

LUXURY PALACE HOTELS

Understated elegance, sophisticated indulgence, historic facades and interiors rich in nuances both nostalgic as well as contemporary, and modern day luxuries laced with customised services are the hallmark of the must-have experiences on offer from a slew of precious luxury-palace destination resorts around the country.



Luxury Palace Hotels

Incredible India



Devi Garh - Udaipur

Udaipur is set amongst the rugged Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan. Half an hour drive out of Udaipur takes you to this restored fort-palace of mind-boggling luxury. Where once bats and eagles roamed, its custom - designed, minimalist interiors, a symphony of tones and textures of creams and whites, greys and silvery sheens in the range of fine fabrics and furnishings, are a stunning foil to this 18th century palace resort's sumptuous blushing exteriors. Little wonder that it was listed amongst the prestigious Tatler Travel Guides 'Top 100 Hotels in the World', triggered off by the lashings of luxury and world-class glitterati showcasing, still very much in evidence since its the celebratory bash of the Millennium when Devi Garh opened its portals to the world. Massive bay windows frame the grand vistas of the Aravallis and the ancient Delwara village with its 14th century Jain temples. Riding and picnics, treks and village walks fill your days marked by the pampering on offer by the Serena Spa and luxurious dips in the open-air Jacuzzi. The fantastic Devi Garh Suite and Palace Suite, sharing a private black marbled swimming pool, still as glass and cool as a mountain stream, are to die for. Pure indulgence awaits you here.



Hotel Ram Bagh Palace - Jaipur

This atmospheric palace hotel, run by the Taj group was the palatial residence of Maharani Gayatri Devi and her polo playing husband Jai, of the Jaipur royals. The internationally celebrated beauty lives a retired life as the Rajmata in a quiet wing of the palace after it was converted into a luxury resort. The newly renovated palace resort continues to attract the well-heeled and the glamorous crowd from both home and abroad with its traditional Indian hospitality, lavish interiors and vast grounds punctuated by gardens and tennis courts, shopping arcades and classy restaurants and popular watering holes. From the luxurious four posters to the riding and the polo games (arranged on request) be assured of a royal treat here. This grand old hotel offers worldly-wise guests more than mere upscale goods and services. It is the wonder of that old-fashioned regal pampering that brings them back repeatedly.



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Shiv Niwas Palace Hotel - Udaipur

This royal guesthouse, standing by the lake in Udaipur, serves up old-fashioned royal luxury in style. Part of the City Palace complex, comprising four individual palaces by Lake Pichola, its lavish setting offers easy access to ancient bazaars to shop for crafts and sparkling jewels, antique gem-encrusted swords and muskets in the old quarter. The refurbished and modernised hotel is a study in opulence with its dazzling assemblage of marble and mother of pearl inlay work- frescoes and mosaics-colored glass and crystalware. The hotel, which offers beguiling panoramas of the Lake Palace and Jag Mandir in the tranquil lake, has played host to luminaries such as Queen Elizabeth, the Shah of Iran and the Kennedys in the past. Its mellow old-world nuances wrap you in a world of cossetting and languid ease. The Imperial Suite in green hues comes with walls embellished in glass inlay, silver period furniture, chandeliers and a fountain by the end of your bed. In the evenings the palace band entertains you on the lawns at sunset with Scottish tunes on the bagpipes.



Umaid Bhawan - Jodhpur

Oozing luxury and regal splendour, this exclusive Indo-Art Deco confection of a palace dates back to the 30s and continues to engage the traveller who is searching for the legendary royal experience of one of India's most visited travel destinations. Commissioned by the Maharaja to alleviate the miseries of his people by giving them employment during the terrible drought that swept the region, the palace with its 347 rooms was the world's largest private residence when it was completed in 1944. Jodhpur's erstwhile royals, His Highness Maharaja Gaj Singh II and his family reside in a private wing at the Umaid Bhawan, which is one of Rajasthan's most prestigious, super-luxury heritage hotels. Full of surprises, the hotel has its own private museum filled with a stunning display of the royal collection of artifacts, while the library is lined with a superb collection of books and mementoes— some of them quite rare. Savour these magnificent vistas of the imposing 13th century Mehrangarh Fort from various vantage points. Riding, golf and jeep safaris can be arranged on request.



Hotel Lake Palace - Udaipur

Bearing the classic stamp of the Taj chain of hotels, this is a secluded fairytale hotel, where elegance and tradition set the placid waters of Lake Pichola at Udaipur aflame with its delectable charm and romantic ambience. The Lake Palace situated on Jag Niwas Island continues to be one of the world's most favoured honeymoon hotels, not just for its beautiful lake setting but also for its attentive services and culinary offerings.

For decades now, its opulent interiors, the private sit-outs jutting over the lake, the lily pond, the swimming pool and atmospheric public areas have served an array of regal fantasies, all beautifully backed by the pampering, gourmet meals and dazzling entertainment. If you really want to make a splash you can hire Gangaur, the 150-year old royal barge (used in Octopussy -the popular James Bond thriller, which was filmed at the City Palace) for a romantic dinner cruise on the lake from the Gangaur Ghat near the City Palace complex.



Heritage Hotels

Forts, palaces, havelis - privileged symbols of a rich cultural legacy of India's erstwhile royals, aristocrats, zemindars and merchant princes, continue to engage the sensibilities of travellers around the world. Scintillating opulence, majestic flamboyance and eccentric extravagance is given in a royal lifestyle - and judging from the tapestry of heritage experiences on offer in India's hospitality industry, the tempting dazzle of regal allurements continues to feed a growing tourist market. Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kerala are the top heritage experience destinations on offer; but the market is burgeoning rapidly with many of India's royals and aristocrats of standing, opening up their private world of pomp, circumstance, and regal nostalgia to tourism to ensure the upkeep of inheritance, often massive, beautiful, richly appointed but sometimes severely encumbered Estates.





