, more authentic life. It's deeply insightful, offering wisdom on how to take things less personally and make peace with others.



 Reflect

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.”
- Albert Camus

“The greatest thing you'll ever learn is to love and be loved in return.”
- Nat King Cole



Watch

Coco (2017)

This heartwarming animated film celebrates the importance of family, tradition, and the enduring nature of love. The protagonist's journey to understand his family's history and connect with his ancestors is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by loved ones.



It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

This classic Christmas film is a timeless tale of a man who loses hope and considers ending his life. An angel intervenes, showing him the profound impact his life has had on others. It's a heartwarming reminder of the ripple effect of kindness and the importance of human connection.

Listen

"Here Comes the Sun" by The Beatles

This timeless classic is like a burst of sunshine. Perfect for a rough day or an early morning, it's a gentle reminder that better days always come around.



Podcast: How I Built This by Guy Raz

For anyone interested in stories of resilience and creativity, this podcast dives into the journeys of innovators and entrepreneurs who built some of the world's best-known brands from scratch.





Switzerland's Glacier Express

Often called the "slowest express train in the world," the Glacier Express lets you soak in Switzerland's most scenic landscapes. From the Matterhorn to lush valleys, it's a dream trip for the soul and senses alike.





Digital Detox Day

Disconnecting for just one day can reset your mind and sharpen your awareness. Spend time outdoors, read, or cook a meal from scratch. The peace you'll feel is priceless.



Journaling

Writing down your thoughts and feelings can be deeply cathartic. Spend a few minutes each day recording your reflections, goals, or simple joys. Journaling can help clear your mind, clarify your priorities, and nurture gratitude.



Stargazing Night Out

In our busy lives, we rarely pause to appreciate the wonders above. Take a night to stargaze – whether you drive to a quiet spot or simply lie back in your backyard. Let the vastness of the sky remind you how magical life really is.



Gateway to a Charming English Life

The English way of life at Provident Deansgate invites you to savour the finer things in life; the luxury of quiet solitude, moments of calm and the joyful rush of feeling your productive best. A space where you and your loved ones are enveloped in a space that's created with an abundance of nature while being connected to everyday conveniences.

Provident Deansgate brings this lifestyle to life in North Bengaluru on IVC Road, offering luxury living inspired by the charm of Manchester.

Experience timeless elegance as you walk along cobblestone streets, relax under Victorian-style lamps, and admire classic English sculptures. Start your day surrounded by the beauty of blooming flowers and a sense of serenity.



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PRM/KA/RERA/1250/303/PR/041123/006373 | RERA website: <https://rera.karnataka.gov.in/>

The elevation is designed with elegance across two levels. On the ground floor, a single villament offers exclusive access to a private garden. Above, two duplex villaments feature private terraces, perfect for relaxing under the open sky. This thoughtful design blends grandeur and comfort, creating a beautiful space for residents to enjoy the essence of community living.

At Provident Deansgate, leisure becomes a part of your everyday life. Our expansive 12,000 square foot clubhouse and 25+ amenities offer endless experiences that help you unwind.

Stroll through Heaton Park, take a refreshing swim in the lap pool, or enjoy a friendly badminton match with your neighbour. Here, the joy of outdoor living is about sharing precious moments with your loved ones.

Provident Deansgate is more than a home-it's a promise of harmony and a brighter future. It's a space where luxury living meets care for the environment, creating a home where life feels complete.



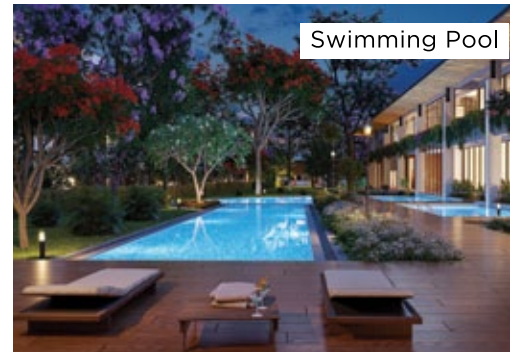
Play Courts



Amphitheatre



Heaton Park



Swimming Pool



Clubhouse with Clocktower

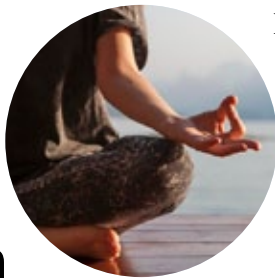
FOUNDER'S FORMULA

5 DAILY PRACTICES THAT HAVE SHAPED MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

BY SAMEER NIGAM

1. Morning Meditation

I start my day with meditation, which helps me maintain focus and clarity throughout the day.



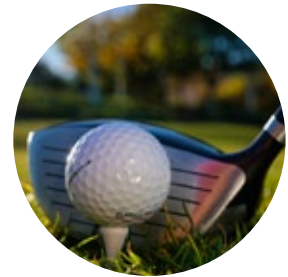
2. Continuous Learning

Reading diverse genres keeps me informed and inspired. I enjoy the scent of new books and the knowledge they bring. I also use short casts from Blinkist and longer-format audiobooks to sample books during my commute or small breaks.



3. Physical Activity

Engaging in activities like golf not only keeps me physically active but also provides a mental break, fostering creativity and strategic thinking.



4. Reflective Practices

Regular reflection on personal and professional experiences allows me to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. Besides using the Notes app on my iPhone, I also carry a small pocket diary for quickly jotting down ideas and inspiration.



5. Networking and Mentorship

Building and maintaining relationships with mentors and peers offers valuable perspectives and support, essential for navigating the entrepreneurial landscape.



SAMEER NIGAM is the founder of Stratbeans, a leading digital transformation company that uses AI to redefine workplace learning. With a passion for personal growth and strategic thinking, he shares insights from his entrepreneurial journey to inspire leaders worldwide.

KAVIT NEHRA FITNESS FAVES

Kavit Nehra is an ACE-certified fitness professional with over 8 years of experience. He has trained over 200 personal clients.

1. Favourite Healthy Indian Dish:

Oats Chilla

2. Favourite Cheat Meal:

Chole Bhature

3. Favourite Piece of Fitness Equipment:

Squat Rack

4. Fitness Inspiration:

Vidyut Jammwal

5. Go-to Pre-Workout:

Peanut butter sandwich with black coffee

6. Fitness Myth That Annoys Me the Most:

"Weight training makes you bulky."

7. Yoga or Weightlifting – My Pick:

Weightlifting, which offers numerous benefits, including improved strength, increased muscle mass, enhanced bone mineral density, and better fat loss. It tones your body and improves your ability to perform daily life activities effectively.



A TIMELESS TALE OF LOVE A KISS IN KASHMIR

BY MONICA SAIGAL

*H*is mind floated back to the first time he saw her.

'I am told you are the best there is,' Sharmila, a member of one of the most eminent royal families of Jaipur, had said to him when they were first introduced. She showed him some of her artwork. Her amateur work showed that she clearly had talent. But more than that, she had vision.

Soon, his tiny studio filled up with a handful of students. He tried to help them all, but his focus was always on Sharmila from the very first.

She laughed easily, painted with abandon, and was curious about his life and his art.

He often told her that there weren't enough hours in the day, or even a lifetime, to answer all her questions. Nevertheless, she would persist, her curiosity insatiable.

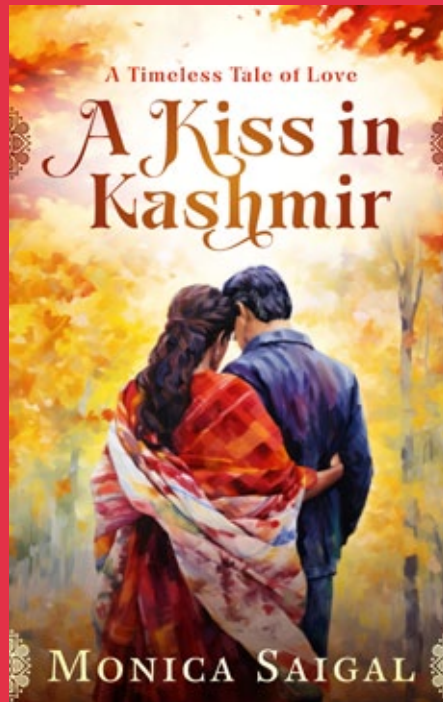
'Vikram, how does the sunrise differ in October versus January when you paint it? What does this brush do? How did you find that perfect shade of magenta?'

Of course, the questions slowly went from being about painting to him, and then to them.

'What is your dream, Vikram -- for your art, I mean? Tell me about your mom. Does your brother paint? I eagerly wait for each morning to be with you, do you feel the same? Is this what love feels like? I feel so safe in your embrace, do you feel that?'

Endless questions, and each one drew him closer to her. He had many of his own.

'I worry I am not good enough for you, Sharmila. You belong to one of the richest families in the country and my family is



from a small town. We are of humble means.'

She would simply smile in response. And if he insisted on worrying, she would add, 'I didn't fall in love with your bank balance, and I did not choose to be born into a royal family. Love is love. That is all that matters.'

Their love of art, of the blank canvas and its promise, brought them closer and closer.

'You must learn to think and see with your brush. Your brush should lead your hand, not the other way around.'

Vikram guided her hand as she learned the intricacies of her craft. Within a short few weeks, her work had shown remarkable progress.

Vikram remembered how shocked he had been when she showed him a painting.

'Vikram, I want you to see something.' Sharmila had pulled him into one of the many gardens behind the studio.

She had spent early morning hours working on a mural.

On a small wall, facing a fountain behind the studio, she had painted him standing by a lake with a brush in hand and canvas in front of him.

'Oh, this is beautiful. You make me look good,' he had said, a bit shy at first.

'I did what you said. My brush guided me. This is the result.' He had kissed her that day and she had held him close, whispering, 'I think I am falling in love with you.'

Just the thought of her and her name made his smile brighter than the sun in Srinagar that morning. But there was a stop he needed to make before heading home, right by the Gawkadai Bridge.

The bridge had been the site of a massacre a few years earlier, a terrible memory.

The last time Vikram had called home, his brother, Suraj, mentioned that the area was now safer, but added, 'This isn't the Kashmir of our childhood. I know you will want to see Afzal for tosha, but come home first.'

Vikram had mumbled an agreement, but, of course, disagreed in his head.

A typical artist, he always insisted that these political things were a passing phase and did not affect him. Besides, he had to tell his childhood friend, Afzal, about Sharmila.

Of course, he also wanted to pick up tosha for his mother. Filled with cashews, almonds, and sugar, tosha was his

mother's favorite treat. And pairing a sweet dish with good news was how he had been raised.

