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Editor's letter

My mind drifts back to a crisp December evening in London, where the city felt like a scene pulled straight from a holiday movie. Dressed in its Christmas finest, with twinkling lights strung across every corner and a hum of cheer in the air, London had a way of making even the frostiest night feel warm. I stood in the heart of Covent Garden, hands wrapped around a cup of mulled wine, as the aroma of spices and the sound of carolers filled the air. And in that moment, it struck me, travel isn't just about ticking off destinations on a map; it's about the moments that nestle into your soul, the stories you carry home, and the magic you can relive long after the journey ends.

2024 was filled with such moments, each one more unforgettable than the last. From the electric energy of ILTM to the serenity of Taiwan's landscapes, the year was a kaleidoscope of emotions, lessons, and achievements. It wasn't perfect, of course, there were missteps and challenges, but as the saying goes, "We don't grow when things are easy; we grow when we face challenges." And grow we did, embracing every high and low with grace and determination.

This issue is a celebration of that journey. The FITUR and OTM special encapsulates the best of what we experienced. Skiing through the powdery slopes of Club Med Tignes was an adrenaline rush like no other, while Cheval Blanc Paris redefined the meaning of indulgence. And let's not forget the joy of shopping at Outlet City Metzingen- a haven for retail therapy enthusiasts. From unveiling the cinematic allure of film tourism in our cover story to capturing the spiritual magnificence of Mahakumbh, every page reflects our passion for storytelling and discovery.

As I reflect on the past year, I'm reminded of a quote that resonates deeply with me: "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." 2024 was a daring adventure in every sense, and as we step into 2025, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we loved bringing it to life. Here's to new horizons, boundless adventures, and stories that inspire us to keep exploring. Let's make 2025 a year to remember!

Do share your feedback at bharti@travelturtle.world.

Happy Reading!



Bharti Sharma
Editor

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Dive into the Blue Depths

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Tourism Ministry approves 40 Projects worth Rupees 3295.76 Crore for Development of lesser-known Tourism sites

The initiative aims to ease pressure on high-traffic sites and promote a more balanced distribution of tourists across the country. By focusing on lesser-known destinations, the Ministry hopes to enhance the overall tourism experience, boost local economies, and ensure sustainable growth in the tourism sector through a strategic approach to new project selection.



OTOAI announces new leadership team for the term 2024-2026

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) successfully concludes its elections on 5th December 2024, marking the end of the 2022-2024 term. They extend their heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing OTOAI team for their remarkable contributions, which included hosting impactful events, forming strategic collaborations, and signing numerous MOUs that enhanced the association's footprint.



Israel and the Philippines deepen tourism collaboration

As part of Minister of Tourism Haim Katz's working visit to Manila, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed yesterday to strengthen ties and cooperation between Israel and the Philippines. The agreement, signed with the Philippines' Secretary of Tourism, Christina Garcia Frasco, focuses on areas such as marketing, aviation, innovation, and digitisation, alongside collaboration in international organisations.



Discover Maldivian elegance with Centara Grand Lagoon Maldives

Centara Hotels & Resorts, announces the exclusive "Grand Island Indulgence" opening offer for Centara Grand Lagoon Maldives. Set to open on 1st February 2025, this new oasis invites travellers to embark on an immersive journey that blends signature Thai-inspired hospitality with authentic Maldivian allure through a collection of thoughtfully curated experiences, excursions, complimentary nights, and more.



FAITH elects office bearers for the term 2024 to 2026

The FAITH Elections for the Post of Office Bearers were held on 10th of December, 2024 in New Delhi. The following Board Members of FAITH have been elected unopposed for Office Bearers' positions for next two years' term of 2024 to 2026.



Saudi Arabia to host the World for FIFA World Cup™ 2034

Following the official announcement of Saudi as the host country for the FIFA World Cup™ 2034, Saudi, Welcome to Arabia, the official destination brand of the Saudi Tourism Authority (STA), is thrilled to welcome football fans from around the globe to experience the warm hospitality and vibrant culture of the Heart of Arabia.



Sabah records impressive over 60 per cent growth in Indian visitor arrivals

Home to one of South East Asia's highest peak, Mount Kinabalu, Malaysia's Sabah region is keen to accelerate its India growth story. With the latest arrival figure available now, Sabah has shown robust growth from the Indian market. Sabah has received 7,249 Indian tourists during the January – September 2024 period posting a significant jump in arrivals from last year's nearly 6,000 Indian visitors for the whole year.

Thailand extends 60-Day visa exemption for Indian tourists and introduces e-Visa system

The Royal Thai Embassy in New Delhi announces the continuation of the 60-day visa exemption for Indian citizens visiting Thailand for tourism or short-term business purposes. This policy remains effective until further notice, simplifying travel for Indian passport holders.



Thailand e-Visa

SriLankan Airlines celebrates seven years of service in Melbourne

SriLankan Airlines recently celebrated the seventh anniversary of its Melbourne-Colombo route, launched in 2017. Since then, the airline has successfully connected many Sri Lankan expatriates and students to Melbourne, while providing seamless travel options for tourists travelling between Melbourne, Sri Lanka and beyond, particularly destinations across India.



IATO delegation meets Deputy CM and Director Tourism, Odisha for 2025 Convention in Puri

IATO Delegation met with Mrs Pravati Parida, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister who also holds the charge of Tourism Minister and Mr Samarth Verma, IAS – Director Tourism, Government of Odisha in their Office in Bhubaneswar to seek their support for the 40th IATO Annual Convention -2025.



One Above Global unveils Saudi Arabia's hidden treasures

Roam Arabia is the in-house travel brand of One Above Global, designed to unveil the hidden gems of Saudi Arabia. It combines adventure, cultural exploration, and bespoke travel experiences, offering travellers an unmatched journey through one of the most exciting and emerging destinations globally.



India's Ranking in the Travel and Tourism Development Index

According to the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024 report published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India is ranked 39th among 119 countries. In the previous index published in 2021, India was ranked 54th. However, due to a revision in the WEF's methodology, India's 2021 rank was adjusted to 38th place.

Maldives reaches two million travellers for the year 2024

The Maldives announces a remarkable milestone, having achieved its national target of welcoming 2 million tourists in 2024. This accomplishment underscores the archipelago's continued global appeal as a premier travel destination.



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FILM TOURISM

TRANSFORMING DESTINATIONS INTO GLOBAL ICONS

Sweeping drone shots of New Zealand's verdant valleys as the Fellowship embarks on their perilous quest. Or the sunlit cobblestone streets of Dubrovnik, transformed into the scheming corridors of King's Landing. Films and TV series don't just tell stories; they etch places into our collective imagination, fueling wanderlust and turning reel worlds into real-world pilgrimages. Film tourism is no mere fling with fandom, it's a global phenomenon, an economic juggernaut, and a bridge connecting people to places in ways no brochure ever could.

- *Bharti Sharma*



On a chilly morning in London, I felt this pull firsthand. Standing in King's Cross Station, face-to-face with a replica trolley at Platform 9¾, I wasn't just a traveller, I was part of the magic, reliving scenes that shaped my childhood. The crowd, the overpriced wands, even the cheesy photo op, none of it mattered because, for a fleeting moment, the line between fiction and reality blurred. This is the allure of film tourism: it transforms ordinary places into extraordinary adventures, inviting us all to step into stories larger than life.

The Numbers Don't Lie

With a staggering valuation of over \$66 billion globally, film tourism is no supporting actor, it's a

box-office superstar. Studies reveal that 80 million international tourists choose their destinations based on movies or TV shows they've watched. Destinations featured prominently in films often experience a tourist influx of up to 30-50 per cent in the year following a release. For example, after the release of The Lord of the Rings trilogy, international tourism to New Zealand increased by a jaw-dropping 40 per cent. In India, the 'Bollywood factor' drives millions of fans to destinations such as Switzerland, where iconic romance scenes were filmed. Meanwhile, Hollywood's influence is felt far and wide, from Los Angeles to rural Alabama, with studios such as

Universal and Warner Bros. doubling as tourism hotspots.

Blockbusters Beyond Borders

What makes film tourism so powerful is its ability to market destinations in ways traditional campaigns never could. A two-minute sweeping vista in a film embeds itself into viewers' hearts and minds. Iconic examples include:

- **New Zealand (The Lord of the Rings):** Peter Jackson's Middle-earth turned unassuming Kiwi landscapes into pilgrimage sites for fans.
- **Scotland (Outlander):** Castles,

rugged highlands, and historical lore lured tourists by the droves.

- **South Korea (Parasite):** The film's Oscar win brought international travellers to Seoul's filming locations.
- **Croatia (Game of Thrones):** Dubrovnik's Old Town, aka King's Landing, became a magnet for fans seeking Westeros in real life. These films didn't just drive tourism; they revitalized economies, created jobs, and gave destinations cultural cachet. They also proved that storytelling, whether fictional or historical, is one of the most potent tourism tools.



Real-Life Blockbusters

1. Iceland: From Ice to Fire and Fame

Known for its dramatic landscapes, Iceland became a prime filming location for *Game of Thrones*, representing the icy terrains beyond the Wall. Tourism skyrocketed by over 30 per cent post-series, with travellers seeking glaciers, black sand beaches, and otherworldly lava fields. The government capitalized on the show's success, offering guided tours to filming locations like Thingvellir National Park.

2. India's 'DDLJ' Pilgrimage

Bollywood's beloved *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* made Switzerland's rolling hills synonymous with romance for Indian audiences. To this day, fans visit Europe to recreate iconic moments. Switzerland's tourism board even launched Bollywood-specific itineraries to cater to this demand.

3. New Zealand's Middle-Earth Legacy

Even two decades after *The Lord of the Rings*, New Zealand remains a beacon for film tourists. Hobbiton, a permanent film

set-turned-tourist attraction, draws over half a million visitors annually. Local businesses, from inns to adventure tours, owe their success to Tolkien's world brought to life.

4. Japan's Ghibli Trails

Studio Ghibli films, with their enchanting animation, have drawn fans to Japan's picturesque towns like Takayama and Yakushima Island. The Studio Ghibli Museum near Tokyo adds an immersive layer, blending art and tourism seamlessly.

Lights, Camera, Future

The future of film tourism is poised to evolve with changing consumer behaviours, immersive technologies, and sustainable practices. Here's what's coming:

1. Virtual Tourism Takes Center Stage

As AR and VR technologies improve, virtual film tourism could revolutionize how fans experience destinations. Imagine walking through Hogwarts or Wakanda from your living room, inspiring trips to real-life counterparts later.

2. Eco-Conscious Initiatives

Film tourism's environmental impact

is under scrutiny. Sustainable practices, like offsetting carbon emissions and promoting eco-friendly travel, will be critical. Iceland, for instance, emphasizes conservation alongside tourism.

3. Diversifying Destinations

While blockbusters dominate, niche films and streaming shows are drawing attention to lesser-known locales. Think *Emily in Paris* boosting Parisian bakeries or *Call Me by Your Name* turning Italy's Crema into a must-visit town.

Action! Initiatives Driving Film Tourism

Governments and tourism boards are actively leveraging film tourism to bolster their economies. Here's how:

• Film Incentive Schemes:

Countries like Canada and New Zealand offer tax breaks and grants to attract filmmakers.

• Destination Marketing:

VisitScotland's *Outlander*-themed campaigns and Spain's *Game of Thrones* itineraries prove that effective marketing pays dividends.

• Film Festivals as Gateways:

Events like Cannes, Sundance, and

the Toronto International Film Festival not only celebrate films but also promote their host cities as cultural hubs.

• **Local Collaborations:** Tourism boards are partnering with film studios to create set tours, merchandise, and themed experiences.

Final Cut: The Power of Storytelling in Tourism

Film tourism's magic lies in its ability to transform ordinary locations into extraordinary experiences. It's where art meets adventure, where fandom becomes pilgrimage, and where dreams meet destinations. Whether you're wandering Middle-earth's lush landscapes or sipping coffee in a Parisian café featured in your favourite rom-com, the allure is universal: we all want to step into a story larger than ourselves.

