

A TATA SIA JV

vistara®

APRIL 2020 THE INFLIGHT MAGAZINE | AIRVISTARA.COM | VOL 06 | ISSUE 4



Conscientious traveller
A beacon of hope



Hope on the horizon

It has always been our endeavour to delight you with our world-class service while flying you to different destinations across India and beyond. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected everyone's life and work as we know it. These are unprecedented times for all of us but we're positive that we will all emerge stronger from this. We're in this together!

As you are aware, we have temporarily suspended our operations until 14 April 2020 in line with the directives from the Ministry of Civil Aviation. But we wish to assure you that your bookings during this period as well as those made for the future are safe with us. Your safety and well-being have always been our foremost priority. And we will continue to take all the necessary precautionary measures once we resume operations to ensure a safe and secure travel experience.

We're aware how much you enjoy reading our inflight magazine and to help keep your wanderlust alive, we have curated something special for you. Our digital edition of the April inflight magazine aims to take you on a virtual tour of destinations around the world. As you flip through, the Scotland of the East, the pristine Meghalayan trails, are sure to leave you awe-struck on pages 46-49. Explore why the coastal city of Galle - with its archaeological wonders and culinary delights - is like travelling back in time into a medieval European town on pages 16-21. Discover the incredible adventures that South America's Guyana has to offer on pages 28-33. And also, experience the magic of minimalist art brushed in the Leisure section on pages 40-45.

Your favourite airline will be back in the skies very soon to fly you to your destinations! Until then, we wish you and your loved ones the best of health.



Fly the new feeling

VISTARA TEAM

VP & Head of Corporate Communications
Rashmi Soni

Corporate Communications
Sunami Paigankar
Karen Raja

MAXPOSURE TEAM

CEO & Managing Director
Prakash Johari

Director
Vikas Johari

Editor
Neelam Singh

Submissions
vistara@maxposuremedia.com

Advertising
info@maxposuremedia.com

Marketing
marketing@maxposuremedia.com

Careers
hr@maxposuremedia.com

CIN No
U22229DL2006PTC152087



www.maxposuremedia.com
Simply scan this QR code from your smart phone which contains the URL of our website.

VISTARA MAGAZINE IS PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY PRAKASH JOHARI ON BEHALF OF MAXPOSURE MEDIA GROUP (INDIA) PVT. LTD. (MMGIP) FOR TATA SIA AIRLINES LTD. (TSAL) AND PUBLISHED AT MMGIP, #THEADDRESS, PLOT NO. 62, OKHLA PHASE III, NEW DELHI-110020, INDIA. VISTARA MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. THE WRITING, ARTWORK AND/OR PHOTOGRAPH CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE USED OR REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF MMGIP. MMGIP/ TSAL DOES NOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE OF UNSOLICITED PRODUCTS, MANUSCRIPTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTWORK, TRANSPARENCIES OR OTHER MATERIALS. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE MAGAZINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE PUBLISHER OR TSAL. ALL EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE WHILE COMPILING THE CONTENT OF THIS MAGAZINE, BUT WE ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EFFECTS ARISING THEREFROM. MMGIP / TSAL DOES NOT ASSUME ANY LIABILITY FOR SERVICES OR PRODUCTS ADVERTISED HEREIN. ALL ADVERTORIALS HAVE BEEN MARKED AS 'IN FOCUS' IN THE MAGAZINE. FOR INQUIRIES | MMGIP TEL +91.11.43011111, WWW.AIRVISTARA.COM, WWW.MAXPOSUREMEDIA.COM

MAXPOSURE MEDIA GROUP

Head Office | Maxposure Media Group India Pvt. Ltd.
#TheAddress, Plot No. 62, Okhla Phase III
New Delhi - 110020, India, Tel: +91 11 43011111
Fax: +91 11 43011199
Email: info@maxposuremedia.com

USA | Maxposure Media Group LLC
22 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 108, Mineola
New York 11501, USA, Phone: +164 63672916
Email: info@maxposuremedia.com

Bahrain | Maxposure Marketing Services WLL
Suite no. 652, 6th Floor, The Lounge Serviced Offices
Building 247, Road No. 1704, Diplomatic Area
Manama, Bahrain, P.O.Box 11409
Mob: +973 3306 7099, Tel: +973 17518793

UAE | Maxposure Arabia FZ LLC
Dubai Media City, Building No. 8,
Premises No. 523, Fifth Floor, Dubai, UAE
Tel: +971 - 44310793
E-mail: info@maxposuremedia.com

Bangladesh | Subcontinental Media Pvt Ltd
Profficio 2nd floor, 4 Mohakhali Commercial Area
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh, Tel: +880 1862260427
E-mail: shohedul@subcontinentalmedia.com

Thailand | Maxposure Media (Thailand) Co. Ltd
No. 4/1 Soi Lat Phrao 52 (Nivet 2),
Wang Thongland Sub-District, Wang Thongland
District, Bangkok, E-mail: info@maxposuremedia.com

Malaysia | MMGM SDN. BHD.
A-15-03 Tropicana Avenue, No.12, Persiaran
Tropicana, Tropicana Golf & Country Resort, PJU3,
47410 Petaling Jaya Selangor Malaysia,
Tel: +60 378860995,
e-mail: info@maxposuremedia.com

MAXPOSURE INDIA OFFICES

Bengaluru | 409, A Wing, 4th Floor, Mittal Towers
MG Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560001
Tel: +91 80 41510657

Chennai | Workafella Unit No. 415, 4th Floor, #10,
Uthamar Gandhi Salai, Nungambakkam High Rd,
Nungambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600034
Tel: +91 44 42015684

Indore | 7/1, 409, 4th Floor, Ratan Mani Complex,
Opposite Inter Star Showroom, New Palasia
Indore-452001, Tel: +91 731 4248881

Jaipur | Shop No.B-18, Hotel Arco Palace
Opp. Metro Station, Sindhi Camp Station Road
Jaipur-302001, Tel: +91 141 4047655

Kochi | Sushil Menon
Tel: +91 9740191055
Email: sushil@maxposuremedia.com

Kolkata | DPS Corporate Club, 1st Floor
9A Sebak Baidya Street, Kolkata-700029
Tel: +91 33 40680111

Mumbai | 7/711, The Summit Business Bay - Omkar,
Andheri Kurla Road, Behind Gurunanak Petrol Pump,
Andheri - East, Mumbai - 400093
Tel: +91 22 61991111

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION

NORTH AMERICA

Canada | Wayne Saint John |
The New Base, Tel +141 63631388
E-mail: wayne.stjohn@thenewbase.com

EUROPE

France | Nicolas Devos |
IMM International, Tel: +331 40137905
E-mail: n.devos@imm-international.com

London | David Simpson |
Simpson Media, Mob: +44 79 00885456
E-mail: david@simpson-media.com

Russia/Switzerland | Gleb Korotkov, Halfbudget
Tel: + 7 9852243800, +41 767102525
Email: info@halfbudget.com

Turkey | Tan Bilge | Media Ltd |
Tel: +90 212 2758433
E-mail: tanbilge@medialtd.com.tr

FAR EAST

Hong Kong/Indonesia | Peter Jeffery |
Asian Integrated Media Ltd.
Tel: +852 39106388
E-mail: peterjeffery@asianmedia.com

Japan | Yusuke Yamashita | Pacific Business Inc
Tel: +813 36616138, E-mail: yamashita-pbi@gol.com

South Korea | Jung-Won Suh |
Sinsegi Media Inc., Tel: +82 27858222
E-mail: sinsegi-2@sinsegimedia.info

AUSTRALIA

Sydney | Charlton D'Silva | Publisher's Internationale'
Tel: +612 92523476
E-mail: charlton.dsilva@pubintl.com.au

What's Inside

— APRIL 2020 —



16



10



50

PERSPECTIVE

A collage of happenings from the world of travel, entertainment, technology and current affairs

08 Potpourri

TRAVEL

There is no better way to learn than travelling. Vistara explores new horizons and destinations

10 Chronicle: Hampi

16 Offshore: Galle, Sri Lanka

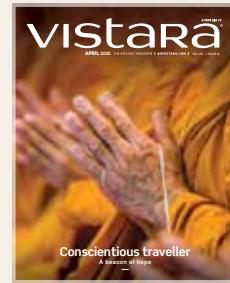
46 Trails: Meghalaya

LEISURE

A mélange of expressions

28 Off Beat: Guyana

40 Art: Minimalism



On The Cover

Chanting in hope, for a new tomorrow



Download the Vistara
magazine app



facebook.com/
AirVistara



@airvistara



Scan this QR code from your
smart phone to visit our app



THE SOCIAL BUZZ

The 'new feeling' has spread its wings in social media and our followers can't stop talking about Vistara

Rituraj Borah @ritzborah - Mar 6
@air_vistara always a pleasure #flythenewfeeling and a first experience of being piloted by 2 women pilots Mallika & Deepika Sharma and a wonderful crew led by Tashi #happywomensday2020 #vistara #Vistaraview

MARCH 2020 THE INFLIGHT MAGAZINE | AIRPORTS & DESTINATIONS | 100+ PAGES

VISTARA

Photo credit: RiturajBorah

Mayur Khandelwal @Mayur_Kh - Mar 12
A beautiful morning #VistaraView at @CSMIA_Official @airvistara @MrrMukherjee

Photo credit: Mayur Khandelwal

Business Insider India @BIndia
AND... she is here!
#DreamLiner #vistara @airvistara

Photo credit: Business Insider India

Shashank Rathi @av_shashankr - Feb 21
Spectacular view at Udaipur!!
#VistaraView #SpotVistara @airvistara @DelhiAirport

Vistara
2 19

Photo credit: Shashank Rathi

Winners of the Vistara Quiz (March 2020 issue)

Answer 1:
Raymonde de Laroche
Dr Ketan Patel
Sachin Yadav

Answer 2:
Celebration
Bhawna Goyal
Saurav Kumar Sharma

Answer 3:
British Pound
Vivek Pathak
Pari Raman



zielonazyrafaosw • Follow
Napal , Katmandu



zielonazyrafaosw Katmandu.
#katmandu #fly #seeyou #nepal
#visitnepal2020 #visitnepal #nepali
#zlotuptaka #vistara #thebestfly
#airlines #house #mountains #city
#photography #travel
#travelphotography #vistaraview

2d



vistara • That's a stunning
#VistaraView of the city! Thank
you for sharing! ❤️

2d 2 likes Reply

— View replies (1)



101 likes

2 DAYS AGO

Photo credit: @zielonazyrafaosw



aircraft_engineer787 • Follow



aircraft_engineer787
#morningbelike
#aviation #aviator #aviatongeek
#aviationlife #aviationdaily
#aviationlovers #aviationpost
#instaaviation
#aviationphotography
#aviationismylife #lifestyleaviation
#airbus #airbuslovers
#airbusspotter #airbusaviation
#vistara #vistaralove #vistaraview
#vistaraairlines #spotvistara

Photo credit: @aircraft_engineer787



pallavi_mahapatra • Follow



pallavi_mahapatra Expectation v/s
Reality!
Thanks to #corona #covid_19
#potd
#pallevmahapatra
#emptyflight
#staysafe
#vistara
#vistarairlines
#vistaraview

2d



instakihush Be safe

2d 1 like Reply



dsp123446 Nice

2d 1 like Reply



53 likes

2 DAYS AGO

Photo credit: @pallavi_mahapatra

Your safety is our **UTMOST PRIORITY**

In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we want to assure you that Vistara will continue to take additional precautionary measures to help you reach your destination safely.

STEPS TO PROTECT YOU

As part of our efforts, we have put in place a specialised task force to orchestrate various preventive, containment and decontamination measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. We have adopted WHO guidelines, stepped up safety measures in our aircraft, in our offices and airport areas.



You are also urged to take necessary personal precautions to control the spread of COVID-19 (as advised by the WHO):

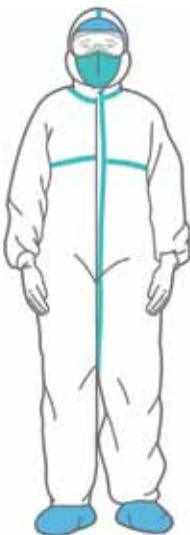
ON GROUND



01

We'll be cleaning cabins of all aircraft in our fleet at the turnaround of every single flight with approved cleaning materials. Seats, tray tables, latches, galley, seat belt buckles, all lavatories and flight deck etc. will be cleaned after every flight.

Plus, deep cleaning of all aircraft will be done every 24 hours using a higher concentration of disinfectant cleaners.



02

All cleaning procedures will be performed by teams wearing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as hand gloves and face masks, as required.



03

Any passenger showing symptoms of fever and/or respiratory illness will be required to undergo a precautionary check-up with the Airport Medical Support Team.

04

Vistara Airport Team handling passengers showing symptoms of fever and/or respiratory illness are equipped with PPE to minimise the risk of infection.



Wash your hands regularly



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth



While coughing, cover your mouth with the bend of your elbow or with a tissue



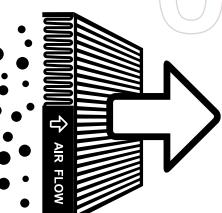
Avoid crowded places



Stay at home if you feel unwell, even if you experience slight fever or cough



Keep your surroundings clean and disinfected



01

Our fleet is equipped with the HEPA (High Efficiency-Particulate Arrestors) air recirculation filters that capture and remove viruses with high efficiency. This also refreshes the air in our aircraft cabin every few minutes.