Deogarh Mahal - Deogarh

This medieval castle, situated in the lakeside village of Deogarh in the Aravalli Hills between Udaipur and Jodhpur, is one of Rajasthan's latest heritage offerings. Marked by its intimate ambience and personalised comforts and wake-up calls by the local peacocks, the rambling palace is now a luxury resort with 40 rooms with rich nuances of its historic past. Dine and share reminiscences with Rawat Nahar Singh, a scion of a renowned name amongst the Rajput aristocracy. The resort is fast becoming a byword of endearing warmth, modern comforts and pleasant company for a memorable sojourn. Shopping in Deogarh is a lovely pastime. With no pressure from touts and hawkers you can browse at leisure for silver jewellery, hand woven fabrics and other local artifacts. The hotel will be happy to arrange jeep safaris, riding and leisurely walks and picnics in the picturesque countryside.



Shahpura Bagh - Shahpura

A royal garden retreat by a lakeside, between Udaipur and Jaipur, this summer home of the Shahpura rulers has opened its doors to visitors from home and abroad. The aristocratic family, which continues to reside in the Nahar Niwas, takes an active interest in running the hotel - making every effort to ensure that your stay is comfortable and actively stimulating with bike rides, fishing, boating, birding and temple, step well visits as well as exposure to local craftsmen.



Samode Haveli - Jaipur

A popular retreat for visitors to Jaipur this beautifully restored haveli, run by the descendants of Rawal Sheo Singhji, a Prime Minister in the royal court of Jaipur, promises a royal but intimate and friendly sojourn. The 22 guestrooms, a stunning array of rich furnishings and textures, come equipped with contemporary in-room comforts. The lavish settings of the Sheesh Mahal leave you spell-bound with its elegance and artistic splendour. The spacious Maharaja and Maharani suites are enhanced by their

Heritage Hotels

plethora of frescoes and mirror mosaics. While away the languid hours by the pool or the Jacuzzi or arrange for an Ayurvedic massage or a round of golf- then savour the delights of the cultural offerings over drinks and dinner in the central courtyard in the evenings.



Pahuna Haveli - Udaipur

Hemant Kumari, wife of ex-tea planter Hanwant Singh runs a lovely home, defined by the traditional warmth and cheer of a life spent amongst the tea and coffee plantations around India. The serenity and the comforts that await you in this delightful haveli, located in a quiet enclave in Udaipur city, underscore the popularity of this pleasant homestay. The seven rooms, clean and elegantly furnished, are pools of tranquility and quiet ease. A lively hostess, Hemant arranges the day's meals and spreads the warmth of her personality to her guests in the true traditions of a tea-wife and Mewar hospitality.

Surajgarh Fort - Shekhawati

The painted towns of Shekhawati in Rajasthan continue to draw visitors from around the globe with their aesthetic offerings. In Surajgarh, a three and a half hour drive from Delhi on the outskirts of the Shekhawati region, visitors can stay at the lovingly and aesthetically restored Surajgarh Fort. Spread over 4 acres, it has 14 suites equipped with modern bathrooms, airconditioning and even TV. The resort is the lovely home of Tikaraj Aishwarya Katoch, son of the Princess of Jodhpur and the Maharaja of Kangra. Meals are very special at the resort as you will be tempted with the specialties of Sailana- as your gracious hostess Tikarani Shailija is the

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daughter of the Maharaja of Sailana who has written a book on the culinary delights of Sailana.

Udai Bilas Palace - Dungarpur

Casting its spell over you with its lakeside locale, this 19th century palace has opened its doors to discerning tourists who can appreciate the privilege of enjoying the unrestrained hospitality of Rajasthan's aristocracy. The sculpted pillars, fretted balconies and vaulted turrets enhance the classic feel and ambience of Rajput architecture- all graceful lines and atmospheric nuances. Guests can enjoy the piquant pleasures of comfortable heritage suites, swims and Jacuzzi soaks, while looking forward to interesting company over drinks and dinner. You can wander around the old fort located in the town, arrange for bird watching jaunts by the lake and ask for a picnic lunch in the countryside to take full advantage of the balmy winters of Rajasthan.





Coconut Lagoon - Kerala backwaters

This beautifully furnished heritage resort, accessible by boat, enjoys gorgeous views of the famous Kerala backwaters from its perch on the eastern shore of Lake Vembanad, at the mouth of the Kavanar River. You will love staying in the old tharawads - traditional wooden residence of Kerala. You can choose one of the the Heritage Bungalows which are independent cottages, seated in landscaped lawns by the canal; else there are the larger Heritage Mansions with their boat - like architectural lines. Some of these wooden residences, which have been dismantled and relocated at Lake Vembanad site from various villages and plantations in the surrounding countryside, date back to the early 1700s— some, to a century ago. All have been installed with modern amenities for a comfortable sojourn. A new addition to the resort is the posse of new pool villas, matching the general ambience of the resort. The resident naturalist will be happy to accompany you on nature walks where you can thrill to the stunning butterfly population in the vicinity of the shy but playful otters by the lake. The resort also arranges traditional Ayurvedic massage, a traditional kalaripyutoo performance every morning and demo classes for Kerala's culinary traditions everyday.

The Bangala - Karaikudi

Set amongst the verdant enclaves of the outskirts of Karaikudi village with its cluster of 75-odd villages known as the Chettinad region this 75-year-old traditional Chettiar mansion (nattukottai) is run as a hotel by its owner Meenakshi Meyyappan. The Chettiars, affluent merchant capitalists of south-central India in Tamil Nadu, were renowned for creating some of the most richly accoutered personal residences with lavish interiors and



fantastically carved wooden doors. But many of these stately estates fell into disrepair due to huge financial losses incurred by their owners with the changing fortunes of the East India Company and the growing independence of the nations they traded with. The Bangala is one of the few survivors of this tradition and has graciously opened its doors to the hospitality market with its offerings of overnight stays or the privilege of enjoying a traditional and legendary home-cooked Chettinad cuisine lunch. The hotel has 12 ac doubles with attached bathrooms and arranges tours around Karaikudi.