In a world hungry for connection and escape, film tourism isn't just a journey, it's a cinematic adventure waiting to unfold. The next time you watch a movie and feel the itch to pack your bags, remember: the silver screen is the gateway to the world.



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Mahakumbh 2025

**A River,
a ritual,
a revelation!**

The grandest of all Kumbh Melas, is poised to capture the world's attention as it transforms Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, into a hub of spirituality, culture, and innovation.

- Tripti Jain

Occurring once every 12 years, the Mahakumbh is renowned as the largest congregation of humanity, attracting millions from across the globe. Scheduled from January to February 2025, this event is expected to welcome over 500 million pilgrims and visitors, making it an unparalleled celebration of devotion and cultural exchange.

"The Mahakumbh is not just a festival of faith but a powerful symbol of India's resilience, inclusivity, and sustainable development. It represents a confluence of spirituality and modernity, where ancient traditions meet contemporary practices to create an awe-inspiring experience for pilgrims and travellers," shares Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Government of India.



Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

THE UNPRECEDENTED MAGNITUDE

Mahakumbh is deeply rooted in Indian mythology and Hindu spiritual practices. Held at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers, it offers pilgrims the unique opportunity to purify their souls through rituals like the Shahi Snan (royal baths). This sacred bath, led by the Naga Sadhus, is one of the most iconic and mesmerising spectacles of the event.

The significance of the Mahakumbh extends beyond its religious importance. It is a magnet for cultural enthusiasts, researchers,

and spiritual seekers from various faiths. "Mahakumbh is a melting pot of cultures and beliefs. It is where millions gather not just to cleanse their souls but also to witness a historic congregation that transcends religious boundaries and unites humanity," explains Ravi Gosain, Vice President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO).

WELCOMING THE WORLD

The Mahakumbh's global appeal lies in its ability to offer unique experiences that resonate with travellers from all walks of life. Visitors from over 100 countries are expected to witness this grand event, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and international tourism.

The Uttar Pradesh government has taken significant strides to promote the Mahakumbh as a global attraction. Eesha Priya, Special Secretary Tourism, Uttar Pradesh Tourism, emphasises, "Our goal is to elevate Mahakumbh into an international phenomenon. With investments exceeding rupees 15,000 crores in infrastructure, including new roads, enhanced transport facilities, and modern accommodations, we are ready to showcase the best of India to the world. From cultural programs to guided tours of the iconic Triveni Sangam, we are curating an experience that celebrates India's rich heritage while addressing the needs of global travellers."



Ravi Gosain



SUSTAINABILITY AT THE CORE

The Mahakumbh is not just a religious and cultural event but also a platform to promote sustainability. The Green Mahakumbh initiative aims to reduce the environmental impact of this massive gathering. Measures include the use of app-based electric vehicles, bans on single-use plastics, segregated waste management, and the establishment of temporary sewage treatment plants.

"The Mahakumbh's scale is both its challenge and its opportunity," says Shruti Pandey of Synergi Hospitality. "Sustainability is at the forefront of our efforts. With eco-friendly transport options, robust waste management systems, and a commitment to reducing carbon footprints, Mahakumbh 2025 sets a benchmark for responsible tourism. It demonstrates how large-scale events can coexist with environmental conservation."

Hospitality, which has developed a luxury tent city. Geeta Maheshwari, representing H&M Hospitality, elaborates, "We are blending comfort with spirituality. Our tent city offers a unique experience that includes private Ganga Aarti sessions, yoga and meditation at our private ghats, and curated cultural activities. By combining traditional Indian hospitality with modern amenities, we aim to make Mahakumbh 2025 memorable for every traveller."



Shruti Pandey



Eesha Priya

TECHNOLOGY REDEFINING PILGRIM EXPERIENCE

The integration of technology will revolutionise Mahakumbh 2025, ensuring a safe and seamless experience for all visitors. AI-enabled cameras, RFID wristbands, and facial recognition technology will aid in crowd management, while mobile apps will provide real-time updates, navigation, and emergency assistance.

"Technology is the backbone of our strategy to manage this unprecedented gathering," states Eesha Priya. "From guided itineraries and event schedules to cashless payment systems, digital platforms will enhance convenience and security for pilgrims. We are committed to leveraging innovation to make Mahakumbh 2025 a global model for managing mega-events."

LUXURY AND TRADITIONS

Accommodations at Mahakumbh 2025 are being redefined to cater to the diverse needs of domestic and international visitors. From traditional tent settlements for ascetics to luxury Swiss cottages for tourists, the event promises to deliver comfort and authenticity. One of the key players in this transformation is Adhvanta



BEYOND SPIRITUALITY

Mahakumbh 2025 promises an immersive cultural experience that goes beyond religious rituals. The Uttar Pradesh Culture Department has organised a series of events showcasing India's rich heritage, including classical music performances, folk dances, and exhibitions. For international visitors, guided tours to Triveni Sangam, wellness therapies, and boat rides on the Ganga add layers of enrichment to their journey. "This Mahakumbh is not just about spiritual cleansing; it's a celebration of India's identity," says Ravi Gosain. "The cultural programs and wellness offerings provide an unparalleled opportunity for travellers to immerse themselves in India's traditions and holistic lifestyle."

CONNECTING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

The Uttar Pradesh government has undertaken extensive infrastructure projects to accommodate the expected influx of visitors. Over 7,000 buses, 3,000 special trains, and shuttle services within the mela grounds will ensure smooth mobility. Pontoon bridges and newly renovated roads are set to enhance accessibility. "The infrastructure we're creating for Mahakumbh 2025 is designed to leave a legacy. It's not just about the event but about building facilities that will benefit the region for years to come," shares Eesha Priya.

faith, heritage, and harmony. It stands as a beacon of India's inclusivity and its commitment to preserving and sharing its cultural wealth with the world." Mahakumbh 2025 is not just a religious festival; it is a celebration of humanity, culture, and innovation. From its awe-inspiring rituals to its sustainable practices and technological advancements, the event is a true reflection of India's past, present, and future. As it welcomes millions of pilgrims and travellers, Mahakumbh 2025 will undoubtedly stand out as the event of the year, leaving a lasting impact on all who witness its grandeur. For those seeking spirituality, cultural immersion, or simply a once-in-a-lifetime experience, Mahakumbh 2025 is a destination like no other—a global celebration that will forever remain etched in memory.

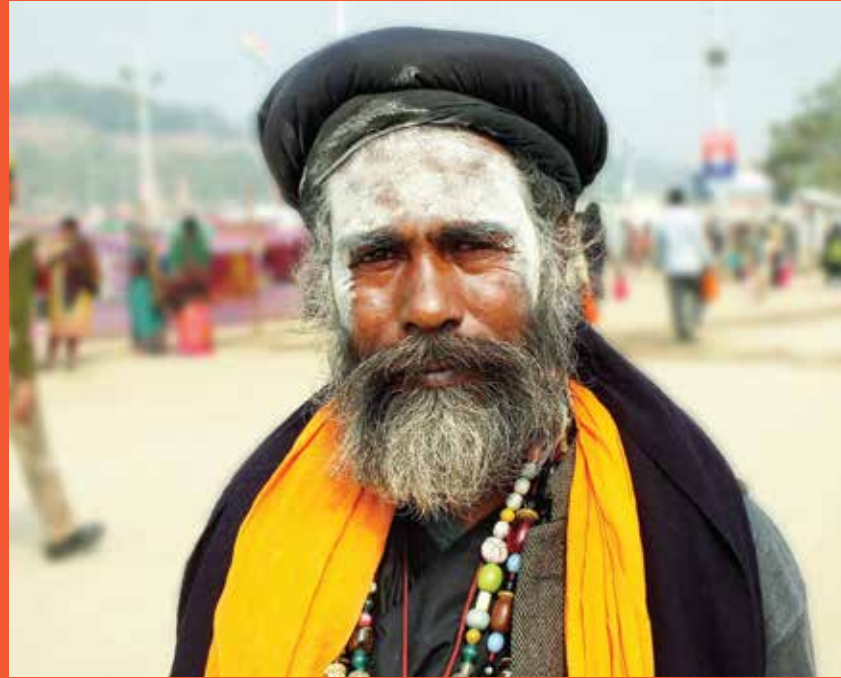


Geeta Maheshwari

EVENT OF THE YEAR

Mahakumbh 2025 is more than a spiritual milestone; it is a testament to India's ability to host an event of unmatched scale and significance. With its blend of faith, culture, innovation, and sustainability, the Mahakumbh reflects the very essence of India.

As Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat puts it, "The Mahakumbh is India's gift to the world. It is a platform where humanity unites in celebration of



Inside the World of
**The Lux
Collective**

The Lux Collective redefines hospitality with its unique blend of lighter, brighter experiences, offering guests extraordinary journeys across Mauritius, Maldives, Reunion Island, and beyond. Nitesh Pandey, Chief Operating Officer, Asia Pacific (APAC), The Lux Collective, shares the story about the brand.

- *Tripti Jain*



Nitesh Pandey



HOTELLIGENCE

A new era of hospitality

From the start, Lux set itself apart by reimagining the guest experience. Its ethos of combining human touch, sustainability, and immersive luxury has turned this 13-year-old brand into a beacon of modern hospitality. Today, Lux operates across Mauritius, Maldives, Reunion Island, and beyond, offering guests not just a stay but an extraordinary journey. Nitesh recalls and shares, "When we launched Lux in December 2011, it was like a breath of fresh air in the hospitality world. Our mission was simple yet transformative: to create lighter, brighter hospitality experiences that surprised and delighted."

A house of brands

Nitesh explains about the evolution from a monolithic brand to The Lux Collective—an umbrella encompassing four distinct brands: Lux, SALT, Tamassa, and Socio and shares, "One size does not fit all. Each brand caters to a different mind-set of guests, ensuring no two experiences are ever the same."

Lux is synonymous with luxury, offering everything within the hotel—from beach cinemas to artisanal coffee roasteries. SALT takes you outside the hotel, connecting you with local cultures and traditions. Nitesh talks about the experience at SALT, "When you stay at SALT, it's about exploring the soul of the destination—its people, its celebrations, its hidden gems."

Tamassa focuses on togetherness, bringing people closer in an increasingly disconnected world. "Imagine celebrations, entertainment, and vibrant experiences that make you feel truly alive, and then there's Socio, an urban brand that fosters productivity and social engagement, ideal for today's fast-paced professionals," explains Nitesh.

Destinations that enchant and delight

"The Indian traveller today is evolving. Gone are the days of once-a-year vacations; it's now about collecting moments, exploring cultures, and creating meaningful memories," says Nitesh. Lux has strategically positioned its properties to align with these

aspirations. Whether it's swimming with whale sharks at Lux South Ari Atoll in the Maldives or exploring the powdery white sands of Lux Grand Baie in Mauritius, every destination is designed to surprise and inspire. "The island at South Ari Atoll is 1.8 kilometres long. Even if you're just jogging, you'll never get bored," Nitesh remarks with a smile.

Each property offers something unexpected. "At Lux South Ari Atoll, the restroom has a DJ booth, disco lights, and glass floors revealing the water below. It's about delighting the customer in every way possible. Such surprises have made Lux a favourite among Indian travellers, ranking in the top eight markets for the Maldives properties," shares Nitesh.



HOTELLIGENCE

Sustainability meets luxury

Nitesh talks about the most important aspect offered by all the Lux Collective properties and shares, "Luxury without sustainability is no longer luxury. SALT, a brand under the umbrella, embodies this principle. SALT of Palmar in Mauritius is a zero single-use plastic property. It's about giving back, leaving the place better than you found it."

Lux's commitment extends to cultural preservation and community involvement. Nitesh shares, "When our guests leave, we want them to take home not just memories but also lessons and connections. From sustainable dining practices to community engagement programs, every aspect is designed to make a positive impact."

Creating moments, not just vacations

"It's not about ticking destinations off a list," he emphasises. "It's about creating meaningful holidays that resonate long after you've returned home." The Lux Collective has made its properties Instagrammable havens. Whether it's pre-wedding photoshoots at Lux Grand Baie's rooftop pool or dining at Beach Rouge, every corner is designed for celebration. "We've had couples run back from the restroom just to share its unique vibe with their partners," he shares with a laugh.