02

Our cabins are also equipped with surgical masks, gloves, sanitizer wipes and contact-less infrared thermometers.



03

Our cabin crew practice a high level of personal hygiene and wear disposable gloves during processes such as clearance of trays.



POTPOURRI

A collage of happenings from the world of travel, entertainment, technology and current affairs



The Boy Wonder is turning 80

DC Comics' spunky character Robin is celebrating its 80 years with a 100-page 'super spectacular' stories. The stories will be contributed by comic book luminaries and will also contain tributes to individuals who have shaped the character's personality over the decades. Known as the 'Boy Wonder', Robin joined Batman in March 1940, bursting through the cover of Detective Comics #38 in his signature suit of red, green and yellow.

This Month, That Year



On April 16, American aviation pioneer Wilbur Wright (1867-1912) was born in Millville, Indiana. On December 17, 1903, along with his brother Orville, the Wright brothers made the first successful flight of a motor driven aircraft. It flew for 12 seconds and traveled 120 feet. By 1905, they had built a plane that could stay airborne for half an hour, performing figure eights and other aerial maneuvers.

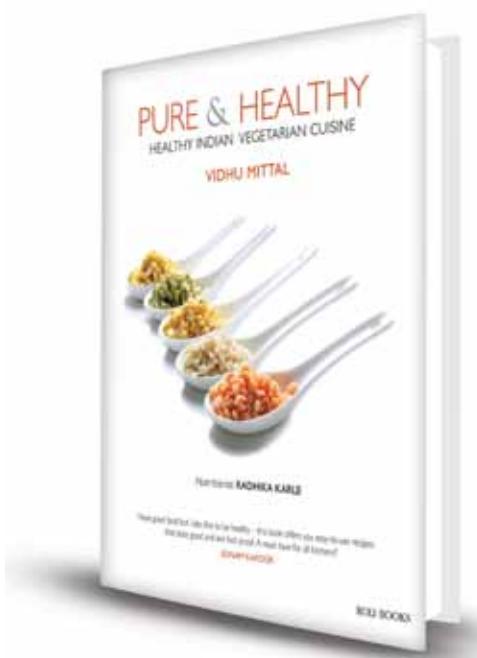


Virtual tour of a Mystery House

The Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, California, is a popular tourist attraction. It can now be explored through a detailed video tour posted on the mansion's website. This 40 minutes tour provides insight into the property and the woman who built it: Sarah Winchester, wealthy and reclusive heiress to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, which manufactured an innovative rifle that became a fixture of Westward expansion.

ON MY KINDLE

'Pure & Healthy: Healthy Indian Vegetarian Cuisine' by author Vidhu Mittal and nutritionist Radhika Karle, published by Roli Books, has over 100 healthy vegetarian recipes with step-by-step photographs.



Other books by Vidhu Mittal



About the Book

Well-known author, Vidhu Mittal and nutritionist, Radhika Karle, have put together a nutritious plan that constitutes food cooked with clean and fresh ingredients for your good health and well-being. With easy-to-make recipes, this book will redefine traditional Indian vegetables, their nutrients, and mineral-packed ingredients like millets, sorghum and *ragi* (finger millet). A combination of classic dishes and innovative renditions, *Pure & Healthy* has recipes suitable for everyone. The book pays special attention to those with medical conditions such as diabetes, gluten allergies and thyroid issues by suggesting specially curated menus that are doable. It also advises how food groups and servings can be determined and distributed.

Pure & Healthy joyfully celebrates Indian food that is delicious wholesome, and promotes the consumption of fresh, seasonal and local produce.

About the Authors

Vidhu Mittal, the author of the bestselling predecessors *Pure & Simple: Homemade Indian Vegetarian Cuisine* and *Pure & Special: Gourmet Indian Vegetarian Cuisine*, is a well-known culinary expert based out of Delhi, India. Conducting cookery classes for over 20 years, Vidhu regularly contributes her expertise to magazines and specialised websites. Having developed an interest in cooking very early in her life, she has been sharing this hobby-turned-passion with others.

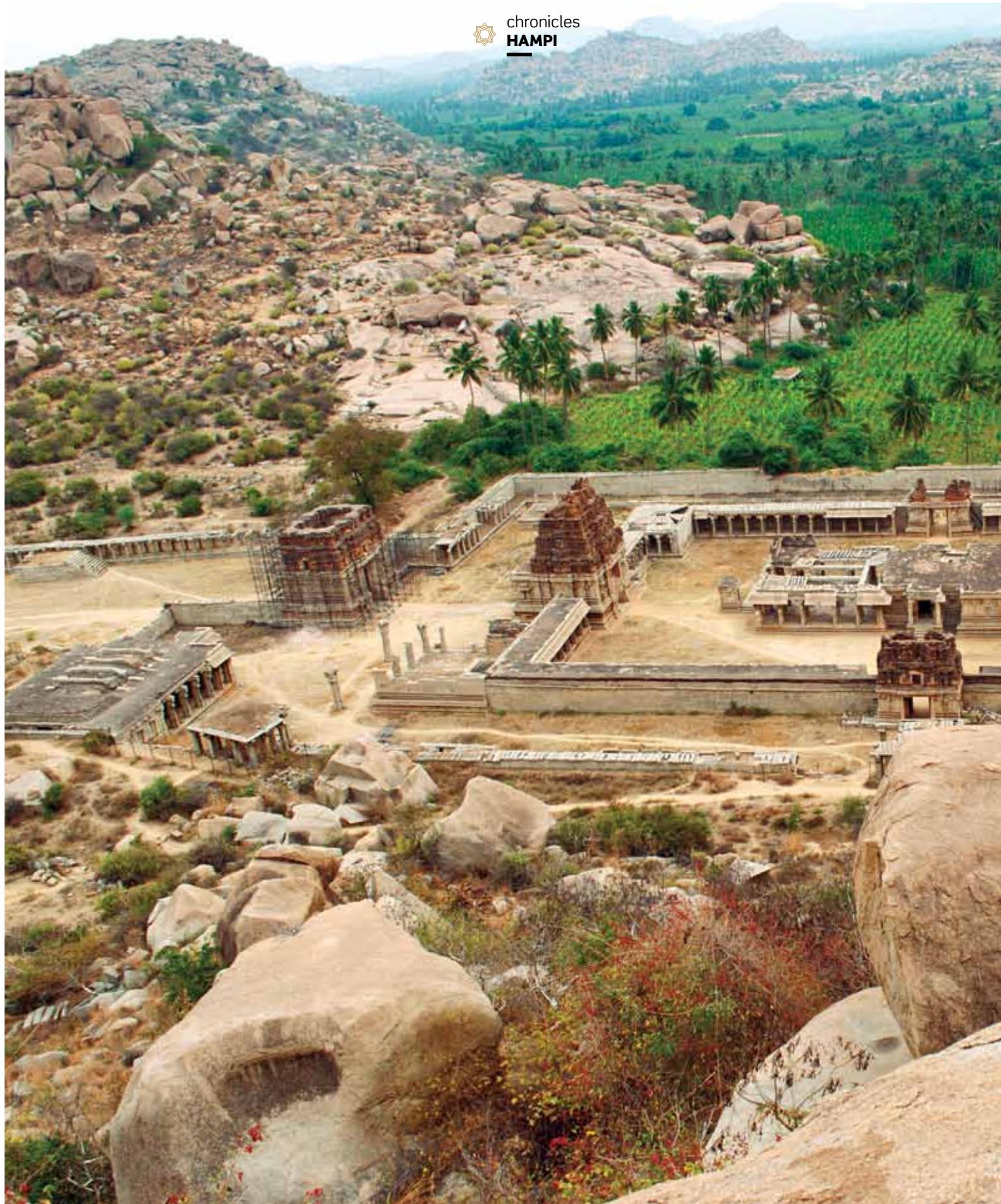
A vegetarian, Vidhu has created a wide range of recipes that retain and enhance natural flavours, textures, colours, while maintaining simplicity and ease of cooking. Compared to traditional Indian cookery, which can sometimes be too rich and elaborate, her recipes are healthy and appealing. She has constantly been evolving her recipes and enjoys experimenting.

Vidhu graduated with Home Science as her major. She has a diploma in Fashion Designing and has travelled widely in India and abroad. She loves entertaining friends and family and enjoys playing bridge.

Radhika Karle holds a master's degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. She has more than ten years of work experience as a nutritionist and personal trainer at a leading fitness centre in the United States. Her clients include celebrities like Sonam Kapoor, Swara Bhaskar, Jacqueline Fernandez, Kunal Kapoor and Naina Bachchan.



chronicles
HAMPI



Hampi

Poetry etched
in stone

“I never saw a place like this,” wrote Nicolo de Conti, the Venetian merchant who arrived in Hampi in 1420 and the first European to set his eyes on the Vijayanagara empire. Another century would pass before this mighty southern kingdom would reach its pinnacle of glory. In those early years of the 16th century, Hampi was the second-largest city in the world after Beijing, and dripped with a glitz splendour that no western capital could dream of.

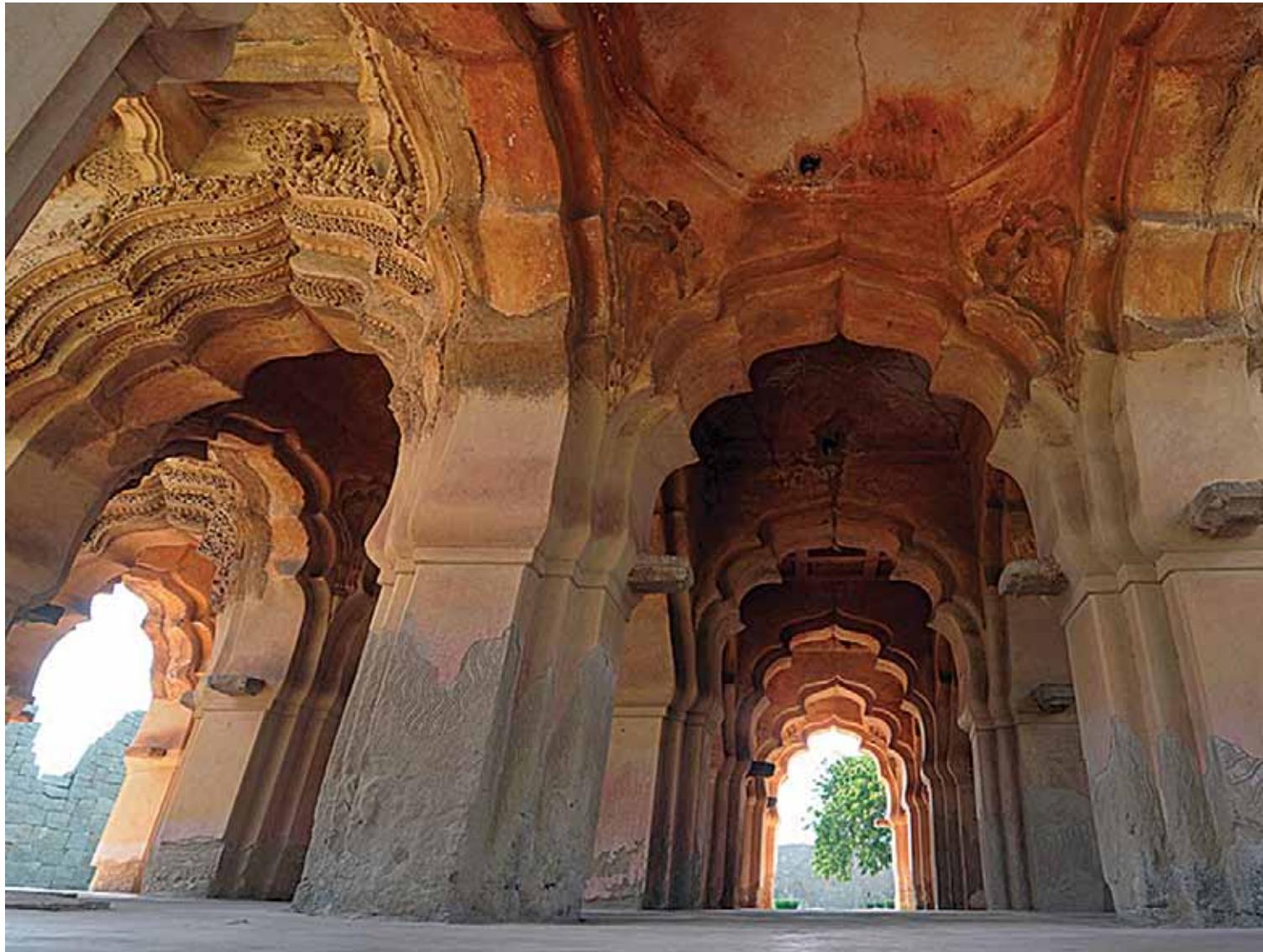
words // Sugato Mukherjee

Spawled on the banks of the blue waters of River Tungabhadra, the city bustled with its bazaars teeming with merchants from different parts of the globe. From the chronicles of these overseas merchants, the opulent palaces, magnificent temples, imposing fortifications and dainty riverside pavilions of Hampi became the stuff of legend. The glory was short-lived though.