Kawardha Palace - Kawardha

Ensclosed amongst vistas less traveled this charming marble and stone Indo-European palace with its ornamental Darbar hall, high vaulted ceilings, in Chattisgarh, has been quietly attracting a slew of worldly-wise clients for decades now. The 1930s palace, which falls in sheltering vistas of the Maikal range offers personalised homestays. The sprawling suites, wrap-around verandahs, cool bowers and sumptuous gardens are perfect for unwinding after rewarding visits to Kanha National Park, the nearby 11th century Bhromdeo Temple and day-long tours of local tribal communities. Yogeshwaraj Raj Singh (son of the erstwhile Maharaja), and his wife Kirti Singh, daughter of the Tripura royals, make every effort to make your stay a memorable as they help you explore the tribal culture, natural beauty and the archaeological treasures of this young state. Relax over a drink in the serene environs of the Zebra Room an evening bar and a library.

LUXURY CAMPS

Customised quiet comforts, luxurious cossetting and efficient care mark the advent of the royal tented vacation experience, available at some of India's most attractive holiday destinations.





Aman-I-Khas - Ranthambhore National Park

Mughul royalty refused to give up their luxuries while they were travelling and the Mughal tent today has come to epitomise the very essence of opulence and comfort. Visitors at this super-luxury tented jungle resort, pitched by the fringes of Rajasthan's premier game park, Ranthambhore National Park, can be assured of one of life's most memorable experiences. The 10 commodious aircon tents with airy rooms (divided by delicate drapes into separate sleeping, private dining, and bathroom areas) and lofty canopies enhance the sense of space and luxury in every which way. Aman-i-Khas is an excellent base to discover these rich jungles renowned for tiger-spotting experiences by jeep safari. Gourmet meals from the fresh produce from in-camp garden and a state-of-the art health spa add to the pampering in store for you amidst all this understated luxury.



Jodhpur Royal Tents - Jodhpur

The Maharajas of yesteryears too enjoyed their luxuries wherever they went and particularly so when out on shikar (hunting trips). The royal camp would be equipped with every comfort, regardless of what it took to create such luxury for the royal entourage. One of Rajasthan's leading crafts and (now a popular export) are luxury tents and if you get the option to stay at the trend-setting Royal Jodhpur Tented Camp be assured of enjoying a living-historic experience that has long passed into legend for those who have been thus privileged to enjoy. Created from weather-proof cotton canvas these lavish tents are equipped with hand-crafted furniture and upholstery sourced locally. The outdoor verandah with each tent is the perfect sit-out for an early cup of tea. Traditional gourmet meals are arranged in the great dining tent while the soft desert evenings rock to the sounds and rhythms of local musicians, dancers, puppet shows, jugglers, flaming torches and camel parades.





Chattra Sagar - Nimaj

A lovely two-hour drive from Jodhpur airport takes you on a journey of discovery to one of Rajasthan's lesser known secrets. The Chattra Sagar Dam at Nimaj is fast gaining a formidable reputation as the site of a seasonal luxury camp that offers a variety of stimulating activities in and around the campsite. The vast lake created by the dam is home to a host of resident birds and masses of migratories from the continent and central Asia. Nandi and Harsh Singh along with their wives have made every effort to keep their guests comfortable and assured of a memorable eco-friendly holiday. The spacious tents, which are east-facing to catch those stunning sunrises, are equipped with in-built bathrooms and comfortable furnishings. Your gracious hosts will be happy to accompany you on a birding spree, country walks or even a rural safari around the local villages and making your interactions with the village communities a rich cultural experience.



Manvar Desert Camp - Manvar

An indescribable experience of fun and adventure amidst the sand dunes in the Thar Desert awaits visitors staying at this delightful desert camp located near Jodhpur in Shergarh district. The campsite itself is just 7km away from Manvar Resort. Comfort is ensured by the cosy arrangements in the 20 deluxe tents with their attached bathrooms, pitched in the desert wilderness, enclosed by sand dunes. Meals are a treasured experience as the dining tent is perfectly situated to take in those glorious desert vistas, the sunrises and the dazzling sunsets. The days are filled with jeep and camel safaris, while the evenings come alive with flickering mashaals and the local folk artists with their song and dance performances weave their own magic.



JUNGLE LODGES

The magic and majesty of the Indian jungles, so delightfully picturised in the riveting jungle tales of the likes of Jim Corbett, hunter-turned conservationist, have found a huge fan following around the world. Be it the wilderness of Kerala's wild elephant-rich forest lands or the savannah grassland-punctuated tiger havens of Madhya Pradesh, the wildlife enthusiast can be assured a truly rewarding jungle-experience in India. Offering easy access to these ancient forest lands with their dazzling range of wildlife are a slew of beautifully appointed forest lodges, hotels and eco-friendly resorts, which offer a range of services including tiger-spotting by jeep and elephant, birding tours and local community interactions.



Jungle Lodge

Incredible India



Taj CC Africa Bag Van - Pench National Park

In the rugged forestlands of Madhya Pradesh, where tigers roam free, lies the Pench National Park, one of India's less trumpeted tiger havens. And the beautiful lodge located by its fringes (a 5-minute drive from the entrance and one of the first jungle resorts run by the Taj group of hotels) offers visitors excellent opportunities to go tiger-spotting in one of the country's most beautiful jungles. The resort's eco-friendly features have merged seamlessly with modern comforts and conveniences (including a swimming pool) in the 12 spacious cottages equipped with private sit-outs. You can look forward to days filled with jeep safaris and elephant rides, boating, birding and guided nature walks in the reserve forest.