For Indian travellers, Lux's culinary diversity stands out. He adds, "Our chefs don't stay hidden in kitchens. They interact with guests, crafting meals tailored to individual tastes. That's what

makes dining at Lux a ninth restaurant—a place where your wish is the menu."

Expanding horizons

Lux's journey is far from over. With properties in Vietnam, Bali, and Zanzibar, and plans to explore India, Japan, and South Korea, the brand is set to redefine hospitality across continents. "India is a key market. The new generation of travellers wants more than just luxury; they want meaningful experiences," shares Nitesh.

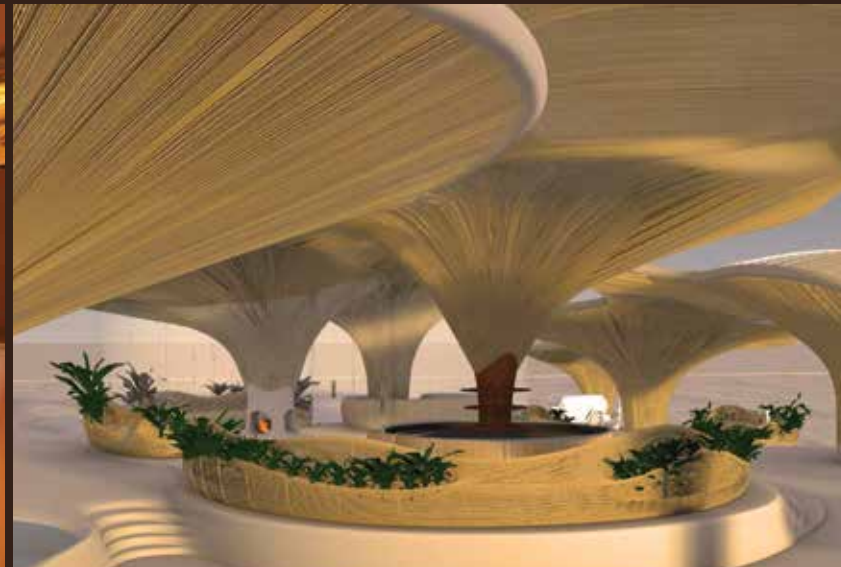
The Lux Collective's innovative approach to collaboration — partnering with developers, tourism boards, and airlines—ensures it remains at the forefront of global hospitality. He emphasises, "Collaboration is at the heart of our growth strategy.

Together, we can create unforgettable experiences."

Live life extraordinary

At Lux, it's not just about staying in a hotel; it's about living a story. The Lux Collective's journey from a single brand to a global house of brands reflects its commitment to redefining luxury, one extraordinary experience at a time. With innovation, sustainability, and human connection at its core, Lux is not just a destination—it's a philosophy.

Whether you're gazing at the stars in Mauritius, diving with whale sharks in the Maldives, or savouring authentic local cuisines, one thing is certain: Lux doesn't just offer vacations; it crafts memories. Nitesh concludes and urges travellers to, "Explore Lux, and live life extraordinary."



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Cornelia Stahr

BADEN-BADEN

Germany's hidden gem for Indian travellers

Discover Bliss, Culture, and Nature in the Heart of the Black Forest. Cornelia Stahr, Head of Global Marketing and Communication, Baden-Baden Tourism Board, shares why this serene destination deserves a spot on every Indian traveller's European itinerary.

- Naina Nath



OFFSHORE BINOCULARS

Baden-Baden, a beautiful town tucked away in the northern part of Germany's Black Forest, is perfect for anyone looking for a peaceful getaway. With its famous thermal spas, beautiful scenery, and various things to do, it's a refreshing change from the usual big city destinations.

Promising market for the future

Although India isn't currently among Baden-Baden's top ten markets for incoming tourists, the town sees great potential in attracting Indian travellers. Cornelia shares, "India has been one of our future markets since 2016. We saw a steady rise in Indian visitors until 2019. We're now focusing on rebuilding those numbers and are confident Baden-Baden is a perfect destination for Indian tourists."

A perfect escape from the hustle

Baden-Baden's quiet charm sets it apart from the bustling cities of Germany, Cornelia explains, "Baden-Baden is small, peaceful, and relaxing, but it also offers plenty of activities, great food, and amazing hotels. From peaceful nature trails to luxurious spas, the town provides a refreshing escape for those seeking a slower pace of life."

Creative marketing strategies

To boost Indian visitor numbers, Baden-Baden is employing innovative marketing strategies. She says, "We've been focusing on B2B marketing with tour operators and government agencies, and we've

also invited influencers to share their experiences here. The town plans to expand into B2C marketing next year to increase awareness and inspire more Indian tourists to visit."

Experiences for Indian travellers

From stunning natural landscapes to indulgent spa experiences, Baden-Baden offers a range of activities that Indian visitors will love, specially tailored to diverse interests. "Nature lovers will adore Merkur Mountain, where a funicular railway takes you to breath-taking views of the Black Forest," Cornelia shares. She also highlights the town's famous thermal waters, served by two public spas—one modern and one historic. Food enthusiasts will find plenty to savour as well. "We have small wine taverns, international cuisine, and even two Michelin-starred restaurants. Our Riesling wine is a must-try," Cornelia recommends. For those craving Indian flavours, the town features three Indian restaurants catering to vegetarians and Jains.

Welcoming Indian travellers with open arms

Indian tourists won't face many barriers in Baden-Baden. The town's international history ensures English is widely spoken in hotels, restaurants, and shops. "Even locals who don't speak English are always kind and helpful," says Cornelia. The visa process for Germany has also improved, making it easier for Indian

travellers to plan their trips.

Perfect for a short stay

For an ideal Baden-Baden experience, Cornelia suggests spending at least three nights. "You can't fully enjoy the destination in just one night," she emphasises. Highlights include the historic casino, Germany's largest opera house, and year-round musical performances. "Only August sees a short summer break for the opera," she adds.

A unique destination

Cornelia encourages Indian travel agents to add Baden-Baden to their itineraries. "Many agents don't include us because they're unfamiliar with the destination," she admits. "But Baden-Baden offers something truly unique—a spa town known for relaxation, nature, and culture. It's a hidden gem that deserves more attention."

A personal favourite

When asked about her favourite spot in Baden-Baden, Cornelia doesn't hesitate. "Merkur Mountain is my favourite because of the incredible views," she says. "But I also love the spas and exploring new restaurants—I'm a foodie at heart." With its natural beauty, cultural richness, and welcoming atmosphere, Baden-Baden has everything to charm Indian travellers. Whether it's for a peaceful retreat or a cultural adventure, this hidden gem is ready to impress.



Neeti Sharma

The future of travel marketing with Intrepid Communications

Innovative strategies and meaningful connections shaping the tourism industry is the key. Neeti Sharma, Director, Intrepid Marketing and Communications, shares insights into the company's journey, upcoming initiatives, and predictions for the travel industry in 2025.

- Naina Nath

Intrepid Marketing and Communications has carved a niche in the competitive world of tourism and hospitality marketing. From impactful campaigns to a growing portfolio of luxury brands, the agency has become a name adjacent with creativity and measurable success.

From vision to reality

Intrepid Marketing and Communications began with a bold vision: to create campaigns that inspire and connect. Neeti shares "We started small, focusing on niche campaigns that emphasised storytelling and engagement with trade and media partners. Over time, we have grown into a multidisciplinary powerhouse, specialising in public relations, digital marketing, sales, and event management."

Furthermore, she adds, "Our growth has been fuelled by our ability to adapt to industry trends while staying committed to delivering impactful, measurable results." Today, Intrepid represents an impressive portfolio of luxury brands, crafting bespoke campaigns that resonate with sophisticated audiences.

The future of travel marketing

As we begin with 2025, Neeti sees storytelling as the cornerstone of effective travel marketing. She explains, "Travellers crave experiences that feel authentic and meaningful. Highlighting that unique cultures, offbeat destinations, and immersive local

experiences will be key."

Sustainability is also set to play a major role. She shares, "Partnering with eco-conscious brands and amplifying responsible tourism messages will become essential. Collaborations with global and local influencers will further enhance reach, connecting destinations with their target audiences in fresh, relatable ways."

Innovative campaigns for the New Year

Intrepid has ambitious plans to captivate and engage travellers. "Our campaigns will focus on thematic experiences—wellness, adventure, and cultural exploration—that speak to niche audiences," Neeti shares.

The agency also plans to spotlight sustainable travel. "From eco-friendly accommodations to green itineraries, we want to make responsible tourism not just an option but an inspiration," she says. Collaborations with influencers will play a crucial role in these efforts. "Authentic storytelling, whether through micro-influencers or established names, is how we'll bring these campaigns to life."

Predictions for Travel in 2025

Purpose-driven travel will define the future of the industry, according to Neeti. "Experiences will hold deeper significance, with travellers prioritising personal growth and cultural understanding," she predicts. This shift will also highlight hyper-local travel. She adds, "Hidden gems and untapped

destinations will become the stars of marketing campaigns."

Technology will enhance—not replace—human connections, "AI can simplify logistics, allowing travellers to truly immerse them in the experience," she adds. "Group travel will also undergo a transformation, with curated itineraries catering to niche interests gaining popularity," she shares.

Exciting developments at Intrepid

This year will bring significant growth for Intrepid Marketing and Communications. "We're expanding our portfolio with new partnerships in emerging travel markets and luxury hospitality brands," Neeti says.

These partnerships reflect the agency's commitment to staying ahead of industry trends and delivering exceptional results. "Our focus has always been on meaningful connections, and these new ventures will help us elevate that mission further," she adds.

"The past few years have shown us the importance of resilience and adaptability. If we continue to evolve and embrace change, 2025 will open the door to incredible opportunities, she says."

Intrepid Marketing and Communications stands out by not merely following industry trends but by defining them. With a sharp focus on innovation, the agency crafts campaigns that ignite wanderlust and builds partnerships that break new ground, driving the evolution of travel marketing one strategy at a time.



The story behind
Atmosphere
Core's success

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts are a haven for travellers seeking joy in luxury and hospitality. Silvia Collepari, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Atmosphere Core, sheds light on their positioning, expansion plans, and what makes their approach stand out.

- *Naina Nath*



Silvia Collepari





Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts and COLOURS OF OBLU have become synonymous with unique guest experiences and innovative hospitality. Over the last two years, these brands have carved out distinct niches, delighting travellers from across the globe.

Something for every traveller!

COLOURS OF OBLU caters to those looking for vibrant, design-forward resorts filled with playful energy and creativity. Silvia highlights the nuances of the brand and shares, "Our brands are distinctly positioned to offer something for everyone. We deliver the quintessential Maldivian experience, steeped in local

culture and warmth. Our motto, 'A New Experience Awaits,' encapsulates its ethos of offering genuine and authentic hospitality."

Growing feathers in a cap

Expansion is in progress for Atmosphere Core, both in the Maldives and beyond. Silvia shares her excitement and speaks about the upcoming development, "We're thrilled about the relaunch of Raaya by Atmosphere in 2024. While there are no immediate plans for further growth in the Maldives in 2025, we will have exciting additions elsewhere: THE OZEN MANSION Kolkata and Sadar Manzil Heritage by Atmosphere in Bhopal. These two properties in

India represent a big step forward for our brand."

Standing out in hospitality

"Our top source markets include the UK, Germany, Russia, China, and India," says Silvia talking about the current markets and also shedding some light on the up and coming ones. Notably, Spain is emerging as a key contributor. The diverse guest demographic highlights the universal appeal of Atmosphere Core's offerings. Their signature Holiday Plan sets Atmosphere Core apart. Silvia shares, "Guests enjoy a carefree holiday where every detail is thoughtfully handled—dining, entertainment, and curated

experiences. This seamless, all-inclusive approach eliminates surprises and hidden costs, allowing travellers to fully unwind."

Three brands, one core philosophy

Silvia explains that Atmosphere Core's sub-brands each have unique identities. THE OZEN COLLECTION offers refined elegance and tailored luxury, while COLOURS OF OBLU is all about lively and creative experiences. Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts remains rooted in authentic hospitality and local culture. "The shared thread across our brands is our commitment to delivering joy through thoughtful experiences," she says.