In 1565, an alliance of the Deccan Sultanates invaded Vijayanagara, and the treachery of two of the kingdom's army generals resulted in the downfall of the empire. For five months, Hampi was plundered, and its majestic monuments were razed. But even this crudest form of mayhem and carnage could not completely obliterate the magnificence that was Hampi.

A COSMOPOLITAN MEGAPOLIS

Trade in spices, horses and precious stones flourished in Hampi from the mid 14th century. It meant an influx of visitors, and many of the foreign traders stayed back for years lending a cosmopolitan flavour to the texture of the medieval city. The empire had a powerful cavalry division, and many of the horsemen were Muslim immigrants from Central Asia. A truly multicultural ethnic



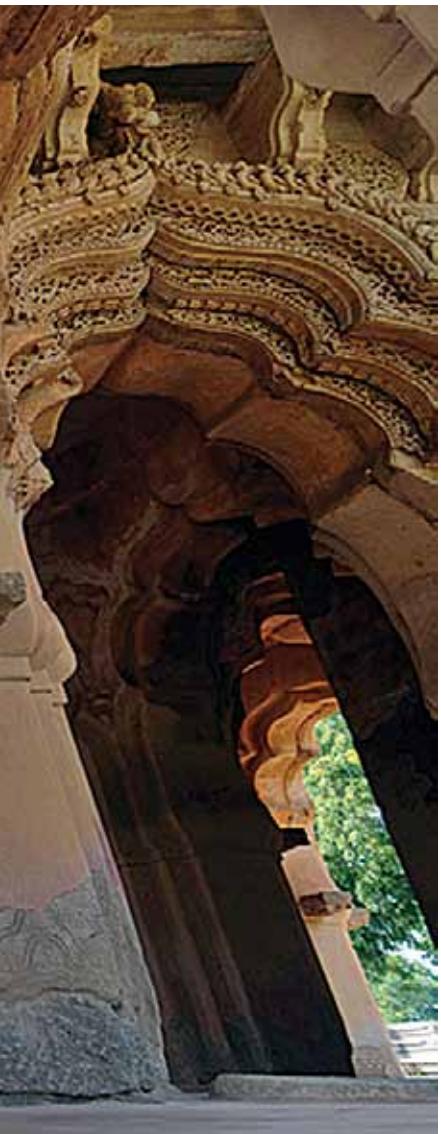


Image credit: Sugato Mukherjee



Wheels of the iconic stone chariot at Vittala Temple, Hampi

mix of population thrived in Hampi, as has been attested by the early European travellers. Even today, ruins of some of the structures strongly suggest that there were several Islamic quarters inside the city.

THE ROYAL ENCLAVE

The brilliant testimony of Islamic influence in Hampi architecture is the Lotus Mahal with its cusped arches and clusters of decorative panels. Built as a leisure house for the king's consorts, the breezy *mahal* with its lobed arches and open pavilions is best viewed

when the mellow rays of the late afternoon sun glance off its elegant contours and drench the lush green compound with a leisurely light.

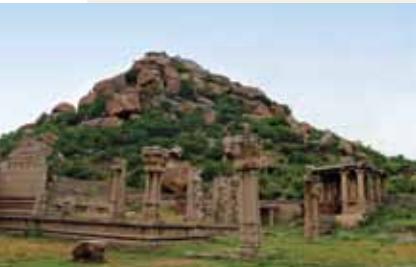
A short walk away are the elephant stables, a perfectly symmetric linear building with rows of domed structures – homes to the royal elephants. The large central hall used by troupes of musicians during royal procession with the pachyderms has a temple-like tower, while the chambers on both its sides reflect the Islamic architectural motifs and style.

A dry moat runs around (five centuries ago it was filled with water, and crocodiles) the plain exteriors of the Queen's Bath, but once inside, you are awestruck with this engineering marvel. A cool breeze blows around the open corridor of this royal aquatic complex whose vaulted ceiling still bears traces of elaborate stucco work. Ornate balconies overlook the rectangular-shaped pool in the centre with seating areas. The perfumed water that once flowed from the lotus-shaped fountain at the centre of the pool was linked to the aqueduct that now lies ruined at a side of the pool – a part of the immaculate water supply system of Hampi during its heyday.

THE TEMPLE TRAIL

Colonel Colin Mackenzie, the East India Company surveyor who had first mapped the ruins of Hampi in 1800, marked the sacred enclave of the medieval town dotted with fascinating temple architecture. One of the highlights is Virupaksha Temple, where Lord Shiva is worshipped. The 160-feet tall cream-white pyramidal structure houses numerous chapels and statues. The beautiful pillared pavilion was dedicated to the

Local INSIGHTS



MATANGA HILL

The stepped ramp at the western flank of Matanga Hill zigzags its way up to the highest point in Hampi, a 45-minute hike to get to its top. From up there, the vast swathes of the granite-strewn landscape that was once one of the richest kingdoms on earth looks surreal, oozing a soft, crimson glow in the mellow afternoon light.



HIPPIE ISLAND

Experience a different facet of Hampi at Virarpur Gadde or Hippie Island, as it is popularly known. Just a coracle ride away from the temples of Hampi, this is an abode for backpackers. There are dainty shacks and cafes where you can savour various local and global cuisines, while admiring a view of the mighty Tungabhadra river.



temple by King Krishnadevaraya on his coronation in 1510 and still serves as a popular venue for betrothal and wedding ceremonies.

The walls of Hazara Rama temple look more like a graphic novel visually depicting the tales of *Ramayana*; the only difference being that the stories are etched as frescoes on the granite walls of this early 15th century temple, dedicated to Lord Rama, when it functioned as a private temple of the royal family.

The crowning glory of the Hampi temple circuit is the architectural masterpiece of Vittala temple—the eternal symbol of Vijayanagara kingdom. Here, a set of 56 exquisitely carved monolithic pillars emanate musical notes when tapped gently. And the final stop, right in front of the *rangamandapa*, is the iconic stone chariot, a miniature temple dedicated to *Garuda*. Legend has it that four wheels of the stone chariot could be made to turn on their axis!



Explore Hampi from a riverine angle and delve into the history and architectural details of the temples as they pop into view over the boulder-strewn banks.

The ruins of Hampi were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986 and have been listed as the 'Group of Monuments at Hampi'.

THE RIVERSIDE RUINS

A stony path saunters its way along the bends of River Tungabhadra connecting the Vittala temple with Hampi bazaar. The 2 kilometres stretch of rocky trail is marked with rock carvings, natural overhangs and cliffside chambers and obscure monuments hidden behind huge boulders. It is here that you find Hampi in its most primitive and evocative form with its herd of striped squirrels and droves of monkeys scampering about the random, abandoned structures with the meandering Tungabhadra in the backdrop.

Tungabhadra river is a constant feature as you flit in and out of these architectural marvels. Explore Hampi from a riverine angle as the coracle or the *dongi* takes you down the river and your helmsman, even as he deftly negotiates the currents and ravines of the river, delves into the history and architectural details of the temples as they pop into view over the boulder-strewn banks.

The architectural wonders dotted across this landscape, untouched by modernity, glance off the slant rays of the sun and in that solitary wilderness you can almost feel that the place is frozen in time. The din and the bustle of the lost empire can come alive at any moment, just the way it had been, more than half a millennium ago. ☀



offshore
TROPICAL SANCTUARY



Galle

The Dutch city with a Lankan soul

On the curvy southwest edge of the pearl-drop island of Sri Lanka, 130 km from Colombo, sits the country's fourth largest city - Galle - flaunting its irresistible colonial legacy.

words // Punita Malhotra





Galle was once a flourishing port that lured Persians, Arabs, Greeks, Romans, Malays, Indians and Chinese through exotic treasures such as ivory, jewels and cinnamon as far back as 1400 BC. Curious visitors like King Solomon and Ibn Batuta and world invaders, from Portuguese, Dutch to British, all explored the unique treasure chest of Galle for its endless gems of precious heritage.

There's enough lushness in the green countryside to soothe the senses along the impeccably laid-out Colombo-Galle expressway, so the pleasant 2-hour cruise appears to end abruptly with the first glimpse of Galle's main road. The sharp contrast stuns. It's an endless coastline fringed with soft sand, tilting palms, frothy waves, fishmongers displaying wares and slow clattering tuk-tuks.

THE DUTCH TOUCH

For those keen to dive into the culture canvas immediately, the colonial-era Galle Fort offers a perfect introduction. First steps through the threshold of the grim, unscathed brick ramparts and one is transported into medieval Europe with neatly cobbled roads, mansions with brick-tiled roofs, a large central square with Dutch-style buildings and a Gothic cathedral. Fifty-two hectares of unique

The first step through the threshold of Galle Fort's main gate feels like time-travelling into a medieval European town.





A colourful wooden mask decorating the front of a craft store in Galle

UNESCO-protected world heritage. Silent reminders of Galle's Dutch supremacy stand everywhere, yet Sri Lanka peeps unabashedly through stone and every bend. On the wide streets lined by leafy suriyas, shady paramaras and flowering frangipanis typical of the region; against the paint-chipped dull ochre archway of the National Maritime Museum which bears the 1669 Portuguese rooster coat-of-arms (Gallus is Latin for rooster); under the ancient 300-year-old Banyan trees in the Court Square, where teens indulge in their favourite game of cricket. Galle is a happy marriage of foreign influences and indigenous culture. And the harmony shows.

EXPLORE ON FOOT

The labyrinth of narrow streets is a sensory explosion. Rows and rows of airy old mansions huddle side by side, sporting a fusion of colonial decor and Asian sensibilities. A cornucopia of sloping terracotta roofs, ornate gables, decorative doorways, pretty shuttered windows and pillared verandahs keeps architecture-lovers and avid photography enthusiasts hooked. Light and shadow play hide-and-seek in exotic tropical gardens of homes reincarnated as chic cafe-retreats, funky home decor stores and tiny art galleries. Quirky distractions call from every direction...from hot-pink tuk-tuks and vintage Morris Minors to historic hotels

ESSENTIALS

COUNTRY
Sri Lanka

LANGUAGES
Sinhala, Tamil &
English

CURRENCY
Sri Lankan
Rupee

TEMPERATURE
(April)
30°C (max), 25°C (min)



BEYOND GALLE'S BEACHES

World's healthiest tea

Handunugoda Tea Museum produces a signature Virgin White Tea, rich in antioxidants. It is said to have been originated in China, where it was a beverage reserved strictly for emperors. 23 kilometres from Galle.

Turtles hatching

Five of the seven turtle species in the world are found in Sri Lanka. At Habaraduwa Turtle Hatchery, one can watch eggs hatching and turtles being released into the ocean. 13 kilometres from Galle.

Wooden mask tradition

The town of Ambalangoda is famous for an ancient wooden mask-making tradition. Fascinating legends and rituals surround these masks believed to have healing and protective powers. 33 kilometres from Galle.

Galle Fort is a smorgasbord of dining experiences...classy restaurants, fun pavement eateries, flower-shaded courtyard tables and swinging chairs in corridors.

and old-world Ceylon-poster shops. And there's an abundance of retail therapy...vibrant resort-wear to brilliant blue Ceylon sapphires to the world's best cinnamon. An iconic walk along the sloping moss-green wall fort ramparts comes highly recommended. The ideal route starts from the Clock Tower, over a glorious star-shaped circuit of three kilometres, sandwiched between the ocean waves and red-tiled rooftops of tiny houses. One cannot help but marvel at sophisticated brick-lined underground drainage, flawlessly designed to avoid flooding by the tide, highlighted by a sunset spectacle near the white Lighthouse that guards the eastern end of the ramparts.

A FLAVOURFUL FEAST

The mood is infectious in this expat haven, where writers, photographers, designers and boutique hoteliers adapt effortlessly to loose linen garments, whirring ceiling fans and barefoot-at-home lives. Can food be far behind? Galle Fort is a smorgasbord of dining experiences...classy restaurants, fun pavement eateries, flower-shaded courtyard tables and swinging chairs in corridors. As if the options weren't overwhelming enough, one stumbles across the chalky colonnades of the former Dutch hospital, where fusion restaurants offer culinary temptations of reinvented string hoppers, coconut relish and sour fish curries.

SOUL OF THE SRI LANKAN RIVIERA

1340 kilometres of the Indian Ocean coastline dangles bait to appeal to every travel personality, whether active adventurer, laid-back lazy or photo-enthusiast. West of Galle, in the throes of unadulterated Sri Lanka, the romance starts to creeps in. An endless road unabashedly shows off dazzling, tan-gold tropical sands, wave-drenched rocks and emerald palm clusters. Red-roofed houses peeking from palm groves drip 'destination envy' from white-columns and cool verandahs. Sleepy villages, sarong-clad fishing folk, cheerful red tuk-tuks and suntanned backpackers on hired motorbikes add to the 'far-away' atmosphere. Saree clad women dry fish on blue tarpaulin and men in short-sleeved shirts chat near curry stalls. It's pure serenity, still untouched by mindless tourism. There is a wide

range of accommodations to cater to solitude seekers...modest home-stays to elite eco-retreats and charming boutique hotels to boho-luxe villa sanctuaries.