Vikram clutched his well-worn gray woollen scarf closer to his body and held his bag tight.

The bag held a surprise for his parents, one he couldn't wait to share. It was true what his grandmother had always said: Jahun chhuh ashhun mazhar (the world is a theatre of love).

Now, he could tell Ma and Baba about Sharmila, about their magical theatre of love that was his life.

A life filled with colours, romance, promises of loving family, and a woman whose eyes were not something just to look at but to immerse your soul in.

Everything about Sharmila was a gift from the Divine: The graceful way she twirled her paintbrush, the naughtiness with which she teased his desperate attempts at cooking her favorite dishes, the gentleness when her lips touched his, the softness of her hair as it fell on his face, the flowery smell of her perfume when he nuzzled her neck, the mole near her quivering lips that he kissed every opportunity he got.

Soon now, she would be his. They had decided to wed in Kashmir in April, on Sharmila's birthday.

He could hardly wait to tell his parents. The thought of seeing her in wedding finery with his family blessing them, and his beloved city surrounding them, made Vikram giddy with anticipation.

He smiled as he looked at the red and yellow autumn leaves falling around him.

He had told Sharmila all about autumn there and had even taught her to paint these leaves.

He enjoyed painting a verbal picture of his favorite places in Kashmir and then watched her paint those landscapes. She was a quick learner and could paint majestic scenes with ease.

'What colour exactly was the tree bark? How did the sky look from this angle? How many minarets were there in the mosque? How many steps were there in that temple?' Sharmila and her never-ending questions created magic on the canvas.

He remembered their first trip outside of Jaipur. Sharmila had been telling him about the little sacred town of Pushkar, a blessed town nestled in the heart of her home state of Rajasthan.

'I want to take you there and show you Pushkar Lake, Vikram. While it isn't like the Dal Lake of your beautiful Kashmir, I know you will love it. There is something timeless about it. I love walking in Pushkar, with all the sound of the chanting, the smell of the incense and endless number of divine places. Oh, and the hot air balloons.'

The balloon ride over Pushkar was nothing like he had ever experienced before.

While Pushkar itself had been intoxicating, the balloon ride was extraordinary.

The balloons danced to the rhythm of the air and every view was breathtaking.

He said as he held her close, 'This balloon makes me feel like I am a part of the canvas of this landscape, this desert below, that lake, the labyrinthine, colourful streets, that warm sun.'

After the ride, he had put his secret plan into action. He'd worked with Sharmila's sister to make sure nothing would go wrong.

He had taken her to a small open-air theatre that hosted traditional Rajasthani puppet shows.

They found seats on the first wooden bench. All the benches were full as locals and tourists alike came to watch the sweet performances.

'Oh, I have loved these since I was a child!' Sharmila exclaimed. At first, Sharmila didn't seem to notice.

Then it suddenly dawned on her -- the puppets on stage, large, intricate marionettes dressed in vibrant Rajasthani clothes, were telling her and Vikram's love story, from the time they met to the present moment.

Just under a year, but a memorable and beautiful year. The dialogues were accompanied by musicians playing the double-headed drum dholak and the stringed instrument, the sarangi.

Oil lamps strung around the stage and the entire theatre cast gentle light and dramatic shadows.

As the puppet show reached its climax, the male puppet hesitated, then offered something in his hand to the female puppet.

He then told the audience, 'For the rest of the show, please watch the couple on the first bench.'

Vikram turned to Sharmila and said, 'I don't have the riches of the world, but I love you dearly and promise to make you the happiest woman on earth. Will you marry me?' In his hand, much to her delight, instead of a ring he was holding his favorite and most prized paintbrush.

While the audience clapped and called for rings to be exchanged, teary-eyed Sharmila lovingly accepted the valued brush and hugged her husband-to-be.

The memory made him smile. And now, soon, he would bring her here to his hometown of Srinagar, in his beautiful state of Kashmir.

It would be her first time. He couldn't wait. He knew she would fall in love with the valley as soon as she saw it.

Excerpted from *A Kiss in Kashmir* by Monica Saigal, with the permission of the publishers, Bodes Well Publishing.



Monica Saigal (Bhide) is an award-winning author, accomplished literary coach, and educator. Her work has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Bon Appétit*, *Food & Wine*, and *Town & Country*, among others.

Her debut short story collection, *The Devil in Us*, a clutch of spellbinding tales centred on fate and fortune, earned a spot on Amazon's bestseller list in 2015.

Monica is a graduate of George Washington University (Washington, D.C.), and holds a master's degree from Lynchburg College (Lynchburg, VA) and a Bachelor's degree from Bangalore University (Bangalore, India).



Great Product is Built When You Don't Depend on others

Fully Finished Door Systems from
Puravankara's Own Manufacturing Unit

PURVA WOODWORKS



100% Factory
Finished



German Quality
Construction



Value Engineering
& Transparency



Fully Functional &
Aesthetic Interiors

SCAN TO CONNECT



DECORATE

IDEAS & INSPIRATION ON HOW TO MAKE
YOUR HOME A BEAUTIFUL SANCTUARY



SOFA, SO GOOD

5 STUNNING SOFA STYLES TO ELEVATE YOUR HOME

From versatile loveseats to classic Chesterfields, these five sofa styles will add personality to any room in your home.



01

THE CHESTERFIELD SOFA

Best For: Formal Living Rooms and Studies

With origins in 18th-century England, the Chesterfield sofa, commissioned by the Earl of Chesterfield, is iconic for its deep button-tufted upholstery and rolled arms. This heritage piece exudes British sophistication and fits perfectly into a formal living room or study, adding regal charm.

Designer Tip: British designer Kelly Hoppen (@kellyhoppen) recommends a “floating” placement in the room to make the Chesterfield a conversational focal point. Update it with textured throws and metallic cushions for a fresh twist on its classic elegance.

CREATIVE PLACEMENT AND STYLING TIPS**Floating Placement:**

Don't always place your sofa against a wall. Floating it in the centre of a room, with a console table behind, creates an inviting focal point—especially effective in larger spaces.

Layer with Textures:

Designer Emily Henderson (@em_henderson) recommends layering different textures with your sofa. Pair a velvet sofa with a linen throw or leather cushions to create a visually engaging look.

Go Bold with Colour:

If you're hesitant to choose a bold sofa colour, try rich fabrics like velvet in jewel tones. Colourful sofas can inject life into any room, while neutral tones create a versatile canvas.

02

LOVESEAT

Best For: Small Living Rooms, Bedrooms, and Cosy Corners

Originating in 18th-century Europe, the loveseat was first designed to accommodate the wide skirts of that era and evolved into a compact, two-seater sofa that's perfect for cosy settings. Ideal for small living rooms or as an accent piece, it adds warmth without overwhelming a room.

Designer Tip: Australian designer Sarah Ellison (@sarahellisonstudio) suggests going bold with colours like coral or mustard to make a style statement. Pair it with a mirror or artwork to add depth and reflect light, enhancing the space's charm.



03



04



03

CAMELBACK SOFA

Best For: Elegant Living Rooms and Traditional Spaces

The camelback sofa, dating back to 18th-century England and popularised by furniture maker Thomas Chippendale, is defined by its signature arched back. This classic piece works well in traditional or Victorian-inspired spaces, lending a touch of vintage sophistication.

Designer Tip: American designer Bunny Williams (@bunnywilliamshome) loves arranging camelback sofas in pairs to create a balanced, symmetrical layout. Try upholstering in a patterned fabric to enhance its vintage feel and place it across from a large coffee table for an elegant setup.

04

TUXEDO SOFA

Best For: Modern Living Rooms and Sleek Interiors

Named after New York's upscale Tuxedo Park, this 1920s American style has high arms and back aligned for a boxy, architectural look, often seen in art-deco-inspired spaces. Its structured design adds sophistication to any modern or urban setting.

Designer Tip: Kelly Wearstler (@kellywearstler), an American designer, suggests adding bold cushions or an oversized throw to soften the lines. Place a tuxedo sofa against a wall with bold wallpaper or a large abstract piece to make a chic, statement-worthy backdrop.

05

MID-CENTURY MODERN SOFA

Best For: Contemporary Living Rooms and Home Offices

This sofa style, inspired by the minimalist design trends of 1950s America and Scandinavia, is known for its sleek lines and low profile. With tapered wooden legs, it fits seamlessly in contemporary or minimalist spaces and brings a touch of retro charm.

Designer Tip: British designer Tom Dixon (@tomdixonstudio) advises contrasting a mid-century sofa with textured rugs and brass or marble accents for warmth. Don't be afraid of bold colours—mustard or navy add a stylish 1950s vibe that's making a comeback in modern interiors.

Selective ELEGANCE

*Journalist Manjul Misra's Kolkata Home
is a Sensory Delight*

S



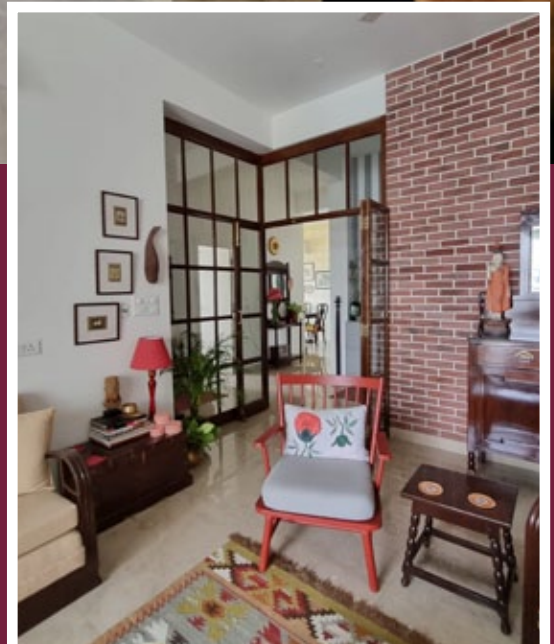
Step into Manjul Misra's Kolkata home, and you're immediately enveloped by a sense of warmth and personality. An experienced décor editor and design consultant, Manjul has skilfully woven together an eclectic blend of styles: country charm, colonial elegance, and modern sophistication – to create a space that feels both curated and lived-in.

Many of the furniture pieces here are treasured heirlooms from her parents' home in Lucknow. These timeless pieces carry stories of generations past, adding a layer of nostalgia to the home's carefully curated aesthetic. Vintage colonial accents sit harmoniously alongside rustic country touches, while contemporary elements bring freshness and balance. Think weathered wooden furniture paired with crisp linens, classic rattan mingling with sleek metallic details, and vibrant Indian textiles offering a splash of colour against neutral backdrops.

