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THE AGE
OF TINDER

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JAZZ
REVIVAL**

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WHAT
TO GET
HER
THIS
MONTH

TRAVEL GOALS 2017

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THIS YEAR

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RNI.NO.: MAHENG/2008/27014. Printed and published by Almona Bhatia on behalf of Conde Nast India Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Manipal Technologies Ltd., Plot No. 2/A, Shivalli Village, Industrial Area, Manipal 576 104 and published at 2nd Floor, Darabshaw House, Shoorji Vallabhdas Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400 001. Editor: CJ Kurrien. Processed at Commercial Reprographers. Distributed by Living Media Ltd. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission is strictly prohibited. All prices are correct at the time of going to press but are subject to change. Manuscripts, drawings and other materials must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. However, GQ cannot be responsible for unsolicited material.

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AT MAADHOO · MALDIVES

Letter
from the
Editor



WHITE NIGHTS

W

ay back in 2005, I was invited to St Petersburg by a local youth culture magazine, which wanted my help throwing an India-themed party. There was a huge demand for all things India, my Russian hosts told me, while ordering hundreds of saris and bindis for their guests. They also required an Indian DJ – desi beats were just about going global at the time – so I asked Zenzi's talented resident DJ, Kris Correya, to come along, eschewing the likes of Suketu and Aqeel.

When Kris and I arrived at the Mumbai airport to catch our flight, we were told that the Aeroflot aircraft had been grounded at Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow for technical reasons, and would only arrive the next day. When we eventually boarded the boat-like Tupolev plane, we were met by austere flight attendants who pointed us to bare-bones seats with not a television screen in sight. Later, we were handed food in blue plastic boxes. As soon as we touched down at Moscow airport, Kris and I were detained in a back room along with an elderly group from Pune on a package tour – then released after being grilled by a plump female immigration officer in an uncomfortably short skirt.

Yet, once we made it past the officials, Russia was enchanting, its people the warmest I have ever encountered. St Petersburg is a student town, and we visited during "White Nights" – three weeks every year when the sun doesn't set, and punters party in the cobblestone streets till dawn against the backdrop of turnip-shaped monuments. From our suite at the Hotel Grand Europe we had a direct view of the Hermitage, the Tsars' Winter Palace and now one of the world's greatest museums. Kris played a killer set of Bollywood mashups at the underground Lemon club, the vibe perfect with revellers dressed in faux Indian garb. I didn't realize it then, but this trip would check off one of my life's major travel goals. As you plan your travel for the year ahead, we've put together a list of places, spaces and experiences that you may want to add to your 2017 bucket list – Russia included, of course.

CHE KURRIEN
Editor

@chekurriengq



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Leonardo da Vinci



● **TARUN VISHWA**

WHO: Photographer

WHAT: Shoots this month's cover star, Shahid Kapoor, page 132

"Hitchcock's *Psycho*. The shower scene is iconic. The background score haunts long after you switch off. And then there's the cinematography, as well as the overall sensory chill that Hitchcock creates."

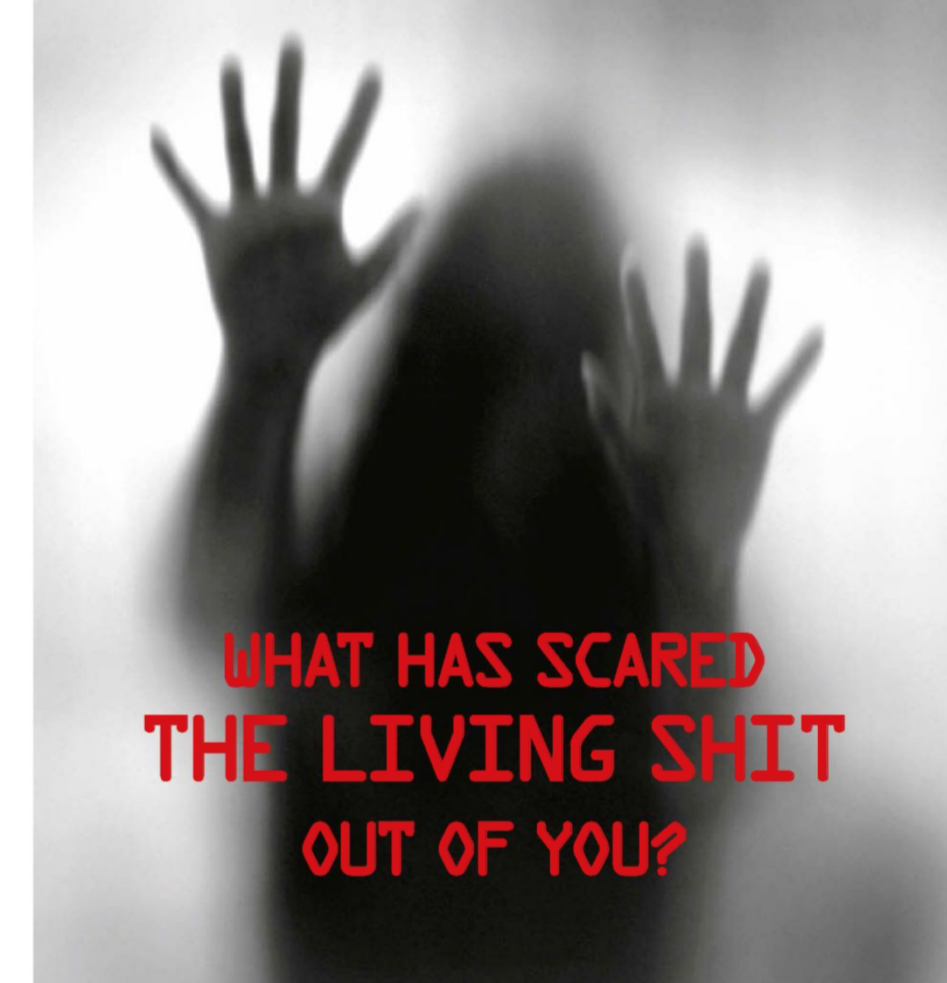


● **ABHISHEK BALI**

WHO: Photographer. Instagram @abhishekbaliphoto

WHAT: Captures the jazz scene in "Swing time", page 154

"*The Conjuring*. It's the most terrifying movie I've ever seen. Watched it in a hotel room in Agra. Couldn't sleep the whole night."



**WHAT HAS SCARED
THE LIVING SHIT
OUT OF YOU?**

● **BHANUJ KAPPAL**

WHO: Writer, freelance culture vulture. Twitter @stonerjesus

WHAT: Chronicles the revival of jazz in India, page 154

"I don't believe in the supernatural, and ghost stories make me laugh. But I do have one 'horror' story - being packed inside Zenzi's performance room watching Luke Kenny pretend to be Bob Dylan for two hours. I wanted to leave, but this little shindig to celebrate Dylan's 2007 album was my first paid piece as a journalist. It was excruciating. The scars still haven't healed."



● **SUMEDHA SAH**

WHO: Architect, illustrator, resident artist at The Industrial Design Centre, IIT Mumbai. Instagram @theumbrellabar

WHAT: Illustrates Bengali ghosts in "Soul call", page 144

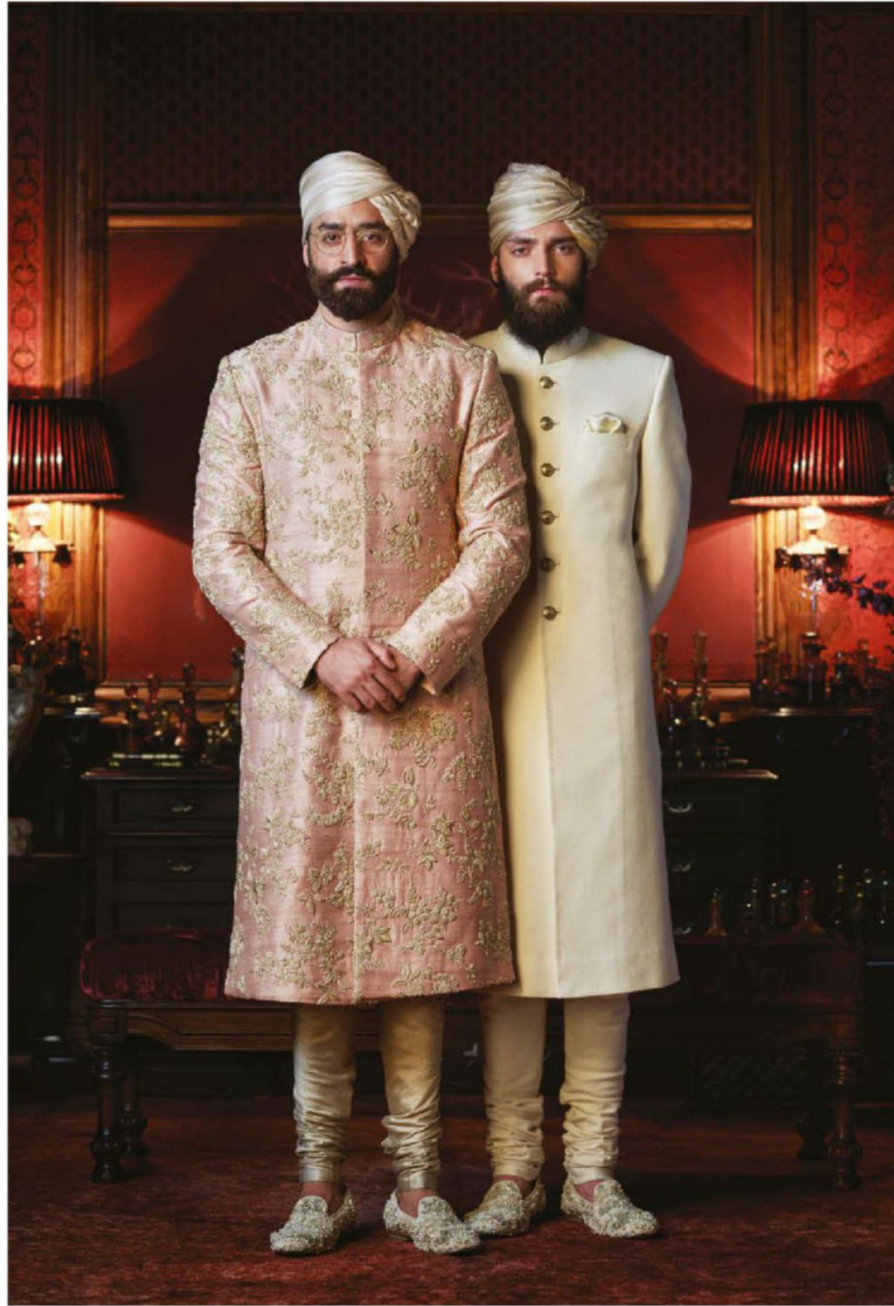
"Growing up in Nainital comes with its share of ghost stories. A particular one from my 130-year-old school, St Mary's Convent: It's said Mr Ramsay, the owner of the school property, loved his walks dearly. Even after a century, one could hear him with his walking stick, trotting about his cottage, which later became the school infirmary. So naturally, no one ever walked past the infirmary, but instead ran past it shrieking and holding hands."

● **BARADWAJ RANGAN**

WHO: Writer, film critic. Twitter @baradwajrangan

WHAT: Makes a case for good, scary Indian movies, page 150

"My shortlist of horror greats: *The Shining*, *The Wicker Man*, *Poltergeist*, *Suspiria* and *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*."



SABYASACHI
CALCUTTA



Stars of the night shift

The night belongs to those who dare. To those who set things alight with their style, their attitude, their initiative. Presented here are a few things you may want to keep in mind as you take charge of the night shift.



The dark style rises

Given the after-hours and muted lighting, a darker outfit with shades of blue, black and grey will make anyone look sharp, just don't go overboard and wear black from head to toe.

Go with a bolder colour like bright cerulean blue. Or, you could choose to go denim with black jeans in an extra-slim cut and a bit of shine. Top them off with a classic, fitted polo shirt.



Late night food trends

Consuming three meals a day at predictable times is so, so passé. Late-night dining and grazing are the habits of the stylish creatures of the dark. Smaller portions, mix-and-match options, and shareable samplers meet the needs of Millennials who congregate during late-night hours.



The night is to party

People are enjoying partying more than ever and hosts are vying with each other to get more creative. New experiences are challenging tradition. Party decorations shadow as art installations with special music compilations that can't be found on music apps. Menus seasoned with herbs from the host's personal garden will be the order of the day, with every party moment worthy of an Instagram post.

Set the night alight from A to B

Presenting the A-Class and B-Class Night Edition. The night belongs to those who leave the hottest impression. Leave behind a heat trail with the new A-Class and B-Class. With Smartphone Integration, 8-inch media display, Diamond Radiator Grille and 'Night Edition' Badging to set sparks flying. Add to these, the Black Mirror Housing, Black protruding Hub Caps, Black Valve Caps and you have some amazing star power. Go ahead, own the night. Today.



VAN HEUSEN | GQ
FASHION NIGHTS
Kunal Rautal



Anil Kapoor

VAN HEUSEN
POWER DRESSING

GQ

FASHION NIGHTS

Rohit Bal closes Day Two with a bang



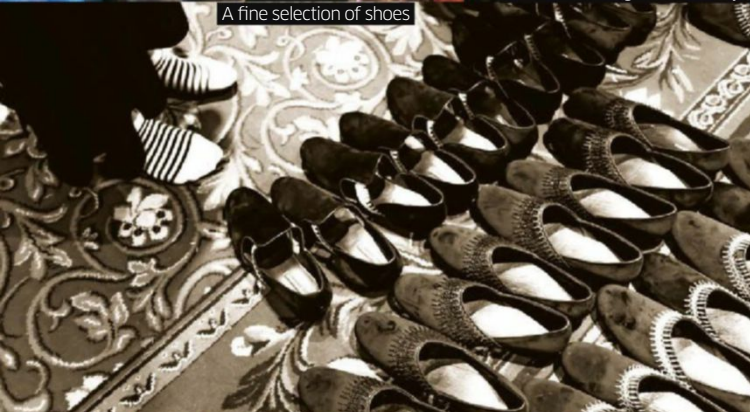
Rajesh Pratap Singh's
sublime menswear is set off
by thought-provoking masks



Prateik cheers on
New Wave designer Sahil Aneja



Aamir Khan, Kunal Kapoor & Farhan Akhtar



A fine selection of shoes



Harshvardhan Kapoor



Anushka Sharma

Over two nights packed with stellar men's fashion, an ultra glam crowd and some of the best designers in the business, we firmly planted the Indian flag on the international menswear map

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



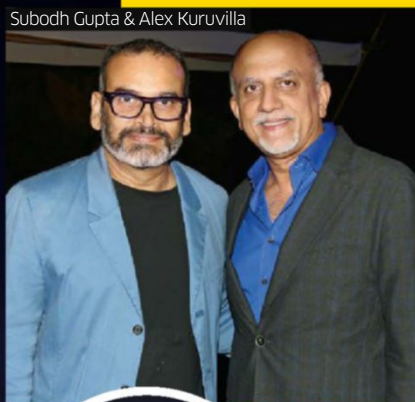
Rahul Khanna & Rohit Gandhi



Hrithik Roshan & Yami Gautam



Farhan Akhtar



Sooraj Bhat



Bibhu Mohapatra



Rohit Gandhi, Anushka Sharma & Rahul Khanna



The Van Heusen booth



Hrithik Roshan & Che Kurrien



Robin Singh



Bijoy Jain

Shantanu & Nikhil Mehra



The MINI Clubman



Suhel Seth



Ayan Mukerji



Mira Rajput Kapoor



Nandita Mahtani & Bhavna Pandey

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Acquin Pais in a look by Abhishek Paatni



Karan Singh Grover



Nico Goghavala & Kamal Sidhu



Ujjwala Raut



The Panerai display



Gaurav Gupta & Isha Ahluwalia



Sapna Pabbi



Rajesh Pratap Singh's gas masks



Namit Khanna looks every inch the dapper don in Van Heusen



Ashish Shah



Siddharth Poojari & Arjun Mehra



Sahil Aneja's
50 shades of grey



Fatima Sana Shaikh, Aamir Khan & Sanya Malhotra



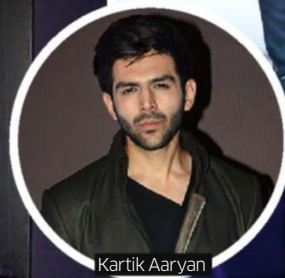
Velvet and
white lilies
break gender
codes at
Rohit Bal



Vikrant Massey



The Fratelli Wines bar



Kartik Aaryan



Van Heusen Creative
Director, Vani Kannan



Anil Chopra &
Arjun Khanna



Sulakshna Pathak



Madhu Sapre & Manasi Scott



Mandira Bedi & Aparna Badlani



Kriti Kharbanda



Kanishtha Dhankar



Sooraj Pancholi



Saloni & Rohit Suri with Almona Bhatia



Kim Sharma



Preeti Govindarajan, Ahmed Sheraf Nazir & Anshuman Bhaskar



NBA legend
Shawn Marion



The Bombay Perfumery display



Gaurav Bhatia



The OG Playa Anil Kapoor takes a bow with Kunal Rawal



Manan Gandhi



Theron Carmine De Sousa,
Shivangi Lolayekar &
Vijendra Bhardwaj



Candice Pinto



AD Singh & Anisha Dixit



Maneka Thadani

Kiran Rao, Sheetal Mallar & Diva Dhawan



Makeup by Sonic Sarwate of M.A.C Cosmetics



Kunal Rawal's luxe
menswear with a
Nehruvian vibe

VANHEUSEN
POWER DRESSING
GQ
FASHION NIGHTS

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All over stripes
at Rohit + Rahul



Ritika Jolly & Sameer Dattani



Harry Chandi, Bharat Kapoor & Mohit Hemdev



Ritu Shivpuri & Nisha Jamwal



Rohit Bal's boys



Adah Sharma



Vikram Raizada

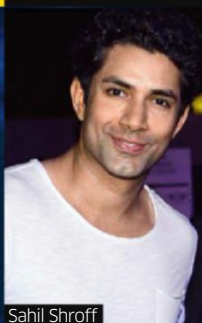
VAN HEUSEN POWER DRESSING GQ
FASHION NIGHTS



Errikos Andreou &
George P Kritikos



Vikas Bahl



Sahil Shroff



Sheetal Munshaw



Sharad Agarwal



Van
Heusen's
lesson in
power
dressing



Abhishek Haryson



Kelvin & Andrea Brown Cheung



Tarun
Mehrotra



Aparna Bahl



Bandita Patnaik &
Rajveer Kaur



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Sasha Rawal Bajaj



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modern ghostbuster in
leather and checks



Bikram Saluja



Nidhi Agerwal



Jatin Kampani

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And the paps go wild for Anushka...



Anuj Gautam & Kapil Kapoor



Aditya Hitkari & Divya Palat



Saket Dhankar



Kehkashan Merchant



Sahil Sangha



Pranati Rai Prakash



Charu Adajania



Nushrat Bharucha



Aartivijay Gupta &
Dhruv Kapoor

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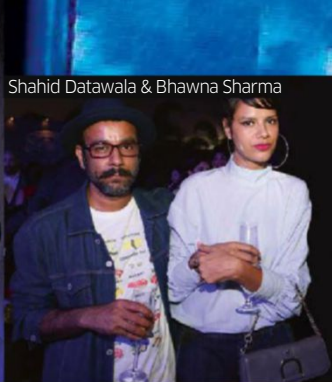
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Rajesh Pratap Singh and his showstopper Farhan Akhtar



Alexandra Elena, Luiza Nesterenko,
Prachi Mishra & Uliana Lazareva

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Aishwarya
Sushmita



Prabhat Choudhary



Pallavi Das



Nikhila & Vivan Bhatena



Madhumita Dutta



Pranav Mishra



Alexander Gellay & Cecilia Oldne



Akshay Tyagi, Sameer Makkar
& Payal Aneja



Akshay Oberoi



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by
shazé
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Abhishek Paatni's
new-age samurai warrior



Prateik, Sahil Aneja & Abhishek Paatni



Mala Kashyap & Lipika Ganguly

VAN HEUSEN
POWER DRESSING

GQ

FASHION NIGHTS



Oona Dhabhar, Akash & Priyanka Sheth with Jai Makhijani



Chhaya Momaya



Prashish More & Bikramjit Bose

Rohit Bal's
boys



Arpita Mehta



Amey Tingare

Tisca Chopra

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SHOW DIRECTORS: Aparna & Anisha Bahl of Preferred Professionals

STYLIST: Gautam Kalra

HAIR: BBhnt

MAKE-UP: M.A.C Cosmetics

BACKSTAGE MANAGEMENT: Nazneen Parakh & Suchi Shah

SET DESIGN & EVENT PRODUCTION: Seventy Event Media Group

PHOTOGRAPHS: Sagar Ahuja (Front of Ramp),

Chou Chiang (Backstage), Kedar Nene & Team, Manish Mansinh

VIDEO GRAPHICS FOR SHOW: Santana Issar & Fay Fernandes

LIGHTS: Viraf Pocha



Aalim Hakim & Shano



Yogesh Lakhani

SIDDARTHA TYTLER



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LION ON THE MOVE

Make in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's major national initiative designed to facilitate investment, foster innovation, enhance skill development, protect intellectual property and build best-in-class manufacturing infrastructure has made unprecedented progress. From mining to tourism, telecom to the automotive sector, from electronics and IT to power, food processing, textiles and more — it's been two years of stellar milestones and record-breaking achievements in some of the country's most important and flourishing sectors. As 2017 takes off, and the initiative continues to move forward, here's a roundup of some of the biggest successes conquered between 2014 - 2016 and an insight into the ones to come...