Royal Tiger Resort - Kanha National Park

The sal forest where the resort, (an ex-army venture run by Capt Navneet Singh and his team), is located in the buffer zone of the Kanha National Park, is a magical place each season. And a stay in one of the

18 quaint mud cottages with tiled roofs, inspired by the local tribal village architecture, but equipped with modern day comforts of an urban dwelling, offer visitors a unique holiday experience. The sit-out with each air conditioned cottage which has its own bathroom with 24-hrs hot and cold running water and 100 per cent power back-up, offers delightful vistas of the jungle while plenty of natural light floods into the rooms from the large picture windows. After a day of excitement of wildlife-spotting take a swim in the pool at the lodge and relax over drinks later, or with a book in the well-stocked library.



Kanha Jungle Lodge - Kanha National Park

Set out for an exciting holiday at Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh and stay at one of the park's increasingly popular jungle abodes. Just a short walk from the park's Mukki Gate, the resort is located in a beautiful forest rich in birdlife, offering rewarding birding opportunities in the resort complex. The lodge with its 18 rooms and two new independent cottages is geared for a relaxing jungle experience with a choice of nature walks, jungle visits and village community interaction on request.





Kings Lodge - Bandhavgarh National Park

One of India's most popular tiger-spotting national parks, Bandhavgarh has a host of accommodation options scattered along its periphery. One of the most favoured hotel options here is this beautifully located forest lodge spread over 10 acres in the Rancho Village and its surrounding sal-robed hills. Created from eco-friendly materials and equipped with an excellent eco-sensitive waste disposal system the picturesque resort has 8 aircon rooms set upon stilts and 4 cottage rooms with en suite bathrooms. Meals are served in a spacious central dining area. You will love the dip pool, the massage deck and the in-camp watchtower. Unwind after a jungle visit (accompanied by an in-house naturalist) at the massage deck or the well-stocked library. Spend evenings stargazing.



Mahua Kothi - Bandhavgarh National Park

The Taj hotel's luxury safari camp set up in collaboration with CC Africa (noted for years of experience running some of the world's best luxury safari camps) is named after one of India's most

beautiful trees, the Mahua (*Madhuca Indica*). The resort, equipped with 12 jungle huts with handmade tiled roofs, luxurious interiors, modern amenities and en suite bathrooms is situated on the old Churhat Kothi campsite. The swimming pool and an in-room Ayurvedic massage are a welcome respite after a day in the jungle with the in-camp naturalist. You will love the 'bullock-cart breakfast' served in the garden and impromptu picnics under the mahua trees.



Wild Grass Lodge - Kaziranga National Park

One of the best-loved, beautifully run jungle resorts, this family-run hotel has two lodges appointed with 18 comfortable rooms. Surrounded by rich verdure, the lodge offers jeep safaris and elephant rides in this UNESCO World Heritage Site game park which is home to the rare and endangered great Indian one-horned rhinoceros. Also on offer are tea estate visits and interactions with the local Karbi village community. Renowned for its personalised hospitality, the resort arranges delicious meals, bonfire evenings, poolside leisure and the promise of excellent company.



HIMALAYAN RETREATS & SPAS

Unpolluted environs, the healing of body and soul, and a reunion with the self mark the trail-blazing offerings of holiday resorts and destination spas in the soothing environs of one of the world's best mountain ranges.





Ananda in the Himalayas - Narendra Nagar

Defining itself as India's only lifestyle destination spa, at its launch, years later, despite the competition, luxury destination spa Ananda stands tall amongst the spa resorts. Promising physical and spiritual revitalisation it continues to attract the glittering jet set from home and abroad. With its array of state-of-the-art facilities to help you master the art of winding down, amongst the silences and splendours of Himalayan mountainscapes in an old palace retreat, Ananda is still close enough for river rafting fun and ashram trips in the holy town of Rishikesh. Visitors can avail of the healing processes of ancient Indian traditions of yoga, ayurveda and meditation along with western restorative and beauty spa treatments at Ananda.

Clouds End - Dharamsala

Set amidst the stunning vistas of the Kangra region this beautifully located residence of the erstwhile Raja of Lambagraon, Kangra, has on offer seven Raj-era style rooms backed by modern amenities for a comfortable stay. Acclaimed by the Tatlers Travel Guide (1993) as one of the 50 Best Hotels in the World, this charming villa is a great base for forest walks and trips to nearby Mcleodganj— home of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



Glenburn Tea Estate - Darjeeling

The personal touch of owner Husna Tara Prakash is very much in evidence in this splendid tea bungalow that is over one and a half centuries old. Set amidst the tea growing region of the hill station of Darjeeling, it overlooks the Rangeet River in the Eastern Himalayas. Steeped in traditional tea-planter hospitality and comfort, the bungalow's ambience is a delightful amalgam of Indian and colonial nuances. The ground-level rooms are equipped with comfortable sleeping areas and private sit outs, overlooking the verandah or the lovely garden at the Burra Bungalow. Another option is the Glenburn Lodge, just a short hop away by the River Rungeet, with lovely river views. Fragrant cups of tea set the pace for a leisurely day in the hill town with its stunning peek-a-boo views of Mt Khachendzonga and nature walks. For enthusiasts there's fishing, trekking and river rafting on the Teesta River.