Every room tells a story, reflecting Manjul's keen eye for detail and her love for design that transcends eras. The spaces are rich with textures and layered with memories, inviting guests not just to admire, but to linger and feel at home.

It's a place where tradition meets innovation, where warmth meets sophistication – a home that inspires creativity and invites you to relax.

Living Room

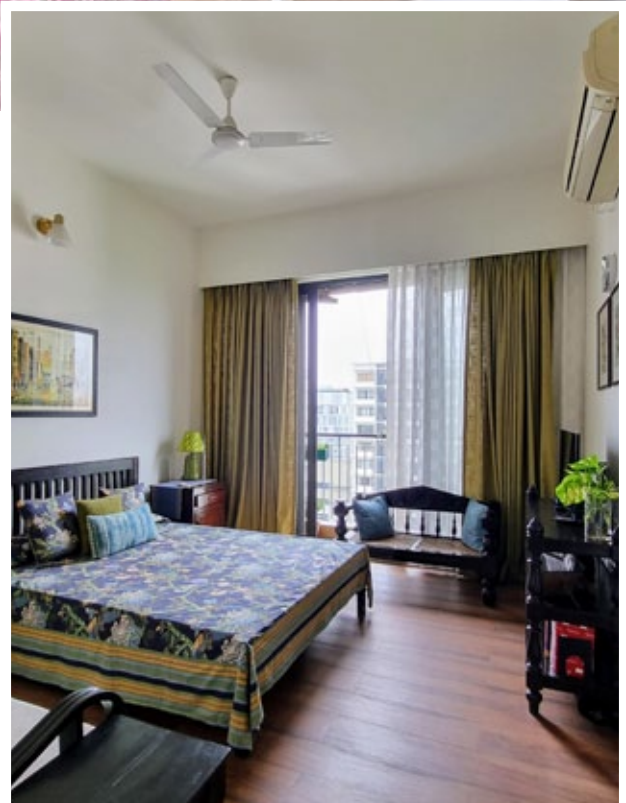




Balcony



Bedrooms



Den

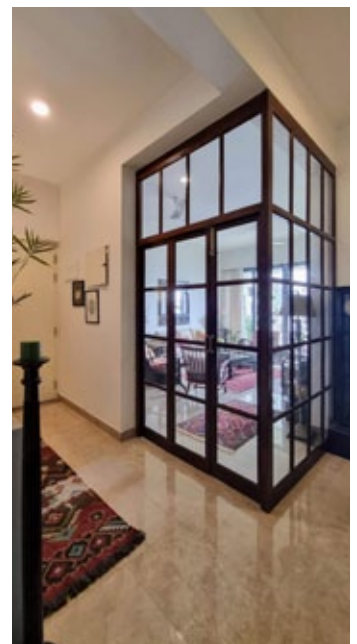




Dining Area



Foyer





[SNUG
AS A HUG
AN ODE TO QUILTS]

Patchwork quilts, with their vibrant mix of fabrics, remind us of how life itself is a blend of fragments—some worn, some new, all stitched together to create something beautiful. That saree your grandmother wore? It might just find its second life as a quilt.

Quilts aren't just blankets; they're memory keepers, holding within their folds laughter, tears, and countless cups of ginger tea shared on foggy mornings.

THE ARTISTRY OF STITCHES

The making of a quilt is no less artistic than painting a canvas. A skilled quiltmaker is part designer, part mathematician, and part storyteller. In Indian households, quilt-making is a joyous pursuit, with women gathering to stitch and chat, exchanging anecdotes, recipes, and wisdom.

Imagine an intricately hand-quilted throw draped over a sofa, its bold patterns and rich colours inviting guests to ask, "Where did you get this?" And when you say, "It's handmade in India," it's a story of heritage you're sharing.

So, this winter, when you reach for a quilt, pause for a moment. Trace its stitches, feel its texture, and think about the hands that made it. Whether it's a heirloom or a contemporary masterpiece, a quilt is more than fabric; it's a patchwork of love, culture, and warmth—just what every Indian winter needs.



“Quilts aren't just blankets; they're memory keepers, holding within their folds laughter, tears, and countless cups of ginger tea shared on foggy mornings.”

From the vibrant kanthas of Bengal to the intricate godhadi of Maharashtra, every Indian quilt tells a tale of heritage, love, and labour.

KANTHA: THE STORYTELLER'S QUILT

The word 'kantha' means 'patched cloth' in Sanskrit. In West Bengal and Odisha, kantha quilts are crafted from old saris and dhotis, then layered and stitched together using running stitches that create stunning patterns. Each kantha is unique, with motifs ranging from rural life scenes to intricate geometric designs.

RALLI: THE NOMADIC CHARM

From the deserts of Rajasthan and Gujarat come colourful ralli quilts, made by hand-stitching small fabric pieces together in geometric designs, a process that can take weeks or even months. Ralli quilts are a vital aspect of nomadic life, often used as bedding, wall hangings, or ceremonial gifts.

GODHADI: RECYCLED LOVE

Maharashtra's godhadi quilts are made from old cotton saris, stitched together with a distinctive zigzag pattern, using bright-coloured threads for contrast. Passed down through generations, a godhadi is a memory keeper, holding fragments of garments worn by loved ones.

JAIPURI RAZAI: CLOUDLIKE COMFORT

This famed feather-light block-prints razai is made using fine cotton or silk and filled with carded cotton. The secret to its fluffiness lies in the hand-carding process, which ensures an even distribution of cotton. The Jaipuri razai can weigh as little as 250 grams, making it a traveller's favourite!

KAUDI: A PATCHWORK OF EMOTIONS

In Karnataka, women sew together scraps of cloth to create patterns that range from bold colour blocks to intricate designs. Traditionally, kaudis were made for special occasions like weddings, symbolising the coming together of lives just as the fabrics merge in the quilt.

QUILT TRAILS OF INDIA

Where to Shop:

- Santiniketan, West Bengal – Explore markets for authentic kanthas.
- Jaipur, Rajasthan – Visit bazaars like Johari Bazaar for razais.
- Kutch, Gujarat – Discover ralli quilts in Bhujodi village.
- Pune, Maharashtra – Find handmade godhadi quilts at local artisans' stalls.

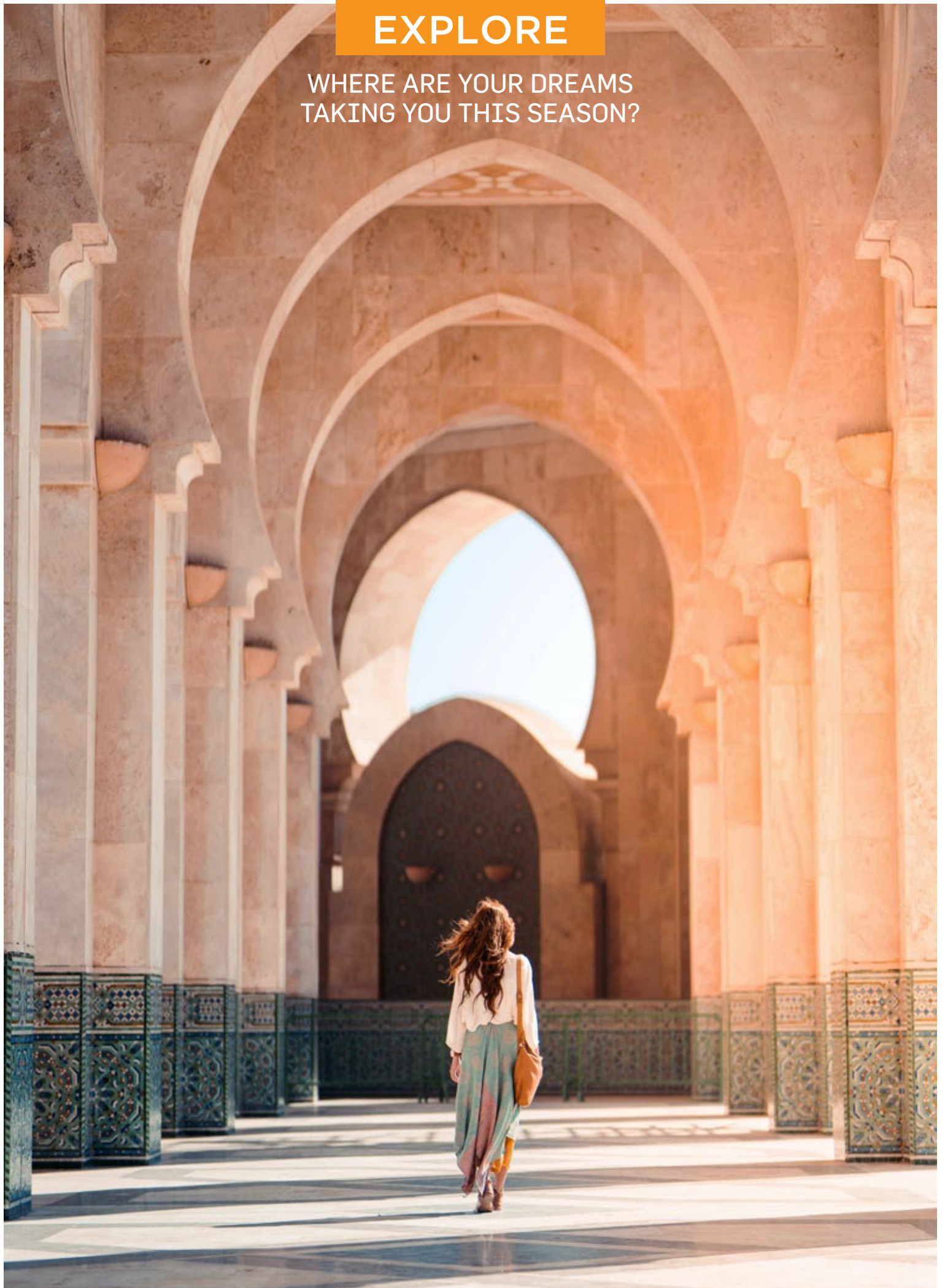


M M Javed
Men's Designer

YOUR LUXURY WEAR SPECIALIST

EXPLORE

WHERE ARE YOUR DREAMS
TAKING YOU THIS SEASON?