1 INDIA'S MINING SECTOR ROCK SOLID

WITH MINING

being one of the core sectors of the economy, providing basic raw materials to important industries, the Make in India initiative paved the way for liberalizing FDI up to 100 per cent under the automatic route. The result: in the last two years, this sector has witnessed major policy interventions — promoting exploration, private participation and steadfast growth.



GROWTH IN PRODUCTION

7% growth in mineral production in FY 2016-17

26% growth in iron ore and chromite production

E-AUCTION FOR MINERAL BLOCKS

17 mineral blocks auctioned across seven states, resulting in an additional revenue of **₹47,551 CRORE** and a total revenue of **₹59,639 CRORE**

FISCAL FILLIPS

- Export duties have been reduced on:
Iron ore (fines and lumps <58 per cent Fe grade), iron ore pellets and chromium ores and concentrates to NIL
- Bauxite (natural) to 15 per cent

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

◇ National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) set up:

- 13 MINERAL exploration projects in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, underway

◇ National Mineral Exploration Policy (NMEP), 2016 approved

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

- Mining lease/composite license granted only through auction
- Post Auction Mining and Approvals Facilitator constituted to expedite clearances and approvals
- Transfer of captive mining leases allowed

2 INDIA'S AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR TOP GEAR

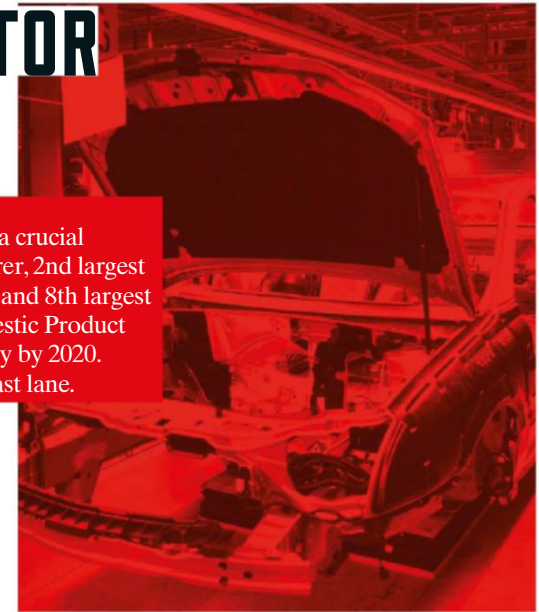
THE AUTOMOTIVE sector in India has always been a crucial catalyst. India is the largest tractor manufacturer, 2nd largest two-wheeler manufacturer, 2nd largest bus manufacturer, 5th largest heavy truck manufacturer, 6th largest car manufacturer and 8th largest commercial vehicle manufacturer. It contributes to 71 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product by volume and projects six million-plus hybrid and electric vehicles to be sold annually by 2020. Innovation, R&D and a favourable policy regime has put this sector's growth in the fast lane.

NATIONAL AUTOMOTIVE TESTING AND R&D INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT (NATIP) SET UP AT:

- Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), Pune
- Vehicle Research & Development Establishment (VRDE), Ahmednagar
- Automotive Inspection Maintenance & Training at (NIAMIMT), Silchar

SKILLING THROUGH AUTOMOTIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (ASDC)

2.8 lakh persons trained (2014-16)



UPWARD TREND IN PRODUCTION AND SALES

	CATEGORY	2014-15	2015-16	PERCENTAGE INCREASE
PRODUCTION	Electric & Hybrid Vehicles	17,107	71,909	320%
SALES	Electric & Hybrid Vehicles	16,513	65,224	295%
PRODUCTION	Passenger Vehicles	32,21,419	34,13,859	6%
SALES	Passenger Vehicles	26,01,236	27,89,678	6%
PRODUCTION	Commercial Vehicles	6,98,298	7,82,814	12%
SALES	Commercial Vehicles	6,14,948	6,85,704	12%

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

FDI increased | 2012-14: **72%** | **\$3.05** billion | 2014-16: **\$5.25** billion

AUTO-COMPONENT INDUSTRY: ROBUST GROWTH

There has been a growth in turnover:

- 15 per cent growth in turnover to ₹4,90,400 crore (2014-16) from ₹4,27,700 crore (2012-14)

There has been a growth in exports:

- Exports grew by 22 per cent during 2014-16 to ₹1,39,400 crore (2014-16) from ₹1,14,000 crore (2012-14)

3 INDIA'S TOURISM SECTOR OPEN FOR BOOKINGS

A FLOURISHING TOURISM

and hospitality sector is considered a direct agent of development and an engine for socio-economic growth. And for India, it has indeed been bright with Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism in rupee terms during FY 2016-17 (Jan-Dec, 2016) as ₹1.56 trillion with a growth of 15.2 per cent as compared to the FEE of ₹1.35 trillion during FY 2015-16 (Jan-Dec, 2015). What's more, the Domestic Tourist Visits to States/UTs have increased by 11.6 per cent in a year to 1.4 billion. As per the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2015 of the World Economic Forum, India's rank climbed up 13 places to 52 in 2015 from 65 in 2013. For every \$1 million spent in Travel & Tourism sales, \$0.18 million of GDP is generated in the agriculture sector and the wholesale and retail sector gains \$0.11 million.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- **1.85** lakh people trained through various skilling initiatives in 2 years
- An **INDIAN CULINARY INSTITUTE** (ICI) established in Tirupati
- **12** Institutes of Hospitality Management approved for the North East

GROWTH IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS

15.2 per cent increase in Foreign Exchange Earnings in a year

	Jan-Dec 2014	Jan-Dec 2015	Jan-Dec 2016	% increase (2015 vs 2014)	% increase (2016 vs 2015)
TOTAL	\$1.2 TRILLION	\$1.35 TRILLION	\$1.56 TRILLION	9.6%	15.2%

GROWTH IN TOURIST FOOTFALLS

11.6 per cent increase in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in a year

	Jan-Dec 2014	Jan-Dec 2015	Jan-Dec 2016	% increase (2015 vs 2014)	% increase (2016 vs 2015)
TOTAL	7.68 MILLION	8.03 MILLION	8.9 MILLION	4.5%	11.6%

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT UP AND UP

72% increase in FDI in a year
 FY 2014-15: **\$777** million
 FY 2015-16: **\$1.3** billion

INVESTING IN WORLD CLASS TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Swadesh Darshan:

- 13 theme tourist circuits identified for development.
- 51 projects worth ₹42.7 billion underway

National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD):

- 25 cities identified
- Projects worth ₹4.1 billion underway

VISA REGIME: A WARMER WELCOME

- E-visa scheme extended to 161 countries
- 2.5 times increase in e-visa arrivals in a year

4 INDIA'S TELECOM SECTOR

TRUE CALLING

THE INDIAN TELECOM

sector shaped by consumer demand, innovation and competitive forces offers tremendous investment opportunities. With the second largest subscriber base in the world with 1.1 billion connections (including fixed phone lines), the telecom industry is thriving. Recently, India with 275 million smart-phone subscribers, outpaced the United States, to become the second largest smart phone subscriber market in the world. The volumes and potential growth of India's mobile market makes it an ever increasingly important investment destination world over.

GROWING SUBSCRIBER BASE

2nd largest subscriber base globally – with **1.1** billion connections

2nd largest smart-phone market globally – with **275** million users

SKILL DEVELOPMENT **3.5** lakh people trained

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT & SECTOR REFORMS

- \$8 billion in FDI
- Spectrum sharing, trading, harmonization and auction initiated

GROUND-BREAKING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Overall Tele-density reached 86.25 per cent
- Rural Tele-density reached 52.43 per cent

MANUFACTURING ON THE UPSWING

- 38 new mobile manufacturing units set up since September 2015, creating 38,300 new jobs
- Number of mobile phone units manufactured grew by 83 per cent in 2015-16

5 INDIA'S FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

\$1.16 billion in FDI equity inflow until September 2016

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

56 cold chain projects completed

6 Mega Food Parks operationalised

4 Abattoirs operationalised

11 Quality Testing Food Labs commissioned

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS INITIATIVES

- Single Window Facilitation Cell set up for investors
- Help Desk managed by Invest India
- 1,590 queries have been answered

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

28,199 people trained

THE FOOD PROCESSING

sector in India, a sunrise sector, is poised for immense growth and greater contribution to the world food trade. The sector has witnessed a number of initiatives undertaken by the government since June 2014 primarily aimed at scaling up infrastructure for storage transport, tackling the issue of food wastage in the country and creating value addition that will benefit both producers and consumers in India through facilitating domestic and foreign investment—for example: The Government has sanctioned 42 Mega Food Parks out of which 6 Mega Food Parks are operational and the remaining would be operational in the next two years. Each Mega Food Park is expected to create direct and indirect employment to about 5,000-6,000 persons and benefit approximately 25,000-30,000 farmers.



6 INDIA'S TEXTILES & APPAREL SECTOR AN XXL OPPORTUNITY

THE INDIAN TEXTILE

industry exhibits the rich cultural heritage of the country with a wide variety of fabrics, techniques and hues that reflect the diverse set of people and traditions. One of India's oldest industries, it covers an extensive spectrum of segments, from hand woven/hand-spun, unorganised segment on one end to capital and technology intensive organised segment on the other, India is the largest producer of Jute in the world and is the second largest producer of silk and cotton globally. What's more, this industry is the second largest employer. The textile sector is a key investment destination for manufacturers around the world.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- **19** new textile parks underway
- **3** new mega textile clusters underway

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

41% growth in FDI

FY 2014-16: **\$427.6 MILLION** | FY 2012-14: **\$302.8 MILLION**



PROMOTION OF INDIAN HANDLOOM

• **INDIA HANDLOOM BRAND**

launched on August 7, 2015 to provide brand value to handloom products

- Indian Handloom Website launched as a **ONE-STOP-PLATFORM** on February 11, 2016 for all services to consumers, bulk buyers and handloom producers

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

- **5.3** lakh youth have been trained
- Over **81%** people have been placed, including 79 per cent of the trained women

INNOVATION & R&D

6 Focus Incubation Centres (FIC) have been set up to help budding entrepreneurs develop innovative technical textiles

SPECIAL PACKAGE

₹6,000 CRORE

aims to create

10 MILLION additional jobs
aims to attract

\$11 BILLION additional investments
aims to generate

\$30 BILLION additional exports

7 INDIA'S ELECTRONICS & IT SECTOR IN WITH THE I.T. CROWD

THE ELECTRONICS

market of India is one of the largest in the world. As the demand for high-end products rises in the domestic market, the Indian ESDM sector is projected to grow at a CAGR of 24 per cent from \$70 billion in 2014 to \$400 billion by 2020.

SKILLING INITIATIVES

Digital Saksharta Abhiyan and National Digital Literacy Mission

99.6 lakh candidates
enrolled for training

82.7 lakh trained | **47.1** lakh certified
And over

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

Investment Facilitation Cell for the Electronics sector and Help Desks for Japan and Israel set up. 914 queries addressed for the Electronics sector

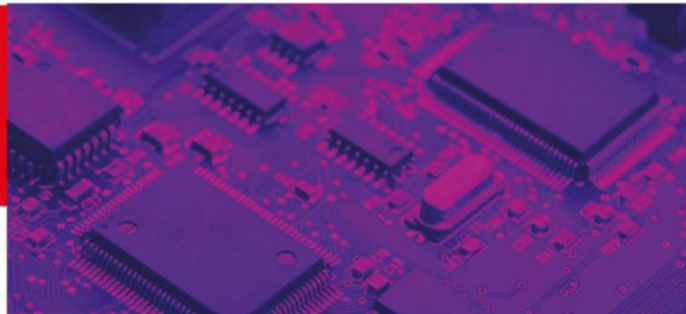
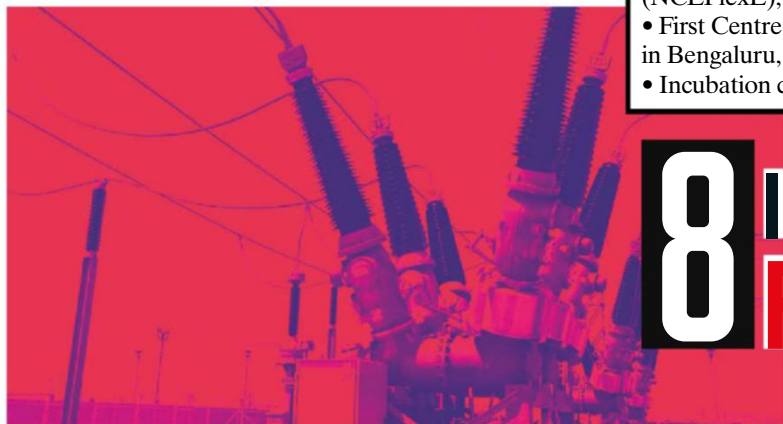
FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

Total FDI equity inflows:

- 409 per cent increase in FDI in Computer Hardware & Software sector from \$1.6 billion in 2012-14 to \$8.2 billion during 2014-16.
- 79 per cent increase in FDI in Electronics sector from \$170 million in 2012-14 to \$305 million during 2014-16.

INNOVATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

- National Centre of Excellence in Technologies for Internal Security (NCETIS), IIT Bombay, set up
- National Centre of Excellence for Large Area Flexible Electronics (NCEFlexE), IIT Kanpur, set up
- First Centre of Excellence for Internet of Things (CoE-IoT) in Bengaluru, set up
- Incubation centre in Delhi, set up



8 INDIA'S POWER SECTOR POWER PLAYER

POWER FOR ALL BY 2022

- 30728 GW of installed capacity—fifth largest globally
- 50,471.41 MW addition in generation capacity since 2014 (until October 2016)
- Lowest ever energy deficit of 2.1 per cent

Electricity generation increase:
FY 2013-14: | FY 2014-15:

967 BU | **1048 BU**

FY 2015-16:

1107 BU

NATIONAL LED PROGRAMME

17.9 crore LED
bulbs distributed as
of November 2016

14.5 lakh street lights
replaced in several
States as of November 2016

India has the world's fifth

LARGEST POWER

generation portfolio. Now with 100 per cent FDI permitted under the automatic route in this sector, a major addition in capacity has been seen in the last two years.

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS ON THE UPSWING

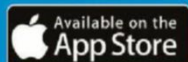
- Power Purchase Agreement for hydro projects extended beyond 35 years for an additional period of 15 years
- Hydro projects exempted from competitive bidding until August 15, 2022

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PLAY

EDITED BY NIDHI GUPTA

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS MONTH

MUSIC

STRING SESSIONS

This month's live music landscape is for a more seasoned palate, as acoustic instruments take over. Here are three acts GQ recommends to ditch the amp

WHO: Quinn Sullivan

WHAT: The 17-year-old prodigious guitarist, discovered and mentored by the American legend Buddy Guy. Sullivan's astronomic rise to fame began as a backstage fan moment, at the age of seven. Now, he performs around the world as part of the Experience Hendrix tour and is promoting his 2016 album *Midnight Highway*.

WHEN & WHERE:

February 11-12 at the Mahindra Blues Festival, Mumbai. This will be Sullivan's second appearance in three years – and first without his mentor.

mahindrablues.com →





WHO: Afro Celt Sound System

WHAT: A four-piece British band that melds modern dance music with traditional Irish, West African and bhangra music. Listen to their 2016 album *The Source*, their first in a decade – it fuses Highland bagpipes with dhol, flutes with Gaelic rap, desert blues with uilleann pipes. And there are all matter of instruments: balafons, koras, harps, bohrán. If you think world music's lame, Afro Celt could change your mind.

WHEN & WHERE:

February 3-5 at Sulafest, Nashik.
sulafest.net

WHO: Symphony Orchestra of India

WHAT: India's only professional western classical ensemble is now over 10 years old. For their Spring season, world-famous conductor Carlo Rizzi will lead Beethoven's *Symphony No 5*. Also expect vocal recitals by the likes of Simon O' Neill and an "innovative" rendition of Giacomo Puccini's opera *La Bohème*. Time to brush up on your Bach, Vivaldi and Mozart.

WHEN & WHERE:

February 2-11 at NCPA, Mumbai.
soimumbai.com

If you insist on "EDM4lyf"

VH1 Supersonic is on February 10-12 in Pune; Amsterdam Dance Events Global Sessions' 2nd edition is on February 26-28 in Mumbai



DATING THE NOOB'S GUIDE TO EMJI FLIRTING

If you must look for a Valentine's date on Tinder, you've got to upgrade your seduction game

🍷🍹🍹 Drinks? // 🙈 Bashfulness. Also: the perfect response to a compliment or to soften your own brazenly suggestive comment. // 🌹 Akin to a bouquet of red roses, it's timeless, classic and also waaaaaaay too forward for a light flirtation. That said, if you get it, feel free to slide into the DMs. // 📶 Signals FOMO (fear of missing out); three in a row is a

perfect response to a nude sext if you're in a different city/state/country or stuck at work (see also: 🙏). // 🙌 Seal of approval. The polite might use it for a restaurant suggestion or the setup of some casual plans. Basically, "cool" but not "cool!" Used three in a row means "thank you!!" // 🍑🍑🍑 All emoji equivalents of nudes. Use with caution or else complete abandon, depending on the desired reaction and receptiveness of the recipient. // 🙄 Derp. Indicates awkwardness at your last comment, text or social media

behaviour. Not a complete deal-breaker but suggests a cooling of enthusiasm (see also: 🙄). // 🙄 Basically, "What are you doing?" // 🙄 Hi. Um. Not interested. Sorry? Sorry! // 🙌 When you're particularly pleased with yourself about something, a pat on the back. Especially endearing when used by dudes. // 💀🔪 You are dead to me and I should just ghost and not respond at all but I just have to get this one emoji off my chest. // 💙💚💛🌸 Let's be friends! Basically, the 💀🔪 for any romantic possibility. 🙄

CERULEAN RHAPSODIES

Turquoise waters mingling with azure skies. Emerald palms glistening over sun-kissed beaches. The soul-calming roar and crash of the surf – **JA Resorts & Hotels** beckons you to experience the magic of the Indian Ocean with stunning properties in the Maldives and Seychelles

JA MANAFARU, MALDIVES

The Maldives can cast a spell on its visitors, making them return to the shimmering atolls, season after season. But JA Manafaru, Maldives – a luxury resort on a 35-acre private island – is a place you never want to leave. A direct seaplane from Male Airport will get you here within 75 minutes. You could choose from seven different accommodation options, as each one has a private pool. We recommend, the Sunset Villa or Sunrise Villa – over-water villas with private decks, infinity pools, i-Spa bathtubs and glass panels in the flooring that let you peek at the marine life. The resort also has six world-class dining options that cater to discerning palates. But if you're looking for a tippie, head to The Cellar – an underground wine cave. During your stay, plunge into the depths of the sapphire sea with experienced 5-star PADI and SSI-certified teams or participate in water sports like windsurfing, kayaking, jet-skiing and wakeboarding. But if you'd rather stay on land, lounge by the swimming pools or indulge in relaxing treatments at Calm Spa & Salon. The aromatherapy massages by Elemis are an absolute must.

