

VISTARA®



THE INFLIGHT MAGAZINE
AIRVISTARA.COM
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021
VOLUME 7 ISSUE 5

Is Jaipur India's
new design hub?
How well-designed
cars can make
an impact



The Design Issue

INDIA'S VIBRANT STREET ART | LUXURY HOTELS & DESIGN



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THIS MONTH, IN THE SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER issue, we put the spotlight on a theme that is very special to us—design, which, today, is virtually omnipresent in every sphere of our lives. No matter the field, innovators are using design to promote sustainability, increase efficiency and, of course, treat our senses. Its meaning goes beyond pretty pictures and aesthetics. It is an expression of creativity and encompasses many different domains like art, architecture and automobiles.



Quite like how we, at Vistara, painstakingly curate the passenger experience, when you fly with us. Take, for instance, our Boeing 787-9 aircraft, that features a cabin so plush and well-designed, that your overall flight experience is smooth and fatigue-free. From cabin lights to seat textures and food presentation, we have meticulously thought through it all.

Join us as we spend time in Jaipur with new-age design entrepreneurs, who are fuelling a contemporary revolution in the city, far from its conventional image. We also get a few car experts to decode how design and luxury automobiles go hand in hand. Lastly, don't miss our photo essay on textures and lines, as seen through the lens of a travel photographer.

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Rolls-Royce is known for conveying luxury through its chic design

2
Street art is changing the face of Indian suburbs for good

3
Jaipur is emerging as the latest design hub in the Indian market

In this special issue, we bring you some of the world's quirkiest holiday rentals, ranging from an igloo and an abandoned hunting castle to a tree house with alpacas. Read about India's burgeoning street art and graffiti landscape, and we are certain you will bookmark these destinations for your next holiday!

We can't wait to welcome you on board while taking all the necessary safety precautions. However, safety is a shared responsibility. To ensure that *#FlyingFeelsSafeAgain*, we urge you to follow the *#FlyerCODE* by being Careful, Observant, Distanced, and Empathetic at all times. Safe travels!

- Team Vistara

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The emerging street art and graffiti scene in India



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ON THE COVER a stunning street artwork in London; photographed by **Ron Ellis/Shutterstock**



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Shalini Passi on art, travel and all things nice

DISCLAIMER:

While this issue might inspire you to travel, we ask that you thoroughly research the destination and its regulatory pre-requisites, and travel only if it is safe to do so. Please continue to cooperate with government advisories for the safety of yourself and your co-travellers.

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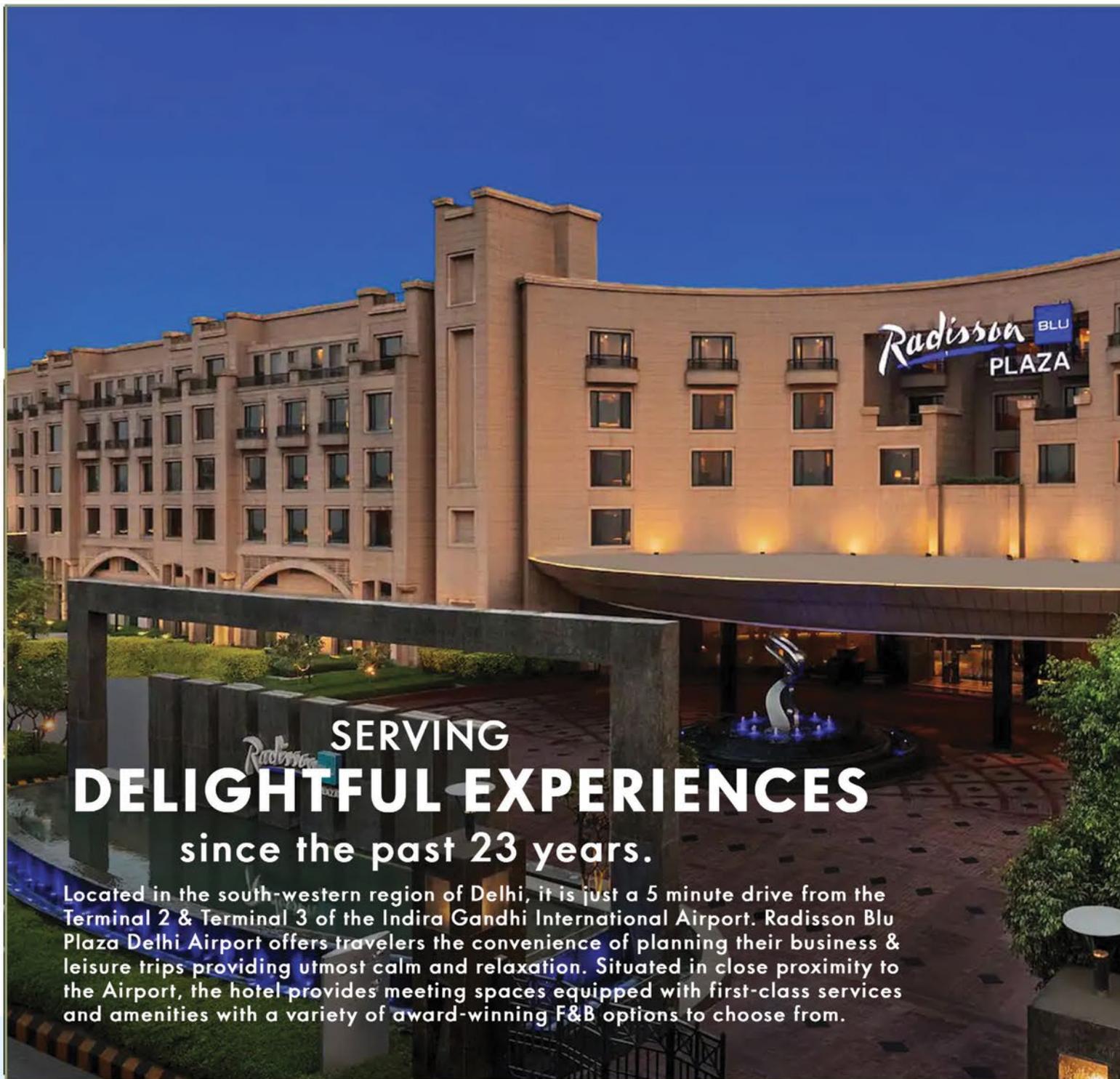
RETAIL AND LIFESTYLE



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Located in the south-western region of Delhi, it is just a 5 minute drive from the Terminal 2 & Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport. Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport offers travelers the convenience of planning their business & leisure trips providing utmost calm and relaxation. Situated in close proximity to the Airport, the hotel provides meeting spaces equipped with first-class services and amenities with a variety of award-winning F&B options to choose from.

ROOMS



The hotel offers luxury in style with a total of 261 opulent rooms and suites best suited to provide impeccable relaxation, comfort and convenience.

BANQUETS



The banquet spins over a lavish space of 20,000 sqft, and is flexible for both indoor outdoor events thereby transforming into an unparalleled venue for dinners, social gatherings or corporate lunches with the capacity to cater up to 800 guests.

SPA



R-The Spa, spans over 20,000 sq ft spread across 3 levels. Apart from the incomparable spa therapies, it is also home to an outdoor pool, a fitness center, and a yoga room.



The hotel has won many awards and accolades, the recent being an award for

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Best Business Hotel

at India's Best Awards 2020 by Travel + Leisure, the leading industry award.

Best Thai Cuisine

Travel & Leisure Delicious Food Awards 2019

Best Couple Treatment

Asia Spa Awards 2019

Best Day Spa

Global Spa Awards 2019

Best Indian Restaurant

The Great Kabab Factory EazyDiner Foodie Awards 2019

Fav. Thai Restaurant

Neung Roi Peaklife Gourmet Awards

FOOD & BEVERAGE



This wonderful property is the most cherished destination for food lovers, travelers and is home to award-winning restaurants. The all-day restaurant, NYC brings with itself an eclectic mix of cuisines from all over the world. Neung Roi-a proud recipient of Condé Nast Best 50 restaurants in India, is a fine dine Thai restaurant serving menu inspired by the four different regions of Thailand. The Great Kabab Factory is the iconic and famous casual dining restaurant to savor the most succulent kebabs along with exotic spirits of your choice. The restaurant has been serving for the last 21 years and is a must try when in Delhi NCR. The tipping cocktails at Savannah Bar tickle your taste buds and make you rejoice every dime you spend at the hotel.

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Talukdar is a documentary and street photographer. She has led workshops and mentored participants for Canon India, and is a Fujifilm X-Mentor. Check out her work on Instagram @[lopamudra](https://www.instagram.com/lopamudra)



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Joshi ditched her finance job to pursue her passion for travel writing. Today, her chronicles appear in some of India's top publications. Find her on Instagram @[delishdirection](https://www.instagram.com/delishdirection)



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VISTA

PERSPECTIVES ON AWE-INSPIRING LANDSCAPES

Delhi

The architectural pot-pourri that is the Indian capital exudes its multi-layered charm like no place else. Delhi is a rare place where you could be casually driving past ancient ruins flanked by avant-garde structures. An afternoon amble through the gritty lanes of Nizamuddin, followed by a trail through Edward Lutyens' geometrically planned district, culminating into an evening spent marvelling at the UNESCO-listed Qutub Minar, is a must.



“The city of Delhi has been very special in mine and Shah Rukh’s life. It is the city where our journey started. It represents so many of our happy memories spent together. Delhi, for me, is spending time with my family, meeting up with cousins and being at home. I particularly find the Hauz Khas Village really charming with its design stores, boutiques, cafes and restaurants.”

GAURI KHAN

Film Producer and Interior Designer





VISTA PICTURE PERFECT

Dubai

The very definition of an ultra-modern megapolis—UAE's financial capital is certainly a treat for the eyes.

Passengers on planes landing into Dubai are treated to the sight of its Gotham-esque skyline rising from the ground and vast sprawl of highways, undulating almost surreally around each other. Head to the top of the Burj Khalifa or the Dubai Frame for sweeping views of the city.



“For me, the future is Dubai. It tops the list on all fronts—be it culture, food, design or tourism. It has been adaptive to multiple cultures, creating opportunities for so many people. And that, in itself, is Dubai’s biggest strength.”