Each beach stretch comes with its own vibe. Unawatuna, for instance, is synonymous with vibrancy. This is the place for popular nightlife, straw-roof cabanas and adventurous shipwreck dives. Wijaya Beach, on the other hand, does solitude with panache. A secret beach with palms bending over the rhythm of froth and foam, dangling yellow king coconuts, a rocky cove and heavenly prawn mango curry on rustic benches on the terrace of Wijaya restaurant.

AN ANCIENT FISHING TRADITION

Further ahead, Koggala is a playground of yesterday's magical traditions. Stilt fishermen perch

skillfully on crossbars tied to slim poles in shallow water, so that they cast minimal shadows and fool fish to come closer. Witness the fish frenzy at Weligama Bay, where enthusiastic fishermen teams are pulling the vessels ashore, baskets of fish being hauled away and noisy fishmongers are negotiating with gusto. Or an unexpected colour explosion at the Mirissa fishing harbour, where hundreds of docked boats and catamarans jostle for space. This is also the go-to place for an adrenaline rush. From blue-whale watching cruises to surfing-snorkelling escapades...a bunch of active oceanic pursuits materialise here.

A perfect day ends with a cliff-top climb to a secluded vantage point. The vision of a seductively curved beach, gust-blown palms, rolling sands and paths cutting into age-old cliffs induces a deep sigh of contentment. ☺





Lagom

The
Swedish
way of life



Sweden has always been a pioneer in leading a minimal lifestyle. While the rest of the world is still adopting their philosophies, we delve deeper into the sphere of *lagom*, death cleaning and *fika*, to gain maximum happiness by de-cluttering our lives.

words // Shirin Mehrotra



Writer and photographer Lola Akinmade Åkerström, who has authored a book on the concept, called *Lagom – The Swedish Secret of Living Well*, describes *lagom* as a scale, “Too much stresses the scale on one end and too little stresses the scale on the other end. So to keep the scale balanced, you have to remove stress factors. *Lagom* is the Swedish mindset of creating balance within one’s life by removing stress within one’s control”, she says. The concept gained worldwide popularity in 2017, as a successor to the Danish concept of *hygge*.

DECODING LAGOM

According to the popular narrative, the word *lagom* came from ‘*laget om*’, which literally translates to ‘around the team’. During the era of the Vikings, a horn of mead would be passed around in a group, and everyone was supposed to take just enough from it – not too much, not too little. However, there tends to be an argument on the origin of the word, that it actually means ‘by the law’ which originated in 16th-17th century, making it a relatively new concept. The word has also given birth to a popular Swedish phrase ‘*lagom är bäst*’, which means ‘just the right amount is best’ or ‘enough is as good as feast’.

For the people of Sweden, *lagom* comes naturally rather than something that’s practiced consciously. It’s a fluid concept that fits in perfectly with every aspect of life, be it design and lifestyle, work-life balance, relationships or even food, where eating and cooking in moderation is key. One of the most notable rituals of *lagom* is *fika* – breaking two to three times



a day to enjoy coffee and cakes with family, friends and colleagues. “While on the surface it may seem like just a sweet tradition, *fika* is a form of re-centering to keep that internal *lagom* scale balanced”, explains Åkerström.

DEATH CLEANING

“We always think there’s enough time to do things with other

people. Time to say things to them. And then something happens and then we stand there holding on to words like ‘if’.”

These words from *A Man Called Ove*, written by Swedish writer Fredrik Backman, reflect the idea of staying organised for death, even if it’s his own. In the book, Ove, the protagonist, sorts out his stuff, puts



Lagom is the Swedish mindset of creating balance within one's life by removing stress within one's control.





all the papers in order and leaves notes for people who, he supposes, will be responsible for sorting out his affairs after he's gone. For Ove, this process of putting things in order seems to come naturally and looks rather dark.

But, the idea is not new in Sweden where *döstadning* or death cleaning is a way of life. During the days of the Vikings, the dead were buried with all their possessions so that they wouldn't miss their belongings on the

other side of life. To be able to be buried with all of life's possessions meant not owning much. In simpler words, it's de-cluttering your house, as well as, your life. As Åkerström puts it, "*Lagom* is an ethos of mindfulness, because it makes us aware of habits and things we do that can cause or leave stress. So death cleaning in a sense is being considerate in advance to family members who would have to deal with practicalities after one's death."

In her book *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning*, Margareta Magnusson writes, "the intention is not that we should remove things that make our lives pleasant and more comfortable. But if you can't keep track of your things, then you know that you have too much". Being a natural course of life, *lagom* is fairly customisable, and hence, it seems to extend itself to the idea of death cleaning. In the book, Magnusson writes about her mother; an

ESSENTIALS

CAPITAL
Stockholm

LANGUAGES
Swedish, English,
& German

CURRENCY
Swedish Krona

TEMPERATURE
32°C (max), -30°C (min)



Did you
KNOW?



HYGGE

Hygge, the predecessor of *lagom*, is the Danish concept of creating intimacy and cosiness for the soul. To quote Meik Wiking, the CEO of the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, "The true essence of *hygge* is the pursuit of everyday happiness and it's basically like a hug, just without the physical touch." The Danes implement this concept as a way of living by separating a person's well-being from their wealth and focus on small things which give them true happiness, even if it's lounging in bed in their favourite pyjamas, sipping hot cocoa. This, Denmark claims, is the reason why the country tops the 'happiest country in the world' list each year.

orderly, wise, and realistic woman; who death cleaned her life when she came to terms with her terminal illness.

After her death, Magnusson found little handwritten notes in her clothes and other things with instructions of what should be done with everything. "An old horse-riding outfit should go to the Museum of History, it said on a note fastened with a pin on one of the jacket lapels", she writes. This helped ease out Magnusson's work to a great extent, who at that moment had her hands full with five children. She also points out that while death cleaning is something that's more common among the elderly, it's something that can be practiced even if you're in your 30s; not in a morbid way, but with a more mindful approach towards life; more philosophical than just getting rid of the material things.

SCANDINAVIAN WAY OF LIFE

Be it *lagom*, *hygge*, *fika*, death cleaning or *sisu*, each of these philosophy paints a bigger picture as to how Scandinavian countries have cut down on materialism and have gone on to give importance to things which should mean more, like family and internal happiness. It is no wonder that these countries are considered the happiest in the world, because less clutter translates into more happiness. ☺



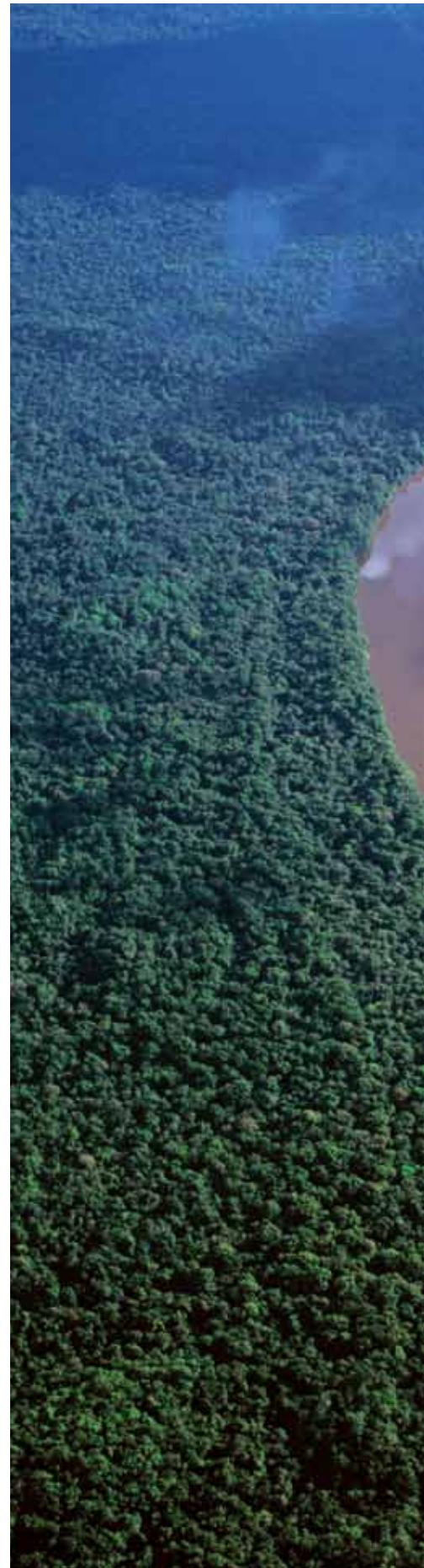
Guyana

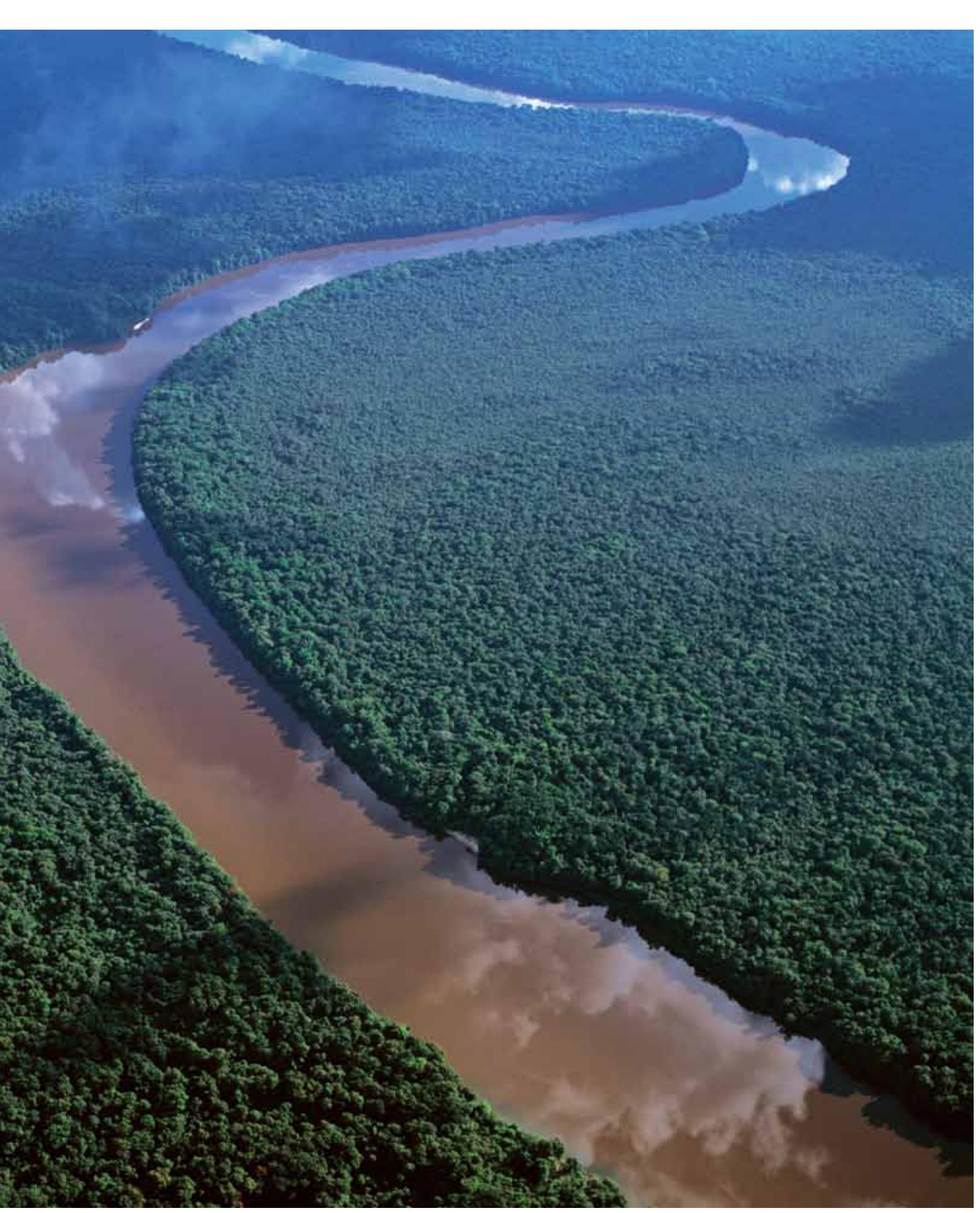
A remote slice of earth

Kilometres of golden savannah, dense rainforest bush, a long and breezy coastline and waterfalls plunging from vertiginous hills, Guyana is nature's wonderland, and a top destination for avid wildlife, birding and outdoors enthusiasts to escape from the chaotic city life.

words // Supriya Sehgal

Embraced by the Atlantic Ocean in the north, and Venezuela, Brazil and Suriname on other sides, Guyana is South America's slice of undiscovered land that promises incredible adventures. Guyana is an integral part of the world's 270 million hectares of 'Green Shield' —along with Suriname, French Guiana, Venezuela and parts of Colombia and Brazil — where more than two billion year-old geological formation represents 18 per cent of the world's tropical forest.







Massive anthills dot the landscape at Caiman House in Yupukari Village, in central Rupununi

While most of the country is carpeted by opaque rainforests, the belly of the country, Rupununi, has vast rolling grasslands, cocooned in low hills. The interior highlands offer a dramatic setting, with craggy flat-topped mountains and plateaus, broken by never-ending Rupununi savannahs and a uniquely low-hanging sky that makes for memorable sunrises and sunsets. Steeped in history of ranches, the Rupununi offers the perfect ambience to hit pause.