India: A key focus

India remains integral to Atmosphere Core's growth strategy. She says, "While it was our second-largest market in 2023, it slipped to fourth in 2024. We aim to regain that momentum in 2025 with enhanced connectivity, like Air India's daily flights to Malé. The Indian market is vital for both leisure and group travel. We are strengthening ties with the Indian market through partnerships and PR efforts. We plan to amplify our social media presence to engage both B2B and B2C audiences. This strategy aims to deepen their connection with Indian travellers."

Consistency through care

Internal talent development through Learning & Development programs also strengthens teams while preserving each property's unique charm. Atmosphere Core's philosophy, "The Joy of Giving ensures a consistent guest experience across its properties. We reflect this value in our hospitality, business relationships, and even sustainability initiatives," says Silvia.

Blending local charm with brand identity

Silvia highlights a balance between consistency and local authenticity. She says, "We adapt to showcase the beauty of each destination while maintaining our core values. Guests experience the distinct culture of each location without compromising the overarching brand identity."

The future of hospitality

Innovation and responsibility are at the heart of Atmosphere Core's operations. "Our app, Eleanor, enhances guest convenience with features like mobile check-ins and itinerary management," Silvia shares. Sustainability, meanwhile, is embodied in C.O.R.E., focusing on community, eco-friendly operations, and certifications like Green Globe. "Our commitment goes beyond hospitality—it's about making a lasting positive impact," she adds. Silvia extends a warm thanks and shares, "To the Indian Travel Trade community, thank you for your unwavering support. Working with this dynamic market for three years has been a rewarding experience, and I look forward to continuing this exciting journey together."



Chasing My Inner James Bond in

TIGNES

CLUB MED

*A Ski Adventure
to Remember*

Tignes is a high-altitude ski haven in the French Alps, close to the Italian border. It's about a three-hour drive from either Geneva or Lyon.

- Harish Chandra



You know those scenes in Hollywood movies where the hero glides down a snowy slope with the grace of a swan but at the speed of a Formula 1 car? One of my personal favourites is the iconic ski chase from 'The Spy Who Loved Me.' James Bond skis off a cliff, parachute in tow, all while looking cooler than an ice-cream in the Arctic. Watching that, I often wondered how people can zip down a mountain on two thin planks without an engine. Naturally, I dreamt of experiencing it myself—and that dream came true when Club Med invited me to Tignes, nestled in the heart of the French Alps.

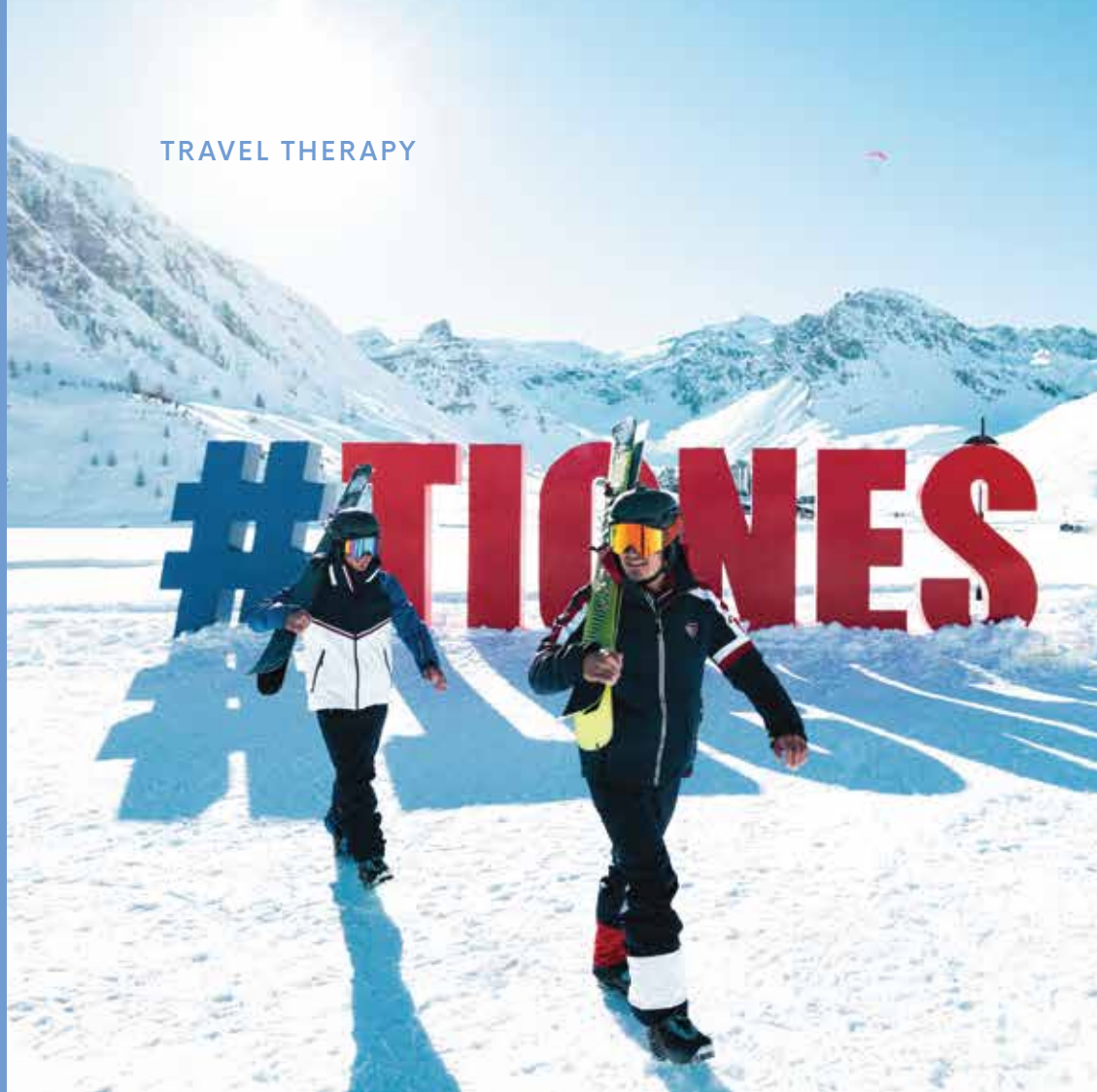
Where beauty meets adrenaline

I chose the Geneva route, and let me tell you, those three hours felt like a live-action travel postcard picturesque towns, serene lakes, flowing rivers, and majestic mountains. It was so stunning that I half-expected Rajkumar to pop out singing "Hey... Neele Gagan Ke Tale, Dharti Ka Pyar Pale..."

In winter (October to May), Tignes transforms into a paradise for snow enthusiasts. Skiing, snowboarding, dog sledding, pony rides—you name it. In summer, it swaps snow for lush trails, perfect for hiking, mountain biking, or simply lazing around with nature as your backdrop. From the station you can see the picturesque and mesmerising 360 view of France Alps. Tignes has different slopes for every skier - beginners, professionals, racers and all kinds of competitions. It has varied slopes such as, 18 black, 28 red, 31 blue and 34 green with a total of approx. 250 km of slope run.

Living the Club Med Dream

After a delightful three-day stopover in Geneva, I reported to the Club Med counter at the airport. From there, my fellow travellers and I embarked on the next leg of our journey to Tignes. Upon arrival, we were greeted by the ever-charming Director, Mr



TRAVEL THERAPY

Bruno Courbet, Mr. Manoj Upadhaya, ClubMed India and his team, and wow, what a welcome! The resort, surrounded by snow-capped peaks, felt like a page out of a fairytale.

Picture this; sipping coffee on your balcony while watching skiers glide down the slopes. The resort was buzzing with travellers of all ages from across the world, united by their love for adventure. Club Med Tignes boasts of over 400 luxurious rooms, each offering breathtaking views of the Alps. The cherry on top? Club Med provided us with top-notch ski gear, ensuring we were ready to conquer the slopes.

From wobbly to winning

I was paired with my ski instructor, Cecile, who was equal parts of patience and talent. Under her guidance, I went from a fumbling newbie who could barely stand to

zipping down slopes with a new confidence. By day five, I could turn in the direction my brain intended—a small miracle! Skiing may be challenging, but it's also exhilarating. After this experience, I'm planning to pursue it seriously. Watch out, Olympics 2028!

A resort like no other

Club Med Tignes isn't just a ski resort; it's an experience.

Amenities: A swanky lobby, a well-stocked ski equipment center, a swimming pool, sauna, steam room, jacuzzi, kids' area, fitness centre, DJs, two restaurants and

even chair lifts and ski slopes within walking distance.

Culinary Delights: A buffet so lavish you'd think it was curated by a Michelin-starred chef. And yes, unlimited liquor options for those who like their evenings spirited.

Entertainment: Every night was a themed party extravaganza with performances, music, and dancing. The coolest part? The performers were Club Med's very own staff, proving they're multitalented marvels.





Unveiling Club Med Val D'isere

As part of our trip, we also visited Club Med Val D'isere, a premium resort offering a luxurious and tranquil stay. It's perfect for those who prefer a slower-paced holiday without compromising comfort.

Reflections and Recommendations

After four nights at Club Med Tignes, I can confidently say this place has massive potential for Indian travellers. Yet, it remains a

hidden gem. If you love adventure, stunning landscapes, and a dash of luxury, Tignes should be on your bucket list. Just don't blame me if you start planning your next trip there before the current one is over!



COMING CLOSER TO
THE EXTRAORDINARY WITH

AWAY & CO

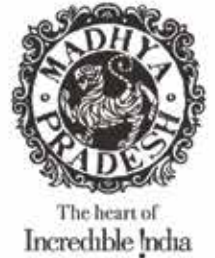
In an age where experiences matter more than possessions, luxury travel has transcended opulence to become a deeply personal pursuit of meaning, adventure, and connection. Ruchi Kohli, Chief of The Experience, Away&Co shares how they don't sell vacations, but craft stories.

- *Tripti Jain*

Ruchi Kohli



MADHYA PRADESH: A TREASURE TROVE WITH SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



The latest set of TV commercials are bound to touch every heart even as they take you on a journey into the heart of India



Madhya Pradesh is the heart of India not just on the physical map of India but also in its essence. The latest TVC (Television Commercial) *Moh Liya Re* campaign starts with current Bollywood sensation and acclaimed actor Pankaj Tripathi inviting everyone to come to MP - "Aap bhi Hindustan ke dil mein aayein aur apne dil ke saare kirdaar nibhaaiye." He invites everyone to come and explore the state. Discover MP and discover yourself. Extolling its diversity, Tripathi refers to the romanticism of Khajuraho, the spiritual vibes of Ujjain, the grand palaces, intricately carved temples, and cenotaphs Orchha - in essence there is something for everyone here.

For the nature enthusiast, there is Kanha Tiger Reserve and Bandhavgarh, Pench, Panna, Satpura and much more. The 2023 campaign "Jo Aaya So Wapas Aaya, Yeh Hai MP Ki Maya" uses the animal imagery moving through different cities of MP and everything is depicted in Gond painting- *Tiger banke Pench dekhein, langur banke Panna, Titli banke Bandhavgarh, Jatak Satpura, Mor banke Khajuraho, Maina Mandu etc.*



If you are looking for love and romance, lose yourself in intricate erotic sculptures of Khajuraho which offers a romantic getaway for couples. If you are an art lover and passionate about learning history, there are many places that will draw your interest such as Sanchi stupas. The 2018 TVC "Memory of Destination" (is like a traveller's diary offering a quirky account of how diverse people tend to come to the state for diverse reasons ranging from heritage to honeymoon, spirituality to shopping (such as for Chanderi sarees to handicrafts and textiles) to cuisine, craft, culture.



The traditional toy-making crafts are an integral part of MP's cultural tapestry. Gwalior Terracotta toys, Indore's wooden and lacquered toys or Tikamgarh wooden toys are part of famous toy traditions of the state. The 2016 campaign *Dil Hua Bachche Sa* makes use of bobblehead dolls and adorable tin toys and talks about how MP rekindles the child-like quality in people.