HIMANSHU SAINI

Chef



#TRENDING

THE WORLD THROUGH OUR LENS

DIMENSIONAL DESIGN

Ever imagined living inside a 3D printed house? Here are some 3D designs that are revolutionising modern architecture across the globe.

by AAKRITI JASWANT

PROJECT MILESTONE

Eindhoven in the Netherlands boasts the first 3D printed home in Europe where people are actually living. Part of a five-home project by Saint-Gobain Weber Beamix, this boulder-shaped house is made by printing layers of concrete in a stacked form. Bringing down the construction time estimate to five days, this house showcases the freedom of form offered by 3D concrete printing. [nl.weber](#)





C3PO BY KAMP C

Located in Belgium, this two-storey house was constructed entirely on-site and in one piece, using the largest 3D concrete printer in Europe. The structure stands 8-metres tall and comes with a variety of textured walls, floor and ceiling heating, special facade solar panels and a heat pump, making it future-ready. kampc.be

EAST 17TH STREET RESIDENCES

These four sustainably built homes offer the best-in-class technology in the heart of Austin, Texas. Each home includes a private yard, open floor plan, bespoke design and a minimalist aesthetic. An innovative project by 3Strands and ICON, it is bringing future localities centred around 3D printing, a step closer to reality. east17thstreetresidences.com



TECLA

Radical and experimental, TECLA—an eco-sustainable habitat built by WASP in Ravenna, Italy, has challenged all norms in the architectural space. Created with locally-sourced reusable and recyclable materials, this unique circular model of housing is 100 per cent carbon-neutral, and is adaptable to any climate and context.

3dwasp.com

URBAN CABIN

These micro cabins in Amsterdam are a smooth mix of modern and cosy. DUS Architects improvised on the concept of individual space, and blurred the boundary between indoors and outdoors with this project. The houses have a minimal carbon footprint, and are made using bio-based materials. They even have outdoor 3D printed bathtubs! houseofdus.com



ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES



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FOUNDER OF DESIGN
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"The concept of 3D printing is particularly interesting to me; other than being sustainable, it also opens enormous creative opportunities. Many 3D printing studios around the world are now using single-use plastic to create something new. I think it is a great tool for innovation in circular design!"



**3D ARTIST JOE MORTELL
LOVES THIS NEW DESIGN
CONCEPT!**

[@joemortell](https://www.instagram.com/joemortell)

"In my 3D work, I explore creating surreal set designs and spaces. Using programs like Cinema 4D allows me to see how an imagined space could look in real life. This is starting to have a big impact on design spaces as 3D printing is becoming more accessible for designers."

NO SHORTCUTS!

Sandeep Khosla, of the Abu Jani-Sandeep Khosla designer duo, on being ahead of their time, places that inspire them, and constantly rejigging things.

by SUSHMITA SRIVASTAV

Congratulations on completing 35 years in the industry! How does it feel?

Amazing! Of course, there have been many ups and downs—some years were great, others not that much. But that’s what has made our journey so much fun. Nothing brings us more joy than staying relevant to and dressing up three generations of a family. And there have been many such families trusting us. This is the biggest achievement for our brand.

You are always breaking stereotypes in the industry. What fuels you?

It’s simple. We just have to stay ahead of the game; there’s no other way for us. I’ve always said very bluntly that we set trends, we don’t follow them. Abu is very restless. He always says that we need to shake things up. You will always find us working towards the next concept, the next idea, the next big thing. And we work hard at all times. Plagiarism and knock-offs annoy me. There’s no such thing as a shortcut for us.

Your designs define ‘younger fashion.’ Tell us how you manage to stay so relevant to the youth.

We were branded as ‘classic fashion’ earlier, and we were happy with the tag at first. But when my niece, Saudamini, joined us some 10 years ago, we knew it was time to cater to a whole new generation. Soon, we had young people like Shweta Bachchan and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja dressing



“We just have to stay ahead of the game. You will always find us working towards the next concept, the next idea, the next big thing!”





2

are machine versions coming up for everything and they are afraid they might not get work in the future. It is heartbreaking. The legacy can only survive as long as there are enough people encouraging and buying these creations made out of labour and love.



3

up for us. That was when our concept sarees took off, as did many of our other ideas.

Now, it just comes naturally to us. We are constantly reinventing. And our love for social media and hanging out with younger people sure helps. We like forming a mental connect with the youth. That's where the inspiration comes from.

In your opinion, is Indian craftsmanship headed in the right direction, or are we losing track somewhere?

There is no better craftsmanship than Indian craftsmanship. At AJSK, we have always focussed on bringing Indian textiles back in fashion. We did *bandhani* long before it became a trend. Khadi has been a love for us, and so has *chikankari*. We enjoy doing *zardozi* work on *resham* (silk).

When we started 30 years ago, a generation of money had changed hands but it was aware of art and design. It respected the artist as well as the craft. Things are different today. Everybody is entitled and restless. Creating a craftwork needs patience and dedication, which the traditional craftsmen in India know well. But the *karigar's* children don't want to be involved in the craft anymore. There

We love how you have distinct labels for different demographics. What was the thought behind that?

GULABO was just us having fun, honestly. The name is inspired by Waheeda Rehman's character in *Pyasa*, our all-time favourite movie! The largely sustainable brand is about being young and fun, and affordable to all. Meanwhile, ASAL was born when we got fed up with plagiarism, and thought of doing a revival of our classic pieces and knocking them off ourselves!

How much of a role does travel play in your designs?

Travel inspires us all the time, especially places like Jaipur and Lucknow. We travel to Lucknow at least twice a year for work. We love exploring thrift markets at new destinations for inspiration.

Your favourite vacation destinations?

We adore everything about Rajasthan, especially Jaipur and Jaisalmer, which is absolutely magical. I love the Falaknuma (Palace) in Hyderabad. The food in Punjab is magical. It is always fun to go to Barcelona. We love travelling to Paris and London as well.

Where are you travelling to, next?

Goa, perhaps, because it is so lively and always full of surprises. 🌸

THIS SPREAD

1. Designer duo Sandeep Khosla (*above*) and Abu Jani;
2. A technicolour kaftan designed by AJSK;
3. Gota collection from their brand GULABO;
4. Khosla and Jani believe in setting trends with their contemporary and unique pieces

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Gauri Sekhon; Ran Shergill
Photography: courtesy of Abu Jani, Sandeep Khosla;
Joseph Radhik Photography

#TRENDING SOCIAL FEED

WHAT'S UP ON SOCIAL?

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fazil.insta Plane-gazing ✈️
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19 w

Liked by iamhitesh_09 and others

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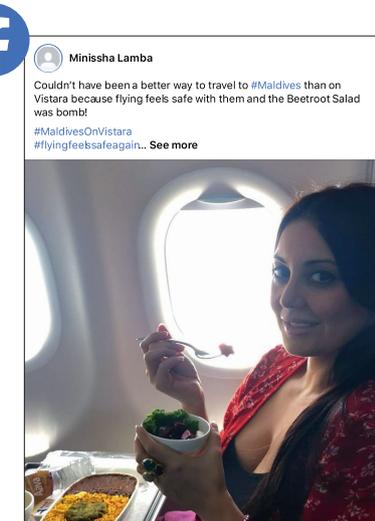


Robin Hood Army

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Minisha Lamba

Couldn't have been a better way to travel to #Maldives than on Vistara because flying feels safe with them and the Beetroot Salad was bomb!

#MaldivesOnVistara #flyingfeelsafeagain... See more

@RobinHoodArmy

@MinishaLamba

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TWEET ON POINT

Shalini Vadhera @shalini_vadhera · Aug 30

Coming from the US where there is no mandates to fly domestically I have to give it to India and @airvistara for taking so many covid measures - vaccine and neg test required, they give you face shields, masks and sanitizer and crew vaxed & in PPE. This American appreciates it!

2 45

@shalini_vadhera



Atulmaharaj @Atulmaharaj · Aug 29

@airvistara Flight UK899 from Delhi to Hyderabad - for the first time I've seen people not racing to get out.

Thanks to your cabin crew for this commendable effort 🙌 Kindly pass it on 🙌

1 1

@Atulmaharaj

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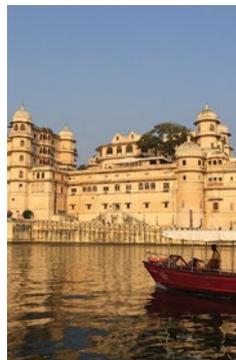
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NEWWHEELS

Volkswagen's highly-stylised SUV, Taigun is possibly the most talked about car launch this season. Ample dimensions and extreme good looks characterise this car on the outside, while a tech-filled interior renders for a family-friendly ride. We love the interactive, glossy infotainment screen with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The Taigun is being released in both manual and automatic variants, with 1.0- and 1.5-litre petrol engine options. volkswagen.co.in

LUXE PICKS

In the mood to splurge?
Here are our latest picks of the most desirable products and experiences in the luxury market.
by RIAAN JACOB GEORGE



200 YEARS OF TRAVEL

Celebrating its 200th anniversary, French icon Louis Vuitton that has always embodied the spirit of adventure and travel with its iconic luggage, has released a new video game, a fictionalised novel, and *Looking For Louis*, a documentary on the maison's founder. louisvuitton.com

COOL KICKS

We have been coveting Ermenegildo Zegna's sneakers for a while now. These cotton canvas Triple Stitch Sneakers feature the signature XXX of the Italian luxe brand. The overall elegance of this pair, with its subtle palette and slick design, makes it ideal for those long-haul flights. zegna.com





RESORT CHIC

Luxury travel meets fashion! The uber luxe Aman chain of resorts has released its fashion line 'The Essentials by Aman', which is exclusively available at Aman boutiques across the globe. This collection packs in minimalist pieces in activewear, loungewear, knitwear, swimwear, resort wear and accessories. What's not to love? aman.com



DIALS ON FIRE

We can't get enough of Rolex's latest Oyster Perpetual models! Its unmistakable 41-mm yellow dial goes just right with the sturdy Oystersteel case and its signature Oyster bracelet. The watch is powered by the watchmaker's 2020-release 3230 movement. A beauty indeed! rolex.com