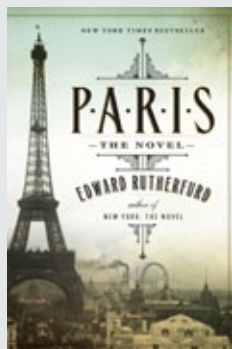
THE BEST OF PARIS

WE'VE PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF 10 HIDDEN GEMS, CAFES, MUST-VISIT SHOPS AND MORE TO MAKE YOUR VISIT TO THE CITY OF LIGHTS A MEMORABLE ONE.

01

BOOK TO READ – PARIS: THE NOVEL BY EDWARD RUTHERFORD

This book isn't just a novel; it's your time machine to the city's rich past. It brings the city alive through unforgettable characters and intertwined stories. By the time you're in Paris, you'll recognize historical sites with a fresh perspective.



02

MOVIE TO WATCH – MIDNIGHT IN PARIS BY WOODY ALLEN

This movie is like a love letter to the city's 1920s art scene, featuring legends like Hemingway, Picasso, and Fitzgerald. The storyline, combined with Paris's golden-hour beauty, will inspire you to take those midnight strolls and discover your own Parisian magic. It's whimsical, nostalgic, and everything you imagine Paris to be.







03 HOTEL TO STAY IN – HÔTEL HOR, 10TH ARRONDISSEMENT

For a chic, boutique experience that's both stylish and intimate, check into Hôtel Hor. With its lively decor, cosy beds, and a charming street view, this hotel is just metres away from Gare du Nord station, ideal if you are planning to take the Eurostar train to London.



04

GREAT BAKERY – DU PAIN ET DES IDÉES

Their pistachio escargot—a flaky, spiral pastry filled with pistachio and chocolate—is a must-try. Another local favourite is the pain des amis, a dense, flavourful bread with a slightly crispy crust. Everything here is traditionally made.



Café de Flore

CAFÉ DE FLORE

05

A SUPERB CAFÉ – CAFÉ DE FLORE

If you want to sip your coffee where literary greats like Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir once sat, Café de Flore in Saint-Germain-des-Prés is the place. This historic café is perfect for people-watching and soaking in the intellectual vibe of old Paris. Try their **café crème** with a side of **croque-monsieur** (a fancy grilled cheese) for a quintessential café experience.





06

HIDDEN GEM – THE MUSÉE DE LA VIE ROMANTIQUE

This one's for the romantics at heart! Dedicated to the Romantic era in art and literature, the museum is tucked away in a beautiful 19th-century house with a hidden garden café where you can sip tea surrounded by flowers. You'll find beautiful art pieces, and the intimate vibe makes it feel like a hidden sanctuary.

INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT TO FOLLOW – @PARISJETAIME

They post stunning shots of iconic locations, share hidden gems, and give tips on seasonal events around the city. The photography is so good, you'll be instantly transported. Plus, it's a great way to get ideas for some Instagram-worthy spots for your own trip!



07



08

BOOKSTORE TO VISIT – SHAKESPEARE AND COMPANY

Located right across from Notre-Dame, this charming, quirky bookstore is filled with shelves of novels, poetry, and rare books. It's the perfect spot to pick up a book to read by the Seine. Upstairs, you'll find a cosy reading room with a piano, and if you're lucky, you might catch an intimate book reading event.





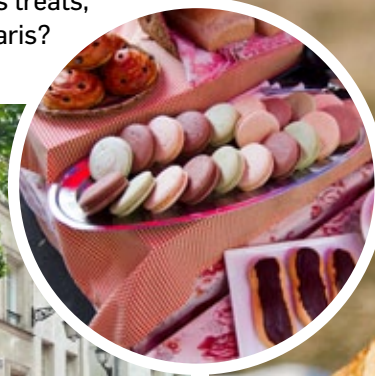
09

THE BEST ARRONDISSEMENT FOR SHOPPING – THE MARAIS (4TH ARRONDISSEMENT)

This area has everything from designer boutiques to vintage shops. A unique boutique to check out is Merci, a concept store that combines high-end fashion with unique home decor items. It even has a cute little café inside where you can take a breather after your shopping spree. The Marais also boasts charming streets and incredible street art, so it's a treat just to wander around.

UNIQUE EXPERIENCE – A HALF-DAY WORKSHOP AT LA CUISINE PARIS

Learn to make classics like croissants or macarons. Their classes are hands-on and taught by friendly chefs who make everything fun and approachable. You'll walk away with new skills, delicious treats, and a story to tell. Plus, baking your own croissants in Paris? That's a memory that'll last a lifetime.



BUFFALO: NEW YORK WITHOUT THE NEW YORK

Rarely does anyone think of anything but the vertically spectacular Manhattan when the words “New York” are uttered. But exploring the understated parts of New York State throws up interesting perspectives.

D

iametrically opposite New York City – in its north west corner—is the city of Buffalo. It doesn’t get its real due these days except as a gateway to the Niagara Falls – but it needs to be read through layers of history.

The city of Buffalo embodies America’s glorious industrial days and its decline thereafter. If you are an architecture and town planning buff, this is the place for you. Many of its iconic buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places – at least 100 years old, standing testimony to a chimerical America of the past.

BY PREETHY RAO

Located along the historic Erie Canal, Buffalo in the 1800s – early 1900s was the centre of steel production and a railroad hub, with thriving grain commerce and a direct hotline to the Atlantic Ocean.

NIAGARA FALLS

A trip to the Falls is a badge of honour you want to wear as a tourist. True to its name, the cruise boat Maid of the Mist, in operation since 1846, takes you real close to the massive torrent of water with godly power, spraying wet mist in the air visible miles away as far up the Niagara River like a cloud.



You experience the awesome power of the Falls safely from behind your raincoat, handed out to everyone who boards the cruise ship. Blue if you are a tourist in America, red if you are from Canada. Niagara Falls divides the two countries in this happy tumult of water. You can get away a tad drenched but totally content, with a T-shirt, a key chain, a fridge magnet, or a postcard from the souvenir shop at the end of your ride.

DOWNTOWN BUFFALO

If you love understanding a city from its past, spend two to three days here – getting insights into America’s great industrial past, long before the Made in China wave swept the world. Buffalo (like Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh, St Louis to name a few) is one of the cities in America’s Rust Belt that stands as a reminder of its glorious industrial past.

CITY HALL

Located in the heart of Downtown, Buffalo City Hall is arguably one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the world. The building’s grand facade is a spectacular

sight to behold, but the real magic lies inside. Every room is adorned with intricate murals depicting what a once ascendant industrial powerhouse thought of itself. In the lobby of the building you are greeted with a pair of gilded elevators, busts of prominent Buffalonians, and a grand mural depicting Buffalo’s role as a bridge between Canada and the US.

Hop onto the thirteenth floor in the golden elevator, you come to the breathtaking Central Council Chamber. spectacularly sunlit by a stained glass roof of the semicircular amphitheatre. It is still used to hold meetings to decide matters of the city.

Head up further, to the 28th floor Observatory Deck and you can see Buffalo 360 degrees, including great views of Buffalo’s skyline, Lake Erie, the border, and even the mist of Niagara Falls on a good day.

Free guided tours of the building and its art are available at explorebuffalo.org.





Tycoons Homes

ELMWOOD VILLAGE

Unlike many other cities, the real magic of Buffalo lies outside of downtown. No neighbourhood reflects this reality more than Elmwood Village. Centered around a 3ish km stretch of Elmwood Avenue, Elmwood village has something for everyone.

The avenue itself is dotted with countless cafes, bars and shops that can keep you entertained (and fed) for hours. A personal favourite of mine is Caffe Aroma on the corner of Elmwood and Bidwell. This quaint bistro, reminiscent of something you'd find in Europe, has all the standard cafe fare but is also open till midnight and serves alcohol. In fact, a highlight of this establishment is its weekly Thursday night open mic nights where you can grab a drink and settle in for hours of music and poetry from local artists.

Duck into any of the residential lanes off Elmwood Avenue and you will be delighted by countless colourfully

painted houses, each with its own unique ornamentation. Architecture enthusiasts must visit the Olmsted campus, again at the Northern end of the village. Designed by one of America's great architects, HH Richardson, this Hogwartsian complex used to be a mental asylum at the turn of the 20th century, but is now home to five-star hotel.

The Crown Jewel of the neighbourhood, however, is the world-famous Olmsted parkway system, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the great American Landscape architect who famously also designed Central Park in New York city. The concept behind the Olmsted Parkway system as it was originally intended was that rather than putting a park in a city, you could put the city in a park.

To explore the parkway system, start at the corner of Elmwood and Bidwell (perhaps with a quick bite at Caffe Aroma) and walk Northeast, up Bidwell. As you walk along, you will be surrounded by grand mansions and apartment complexes from Buffalo's heyday.

Its easy to imagine an age when these mansions were home to tycoons who spluttered in their motor carriages (aka cars) with ladies in their rustling taffeta gowns!



City Council Building



Colourful Houses Elmwood



Golden Dome of Buffalo Bank



Preethy Rao is the Co-Founder and Program Lead at Gubbachi Learning Community, Bengaluru. She thoroughly enjoys working with and learning from children, and has a childlike curiosity towards the world.

MOUNT HUTT

Canterbury, New Zealand

Mt Hutt has been voted New Zealand's best ski resort nine years running at the World Ski Awards. A true alpine experience, with wide-open terrain, leg-burning runs, monster snowfalls, and spectacular views. You've not skied in New Zealand until you've skied Hutt!

Located near the town of Methven, Mount Hutt sits in the heart of **Canterbury's dramatic landscapes**, many of which served as filming locations for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films. So, you're essentially skiing in Middle-earth!

On clear days, you can see both the **Southern Alps** and the **Pacific Ocean** from Mount Hutt's slopes—a rare and breathtaking dual view that not many ski resorts can boast.



THE MONUMENT: A TOWERING TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON

Standing tall at 202 feet, The Monument commemorates the Great Fire of London in 1666, which began a short distance away at a bakery on Pudding Lane. Its height matches the exact distance from the column to the fire's origin. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren, this Doric column offers a spiral climb of 311 steps leading to panoramic views of the city. Each inch of its design tells a story of rebirth and resilience. Conveniently located next to Monument Tube Station on the Circle and District lines, it's a perfect stop to marvel at London's history and skyline in one go.




INDULGE

A CORNUCOPIA OF LIGHT & LOVELY FLAVOURS,
CURATED TO SERENADE YOUR SENSES



Starring Cinnamon



Cinnamon brings a sweet, woody, and slightly spicy note to dishes. In both savoury and sweet recipes, it acts as a flavour enhancer, adding warmth and depth that feels like a comforting hug in winter. Here's a simple but delicious winter menu that will please your palate and warm your heart!