The 2013 *Rang Hai Malang Hai* campaign showcases how MP is a state of vibrant colours with every hue or emotion ranging from tradition to devotion to conservation being represented here.



The 2010 MP *Ajab Hai, Sabse Gajab Hai* is a legendary campaign which will go down history books as one of the best ever TVCs. It uses the traditional technique of shadow dancing involving intricate hand movements to create themes depicting mesmerizing facets of the state - all this in the voice of talented artist Raghubir Yadav.

The 2006 *Hindustan Ka Dil Dekha* campaign is all about conveying spirit of MP through expression of the eyes. The focus is mainly on UNESCO heritage sites and ancient historical places in MP.

Finally, the first TVC of MP Tourism was launched in 2004 *Til Dekho Tad Dekho* which became extremely popular as it took viewers on a vintage journey through a bioscope.

There is something for everyone in this state - that is the message of these TVCs. MP provides a multi-sensory experience and some aspect or the other is bound to touch your heart and move your soul.

PS: All TVCs can be seen on the MP Tourism official YouTube channel

Barceló Hotel Group *One of a kind!*

India has emerged as a linchpin in the global strategies of hospitality giants. David Fernández Fanego, Area Manager APAC, and Jenna Gangmei, Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing, Barceló Whale Lagoon Maldives and Barceló Nasandhura Male, share insights into the group's plans to deepen its roots in this vibrant market.

- Tripti Jain

David Fanego



Jenna Gangmei



With over 90 years of experience, Barceló Hotel Group is a global leader in hospitality, blending Spanish heritage with world-class luxury. Operating more than 270 hotels in 25 countries, the group is synonymous with innovation, personalised service, and unforgettable guest experiences. For Barceló Hotel Group, India represents not just an opportunity but a cornerstone of its Asia-Pacific expansion.

Why India matters!

"India is more than a market; it's a gateway to growth for the entire Asia-Pacific region. With its burgeoning middle class, increasing disposable incomes, and an appetite for luxury and leisure travel, India offers unparalleled opportunities. Indian travellers are sophisticated and value experiences that blend luxury with cultural authenticity," says David. Jenna agrees with the thought and shares "India's diversity and cultural richness align perfectly with our approach to hospitality. By understanding their unique preferences, we can offer tailored experiences that resonate deeply with them. The group's commitment to India is evident in its growing portfolio and strategic initiatives designed specifically for this market."

It's the experience that counts

Barceló Hotel Group recognises that catering to Indian travellers requires a

nuanced approach. "Food is central to Indian culture, and we've made significant investments in offering authentic Indian cuisine across our properties," says Jenna. This focus extends beyond food to include celebrations and special occasions. Destination weddings are a key focus area. David shares, "Our properties in Phuket and Istanbul have become favourites for Indian weddings. We offer bespoke wedding packages that combine the grandeur Indian couples desire with our signature Spanish hospitality. By blending local flavours with global standards, Barceló ensures every event is both memorable and culturally resonant."

Expanding horizons in Asia

Barceló's growth in Asia is emblematic of its global ambitions. David shares, "Our recent openings in the Maldives and Thailand signal our intent to be a dominant player in the region. The group recently unveiled Barceló Whale Lagoon in South Ari Atoll and plans to launch Barceló Nasandhura Male' in 2025. These properties are designed to offer unparalleled luxury while catering to the diverse needs of our guests."

Jenna highlights the significance of these openings for Indian travellers and explains, "The Maldives is a dream destination for many Indians, whether for honeymoons or family vacations. Our properties offer the perfect blend of privacy, adventure, and cultural familiarity to make every stay special."



Standing out in a crowded market

The luxury travel segment is fiercely competitive, especially in destinations like the Maldives. Jenna shares how the property resonates with the Indian travellers, "It's about understanding the travellers. For Indian guests, we focus on curated experiences—romantic candlelit dinners, couple's spa treatments, and family-friendly excursions. This personalised approach sets us apart." David adds to this and says, "Our Spanish heritage brings a unique flavour to our hospitality. Combining this with cultural sensitivity allows us to create experiences that are both distinctive and deeply satisfying for Indian travellers."

Partnerships and their perks

Collaborations with Indian travel agents and tour operators are pivotal to Barceló's strategy. Jenna explains, "Indian travellers often rely on trusted travel agents for their bookings. By partnering with key players, we ensure that our properties are easily accessible to Indian audiences." David highlights the importance of these partnerships and shares, "They allow us to align our offerings with the preferences of Indian travellers, from exclusive deals to tailored marketing campaigns during peak seasons such as Diwali and summer vacations."

Marketing that resonates

Since 2021, Barceló has intensified its focus on the Indian

market. Jenna highlights the importance of campaigns and shares, "We've launched targeted campaigns to enhance brand visibility. From leveraging digital platforms to organising on-ground activations, our approach is both innovative and impactful." David shares the importance of storytelling in these efforts, "We aim to communicate the unique experiences we offer through compelling narratives. This approach not only drives bookings but also builds lasting connections with our guests."

A bright future

As Barceló Hotel Group deepens its footprint in India and Asia, the road ahead looks promising. David shares, "India is central to our vision for Asia-Pacific. Our investments in this market reflect our confidence in its potential to drive growth and innovation." Jenna concludes and says, "By staying attuned to the evolving needs of Indian travellers, we're not just expanding our presence—we're building a legacy of trust and excellence."

Barceló's journey in India is a testament to the power of understanding, adaptability, and a relentless focus on creating meaningful experiences. As the group continues to grow, it's clear that India will remain at the heart of its global strategy.



A Divine Confluence



In a spectacular display of faith and tradition, Prayagraj is preparing to host the Maha Kumbh 2025 - one of the world's largest religious gatherings that occur once every 12 years. This grand spiritual congregation, deeply rooted in Hindu mythology, draws millions of pilgrims from across the globe to the sacred confluence of three rivers – the Ganges, Yamuna, and the Saraswati. The event, which marks a rare celestial alignment, brings together Hindu devotees from across the country, who bathe in the river to symbolically cleanse the soul and wash away sins.

A Sacred Geography



Prayagraj's unique geographical location adds spiritual significance to the event. Situated almost at the centre of northern India, with the Tropic of Cancer passing directly overhead, the city's

position is believed to enhance the spiritual and medicinal benefits of bathing in the Triveni Sangam, especially during the Maha Kumbh. Bathers who take a dip in the holy Ganges during this time believe that the direct rays of the sun have disease-preventing and life-enhancing properties.

The Spiritual Heart of India

The Maha Kumbh is more than a religious gathering; it represents a transformative spiritual journey as well. Devotees believe that taking a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam during this auspicious period cleanses the soul, washes away sins, and leads to spiritual salvation.

Sacred Rituals and Celebrations

In January 2025, Prayagraj will once again host this remarkable event after a gap of 12 years. The last such event took place in 2013. For two months in early 2025, Prayagraj will transform into a temporary mega-city, hosting various Akhadas - spiritual monastic orders - including Mahanirvani, Atal, Niranjani, Anand, Juna, Avahan, and Agni Akhadas. The event will witness



a host of religious rituals with deep spiritual meanings. The Yajnas (sacred fire rituals) performed during Mahakumbh by the Akhadas are deeply spiritual and carry a 'sankalp' (resolution) for the greater good of society. These rituals aim to promote harmony, well-being, and global peace. Among other events during the MahaKumbh are the Shahi Snans (Royal Baths), conducted on astrologically determined auspicious dates. These ceremonial baths see participation from sadhus (holy men) and pilgrims alike. Local Heritage and Tourist Attractions

Beyond its spiritual significance, Prayagraj offers visitors a rich cultural experience. Visitors participating in Maha Kumbh can explore traditional handicrafts such as moonj weaving,



HEADS IN BEDS

Cheval Blanc Paris

A Parisian Dream

Artful indulgence meets the quiet beauty of the Seine at the show-stopping Cheval Blanc Paris

- *Misbah Mansuri*



HEADS IN BEDS



It starts with a whisper. The hum of Parisian life swirling past Gare du Nord as I'm swept into the cocoon of a gleaming black car, waiting precisely where the concierge said it would be. The air feels different — warmer, more deliberate. Within moments, Paris unfolds like a private showing, its grandeur softened by twilight. By the time Cheval Blanc Paris rises into view, the Seine reflecting its golden façade, I know I'm stepping into something rare.

The arrival ritual

There's a certain elegance in how Cheval Blanc handles time — it slows, stretches, and accommodates only what matters. *Vino*, a member of the Cheval Blanc team, greeted me before I even stepped off the train — a quiet yet reassuring presence. He wasn't just there to assist with my luggage; he was the first glimpse into the hotel's impeccable service culture, ensuring that from the very first moment, everything felt seamless and personal.

By the time I arrived at my suite, I understood the magic of their welcome. Stepping into the space was a multi-sensory experience in

itself—the subtle hum of Paris outside the windows, the soft glow of curated lighting, and the comforting scent of freshly brewed tea. On the table, a pistachio cookie awaited — a delicate blend of sweetness and earthiness, setting the tone for indulgence. The cookie crumbled in my mouth, its buttery richness balanced by the earthiness of Sicilian pistachios. And in that moment, I realized that Cheval Blanc Paris wasn't just about luxury — it was a masterclass in anticipation, a place where the smallest details carried weight.

My suite is an orchestration of textures and intentions. The Seine glides past the window, a steady reminder that the city is alive while I'm ensconced in quiet luxury. Soft, cloud-like bedding calls to me, but I'm too enthralled by the details: Dior-scented linens, hand-painted ceramics, and that unmistakable French reverence for beauty. By the time I notice the Dior bath set—amber bottles of elixirs promising serenity — it's clear this space was designed to cradle, not just impress.

A culinary serenade

Post check-in, I find myself at Le Tout

- Paris, the hotel's Michelin-starred brasserie, perched like a jewel above the river. It's Parisian but playful—think velvet banquettes, golden light, and servers who understand how to balance charm with precision. The menu is a love letter to the city itself: escargot that melts into garlicky bliss, sea bass that feels like poetry on the palate, and a tarte au citron that dances between sharpness and silk. I sip a glass of Sancerre and realize: I've never been this present. Sunlight spills into the suite, brushing against the breakfast tray set beside me. I chose the *Carte Blanche* service — a concept where every craving is anticipated before you even realize it's there. The croissants flake at the lightest touch, their buttery layers a testament to the alchemy of French baking. The berries are plump, sweetened by memory alone. This is not just breakfast, it's an act of reverence.

By lunchtime, I step into *Hakuba*, the *Maison's* ode to Japan. Minimalist yet profound, the space feels like a hushed ceremony. I'm handed a menu that reads like a promise: respect for ritual, devotion to craft. Each bite is

deliberate — thin slices of toro arranged like petals, a whisper of wasabi that blooms and fades. The staff moves with choreography so precise it could be poetry in motion.

For dinner, I find myself at *Langosteria*, where the Italian coastline meets Parisian elegance. The atmosphere hums with quiet sophistication. I savor *scampi*, their sweetness heightened by the faintest char, and sip a crisp *Vermentino* as candlelight flickers against crystal glassware. The pacing, the plating — it's like a maestro conducting an orchestra of indulgence.

The prawns were a revelation, flown in fresh from the region and seared to perfection. Each bite was the taste of the sea itself — sweet, briny, with just a hint of char that deepened its complexity. The chef's commitment to sourcing was evident in every element. Then came the *Torta della Nonna*, a dessert as comforting as a childhood memory. The shortcrust was buttery and delicate, cradling a creamy custard. It was the kind of dessert that made you close your eyes and smile, as if being wrapped in the embrace of a beloved grandmother.



HEADS IN BEDS

A maison of wonder and indulgences

The private Maison tour feels like stepping behind the velvet curtain. Art adorns the walls not as decoration, but as conversation pieces. The blend of architecture—modern yet steeped in the past—is a reminder that Cheval Blanc doesn't merely occupy Paris; it dialogues with it.