RIDE THE RODEO

While the northern stretch of Rupununi region of Guyana is covered with untouched rainforests, the southern part is carpeted in golden grasslands. This is the beating heart of Guyana, where the ancient rodeo culture still thrives. Travellers can stay at actual running ranches, feel like cowboys and also see the annual Rupununi Rodeo - the biggest

The interior highlands offer a dramatic setting, with craggy flat-topped mountains and plateaus, broken by never-ending Rupununi savannahs and a uniquely low-hanging sky.



A cowboy herding his cows at a ranch in Rupunini

ESSENTIALS	COUNTRY Guyana	LANGUAGES English and Guyanese Creole	CURRENCY Guyanese Dollar	TEMPERATURE 26°C (max), 24°C (min)
------------	-------------------	--	-----------------------------	---------------------------------------



ACCOMMODATION

From jungle lodges, hotels, homestays, ranches and community-run projects, a traveller has a wide range of stay options to select from, depending on the location.

festival of the country that coincides with Easter. The town of Lethem, located at the edge of Brazil, is the perfect springboard to visit these ancient ranches, hike in the low mountains and go anteater watching in the tall pale yellow grasslands. The absence of a phone signal in most places is an added draw for those travellers who want to truly taste the digital freedom.

LIVING THE RANCH LIFE

Cowboy boots, saddle, hat and a whip – and one is all set to ride (or trot if you will) into the sunset. The wild west ambience is an abiding feature

of the Rupununi. It is home to Dadanawa, one of the oldest and largest ranches of the world, which had 5,000 cattle heads at one point of time. The numbers might have dwindled but life at a typical cattle farm is still reminiscent of a bygone era. One can check in at some of the most iconic ranches like Saddle Mountain, Waikin, Manari and Karanambu to live the *vaquero* life for a few days. The vast feeding grounds for the cattle, vegetable gardens and cassava farmlands truly celebrate the Rupununi landscape. The scene might look like something out of a movie, but the traveller also

needs to be prepared to herd the cows, clean them and feed the pigs and poultry.

The Rupununi Rodeo deserves to be on every bucket list of South America travels. Watching a *vaquero* showing his skills of saddle bronc or bareback riding, immediately transports one to the Wild West where bull and horse riding is second nature to the locals. The two-day event is a throbbing party of cowboy hats and boots, beer and rodeo events that promise to leave one in thrall. The Rupununi Rodeo is followed by the lesser known Saddle Creek Rodeo that happens



Slow paced life in the Rupununi

Image credit: Supriya Sehgal



The crab-eating raccoon (*Procyon cancrivorus*) is a common resident of the Rupununi rainforests

a few miles away in a namesake village off Lethem.

SIMPLE VILLAGE LIFE

Crunchy farine made of cassava, a sleep over in a hammock in a *benab* (thatched hut), and warm hospitality of the local

Amerindians in Rupununi is food for the soul. For the stomach, there is always a steamy pepper pot in every home. Add to this, an impromptu swim in a creek or a hike to one of the hills that frame the Rupununi. A little bit of action on a holiday makes the traveller

realise how nature has an upper hand in every corner of the country. The hike to Skull and Bones Mountain and 1000 steps to Moco Moco Mountain are easy day long trips. These can be followed by dipping travel-wearied feet in the cool blue pools of Kumu Falls.

MEETING RUPUNINI'S WILD INHABITANTS

To say that a Rupununi wildlife and nature experience is sublime would not be heretical. The land springs life, enriching and replenishing the world's biodiversity at a rapid speed. A prolific variety of animals, birds, reptiles and insects, along with exquisite flora, showcase nature's hand in making this an essential haven for nature enthusiasts. The impenetrable forests and river systems offer shelter to iconic mammals like the elusive jaguar, the much celebrated-Giant Anteater and Giant River Otter, rare reptiles such as Black Caiman, and one-of-a-kind birds such as the Harpy Eagle and Cock-of-the-rock. No wonder, the region was home to conservationist and Giant Otters' expert, Diane McTurk, who played host to wildlife greats like David Attenborough and Gerald Durrell. ☀



VISIT THE CAPITAL

Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, is a colourful city deeply influenced by Caribbean culture. Located on the banks of River Demerara, the city has a long coastline which showcases the best of its colonial architecture. The area also has great seafood restaurants.



LOCAL DELICACY

The Guyanese Pepperpot, often called the National Dish of Guyana is a slow cooked meat dish made with spices like pepper, cinnamon, and cassareep (thick sauce made from cassava root).

Local INSIGHTS



Slovenia

The fairy tale escape

Embark on a magical journey in Slovenia filled with hiking adventures, wellness retreats and culinary surprises.

words // Sunami Paigankar

Once upon a time there was a tiny country in central Europe blessed with diverse and picturesque panoramas. From snow-capped Julian Alps to the Mediterranean Sea, from medieval villages to meadows, from mountain rivers to pristine lakes; Slovenia is bound to cast a spell on you with its natural beauty. If you don't believe in fairy tales, then a visit to Slovenia might change your perception.

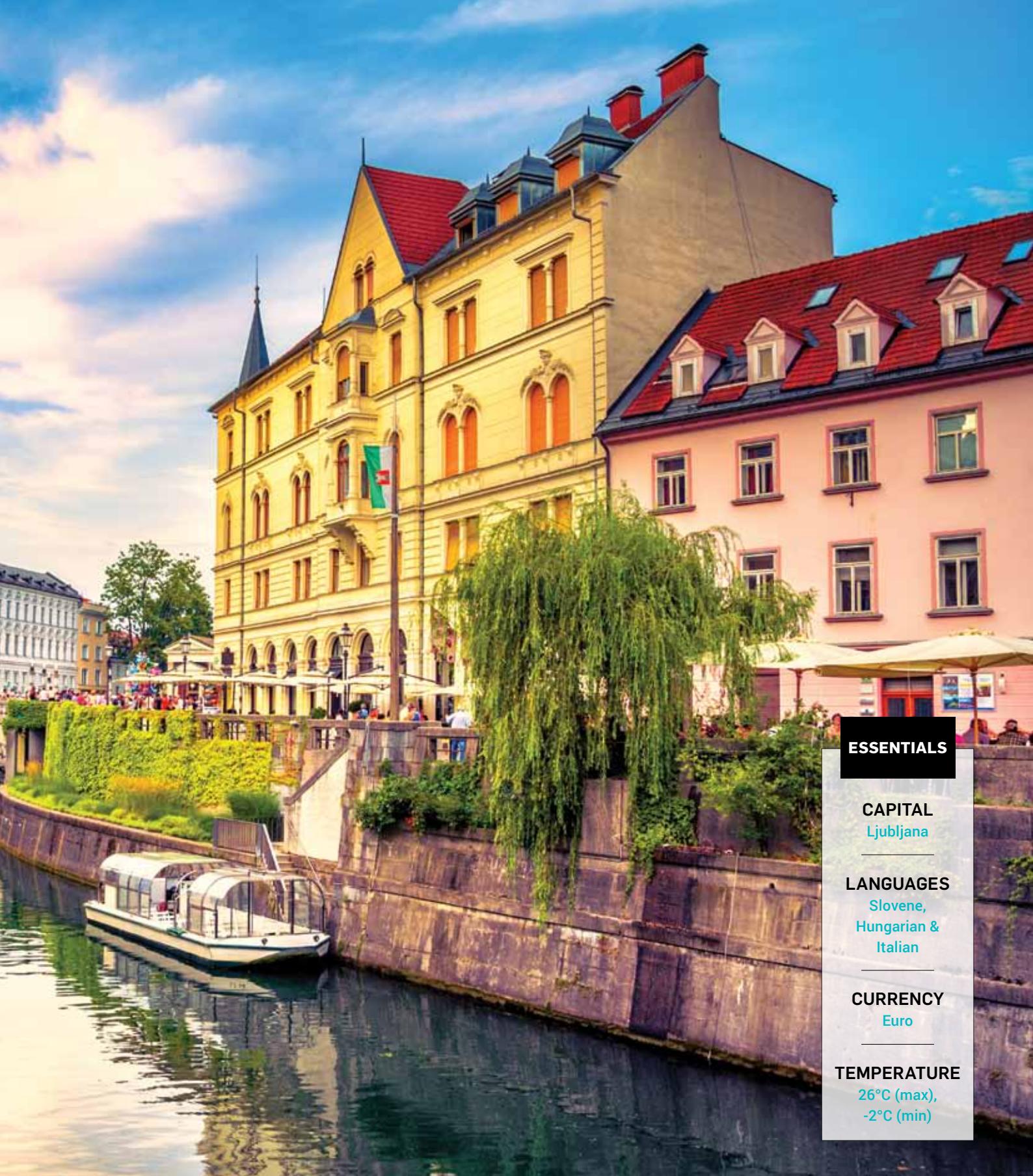
LOVE-STRUCK IN LJUBLJANA

With a towering castle, a meandering river, ornate bridges and the 'dragon' as the city symbol perched on a bridge, the capital city of Ljubljana sets the tone for your fairy tale holiday. A walk along the cobbled streets past the cotton candy coloured buildings with the Ljubljanica River peeking out every now and then, is a dreamy experience.

The Franciscan Church in Preseren Square with its pop of pink stands tall and proud by the iconic Triple Bridge and is perhaps the city's most photographed locale. Walk around Old Town and admire the architecture from different historic periods and the works of Jože Plečnik who played a major role in shaping Ljubljana's architecture. The majestic Ljubljana castle is only a funicular ride away and offers commanding views of the city. Alternatively, you can also visit the Nebotičnik skyscraper and enjoy a gorgeous view of the castle and the city, especially at sunset.

Several cafés dot the Petkovšek Embankment and you can spend the afternoon people-watching while enjoying a cup of coffee or a gelato. Head over to the Central Market and browse through





ESSENTIALS

CAPITAL

Ljubljana

LANGUAGES

Slovene,
Hungarian &
Italian

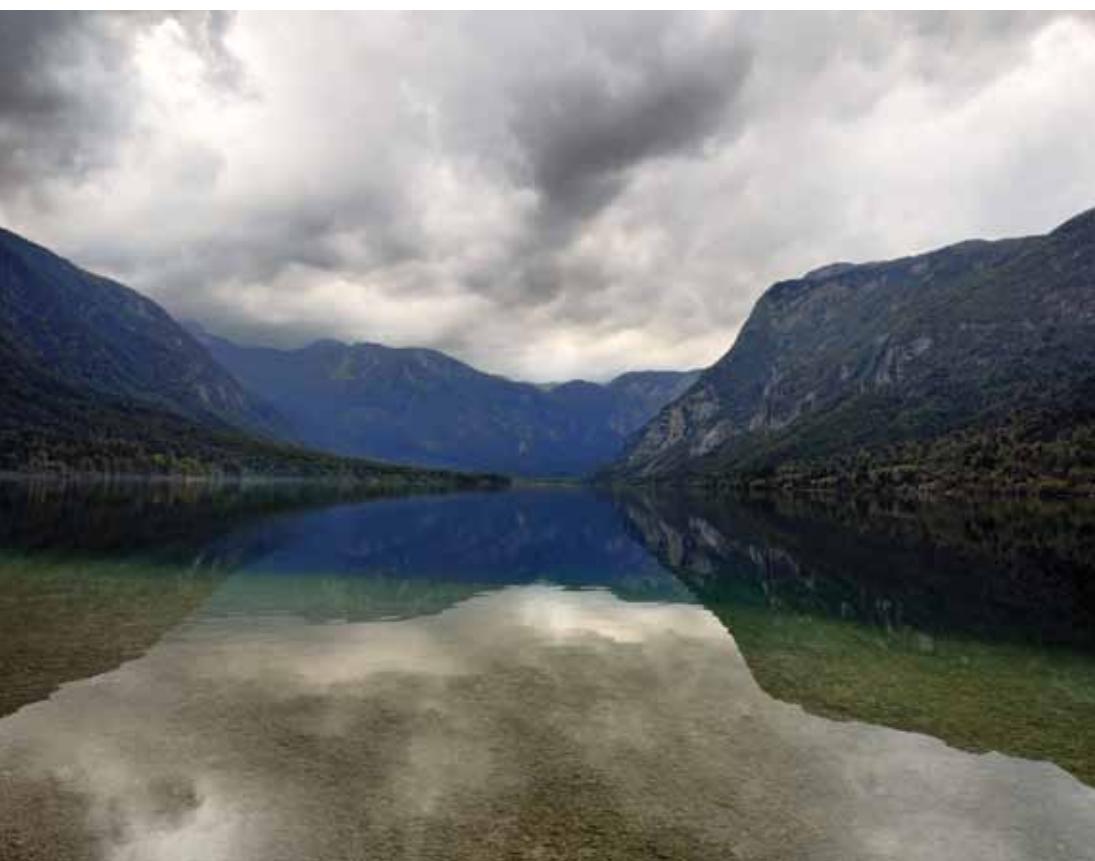
CURRENCY

Euro

TEMPERATURE

26°C (max),
-2°C (min)

the stalls selling fresh fruits, homemade olive oils, organic honey and milk on tap. Every Friday from spring to autumn, Ljubljana hosts an Open Kitchen market in Pogačarjev trg Square which serves both Slovenian and international cuisines. Given Slovenia's proximity to Croatia and Italy, you will see a lot of Istrian and Italian influences in its cuisine. Grab a traditional strukjli (dumplings with either savoury or sweet fillings) and a glass of local wine and soak up the fun. As the holiday season kicks-in, the square transforms into a sparkling Christmas market and the aromas of sinful desserts and hot mulled wine fill the air.