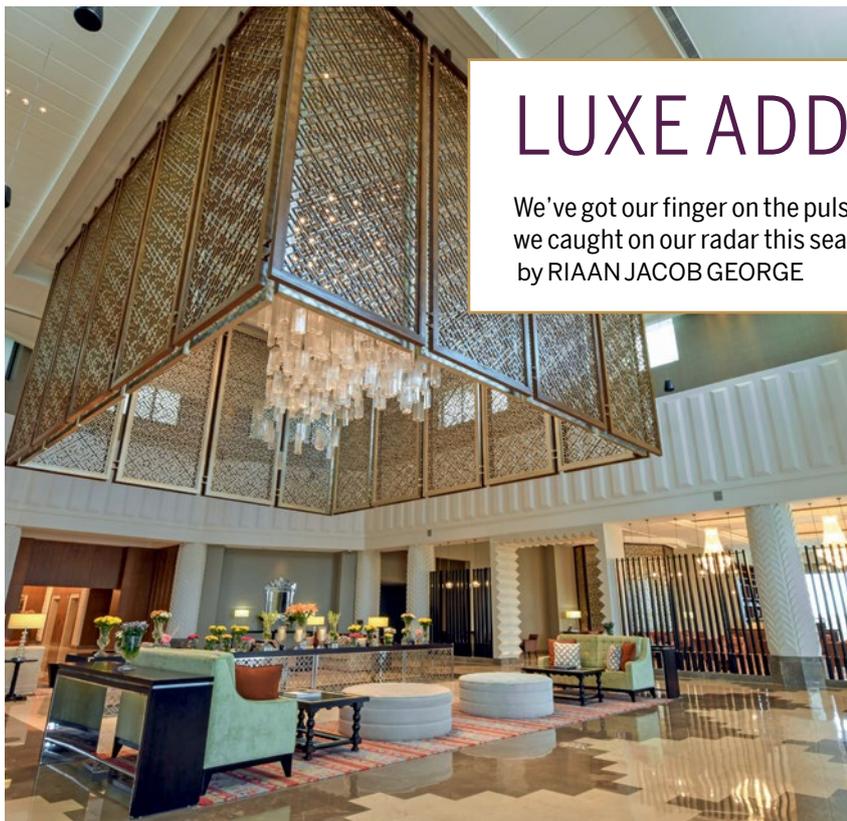
VIDEO SWAG

Adventure travellers will find much to rave about in the GoPro Hero9 Black. Shoot 5K video in the most advanced handheld action camera out there, and get some pro-level 20 megapixel photos, while you are at it. Expect highly-stabilised videos and GoPro's widest-angle perspective with the Max Lens Mod. Our favourite, though, is the new front screen, to help frame selfie videos effortlessly. Wirelessly stream your footage to your phone and create amazing video edits using GoPro's Quik app. We are all geeked out! gopro.com



PLAYTAG

These AirTags by Apple can be attached to your luggage so you can keep track of it when you are on the move! Simply use Apple's Find My app to find a lost or misplaced bag on your phone, tracing down its current or last known location. You can even personalise the AirTags by getting them monogrammed. So chic! apple.com



LUXE ADDRESSES

We've got our finger on the pulse of high-end hospitality. Here's what we caught on our radar this season.
by RIAAN JACOB GEORGE

UNIQUE STAY

India's first luxury hotel built on top of a railway station, **The Leela Gandhinagar**, is worth the buzz. Now the tallest building in the Gujarat capital, the luxury address is offering the city a strong MICE tourism edge. The 318-key property stands right next to the Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre. With this, the Indian hotel chain aims to create an increased demand for both leisure and business travels in the city. *Doubles from ₹7,500; theleela.com*



NEW IN TOWN

Fast expanding its portfolio, ITC Hotels launched yet another Welcomhotel—this time in Jammu's Katra town. Located amidst breathtaking mountains and meadows, this 83-key luxury address is sure to give a boost to this spiritual and adventurous destination. **Welcomhotel Katra** features an impressive F&B offering as well as the group's signature Kaya Kalp Spa. It is located an easy 45 km from the Jammu Airport and within driving distance from popular spots like Patnitop hill station and the Chenab River. *Doubles from ₹12,000; itchotels.com*

ULTIMATE OPULENCE

The battle for Udaipur's high-spending luxury traveller just got more intense with the grand launch of the first Raffles property in India. Discreetly tucked on the banks of the Udai Sagar, away from the crowded city centre, **Raffles Udaipur** is a private serene oasis spread across 21 acres, and features an understated room count of just 101.

Upon arrival, take a private boat across the lake to check-in, sip on an Udaipur Sling (a reinterpretation of Raffles' iconic Singapore Sling), rejuvenate yourself at the spa and enjoy a romantic or family getaway in the City of Lakes. *Doubles from ₹37,000; raffles.com*





EXCLUSIVITY AT ITS BEST

The famously private, members-only club from Gurugram, Quorum's new Mumbai outpost, has got the city's corporate leaders raving. This ultra-chic space in Lower Parel's One World Centre is spread across 56,000 square feet and welcomes the who's who of the corporate world into its carefully guarded spaces. At **Quorum Mumbai**, members can work (remotely), eat, drink and unwind after work hours. Members can access both the Quorum clubs as well as a wide network of plush international members-only clubs. *Price on request; thequorum.club*



LONDON HOTSPOT

A New York favourite, The NoMad has set down anchor in the British capital. This design-forward boutique property opened its doors in the heart of London's Covent Garden, in a heritage building dating back to the 18th century. The 91 rooms and suites of **The NoMad London** feature the quirkiest decor

with references ranging from art deco and classic Victorian to Scandinavian modernism. The hotel's eponymous restaurant, situated in the glass-covered courtyard, is one of London's most coveted tables. Chic! *Doubles from ₹42,000; thenomadhotel.com*



ROCK THE BLOCK

This Discovery+ show is part lifestyle series and part reality TV competition. Hosted by Ty Pennington, the show pits design celebrities against each other. They must build a whole house in merely four weeks, from the ground up, on a street specially made for the show!



LOVE IT OR LIST IT

In this popular HGTV show, interior designer Hilary Farr renovates old spaces for homeowners, while realtor David Visentin finds them a new home. At the end of each episode, residents pick one of the two options, and the suspense makes it worth a watch!



INSTANT HOTEL

Australian homeowners transform their houses into beautiful hotels, spend a night at each other's properties and rate their experiences to win! The show travels across some of the most breathtaking destinations in Australia.



FOR THE LOVE OF DESIGN

These OTT series will take you inside some extraordinary pieces of architecture from across the globe.

by AAKRITI JASWANT

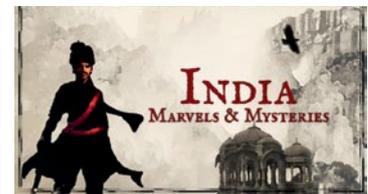
HOME

This binge-worthy documentary has sustainability at its core. From futuristic design aficionados to the average homeowners, it showcases how everyone can adopt a sustainable lifestyle, in some way or the other. Apart from this, each episode explores some of the world's most gorgeous and distinctive homes. The Apple TV+ show also interviews the masterminds behind such impressive structures. Watch this one to get inspired or simply stay abreast about the next big thing in architecture.



SELLING SUNSET

This ultra-glam Netflix original has both drama and dazzling sights of multimillion-dollar listings. Set in the plush neighbourhoods of Los Angeles, *Selling Sunset* follows the dramatic lives of the Oppenheim Group's realtors, who put up cut-throat fights to get clients for the city's most coveted properties.



INDIA: MARVELS & MYSTERIES

History and architecture buffs will get sucked into this stellar Discovery+ series, which traces some of the most spectacular structures in the subcontinent. From ancient forts to iconic temples and cave complexes, this show is informative, easy-to-consume and a treat for the eyes.

ART TALKS

We recommend these trending podcasts on Spotify, as sure-fire game changers for architecture and design aficionados.

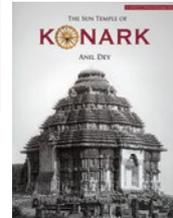
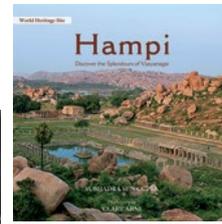
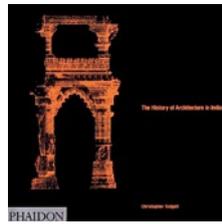
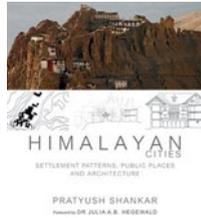
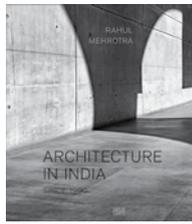


DESIGN MATTERS WITH DEBBIE MILLMAN
Considered as the “first and longest-running podcast about design”, *Design Matters* has been around since 2005 and has featured over 250 guests. Started by designer Debbie Millman, the show is now run by Design Observer. Catch up on this award-winning series for some interesting takes on the design world.

DESIGNED THIS WAY
This podcast showcases designers and creative individuals in an enriching one-on-one with host Kawal Oberoi. A graphic designer himself, Oberoi followed his passion for design via interesting discussions on his podcast, and has had everyone from Egyptian cartoonist Haitham El-seht to typography teacher Mahendra Patel as guests. A must-listen!

THE OPEN CITY PODCAST
With a slightly different twist to podcasts on design and architecture, this free radio show focusses on discussions about London’s cityscape. By talking about Londoners and their stories, this holistic show revolves around cultural themes and awareness. The podcast also talks about urbanism and the importance of inclusivity.

ARCHGYAN WITH MANISH PAUL SIMON
Fuelled by a desire for dialogues around architecture, Manish Paul Simon left his job as an architect to start this informative talk show. One of the earliest podcasts on this genre in India, *Archgyan* brings to the table contractors, engineers and project managers who form the backbone of the design industry, while highlighting current innovations.



COLLECTOR'S PIECES

If you like reading about the architectural heritage of India, here are some of our top recommendations.

by PALLAVI SINGH

ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA SINCE 1990

Rahul Mehrotra

In 21st century India, the architecture reflects the country's socio-economic and political scenario. In his authoritative study, Mehrotra presents four distinct schools of architectural thought and introduces the exponents of each with tasteful examples. Showcasing creations by 60 contemporary architects and over 500 photographs, the book finds takers among architects and students alike.

LE CORBUSIER REDISCOVERED: CHANDIGARH AND BEYOND

Rajnish Wattas & Deepika Gandhi

With Chandigarh's Capitol Complex getting recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016, the spotlight shifted to its creator, urban planner and architect Le Corbusier. This book is an anthology on Corbusier's life, ideas and work, showcasing his impact on the world stage through some rare archival images and texts.

HIMALAYAN CITIES: SETTLEMENT PATTERNS, PUBLIC PLACES AND ARCHITECTURE

Pratyush Shankar

The book delves into the idea of settlements in the Himalayan region. The crux of the book is the relationship between a natural state and human dexterity, as designed through its built traditions. Illustrated with captivating photographs and hand drawings, it ignites a discourse on an intriguing landscape and its architectural nuances.