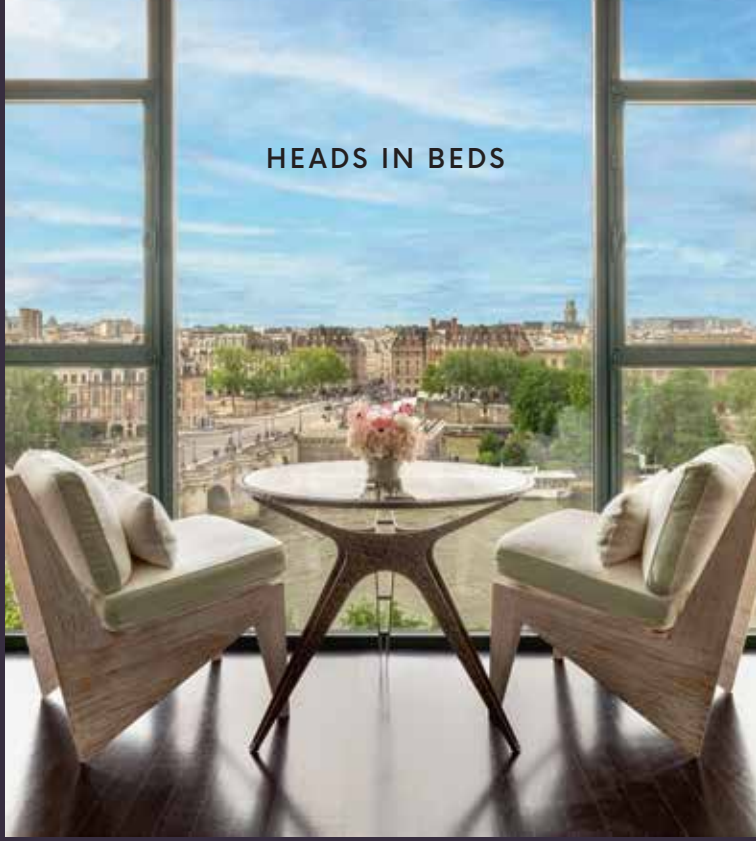
Another highlight was my facial treatment at the Dior Spa—a place where the world narrows to nothing but breath and intention. My Kobidior facial is a masterclass in tactile luxury, each massage stroke an ode to rejuvenation.

From the moment I stepped in, time slowed, enveloped by an ethereal calm scented with rose, bergamot, and ambergris. The light was diffused, soft, as if someone had brushed it with gold leaf, and the plush seating was as inviting as an embrace. My therapist spoke in a hushed tone, her voice as soothing as a lullaby. Inspired by ancient Kobido techniques, it was an intricate medley of firm strokes, delicate pinches, and slow, rhythmic pulses designed to resculpt my face. Each motion felt intentional, tracing every curve of my jaw and cheekbones like an artist carving a masterpiece.

The cooling serums and balms infused with Dior's signature rose extracts seeped into my skin, while a silk cloth was draped across my eyes, creating a cocoon of weightless stillness. The final touch was a massage gliding across my temples, dissipating the last remnants of tension. When I finally opened my eyes, I saw a version of me that felt lifted—radiant with ease.

At the Rossano Ferretti Salon, I was pampered with a hair spa and blow dry. The brand's nourishing mask, infused with botanical oils, was gently massaged into my scalp, each movement designed to soothe both hair and mind. The warm steam that followed opened every strand to pure hydration, leaving my hair feeling weightless and silky.

The blow-dry that came next was a masterclass in understated glamour. With deft hands, my stylist created soft waves that moved like a whisper of Parisian air. My hair didn't just shine—it flowed, reflecting the kind of effortless elegance that makes you



feel like you've stepped into your own cinematic moment.

No visit would be complete without a stop at Maxime Frédéric at Louis Vuitton, where pastry isn't dessert—it's storytelling. His creations are edible reveries: glossy, delicate confections that balance the sublime and the familiar. Each bite holds a whisper of Paris itself—the romance, the intrigue, the history in every fold of pastry and shimmer of glaze.

The unscripted moments

But what stays with me aren't just the grand gestures—it's the quiet kindnesses. Returning to the suite to find a hot bath drawn, steam curling over Dior-scented water. The handwritten note left beside a plate of madeleines, inviting me to savor the stillness. The way the staff greets you by name, not out of duty, but as though they've known you for years.

On my last morning, I glance out at the Seine one more time. The Rossano Ferretti Salon ensures my final hour in Paris feels polished, not rushed. My hair, sleek and effortless, mirrors the Maison's ethos itself: style born from substance.

As I step out and Paris exhales around me, I realize that the tasteful hospitality has given me a memory so vivid it feels like part of me now. Paris, with all its poetry and past, found a way to pause and breathe through the lens of this unforgettable haven. And in return, I take a piece of its beauty with me—knowing I'll always be drawn back.



Jumeirah Living Marina Gate

Redefining urban hospitality in Dubai

A distinctive address for modern travellers seeking the perfect balance of luxury and convenience. Jan Valasek, General Manager, Jumeirah Living Marina Gate shares what makes this property a unique gem in Dubai's hospitality landscape.

- *Naina Nath*



Jan Valasek



Dubai's skyline is dotted with luxury hotels, but Jumeirah Living Marina Gate stands out for its unique mix of hotel luxury and residential comfort. The property offers a personalised experience for a diverse clientele, catering to short-term visitors, long-term residents, and everyone in between.

A gateway for Indian wanderlust

India remains a significant market for Jumeirah Living Marina Gate. The property recorded 600 room nights and generated approximately AED 700,000 in revenue from Indian guests. "India is very important for Jumeirah as a brand," says Jan. "While Marina Gate differs from Jumeirah's other beach hotels, it offers a unique combination of hotel and residential experiences that resonates with Indian travellers."

Luxury that feels like home

The concept behind Jumeirah Living Marina Gate is transforming urban hospitality by combining the comforts of home with the luxury of a five-star hotel. Its strategic location in Dubai Marina provides guests with easy access to the city's iconic landmarks, waterfront lifestyle, and bustling business hubs. Jan emphasises the property's versatility, "We serve travellers seeking long-term stays and those visiting for a few days, ensuring each guest feels at home with our unmatched services."

The ultimate Staycation goals

One of the unique aspects of Jumeirah Living Marina Gate is its meticulously designed apartments. Each unit is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, premium

furnishings, and floor-to-ceiling windows offering breath-taking views of the Marina or the cityscape. Jan explains, "We focus on creating spaces that exude comfort and practicality without compromising on aesthetics. Residents and guests also enjoy world-class amenities such as a temperature-controlled infinity pool, a fitness center, and 24-hour concierge services."

Flavours and festivities

For Indian travellers, the property offers customised services that address their specific preferences. Whether it's personalised dining options that cater to various palates or assistance with planning leisure activities, the focus is on providing a tailored touch. Jan says, "We understand the nuances of Indian guests' needs and strive to make their stay memorable, whether it's for business or leisure. The inclusion of family-friendly facilities has also been a significant draw for multi-generational travellers from India."

Luxury meets sustainability

As sustainability becomes an essential part of global travel, Jumeirah Living Marina Gate has taken steps to integrate environmentally responsible practices. From energy-efficient systems to waste management initiatives, the property aligns with Dubai's vision of sustainable urban living. "Sustainability isn't just a trend; it's a responsibility we take seriously," shares Jan. These efforts are increasingly appreciated by environmentally conscious travellers from all over the world, including India.

Thriving in a new era

The post-pandemic hospitality industry has seen a shift in guest

preferences, with a growing emphasis on privacy, personalised service, and long-term stays. Jumeirah Living Marina Gate has adapted to these trends by offering flexible packages and creating exclusive spaces for its guests. Jan shares, "Our ability to adapt to changing demands has been the key to staying relevant in a competitive market."

Dreaming bigger

Going forward, Jumeirah Living Marina Gate is exploring ways to enhance its offerings and strengthen its presence in the Indian market. Collaborations with travel agencies, participation in industry events, and targeted marketing campaigns are part of the strategy. "We aim to deepen our engagement with Indian travellers by highlighting the unique experiences we offer," says Jan.

Where every stay feels like a Masterpiece

Under Jan's leadership, Jumeirah Living Marina Gate continues to grow, with a focus on quality, guest satisfaction, and innovation ensuring they remain a preferred choice for Indian travellers. "We are constantly striving to exceed expectations and deliver an experience that's not just luxurious but also meaningful," he concludes.

Jumeirah Living Marina Gate stands true to Jumeirah Group's overall commitment to excellence and innovation in hospitality. Offering a blend of luxury and comfort, the property appeals to a range of audiences while setting new standards for urban living. For travellers and residents alike, it's a place that redefines what it means to feel at home, in Dubai.



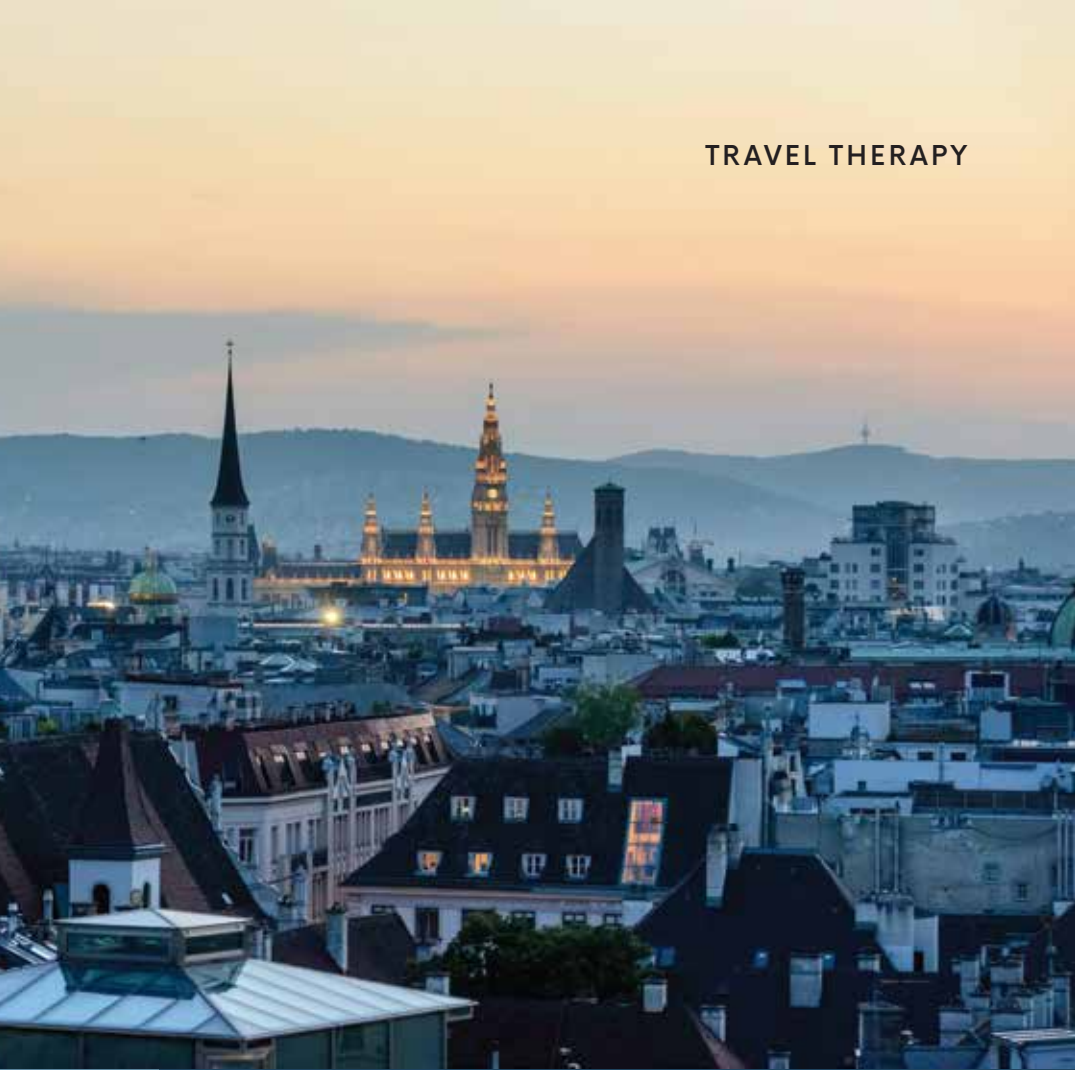
Vienna's Winning Ways

The Habsburg emperors once ruled a huge empire from Vienna, and the city is still dominated by castles and palaces of the imperial seat.