EXPERIENCE BLISS IN BLED AND BOHINJ

The highly Instagrammable Lake Bled is definitely worth a visit. The turquoise lake nestled in the Julian Alps with an idyllic church on a tiny island is picture-perfect. Adding to the charm is the medieval Bled Castle perched high above the lake.

One of Slovenia's best kept secrets is its thermal and mineral springs. Bled has always been known for its natural healing treatments, with Europeans in the late 1800s travelling to Bled to seek natural healer,



The canyons and waterfalls over the emerald green Radovna River paint a 'gorge-ous' picture.

Arnold Rikli's naturopathic and hydropathic healing regimes. So do hit the spa or relax in a thermal pool as the water is said to have positive healing effects.

Walk along the six kilometre perimeter of Lake Bled, swim in the azure water, or row a traditional pletna boat to the island to visit the church and the 'wishing bell'. You can also hike up to the castle and visit the museum that traces the lake's history and sip on a glass of Rosé while enjoying the lovely views. But the most magnificent view of the lake is through a treacherous trek on the Osojnica trail that will leave you awe-struck.

Just when you think that the beauty of Lake Bled can't be superseded by anything else in Slovenia, Lake Bohinj will happily surprise you. Raw, rugged and flanked by the Julian Alps, the largest lake in Slovenia might lack the charm of Lake Bled but has a dramatic appeal. Pack a picnic and spend the day at Bohinj taking one of the many hiking trails, walking up to Savica waterfall, and taking the Vogel cable car for amazing views of Triglav National Park.

TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK TREASURES

A gem within Triglav National Park is Vintgar Gorge which is four kilometres north-west from Bled. The canyons and waterfalls over the emerald green Radovna River paint a 'gorge-ous' picture offering tons of photo opportunities for your Instagram feed. Adventure enthusiasts can also try white water rafting in Soca river or skydiving from Mount Vogel which offers panoramic views of the Julian Alps and the Slovenian countryside.

Your trip to Slovenia is incomplete without trying the decadent cream cake - a puff pastry with layers of vanilla custard and cream and dusted with powdered sugar. It's best savoured at the Park Hotel Bled which has been serving this celebrated cake since the 1950s. Experience heaven in every bite and combined with the view of Lake Bled, this might just be the sweetest memory of your holiday! ☀

Sohan Qadri - Art I V 2008



Minimalism in a modernist world

Characterised by simplicity, both in content and form, Minimalism in Visual Art shuns the use of superfluous elements, colours, shape and textures and focuses more on 'what's important' to achieve a sense of fulfillment and freedom in art.

words // **Uma Nair**



In the year 1990 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, I stepped into the world of minimalism to understand how artists produced pared-down three-dimensional objects devoid of representational content to create a new language. Enchantment wrapped around my senses as I walked around 'Walking Man', the historic sculpture of Alberto Giacometti to understand how a new vocabulary of simplified form could determine the composition of a masterpiece.

PICASSO'S GUITAR

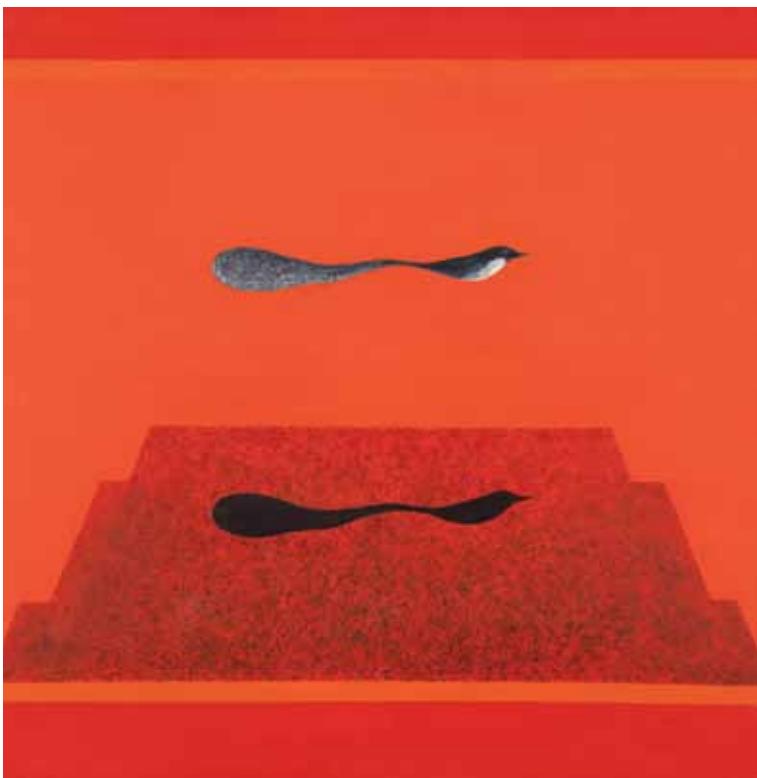
The following summer, I glanced at Pablo Picasso's 'Guitar' to see how he challenged traditional notions of craftsmanship in a show Picasso and Braque, which laid bare the illusion of three dimensions, spatial depth, and the idea that a work of art must

be one-of-a-kind. Cobbled together from cardboard, paper, string, and wire, material that he cut, folded, threaded, and glued, Picasso's silent instrument had a quiet lyrical tone within its minimalist mode. Minimalism was more than just a language.

MINIMALISM AS A LIFESTYLE

Back in India, I delved deep into the works of the great Sohan Qadri, a poet artist who was one of the greatest abstractionists in the country. "Minimalism began in the West in 1960s long after the East made it a lifestyle," said the meditative, melancholic genius.

Looking at Zen ripples in the fashion world and following Isse Miyaki made one realise that becoming a minimalist is a lifestyle choice, it's a habit that we begin to form. Looking



Extreme Left:
Alberto Giacometti
- Walking
Man 1960 -
Guggenheim
Museum, New
York; **Left:**
J Swaminathan's
Untitled Bird,
Mountain Tree
1981 Bonhams



Sculptor Dhanraj Bhagat created a 'Shiva Dance Anandatandava' in minimalist mode to give us an aura of the dance of destruction.





Top Left: Dhanraj Bhagat - Shiva Dance, 1956 (Bronze);
Above: Himmat Shah - Untitled Terracotta 2000; **Bottom Left:** Rupin Thomas - La Vie A Paris: A Study of Volition 2017.

at the work of the critic and India's greatest abstract guru J Swaminathan's 'Untitled-Bird Mountain and Tree' series brought home the point that minimalist arts and design find beauty and satisfaction in 'less', or 'emptiness/nothingness'. Painted with captivating simplicity, his paintings explored the pictorial possibilities of his limited imagery which were emblematic of elements necessary for man's survival on earth.

SELF-AWARENESS

When we look around, we know that minimalism as a language has crept into urban dwelling. Minimalism is linked to abstraction in art as well as life. More than any abstract sculptor, Giacometti anticipated the blunt presences of minimalist art which induces acute physical self-awareness in viewers. You see that when you look at Bengal Master Jogen Chowdhury's 'Grey Vase'.



Right: Jogen Chowdhury's The Grey Vase (Gouache, pastel and ink on paper pasted on board);

Below: Shakuntala Kulkarni - Bodies Armour and Cages (Cane)

PENN'S STILL LIVES

Photography can be many things to many people. For Irving Penn, the god of the fashion world, his dictionary of still lifes were more than just a study of objects.

Feeling was the determining factor in his works and a pair of spoons, a bit of lettuce and a few drops of balsamic vinegar, could evince that feeling. Penn created a formidable study of still lifes, replete with ravishing edges and perfect composition and a quality of deep colour that was the envy of every other photographer. Nothing in excess - is the basic signature of minimalism.

Penn's images were casual yet exquisite in every way. With their drizzled liquids, spilled spices and other raw ingredients, or their strewn petals, they felt innovative and intimate, as if tossed off by someone who had just exited, smiling. But their contrasting textures and vivid colours, enhanced by the sparkling white seamless background paper, and the wit and poise of their compositions, seemed like art.

For photographers who traverse the world through sunrises and sunsets, it is a whole new language. Ace photographer Shyamal Datta's 2008 image of a Galapagos Brown Pelican, swooping in on fish in a fjord captured against the remote black stone rocks of the Santiago Island, speaks to us about the power and poignancy of monochromatic minimalism. Data analyst Rupin Thomas's dulcet study of a Parisian lamp-post under the setting sun is a narrative of romance and a silent rhapsody in tranquility. Lines, composition and alignment all come into play



Right: Sayed
Haidar Raza -
Shanti Bindu
2017

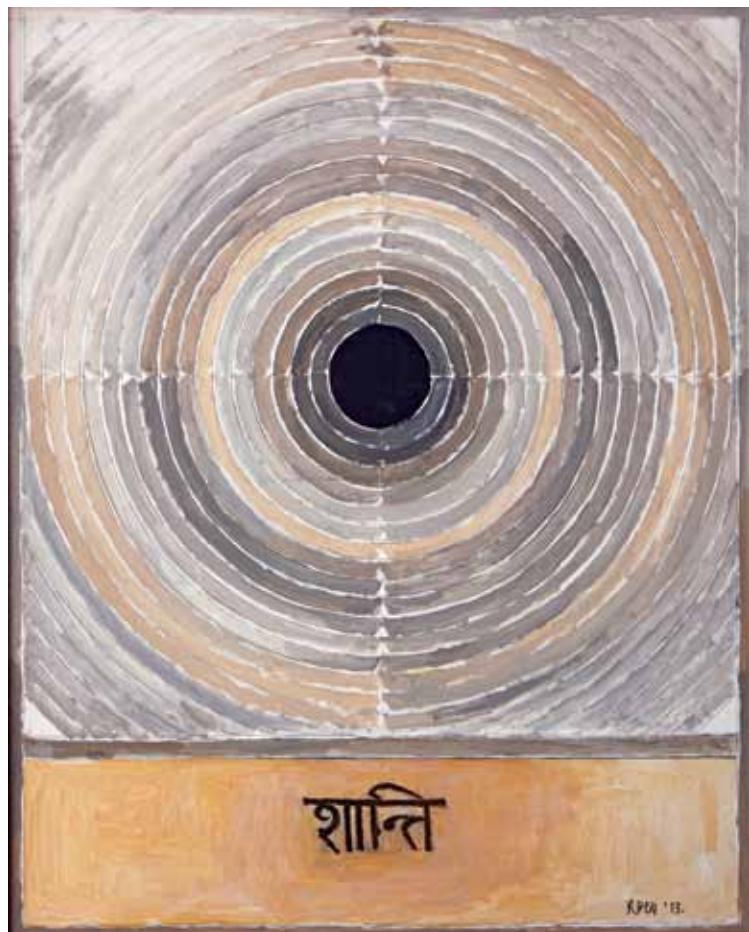
Below: Jyoti
Bhatt - Devi
Intaglio 1971

as you look at this everyday object
that spells antiquity in the elegance
of design.

THE GODDESS

Drawn in the corridors that echo tradition and modernity, Jyoti Bhatt's intaglio print of 'Devi' has minimalist aesthetic when you look at the overall detailing of the visage. The contours, the soft colouring and the lithe texturing, all speak of an ethos that celebrates the notes of spiritual signatures reflecting prayer and symbolism.

One of India's foremost mentors, the sculptor Dhanraj Bhagat, created a 'Shiva Dance Anandatandava' in minimalist mode to give us an aura



of the dance of destruction that speaks of creativity and eternity in the web of life. Himmat Shah, India's master of minimalism, creates sculptural heads and terracotta work inspired by an experiential and evocative solitary journey built upon a long sequence of minimalist, organic heads—radical in their formal purity—that would preoccupy the artist for well over decades.

Installation genius Shakuntala Kulkarni who was part of the Venice Biennale this year had a series of cane installations that were minimalist renderings of an armour from her series 'Bodies Armour and Cages'.

The abstract master Sayed Haider Raza's 'Shanti Bindu', the last one he painted before he passed away in 2017, is yet another beauty. The beginning and the end, the ripples echo the basic nuances of the word *Om*, the many meanings that come to our mind when we think of the seed and the different connotations attached. And in the world of jewellery, the recent Moghuls and Maharaja Sales in New York saw a stellar diamond, sapphire brooch with an elephant. It became the exemplification of class and exclusivity in the realms of design for the ages. ☺

(The writer is a renowned art critic and curator.)