ENCHANTED ISLAND RESORT BY JA, SEYCHELLES

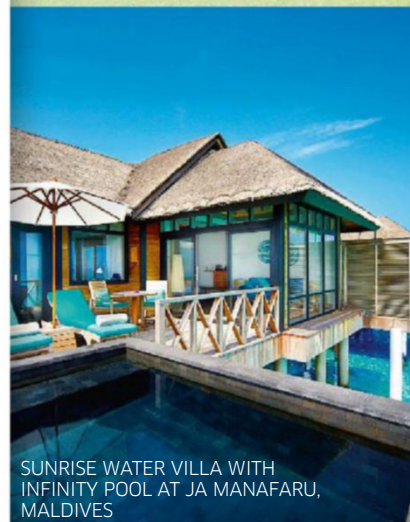
This otherworldly archipelago of 115 islands, is something out of a dream. But if you're looking to fulfil a *Castaway* fantasy, stay at the Enchanted Island Resort – a secluded hideaway, just 15 minutes away from the main island. The word “exclusive” doesn't even begin to describe it. With only 10 Creole-style colonial villas, each one featuring private beach access and an infinity pool, amongst several other luxuries such as a private sundeck and a French bathtub overlooking the endless ocean, as well as a personal butler at your beck and call! Better still, if you're a group of 24 people, you can call this private island resort your own. Book it for your next big family vacation. The island resort also has a gym, a restaurant and bar, a Yoga Pavilion, a library and the Serena Spa. But if you're looking for privacy, an in-villa barbeque experience can also be arranged. The resort also organizes excursions for those who wish to explore neighbouring islands.



THE VIEW AT ENCHANTED ISLAND RESORT, SEYCHELLES



FRENCH BATHTUB AT ENCHANTED ISLAND RESORT, SEYCHELLES



SUNRISE WATER VILLA WITH INFINITY POOL AT JA MANAFARU, MALDIVES



AERIAL VIEW OF JA MANAFARU, MALDIVES

IF YOU'RE A GROUP OF 24 PEOPLE, YOU CAN CALL THE ENCHANTED ISLAND RESORT YOUR OWN

For reservations, call +971 4 814 5500, email reservations@jaresorts.com or visit jaresortshotels.com



MALDIVES





#INLOVEWITHSWITZERLAND

since landing on Jungfrauoch - Top of Europe.

Ranveer Singh, Actor

Explore Switzerland Ranveer Style - visit [MySwitzerland.com](https://www.myswitzerland.com)



Switzerland.
get natural.



TECH

DREAM STREAM

Cutting the cord? Apple TV's the most interesting way to go wireless

So, you're watching Ricky Gervais oafing around as a travelling salesman in his new Netflix comedy. And you're watching it on Samsung's KS9500, the most curved/bright/4K/HD TV out there. But Gervais has a thick Estuary accent and you don't like subtitles. "What did he say there?" you ask, almost to yourself. And Siri promptly rewinds 15 seconds.

It may sound like small change, but it's one of the coolest features on the fourth-gen Apple TV (Siri also instantly pulled up trivia on Gervais, when we asked, "Where have I seen him before?"). The Apple TV runs on a powerful dual core 64-bit A8 processor, and is built around the tech giant's conviction that the future of everything is apps. On the latest tvOS 10.1, you've got your Hotstars, Netflixes, Spuuls, Eros Nows (no Amazon Prime Video though). There's also an app called TV, that lets you access content without having to go through their host apps (except Netflix, oddly). And of course it lets you access, stream and organize your photos and videos, play music and games (*Alto's Adventure* on a 64-inch screen, anyone?). All this at your fingertips with Apple's "revolutionary" remote control.

This sleek black accessory, smaller than an iPod Shuffle, has all of five buttons, and a touch pad so efficient it takes some getting used to. (Tip: Go to Settings and minimize the sensitivity straight up.) Hit the mic button, and Siri pops up to help you with everything. Eventually, once your home catches up, Apple claims it can also monitor everyday functions. All of which goes to prove that the Apple TV isn't just the best (if the most expensive) way to watch TV right now; it's a peek into the potential of AI in your home.



FILM

NOW, A MARS BABY

The Space Between Us is space travel 101 for the iGen

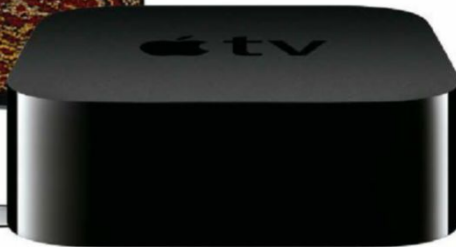
They've made films about astronauts trying to colonize Mars. About astronauts falling in love on their way to Mars. About astronauts stranded on Mars (but it's OK because they have a sense of humour). But in 2017, since we live on a crumbling planet with Elon Musk, the Noah to our 21st-century apocalypse, we must consider the ramifications of actually living on Mars. Peter Chelsom (*Serendipity, Shall We Dance?*) gives us a kid born on a spaceship, growing up there, taking a trip back to Earth to look for his roots and scrawling "I wuz here" on walls. Even on Mars, it's easier to get Wi-Fi access than teach a 16-year-old how to spell. *In theatres February 3*



WATCH

David Brent:
Life On The Road,
a throwback to the
hit Noughties British
comedy series *The
Office*, is on Netflix
February 10

Samsung KS9500,
price on request;
Apple TV available
in 32 & 64GB for
₹13,500 and ₹17,900



The Rega
RP10, price on
request at The
Revolver Club



BUY

DROP THE NEEDLE

Want to participate in the
revival of vinyl? Head to The
Revolver Club in Mumbai

"Vinyl is *the* best way to listen to music," insists Jude de Souza. "That's how music is made, on stereo sound, and that's how it's meant to be heard." De Souza isn't just another music snob; he's the co-owner of The Revolver Club, an audio store in Mumbai that specializes in all things music for the purist. "You want to hear your music hiss and crackle? That's what vinyl's capable of."

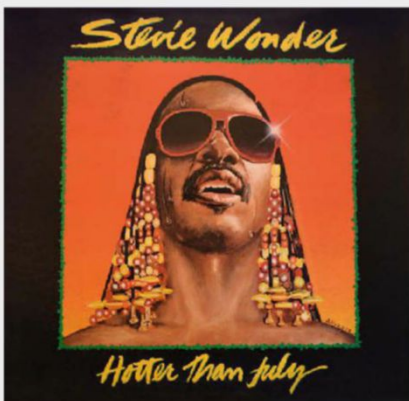
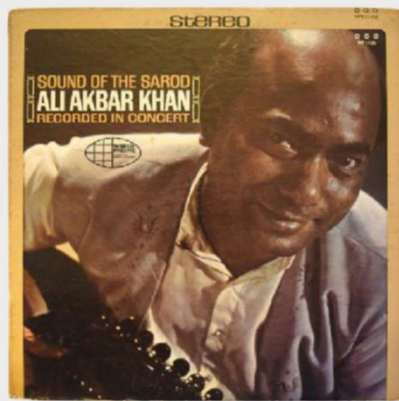
It's a world where DJs – like the UK-based Floating Points or Havana Cultura vet Gilles Peterson – are as famous for their collections; and others like Actress experiment with going analogue on the console. To wit: Wax is the new black, and it isn't just for the nostalgia factor.

"It's like an art collection. If you have early pressings of records by The Beatles, for instance, you're sitting on a goldmine," says de Souza. "It's not just a hipster thing any longer. I see a lot of younger people attracted to it because they like the ritual-like quality of playing vinyl."

But as cool as vinyl has become again, de Souza admits it's an acquired taste: It is an expensive hobby. Which is why the vibe at the store in Mahim is pretty chill, where de Souza is always available to explain, recommend and chat. Their collection of over 1,000 LPs ranges from classic rock to jazz & blues to pop music and even Hindi classical (both Bollywood and Hindustani); from Pantera to Pink Floyd, Mumford & Sons to AR Rahman.

"Hindi vinyl moves really fast," de Souza says, "particularly pressings of *Sholay*. It's got a cult following everywhere. Anything with iconic artwork also sells." His personal collection features over 100 pressings of Led Zeppelin records. "It's a collector's hobby. Like, a Japanese pressing will be better quality than one made here – they're always ahead. But otherwise, it's a great conversation starter. Gives me bragging rights." 🎧

therevolverclub.com



AND THE AWARD GOES TO

The biggest, slickest, most badass actors, directors and musicians of 2016. With the Oscars and Grammys coming up this month, GQ gives away some of its own

Damien Chazelle

Watch out for this guy: creator of 70mm gold like *Whiplash* and *La La Land*; and purveyor of all things jazz.



BEST LEADING LADY

Amy Adams vs Amy Adams

In *Arrival*, she leaves you lost in translation. In *Nocturnal Animals*, she's spellbinding with her cold-hearted ways. We like both – marginally better than the ex-president's wife and the budding actress with a weakness for monologues.



BEST FOREIGN FILM (*ING NICOLE KIDMAN!)

Lion

Yes, we know it isn't actually running in that category, but when Dev Patel plays yet another token Indian searching for his roots, and there are flashbacks to three underprivileged children running around the extensive Indian train network, the CBFC may as well lay claim to it. Especially since *Dhoom 4* won't be ready in time.



MOST SUPERHUMAN

Ryan Reynolds

Setting the bar high for badassery last year was Ryan Reynolds, aka *Deadpool*, aka the dude with the "testicles like teeth" face. Now for Margot Robbie's Harley Quinn solo.



MOST AUTEUR

Martin Scorsese

Silence, a film 10 years in the making, has Liam Neeson in a period drama about missionaries lost in wartime Japan. 'Nuff said.

The 59th Annual Grammy Awards will be held on February 12. The 89th Academy Awards are on February 26



Casey Affleck

Best new brood-face, on full display in *Manchester By The Sea*.

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS

The Jungle Book

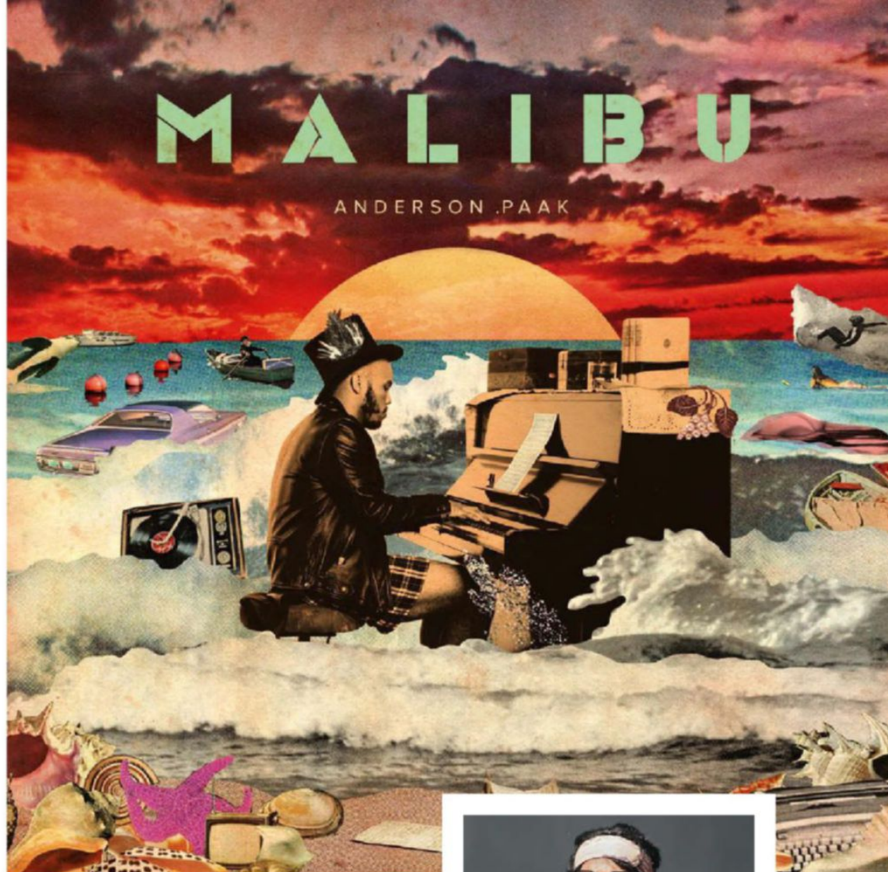
Jon Favreau's live-action tribute to Rudyard Kipling is the sort of reboot worthy of its name in this century. With an on-point performance by Neel Sethi, lush jungle landscapes and Scarlett Johansson like you'd never see her again, Favreau found the best way to introduce a whole new generation to a classic piece of literature. And has inspired the likes of Guy Ritchie to have a go at live-action animation with *Aladdin*.



BEST SPECTACLE (OF ALL KINDS)

Lemonade

A revenge album. A visual album. A surprise album. *Lemonade* is what happens when you're getting a little bored up there, at the top. Beyoncé's thrown down the gauntlet; and if nothing else, at least we'll get Jay-Z spitting fire in response.



MOST SMART MOUTH

Anderson .Paak

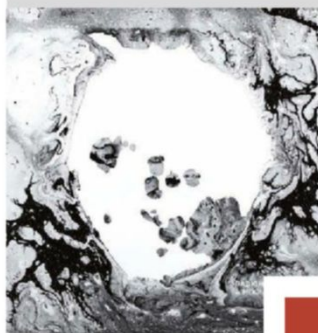
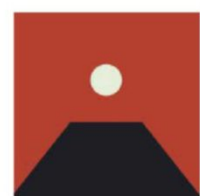
We spotted him early on Dr Dre's *Compton*; and now, two years later, he's all grown up, getting personal AF on his Grammy-nominated album *Malibu*. On it, he's talking, with amazing restraint, about mamas in prison, dads in need of kidneys, and himself, of cash. Honesty makes the most potent hip-hop; and Anderson .Paak's tripping on veritasium.



BEST ALBUMS

***Epoch* by Tycho; *A Moon Shaped Pool* by Radiohead**

To be honest, Tycho's music isn't exactly rave-ish; and we're slightly offended Radiohead didn't get an Album of the Year Grammy nom. But never mind the juries; these are our picks as must-own alternative electronica from the year.



BEST COMEBACK

Tom Ford

Hollywood's biggest fashion icon – not *Zoolander* – reappeared with a sordid drama about revenge on the ex. *Nocturnal Animals* is noir-ish, decadent and, of course, very stylish. And it does right by channelling the bravura of Jake Gyllenhaal into suitably dark corners. 🐍



Sunil Mehra







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Baselworld is the single-most important trendsetting show for the world's watch and jewellery industry. What makes it unmissable is the fact that only here will you find all the key players representing every sector of the industry together under one roof. Baselworld is where the most prestigious international brands unveil their innovations, creations and new collections in the presence of world-class buyers and the global press, all of whom unite here to take the pulse of the

market and witness the start of a new trendsetting cycle for the year.

Seize the unique opportunity to experience the interplay of passion and precision to create perfection. We invite you to join us at Baselworld, where you will be awe-struck by the spectacular pavilions, amazed at the new collections, and be amongst those who are a part of history in the making!

See you at Baselworld 2017

BASELWORLD.COM



Andaz Delhi

WHERE LOYALTY IS TREATED AS ROYALTY

It's easy to be loyal when you're rewarded for it. The Hyatt Hotels and Resorts group kick-starts their all-new global loyalty programme – World of Hyatt, to make offers that you cannot refuse

In a parallel universe the world would revolve around you. Everything that transpires in this world would make you privy to enviable privileges. But what if we told you that this parallel world really exists? The Hyatt Hotels and Resorts Group presents World of Hyatt, a global loyalty programme that's brimming with intuitive luxury.



Andaz Amsterdam, Prinsengracht

“Inspired by our purpose, World of Hyatt is about celebrating our members by understanding the people, places and experiences at the heart of their world. The more we understand them, the better we can care for them and design unique experiences with them in mind.” – Mark Hoplamazian, president and CEO, Hyatt Hotels Corporation

This programme replaces Hyatt Gold Passport. Members of the older programme will continue to earn their Platinum or Diamond tier statuses all through February. But come March, 2017 – all the members and their accumulated points will transition into the new World of Hyatt. Three tiers make up this programme. And the new tier names echo the aspirations of the members.

DISCOVERIST

In the World of Hyatt, this title is conferred upon those who have spent 10 luxurious nights or earned 25,000 base points in a year.

EXPLORIST

This status is achieved once the explorer spends 30 nights at the Hyatt Hotels & Resorts or earns 50,000 base points in a year.

GLOBALIST

Right on top of the food-chain, this is the most prestigious title. But if you're a globetrotter, it shouldn't be that hard to achieve. All you have to do is spend 60 nights at any of the Hyatt hotels or earn 100,000 base points in a year.



Park Hyatt Dubai



Park Hyatt Vienna



Hyatt Regency Phuket



Hyatt Regency Dubai Creek Heights

..AND HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

5 base points are earned for every US dollar spent on stays, dining and spas. These points can be redeemed for free nights in standard rooms with no blackout dates. You can even use them for room upgrades or at the fine-dine restaurants and spas of the Hyatt. Better still, should you feel like gifting a free night to another World of Hyatt member, these points will come in handy. Furthermore, as member, if you stay at one of the Hyatt hotels you can earn miles with participating partner airlines too.

World of Hyatt is designed to revolve around its guests. It's a world that understands you and your needs. So if you're not a part of it yet, it's time you enroll or let FOMO get the best of you.

For more information, visit worldofhyatt.com



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SHANGRI-LA BARR AL JISSAH RESORT & SPA



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Philippa Malmgren
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Raffaello Napoleone
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Chairman, YOOX
NET-A-PORTER GROUP

THE **GQ** good life

OUR HOTTEST TRAVEL PICKS THIS MONTH

MODERN
LOVE


ROOM FOR **SEX**

With a cultish set of clients across 20 Indian cities, a website that offers premium hotel rooms for unmarried couples (minus the judgement) has become a curious community for the lovesick

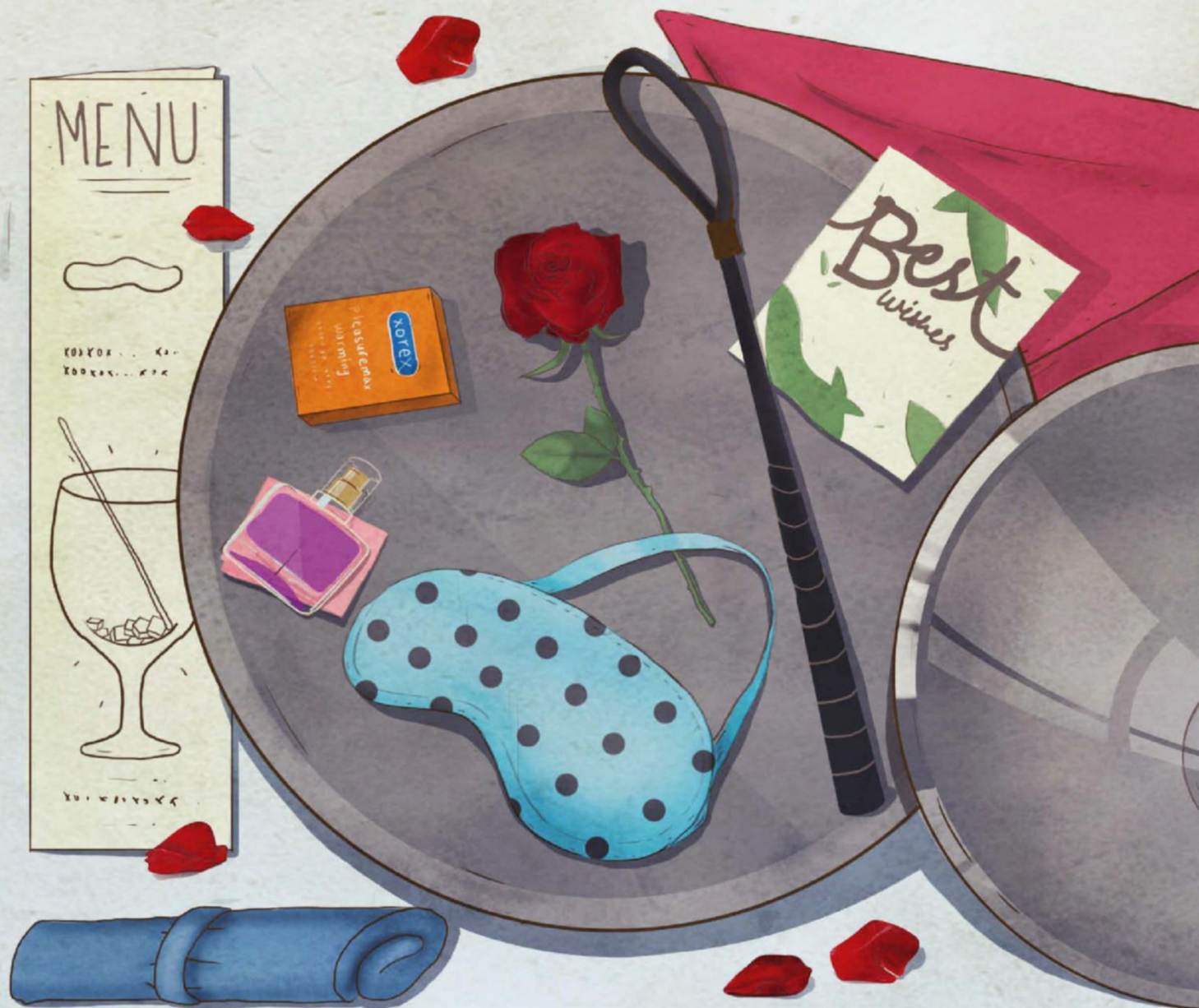
“**S**he took off her clothes within minutes of entering our room in a 4-star hotel, and attacked,” writes a 24-year-old Android developer from Kolkata in an email, describing his most prized sexual encounter.