Pro Tip:
Use freshly ground
cinnamon for
maximum aroma and
health benefits.



STARTER: WARM CINNAMON-SPICED ALMOND MILK

- **Ingredients:** Almond milk (or regular milk), cinnamon stick, honey, a pinch of nutmeg, sliced almonds (optional).
- **Instructions:**
 1. Heat almond milk in a saucepan.
 2. Add a cinnamon stick and a pinch of nutmeg; simmer for 2–3 minutes.
 3. Sweeten with honey and top with sliced almonds. Serve warm.



MAIN COURSE: CINNAMON-INFUSED VEGETABLE PULAO

- **Ingredients:** Basmati rice, mixed vegetables (carrots, peas, beans), cinnamon stick, whole cloves, ghee.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Wash and soak the rice.
 2. Heat ghee in a pan, sauté the cinnamon stick and cloves.
 3. Add vegetables, followed by the rice, and water (1:2 ratio).
 4. Cook until rice is fluffy and aromatic.

CINNAMON: A STAR SPICE FOR WINTER

1. **Boosts Immunity:** Rich in antioxidants, cinnamon helps strengthen your immune system during cold months.
2. **Warms the Body:** Its natural warming properties improve circulation and keep you cosy on chilly nights.
3. **Soothes Sore Throats:** Cinnamon's anti-inflammatory properties help ease throat irritation and congestion.
4. **Aids Digestion:** It supports gut health, preventing bloating and discomfort after indulgent meals.
5. **Balances Blood Sugar:** Perfect for those keeping an eye on sugar levels during sweet winter treats.



SIDE DISH: HONEY-CINNAMON GLAZED SWEET POTATOES

- **Ingredients:** Sweet potatoes, cinnamon powder, honey, butter, black pepper.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Peel and cut sweet potatoes into cubes.
 2. Toss with melted butter, honey, cinnamon powder, and black pepper.
 3. Roast in a preheated oven at 200°C for 25–30 minutes, flipping halfway.



DESSERT: CINNAMON-CARDAMOM RICE KHEER

- **Ingredients:** Basmati rice, milk, sugar, cinnamon stick, cardamom powder.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Wash and soak rice for 30 minutes.
 2. Simmer milk in a heavy-bottomed pan until it reduces slightly.
 3. Add rice and a cinnamon stick, cooking until the rice softens.
 4. Sweeten with sugar, stir in cardamom powder, and cook until creamy.
 5. Serve warm, garnished with slivered almonds or saffron (optional).

Pappardelle

ITALY'S SHOWSTOPPER PASTA



If pasta had a flair for drama, pappardelle would be its star performer. Wide, luxurious ribbons of dough that elegantly wrap around hearty sauces, pappardelle is a culinary delight rooted in Tuscany, Italy. Its name comes from the Italian verb “pappare,” which means “to gobble up”—a hint at just how satisfying this pasta is to eat.

PAPPARDELLE WITH CREAMY MUSHROOM SAUCE

Ingredients:

- 250g pappardelle pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 200g mixed mushrooms (like porcini, shiitake, or button), sliced
- 150ml heavy cream
- 50g Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions:

- Cook the pappardelle in a pot of salted boiling water until al dente, according to package instructions.
- In a large pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute.
- Add the mushrooms and cook until golden and tender, about 5-7 minutes.
- Pour in the heavy cream and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
- Add the cooked pappardelle to the sauce, tossing to coat. Stir in the Parmesan and sprinkle with parsley.
- Serve hot and enjoy!



5 WAYS TO ENJOY PAPPARDELLE

- **Mushroom Ragù:** A rich and savoury sauce made with assorted mushrooms, tomatoes, and herbs.
- **Roasted Vegetable Medley:** Toss pappardelle with roasted bell peppers, zucchini, and cherry tomatoes.
- **Creamy Pesto:** Toss pappardelle with a fresh basil pesto and a splash of cream for a lighter option.
- **Porcini Mushroom and Truffle Oil:** A luxurious combo of earthy mushrooms and a drizzle of truffle oil.
- **Lemon and Ricotta:** A refreshing twist with zesty lemon, creamy ricotta, and a sprinkle of fresh mint.



Let pappardelle bring a touch of Italian elegance to your table!

Winter Warmers

BY SWAPNADEEP MUKHERJEE, EXECUTIVE CHEF,
THE METROPOLITAN HOTEL & SPA, DELHI

CARROT AND GINGER SOUP

Ingredients	Quantity
• Olive oil	1 tbsp
• Ginger	1 tbsp
• Celery	1 tbsp
• Diced carrots	100 gms
• Vegetable stock	300 ml
• Sugar	2 tbsp
• Salt, pepper	according to taste
• Mint leaves, ginger sticks	to garnish

METHOD

- Heat 1tbsp of olive oil in a pan and sauté 1tbsp of ginger and 1tbsp of celery.
- Add 100gms of diced carrots and sauté for 10 minutes.
- Add 300ml vegetable stock and continue to cook till the carrot is cooked.
- Remove from heat and blend. Strain through a strainer and add 2tbsp of sugar if required
- Add salt & pepper to taste.
- Garnish with mint leaves and ginger sticks and serve hot



SUNEHRI MACCHI

Ingredients	Quantity
• Sole cubes	200 gm
• Mustard oil	2 tbsp
• Ginger garlic paste	2 tbsp
• Yellow chili powder	1 tsp
• Green chili paste	1 tbsp
• Salt	to taste
• Cumin powder	1/4 tsp
• Gram flour	2 tbsp
• Spinach leaves	5-6 leaves
• Lemon juice	2 tbsp

Garnish

- | | |
|-------------------|-------|
| • Onion rings | 30 gm |
| • Coriander sprig | 2 no. |
| • Lemon wedge | 1 no. |

METHOD

- Marinate sole cubes with salt and lemon juice and keep aside
- In a pan heat oil and add gram flour and stir till light golden in color
- Remove from flame and add ginger garlic paste, green chili paste, yellow chili powder and cumin powder and make a paste
- Marinate fish cubes in prepared marinade and refrigerate for 30 minutes
- At medium pre heated coal fired tandoor or pre heated domestic oven put fish skewers and roast evenly
- In the meantime take oil in a pan and sauté washed spinach leaves and add salt and lemon juice to it
- Once the fish is cooked remove from skewer and toss in the pan containing sauté spinach
- Serve hot, garnish with onion rings, coriander sprig and lemon wedge.



SWEET POTATO TOTS WITH CREAMY KETCHUP

Ingredients	Quantity
• Large sweet potato	1
• Egg	1
• All-purpose flour	30gm
• Sea salt	1/4 teaspoon
• Paprika	1/4 teaspoon
• Garlic powder	1/4 teaspoon
• Oil for deep frying	3 cups

Creamy Ketchup:

- Plain Greek yogurt
- Ketchup

METHOD:

For the tots:

- Bring a large pot of water to boil. Add whole sweet potato and cook for about 15 minutes till slightly soft but not easily mashed. Drain and let it sit until cool enough to handle, and then grate with a cheese grater.
- Combine shredded potato and egg in a medium bowl and use a fork to combine. In another bowl, combine the flour, salt, paprika and garlic powder. Add the flour mixture to the potato and stir to combine.
- Pour the oil into a deep fryer or in to a heavy pot. Heat the oil until it is 375°F. Place a few sheets of paper towels on a plate to drain the tots when they are done cooking.
- Form the potato mixture into 1-inch balls and add to the hot oil, being careful not to overcrowd the pot. (It will take several batches to cook all of the potato mixture.) Fry for 3 minutes, then remove with a slotted spoon and drain on the paper-towel lined plate.
- Repeat with the remaining batter, allowing the oil to come back to temperature between batches.

For the sauce:

- In a small bowl, combine yogurt and ketchup.
- Serve with the hot tots.



BEETROOT HALWA

Ingredients	Quantity
• Beet Root	500gm
• Desi Ghee	200gm
• Sugar	150gm
• Khoya danedar (Reduced milk)	200gm
• Green Cardamoms (powder)	01gm
• Almond chopped	15gm
• Cashewnut chopped	15gm

METHOD

- First rinse, peel and grate the beet root. Heat ghee in a heavy pan on medium flame.
- Add grated beet root and mix well with ghee.
- Cook beet root on medium flame. Continue to stir until the moisture evaporates.
- Add sugar and continue sauté until beet root halwa turns thick. Add khoya and keep stirring to avoid burning. Switch off the flame.
- Add nuts and cardamom powder, mix well and serve it hot or cold.







A Sip of History

JAKARTA'S SPICE TRAIL COMES ALIVE
AT FOUR SEASONS BENGALURU

BY NIKITA HARINDRANATH

Jakarta is Indonesia's massive capital, strategically located on Java Island's northwest coast. It is a hub of cultures, well-known for its diverse cuisines and architectural styles influenced by Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. This beautiful mix of influences was brought about by the spice trade.

From the 15th to the 19th century, Jakarta was an important port that connected the Spice Islands (Maluku) to the rest of the world. Cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, cocoa, mace, salt, and various types of peppers—these coveted treasures left a deep impression on Jakarta's economy, history, and heritage.

I was invited to experience a taste of this history. The Nautilus Bar from the Four Seasons Hotel Jakarta brought the essence of Jakarta's historic spice trade to Copitas at Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru.

Copitas is a glamorous bar located on the 21st floor of the Four Seasons. The friendly wait staff escorted us to our seats on the open balcony, offering one of the most breathtaking views in Bengaluru. We met the charismatic Bar Manager of Nautilus, Julian Brigget, who introduced us to a delicious pre-dinner cocktail menu exclusively prepared for the evening.

“This savory and truly one-of-a-kind drink was garnished with crispy bacon and a salty jelly, designed to be dipped into the cocktail and savored for an added burst of flavor.”





Bar Manager of Nautilus, Julian Brigget



Bagun - Mixologist at Nautilus

Our table of four began the evening with “Honey Me,” a delightful cocktail that perfectly captured the warmth of cinnamon. This sweet yet subtly bitter creation featured Toki Suntory Whiskey, cinnamon soda, an acid solution, and a luscious Kana Bitter Honey Foam. With its smooth, earthy profile, this drink is an excellent choice for those who appreciate a harmonious blend of sugar and spice in their cocktails.

The next cocktail to grace our table was a standout favourite of the evening: the “Red Pearl,” a bold creation inspired by the flavours of salt and pepper from the spice trail. This savoury and truly one-of-a-kind drink was garnished with crispy bacon and a salty jelly, designed to be dipped into the cocktail for an added burst of flavour. A tantalising experience for the taste buds, this mouthwatering masterpiece is one I can’t wait to revisit.