— A trail through —

Meghalaya's colonial past

Once lovingly called Scotland of the East by homesick British officers during the East India Company rule, Meghalaya still retains the crown.

words // Edwina D'Souza





With picturesque misty hills, wild untouched rainforests, refreshing spring baths, and rolling meadows, Meghalaya is full of pristine natural beauty. You will never cease to be amazed by its breathtaking nature trails, jaw-dropping waterfalls, countless living root bridges and sacred forests waiting to be discovered. One such hidden gem is the David Scott Trail in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya - a charming hike through India's colonial past.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

David Scott was a British admiral in the East India Company between

1802 and 1832. His services as the Commissioner of Revenue Circuits on the north east frontier covered areas that are modern day Bangladesh, Assam and Meghalaya. A remnant of David Scott's legacy is the 100 kilometre horse-cart trail that he created for trading goods like silk, cotton, wax, honey and minerals like iron and limestone between Assam and Bangladesh. Meghalaya's indigenous Khasi tribe, led by U Tirot Singh, revolted against the British to stop this trade route. They fought a guerrilla style warfare with bows and arrows for four years until the British emerged victorious and U Tirot Singh was captured and deported to Dhaka, where he breathed his last in 1835.



The David Scott Trail Exit Point

The David Scott Trail, a charming hike through Khasi Hills in Meghalaya, is one of India's prettiest nature trails.

Today, the David Scott Trail is recognised by the United Nations as an Indigenous and Community Conserved Area (ICCA), which should come as no surprise since the people of Meghalaya have always been very protective of their forests and believe that God resides there.

FROZEN IN TIME

While the original 100 kilometre trail through the East Khasi Hills takes about five days to complete, a shorter 16 kilometre route is more popular with day-hikers and is considered one of the prettiest nature trails in India.



OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST IN MEGHALAYA

- ◆ The picturesque secret pool and Rainbow Falls are at an added two hour trek from Nongriat in East Khasi Hills.
- ◆ The Arwah caves and Mawsmai caves are popular for their limestone formations.
- ◆ The Mawphlang sacred forest is a forest conservation initiative by the Khasis and is a great way to spend some time in the lap of nature.
- ◆ The Nohkalikai Falls in Cherrapunji is the highest plunge fall in India.



Above: Flowers in full bloom hanging like garlands in the rainforest;

Below: One of the many tea stalls for refreshments along the picturesque trail



The hike begins from Mawphlang heritage village, which has played an important role in shaping Khasi culture and is popular for its sacred forest grove with stone monoliths. A grassy trail leads you from the front and a water stream runs parallel through the entire trail that takes 5 to 6 hours to complete. Expect to cross rickety bridges, ice cold waters and misty meadows while occasionally getting a glimpse of Khasi villages frozen in time.

The air in the hills is intoxicatingly pure and the streams are clean enough for you to replenish your water anywhere along the trail. Bright green fern shrubberies adorn walls along the winding trails looking like wallpapers. The weather is nippy all year round with erratic rains, creating natural pools for the Khasi villagers to take a dip. It would be a good idea to carry some salt to protect you from leeches that thrive in wet conditions like these. The rivers which are brown from the moving silt during monsoon turn crystal blue during winter, making for a picturesque landscape. Mobile network is non-existent, but the mountain dogs do a pretty good job of being a companion or guide on the route.

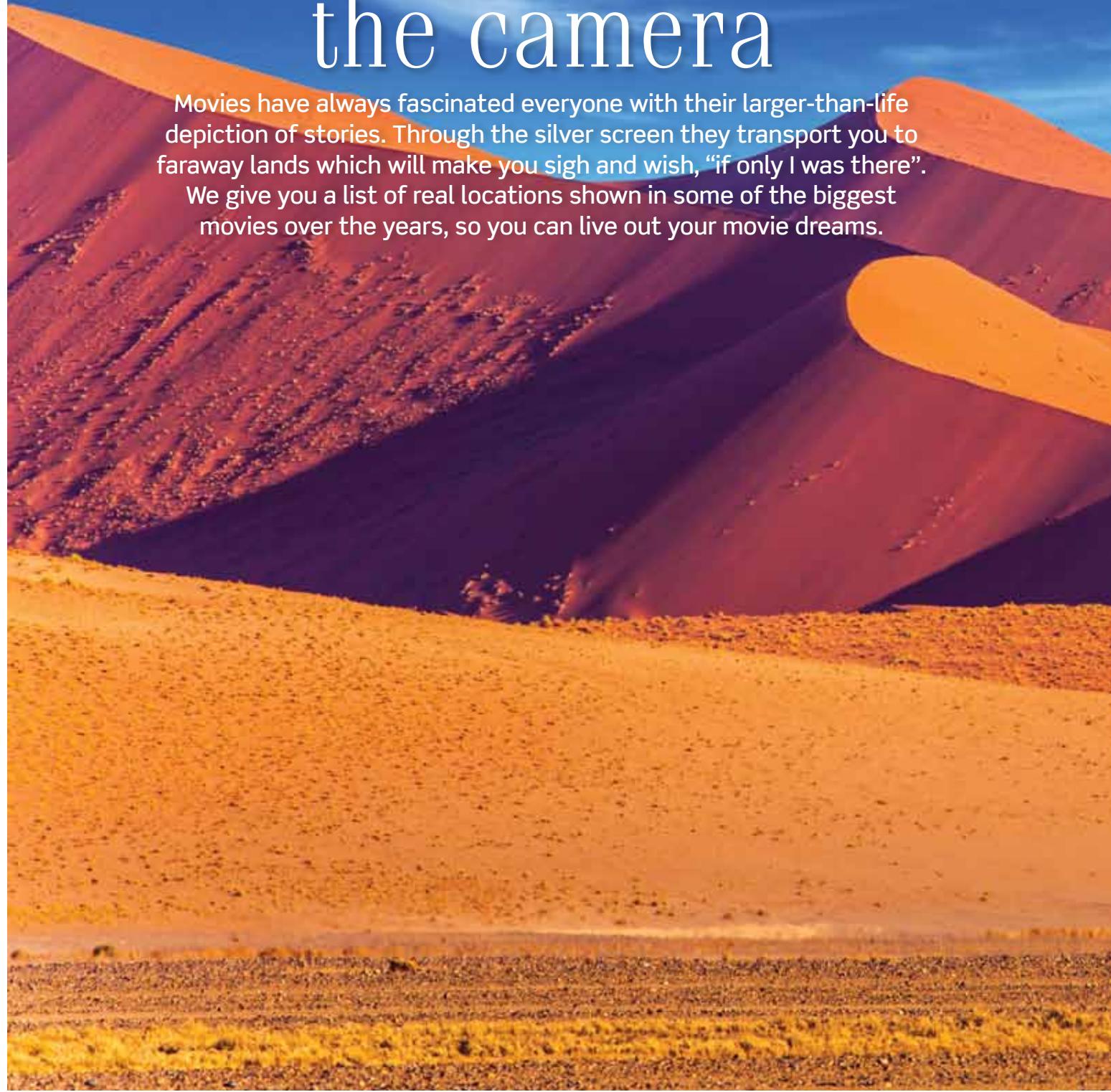
For lunch, you can stop at any of the Khasi villages and enjoy a plate of hot noodles and *lal cha* (red tea) native to Meghalaya, while soaking in the amazing vistas and contemplating if you should even go back to the city. As the forest cover begins to reduce, stone quarrying comes in sight. This signals that you are approaching the Lad Mawphlang village which is the end of your 16 kilometre long expedition on foot through the abode of clouds. ☺



Going behind the camera

Movies have always fascinated everyone with their larger-than-life depiction of stories. Through the silver screen they transport you to faraway lands which will make you sigh and wish, “if only I was there”.

We give you a list of real locations shown in some of the biggest movies over the years, so you can live out your movie dreams.





Namib desert, Namibia

The 43 million years old Namib Desert is the place where one of 2015's highest grossing films, *Mad Max: Fury Road*, was picturised. With its desolate landscape, the desert was perfect for depicting a post-apocalyptic world, as shown in the movie.