“She was the alpha, in control. We didn’t touch the bed but headed straight for the table which caused the mirror above to break,” his email continues. “The hotel was nice about the damage. She paid for it, and we were out in a few hours.”

My correspondent, who calls himself “by some standards, a sex addict,” has booked hotels for sex 21 times in the last six months through a website called StayUncle.

It could have been an expensive hobby, except that StayUncle offers 4- and 5-star rooms on a 10-hour basis – 10am to 7pm, or 9pm to 8am – at 40 to 50 per cent of the regular tariff.

“We often mistake moral law for the actual law in India,” says Blaze Arizanov, on a chilly evening in Delhi. We’re sitting →



in an outdoor café drinking tea and avoiding curious glances from passersby. Arizanov, who's from Macedonia, and whose Instagram profile picture is of him wearing a T-shirt with the words "I've just helped my 100th customer have sex", is eccentric looking. He has long, dirty blond hair pulled into a ponytail, and gangly limbs that betray his morning job of teaching yoga "to aunties and children" in parks across South Delhi.

"There is absolutely no law which prevents unmarried couples from booking rooms in a hotel. Yet couples are subjected to humiliating questions by hotel staff or even outright refusals. And, in some of the shadier ones, raids by the police." He shakes his head angrily.

Arizanov fancies himself a bit of a love doctor, a champion of aching hearts or just a facilitator of those in need of a quick one. StayUncle is an extension of this personality. "Uncle" is a very misunderstood and underrated term. To me it evokes an image of a big-bellied, elderly man, who's saying, 'Don't

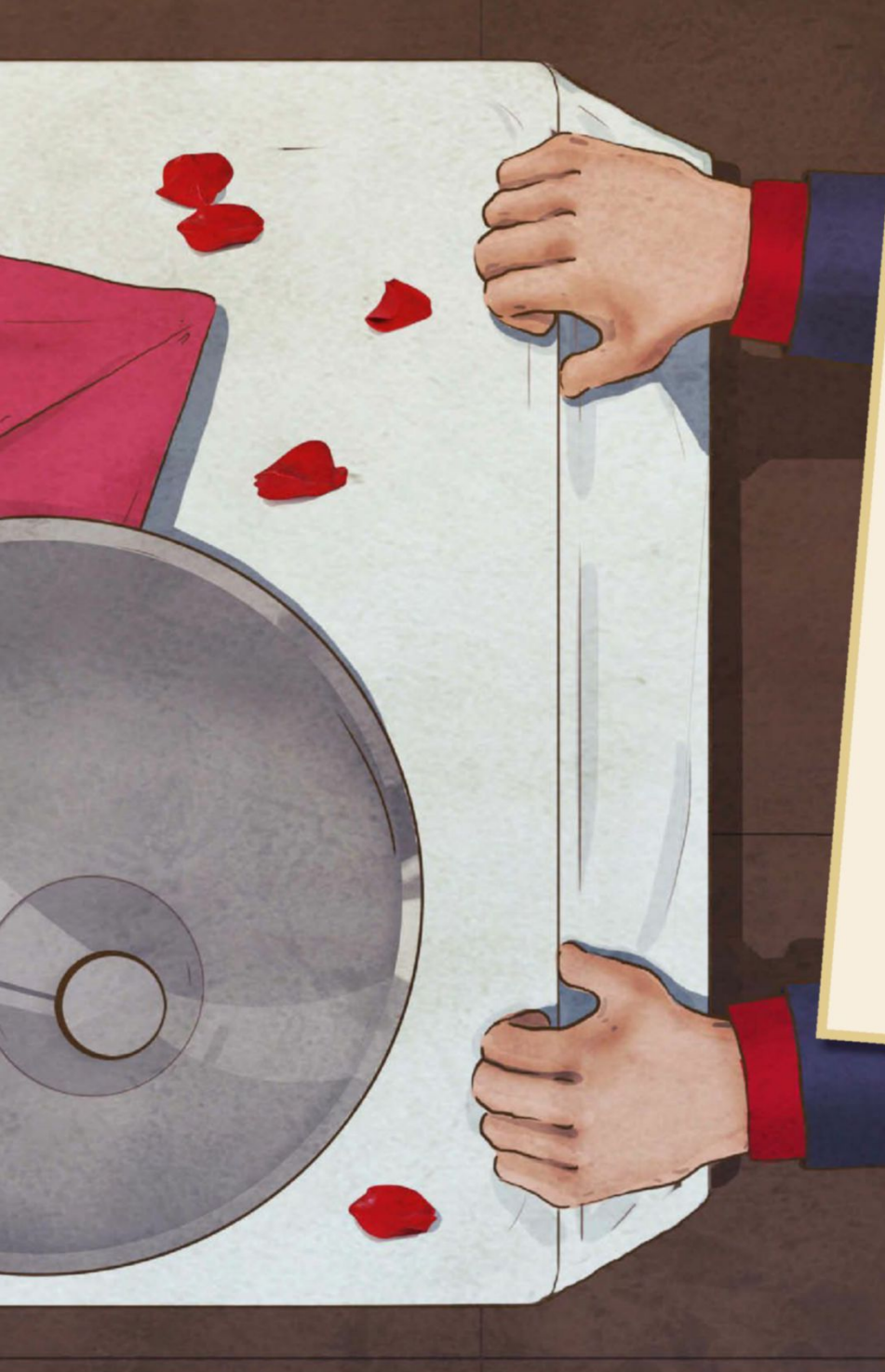
worry, *beta*, leave it to uncle, he has you sorted.'" A concept that StayUncle's social media audience has adapted to well.

"Hello uncle," tweets a customer. "She is married to another man. I am married to another woman. We are dating each other. Can StayUncle help us?"

"Of course," comes the reply. "Where there is love, there is StayUncle :)"

The startup, founded in March last year by Arizanov, along with Sanchit Sethi and Shubhneet Kohli, is present in 20 cities – including, most recently, Mahabaleshwar, Amritsar and Agra – and features about 300 hotels, including The Orchid and The Gordon House in Mumbai and Le Meridien in Delhi.

"It's a numbers game," Arizanov says. "Seven out of 10 hotels refuse outright; they want to maintain their family-friendly image. We tell them they're going to be wiped out by the likes of Airbnb if they don't start falling in line with the needs of the youth. Some get it, others don't."



THE REQUESTS
FROM TROUBLED
WOLVES POUR
IN: "WHEN ARE
YOU LAUNCHING
IN LUCKNOW?
I CAN'T WAIT."
ANOTHER ASKS,
"DO YOU HAVE A
ROOM IN MUMBAI
WITH FULL-SIZED
MIRRORS ON
BOTH SIDES?"

"We're accustomed to rejection," he continues. "Dating apps like Tinder, TrulyMadly, OkCupid. Comedians and social activists who swear they stand on the side of young Indians. They've all rejected associations with StayUncle, claiming they don't want to have anything to do with a brand like ours."

But the requests from troubled wolves on Facebook keep pouring in. "Uncle," writes one, "When are you launching in Lucknow? I can't wait."

"Hello uncle," says another, "Do you have a room in Mumbai that has full-sized mirrors on both sides?"

StayUncle's Facebook page, managed by Arizanov, the only marketing tool employed, is a bizarre mix of content: an outlet for the suppressed desires of men ("What are your sexual fantasies?" asks a post. "An eightsome," replies one); frustration over the intolerant climate of the country; articles by women from their blog, entitled Naughty Sita ("My thoughts after two orgasms"); and not-so-covert digs at perceived competitors like OYO Rooms, which offers

rooms starting at ₹999 and has recently started a "relationship mode" for couples. "Forget 999," says one StayUncle post. "What you need is a 69."

"OYO has no idea what it's doing. How can you decide you know what couples need, when you can't even use the word 'sex' when talking about it!" Arizanov scoffs.

He's openly malapert, and his marketing methods often seem like fish bait for controversy. But "apart from some hatred on our social channels from a few politically tinged

individuals, we haven't faced much opposition.

"In order to ensure everything's legal, the only thing the hotel staff ask for is ID proof, a precaution against prostitution." What about homosexual couples? "Our government considers this illegal, so when asked, we can't say go for it." But if a couple books anyway? "Then they book it," he shrugs. "Nothing much happens. Our hotel partners are pretty solid."

But StayUncle's Facebook page seems to endorse all sorts of relationships. Including posts about highlights from Delhi's Pride Parade, and confessions from one of its employees, Rose Mary, a cross-dresser.

"We're a community and our goal is to become the solution for all unmarried couples," Arizanov says. They're currently planning to start a relationship counselling service, and offer package deals for holidays in and outside India. "Imagine if we set up a cottage for you on the mouth of Mount Vesuvius in Italy. How hot would it be to make love there?" 🍷

RAISING THE BAR

Whether it's a date, a boy's night out or an evening with a business associate, rest assured that in Mumbai, the Taj Hotels has a venue that offers the perfect setting

The Maximum City boasts a vibrant nightlife with myriad bars, nightclubs and lounges that will entertain you or help you unwind. But none of them can surround you with the subtle elegance and legendary hospitality of the Taj. With three luxury properties across Mumbai, the Taj Group of Hotels has a bar or a lounge with an ambience that sets the mood for almost any kind of evening.



CORPORATE COCKTAILS

AT: HARBOUR BAR, THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE

Every businessman knows that it isn't about just getting a job done. It's about getting it done in style. It's about making the right impression and striking a chord at the right place and time. And the iconic Harbour Bar at

The Taj Mahal Palace is the only venue in Mumbai that will sweep your clients off their feet. Overlooking the majestic Gateway of India, it is a stylish lounge, serving a selection of the finest malts, international wines

and global tapas. Opened in 1933, it has the distinction of being the first licensed bar in the city. While you're here, try 'From the Harbour since 1933', their signature cocktail from the Prohibition Era or indulge in the Asian

spice cocktails like the Paan Flip. The warm interiors, intimate seating with plush art-deco seats, the history and breath-taking views of the harbour will stay with you long after you've left the place.

ROMANTIC RENDEZVOUS

AT: TIQRI BAR AND LOUNGE, TAJ SANTACRUZ

Vibrant and charming with elegant gilt mirrors and high-backed chairs, Tiqri Bar and Lounge at Taj Santacruz, is where cocktails are savoured at an unhurried pace. It's where conversations reveal insightful stories and memories of a lifetime are born, making it the perfect spot for a date. Apart from a stellar collection of bubbly whites and flirty reds, merlots, pinot noirs and chardonnays, Tiqri boasts an exclusive champagne and vodka bar that serves the very best. However should you or your date prefer a cocktail, we recommend the signature 'Tree of Life' Sangria, a divine elixir that comes alive with golden champagne hues. To

accompany these exotic tipples the chef and his team have crafted a scrumptious menu. Think Veg Poutine, Caramelized Onion and Mushroom Flat Bread, Calamari Frito, Malaysian Lamb Satay and Kapproa Pla, amongst other delicious dishes. If you're in Mumbai for Valentine's Day, consider spending the evening here. It's bound to be an unforgettable experience.



REUNIONS AND REVELRIES

AT: ATRIUM LOUNGE, TAJ LANDS END

Overlooking the Arabian Sea through large windows, the Atrium Lounge is vibrant by day and glamorous by night, making it an ideal place to catch up with friends. Right at the very heart of Taj Lands End, the ambience is fluid and exciting. Inspired by the global tradition of tapas, the chefs here serve an exquisite menu of finger food and compact meals. As soon as the sun disappears into the horizon, bartenders here whip up delicious cocktails to keep you going through the night. Atrium Lounge also features the world's finest single estate coffees and teas, making it the perfect venue for high tea as well.



For more information, visit tajhotels.com



THE HOTEL

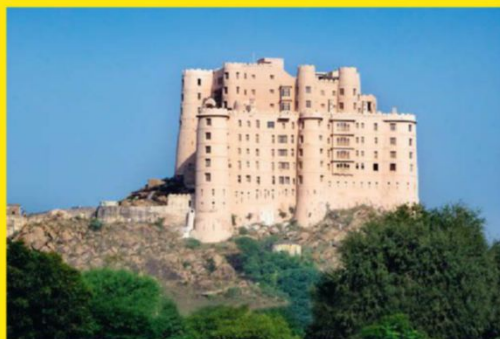
THE HIGHLANDS, NGORONGORO CONSERVATION AREA | Tanzania

Designed by the Cape Town-based firm Artichoke, the interiors of The Highlands' nine otherworldly geodesic domes are inspired by Scandinavian caves: faux-fur throws, generous wood and large windows that catch both the sunrise and sunset because of their clever positioning at the edge of a mountain. When you're back from watching a pride of lions, gazing at the starlit sky from your otherworldly dome, savour the moment. It's not every day you get a whopping 6km-wide volcanic crater (almost) to yourself. From ₹47,400 per person per night; asiliaafrica.com



TASTE

ALL THAT MATTERS THIS MONTH



ON OUR RADAR

ALILA FORT BISHANGARH | Rajasthan

Off the conventional Jaipur-Jodhpur-Udaipur trail is Alila's newest property: a 230-year-old defensive fortress that has been seven years in restoration. An hour's drive from the Pink City, Fort Bishangarh sits high on a granite mountain with 360-degree views. Its 59 suites wrap around the whole thing, complemented by a resplendent banquet hall, lawns and a grand pool. A new structure – created above and outside the old fort – houses Nazara, an outdoor grill venue on the terrace. There's also Madhuveni, the hotel's bar, with a cigar/cognac turret, and the Kachhawa Lounge, which serves the 4 Cs: champagne, coffee, chai and cakes. It's the most fun you can have in the Aravalli hills. alilahotels.com/fortbishangarh →



FLY THE SKIES IN STYLE

"To know me, you need to fly with me" – George Clooney's famous words from the movie *Up in the Air* perfectly resonate with AirAsia India as it invites you to jet, set and travel with flair to your favourite destinations this new year

Two words: unadulterated style. AirAsia India has been painting the Indian skies red and redefining the way people fly. It's no longer just about getting from one point to the other. It is an experience that begins before take-off and lasts long after you leave the air craft. With an obsession for quality in every aspect, in two and a half short years, the brand has made a name for itself in the aviation industry for its ground breaking hospitality standards, unparalleled customer service and some of the best fares available. From its comfortable cabin configuration to its gourmet delicacies, from the staff's intuitive thoughtfulness to the exclusive lounge access at over 7 airports and amazing connectivity across India – AirAsia India fulfils all your desires as the future of travel. Get on board.



3

GOAL: TO TRAVEL ALL AROUND INDIA THIS 2017

AirAsia India will make this possible. The airline recently launched two new sectors – Srinagar and Bagdogra (think Tea Estates in Darjeeling) – and one new route – connecting Pune and New Delhi. What's more, AirAsia India will also connect Delhi with Srinagar, Bagdogra and Pune on a daily basis. Its network already consists of Guwahati, Imphal, Kochi, Pune, Hyderabad, Jaipur and Goa as well as tier II cities where young millennials often take business trips to.

3 TRAVEL GOALS AIRASIA INDIA FULFILLS

GOAL: TO FEAST IN STYLE WHEN I FLY

AirAsia India is the first low cost carrier to serve a wide range of delicious Indian and International hot meals through Santan, AirAsia India's inflight food and beverage menu. From light snacks like paneer and mixed vegetable roll or akuri with Lyonnaise sausages to complete meals like cheese crusted chicken in mushroom sauce or spinach crepes, from a full list of beverages to ice cream and more – eat to your heart's desire when flying with AirAsia India.

2

GOAL: TO INDULGE IN A STRESS- FREE FLYING EXPERIENCE THAT'S GLAMOROUS AND SPECIAL

With an aim to make every guest feel special, AirAsia India has relaunched its Red Carpet services across New Delhi, Jaipur, Guwahati, Vizag, Kochi, Bengaluru, Pune and Hyderabad. Guests can pre-book this service on www.airasia.com for ₹850 and enjoy amazing benefits like: a dedicated check-in counter, priority check-in and baggage tagging, access to the lounge with food, soft drinks and Wi-Fi, porter assistance with baggage until check-in desk and priority baggage handling on arrival.





THE RESTAURANT

CAMPTON PLACE |

San Francisco, USA

The coveted Michelin star rating is ridden with controversy: Critics say that while it's an authority on French food, it isn't on Indian cuisine, for instance. Yet, within the chef community, it's an accolade few don't desire. While Indian restaurants in Hong Kong, New York, Geneva, London and recently Singapore have been awarded Michelin stars, it's never been more than one – restaurants serving other Asian cuisines

like Japanese and Chinese have won all three. This recently changed when Srijith Gopinath, after six years of single-Michelin stardom, won his second for Campton Place, at the Taj-owned hotel of the same name in San Francisco. His Californian-Indian cuisine combines the sunny state's fresh ingredients and its smoke, fire and brining techniques, with India's regional dishes, aromatics and traditional spice blends. The jinx has been broken, spectacularly. *A meal for two costs about ₹8,000; tajcamptonplace.com*

TASTE

ALL THAT MATTERS THIS MONTH

THE DESTINATION

OMAN

It's the antidote to the glittery façade of the UAE's star attraction (Dubai) and vastly more picturesque than its other, richer neighbour (Abu Dhabi). From beaches that rival Brazil's and epic windswept deserts to the fantastically craggy, gulch-filled Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar range – which, at nearly 10,000 feet at its peak, is one of the Middle East's highest – Oman has arrived on the tourism scene. It's not all fairy tale *Arabian Nights*-style reverie. You could stay at one of the many modern 5-star properties: an expansive, butler-ridden Six Senses, two dramatically raw Anantara resorts or a glittering Ritz-Carlton. Currently in construction are the sultanate's first W hotel, and a Louis Vuitton property. And after swimming in a natural sinkhole and shopping in the souks, you can finish the night with a concert at the Royal Opera House. Not many other holidays will match up after this.



THE BOTTLE

ROYAL SALUTE 38 YEAR OLD STONE OF DESTINY

A bash held at the ITC Maurya with the Duke of Argyll, where we sipped this luxurious liquid from a traditional Quaich bowl, and indulged in Dum Pukht's nuanced fare, has rekindled our love affair with Royal Salute. This exquisitely bold expression is named after the ancient stone used for British Royal coronation ceremonies. And savouring this single malt – with aromas of butterscotch and tastes of pipe tobacco and dark chocolate – in Delhi's biting winter with a cigar (or a vape) makes us feel like royalty. 🍷



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A man with a goatee and a denim jacket is looking through a large magnifying glass. The lens of the magnifying glass is focused on his face, making it appear much larger. The background is a collage of various images, including a group of people, a train, a crowd, a person in a patterned shirt, a person in a black shirt, and a person in a white shirt. The overall theme is photography and capturing stunning images.