Kalmatia Sangam Himalayan Resort - Almora

Smothered amongst stands of pine and fragrant mountain breezes, this beautifully appointed, Indo-European eco-friendly home of Dieter and Geeta Reeb in the Kumaon Himalayas offers visitors a warm experience of traditional Kumaoni hospitality and an insight into an ancient culture that has thrived under the benevolent eye of Mt Nanda Devi and her serried ranks of peaks espied from the massive bay windows and various perches. The in-house wellness programme including yoga, meditation and reflexology are particularly popular. Village and forest walks past fruit orchards, birding at the nearby Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary and temple visits at Almora and Jageshwar are welcome allurements.



Wildflower Hall - Shimla

Set amidst tranquil environs, Raj-era British Commander-in-Chief Lord Kitchener's palatial residence, Wildflower's new avatar as a luxury hotel from the Oberoi group offers a score of immaculate spa comforts. Recharge your batteries with the deft pampering of the Banyan Tree Spa and the idyllic views of the forested hills, languorous afternoons and high tea in the summer hills of this Raj retreat. The 87 luxurious suites, overlooking ancient cedar forests and mountainscapes and landscaped garden, are a bower of serenity and aesthetic delight, backed by a personalised butler service. The splendid Lord Kitchener Suite comes with a fabulous four-poster (and a second bedroom) and private dining and sitting areas. Golf can be arranged at the nearby Naldehra Golf Course.



TROPICAL SOUTH

A host of lovely resorts open up the casements to Kerala's traditional allurements and many new ones. From backwater cruises to jungle safaris in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, from the cultural delights of a Chettinad mansion to a holistic Ayurvedic spa experience, from the legendary spice trails in the Western Ghats to the fragrant tea and coffee breaks in the highlands, 'Kalidescopic Kerala' continues to enthrall.



Tropical South

Incredible India



Kalari Kovilakom - Palakkad

Situated amidst the serene environs of the Annamali Hills in Kerala at Palakkad, this tranquil 19th century Ayurvedic palace resort is fast becoming a favoured destination for those looking for a restful and healing vacation for body and soul. Jose Dominic's CGH Earth group has a true winner on their hands with the customised Ayurvedic healing processes, yoga and meditation promoted in this wondrous place. Set against a backdrop of wooded hills, the old palace is steeped in an ambience of soothing colours and enclosed within walls flamboyantly festooned with bougainvillea. The beautifully restored palace has Raj-era furnishings scattered amongst the suites, much-favoured by its European clientele. No meat or alcohol is served as is the custom in its austere ashram-like environs where Ayurvedic tenets are adhered to in their purest form. Personalised meals and herbal drinks are prepared from organic home grown produce. Classical music, a talk or hymns break up the evening silences.



Spice Village - Periyar Tiger Reserve

Just 3km away from Thekkady the main entrance to the Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kumily village is home to the delightful eco-friendly Spice Village concept promoted by Jose Dominic's CGH Earth group. Enhanced by four posters and footstools, the colonial elements and the modern-day comforts act as a beautiful foil to its traditional native tribal-style huts with their wraparound verandahs. Centred in the village complex is a glittering swimming pool, while for those looking for that extra pampering there's Ayurvedic massage and therapies conducted under the supervision of a qualified doctor and trained team. The in-house botanist helps visitors identify the spice trees on the grounds and the chef offers demonstrations and cooking classes of Kerala cuisine with spices every evening. In addition, you can enjoy jungle excursions and leisurely tea and spice garden tours.



Tropical South

Incredible India



Surya Samudra Beach Garden - Kovalam

Surya Samudra Beach Garden - Kovalam

The massive 20 acre beach resort is an eco-friendly attraction set amidst luxuriant gardens that has been attracting the well-heeled from home and abroad with its promise of de-stressing and revitalising environs for a luxurious and leisurely coastal sojourn. Accessible from Thiruvananthapuram standing by waters of Arabian Sea, this is said to be one Kerala's earliest heritage holiday offerings. In addition to those glorious seascapes, an offer are Ayurvedic therapies and Yoga sessions, in addition to those glorious seascapes, swims in a pool nestling in a rocky cradle, tempting meals and cosseting service from the attentive but unobtrusive staff.



Tranquil - Wyanad

The expansive plantation home of Victor and Ranjini Dey spread over the 400 acre Kuppamudi Coffee Estate is of over 70 years vintage. The intimate, cosy environs of this family-run escape in the wilderness plantation enclaves of the Wyanad region of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve has been going from strength to strength with its personalised care and

professional hospitality which has won much acclaim. The wrap-around verandah at this atmospheric bungalow, dripping in colonial nuances, is lovely for drinks in the evenings. The trekking trails set amongst the grounds of the plantation are popular with both amateur and veteran trekking enthusiasts.