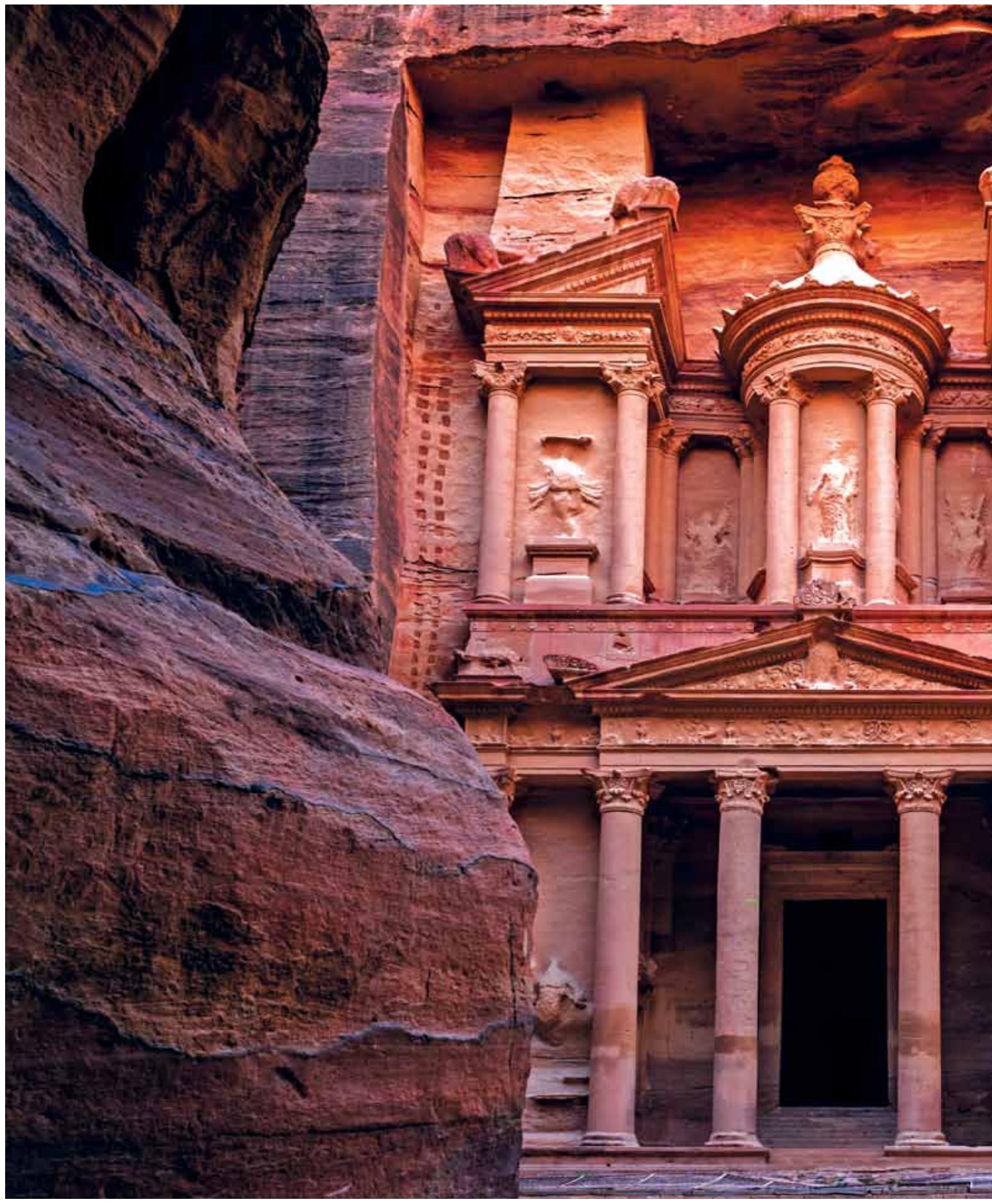
Kualoa Ranch, Hawaii, USA

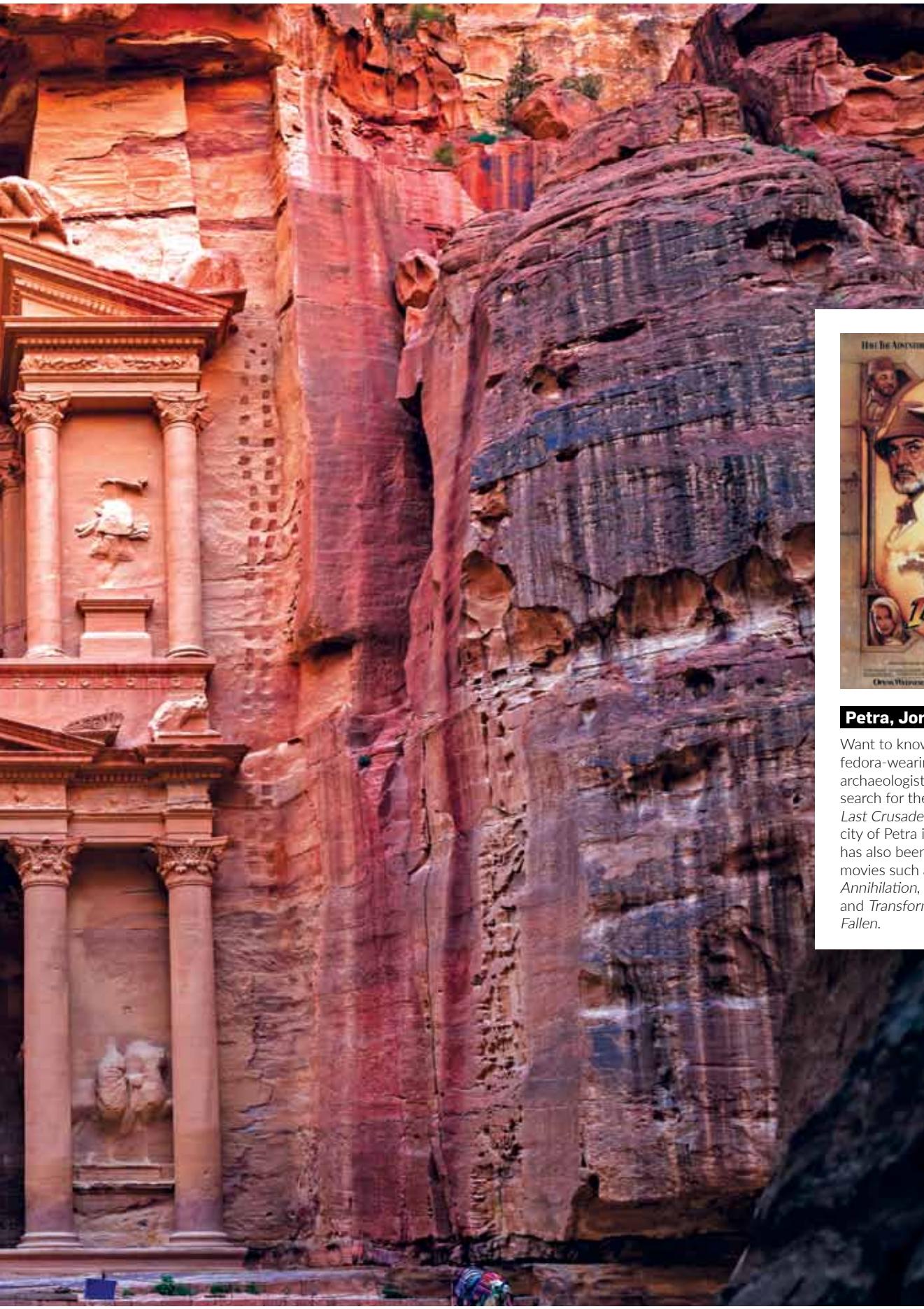
Kualoa Ranch is a 4000-acre large natural reserve and working cattle ranch, where dinosaurs created havoc in 1993's *Jurassic Park*. The ranch has also been the location of *Jurassic World*, *Godzilla* and *Jumanji*.



Skopelos, Greece

The 2008 musical romantic comedy *Mamma Mia!* starring Meryl Streep and Amanda Seyfried, was shot on the beautiful Greek island of Skopelos.





Petra, Jordan

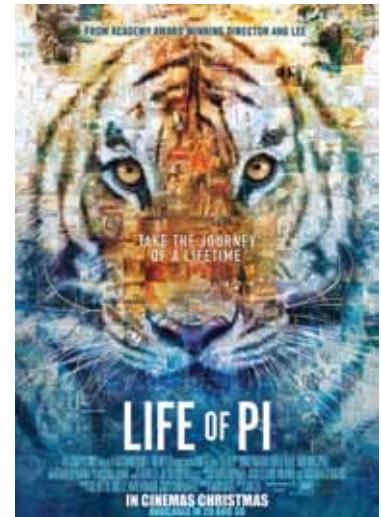
Want to know more about the fedora-wearing, bullwhip-yielding archaeologist Indiana Jones and his search for the 'Holy Grail' in *The Last Crusade*? Head to the ancient city of Petra in Jordan. This wonder has also been the location of other movies such as *Mortal Kombat: Annihilation*, *The Mummy Returns* and *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.



Angkor Wat, Cambodia

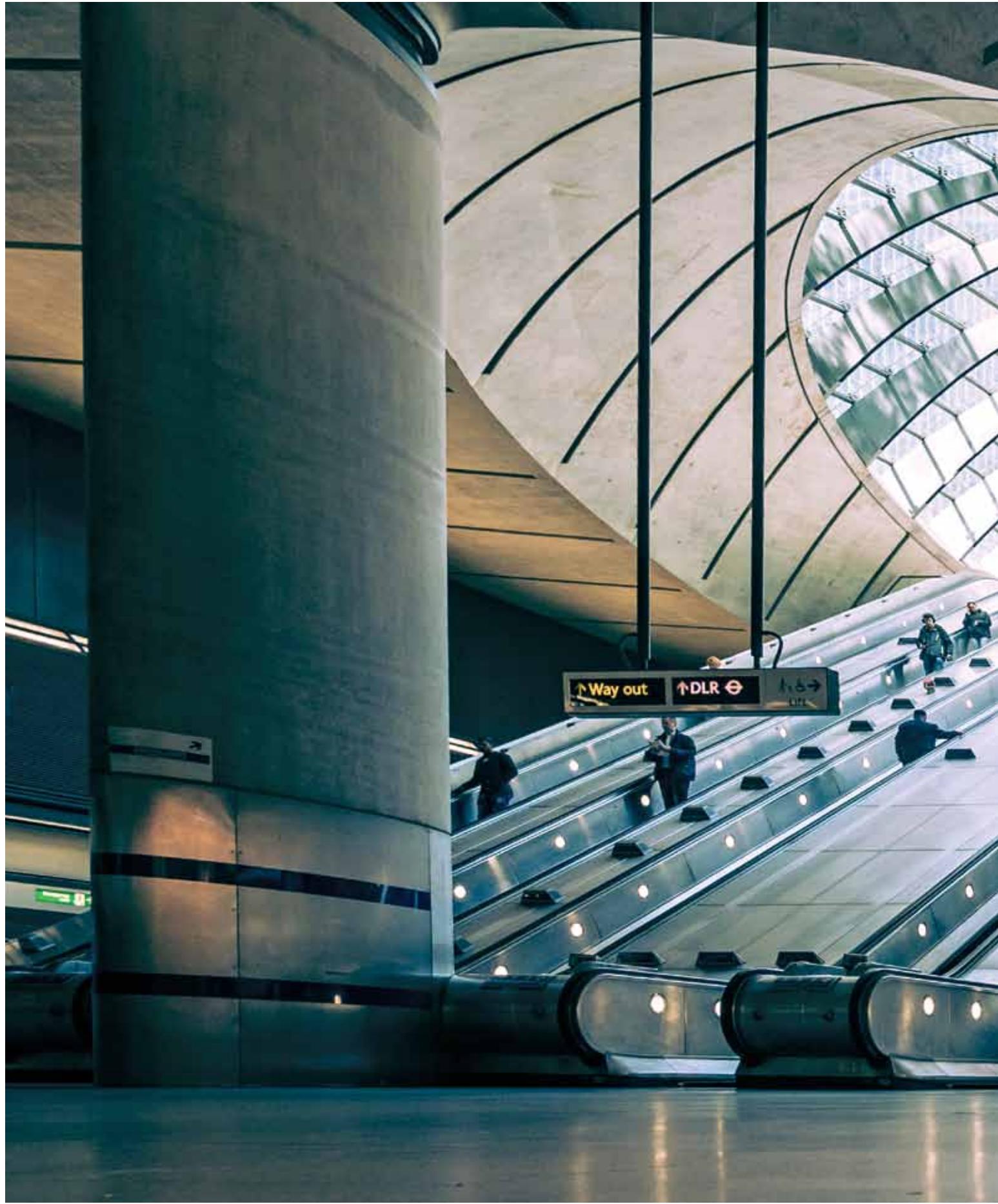
The ruins of Angkor Wat's Ta Phrom, popularly known as the 'Tomb Raider Temple', formed the backdrop of Angelina Jolie's 2001 movie *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. The tree where Croft stops to nip a jasmine from, before she falls into the ground, is a popular spot now known as the 'Tomb Raider Tree'.

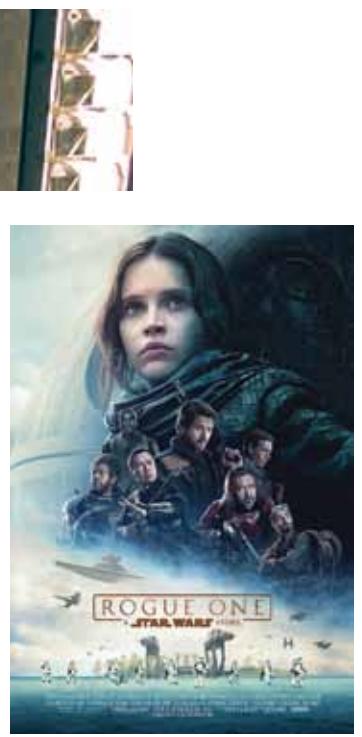




Puducherry, India

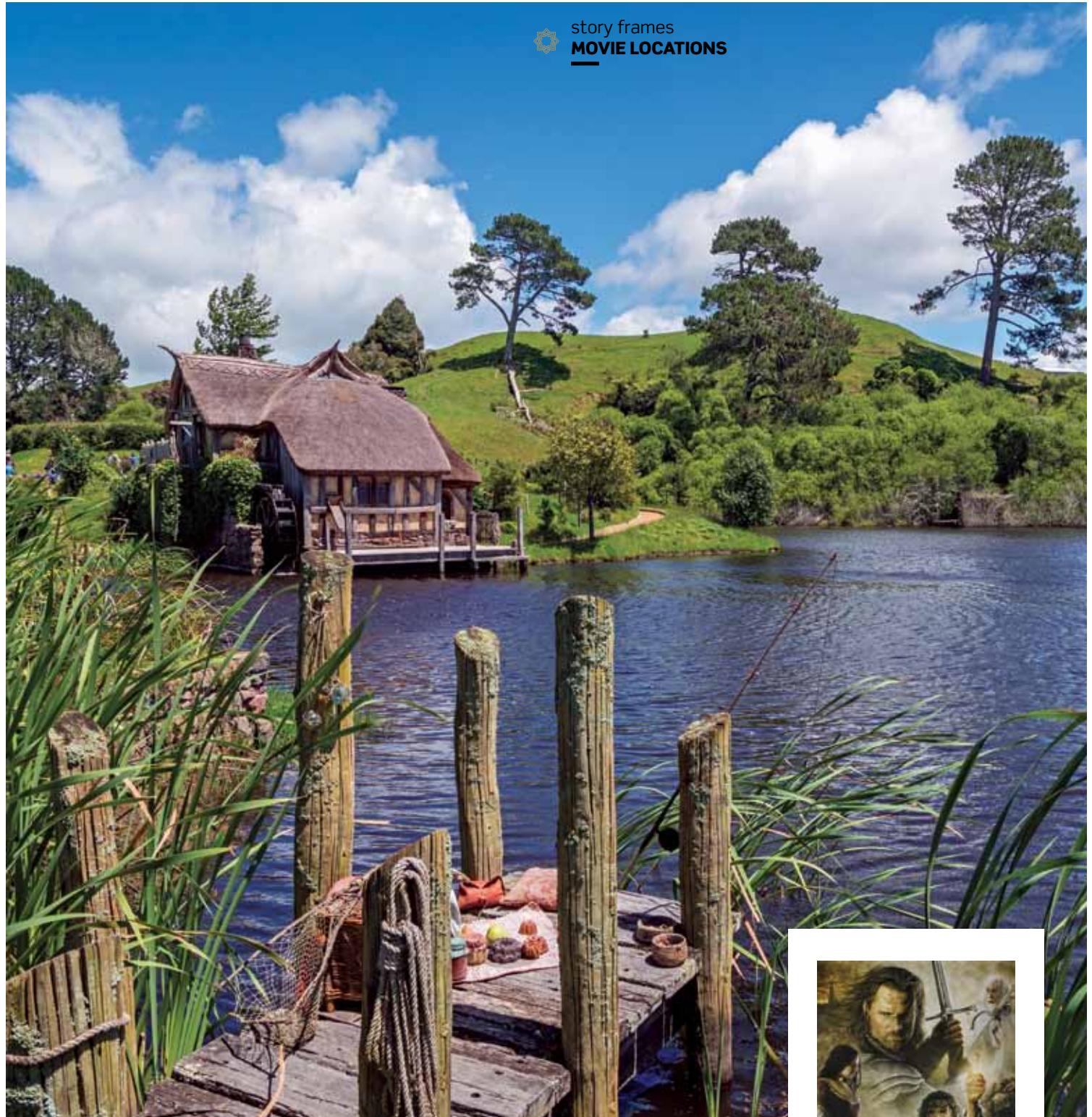
When Ang Lee brought to life Yann Martel's Booker Prize-winning book in his 2012 movie *Life of Pi*, he featured many locations of Puducherry, as mentioned in the book. Vivid French quarters, rich Tamil culture and an inherent beauty reflect what Puducherry is. And it is this myriad of colours that contrasts so starkly with Pi Patel's journey of being stranded in the sea with a tiger.





London, UK

London's Canary Wharf underground tube station got an intergalactic transformation when it played the location for a Stormtroopers' hub in the *Star Wars* prequel, *Rogue One*.



Various Locations, New Zealand

The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Peter Jackson's *opus magnum* was shot extensively in the picturesque terrain of New Zealand. Be it the *Shire* in the Matamata Hills, *Mordor* in the Tongariro National Park or the *Misty Mountains* in the South Island glaciers, New Zealand is Tolkein's *Middle Earth* brought to life.