CLICKED TO STUN

A picture speaks a 1000 words. But with the new Vivo V5 Plus, it speaks volumes - thanks to its 20 MP Dual Front Camera that captures stunning images worth displaying

"Selfie lovers would indulge and enjoy the whole new experience of using Vivo's New Phone V5 Plus, which comes loaded with 20 MP Dual Front Camera. It has interesting features like Bokeh, anti-shake and face beauty that enables you to capture selfies equivalent to professional cameras and thus redefining the meaning of Selfie with Perfect Duo."

-Idris Ahmed



When a professional photographer chooses a phone for its camera, it's got to be something extraordinary. So when Idris Ahmed, an acclaimed travel photographer, chose Vivo V5 Plus for its stunningly clear camera, it caught our attention. Idris is known to have shot International guidebooks for Israel, Sri Lanka and Delhi and for initiating the first ever "Phone Photography" group show in Delhi. But to be a part of the selfie revolution with Vivo V5 Plus, all it took is one click to convince him that this phone could capture that perfect selfie.

You might find it difficult to capture your swagger in every selfie you click. But we've got good news for you. The Vivo V5 Plus captures every minute detail with its cutting-edge technology. All you need to do is click. The phone does the rest.

CATCH THE MOONLIGHT

The Vivo V5 Plus has a 20 MP Dual Front Camera, co-engineered with Sony that comes with an inbuilt moonlight glow creating the perfect lighting effects for your picture. So that every picture is crystal clear, intense and rich with natural colours. The 20 MP front camera ensures clarity while the 8 MP front camera captures depth-of-field information. Result - the Bokeh effect that keeps the face sharp while the background is blurred.

CLICK. CHECK. REFOCUS

You know these guys have taken technology to another level when you notice the shot refocus feature. It gives you the power to add focus even after the picture has been taken.

POWER UP

The phone has a 4GB RAM, 64 GB ROM and a massive Qualcomm Snapdragon 625 octa-core CPU. Need we say more?

BEING CURVY

The V5 Plus has a 5.5-inch large display, curved edges and ultra-narrow bezels for a comfortable touch. Besides this, it has the fifth generation Corning Gorilla glass that provides ultimate protection to your screens.

LONGER AND FASTER

The phone's slim body is power-packed with a 3055 mAh battery that promises to never die on you. Better still, its Dual-Charging Engine technology helps you charge it as fast as your imagination can run.

AUDIO PLEASE

The iconic AK4376 Hi-Fi audio chip gives you an unparalleled sound quality, helping you block out the world as soon as you hit play.

All in all, the V5 Plus has technology that's as impressive as its looks. Own it and you'll be clicking selfies at the speed of light (even though you deny it). And if there's something that'll come to mind when you see its features it is - shut up and take my money.



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Camera & Music

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GQ

STYLE

EDITED BY VIJENDRA BHARDWAJ &
SHIVANGI LOLAYEKAR

SHARP SHOOTERS

GQ
ENDORSES

ON POINT

→ If there's a shoe to flaunt right now, it's from **Alessandro Sartori**'s capsule line sitting in Ermenegildo Zegna's new Bond Street, London flagship. Each pair - from the biker boot to the double monkstrap - is bespoke: entirely handmade specially for the wearer. Take your pick. ■



TWO TO TANGO

Don't let your girl outshine you on your next holiday

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PRABHAT SHETTY
STYLED BY DESIRÉE FERNANDES

LOUNGING IN MARRAKECH

Take a boater and comfy loafers to laze around in. You'll manage to steal some of the attention away from her.

ON HIM: JUMPER, ₹5,000, TROUSERS, ₹8,000; BOTH BY **TOMMY HILFINGER**. HAT BY **BROOKS BROTHERS**, ₹17,200. BRACELET BY **THE BRO CODE**, ₹400. SHOES BY **TOD'S**, ₹40,000

ON HER: BODYSUIT BY **ZARA**, ₹2,500. JACKET BY **MARKS & SPENCER**, ₹7,000. SHOES BY **STEVE MADDEN**, ₹5,200. NECKLACE, ₹800, BRACELETS, ₹1,700; ALL BY **ACCESSORIZE**

IN TRANSIT

Twinning isn't so bad when you look like the coolest people up in the air. Pair your look with sneakers and a watch. You don't want to miss your flight.

ON HIM: JACKET BY **JACK & JONES**, ₹5,500. SHIRT BY **RARE RABBIT**, ₹1,300. JEANS, ₹8,000, SHOES, ₹12,000; BOTH BY **TOMMY HILFINGER**. WATCH BY **DIESEL**, ₹9,500

ON HER: JACKET, ₹3,000, T-SHIRT, ₹1,000, JEANS, ₹6,000; ALL BY **VERO MODA**. SHOES BY **ZARA**, ₹3,000. SUITCASE BY **TUMI**, ₹51,000

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DINNER IN PARIS

Wear your sharpest suit to complement her sexy dress. It'll do you good for when she wants to take a million selfies.

ON HIM: SUIT, SHIRT, SHOES, ALL BY **DIOR HOMME**. PRICES ON REQUEST. BOW TIE BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. PRICE ON REQUEST. POCKET SQUARE BY **VAN HEUSEN**. ₹900. WATCH BY **EMPORIO ARMANI**. ₹24,500

ON HER: DRESS BY **TOPSHOP**. ₹12,000. JACKET BY **MARKS & SPENCER**. ₹8,000. SHOES BY **JIMMY CHOO**. PRICE ON REQUEST. EARRINGS BY **ACCESSORIZE**. ₹800



THE TIGER RESERVE IN RANTHAMBORE

Bring out your wild side with rugged boots and a utility backpack. Keep the colour palette neutral to match the wilderness.

ON HIM: JACKET BY **JACK & JONES**. ₹5,500. SHIRT BY **H&M**. ₹3,000. TROUSERS BY **CELIO**. ₹2,500. NECKLACE BY **THE BRO CODE**. ₹500. BAG BY **SUPERDRY**. ₹6,500. SHOES BY **WOODLAND**. ₹7,500. WATCH BY **DIESEL**. ₹9,500

ON HER: DRESS BY **BURBERRY**. ₹64,900. SCARF BY **DOLCE & GABBANA**. PRICE ON REQUEST. SHOES BY **STEVE MADDEN**. ₹6,500

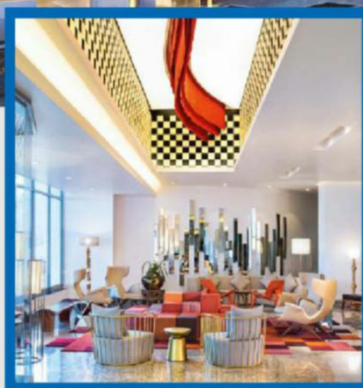
BOUND TO BE SPELLBOUND

Bhutan, the land of happiness, has not one but two reasons to be happier, as Le Méridien Thimphu and Le Méridien Paro, Riverfront open their doors to pamper you silly



LE MÉRIDIEEN THIMPHU

A quaint town. Mystical monasteries interspersed with fortresses. Warm, friendly strangers smiling at you when they pass you by. The formidable Himalayas soaring above you protectively. No, this is not a figment of your imagination, nor is it a dream. This is Bhutan. Set in this "Land of the Thunder Dragon", is Le Méridien Thimphu - the largest five-star hotel in Bhutan, a fifty-minute drive from Paro International Airport. With 78 inviting guestrooms and suites to choose from, the hotel has three F&B options that cater to the most discerning palate. While Latest Recipe serves local and international cuisine and Sese Shamu brings to the table authentic flavours from South-East Asia, Latitude 27 is a cosy café that turns into a bar after the sun sets. Not to



forget that the swimming pool and spa are capable enough to keep you in a leisurely trance for as long as you like. For events and weddings, you can always book the hotel's Tsho-Khang Grand Ballroom, which can seat as many as 300 people. The ballroom also has a dedicated driveway that allows you to arrive in style. And should you feel like venturing out, the National Textile Museum, Buddha Point and the Arts and Crafts Market are just around the corner, brimming with myths and legends waiting for you to unravel.



LE MÉRIDIEEN PARO, RIVERFRONT

Paro is a little haven tucked away in the valley country of Bhutan. At the heart of this beauty is the largest and only global five-star this township has seen - Le Méridien Paro, Riverfront. It takes 10 short minutes to reach the hotel from the international airport. And once you're here, you find that it is the only hotel with direct access to the lazy Paro river. So if you've been wanting to have dinner under the stars by the riverside, this is where you can experience it. The hotel boasts a restaurant that specializes in Pan-Asian gourmet cuisine. It's well-equipped with a spa, a fitness centre and a swimming pool for you to unwind in.

It also has a regal ballroom with a high ceiling and a



spectacular view of the Himalayas that gives it a sense of grandeur. Better still, the main attractions like the Paro Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) or The National Museum are just a stone's throw away. So if your idea of an ideal holiday is to dip your feet in the river and get enchanted by nature, you know where to go.

If this doesn't convince you to visit Bhutan, we're not sure what else will.

For more information, visit lemeridienparoriverfront.com and lemeridienthimphu.com

Le **MERIDIEN**

 CHIVAS
ALC EMY
Crafted for the Senses

Five virtuosos turn alchemists and dabble in the unlikely, to craft new expressions of creativity from a palette of 85 notes, over eighteen magical hours. What brings them together, is the bespoke spirit of Chivas and their passion for handcrafted luxury that appeals to the five senses.



PACK IT IN

What happens when an industrial design whiz gets his hands on **Louis Vuitton's** iconic luggage



Louis Vuitton's new Horizon line of rolling luggage is a respite from pre-holiday packing hell. The collab, with industrial designer Marc Newson – who's worked on everything from the Apple Watch to Qantas jet interiors to Montblanc pens – offers slim cabin pieces with 15 per cent more space. And at 2.9kg for the small size, they're among the lightest around.

"Design is about limitation. You look for solutions where you wouldn't otherwise," says Newson. He's considered every little detail: especially how one packs. ("The lock is in the middle so it's not in the way. It doesn't touch anything until you close the bag, and at that point you don't care.")

The design's reminiscent of LV's iconic trunks: complete with side hinges and leather corner coverings. We'll take one in every colour, please. ☺

Available in 8 colours of Epi leather and 3 signature prints; louisvuitton.com



HIGH TECH

- It's got one zip instead of the standard two, halving breakage potential. The zip essentially also creates the bag's hinges, so the lock is mounted on the hinge, saving space.
- The inside is ridge- and bump-free: Newson made sure to put the extendable cane outside, so you no longer need awkward balls of socks to fill up the trenches.
- Canvas, glue and leather have been upgraded with a multi-layered mesh matrix made from a self-reinforced polypropylene composite. In other words, more elastic, more shock-absorbent.

STARRING



David Beckham



Charlize Theron

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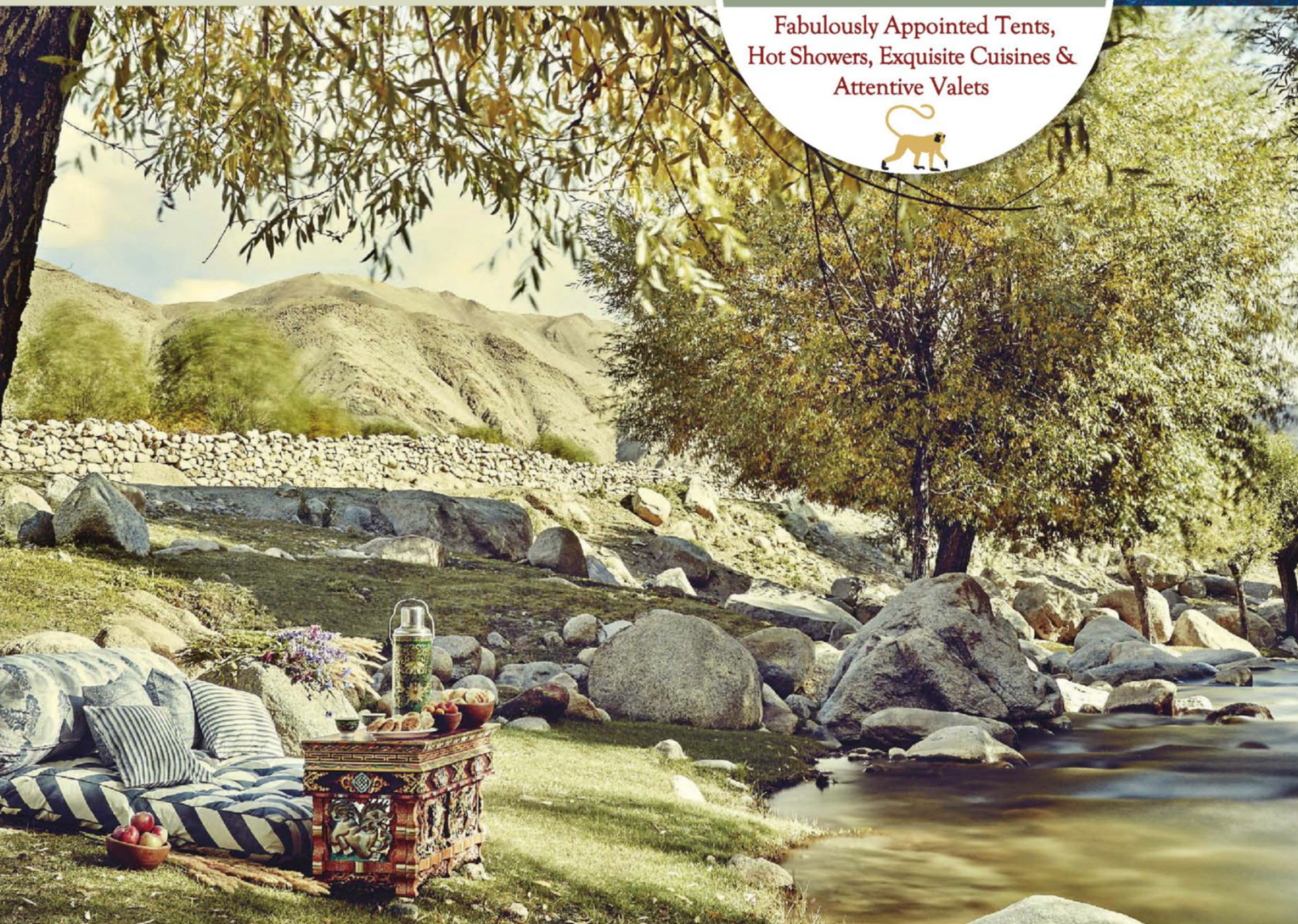
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2017:
15th May - 30th Sept



KOHIMA CAMP, NAGALAND

2017:
29th Nov - 12th Dec



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3. GUCCI, ₹94,000
4. LOUIS VUITTON, PRICE ON REQUEST
5. PAUL SMITH, ₹48,000
6. BOTTEGA VENETA, ₹2,42,500
7. VICTORINOX, ₹21,530
8. TUMI, ₹51,000





SERIOUS BAGGAGE

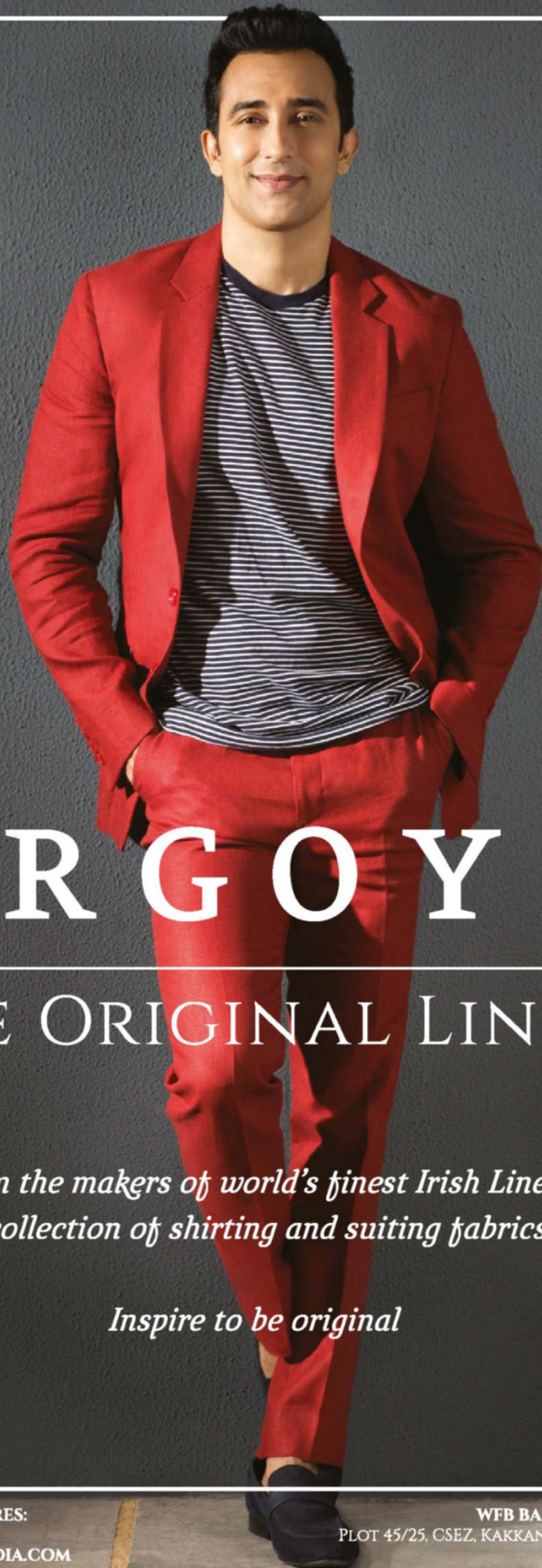
Trendy pieces to upgrade your travel style

📷 PHOTOGRAPHED BY JIGNESH JHAVERI





9. HACKETT LONDON, ₹10,500
 10. TUMI, ₹18,500
 11. GUCCI, ₹64,500
 12. ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA, ₹1,31,500
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TAG ALONG

Whether you strap on lime green leather or a wild-eyed monster, your luggage tag should have as much personality as anything you're packing inside



1. LOUIS VUITTON, ₹16,000
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3. THE CAMBRIDGE SATCHEL COMPANY, ₹3,060
4. SMYTHSON, ₹7,830
5. FLIGHT 001, ₹480
6. FENDI, ₹44,215
7. LOEWE, ₹30,600
8. PRADA, ₹11,560
9. VALEXTRA, ₹15,000
10. CLARE V, ₹3,740
11. GOYARD, ₹11,900
12. TUMI, ₹3,740

SUITCASES CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TUMI, RIMOWA, PRADA (WITH PRADA LUGGAGE TAG), RADEN (BOTTOM) AND RIMOWA

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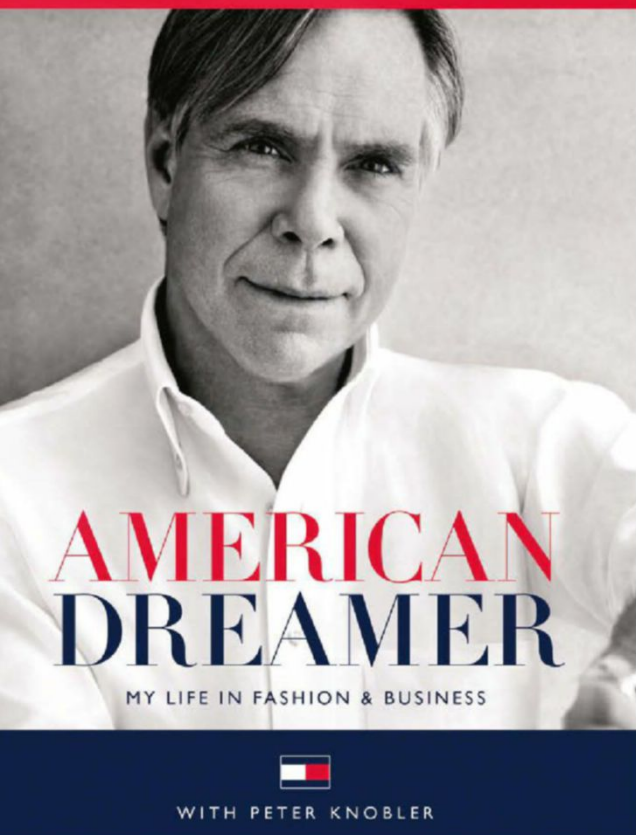


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TOMMY HILFIGER



AMERICAN DREAMER

BY TOMMY HILFIGER AND PETER KNOBLER

From opening his first store as a teenager to filing for bankruptcy at 23, and from sourcing in Juhu and partnering with denim mogul Mohan Murjani to creating a blitzkrieg campaign that took over Times Square, Tommy Hilfiger's new book chronicles the inspiring story of his life. One which puts him among America's most successful designers and businessmen.