The Nautilus Bar served us Tempeh Mendoan and Lumpia Semarang to accompany the delicious drinks. The former is a delectable vegetarian snack made of deep-fried tempeh in spiced batter, while the latter consists of flavourful spring rolls filled with juicy chicken, egg, and shrimp. Both dishes are staples of Indonesian cuisine. Tempeh, made from fermented soybeans, and lumpia, a popular street food, were perfect accompaniments.

Next up was our second favourite cocktail of the evening, the captivating “Lada.” Crafted with Roku Japanese Craft Gin, strawberry light rum, overproof rum, Andaliman pepper honey syrup, lemon juice, and almond milk, it delivered a harmonious blend of flavours. Presented in a glowing violet hue and served on a luminous coaster, this mesmerising cocktail was a feast for both the eyes and the palate.

We concluded our pre-dinner cocktail session with the “Koko Pala,” an artful creation garnished with dark chocolate. Designed for those who prefer bold, bitter flavours, each potent sip was perfectly complemented by a bite of chocolate. A nod to the nutmeg spice, the Koko Pala was skillfully crafted with Toki Suntory Whiskey, Italian bitters, and Andaliman Bitter.

This journey along the spice trail felt like a deep dive into Jakarta’s rich legacy—a poetic reminder of how history’s footprints weave through time, shaping the present in unexpected ways. My heartfelt thanks to Copitas for curating this memorable experience. I eagerly await the next bar takeover and the unique cultural stories it will unveil. What fascinating adventures lie ahead?

Loy Krathong

LIGHTS UP AT FOUR SEASONS'
FAR & EAST

BY ROHIT BISWAS



Loy Krathong, Thailand's Festival of Lights, is celebrated on the full moon of the 12th Thai month. People float krathongs in water to honour the Goddess of Water and release negativity. In Chiang Mai, the celebration is further enhanced by sky lanterns and various cultural festivities, creating a truly magical atmosphere. This festival beautifully symbolises gratitude, renewal, and hope.

I was invited to celebrate the Loy Krathong Festival at Far & East, Four Seasons Bengaluru. The experience was extraordinary. The vibrant atmosphere captured the essence of Thailand's Festival of Lights, creating the perfect evening for an unforgettable culinary journey.



Chef Wimon Pahuja

Far & East is a sky-high Asian brasserie located on the 21st floor of the Four Seasons. It offers panoramic views and unforgettable dining experiences featuring Thai and Chinese cuisine. The friendly wait staff escorted us to our seats, where we experienced an authentic Thai feast led by Chef Wimon Pahuja. The culinary journey through Thai cuisine truly captured the spirit and flavours of the Festival of Lights.

The menu showcased a symphony of Thai delicacies, each dish an unforgettable journey of flavours. Trusting the expertise of our gracious host, we left the ordering entirely in their hands.

And then it began—the arrival of the feast. The moment the first sip of Kuai Tiao Nam, a steaming bowl of noodle stew with prawns, touched our lips, it was pure magic. The soup was appetising, filling, and flavourful. The warm, rich, and soul-soothing flavours danced on our palate.

Next came an incredible appetiser called Koong Makham. This dish featured deep-fried prawns topped with tamarind sauce and crispy shallots. The prawns were perfectly crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside, while the tangy tamarind sauce added a delightful sweetness. The blend of prawns, zesty tamarind, and crunchy shallots made this dish truly unforgettable.

We also tried Yam Sam-O, a salad combining grapefruit and crispy shallots. It was tangy and sweet at the same time, creating a fantastic taste sensation.

For the main course, we enjoyed a traditional mild-spiced lamb curry served with fragrant jasmine rice. The curry was beautifully cooked, with tender lamb and a rich blend of Thai spices that paired perfectly with the fluffy, aromatic rice.

We also had the pleasure of trying Far & East's signature cocktail, the Sichuan Collins. This drink was a creative mix of premium gin, a carefully crafted homemade shrub, and refreshing tonic water. The combination of flavours was unique and balanced, making it a memorable part of the experience.



For dessert, we indulged in Tub Tim Grob, the most delicious treat I've ever had. This masterpiece featured vibrant red rubies—crunchy water chestnuts in sweet syrup—swimming in silky coconut cream. Succulent jackfruit added a burst of tropical sweetness, perfectly balancing the textures. It's truly a must-try for anyone who loves sweets!

The evening was all about celebrating culture and flavour. Each dish, rich with aromatic herbs and spices, told a story of tradition. The dim lighting and Thai-inspired decor created the perfect backdrop for this unforgettable culinary journey.

Croissant

FRENCH PERFECTION

Bake Yourself A Buttery, Flaky Slice of Heaven

Light yet indulgent, crispy yet tender. The buttery croissant is a breakfast classic, and you don't have to go to Paris to enjoy the best. Here's an easy recipe for you to try at home.

EASY HOMEMADE CROISSANTS

Prep time: 1 hour (plus 3-4 hours for chilling and proofing)

Cook time: 20-25 minutes

Makes: 12 croissants

WHAT YOU NEED

- **For the Dough:**
 - 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 tbsp sugar
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 1 tbsp active dry yeast
 - 1 cup warm milk
 - 1/2 cup water
 - 2 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- **For the Butter Layer:**
 - 1 1/2 sticks (3/4 cup) cold unsalted butter
- **For Brushing:**
 - 1 egg, beaten

WHAT YOU DO

1. Make the Dough:

- In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar, and salt. Dissolve the yeast in warm milk and let it

sit for about 5 minutes, then add it to the dry ingredients with the water and softened butter. Mix until it forms a sticky dough.

- Knead for 5-7 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

2. Prepare the Butter Layer:

- Place the cold butter between two sheets of parchment paper. Using a rolling pin, pound and shape the butter into a thin rectangle about 8x5 inches. Keep it refrigerated until ready to use.

3. Laminate the Dough:

- On a lightly floured surface, roll out the chilled dough into a 12x8-inch rectangle. Place the butter layer in the centre, then fold the dough over the butter like an envelope.
- Roll it out gently, then fold into thirds like a letter. Wrap and chill for 30 minutes.
- Repeat the rolling and folding process twice more, chilling between each fold.

4. Shape the Croissants:

- After the final fold, roll the dough into a large rectangle, about 1/4 inch thick. Cut into long triangles.
- To form each croissant, start at the wide end of the triangle and roll towards the tip. Curve the ends slightly to create a crescent shape.
- Place the croissants on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, cover loosely with a cloth, and let them proof for 1-2 hours or until puffy.

5. Bake:

- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C). Brush each croissant with the beaten egg for a golden finish. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until deeply golden brown and flaky.

6. Cool & Enjoy:

- Let them cool slightly on a rack—if you can wait! Croissants are best enjoyed warm with coffee or tea.

Croissants can be stored at room temperature for a day or two, but for longer freshness, freeze and reheat them in the oven—this way, you'll always have a delicious pastry ready for any craving.





SERVING TIPS

- **Classic Pairing:** Serve your croissants fresh from the oven with a simple side of butter and jam.
- **For a Savoury Twist:** Slice a croissant in half and add cheese and a slice of tomato for a quick, satisfying breakfast sandwich.
- **Sweet Treat:** Drizzle with melted chocolate or fill with almond paste for a luxurious pastry to wash down your coffee.

KNOW YOUR CROISSANT

1. The Origin

While croissants are credited as French, they probably originated in Austria! The first ancestor of the croissant was the Austrian *kipferl*, a crescent-shaped bread brought to France in the 18th century by Viennese bakers. Over time, French bakers transformed the simple *kipferl* into the delicate, flaky croissant we know today.

2. The Shape

The crescent shape, or croissant in French, is said to commemorate a European victory over the Ottoman Empire, with the crescent mimicking the emblem on the Ottoman flag.

3. The Layers

The success of a great croissant lies in its laminated dough, which requires folding and rolling layers of dough and butter multiple times. When baked, the butter melts between these layers, creating a flaky texture that's irresistibly light and crisp.

DISCOVER

IDEAS TO KICKSTART YOUR MIND



GUARDIANS OF THE GREEN

Meet Reeshna Pardhi
Nature's Protector



Reeshna Pardhi, a spirited young woman from the Pardhi community of Madhya Pradesh, walks the forests not as an outsider but as an integral part of the ecosystem. Though she hasn't had formal schooling, her education in the "language of the forest" is profound, honed by her father, a lifelong forest guide.





Reeshna's knowledge extends beyond basic survival; she knows how to interpret animal marks, recognize distinct sounds, and understand subtle scents—an immersive learning passed down for generations within her community.

This connection with nature is more than a lifestyle; it's a legacy. The Pardhis believe they are descendants of Maharana Pratap. They once hunted for survival, and have transformed into dedicated guardians of the land. Reeshna is one of the finest examples of this ethos. She has chosen a path that many find surprising—refusing marriage to devote herself fully to protecting Mother Nature. In her words, “I am already married to this land, to the trees, to the animals.”

LIVING AS NATURE'S CUSTODIANS

Today, Pardhi children grow up in what can only be described as nature's university. They learn to respect and protect the forest from an early age, with “lessons” that include everything from animal behaviour to conservation ethics. Risk is part of the curriculum, as are the secrets of their ancestors.

With the support of local NGOs and government initiatives, schools have been established, and tourism is encouraged. This means the community can enjoy a sustainable livelihood while preserving the forest they call home. For Reeshna and the Pardhis, life has become a unique blend of tradition and transformation—a testament to the enduring connection between people and nature.

TAKE A KORA Walk

Discover Bengaluru's green side with guided nature walks that unveil the city's lush hidden gems.

A guided walk in Koramangala? A Bengaluru suburb infamous for its commercialization and traffic! What's there to see? That's the question that many ask before they attend The Koramangala Trail by KoraWalks. The ones who are curious enough to get up early and attend the walk on weekends between 7.30 and 10 am go back surprised and happy. Their feedback captures what KoraWalks founders Ramya Bharadwaj, Febin Sagir and Ashish Patel set out to do:

"Ramya, Febin and Ashish are wonderfully engaging, funny and informative. The walk seems to go by in flash and I've learned so much even about places I've been to many many times before. After the walk, with so much more info, the same places seem richer and more colourful. I've really enjoyed my walks with KoraWalks

especially because of their unique mix of history, nature and culture. Highly recommend!"