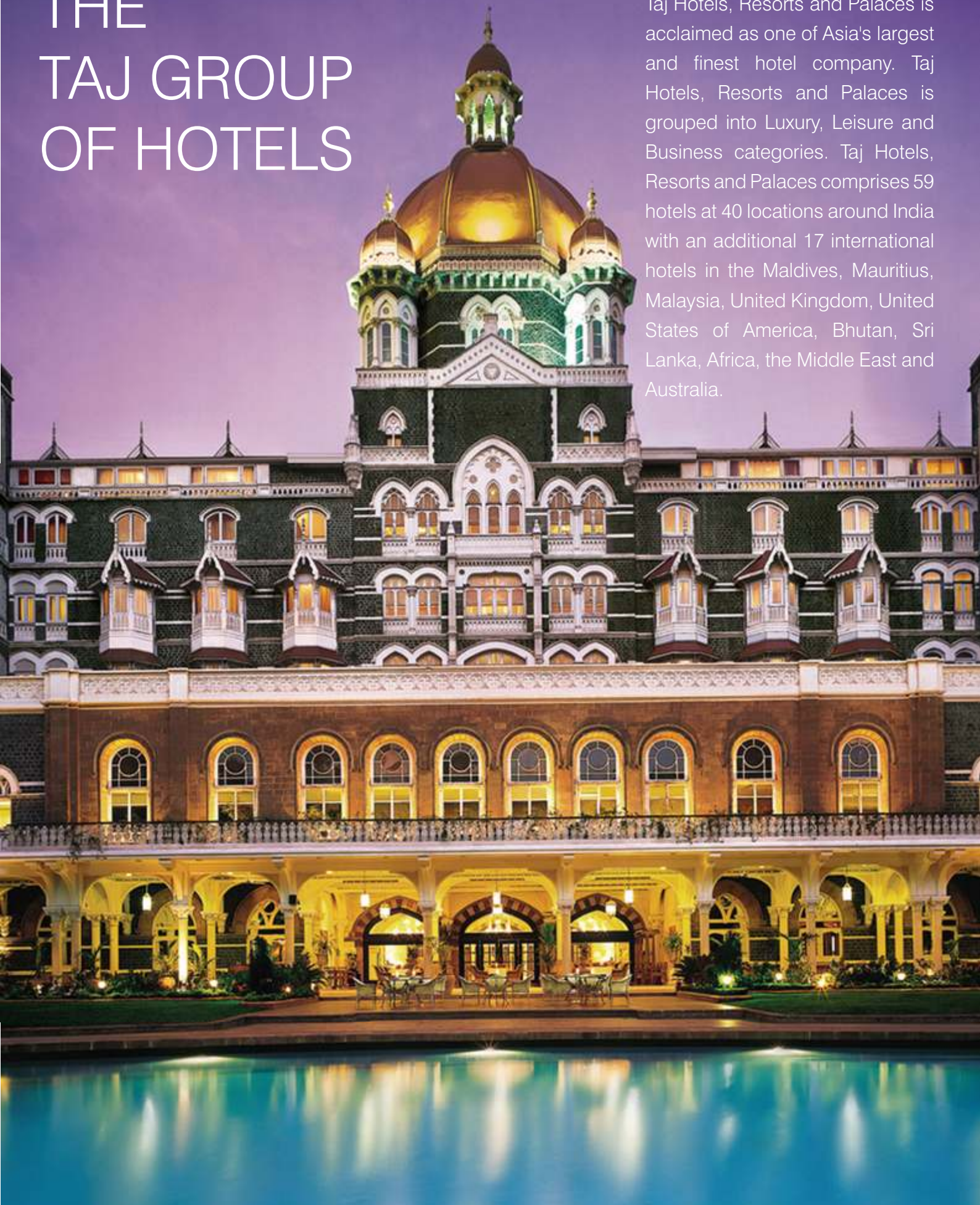


Windermere Resort - Munnar

The glorious countryside of Munnar is best explored from the gorgeous setting of this beautiful plantation homestead located on Observatory Hill, in the misty heights of the Palani Hills. The 360° panorama offers awe-inspiring moments amongst nature's most glorious vignettes of the Western Ghats. This 19th century estate is a working plantation with the cordial owner Dr Simon, a gentleman planter, residing in the bungalow and personally ensuring the comfort of his guests. Five double bed guestrooms are available at the old-fashioned but newly built farmhouse. You can even opt for the more roomy individual cottages with their picture windows. Estate walks, country treks and home cooked meals are much the order of the day in this tranquil retreat. Golf at Top Station, one of the world's highest golf courses, sailing and plenty of bird watching can also be arranged on request.

THE TAJ GROUP OF HOTELS

Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces is acclaimed as one of Asia's largest and finest hotel company. Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces is grouped into Luxury, Leisure and Business categories. Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces comprises 59 hotels at 40 locations around India with an additional 17 international hotels in the Maldives, Mauritius, Malaysia, United Kingdom, United States of America, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Africa, the Middle East and Australia.



The Taj Group of Hotels

Incredible India



The Taj Mahal Palace and Towers - Mumbai

The classic architectural lines but contemporary nuances speak volumes of how this gracious heritage hotel, Mumbai's most recognizable waterfront landmark, has continued to move with the times in every which way. Built in 1930, it opened its doors to the movers and shakers of the Raj era. This landmark hotel in India's hospitality industry, located besides Mumbai's historic harbour and the elegant Gateway of India by the Arabian Sea, continues to attract a slew of visitors from around the world all year round. A living legend in terms of hospitality, grandeur and glamour, the Taj is a cornucopia of understated luxury and warmth. Filled with memorabilia from its historic past, this atmospheric legend is the perfect retreat for those looking for nostalgia laced with contemporary pampering. Go for rooms in the historic old wing with its views of the Gateway of India and the Arabian Sea, browse at leisure in the bookshop, savour a cup of tea at the Sea lounge or gaze at serene harbour views.



The Taj Mahal Hotel - New Delhi

Its Mughal-inspired lines rise above the canopy of verdure lining the quiet avenues of Luteyins Delhi. A popular watering hole with the city's residents with its plethora of fine dining restaurants and a lively pub, the Taj rates high amongst visitors looking for a central location for pursuits of business and pleasure, and it does not disappoint. On offer are gorgeously appointed suites and a shopping arcade accessed by a stunning lobby with its lavish tapestries and vaulted dome. In close proximity lie the tony Khan Market shopping complex, the historic Lodi Gardens and the city's colonial, era clubs. A round of golf can be arranged on request.



Hotel Jai Mahal - Jaipur

Tucked away in a quiet enclave near the Civil Lines, this serene, sensitively restored 18th century Indo-Saracenic edifice is filled with a galaxy of old crystal mirrors, chandeliers, miniature paintings and tapestries, stained glass panels, and marble inlay. Set amidst sumptuous Mughal-style verdure, it is

The Taj Group of Hotels

Incredible India

within easy distance of the city's primary shopping hubs and historic places. Overlooking a beautiful garden, it has six suites and 100 rooms of different categories and budgets on offer. Get ready to be cosseted by a range of luxuries including opulently furnished rooms, great food and lively cultural offerings.