SIR

BY MARIO TESTINO, PIERRE BORHAN AND PATRICK KINMONTH

He's one of the most prolific photographers of our time, having candidly captured celebrities for magazines across the world. But in his new tome dedicated to men, Mario Testino trains his lens on everyone from the dandy and the gentleman to the macho and the fey, the world-famous face to the unknown passerby. A coffee table book she might enjoy more than you.



PETER LINDBERGH

BY THIERRY-MAXIME LORIOT AND PETER LINDBERGH

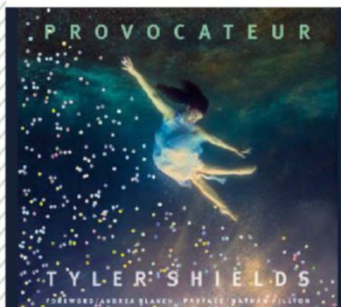
Coinciding with his retrospective at the Kunsthall in Rotterdam (on till February 12), the book gathers more than 400 images from four decades of pioneering work by fashion's most-renowned photographer. Bonus: his collector's edition is marked with commentaries from collaborators such as Jean Paul Gaultier, Nicole Kidman and Cindy Crawford.



PROVOCATEUR

BY TYLER SHIELDS

His gloriously twisted photographs would never make it past the censor board, but that's what makes LA-based Tyler Shields' work so dangerously appealing. *Provocateur* brings together his most compelling work, including retro glamour portraits and rustic woodland scenes that serve as a backdrop for modern-day nymphs.



GET A LIFE: THE DIARIES OF VIVIANNE WESTWOOD

BY VIVIANNE WESTWOOD

"After calling my friend Shami Chakrabarti to talk about how climate change is destroying the world, I fly to Rome to have a tofu salad with Pamela Anderson. I tell her the financial crisis is the exact mirror of the ecological disaster. She agrees. Pamela is one of the smartest people I know." Just one of the many delicious anecdotes from the punk goddess' personal diary.

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British gothic deathrock band Blood And Roses

GROOMING: ON THE EDGE



ROHIT GANDHI +
RAHUL KHANNA



VAN HEUSEN

DARK ARTS

Leather, layers and an overall gothic mood rode strong at the VH + GQ Fashion Nights 2016



★
**ABHISHEK
PAATNI**

STRAPPED IN

Think sporty and utilitarian, all with samurai cool.



★
**ROHIT GANDHI +
RAHUL KHANNA**

WAR ZONE

Your new dressed-up look is more armour, less bling.



★
**SAHIL
ANEJA**

TEXTURE PLAY

Mix fine cottons and wool pieces with raw leather.



★
**ROHIT
BAL**

ROCK 'N' RULE

Regal embroidery meets Axl Rose swag.

★
**RAJESH PRATAP
SINGH**

CUTTING EDGE

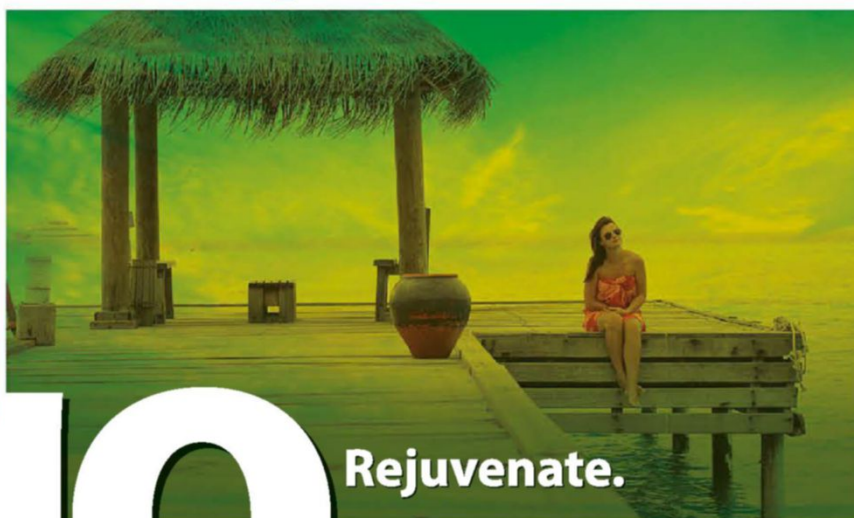
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PLAY

— AND SOAK IN SOME
CULTURE THIS YEAR

EDITED BY SHIKHA SETHI



MAKE A MUSICAL PILGRIMAGE

📍 NORTH-EASTERN INDIA

Going to **Ziro, NH7 Shillong** or **Hornbill** seems like the greatest weekend of your life... in theory. Until you realize it means days without a shower, sodden venues and hundreds of other people who also haven't bathed. But it's all worth it for the experience of watching the coolest indie bands – **Donn Bhat/Parekh & Singh/Skrat** – from a few feet away. This year, go beyond the usual suspects with **Orange** (a week post Hornbill in December) in Dambuk, Arunachal Pradesh, a mashup of great

gigs and adventure sports like off-roading and white-water rafting. There's also the **Brahmaputra Beach Festival** in January; as well as **Lou Majaw's Bob Dylan Festival** in Shillong, an annual two-day bash to celebrate the Nobel laureate's birthday (May 24 for you Dylan virgins) that's been going strong since 1972. Those in the know will be at Imphal's **Where Have All The Flowers Gone?** – a three-day festival in May dedicated to the late folk music pioneer (and Dylan's mentor) Pete Seeger – secretly active in the village of Andro, 26km from the Manipur capital. Using music as a tool for social change, it's a scaled-down version of Rage Against the Machine's Tom Morello and Serj Tankian's Axis of Justice concerts. But in the wilderness.

—PAULINE ZONUNPUII



CHILL AT THE MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL

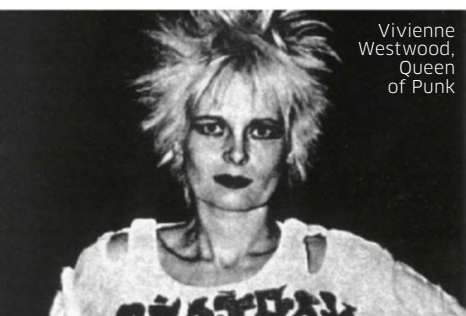
SWITZERLAND

It's obvious that Claude Nobs didn't spend too much time thinking about a name. A former cook-turned-tourism officer, he thought it would be a good idea for jazz musicians to play in a Swiss town called Montreux, and promptly founded a festival to make it happen. Half a century later, Nobs has passed but his nonchalance has a lot to do with why thousands of people will make their way to the 2017 festival from June 30 to July 15.

Here's a suggestion: Don't go just for the jazz. Sure, Miles Davis

and Ella Fitzgerald played here. But Nina Simone and David Bowie have graced these stages in the past too, as have Prince and Radiohead. Explore the private listening zones at the **Montreux Jazz Café @ EPFL**, world-class wineries like **Corniche Lavaux** and **La Cave Vevey-Montreux** and the medieval **Château de Chillon**. Go out of respect for the late Leonard Cohen, who opened the festival in 1913, allowing the sounds of his gorgeous "Hallelujah" to reverberate across the Alps. Stay at the **Fairmont Le Montreux Palace** to feel like a movie star. And if you still need more reasons, know that this unpretentious event lets you get tipsy on the shore of Lake Geneva while listening to spectacular music. Be like Nobs; don't overthink it.

—LINDSAY PEREIRA



Vivienne Westwood, Queen of Punk



VISIT THE BIRTHPLACE OF PUNK AT WORLD'S END

430 KING'S ROAD, LONDON

Sometime in the summer of 1975, a young lad sporting a shock of green hair and a home-made T-shirt that said "I hate Pink Floyd" walked into a Chelsea boutique. He didn't know it then, but that moment would change the history of music, pop culture and fashion. Because the young lad's name was John Lydon, and the shop he had just entered was **SEX**, the kinky, transgressive fetish boutique run by raconteurs and art-savants Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood. Alongside Glen Matlock, Steve Jones and

Paul Cook, the trio would create the phenomenon that were the **Sex Pistols** and kickstart the punk revolution. It's hard to overestimate the influence of punk rock on contemporary culture – you can credit (or blame) it for everything from Nirvana to Etsy, from Avril Lavigne's "Sk8er Boi" to Rihanna's **faux hawk**. And it all begun in that tiny 450sqft shop that McLaren once called "a cross between a school gym and a padded cell." If that's not enough for you to make the trek over to **430 King's Road**, just remember that since the Eighties, Westwood has used the shop – now called World's End – as a testing ground for her most outre, forward-thinking fashion. From punk to the "New Romantics", from bondage outfits to "Climate Revolution" T-shirts, this little Victorian building is as important to modern culture as any museum or gallery. —BHANUJ KAPPAL



Kamasi Washington



FKA Twigs



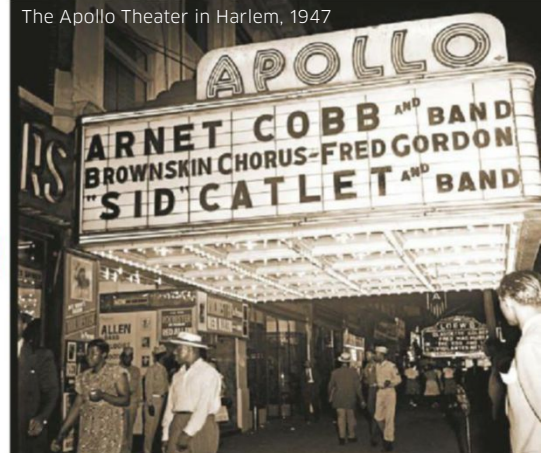
MUSIC

GET YOUR GROOVE ON AT THE PITCHFORK FESTIVAL

CHICAGO AND PARIS

When *Pitchfork* launched a three-day music festival in Chicago in 2006, it was still just another hipster, music website. A decade on, *Pitchfork* has become the gatekeeper of the new guard in international music; has had titles like “tastemaker” conferred on it; and its festival is a fantastic showcase of the journal’s accumulated might. Held annually at Chicago’s Union Park, and in Paris since 2011, it’s got eclectic line-ups, great food and a deeply indie vibe: The sort where, say, **Kendrick Lamar** and **Anderson .Paak** performed before they became household names around the world; where artists as low-key as **Sufjan Stevens** give grandiose performances in large feather wings; where pop divas like **Carly Rae Jepsen** can incite mosh pits; indie songstresses like **FKA Twigs** turn into A/V phenoms; and where rap meets saxophones, and collaborations tend to be spontaneous and stirring. If you’re looking for an alternative to the immediate release of raging on chemicals and brain-deadening BPM, this is it. —NIDHI GUPTA

The Apollo Theater in Harlem, 1947



PAY HOMAGE TO FORMER GREATS AT THE APOLLO THEATER

NEW YORK

There’s a reason why the body of James Brown made its way towards the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York City, on December 28, 2006. The Godfather of Soul had died of heart failure two days ago in Atlanta, Georgia. It was at the Apollo, however, that his 24-karat gold coffin was placed, brought there by a carriage drawn by white horses, surrounded by thousands of mourners who had waited for hours to bid him farewell.

What started as a burlesque theatre in 1913 is today a venue respected worldwide for its role in the history of Black America. By the Thirties, it was the largest employer of African-American theatrical workers, hosting the debuts of legends like **Billie Holiday** and **Lena Horne**. Among the stars making their first appearance here were **Dinah Washington** and **Sammy Davis, Jr.**, followed by **John Coltrane** and **Miles Davis** in the Forties and **Thelonious Monk** in the Fifties. Winners of its *Amateur Night* in the Sixties included **Gladys Night** and **Jimi Hendrix**.

To visit the Apollo at any time is a blessing. Go now not for the great performances it will line up (as it always does), but because few venues are as storied, as emblematic of a race and as powerful a witness to humanity’s continuing struggle for equal rights. Visit to honour its guests from the past; artistes who just happened to be among the most important to walk this earth.

—LINDSAY PEREIRA

INDULGE YOUR NEED FOR SPEED AT AN F1 CIRCUIT IN BAKU

AZERBAIJAN

Everyone knows that city circuits are the best kind of F1 races to watch. And the latest addition to the 2017 Formula One calendar – the **Baku City Circuit** – may just be the jewel in the crown. The second-longest racetrack in the world, it snakes past UNESCO heritage sites (the 15th-century **Palace of the Shirvanshahs**, a vast royal complex, and the iconic 12th-century **Maiden Tower**), dazzling modern architecture (the glass-and-steel **Flame Towers**) and the capital's famed Caspian coastline. It's also one of the most technical and challenging tracks out there, offering very little margin for error, thanks to the absence of run-off areas around its angular chicanes.

A relatively unexplored Eurasian gem, with a beautifully preserved old city and a futuristic Zaha Hadid-designed **cultural centre**, the millennium-old city of Baku has the potential to turn an adrenaline-fuelled F1 weekend into one of the coolest holidays of your life. —**PARTH CHARAN**



IMAGE: ALAMY (KAS, BERNABUE)

GO DIVING IN KAS AND KEKOVA

TURKEY

Accomplished divers, head to **Kanyön** in Kas, an underwater canyon with elaborate rock formations and narrow passageways from 3-23 metres. There's also a wreck – an airplane from World War II – lying at 50-plus metres. Beginners, even if you don't make it to these depths, you're still likely to spot turtles, seahorses and massive

groupers. Kas is also home to two shipwrecks worth seeing – one of which, the **Uluburun**, dates all the way back to the Bronze Age. Last, make a stop at **Amphorae** fields to spot ancient urns, vessels and amphorae, unspoiled and untainted since the time they were lost at sea. Diving companies like Bougainville and Naturablue sail to these sites every day.

Next, mix things up, and book a day tour onboard a Turkish **gulet** from Çayağzı to the ancient sunken city of **Kekova**. South Turkey has been an earthquake-prone zone for thousands of years, which explains why an entire Lycian city comprised of

Greco-Roman architecture broke off from the mainland and exists half submerged and perfectly preserved to this day. Your **gulet** – stocked with cold beers, bread, olives, cheese, tomatoes, fruit and fresh seafood to grill – will make stops at shallow bays and natural caves where you can free dive and snorkel past schools of parrot fish which inhabit the ruins of a civilization harking as far back as the Byzantine era. A glass bottom offers spectacular views of protected heritage zones and further west, you can dive into shallows that lead to the remains of an ancient chapel beached on shore. —**NISHA RAVINDRANATH**

The harbour at Kas





The Baku racetrack is the latest addition to the F1 circuit



RIDE THE WAVES IN PURI, AT THE INDIA SURF FESTIVAL

ODISHA

Come November, the beaches of Odisha's temple-bound coastline will once again play host to the India Surf Festival. In its sixth edition, the ISF promises a lot more than just a high dreadlocks-per-square-foot ratio. This is where surfing enthusiasts discover everything from the right technique to ride the roughest waves to the best equipment.

And once you have, you can choose from a range of other (less hectic) activities: smoking a doob and watching the sea, trying a Yoga On Water class (exactly what it sounds like – doing yoga atop a paddleboard) and skateboarding. Also on offer are live music, painting, poetry and stand-up comedy sessions. Pack light, but don't forget the sunscreen.

—PARTH CHARAN



WATCH REAL MADRID AND BARCELONA FACE OFF AT THE EL CLÁSICO

MADRID

The world's biggest football rivalry stems from an oft-ignored political backstory: Real represented General Franco – the right-wing dictator who ruled Spain with an iron fist from 1936-1975 – while Barça represented the Democrats.

Catalunya, particularly the city of Barcelona, was repressed under Franco's regime. To the city's people, these matches were, and to a degree still are, a way to stick it to the man.

Now imagine watching this epic face-off at the two-tiered Santiago Bernabéu stadium, packed with over 85,000 people, singing, screaming and crying – to a point where players can't hear their teammates mere yards away. That is what the **El Clásico** is about: It's not just a football match; it's a (civil) war, minus the bloodshed.

Smack in the middle of one of Madrid's traffic arteries rises the stadium's greying façade, overdue a facelift and in the process of getting one by 2020. But you'll want to visit the Bernabéu before its architectural botox. There's a Spartan ruggedness to it, which is fitting given that it's hosted the best players from every generation who've donned that famed Madrid armour. The April 23 fixture could very well be the title decider of the **La Liga** season. What's more, you don't need to worry about exorbitantly priced tickets either: With the financial crisis in Spain, you might be able to score them for as little as €80. —MERYL D'SOUZA



SAVE THE WORLD (OR A PART OF IT) WITH 2041'S INTERNATIONAL ANTARCTICA EXPEDITION

ANTARCTICA

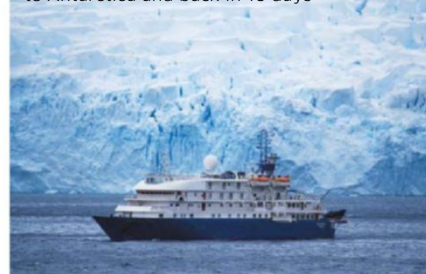
If rising temperatures, ever-more vicious storms and floods and Leonardo DiCaprio haven't convinced you that climate change is real, perhaps a trip down south to "the last great wilderness on Earth" will do the job.

For the past 13 years, explorer and environmentalist OBE Robert Swan has been hosting the International Antarctica Expedition under the aegis of his company 2041 – the name, a reference

to the year that a global moratorium on mining and drilling in the white continent will expire. "The greatest threat to our planet," Swan is fond of saying in TED talks, "is the belief that someone else will save it." 2041 is about inspiring activism, and taking ownership of this pickle we're all in.

The journey begins at Ushuaia in Argentina, aboard the *Sea Spirit*, which sails down the Beagle Channel and into the choppy waters of the Drake Channel, accompanied by landscapes in vivid colours, majestic albatrosses and masterclasses on the history and geology of Antarctica. Eventually, you'll circle around Cuverville Island, Neko Harbour, Paradise Harbour and Lemaire Channel, all along the western coast of Antarctica – and witness, first-hand, an ecosystem of ice, water and wildlife not yet out of balance. Expect statuesque icebergs, whales, gentoo penguins and the

The *Sea Spirit* makes its way from Argentina to Antarctica and back in 10 days



starriest night sky you'll ever see.

The 10-day journey is not for the faint-hearted, of course; but perhaps the hardest part is being accepted for the ride. There's a rigorous screening process, in which they'll want to know your intentions; and the cost of the trip has often prompted crowd-funding bids in the past. If you make it through, you'll want to do more than Instagram the shit out of the place.