HAMPI: DISCOVER THE SPLENDOURS OF VIJAYANAGAR

Subhadra Sen Gupta

With some stunning photographs courtesy of Clare Arni, the book celebrates Hampi, one of India's most popular UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Temple ruins, palaces and the remains of the Vijayanagar kingdom—the book showcases the marvels of Hampi, legendary for its wealth and military prowess as also for its art, architecture, crafts and culture in the medieval world.

THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

Christopher Tadgell

This groundbreaking work weaves together all the components of India's architectural history. The book imparts information about dynasties, religion, myths, symbolism, invasions and migrations in the development of characteristic forms. Photographs, engravings and maps together with textual details make for an interesting read.

THE SUN TEMPLE OF KONARK

Anil Dey

In his seminal volume titled *The Sun Temple of Konark*, author Anil Dey examines the architecture and engineering of the iconic temple, in a meticulously comprehensive way. With 415 images and 21 elaborate architectural drawings, the book delves into the details of every portion, monument and sculpture of the temple, which is a declared UNESCO World Heritage Site.

SUITCASE

YOUR GO-TO GUIDE FOR OFFBEAT ITINERARIES



MAHARAJA'S CASTLE, INDIA

Built over 200 years ago as a hunting pavilion for royals, today this castle has been completely refurbished into a lavish villa with two suites. Tucked away in Rajasthan's Kheroda village, this secluded Airbnb boasts breathtaking views of the surrounding Aravalli Hills. [airbnb.co.in](https://www.airbnb.co.in)



THE BOX HOUSE, SRI LANKA

A villa created using repurposed cargo containers made news in Sri Lanka's deep south Tangalle town. The chic and sustainable living space has five bedrooms with en suite bathrooms, a private pool and a courtyard that breaks the barriers between outdoors and indoors. [booking.com](https://www.booking.com)

THE WORLD'S QUIRKIEST VACATION RENTALS

From a snow igloo to a luxury hanging pod, these unique rentals will redefine your vacation.



SKYLodge ADVENTURE SUITES, PERU

These transparent luxury pods hang from a hilltop in Peru's Sacred Valley! Be ready to climb up a via ferrata to reach your cosy bedroom. [airbnb.co.in](https://www.airbnb.co.in)



THE ATLANTA ALPACA TREEHOUSE, GEORGIA

This one is all about eccentric experiences—think Llama yoga sessions, barns with rescued alpacas, and a treehouse done up with antiques! [alpacatreehouse.com](https://www.alpacatreehouse.com)



LUCKY RANCH SNOW IGLOO, FINLAND

Go ice fishing in a frozen lake, take a reindeer sled ride, visit a husky farm and spend a night in an igloo—this is your winter dream come true. [luckyranch.fi](https://www.luckyranch.fi)



CASAS DA RIA, FARO, PORTUGAL

Bobbing on the tranquil waters of the Ria Formosa, is this chic solar-powered catamaran ideal for a lazy staycation under the sun. [casalaria.com](https://www.casalaria.com)

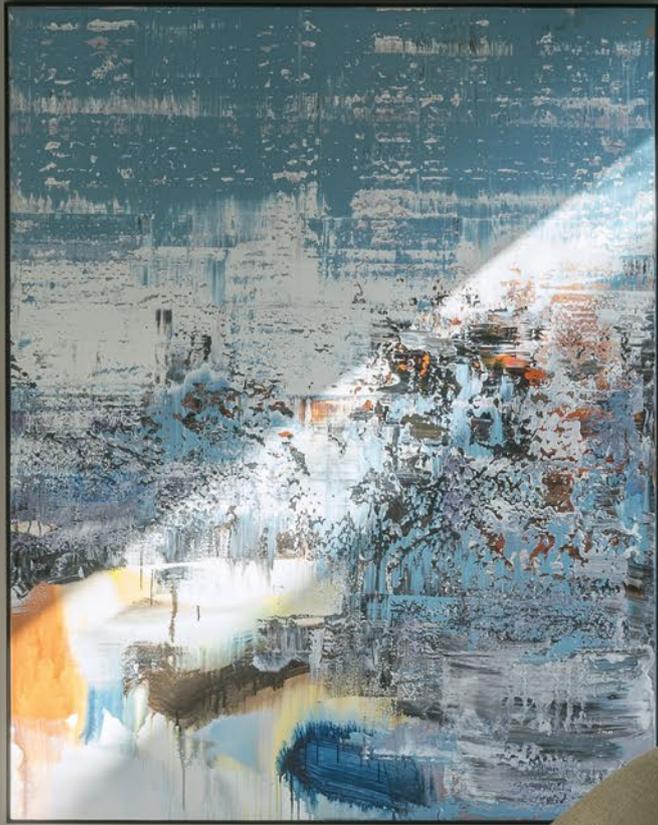


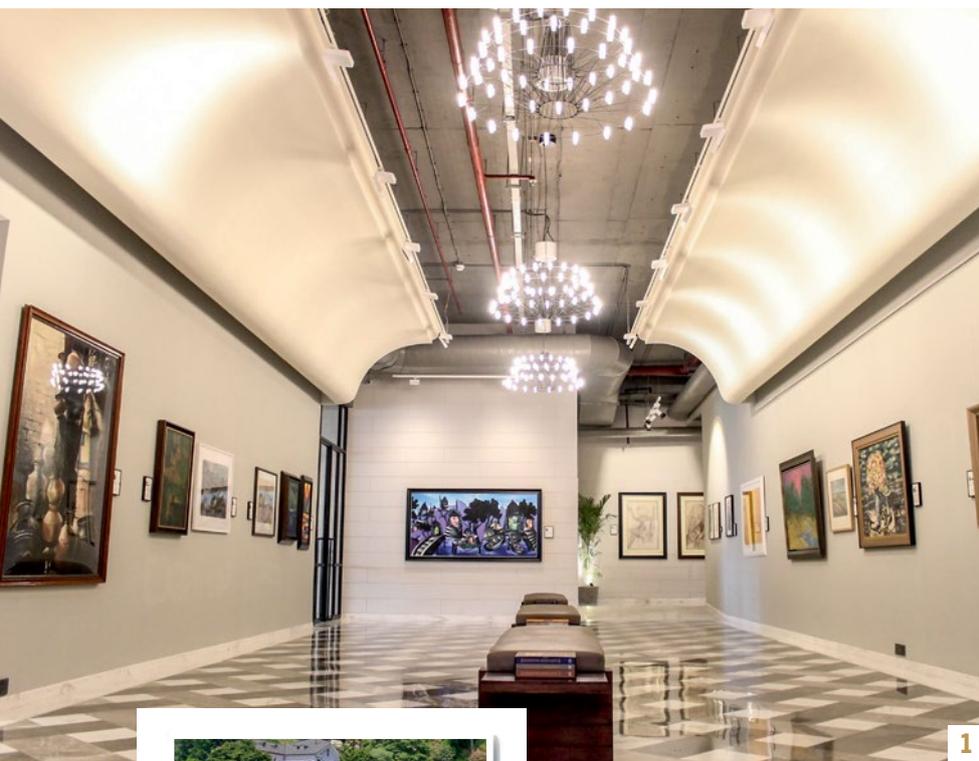
SUITCASE BUSINESS TRENDS

THINKING ART

The role of art advisories in India's thriving art market is more significant than ever. Some insiders tell us why.

by SUSHMITA SRIVASTAV





INDIA'S ART MARKET IS A FORCE to reckon with, and it's only getting bigger. One profession that has increased in popularity and importance these days is that of the art advisory. As the name suggests, an art advisory firm works closely with individuals or corporates to, well, advise them on what art to get. With universities pumping out a fresh stream of art professionals every year, prices of artworks skyrocketing and connoisseurs and collectors with deep pockets growing more meticulous towards their preferences, scores of new players in the already flourishing advisory market are prompted to jump into the pool. In 2000, the turnover from public sales for artworks in India was INR13.1 crores. As per the Artery India State of the Indian Art Market Report 2020-21 that was released in July this year, the turnover, despite a COVID-depressed market, was ₹880.9 crores.

DEMOCRATISING THE PROCESS

"The advisory practice has been a niche business," says Arvind Vijay Mohan, founder and CEO at Artery India, a leading art intelligence and asset advisory firm based in Gurugram. "Since 2003, our advisory team has managed the investment interests of a select group of high net-worth individuals and families. Our key strength is our financial knowledge that is based upon the careful analysis of public domain art sales that have been conducted globally since 1987. We publish industry and artist performance reports, as well as a signature valuation report, all based on reliable and verifiable sales data that now covers more than 95,000 sales records. While our advisory practice is certain to remain a niche, we have recorded a surge in interest in our editorial and sales initiatives. Our gallery spaces at The Quorum, in Gurgaon and Mumbai, where one can view works by Artery artists and assets we represent, have been overwhelmingly successful, as have been our digital properties where collectors can access knowledge, content and artworks for sale from their comfort zones."

For Aziz Amin, founder, and director of Eztabish.ART, making art accessible to all is the goal. "Art, for the longest, has been limited to a select few enthusiasts with a snob factor. That concept is far from reality. You do not need to be an art expert to understand art. And you certainly do not need someone to tell you if a piece speaks to you. What you need, of course, are certain explanations of certain art pieces and their relevance and purpose. That's where we enter as an agency."



- THIS SPREAD
1. The gallery of Artery India at The Quorum, Gurugram; (*inset*) Arvind Vijay Mohan
 2. Rufescent, an artwork by Jaideep Mehrotra (*inset*)
 3. An exhibit by Eztablish.ART at Phoenix Palladium, Mumbai; (*below*) Aziz Amin

THE GAME OF INVESTMENTS

Ask Vijay Mohan how firms like his play a role in the process and he explains that they help interested collectors make savvy art investments. “Artery India tracks over 960 Indian artists, from an academic and financial perspective, offering our clients objective advice that ensures they do not make any investment mistakes. While we have functioned strictly as a private advisory since 2003, from the beginning of 2018, we decided to share our knowledge and learnings with the community, to widen the circle of patronage. This started with us sharing a selection of our financial knowledge reports with the world.” The firm also features videos, articles, and a podcast (Art of the Matter) on its editorial channel.

We often see several investors buying and storing works of ageing artists in the hope that the prices will shoot up over the years. “As grim as it may sound, it is an investment perspective we cannot neglect. However, at the point of making (in most cases), the piece of art was not created keeping ‘investment’ in mind,

it was created with the sole purpose of stirring emotion,” explains Amin.