Taj Malabar - Kochi

Acclaimed and credited with being one of the most popular old-world escapes in town, this fine hotel is located at the tip of Willingdon Island in the Arabian Sea. Its heritage wing, with its Victorian lines and accoutrements, offers visitors a graceful bower of tranquility as a welcome foil against the busy streets and harbour of present-day Kochi. For those looking for a more contemporary ambience, there's the Tower Wing with its freshly renovated guestroom suites. Suffused with an aura of classic elegance and modernity, they overlook the waterfront and the historic Chinese fishing nets or the harbour.

Taj Exotica - Goa

A sanctuary of quiet ease and comfort on the southwest coast of Goa, its Mediterranean-style ambience has a favoured clientele drawn from both home and abroad. It has 140 centrally air - conditioned elegantly appointed rooms and villas, including two Presidential villas with private plunge pools to choose from for a leisurely sojourn in one of India's hottest beach holiday destinations. Enjoy those fabulous seascapes from your very own balcony. They also have rooms with garden views. For a truly luxurious, very private stay, opt for the



Sunset Pool Villa Rooms, set amidst palm and lush greenery with a large veranda and a private plunge pool.

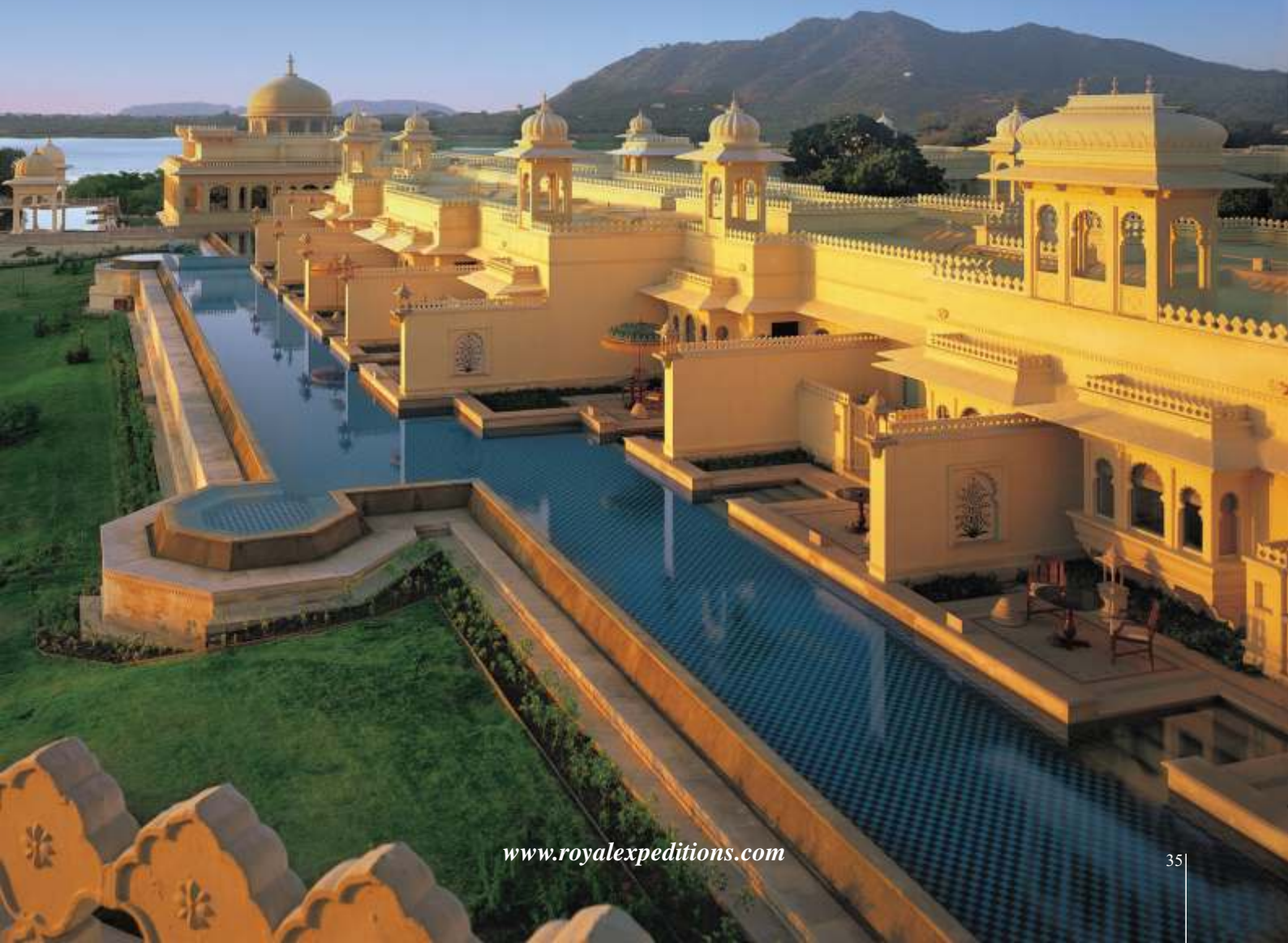


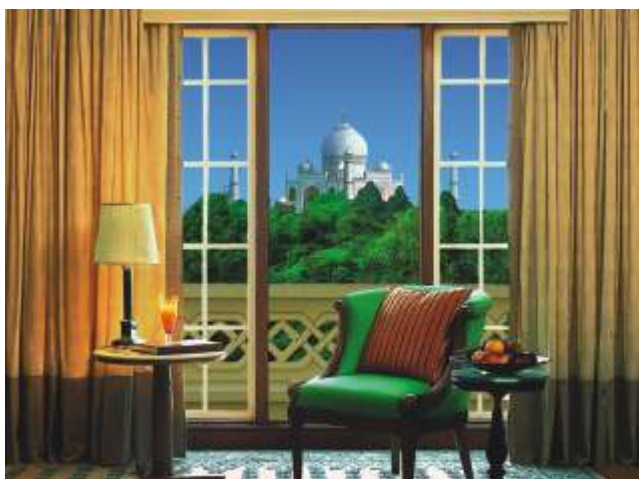
Taj Ganges - Varanasi

The gracious confines of this tranquil 5-star hotel at Raja Bazaar Road makes an excellent base for explorations of the bustling streets, temples and bathing ghats of one of India's holiest and historic cities by the hallowed Ganga River. Just 21 km from the airport, this dignified edifice with its richly appointed guestrooms and luxury suites is set amidst 40 acres of verdure of the Nadesar Palace Grounds that celebrates the tones and textures of this ancient city steeped in culture and historic splendour.

THE OBEROI GROUP OF HOTELS

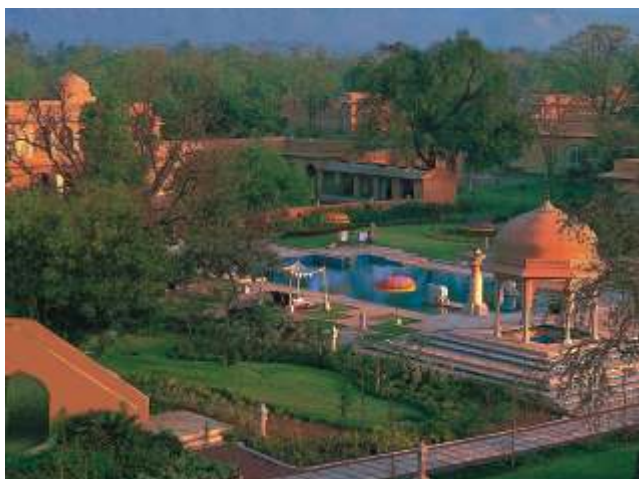
Founded in 1934, the Oberoi group of hotels owns or manages 32 hotels and luxury cruisers across five countries under the 'Oberoi Hotels & Resorts' and 'Trident Hilton' brands. Oberoi Hotels & Resorts are synonymous the world over for providing the right blend of service, luxury and quiet efficiency. The Group's new luxury resorts have established a reputation for redefining the paradigm of luxury among leisure hotels around the world. Nine Oberoi Hotels & Resorts are members of The Leading Small Hotels of the World.





Amar Vilas - Agra

The elite 'Vilas' brand of Oberoi luxury offers visitors an exciting heritage experience amongst the rich nuances of the Mughal era in the old city of Agra, home of that paean of love that is known the world over as the Taj Mahal. The best thing about Amar Vilas is its location, as it is the closest hotel to the monument and offers superb Taj Views from all rooms. The Mughal ambience of the hotel is heightened by its judicious use of architectural features such as courtyards, water bodies and landscaped gardens which act as a beautiful foil to the austere stonework. The hotel will be happy to arrange shopping sprees and local sightseeing trips to Fatehpur Sikiri, the legendary abandoned capital of Mughal emperor Akbar.