—NIDHI GUPTA

This summer go diving, zip lining and kayaking in Dawki and Shnong Pdeng



ADVENTURE & SPORTS

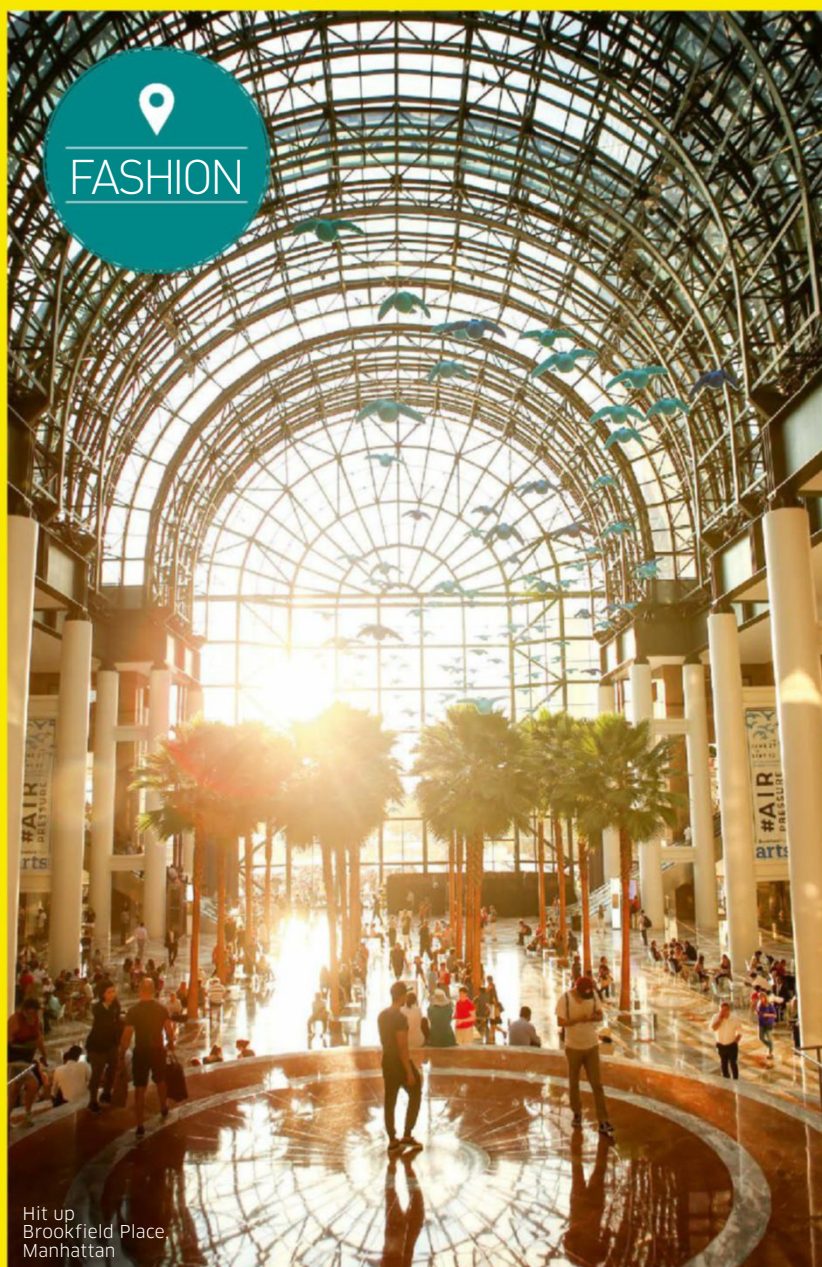
JUMP OFF A CLIFF IN DAWKI

MEGHALAYA

Getting there, to begin with, is an adventure. Shnong Pdeng lies 100km south-west of Shillong, in the West Jaintia Hills, on the very edge of the Meghalaya-Bangladesh border.

There are roads. In parts. The rest mostly comprises of pot-holed river bed tracks. But you will pass the cleanest, quaintest villages and orchards of swaying betel nut palm trees before you get to Dawki, Shnong Pdeng's louder, more touristy sibling. The hills here drop into the vast plains of Bangladesh, cut through by the crystalline Umngot River (in winter, especially, piercingly clear).

A turn off the main road takes you to Shnong Pdeng ("village in the middle"), a riverside hamlet where life clusters around piscine activities – elegant fishing boats dotting the waters, carrying local fisherfolk. Sip *sha saw* (red tea) at a stall overlooking groups of playing children, hire a boat for a trip down the river, walk across the hanging bridge suspended scarily high above. And for the more adventurous, get in touch with Pioneer Adventure Tours (pioneeradventuretour.com) for an array of sporting activities. Its one-day trip includes a two-hour trek from Wakhadait to Dawki with scuba diving, zip lining, kayaking, snorkeling and cliff jumping; the overnight option (two days, one night) offers, in addition, rock climbing and rappelling, with camping along a lovely sandy stretch of riverbank. As the evening settles around you, sit around the bonfire, grill the catch of the day, stargaze. —JANICE PARIAT



FASHION

Hit up Brookfield Place, Manhattan

INDIE RETAIL

LONDON

Mod, punk rock and indie were all born on the streets of London, and while big-name brands hog the real estate on Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street, you can still count on Carnaby Street to remain true to its iconoclastic roots. Here, you'll find **Liam Gallagher's Pretty Green**, **Shinola** and **A.P.C** within walking distance of each other. For real street cred though,

drop into Lambretta, Oi Polloi and Baracuta. Next, go east: Shoreditch and its surrounding areas are buzzing with creative, independent talent. **Boxpark**, on the corner of High Street is an eat/shop/drink space made up of storage containers, housing brands such as Hype, The Brokedown Palace and the exclusive Idris Elba x Superdry collab.

And while London is the home of British menswear, the scene in Manchester is hotting up too. Check out the Northern Quarter, for stores like A Shop Called Wood that stock brands from Penfield to YMC. You're bound to find something exclusive that no one else will have. —**RAVNEET CHANNA**

EXPERIENCE AMERICA'S MENSWEAR REVOLUTION AT BROOKFIELD PLACE

NEW YORK CITY

When Condé Nast moved its American HQ out of Times Square last year, the tremors were felt all around Midtown: favourite restaurants were suddenly open for reservations, high-end salons accepted walk-ins and cool shops marked down their prices. On the flip side, the move downtown by the 3,000 men and women who work at 16 print magazines and 20 websites to the landmark 104-storey 1 World Trade Centre has given once-moribund Lower Manhattan an economic fillip. Just opposite the imposing tower is the upscale Brookfield Place, a spanking new retail space filled with luxury fashion boutiques, hip breweries and gourmet street food. While Brookfield does not overtly target Condé Nast staffers, it's clear from the unique merchandising mix that it knows just who's shopping at its stores. —**CHE KURRIEN**

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE AT SÖDERMALM

STOCKHOLM

It's Stockholm's hipster hangout – called Söder by locals and favoured by the creative elite. A walk around this vibrant hood will throw up one-of-a-kind vintage emporiums, second-hand shops, independent boutiques, even an Indian restaurant called Gossip that promises to serve “crazy good Bengali street food”. Stop by **Herr Judit**, a handsome menswear store stocked with vintage apparel and antique wooden cabinets. The distinctive smell of fine leather and burnt amber elevates your shopping experience as you sift through Pendleton plaids and Maison Margiela raincoats. For the classic gent, **Haberdash** is the jam, with old-school labels like Dr. Martens, Filson and Stutterheim neatly stacked in front of granite and cacti-accented walls. Grandpa has everything for the urban male: jeans to hoodies from labels like Velour and Neuw. After you're done, head over to **Cultur Bar & Restaurant**, which exudes a speakeasy vibe and is filled with Stockholm's most beautiful people. Order a Valmont the Second, made from a blend of Stolichnaya vodka and zingiber liqueur, and you'll fit right in. —**SHIVANGI LOLAYEKAR**



Phoenix Dragon, made from debris and scrap metal by Chinese artist Xu Bing for the 56th Venice Biennale

SOAK IN SOME ART AT THE VENICE BIENNALE

📍 **VENICE, ITALY**

History comes easily to Venice. But if, like me, you need a compelling reason to visit this overhyped tourist trap, the 57th edition of the **Venice Biennale**, begun in 1895, could provide it. We recall the previous edition for its controversies (Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel converted an unused Catholic church into a mosque) and its parties (Feroze Gujral's being the most talked about), besides the Gujral Foundation's pathbreaking project *My East Is Your West* featuring artists Rashid Rana and Shilpa Gupta. But curator Christine Macel seems intent on bringing the focus back to art – and artists – this time around, with a weekly roundtable that will allow visitors to engage directly with them.

The biennale touches the medieval soul of Venice, away from the canals and gondoliers and the arguable splendours of St Mark's and the mandatory visits to **Murano** and **Burano**. Because it is unpredictable and volatile, art makes Venice gracious, a doppelgänger of the city it was before Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp destroyed it for us.

The Venice Biennale runs from May 13–November 26, 2017. —KISHORE SINGH

A DOUBLE BILL @ DOCUMENTA 14

📍 **KASSEL, GERMANY & ATHENS, GREECE**

It's easily the art world's most cerebral event, and its best-kept secret. Curators vie for the distinction of having a project at the rarefied **documenta**, which has traditionally been held in Kassel, Germany. A little-known outpost in the country's northern



Key In The Hand, an installation at the Japanese pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale by artist Chiharu Shiota

IMAGE: ALAMY

ART +
DESIGN

• The Biennale touches the medieval soul of Venice, away from the canals and gondoliers and the arguable splendours of St Mark's and the mandatory visits to Murano and Burano. Because it is unpredictable and volatile, art makes Venice gracious

Hesse region, the town's history has included moments of celebrity (the Brothers Grimm lived and wrote their eponymous fairytales here) and notoriety (as a concentration sub-camp for Dachau). Kassel also has Europe's first public museum, founded in 1779, which survived the bombings of World War II that razed most of the city.

Rebuilt in the Fifties, what the city lacks in architectural beauty, it makes up for during documenta, with its breadth of events and projects that defy and challenge our notions of art and its influence. Among the more notable projects at the forthcoming edition is one on hunger, co-curated by Natasha Ginwala and featuring works by **Chittaprosad Bhattacharya**, **Zainul Abedin** and **Sunil Janah**, on the Bengal famine of 1943-44.

Held once every four years, documenta has chosen to split its 14th edition between Kassel and Athens, Greece – the result of a bailout package for the Greek government. Cynically (or cleverly, depending on your perspective) titled "Learning From Athens" by artistic director Adam Szymczyk, documenta will share the programming in more salubrious environs. Though purists who will not want any distractions might prefer the virtues of Kassel over Athens. *documenta runs from April 8-July 16 (Athens) and June 10-September 17, 2017 (Kassel).*

—KISHORE SINGH



Nalini Malani's installation at documenta 13, June 2012



STAY IN THESE HOMES DESIGNED BY GODS OF MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE

Architecturally significant homes aren't just for coffee-table books. They're meant to be lived in. By you. Even if just for a few inspiring nights. Here are three design escapes
—BRAD DUNNING

1. BAUHAUS, DESSAU, GERMANY

Responsible for so much of the modern furniture, typography and architecture we love today, the Bauhaus school in Germany was as influential on the world of design as The Beatles were on 20th-century music.

From 1925 to 1931, students there were educated in architecture, industrial design, metalworking, painting, photography and even colour theory and weaving. And then, in 1933, the school was closed under pressure from the Nazi regime, which considered it a threat, due to its emphasis on individualism, creativity and intellectualism.

There were three campuses during its lifetime, but founder Walter Gropius designed the largest one, in Dessau, where you can now spend the night in a dorm room. It's an easy 90-minute train ride from Berlin's Zoologischer station – and, upon arrival in Dessau, a pleasant 15-minute walk through the quiet little town over to the campus.

The restored Bauhaus Building is one of the greatest and most faithful architectural restorations I have ever seen. I swear to God, the canteen looks like an Apple Store. The rooms are ridiculously affordable and spotlessly clean, with bare walls and hard floors, yet each also has a beautifully designed (of course) bed and furniture by Bauhaus designers and illustrious alumni. Communal bathrooms are down the hall.
From ₹2,700/night

2. CONVENT AT LA TOURETTE BY CORBUSIER AND HÔTEL LE CORBUSIER (LYONS AND MARSEILLE, FRANCE)

Gaze at any modern building and you'll see breadcrumbs leading back to Le Corbusier's desk. His continuing oracular authority verges on the sacred, so why not stay in a Corbusier-designed convent? Rooms at the Convent at La Tourette (Lyon, France) are small and monastic, but the structure remains a masterpiece of inspiration, introspection and rejuvenation. It's your chance to get closer to God and Le Corbusier. Or are they one and the same?
From ₹3900/night

Alternatively, you can stay in Hôtel Le Corbusier (Marseille, France), arguably Le Corbusier's most famous creation. It's part of La Cité Radieuse (The Radiant City), which was to be the prototype for a new wave of post-war housing – a nine-storey building, with one floor of shops and a rooftop garden, that is one of the most famous and most photographed modern architectural spaces in the world. Cradle yourself in a monument; it's an erection of the senses. *From ₹6,000/night*

3. LEONARDO DICAPRIO'S DINAH SHORE ESTATE BY DONALD WEXLER (PALM SPRINGS, CA)

The phoenix-like revival of Palm Springs has been well-documented and lovingly appreciated. The houses and architecture that were abandoned like bones at a barbecue during the Eighties and Nineties roared back into vogue as the world rediscovered mid-century modernism. (Architecture geeks, check

out palmspringsmodernarttours.com and themodernarttour.com for excellent guided tours through this design hood.)

As one of the key players in the Palm Springs school, architect Donald Wexler created sublimely simple pavilions of glass and often steel. One of his most luxurious commissions was the Dinah Shore Estate (1964), smack dab in the middle of what could be called the Beverly Hills of Palm Springs – the neighbourhood of Old Las Palmas, a setting of flat labyrinthine streets and high-walled estates. Quiet and peaceful, perfect for bicycling and projectile-weeping house envy.

Did Leonardo DiCaprio buy this important home to have a party pad during Coachella? Maybe. It's hard to separate the DiCaprio mojo from your experience here. It's sexy as hell being in that hot sun and tranquil pool, and under those stars at night. If you can't get laid in this house, something is truly amiss.
From ₹2,56,000/night

Hôtel Le
Corbusier
(Marseille,
France)



ART +
DESIGN



Whipped emu egg and sugar bag at the three-hatted Attica in Melbourne, also one of The World's 50 Best Restaurants, 2016



GUSSY UP FOR DINNER

📍 AUSTRALIA

Modern Australian cuisine is known for its diversity: born as a result of the continent's multicultural immigrant population. "But the real focus is on celebrating produce," says celebrity chef and restaurateur **Sarah Todd**, who runs Antares in Goa. "You'll see this in **Attica** in Melbourne, a three-hatted restaurant (between one to three Chef Hats are awarded to outstanding restaurants in Australia), where one of the courses is half a piece of cabbage, slow-cooked and served with a duck confit jus. It's to die for. At **Saint Crispin**, also a hatted restaurant in Melbourne, order the Western Plains pork jowl and fillet, white pudding, zucchini flower and mustard. In Sydney at **Chiswick**, former *MasterChef* judge Matt Moran serves lamb, which his family raises on their farm, with vegetables grown in his on-site kitchen garden." The best part: it's all beautifully plated, without being fussy, with earthy, unexpected flavours to tease your palate. —**ARSHIE CHEVALWALA**



Don't miss the lamb at former *MasterChef* judge Matt Moran's Chiswick, Sydney



Street side speciality in Sri Lanka: hoppers



KEL C TELLS YOU WHERE TO GET FED UP

📍 SRI LANKA

Last September, I married my girlfriend in a villa in Mirissa, surrounded by a small group of friends and family who'd flown in from across the world. Many of them were chefs who'd worked in the kitchens of Michelin-starred restaurants in America. Which meant the culinary stakes were high. And Sri Lanka didn't disappoint.

In Colombo, try the fluffy rice hoppers served up by most street vendors, and sample the fiery curries at **Ministry of Crab**. If you want to avoid tourist attractions completely, get a reservation at **Nihonbashi** for the freshest sushi in town. For a laid-back candlelit dinner, book a table at the sexy **Gallery Café**.

From the capital, we made our way down south to Galle and Mirissa, for sunshine and more seafood. Grab lunch at the **Closenberg Hotel**, a heritage structure built in the 1860s, followed

by a drink by its infinity pool at Luna Terrace, which overlooks the UNESCO heritage-listed Galle Fort and Rumassala Mountain. While I'm usually not a fan of buffets, The Closenberg blew our minds with its array of sambals and curries.

The seafood and produce in **Mirissa** were exceptional. We had a fully equipped (depending on who you asked) kitchen and extra hands on deck. After scouring the market for fresh produce the day before, my friends and I were able to source beautiful crabs, fish and squid directly from the docks and prepare them for our wedding dinner that night. If you don't feel like rigging an open fire grill and using palm leaves as a cooking tool, you can always go to any of the beachside restaurants and enjoy the fresh catch of the day.

Your next stop is the **Amba Estate farmstay**, outside Ella. Here, you can learn how to harvest the tea that used to be served at Noma, before it closed last year. Tea not your thing? Drive down to Kandy for juicy burgers at Licensed to Grill, which only comes to life at night, at George E De Silva Park in the City Centre. Breakfast the next day should be on the patio of the OZO Hotel. Watch your food though – I had a monkey with impeccable taste steal a doughnut from my plate. —KELVIN CHEUNG



MICRO-DISTILLERIES ARE ALL THE RAGE

📍 **HOKKAIDO, JAPAN
AND ISLAY, SCOTLAND**

Sorry, Samuel Adams fans, but craft beer is so 2014. The latest trend in artisanal alcohol is the craft spirit, lovingly created at regional micro-distilleries with locally sourced ingredients, innovative distillation techniques and generous helpings of so-cool-it-hurts authenticity. The past 10 years have seen an explosion in American craft distilleries, each churning out their own hyper-local take on whisky, rum and the increasingly resurgent American-style gin. But two of the most exciting micro-distilleries are outside American borders, offering beautiful views and centuries of tradition and history alongside their world-class spirits.

For the first, head to the Japanese island of Hokkaido, home to **Nikka Whisky's Yoichi Distillery**. The northern-most distillery in the country, Yoichi is the birthplace of the single malts that have earned Japanese whiskies a perennial place in connoisseurs' Top 10 lists. Flanked by mountains on three sides and the sea on the fourth, Yoichi still uses traditional Scottish methods, including massive copper distillation pots fired by powdered coal. You can take self-guided tours of the facility (or find an English-speaking guide), sip up to



The Moorland Martini at The Botanist micro-distillery

three blends of salty, peaty whisky at one of two tasting bars and discover the founder's intriguing history at its museum. Remember to sample the rare Yoichi Single Malt NAS.