IT'S A WIN-WIN

Mumbai-based multi-disciplinary artist Jaideep Mehrotra has been a part of the Indian art scene for the past four decades and he believes that art consultancies have the potential to not just educate buyers, but also to guide the market. “To me, the scenario, where clients depend entirely on an art gallery with limited options, is counter-productive to both individual artists and themselves. They are, in such cases, forced to think with their heads and not with their hearts.”

The ideal scenario, Mehrotra concludes, is to have independent art consultants and advisory firms that are open to first understanding the taste of the client, providing them with impartial advice and recommendations, and finally, connecting them to the right artists, either directly or through galleries. This way, more opportunities can be created for artists, while presenting wider possibilities and a gamut of diverse choices to potential buyers. 🌟

Wheels Reimagined

A look at how global carmakers are decoding new design elements that truly impart an aura of luxury.

by ANINDA SARDAR



MY FIRST IMPRESSION OF LUXURY

on wheels was created long before I became a standard fixture in the world of automotive journalism. In many ways, you could say that I was acquainted with the idea even as a child looking at (and longing to drive) my grandfather's 1936 Rolls-Royce 25/30HP. At the time, I had no idea what the shiny wood on its dashboard was called. Yet, I knew that the shape and silhouette of the long and stately saloon conveyed pure luxury. So, what was it about the RR that exuded luxury the moment eyes were laid on it?

STYLISTED SILHOUETTES

Years later, at the India launch of the Volvo S90 saloon, it suddenly struck me that there was something about the car's design that reminded me about luxury more than any of its other attributes. Unable to put my finger on it, I sought help from the good chaps at Volvo. A fairly large wheelbase, clean lines, a longish bonnet and a short boot, go into creating a silhouette that conveys luxury and class, I was told. It was then that the penny dropped and all the shapes began to make sense,

THIS SPREAD

1. British marque Rolls Royce takes design inspiration from other modes of super-luxury travel; 2. Jaguar I-PACE is the brand's first all-electric model; 3. Audi is known for its distinctive, flowing aesthetic



1

whether it was the Mercedes-Benz S Class, the BMW 7 Series, the Jaguar XJ or the Audi A8. That combination of factors is probably also the reason why GT cars like the Aston Martin Vantage, the Maserati Ghibli or the Ferrari 812 Superfast look more luxurious than the McLaren Senna, the Ferrari LaFerrari and the Lamborghini Huracán Performante. Come to think of it, these attributes are a standard feature of all Rolls-Royce saloons, Bentleys and Mercedes-Maybachs too.

“A car’s silhouette gives you the first impression of the vehicle,”



2

says Gorden Wagener, Daimler AG’s chief designer. “First of all, it is the sculpture of a vehicle and its proportions that convey luxury. A vehicle must have as many seamless transitions as possible, to give it the appearance of being sculpted out of a single element. Lines must be clean and uncomplicated, but a distinct character should be given,” he adds.

ACROSS THE SPECTRUM

The aspiration to create visual luxury, in fact, exists across the automotive spectrum. A few years ago, Korean auto giant Hyundai created quite a buzz with its Fluidic Sculpture Design philosophy. According to the company’s own literature, the idea wasn’t just about using a curvy styling; it was more about endowing an automobile with an artistic spirit.

Meanwhile, Hyundai’s sister manufacturer, Kia, seems to have put its faith in key elements to create that aura of luxury than simply a



3

classy silhouette. If you recall, much brouhaha was made about the brand's signature tiger nose grille that now adorns both the Seltos and the Sonet.

It even adorns the face of the very classy looking Stinger GT Jewel. Furthermore, tasteful interventions of chrome and contemporary design lines are used to create

an aura of modern luxury. This whole notion is now set to take a quantum leap forward, with the brand having recently revealed its new design philosophy—Opposites United.

Another brand that has made great strides in presenting luxury through its design is Skoda. Oliver Stefani, head of Skoda Design, had once declared that the Czech carmaker's team was always trying to create an emotion with its design language. A single look at any of the Skoda products of recent years and you would be left in no doubt about that statement, whether you talk of the Rapid, the Kodiaq, the Superb, the Octavia or the latest, Kushaq. Each of these chic products bring together modern elements like jewelled headlamps and tasteful inserts of bling coupled with simple lines, a long bonnet and a short boot, to create an impression of visual luxury that is quite unique.

As we move into the future, evolving technology will decide the direction that automotive design will take.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

In today's world, a luxurious interior isn't merely about yawning space, thick carpets and plush upholstery.

It is also about creating a visual impact. "Every surface you touch must be high quality, with an attention to detail, fit and finish.

We like to create vehicles that offer a treat for nearly all senses. On the

other hand, high-tech elements like our MBUX system, give luxury a whole new meaning," says Wagener about the Mercedes-Benz cars.

Take Volvo's floating waterfall-like centre console design or its rimless rear-view mirror or the bejewelled engine starter button. Or you could take the Range Rover Velar's butcher's slab touchscreen interiors. In the more affordable segment of the Hyundai, Kia and Skoda, too, you will realise that the visual impact of the cabin's design often tells you whether a car is luxurious, sporty or simply businesslike.

DIFFERENT WORLDS

The examples are numerous, but none have perfected the art of creating luxury on wheels quite as well as the legendary British marque Rolls-Royce. Michael Bryden, the company's lead bespoke designer, says that their inspiration comes from a different



THIS SPREAD

1. Mercedes-Benz is known for turning heads with its uber stylish models; 2. The Volvo S90 saloon speaks of the brand's sleek design language; 3. Skoda brings together modern elements and classic luxury attributes in its cars



3



All images courtesy of respective brands.

world altogether. “A Rolls-Royce goes far beyond just being a car. It becomes a lifestyle enhancement, a highly personal and expertly executed vision. And we look at other modes of super-luxury travel, from private aviation to superyachts, or even at the worlds of art and haute couture for inspiration.”

As we move into the future, evolving technology will decide the direction that automotive design will take. “We have always designed cars from the outside moving inward. First, we focus on what vehicle segment the model is to be positioned for and what engine drives that segment, followed by the vehicle body and, consequently, the exterior design. The interior designing comes at the very end,” says Marc Lichte, head of Audi Design. “For us designers, the interior is the new design nucleus of a car. In the future, the cars will no longer be designed from the outside in, but from the inside out. It is a 180-degree turn,” explains Lichte.

The story could go on, but Wagener best sums up the relationship between design and visual luxury; “We have been working with the design philosophy of Sensual Purity at Mercedes-Benz since 2009, continually evolving it as part of an ongoing process. This philosophy encapsulates an essential aspect of our brands—the bipolarity of intelligence and emotion.” That is what it is, in a nutshell. The coming together of tradition, contemporary spirit and desirability. And with that, the penny drops. ⚙️

AHMEDABAD IN

Eight Dishes

Long considered one of India's capitals for street snacks, Ahmedabad is a food lover's delight.

by PRACHI JOSHI

THE WALLED CITY OF AHMEDABAD in Gujarat is home to a series of preserved monuments, art galleries, cafes, shopping streets and traditional wooden homes in 300-odd *pols* or neighbourhoods. Food is, of course, a big part of its living heritage, and there is much to sample here when it comes to local fare.

There is also a vibrant street food culture with several popular hubs like Manek Chowk, Law Garden, Bhatiyar Gali and more, in India's first UNESCO World Heritage City. Read on to discover the quintessential *Amdavadi* dishes that you must try.

KHAMAN

Spongy, fluffy khaman or dhokla is a classic Gujarati snack—glazed with sugar syrup, bursting with flavours and yet, a simple preparation made with gram flour, yoghurt, spices and herbs. A tempering of mustard seeds, asafoetida, and chillies elevates this healthy, steamed dish.

TRY IT AT:

Khaman Multiple outlets;
daskhaman.com

FAFDA-JALEBI

A breakfast of fafda-jalebi will get your Ahmedabad trip off to a great start! Fafda is a savoury gram flour





fritter, often served with a side of sambhariyo (tempered papaya sauce). It goes well with the sweet, crunchy jalebi, for they offer a burst of flavours when served piping hot together.

TRY IT AT:

Chandravilas Gandhi Road, Kalupur

GUJARATI THALI

With seasonal preparations like khaman, patra, khichdi, undhiyu, rotli and more served in a heavy metal plate, a Gujarati thali is the perfect lunch for a lazy day. Enjoy aamras (sweet mango pulp) with hot pooris and wash it all down with a tall glass of refreshing chaas (buttermilk)!

TRY IT AT:

Rajvadu Atithi, Bodakdev

KHAKHRA

Think of Gujarati snacks, and khakhra is probably the first to come to mind. This crunchy, flat, savoury cracker (of sorts) comes in many flavours—from plain, methi, or jeera to even non-traditional variants like cheese, Mexican and Manchurian!

TRY IT AT:

Induben Khakhrawala Multiple outlets; indubenkakhrawala.in

AMDAVADI PIZZA

You cannot visit Ahmedabad and not try the famous *Amdavadi* pizza. With a crisp biscuit-like base slathered with tomato ketchup, this delicious Gujarati version of pizza is topped with vegetables and copious amounts of cheese—what's not to like?

TRY IT AT:

Jauben Shah Old Pizza Navrangpura



METHI NA GOTA

Gujaratis love their fried snacks, especially methi na gota. Prepared by adding chopped fenugreek leaves into a spiced chickpea batter and fried as spongy balls, this winter delicacy is served hot with a spicy chutney.

TRY IT AT:

Sabarmati Jail Bhajiya House
Dr. Ambedkar Road, Hridaya Kunj



HANDVO

A spiced vegetable cake, handvo is a common teatime snack in Gujarat. Grated bottle gourd is mixed with soaked lentil, rice batter and spices, and then baked to golden perfection.

TRY IT AT:

Swati Snacks 13 Gandhibag Society,
Panchavati Road, Law Garden



MUTTON CHAAP

Ahmedabad is also famous for its authentic meaty delights. The succulent mutton chaap, or slow-cooked lamb chops in gravy, will leave you wanting for more.