-Inder Raj Ahluwalia



TRAVEL THERAPY



Get going...! I did. And reaped rich rewards!

Conjure up nostalgic dreams of imperial majesty and Jugendstil, of glamorous balls, waltzes and coffee-houses. In fact, everything you've perceived to be synonymous with the city. Allow yourself be seduced by the charm and Gemutlichkeit of this grand old metropolis famed for its arts and music.

The Habsburg emperors once ruled a huge empire from Vienna, and the city is still dominated by castles and palaces of the imperial seat. The Baroque boom spawned magnificent palaces, and the turn of the century saw Vienna's artists embark on a golden age, as personified by the splendid Stadtbahn pavilions. Emperor Franz Joseph ordered the demolition of the city walls 130 years ago, and in their place was built the Ringstrasse, the monarchy's showpiece, conveniently bordered by notable buildings like the City hall, Vienna University, the Museums of Fine Arts and Natural History, the Parliament, and the State Opera.

From luxury restaurants and sophisticated bars to simple corner cafés, there is 'joie de vivre'.

But the past isn't overpowering. Showing a newer face, the city is creative and lively in the treatment of its history. Baroque and post-modern, Vienna is in step with time with its current lifestyles, open-air spectacles and theatre excitement, opera and jazz performances, and music festivals.

It was into this potpourri of imperial culture that I arrived in the rain one January morning.

My initiation couldn't have been better. The attractions spilled over, and I started at the right place. The city's shining symbol and tourist rendezvous, Schonbrunn Palace - the magnificent imperial summer residence that attained its present form under the Empress Maria Theresia - is simply magnificent. Also high-valued are the Palm House and the Butterfly House, the Imperial Coach Collection, the magnificent state-rooms in the Hofburg, Belvedere Palace, and the imperial crown in the Treasury.

The choices are there, but your best bet is a walking tour, which is what I opted for. From the world-famous State Opera, a short walk brought me to Vienna's landmark, St. Stephen's Cathedral. Passing the post-modern Haas House opposite, I cut through the Old City to the Hofburg. From the Grand Hall of the

National Library, to the Imperial Treasury, the Court Silver Depot and Tableware, the Spanish Riding School, and the Imperial Apartments, the attractions mass up on you.

Crossing the imperial Heldenplatz, I poked my head into the paintings-rich Museum of Fine Arts. The area around the State Opera is replete with attractions. The Secession with Klimt's Beethoven frieze, the Karlskirche-the most beautiful local Baroque church, Gustav Klimt's famous painting-The Kiss-displayed in the Belvedere, and Musikverein-the city's best-known concert hall, all merit close scrutiny! And reflecting the former glory of the imperial capital is the Ringstrasse. By contrast, the Spittelberg quarter is 'off the beaten track' Vienna, and holds its own collection of charms.

My curious nature was overly satisfied. Curiosities and treasures abound in a hundred museums, large and small. The emperors' acquisitions in the past now form the heart of an imposing collection in the Museum of Fine Arts. Works by Titian, Durer, Rubens, and Raphael hang alongside the world's largest Bruegel collection. The Museum of Applied Arts beckons, the Historical Museum recounts the



TRAVEL THERAPY

city's history, and the Clock Museum dazzles with its intricate treasures.

Arts and culture notwithstanding, Vienna's forte is music, of which it is the undisputed world capital. It's 'Waltz King' Johann Strauss apart, great composers like Mahler, Beethoven, Schonberg, Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert, worked here, touching the city with their genius. Continuing the legacy are splendid concert halls like the Volksoper, the Konzerthaus, the Theater an der Wien, the Vienna Boys' Choir, the Raimundtheater, and the State Opera, Golden Hall in the Musikverein.

All this apart, the Spanish Riding School's Lipizzaners have been offering imperial delights for eyes and ears for centuries.

Featuring concerts at beautiful venues, the Musical Summer spreads its 'sound bow' over the city. There are Mozart operas in Schonbrunn Palace Gardens, and fine variety shows in the Etablissement Ronacher.

It's literally raining festivals. Lovers of German theatre, both front-of-house and backstage, are spoilt for choice with some 40 stages presenting every mood from action-packed to bitter-sweet. Also

popular are the Klangbogen concerts during the Musical Summer, the Jazz Festival, the Haydn, Mozart and Schubert festivals, and the Vienna Festival that features daring experimentation. And there is romance during Advent, and at the Christkindl fair.

Remember the adage-a long coffee-break! Viennese coffeehouses are institutions in themselves, a state of mind. A place to unwind, write postcards, read the newspaper, study your guide book, and watch the world go by. All this, while savouring your coffee served with special Viennese charm by the 'Herr Ober' (waiter). A somewhat lesser institution is Heuringen, the Viennese name for new wine from the latest harvest, and the taverns serving the wine. To live traditional Heuringen music, you drink, laugh, and sing together.

Time to get serious! It isn't for the plebian! The only cuisine to be named after a city, Viennese food includes 'eye and taste-buds-satisfying' specialties originating from the former monarchy's countries: Italy, Hungary, and Bohemia. There is Tafelspitz and Schnitzel, Powideltascherl and Kaiserschmarren, dishes that are

works of art. There are also poetic flour and sugar combinations, like the legendary Sachertorte, and also Gugelhupf, and Apfelstrudel. Wien, Vienna, Bec, Dunai, Vican, Wenen... How good are you with names? Not that it really matters!

Just stop by...!

•Vienna is well connected by air. From Vienna Schwechat Airport one can take a bus or taxis to the city centre.

•Vienna is well connected by train with the rest of Austria and several other European cities.

•From deluxe to standard to budget, there's accommodation for everyone.

•Indian and vegetarian cuisine is on the menu in hundreds of restaurants and cafes spread across the city.

•Available is a choice of walking tours, city tours, and boat excursions.



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TAKAMAKA RUM

The heart of Seychelles in a bottle

This is a story of how two brothers turned a backyard experiment into a world-famous rum brand.

- Naina Nath



TRAVEL THERAPY

In the Seychelles sits a small island nation in the Indian Ocean, which is a rum and it tells a story. It's called Takamaka, and it's become a favourite not just at home but in countries around the world. Here's how two brothers turned a dream into something amazing and why their distillery is worth a visit.

The roots of Takamaka

Takamaka Rum began with Richard and Bernard d'Offay, two brothers who grew up in Seychelles after spending part of their childhood in South Africa. When Bernard was just 21, he had the idea of making rum. He and his dad started experimenting with a basic setup, even using their backyard swimming pool to cool the equipment. Richard, who was working in London at the time, got a call from Bernard to come back home and help turn the idea into a real business.

In 2002, the brothers officially opened the Trois Frères Distillery on an old plantation called La Plaine St. André. They named their rum Takamaka after an indigenous tree in Seychelles and because it's easy to remember for the locals. From those humble beginnings, they've come a long way.

A world of flavours

Takamaka makes a range of rums, so there's something for everyone. If



you like something sweet and smooth, their Dark Spice rum is perfect for mixing with coke. Want a tropical vibe? The Zannannan pineapple rum pairs beautifully with fruit juice or coconut water.

For serious rum fans, there's the St. André Series. These are aged rums that have been stored in different barrels like bourbon or French oak to give them unique flavours. They've even got overproof rum called Takamaka Overproof 69, which is not for the faint-hearted at 69 per cent alcohol!

Visiting the Distillery

If you're visiting Seychelles, the Takamaka Distillery on Mahé Island is a must-see! You can take a guided tour to learn about how the rum is made, explore the gardens where herbs and spices are grown and hear about the history of the old plantation. Retha d'Offay, who's married to Richard, often leads the tours and shares stories about the family and the rum business. She's passionate, energetic and makes the experience fun. After the tour, you get to taste five different rums. Outside in the open spaces, you'll find food trucks offering delicious bites and refreshing cocktails to enjoy, made with Takamaka rum. The distillery is open most days, and prices are affordable, so it's a great way to spend a few hours on the main island.



The people behind the bottle

What makes Takamaka truly stand out isn't just the rum—it's the people behind it. Richard and Bernard d'Offay are hands-on leaders who have stayed closely involved in every aspect of the business. From experimenting with new flavours to expanding into international markets, their passion shines through. They've built a team that shares their vision, and this dedication is reflected in every bottle of Takamaka. Even today, the d'Offay brothers remain approachable, often interacting with visitors at the distillery, sharing stories, and listening to feedback.

The process behind the rum

Making Takamaka rum starts with molasses, a byproduct of sugar production, or fresh sugarcane juice. The fermentation process uses yeast to turn the sugar into alcohol. After that, it's distilled to create a high-proof spirit. The rum is then aged in barrels to develop its flavour. Takamaka uses a mix of barrels, including ones made from American bourbon and French oak. They also use a special technique called hydrodynamic cavitation. It sounds fancy, but it's basically a way to speed up the aging process by creating chemical reactions in the rum. This lets them experiment with new flavors in a much shorter time.

A sustainable future

Takamaka isn't just about the process of making great rum; it's



also about doing it responsibly. The distillery has taken steps to minimize its environmental impact by recycling waste products and sourcing local ingredients wherever possible. They've even collaborated with local farmers to use byproducts of rum production as animal feed, creating a sustainable loop. The team is constantly looking for innovative ways to reduce their carbon footprint, proving that good business and good ethics can go hand in hand.

Takamaka around the world

Takamaka Rum isn't just popular in Seychelles; it's now sold in over 17 countries, including South Africa, Germany, and India. Retha d'Offay explains, "Getting Takamaka out there in the European market, and to countries like India, is really exciting. That's why we're available in four duty-free locations in India. Seychelles gets a lot of visitors from around the world, and the Indian market is very important to us."

The global reach of Takamaka shows just how much people love their unique approach to rum. Takamaka Rum is more than just a drink. It's a story of a family, their innovation, and the incorporation of Seychelles' culture. Whether you're sipping it on a beach, mixing it in a cocktail, or visiting the distillery, it's an experience that stays with you. No matter where you are—Takamaka brings a taste of the islands to you.



A Serendipitous Sojourn at Soul Stories,

Dhanaulti

As I meandered through the winding roads of Dhanaulti, the misty veil of the Himalayas slowly lifted, revealing the charming Soul Stories Luxury Villa and Resorts. Nestled amidst the verdant hills, this boutique hotel seemed to whisper tales of tranquillity and rejuvenation, beckoning me to surrender to its rustic charm.

Sudipta Saha



TRAVEL THERAPY

Tucked away in the breath-taking landscapes of Dhanaulti, Mussoorie, Soul Stories Luxury Villa and Resorts are a tranquil oasis that seamlessly blends opulence with ecological sensitivity. This exclusive boutique property is a testament to refined elegance, offering a sanctuary of tranquillity and indulgence that makes it a quintessential retreat for discerning travellers.

Upon arrival, I was enveloped in a warm welcome, replete with steaming cups of tea and gentle smiles. The staff, with their effortless hospitality, seemed to anticipate my every need, making me feel like a cherished guest in a friend's home.

As I stepped into my luxurious villa, I was struck by the stunning vistas and expansive living spaces that

seamlessly blended indoor and outdoor environments. The panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and lush greenery captivated my senses, creating a serene sanctuary where I could unwind and rejuvenate.

The architectural design of the villas reflects a deep commitment to harmonising with the natural landscape. The use of natural materials and thoughtful placement of windows and terraces ensured that every villa felt intimately connected to the beauty of its surroundings. The interiors were meticulously crafted to enhance the tranquil ambiance, with plush furnishings, soothing colour palettes, and carefully curated art pieces, including works by renowned artists such as M.F. Hussain.

One of the highlights of my stay was the enchanting sunset point, an open deck that offered an unparalleled vantage point for witnessing the majestic sunset. Whether I was sipping a warm cup of tea while basking in the early morning sun or enjoying delightful snacks with a piping hot beverage as the sun set, the experience was nothing short of magical.