What started out as an effort to do a memorial walk in the memory of the late Vijay Thiruvady famous for his iconic Lalbagh Walk has now become a labour of love with plans to add many more walks to their Koramangala, Lalbagh and Jayanagar Trails. "With our city walks, we want people to pay attention to the natural beauty around us that we miss completely and also learn about the interesting history and people that make the place what it is. With Lalbagh, we are stunned by its hidden treasures each time we visit and just want to share this magical place with as many people as we can. In essence, we just want to share our love for Bengaluru and nature with everyone" says Ramya.

You can follow @KoraWalks on Instagram or write to korawalks@gmail.com or message 8826806789 if you would like to attend their walks or get them to tailor a private walk for you.



Lafaani

Weaving Tradition with Sustainability



T

In a world where fast fashion reigns, Lafaani stands as a refreshing alternative. Co-founded by environmentalists Drishti Modi and Rashmick Bose, this conscious apparel label blends Indian textile heritage with modern, sustainable practices.

Born out of a deep love for timeless designs and Indian craft, Lafaani took root during the COVID lockdown, but its story began years earlier. While studying Environmental Studies, Drishti and Rashmick worked on grassroots projects like rainwater harvesting in Rajasthan and natural farming in Andhra Pradesh. These experiences nurtured their passion for sustainability, eventually shaping their brand philosophy.

At Lafaani, craft and care converge. The brand's collections showcase hand-spun, handwoven textiles, from rain-fed indigenous cotton to eco-friendly dyes derived from temple flowers. Each piece is thoughtfully designed to be 100% biodegradable, proving that fashion can be kind to the planet.

The Kantha embroidery technique, which involves stitching discarded fabrics into new creations, plays a pivotal role in Lafaani's designs. Inspired by this resourceful craft, Lafaani upcycles leftover materials into accessories, creating zero-waste collections.

Driven by a shared vision of sustainable fashion, Drishti and Rashmick continue to blend India's rich heritage with circular design principles, offering garments that tell stories of culture, community, and consciousness.



FOUNDERS

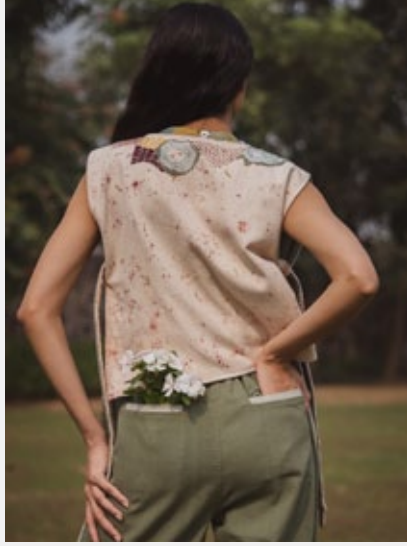
Drishti Modi & Rashmick Bose

Environmentalists turned fashion pioneers.

What Makes Lafaani Special

- 100% biodegradable clothing
- Traditional Indian crafts like Kantha
- Zero-waste and gender-inclusive designs


Website: www.lafaani.com



Inked

From ancient rituals to celebrity trends, tattoos can bewild, wonderful and sometimes weird





A tattoo is a mirror of its wearer. Some get them for emotional reasons, like Priyanka Chopra's Daddy's Lil Girl tattoo, while others like David Beckham's intricate sleeve showcase family and faith. For some, it's a spontaneous thrill (hello, Ed Sheeran's Heinz ketchup bottle tattoo), while for others, it's deeply symbolic, like Angelina Jolie's Buddhist prayer inked on her back.

Then there are those who love to stand out. Did you know rapper Post Malone has a tattoo that reads Always Tired under his eyes? Tattoos are proof that art can sometimes be wonderfully weird.

INK OR THINK?

Ink: "Tattoos are wearable art. They're a way to claim your body and celebrate your unique story. Mine are my diary, written in ink." – Meera, Artist

Think: "Trends fade, but tattoos don't. What feels meaningful now might be hard to explain later. Plus, laser removal is no joke—it's painful and expensive." – Rohan, Corporate Professional.

TATTOO SAFETY 101

"Interestingly, the age-group that's most interested in getting tattooed is under-18," says Bobby Rana, Troy Tattoo. Mcleodganj, Dharamshala. "Of course, I have to refuse them, since it is illegal to ink minors in India."

His advice: Before you go under the needle, here's what you should know

- **Do your homework:** Pick a reputable tattoo artist with a clean, licensed studio.
- **Think long-term:** Avoid spur-of-the-moment choices. Will that name or inside joke still be relevant or funny in 10 years?
- **Aftercare matters:** Follow your artist's advice to prevent infections—clean it, moisturise it, and resist the urge to scratch!

If you're taking the plunge, let your tattoo reflect a piece of your soul—or, at the very least, avoid the temptation of Always Tired!

AMORE

LIFE & LEISURE

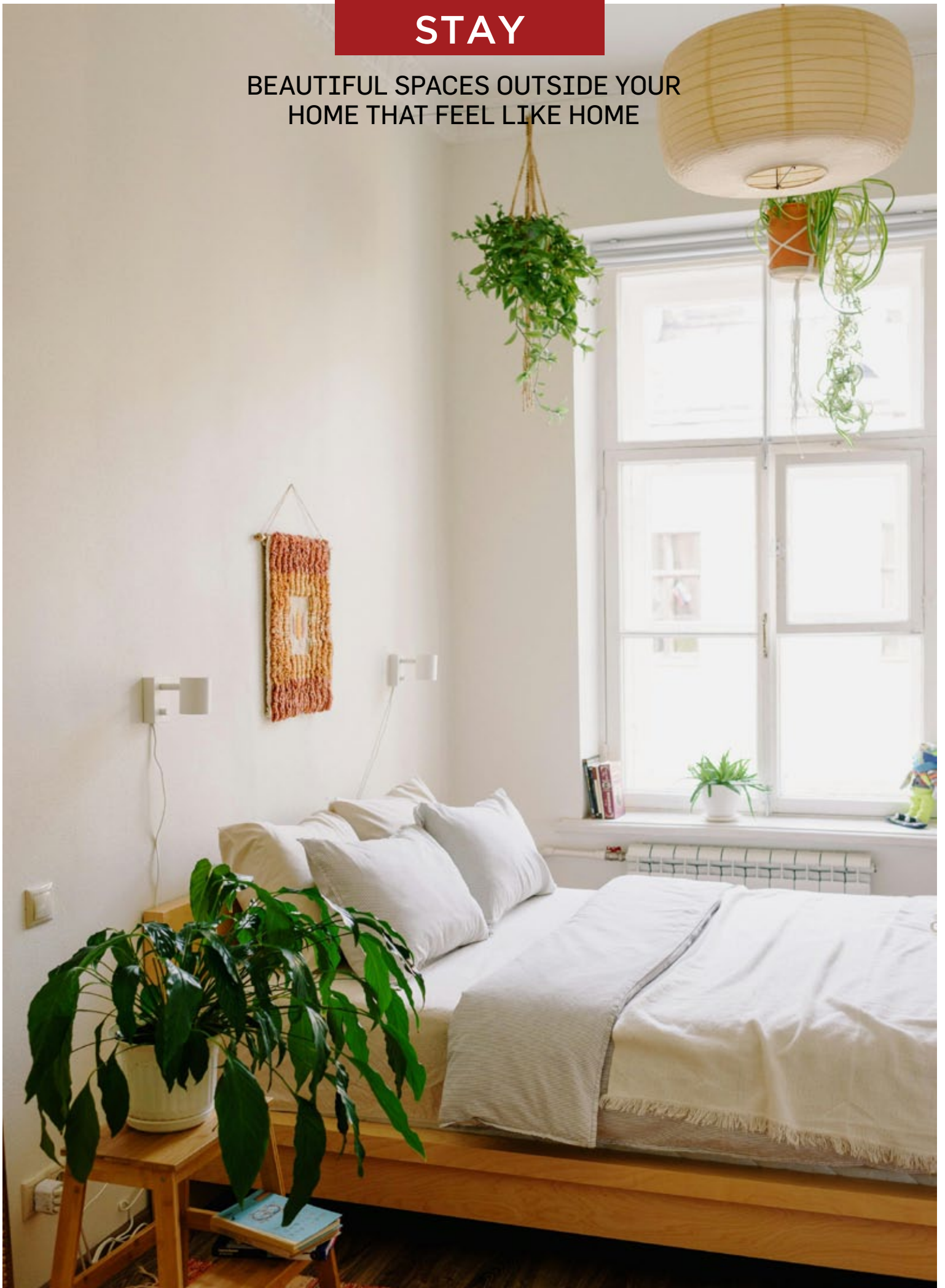


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STAY

BEAUTIFUL SPACES OUTSIDE YOUR HOME THAT FEEL LIKE HOME



A Homely Stay in Assam

Built by two retired English professors, this Guwahati retreat cocoons you in country-style comfort

BY SATHYA SARAN

It's a flat on a hillside, all done up in pastels with white painted French windows and curtains to match. Like being in an English cottage, except that this is in Guwahati, where high rises have become the norm.





GOOD TO KNOW

- The mighty Brahmaputra is only a kilometre away. The riverside offers a great walking experience.
- The road uphill from the house to the famous Nabagraha Temple provides a pleasant trek. The Ugratara Temple, is also just a kilometre away.
- Restaurants, take-aways are close by, too.
- Close to the Uzan Bazar, where you get a variety of local fish.
- Close to the Silpukhuri Market for daily needs.



As a place to stay for a few days, there is seriously nothing more one can ask for. The flat has two rooms, one with an en-suite bathroom, and the beds are large, comfortable and wear tastefully printed bed linen. The spacious living area, all my own in the absence of a second occupant, delights the senses. The furniture is modern but unobtrusive, and the room dotted with bric-a-brac that showcases metal, wood and ceramic work. The kitchen is large too, and the hosts have thoughtfully provided tea, coffee, sugar, as well as biscuits in an airtight tin. Milk is provided on request, and the gas and microwave are ready for use. One could, if in the mood, cook oneself a meal here, with stuff bought from the bazaar.

Linked to Airbnb two and a half years ago, this flat belongs to two retired English professors, who live in a separate linked-by-a-lift cottage a level above. Aditi Chowdhury, the host explained that the flat was reshaped out of a shack that her father-in-law had built, tucked as it were into the hillside. Years had beaten it down into a dilapidated state, and an eyesore for its present owners as they passed it on the way to their abode.