TRY IT AT:

Z K Fry Centre Khas Bazaar, Bhadra 🍴



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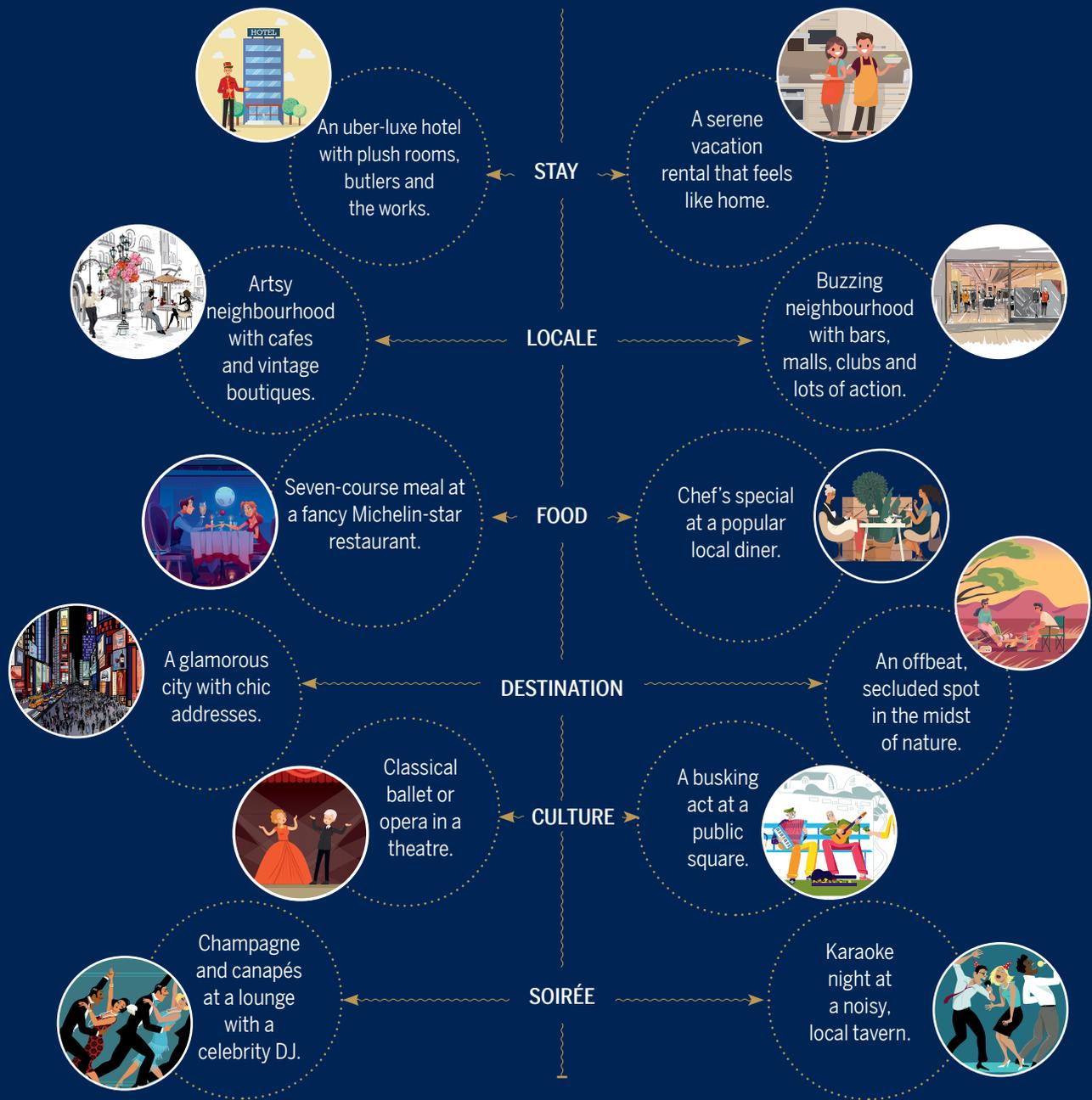
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THIS OR THAT



PAINTING TOWNS

Cities across India are witnessing a thriving graffiti and street art trend that seems to be getting bigger by the day.

by BINDU GOPAL RAO



1



THIS SPREAD
 1. A stunning wall mural on World AIDS Day transformed the Indira Nagar Railway Station in Chennai; 2. Dizzy by artist Anpu Varkey in Mahim, Mumbai, is about strength and the urge to plunge without restraint

FROM GENDER EQUALITY AND CLIMATE change to human and LGBTQ rights, street art in India is straddling themes and exploring subjects that elevate it a notch above, making it much more than merely colourful artwork.

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

Public art can be such an intrinsic part of metropolitan life. It can invoke emotions and capture the essence of a city with a few colours and an engaging theme. A token interaction that people from all walks of life can experience, it is truly about making art accessible to all. A few years ago, street art was more of a novelty, but now, it is having its moment with increasing exposure and numerous pieces cropping up frequently across the country. Graffiti in India, over the last decade, has grown exponentially through large corporations and

government funding of smart cities. “Being able to paint a unifying image, which strikes a common chord in people, is tough and yet when you do so, it becomes gratifying,” says Delhi-based artist Anpu Varkey. “It is when artists tell their stories on the walls, that the power of the streets becomes energising. It is not about going and absurdly painting. You become aware of your surroundings and the people living around you first. It is through their eye that you see your work.”

THEMES GALORE

Street art explores a variety of themes and allows the artist to interpret them in their own way. It gives a sense of ownership to those residing in the neighbourhood. Recently, in Bengaluru’s Mallechwaram, the ‘Bengaluru Moving’ project curated Mallechwaram Hogona! (a series of

ESCAPE COVER STORY

12 murals spread across conservancy lanes) in collaboration with Geechu Galu, a collective of artists. A team of 13 artists with the neighbourhood community used this opportunity to create murals uplifting the footpaths and streets of the suburb, to ultimately make them safer for women and the local community.

SOCIAL ARTISTRY

“Street art is a visual manifestation of the mindset. And considering how it is a form of social commentary, it can act as a catalyst for social changes. But other than that, it is also a way of reclaiming spaces for the people,” says street artist Kiran Mahajan aka H11235. Her work stands at Block 19 of Lodhi Art District in New Delhi as a mural that is a comment on our impact on the environment. The introduction of non-native fish that have decimated the local fish population of the Yamuna River, was the main topic of the mural. It highlights how a simple act like owning and dumping a goldfish can result in large-scale impact on the ecosystem.

MAKING A MARK

As part of its Art X digital series during the first lockdown, Delhi-based Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) sharpened its focus on digital engagement. Its ‘Art Meets Street’ series looked to explore the realm of public art. As an increasingly popular art form that is often overlooked, it is now slowly finding its footing in India. “We were able to engage with some of the leading street artists in India, such as Shilo Shiv Suleman, Hanif Qureshi, Anpu Varkey, Do & Khatra and Kiran Mahajan.



By crafting conversations around their creative process and sharing their life experiences, we can learn and familiarise ourselves and our audiences with this art form,” says Kiran Nadar, Chairperson, KNMA. Street art is triggering conversations and impacting public art laws and policies. It is becoming a sustainable profession with more full-time, contemporary artists entering this domain. “We, at St+art India, believe in infusing positivity into the community through the spaces we work on. The primary cause St+art India works for is ‘Art for All.’ We aim to improve art education by transcending the constraints of high art kept in gallery and museum spaces. The artists bring the local community together, involving them in the process. After all, we are painting in their communities, and their collective voice is our topmost priority,” says Arjun Bahl, Co-Founder, St+art India Foundation.



THIS SPREAD
1. *The Garden of Eden* at Lodhi Art District, New Delhi; 2. A graffiti at Kannagi Art District about Chennai's people and their relationship with the environment; 3. A stunning mural breathing life into Mumbai's Mahim Art District; 4. Artists at work in Bengaluru's Malleshwaram

Street art is becoming a sustainable profession with more contemporary artists entering the domain.



2



3

THE INCLUSIVITY ANGLE

Most people often miss out on interesting art pieces since these are usually housed in museums and galleries. Street art presents them to the world and is probably the best introduction to the art landscape for anyone from any strata of society. “Art makes you think about something differently or inspires you to create something yourself. It changes the way you think and feel about things and could influence your world view,” says Sahil Arora, founder of Method, a Mumbai-based contemporary

art space. Lodhi Colony in Central Delhi always had great potential to become an art district. “We worked with the CPWD and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and it took almost one year for us to secure the permissions required. It has now been renamed Lodhi Art District. We started working there in early 2015 and now there are 60+ walls adorned with the work of artists from around the world. This colony serves as an example of how art can be made democratic through such initiatives,” says street artist Hanif Qureshi. 🌟

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: LEFT: courtesy of St+art India/Pranav Gohill; courtesy of St+art India/Sharvari Somavanshi; Hari Mahidhar/Shutterstock

ESCAPE DESIGN



Hermosa Design Studio
crafts luxurious furniture,
and chic tableware (*right*)
with a modern aesthetic



THE NEO-JAIPUR AESTHETIC

The Pink City is asserting itself as a major hub for new-age design. A look at Jaipur's renaissance.

by RIAAN JACOB GEORGE

IT IS A FINE AFTERNOON IN JAIPUR as I sit in the aptly-named Bistro Quaint in the heart of the plush Civil Lines neighbourhood. Here's what I notice—a chic, minimalist decor with cool design accents, packed with well-heeled patrons gulping down smoothie bowls and avocado toasts with gourmet espressos. I could be anywhere: Mumbai, Melbourne or New York. Except that this is Jaipur. And this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to stylish spaces in the city. In fact, Jaipur, in recent times, has become a hotbed of cool, with concept stores and design spaces being founded by a young breed of contemporary designers and entrepreneurs. The Jaipur aesthetic that we have grown accustomed to

over centuries—read *jharokhas*, *phool pattis*, latticed screens and block prints—have given way to a drastically new narrative. In my mind, I coined the term neo-Jaipur aesthetic: Something that is modern, minimalist and truly international, yet rooted firmly in Rajasthani heritage.

DEFYING THE NORM

Bistro Quaint sits on the mezzanine of a very avant-garde structure, which houses the Hèrmosa Design Studio. The brand is largely focussed on home decor, furniture in particular, which almost defiantly eschews the traditional Jaipur design narrative. We get chatting with the young entrepreneur behind Hèrmosa, Pranjal Agrawal, who tells us that



his design studio employs the very same traditional craftsmen to make the furniture, but with a modern aesthetic. “The furniture that we make is primarily for the Indian market. Indians, in general, are appreciating a more international look. Therefore, our craftsmen work with furniture designers, who have global exposure to trends.” I walk through Hèrmosa’s candy-coloured rooms showcasing furniture and decor items that could rival the best design stores in Paris or Milan. An interesting fact is that the studio’s manufacturing unit, located in nearby Kota village, is a 3,00,000-square-foot, ultra-modern glass and metal structure, which is in itself a design feat. “Our craftsmen have been equipped with the best of modern machinery, and acquainted with international design trends to create versatile products,” Agrawal tells us.