Raj Vilas - Jaipur

Continuing its international accolade-winning spree since its inception in Jaipur, Rajasthan's historic Raj Vilas is India's first boutique resort. An offering of the 'Vilas' brand of luxury from the Oberoi group, it is the country's toniest spa destination. In 2006 it topped the Travel and Leisure, Readers' Poll World's Best

Values 2006 listing for delivering the best experience at the right price and again, ranked 6th in Travel and Leisure, World's Best Hotels Awards Readers' Survey 2006 for the Top 100 Hotels in the World. The Banyan Tree Spa (proven performer of spa treatments from Thailand) at the resort offers a range of spa treatments backed by a compliment of world-class, state-of-the art amenities and traditional Indian hospitality. For those looking for a chilled-out sojourn the pleasures are all in the details of this stunning property with its landscaped gardens and Mughal-Rajasthani architectural features interleaved with the best modern-day comforts that money can buy.



Udai Vilas - Udaipur

Set along the lakeshore, this stunning marvel from the Oberoi chain has rightly earned its place in Travel and Leisure magazine's 100 Fabulous Places in the World and the Tatler Travel Guide's Top 100 Hotels In The World. A fabulous collaboration of Rajasthan's architectural marvels such as the use of space and grace, tranquility of verdure and waterways, palatial delights and elegant lines rendered by traditional domes and arches, chattris, fretwork and local thekri work, wraps you in a gauzy veil of ease and pampering. A cavalcade of 87 rooms and suites, accoutered with the finest of furnishings and facilities, overlook lake vistas and a city steeped in antiquity and romance. The Banyan Tree Spa of Thailand here offers the magical luxury of traditional Asian specialties in massage and healing treatments and a slew of world-class beauty treatments-- to de-stress and relax under the capable and caring hands of experts. Picnic on shikaras on the lake or Badal Mahal close by can also be arranged.



Vanya Vilas - Ranthambhore National Park

Edging the forested enclaves of Rajasthan's famous Ranthambhore National Park this luxurious jungle resort offers healing and resuscitation with a world class spa and wilderness experiences. Livered staff, a welcoming swimming pool, a gym and 25 plush luxury tents with spacious bathrooms with shower stalls and free standing tubs, a private sun deck, cable TV, broadband Internet, well-stocked mini-bars and controlled room temperatures put the resort in the premier league of luxury escapes. Classy accommodation, fine company and luxury jungle safaris at Vanya Vilas give it top billing for the worldly-wise traveller every time.