Covid-19 suggested a solution. With no activity or traffic to impede work, the old structure could be pulled down. Two architects, thrown out of work by the lockdown were pressed to bend their minds towards creating a new, habitable space. And even as the deadly virus was being forced to lose its grasp on humanity, the flat took shape.

For decorating the flat, Chowdhury took recourse to yet another Covid-spurred tool: online shopping. Selecting carefully, her eye and finger picked out 'cheap and cheerful' decorative pieces, curtains and kitchenware to bring life into the new space. A carpenter was pressed into service to craft the furniture.

Voila! it was ready.

At ₹4000 a room a day, staying here beats a five-star hotel. Two brisk women helpers come to set up breakfast, and ask if any food needs to be provided. They stay on the premises on the ground floor and are a phone call away in case of emergencies.

All in all, a real home away from home. Pardon the cliché.

Address: 22A Nabagraha Hill Road, Guwahati, Assam

SLEEP AMONG THE VINES

7 UNIQUE WINERY STAYS

Planning a visit to one of Australia's wine regions? Get cosy with these Ultimate Winery Experiences Australia overnight escapes, from luxury studios in Orange to charming cottages in the King Valley.



01

GO GLAMPING AT SIRROMET NEAR BRISBANE

Just 40 minutes from Brisbane, Sanctuary by Sirromet offers a tranquil escape with a touch of luxury. Nestled amongst the native paperbark and giant scribbly gum trees, the luxurious tented glamping pavilion offers elegance, comfort and style, allowing guests to escape the everyday, reconnect with nature and experience everything Sirromet has to offer. Stays include breakfast each morning.



Tip: Enjoy a mid-week stay when Sirromet is quieter, and take the time to explore the winery with a behind-the-scenes tour and tutored wine tasting, followed by an onsite picnic in the beautiful surroundings.



02

KICK BACK AT MANDOON IN THE SWAN VALLEY

Located onsite at Mandoon Estate, Maya Maya is a luxurious gateway to the enchanting Swan Valley near Western Australia's capital city of Perth. Nestled within this exclusive enclave are 32 elegantly appointed rooms looking out over the historic verdelho vines planted in 1895, and the serene banks of the Swan River. Meaning 'camp' in local Indigenous language, Maya Maya pays homage to the ancestral legacy of the Whadjuk Noongar people.



Tip: Taste traditional bush foods and learn about local Indigenous culture from Noongar Elder, Dale Tilbrook with Mandoon's Bush Tucker Tasting and Talk Experience.



03

PAMPER YOURSELF NEAR PRINTHIE IN ORANGE

A 3.5 hour drive from Sydney in Orange, Printhie Wines has partnered with local luxury accommodation Basalt to offer an exclusive dine and stay package. The stay includes two nights at the architecturally designed luxury studios, set amongst a beautiful cherry orchard, each of which is grafted into the rich basalt soils with sweeping views over the region. The studios come equipped with an exquisite freestanding concrete bath, king bed with luxurious linen, outdoor firepit and a telescope for stargazing. The stay includes a four-course degustation lunch at Printhie Dining with matching wines.



Tip: Before or after lunch at Printhie, head to nearby Swinging Bridge Wines for their 'Explore with Swinging Bridge' guided vineyard tour and tasting which departs daily on the hour between 11am and 3pm.

04



SETTLE IN AT SEPPELTSFIELD IN THE BAROSSA

A five-minute walk from the Seppeltsfield cellar door, The Lodge at Seppeltsfield is the perfect base for exploring this iconic winery in the Barossa Valley. Built in 1903 by Udo Seppelt, grandson of Seppeltsfield founder Joseph Seppelt, the beautifully restored homestead accommodates up to 12 guests in six king bedrooms, with four private ensuites and one shared bathroom. The Lodge is surrounded by lush gardens and features a fully equipped kitchen, cosy wood fire and a private pool. Breakfast provisions are included.

Tip: Treat yourself to a private tasting of super-premium fortified wines with the Centenary Tasting experience, followed by a long lunch at onsite restaurant FINO Seppeltsfield.





05



SAVOUR A CULINARY ESCAPE TO PIZZINI IN THE KING VALLEY

Visiting Pizzini Wines in the King Valley feels like a warm embrace from an old friend, so it's a no-brainer to settle in for the night at their onsite cottages. Pizzini's Vineyard Guesthouse is adjacent to the cellar door and offers a charming two-bedroom getaway, while Rosetta's Garden Guesthouse is a gorgeous four-bedroom home set among delightful gardens across the road. Alternatively, guests can stay at the Pizzini family's Mountain View Hotel as part of the Pizzini Overnight Food & Wine Escape, which includes a four-course dinner with matching wines.

Tip: Time your trip to line up with one of Katrina Pizzini's regular cooking classes at her A tavola! cooking school, where you can learn the art of hand-made pasta and other Italian classics.





06

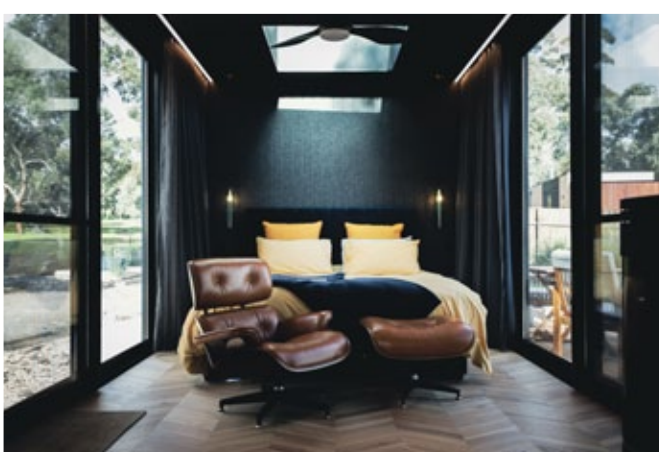


TAKE A BREAK AT AUDREY WILKINSON IN THE HUNTER VALLEY

In the Hunter Valley near Sydney, Audrey Wilkinson offers three guest cottages – Mulberry Cottage, The Dairy and Oakdale Cottage. With 360-degree views of the Hunter Valley and the magnificent Brokenback Ranges, the cottages are surrounded by vines and within close walking distance from the Audrey Wilkinson cellar door which offers an array of experiences, from wine and chocolate pairing to picnics among the vines.

Tip: If you're travelling with friends or family, choose the Stay Among the Vines package which includes two nights in the two-bedroom Dairy cottage plus a welcome breakfast hamper and a bottle of wine.





COSY UP AT GEMTREE'S CABNS IN MCLAREN VALE

Just 45 minutes from Adelaide, Gemtree Wines offers minimalist off-grid escapes in the heart of the McLaren Vale wine region. The property offers eight unique CABNs – two of which are the premium CABN X style – boasting uninterrupted vineyard views. Enjoy Gemtree's Wine and Wander experience, which includes a guided tour of the biodynamic hut and vineyard, a tutored wine tasting and three course lunch, followed by a self-guided stroll along the Gemtree Eco trail to witness the abundance of native plants and wildlife that inhabit this protected area.

Tip: If you're feeling extra-fancy, CABN X Giles has a private wood-fired sauna and outdoor bath.

ULTIMATE
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ABOUT ULTIMATE WINERY EXPERIENCES AUSTRALIA

Ultimate Winery Experiences Australia is a hand-selected collection of premium award-winning wineries offering experiences that invite visitors to go 'beyond the cellar door'. Located in Australia's most renowned wine regions, we offer a diverse range of behind-the-scenes, culinary, and hands-on experiences delivered with warmth and knowledge and epitomise the unique characteristics of a winery and its surrounding region. Discover more at www.ultimatewineryexperiences.com.au.

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Information courtesy: Tourism Australia

THE House IN THE Forest

Escape to The Umri: A secluded Uttarakhand haven with birdsong, forest trails, and cosy comfort. Perfect for nature lovers, bookworms, and seekers of peace.

H

idden gems are easy to find. You just have to look in hidden places. One such jewel is The Umri, a charming, fully-staffed homestay tucked away in the little village of Umrikhal, about 15 km before the old Cantonment town of Lansdowne. This is a region where ancient pines sing in the wind and streams meander through paddy-striped valleys.

The homestay sits on a winding road off National Highway 534, between Kotdwar and Lansdowne. A giant banyan tree with aerial roots that caress the earth tells you you've arrived at your destination. Bells tied to the roots tinkle in the Himalayan wind as if to say Hello; you can tie a few of your own to honour the nature sprites that are said to bring luck.





The Umri is the only building in the vicinity. With just trees for company, it faces an orchard beyond which loom green shoulders of hills clothed in mist. The two-storied house has four bedrooms and easily sleeps eight adults. There are living and dining rooms on the ground as well as the first floor, and two spacious bedrooms on each level. The ground floor deck as well as the first floor balcony and terrace offer stunning views of the surrounding hills and forests and the bluest of skies. The rooms and en suite bathrooms are equipped with best-in-class amenities and facilities.

All the rooms are decorated comfortably and stylishly, with ottomans to prop your feet on and read and

deep sofas and king-sized beds that invite you to sink into them and doze off watching the mountains. Books line the shelves in every room. There are crime novels as well as literary fiction, classics, thrillers and children's books stacked across the house. For those who'd rather hear the spoken word than read it, there are music systems on both floors ready to be switched on.

Those looking to enjoy the great outdoors—and this is truly green and gorgeous territory—can go trekking on the many trails that ring the house. You can walk up to Lansdowne along the old British road or walk down to the river or ask for a jeep to visit Corbett Park, which



is just 40 km away. If all that seems too hectic, simply scramble up the ridge and get the ever-obliging staff to lay out a sumptuous picnic lunch for you under the azure sky.

The staff can also set up a paddle pool for the kids on the deck by day and light you a crackling bonfire when night falls. You can dine indoors or out, watching the unsullied cobalt sky above powdered with stardust. Breakfast is on the house and there's an a la carte menu for all other meals and snacks, whipped up by the super-talented chef Harish. (Do ask him to make you the special Garhwali thali, if you'd like a taste of the local delicacies.)

These days, a homestay revolution is exploding around India. There are elegant homes in hills and valleys designed by inspired architects as well as riverside cottages, seaside apartments and old mansions redone by proud owners. Everything has a selling point, but The Umri's unique location and exceptionally comfortable rooms set it apart from the rest.

COORDINATES:

The Umri Lansdowne

RMF2+R6Q, The Umri Village, Umari Khal
(near GUPS Umrikhal), PO Lansdowne. Pin: 246155

+ 91 75054 09283, thrumri.com

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Actual shot of the entrance portal

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