SENSITISING THE CRAFTSMEN

At the other end of town, Yogesh Chaudhary of Jaipur Rugs, has managed to establish a truly global brand, catering to international HNIs, royalty and heads of state. Chaudhary says, “Jaipur has always been good at design. In the last decade or so, designers in Jaipur have been working with international partners. A lot of foreign design specialists have come set up shop here. That has changed the dynamic tremendously.” His sister, Kavita Chaudhary, Design Director of Jaipur Rugs, has been collaborating with European designers regularly. The brand works with rural (female only) weaver collectives. “From making traditional Jaipuri rugs with 30-40 colours, we had to train our weavers to the international sensibility of using three to four colours on one rug,” says Yogesh. He is constantly pushing the boundaries



THIS SPREAD

1. Ayush and Geetanjali Kasliwal, co-founders of AKFD and AnanTaya;
2. AnanTaya is an interdisciplinary lifestyle and decor studio;
3. Live Linen is turning the simple soft linen into a variety of household and decor products;
4. (Inset) Bistro Quaint, where lifestyle meets taste, houses the stylish Hèrmosa Design Studio

of design in Jaipur. He will soon be launching an experiential centre at Jaipur’s Hotel Narain Niwas Palace, where art installations and unique home decor pieces are innovatively showcased. “The idea is to push the boundaries on how you see rugs and what role they can play in home decor as art pieces,” he says.

NEW MATERIALS

A relatively new entrant on the block is linen. Entrepreneur Nimit Singhi’s

brand new venture Live Linen is a far cry from the traditional bed linen that is associated with this city. “We have brought minimalism in linen to the fore. We want to change the clichéd local aesthetic and keep detailing to the minimum, limited to the edges in bed linen, for example,” says the designer, who launched the brand in October 2020. “Bringing together linen and block prints is something new. These block prints, too, are being approached in a modern way.”



GLOBAL TASTEMAKERS

The power couple of Jaipur's modern design scene, Ayush and Geetanjali Kasliwal, collectively run two rather disruptive houses. AKFD, which specialises in furniture, and AnanTaya, which is all about decor, fashion and lifestyle items. The latter, Ayush tells me, focusses on craft and culture, where they work with traditional craftspeople, but reinterpret it in a new vocabulary.

Is this neo-Jaipur aesthetic and breaking stereotypical design narratives, something that the Kasliwals have consciously spearheaded? "Everything that we do is contemporary. We are not breaking stereotypes. We are merely building on the existing heritage to change the narrative," Ayush highlights. "Jaipur is a fascinating place, which was founded with the *karkhanas*. The same thing continues, but we are just welcoming new perspectives."

When Colombian designer Virginia Borrero De Castro came to Jaipur seven years ago, she tried looking for clothes that she could carry back to her country. She found stunning pieces, which were relevant



in the Rajasthan context, but these pieces would not translate as fashion in another country. This led her to set up Parampara, one of the city's trendiest concept stores, housing her own fashion label De Castro. One look at both Parampara and De Castro's Instagram feeds is enough to indicate just how focussed Virginia's design narrative is. "De Castro is the quintessential Indo-Western brand. We specialise in South American fits with Indian elements of handmade details, fabrics and embroidery." Virginia, whose label is four years old now, also evokes a sense of colour that Indo-Western brands often miss out on. "Many fusion brands end up using such dark or sober colours that

they lose the Indian charm. Colours are a constant in my work. Jaipur may be known for its block prints, but I feel they do not inspire as much as, say, khadi or ikat," says the designer.

The next few years are going to be crucial for the Pink City. As more design professionals make it their home, the landscape is likely to become even more dynamic. Ayush Kasliwal concludes, "Jaipur will, in the future, showcase what we, as Indians, enjoy. It is poised to take design and craftsmanship to the next level. Many young people are coming to Jaipur to set up enterprise, while also working with international designers. In a way, we are going to be at the same level as Paris and Milan soon, I would say." 🌟

THIS SPREAD

1. Virginia Borrero De Castro is the founder of Parampara, a concept store, and the fashion label De Castro;
2. Live Linen has brought minimalism in bed linen to the forefront;
3. Jaipur Rugs works with rural (female only) weaver collectives and artisans, empowering them with a sustainable livelihood;
4. The designs at Jaipur Rugs bring together traditional weaving and contemporary details

ESCAPE HOTELS

DESIGNING SMART *Luxury*

We speak to some hospitality experts to decode the relationship between design and luxury.

by ANAND KAPOOR



Enjoy overwater luxury at Soneva
Fushi in the Maldives

ESCAPE HOTELS

SMART DESIGN UNDERPINS THE overall luxury experience—no wonder then, the global hospitality sector has been focussing on design aesthetics that please the luxury traveller.

GOING BEYOND GILT

“Often, people refer to gold and gilt as a luxury, but that is wrong. Luxury is not just about objects but a philosophy,” believes Sonu Shivdasani, founder and CEO of Soneva, the ultra-luxury eco-resorts chain in the Maldives and Thailand, “Essentially, luxury is anything which is rare, which is not commonplace, which is new to someone, but also true. It must strike a chord in your heart when you experience it.”

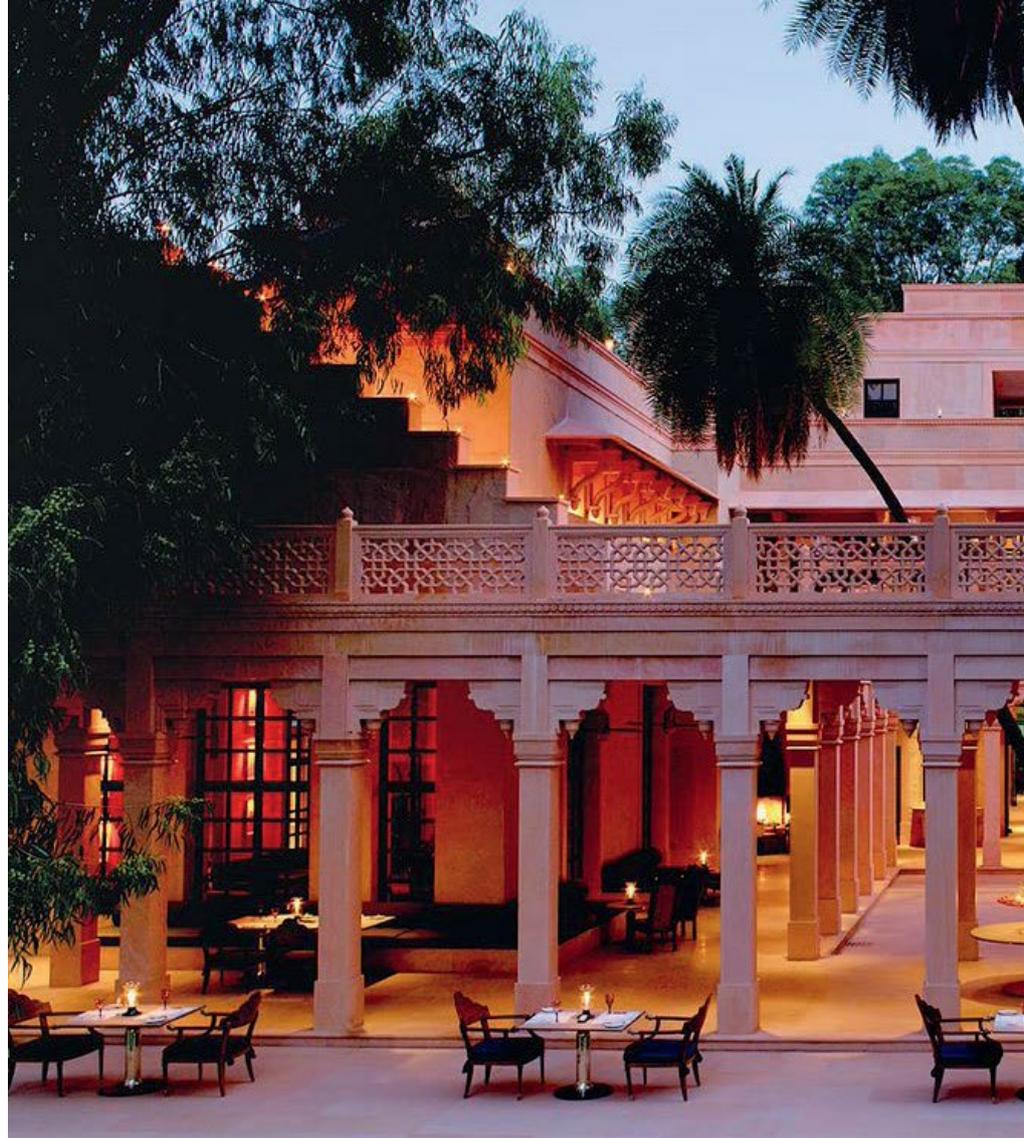
Luxury may not necessarily be tangible. If a hotel earns the moniker of being a luxury property, they then must deliver on that claim, because high-paying guests have a right to expect high standards. It is this right that allows them to expect excellence in service—in rooms, at dining and in everything that the luxury hotel offers.

However, when it comes to design and architecture, the intangible kicks into overdrive as it becomes a very personal aspect. People are unconsciously and consciously attracted to good design. Over time, an intersection between technology, sustainability and design has emerged to play a truly transformative role in how luxury is experienced.

TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN

Architect and interior designer Bill Bensley unapologetically states, “Luxury is DEAD. There is no point in designing lavish hotels just to put heads on beds—every hospitality project should have a purpose.”

This ethos has been taken to heart by ITC Hotels, where they





1



3

THIS SPREAD

- 1. The pavilion at Amanbagh is crafted with local materials;
- 2. An ancient Moroccan plaster finish has been used in the exteriors at Fairmont Jaipur;
- 3. The futuristic exteriors of ITC KohenuR, Hyderabad

have incorporated technology with a purpose at ITC KohenuR in Hyderabad. They have used technology in the very fabric of the building, which has been mapped for radiation, post which radiation protection chips have been installed to make the property radiation neutral—truly intangible luxury. To top this, they have explored the effect of magnetic fields on sleep. This has influenced the position of the bed and, thus, the layout of the room. All these latest design elements are not visible on the surface, but they simply combine to make it ‘feel right’.