Soul Stories Luxury Villa and Resorts is also committed to environmental sustainability and biodiversity, with a thoughtfully landscaped property that features a variety of feeder plants that enhance the natural habitat and support local wildlife. As a birdwatching enthusiast, I was thrilled to spot a variety of colourful songbirds and majestic raptors, creating a dynamic and



TRAVEL THERAPY



ever-changing spectacle of birdlife.

Beyond the confines of my room, Soul Stories offered a plethora of experiences that allowed me to connect with the local culture and the stunning natural surroundings. From guided treks through the hills to yoga sessions at sunrise, every activity seemed to weave a deeper narrative of discovery and wonder.

The culinary journey at Soul Stories was a masterful symphony of flavours and textures. From the luxury spread at breakfast to the hearty dinners, every meal was a testament to the chef's creativity and passion. The warm and attentive service only added to the allure, making every meal feel like a special occasion.

The resort's culinary journey was equally impressive, with a focus on rich, organic cuisine that showcased the best of local flavours. From simple, home-style dishes to gourmet experiences, every meal was a delight for the senses.

As I bid farewell to Soul Stories, I felt a deep sense of connection to this enchanting property and its stunning natural surroundings. With its commitment to environmental sustainability, luxurious accommodations, and exquisite cuisine, Soul Stories Luxury Villa and Resorts is a true gem in the heart of Dhanaulti.

If you're seeking a tranquil retreat from the chaos of city life, Soul Stories Luxury Villa and Resorts is the perfect haven. Allow yourself to be seduced by the property's rustic charm, indulge in the gastronomic delights, and surrender to the beauty of the surrounding hills. And when you finally bid farewell, be prepared to leave a piece of your heart behind.





Angela Rieger

Shopper's paradise in Germany

Outletcity Metzingen

Where fashion meets history to create global appeal! Angela Rieger, Senior Destination Marketing and Partnership Manager, Outletcity Metzingen shares how they are redefining shopping for global travellers.

- *Naina Nath*



Outletcity Metzingen, Europe's largest outlet destination, offers much more than just shopping. Located in the picturesque town of Metzingen, Germany, it combines world-class retail experiences with culture, history, and natural beauty.

A fashionable affair

India has become one of the top five overseas markets for Outletcity. Angela emphasises, "We've seen a significant rise in Indian visitors in the past few years. The numbers continue to grow, and we're excited to welcome even more travellers from India in the coming years. The increasing interest from Indian shoppers signifies the destination's growing global appeal."

Fashion on the road

While Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad remain key focus areas, it is open to welcoming travellers from all corners of India. Angela explains, "India is a vast country, and while we currently collaborate with major tour operators in Tier I cities, we're also exploring opportunities to reach audiences in other regions. Our participation in roadshows signals a commitment to expanding our reach to other parts of the country."

Rolling out the red carpet in 2024 Outletcity Metzingen has ambitious plans for the Indian market in 2024. Angela shares, "We're increasing our presence through exhibitions, roadshows,

and partnerships with travel agents. Additionally, we're exploring direct campaigns targeting consumers. Collaborating with the German Tourism Board, we aim to enhance the visibility and appeal to both B2B and B2C audiences."

A style haven like no other

Angela encourages Indian travellers to move beyond using Germany as a mere stopover destination. She shares, "Germany offers so much more. From cultural activities and stunning nature to unique shopping experiences, it's worth extending your stay and discovering all that the country has to offer."

Heritage Meets Haute Couture

The shopping arcade is a haven for fashion lovers. Angela highlights its unmatched offerings and share, "We are Europe's largest outlet, featuring 170 brands, including flagship outlets of major names like Hugo Boss, which has its largest store here, over 5,000 square meters! Visitors can enjoy deals and discounts of up to 80 per cent, making it a must-visit for luxury and premium shopping."

Nature's Catwalk in Metzingen

From high-end luxury labels to casual and sportswear brands, Outletcity Metzingen caters to diverse tastes and budgets. Angela says, "We offer something



for everyone, whether looking for luxury fashion or casual wear. Our mix of brands ensures a complete shopping experience."

Diverse dining and dream deals

Located in the heart of Metzingen, the outlet is intertwined with the town's heritage. Angela shares, "The outlet city is set in a historic town with a modern twist. It was developed by the grandchildren of Hugo Boss, transforming the old factory area into a world-class shopping destination. This unique combination sets Outlet City Metzingen apart from other conventional shopping destinations."

Weaving dreams, one expansion at a time

Metzingen's location adds to its charm. Surrounded by the scenic Swabian Alps and vineyards, the area offers a mix of outdoor activities and historical exploration. "The town is part of a UNESCO biosphere reserve, providing visitors with opportunities to hike, bike, and visit historic castles. With a mix of shopping, nature, and culture, it is a truly unique destination," explains Angela.

Not just shopping, it's a story

With a global customer base, they ensure inclusivity through multilingual staff and services. Angela elaborates, "Our team speaks multiple languages, and all information is available in various

languages. We even have an Indian restaurant to cater to our international visitors."

Making waves in the Indian travel scene

Increasing awareness about Outletcity Metzingen among Indian travellers remains a top priority. Angela emphasises, "By partnering with the local travel trade, we aim to be on the radar of Indian travellers considering Germany. We want them to know that Metzingen is a must-visit destination."

Where tradition meets transformation

Outletcity Metzingen continues to grow its offerings. She shares, "We recently opened a Moxy Hotel and a museum showcasing the history of Hugo Boss and Metzingen's textile industry. Plans for new stores and brands are already underway, ensuring that visitors always have something new to explore."

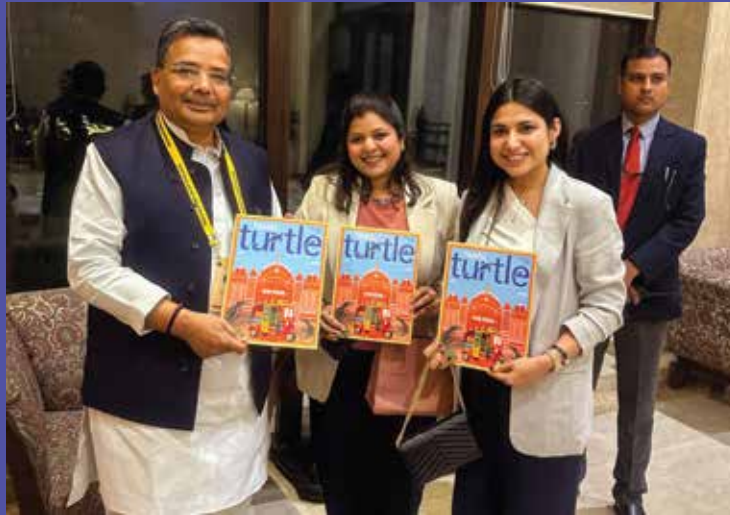
An invitation to discover more

Outletcity Metzingen is ready to welcome Indian visitors, promising an experience that goes beyond the ordinary. For Indian travellers looking for an unparalleled shopping experience with a side of culture and natural beauty—Outletcity Metzingen offers it all. Angela sums it up perfectly: "It's not just about shopping; it's about creating memories in a unique and historic setting."



Uttar Pradesh tourism department organizes 'Mahakumbh 2025 Prelude'

The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department organized a grand event, 'Mahakumbh 2025 Prelude', in New Delhi. Graced by the esteemed presence of Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and Uttar Pradesh's Minister of Tourism and Culture, Jaiveer Singh, the event aimed to provide a glimpse into the spiritual essence of Prayagraj, the host city for the upcoming Mahakumbh 2025. Dignitaries from various ministries, ambassadors, and high commissioners from several countries were in attendance, along with senior officials from the central and state governments.



TOFTigers urges India to lead a new era of re-wilding and conservation

TOFTigers, celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024, is calling on India to lead a global movement in re-wilding and conservation, using nature tourism as a key tool for protecting the country's biodiversity. Since its inception, TOFTigers has championed the role of responsible tourism in wildlife restoration and ecosystem protection. With global studies revealing the alarming loss of wilderness — a tenth of the Earth's wilderness has been lost in the past 25 years — TOFTigers is urging the tourism industry and government to embrace sustainable tourism as a means to protect India's rich natural heritage.



VIETNAM AIRLINES HOSTS A DELIGHTFUL VIETNAMESE EVENING IN NEW DELHI

Vietnam Airlines and Aeroprime Group, successfully hosts an exclusive Meet and Greet event, offering a memorable evening filled with Vietnamese culture, cuisine, and hospitality. The event brought together travel professionals, industry stakeholders, and Vietnam enthusiasts to celebrate the rich heritage and vibrant experiences Vietnam has to offer.



Atmosphere Hotels & Colours of OBLU organises a meet and greet in New Delhi

Bringing together their valued partners and media friends under one roof to celebrate the incredible journey they've shared. From meaningful conversations to joyous moments, this soirée was all about gratitude, connection, and looking ahead to a vibrant future together. Cheers to stronger partnerships and exciting horizons!



Taiwan Tourism and Blink Brand Solutions Host an evening to usher in 2025



Taiwan Tourism, in collaboration with Blink Brand Solutions, hosted a spectacular evening to celebrate the festive season and welcome the New Year with cheer. Guests enjoyed engaging conversations, networking opportunities, and delightful moments, reflecting on the fruitful partnerships of 2024 while looking forward to an exciting 2025.



Finnair hosts a Magical Christmas Soirée in Delhi

Finnair brought the festive spirit alive in Delhi with a delightful Christmas soirée, featuring a special appearance by none other than Santa Claus himself. The event was a celebration of Finland's enchanting holiday traditions, providing guests with a glimpse into the magic of the Nordic winter.



South Africa Tourism unveils future plans for Tourism

South Africa Tourism hosted an engaging media interaction to unveil its upcoming strategies and initiatives aimed at strengthening its position as a top travel destination. The event, graced by the South African Minister of Tourism, showcased the country's vibrant cultural heritage, including an energetic performance by traditional dancers.



The Fern Hotels & Resorts hosts Annual Friday Daze

The Fern Hotels & Resorts recently organised its much-anticipated annual Friday Daze Soirée, a grand celebration honouring its esteemed partners and stakeholders. The event showcased the brand's gratitude for their unwavering support, which has been instrumental in its success and growth.



Travel DMC rings in the New Year with a grand celebration



Travel DMC hosted a spectacular New Year celebration to honour and thank its valued partners for their continued support and collaboration. The event brought together their trusted partners and stakeholders under one roof to celebrate the year.

APPOINTMENTS



Taiwan Tourism Administration

Taiwan Tourism Administration - Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA), the destination marketing organisation responsible for the promotion of Taiwan as a premier travel destination, has announced the appointment of Paul Shih as the Director of TTA, Singapore Office. Shih brings a wealth of knowledge, significant experience and proven leadership roles from across sectors in key positions. In his new role, Shih is responsible for India, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the Middle East tourism markets. Paul Shih appointed Director of Taiwan Tourism Administration, Singapore office.

SEPC

Rajeev Kohli, Joint Managing Director of Creative Travel, has been elected to the Committee of Administration of India's prestigious Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC). Representing Tourism Services at the national level, Rajeev will join a distinguished panel of 10 members from diverse service sectors, including healthcare, education, logistics, IT, and entertainment, to drive India's service export agenda.



Atmosphere Core

Atmosphere Core, announces two strategic appointments to its leadership team. Alain Camille Trefois joins as the General Manager at OBLU NATURE Helengeli by SENTIDO, a 4-star superior resort and renowned diver's paradise. Meanwhile, Mohammed Belhacen takes over the role of Cluster Director of Revenue for Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts and COLOURS OF OBLU brands.



DreamSetGo

DreamSetGo announces the appointment of Daniel Dsouza as their new Co-Founder. He will join the leadership team to drive DreamSetGo's next phase of growth and solidify its position as a leader in this rapidly expanding category. Daniel has played a pivotal role in shaping the leisure and holiday business at SOTC Travel Limited, part of the Thomas Cook Group and formerly Kuoni Travel.



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