Most hotels these days are using technology in a more obvious way to simplify our lives. For example, it is always awkward giving feedback when the person you are speaking with is hovering around you. The Fairmont Jaipur uses marble slabs with QR codes for guest feedback, which exemplifies the bridge between traditional materials and modern requirements. Louis Sailer, the ex-general manager at The Leela Palace Chanakyapuri and now founder of Nullus Ineptias (a hospitality asset advisory firm), predicts, “Augmented Reality will become a future trend in lobby design, replacing the traditional concierge with panels or virtual kiosks in public areas, with instant access to information on local sites, shops, restaurants, reviews and things to do.” This is already happening at hotels such as the Four Seasons Orlando, where interactive elements are in the lobby to help you plan your day!

ETHICAL LUXURY

With guests increasingly choosing their accommodation based on experiential and ethical travel, designers have had to step into action to cater to this demand.



THIS SPREAD

1. The design philosophy at Vana in Dehradun is inspired by contemporary shapes and sustainability;
2. Goan-tiled floors and Mangalorean-style roofs adorn The Postcard Cuelim;
3. Indigenous materials and local skillsets were used while designing The Leela Palace Chanakyapuri

A trend that originated in the farm-to-table push, a few years ago, has extended into design—where sustainability and renewability, respect for location and materials play a crucial role. This means that hotels are veering away from using fancy Italian marble that scream luxury, only to softly announce an immersive experience through a locally sourced unified palette of materials.

This is exactly what Kapil Chopra has done at his Postcard Hotels & Resorts. He says, “We have used local stones including *kadappa* at our hotels in Goa. We have used indigenous materials such as laterite for the walls and outdoor paths, and Goan-tiled floors and Mangalorean-style roofs, to create an authentic experience.”

This trend of returning to simplicity is well echoed in the materials used at Vana, a wellness retreat in Dehradun. “The design philosophy here at Vana is based on contemporary shapes and sustainable materials such as bamboo, which grows in abundance in our neighbourhood,” confirms Jaspreet Singh, the property’s Executive Director.

The use of locally sourced materials and skillsets is something that caught the imagination of Bill Bensley when he was designing the iconic Oberoi’s Vilas properties and the stunning Leela Palaces. Through his love affair with local craftsmanship, he discovered his signature stamp for his Indian properties—*thikri* work. He redesigned its use in a contemporary way while retaining its core beauty. This glass and



Sustainability, renewability, respect for location and materials play a crucial role in design.

mirror inlay work that originates from Thikri village in Rajasthan adds to the intangible quality of his design.

The importance of respecting your environment plays a crucial role in the design process. The late American architect Ed Tuttle was conscious of this when he designed one of his last great projects, Amanbagh in Rajasthan. He worked with local materials and artisans to create unique items for the hotel, such as marble bathtubs carved miraculously from a single piece of marble.

However, many brands get it wrong and try to enforce a culturally inappropriate thematic onto their design. This leads to a disturbing cultural appropriation, which can be offensive. A great example of carefully considered cultural appropriation is the use of Tadelakt at the Fairmont Jaipur, where they have used the ancient Moroccan exterior plaster finish on the bathtubs of all guest washrooms, walls and floors. ✨



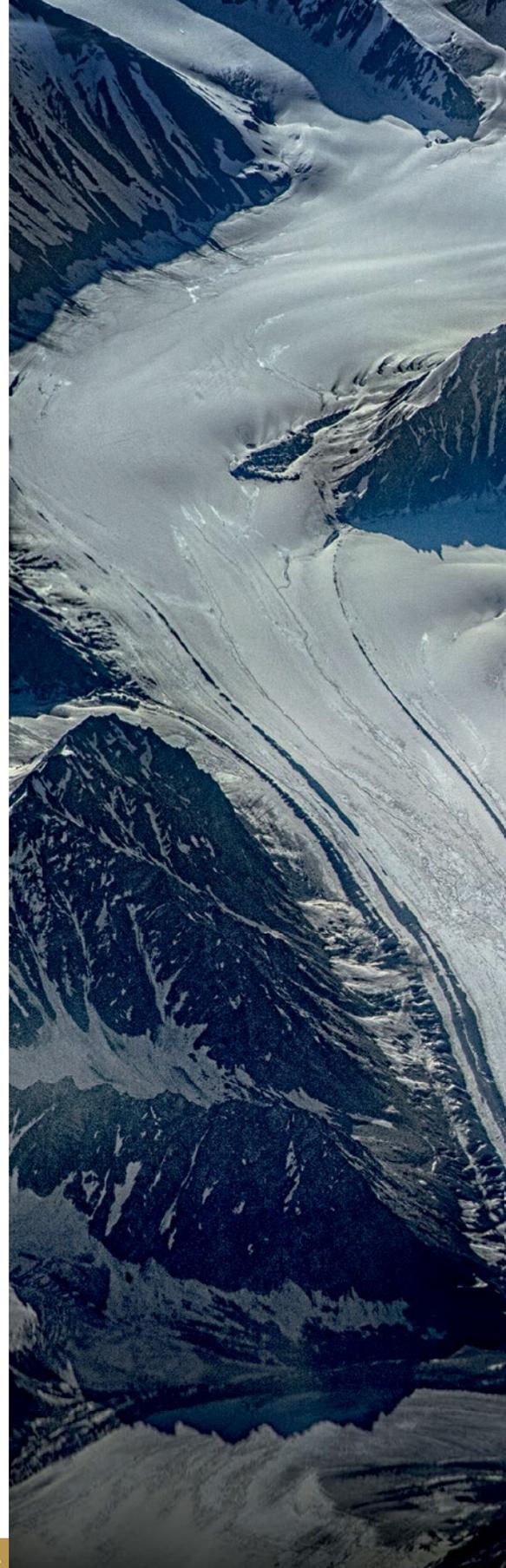
ART IS EVERYWHERE

As a student, I was never great at math but did find geometry interesting. I was fascinated by the way shapes would fit together to create spaces. When I became a photographer, my love for geometry became stronger. I found myself paying attention to things that most people would overlook. I found new and interesting elements in the most ordinary objects. I started looking for lines, shapes, textures, and patterns as I went about my daily routine. It became an almost meditative practice.

Defining space, emphasis and momentum, the geometry of the lines enhances our visualisation of the surroundings. From bold and thin to wavy—there are countless variations of lines in the world. Texture defines the way an image looks and feels. It allows the viewer to connect with a photograph on a physical level. Rough, smooth, wrinkly or slippery, most subjects are made up of one or more of such textural qualities. Patterns are a useful tool for both framing and composition in photography. When a frame is filled with shapes, it can add to a photo's drama or, when aligned, its order.

I guess such photography appeals to viewers who seek aesthetic studies of the physical world. By focussing on lines, textures and patterns, one can create engaging photographs that connect on a deeper level.

curated by LOPAMUDRA TALUKDAR



1



1
*The Great Himalayas,
Leh, India*

I always make it a point to grab a window seat while flying from Delhi to Leh, for the breathtaking views of the Great Himalayas. Glaciers seem to be floating and together depict a lovely texture that I simply can't get enough of.

ESCAPE CANVAS



2
Oslo, Norway

The best scenes always arrive unexpected. I remember striding the streets of Oslo, in a rush to catch a train, when I stumbled upon this urban installation. The soaring bird was an unexpected surprise that broke the pattern depicted by the flying humans!



3

3
Lijiang, China

One of the highest open-air theatre performances is held in Lijiang. I found that the colours of the rampart walls, thousands of local performers and the jaw-dropping backdrop of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain provide a synergy rarely seen.

4
Copenhagen, Denmark

This is one of my favourite pictures of Copenhagen. I love how urban patterns and human elements complement each other here. I am fascinated by the simplistic, modern designs of Scandinavia.

4





5

5
Ladakh, India

I once spent a couple of weeks in the harsh Ladakhi winter documenting for a project. What strikes me here in this picture is how effortlessly this herd of sheep has formed a striking pattern on what seems like a deserted moonland. Simply beautiful!



6



7

6
Pamukkale, Turkey
Pamukkale, which translates to 'cotton castle', comprises white calcium bicarbonate deposits that stand out amongst the natural bright blue pools, resulting in a surreal landscape. The place truly took my breath away.

7
Bagan, Myanmar
The face of this young monk glowed as light seeped in through the holes in the wall of a Buddhist temple in the sacred land of Bagan. As a photographer, the scene was so simple yet appealing that I just had to take my camera out.

THE LAST WORD



THE QUINTESSENTIAL AESTHETE

A philanthropist at heart, art enthusiast **Shalini Passi** talks about her innate connect with the creative domain, her newest muse, places she plans to travel to and more.

by PALLAVI SINGH

What is it about art that truly fascinates you?

We all have something that we find solace in. For me, that something is art. I believe art speaks directly to your soul. My fascination towards a piece of art begins with the artist's journey and the reflection of us, as society, through it. As a collector, I either pick artworks that are relevant to the contemporary times or ones that bring a whiff of nostalgia!

You have been providing underprivileged children in the capital opportunities to learn about art and craft. What prompted you to work in this area?

We identified the need and commenced this project around 16 years ago, and it has been a continually growing effort. I had noticed that we often focus on providing these kids with education, but their creative development gets neglected in the process. An overall development is the need of the hour, especially to keep them away from the adversities of life. Art is also a great form of catharsis and keeps the children indulgently occupied. Through my work in the field, I have witnessed some extremely talented kids.

I am truly grateful that I can extend my support and provide opportunities to those in need.

What are your favourite holiday destinations?

In India, it has to be Rajasthan, where Jodhpur and Bikaner are my most favourite cities. I travelled to Ladakh recently, for the first time, and fell in love with its surreal beauty. I also love Paris for its art and fashion, Courchevel for skiing, and Maldives for deep sea diving.

The next destinations on your bucket list?

Latin America and Iceland are definitely topping my list!

One advice for upcoming artists?

My advice to young art practitioners would be to get indulgently involved and aware about the art scene, across borders, and produce artworks without any preconceptions about their success. Find your inner voice.

As an artist, what aspect of a destination attracts you the most?

Every destination has a unique character. I guess I am subconsciously drawn to destinations that have a rich culture, art and lots of museums to explore. Architectural havens are my latest muse!

What are the items that you always carry in your inflight bag?

My headphones, prayer beads (since I pray regularly), hand sanitiser, lip balm, sunscreen, and lots of healthy snacks. 🍌



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