The other must-visit distillery is found on the famous Scottish island of Islay. Unlike most of its peers, **The Botanist** focuses not on whisky but on small-batch artisanal gin. Crafted from 22 botanical ingredients hand-foraged from the hills, peat bogs and shores of the small island, its floral gin is slowly distilled in one of the last functional Lomond pot-stills in existence. Take the £5 tour or splash out £25 for the full warehouse experience, tasting glass included. And remember to pick up a bottle as you head out. —**BHANUJ KAPPAL**



Tobacco leaves being cured in Viñales

RUM AND TOBACCO DIARIES

📍 **CUBA**

Venture out of Havana towards Viñales and watch the pastel houses and grand Spanish-style colonial architecture morph into a countryside dotted with tobacco fields. A three-hour tour will take you through the basics from picking aromatic tobacco leaves, drying, curing and rolling. Celebrate your newfound knowledge with a freshly-made cigar, rolled by a wizened farmer. Buy a pack or two for your boys at home – the cigars here are significantly less expensive than Monte Cristo, Cohiba and Romeo y Julieta, brands that are ubiquitous in the bodegas of Havana. Cuba Libre – the battle cry of the Cuba Liberation Army during the War of Independence – is the go-to-drink in the island country, popularly known worldwide as rum and Coke. And although Cuba is where Bacardi was founded, I prefer Havana Club's naturally aged rums for their more nuanced flavour profiles. Stop by a local factory on the way back from Viñales for all the juice on how sugarcane is transformed into some of the most expensive booze in the world. —**KRISHAN RELE**

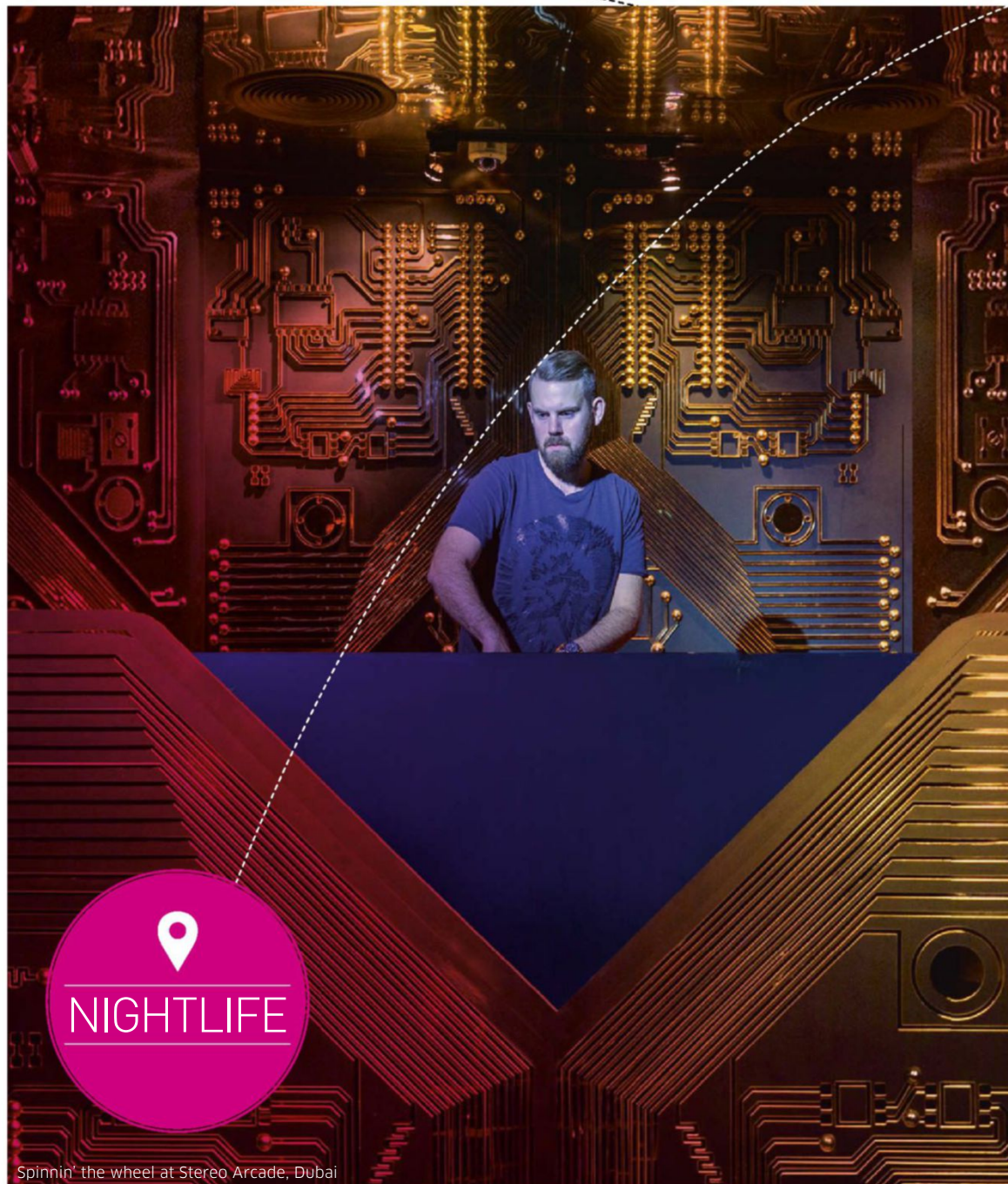
GET IT UP IN THAILAND

(NO, NOT THAT)

📍 BANGKOK

Give the Iron Fairies a miss on your next visit to Bangkok, because there's a whole new crop of bars taking inspiration from Prohibition-era American speakeasies. For the most part, the Twenties vibe has been updated, and at places like **Track 17**, the drinks menu – influenced by cities from around the world – changes regularly. Taking its name from the area, Thonglor 17, the interiors are reminiscent of a railway cabin, and for the next few months, drinks are inspired by Chicago. Another option is **UNCLE** aka United Nations of Cocktail Lovers Everywhere, which has two locations in the city. Visit the newer outpost at 72 Courtyard in Thonglor, where home-infused syrups are used in cocktails that pack a punch. For those who prefer their watering holes with a veneer of secrecy, **J Boroski Mixology**, also in Thonglor, serves up pricey drinks (made with exotic ingredients) behind an unmarked door. Because some nights you need to drink like a baron.

—AATISH NATH



Cocktail at Native

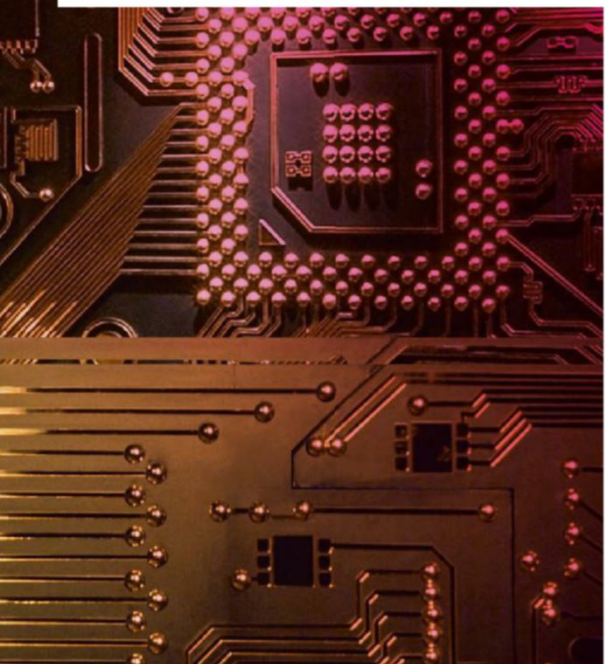
COCKTAILS GET A NEW TWIST

📍 SINGAPORE

If you abide by lists, Singapore has three of the World's 50 Best Bars of 2016 to check out. The well-crafted cocktails at **Manhattan** (No 11), **28 HongKong Street** (No 14) and **Operation Dagger** (No 21) are worth sampling. But for something more under-the-radar, we recommend making a stop at **Native**, which uses regional ingredients: Vijay Mudaliar's signature tipples feature

everything from Sri Lankan arak to foraged ants. In Clarke Quay, grab a drink at **Red Tail Bar**, which serves up drinks (and food) inspired by the cities around Singapore. While the sharing plates will line your stomach, it's the cocktails – made with ingredients like house-made beetroot grenadine – that will keep you asking for more. Finally, make your way (though probably not in a straight line) to the **Court Martial Bar**, at the newly revamped JW Marriott South Beach, located in the military court of a former barrack. Once there, try its twist on the mai tai, inventively called the MT Platoon.

—AATISH NATH



PARTY LIKE AN EMIRATI

📍 DUBAI

It may be surprising, but in fact it was inevitable – Dubai's over-the-top party excesses are giving way to places that actually have character.

NOLA Eatery & Social House, New York import **Miss Lily's** and **Stereo Arcade** are just three of the new lot. While New Orleans is the inspiration for NOLA, Miss Lily's transports you straight to Jamaica, with old-school Usher on the sound system and cocktails named "Rude Boy" and "Tempted To Touch" on the menu. Stereo Arcade meanwhile is the place to play retro arcade games, grab a drink or boogie the night away. If old habits die hard and you're looking for something plusher, stop by the **St Regis Lounge** at the recently opened luxury hotel and order the Gold Mary, the hotel's twist on a bloody mary, with an edible gold leaf. Also in the neighbourhood is the new **W Hotel**: Head to the **W Lounge** on the 30th floor, for a drink and vistas of the city, or to **Boa** on the 32nd floor, where the party never stops.

—AATISH NATH

IMAGE: REX FEATURES (COMIC-CON)

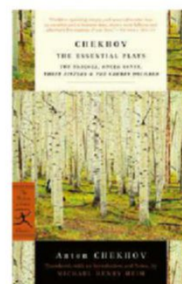
FOLLOW A (LITERARY) COMMUNIST TRAIL

📍 MOSCOW

Communists tend to get a bad rep on our side of the world, possibly because they don't photograph well, or they tend to shy away from platforms like Facebook. In Russia, however, it's a whole other story. And Moscow in particular hits the sweet spot between great vodka, literature and Communism.

Start with **Anton Chekhov**, for instance, whose plays like *The Sea Gull* and *The Cherry Orchard* were steeped in ideas of Marxism and Communism, and whose home from 1886-1890 is carefully preserved as a museum close to the centre of the city. Chock-full of his personal possessions, it welcomes visitors for a ridiculously cheap sum that should warm the heart of any Communist tourist.

Not too far away stands the home of a writer heavily favoured by Stalin himself, **Mikhail Bulgakov**. What makes Bulgakov House so special is



the role it occupies, along with locations around it, in his classic novel *The Master And Margarita*. If you're lucky, you might run into a celebrity here, given the writer's enduring popularity with everyone from Mick Jagger to Daniel Radcliffe.

If it's atmosphere you're after, nothing beats the charming home of Nobel winner and Communist supporter-turned-critic and poet **Boris Pasternak**, a 20-minute train ride from Moscow. But the capital itself deserves more than just a cursory visit: See the last home of **Nikolai Gogol**, pay homage to both him and Chekhov at the **Novodevichy Cemetery** and visit the apartment where **Dostoevsky** wrote *Crime And Punishment*. —LINDSAY PEREIRA



DRESS UP (OR DOWN) FOR COMIC-CON

📍 SAN DIEGO

There's something to be said for how desperately we crave the idea of escape. On March 21, 1970, San Diego's Golden State Comic-Minicon first introduced people

to the idea of a world that didn't have to be as oppressive as the one we inhabit. Today, millions throng to the annual **Comic-Con International**, or copycat events in cities across the globe.

Why? As a comic book fan for as long as I can remember, I see the appeal of access to the faces behind the superheroes – the writers and illustrators of iconic characters like Spiderman and the Fantastic Four, for example. The merchandise is also a big draw. And then there are the early previews of big-budget films that the rest of the world has to wait for. You get bragging rights for having checked out the new *Batman* trailer months before your friends even hear of its release.

It gets bigger every year, and the July 2017 event promises to have it all: Hollywood biggies (past attendees include Francis Ford Coppola and Steven Spielberg), legendary comic book writers and creators (Stan Lee, Alan Moore, Frank Miller, George RR Martin, Neil Gaiman) and the Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards – the Oscars for comic books, only without the red carpet and rambling monologues.

—LINDSAY PEREIRA

ESCAPE FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWDS

📍 A PRIVATE ISLAND IN INDONESIA OR THE SEYCHELLES

Every once in a while the gods smile upon Earth, and its good people discover a new island. Utter seclusion and spiritual renewal are the new touchstones of luxury, and – for a few dozen lakhs – you can kick back on your own piece of paradise.

Bawah (bawahisland.com), the newest find in the relatively unexplored Indonesian archipelago – its address, a few coordinates in the South China Sea – is set to become the next Bintan. Arriving via a tony seaplane from Singapore, as all guests must, is spine-tingling: The atoll glimmers as you approach. Coral gardens stretch for miles into abyssal depths, rare birds and flowers surround three lagoons and 11 empty beaches. And amidst it all is a mysterious jungle that rises from the centre, 150m tall, like a lost world from a James Cameron movie.

The 35 villas that have been built entirely by hand, using bamboo, stone and recycled teak, don't clutter the powdery sands. And with a maximum of 70 guests here at any given time, everything feels entirely folded away, a place to dream and read.

If you can't wait for the property to open this summer, there's the newly-launched Zil Pasyon on Félicité (sixsenses.com/resorts/zilpasyon), a private island in celeb-magnet Seychelles. For nine years, the Six Senses team has been bushwhacking its way through a tangled mass of coco plum so that more delicate indigenous species can re-establish themselves. Jagged granite rocks on white sands provide a dramatic setting for a vacation that's entirely otherworldly. When you aren't in your generously appointed villas with private pools and organic mattresses, there are paddleboards and kayaks, speedboats and jet skis and long walks that are medicinal for the soul. Nature feels different in places where man treads lightly.

—MEGHA SHAH

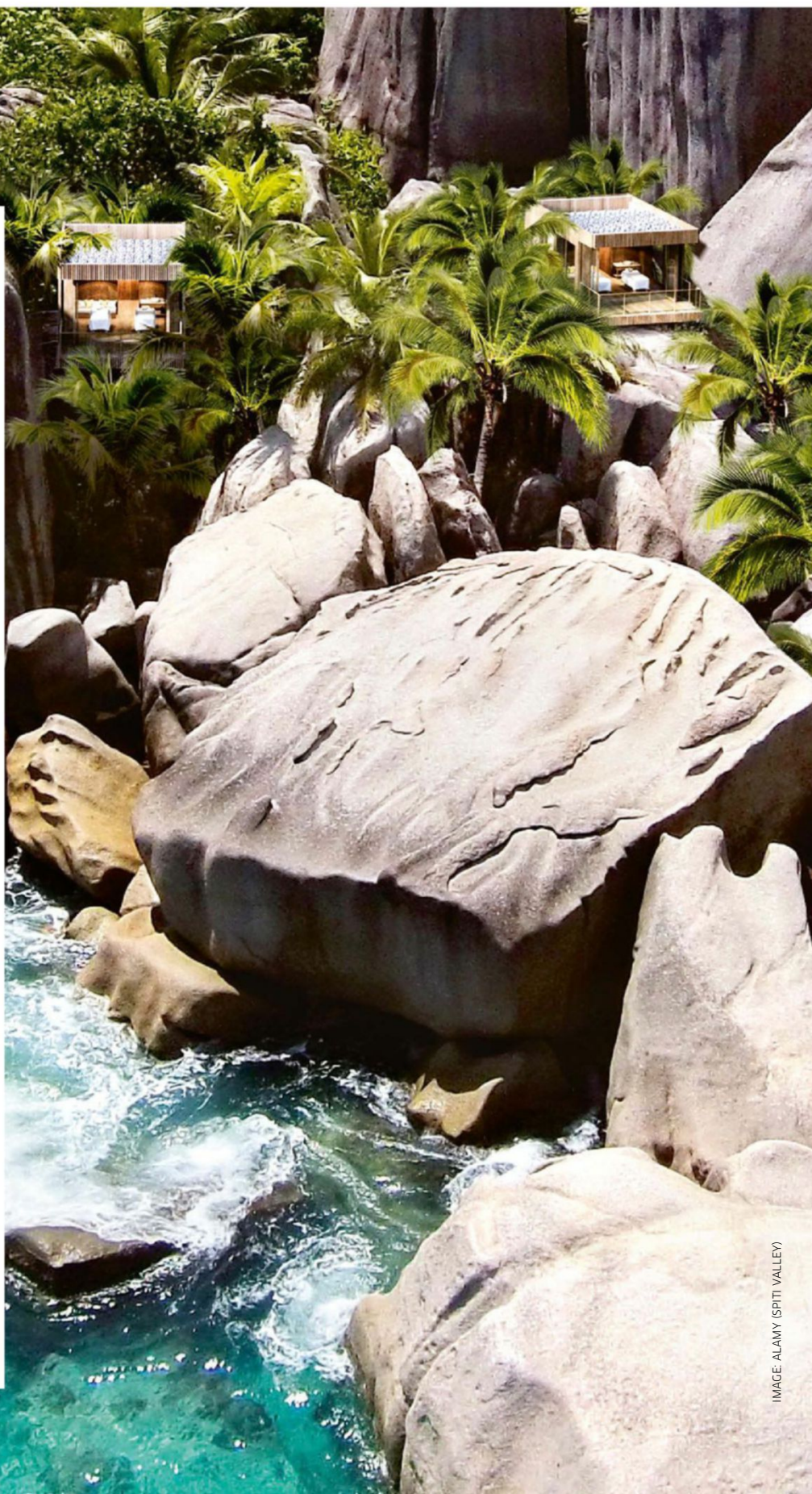
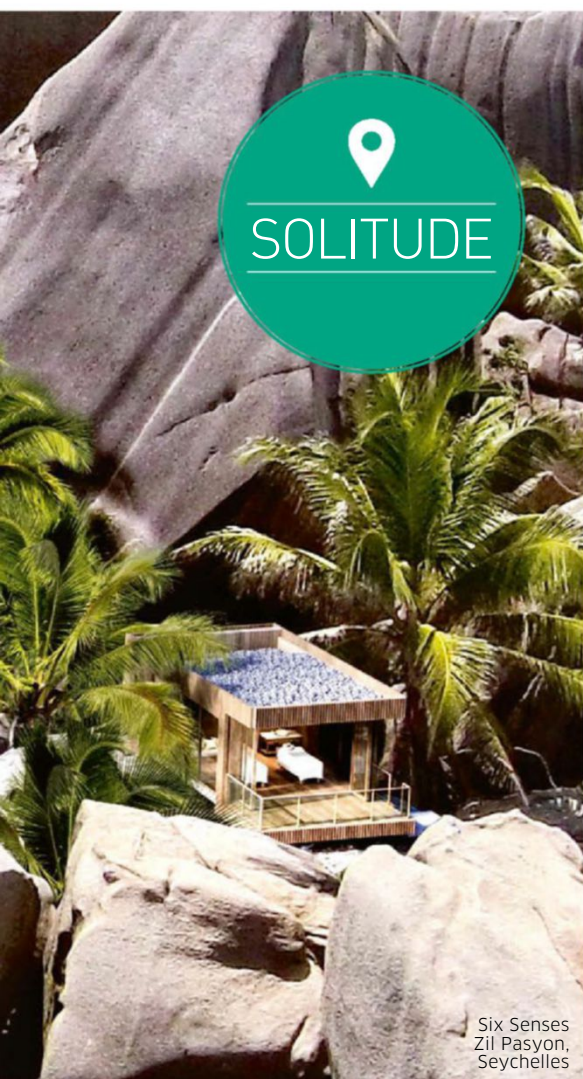


IMAGE ALAMY (SPITI VALLEY)



Six Senses
Zil Pasyon,
Seychelles



Bawah, near Indonesia

- The 35 villas that have been built entirely by hand using bamboo, stone and recycled teak on Bawah island, near Indonesia, don't clutter the powdery sands. And with just 70 guests here at any given time, everything feels entirely folded away, a place to dream and read



Kye monastery in
the Spiti Valley, HP

GO MONASTERY-HOPPING IN SPITI VALLEY

● HIMACHAL PRADESH

It was the third day running without electricity. Word of a cloudburst in Leh had come in, and the road back to civilization, via Manali, had been blocked. I was cut off, even virtually. But for once, sitting at the Sol Café, sipping on sea buckthorn tea and breaking pita with an Israeli couple fresh out of military commission, I couldn't care less about Instagram likes. Or checking in on Facebook. Or an exit strategy.

We'd arrived in the sleepy town of Kaza, the capital of Himachal Pradesh's Lahaul-Spiti district, after four arduous days of driving from Delhi. Turning into the Spiti valley – the middle land between India and Tibet, where the terrain gets harsher and drier and the colours are naturally saturated – brought an unfamiliar calm.

There was a monastery a stone's throw distance everywhere in the valley. We turned prayer wheels in the village of Tabo, and marvelled at the monastery-in-a-mud-hut that's been standing since 995 CE, a cold, glacial wind snapping at our ears. At Kungri, we closed our eyes to the reverb of 200 monks chanting in unison.

At Kye, the fortress-like monastery an hour's drive from Kaza, the Israelis gleefully related stories of war to an inquisitive monk in impossibly-flimsy-for-4°C-weather red robes as he brewed us tea; in return, he explained the large, intricate murals depicting the cycle of life according to Mahayana Buddhism. Later, we drove higher up the hills into Kibber, a village home to people who'd fit right in on a brochure about happiness indices.

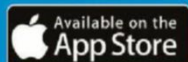
Greater altitudes were hit, of course, as we trekked along the perimeter of the Chandra Tal – courtesy of some wonderfully fresh Malana hash. But transcendence in Spiti cannot (just) be substance-induced; the high we experienced was from successfully unplugging. —NIDHI GUPTA

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GQ

EDITED BY PARTH CHARAN

WATCH

Timepieces to travel with
 Tilting the field of view with the Longines Avigation Type-A7 1935



CHANGING TIMES

We list the 10 best travel watches of the season to aid your nomadic inclinations



IWC BIG PILOT PLATINUM EDITION

One stint on Michael Jordan's billion-dollar wrist - the NBA legend sported this Platinum edition while receiving the Congressional Medal of Freedom from Barack Obama last year - and the IWC Big Pilot went really, really big, unofficially becoming the season's MVP of aviation watches. Based on navigator watches from the Forties, its clean, bold interface and classical appeal are sure to catch your eye.



BREITLING CHRONOSPAC EVO NIGHT MISSION

The aviation watch is the bedrock upon which Breitling's horological church has been set up. Now, with the evocatively named Chronospace Evo Night Mission, Breitling's black ops-style chronograph comes with a SuperQuartz movement that's 10 times more reliable than the standard quartz one, and provides the kind of accuracy only aviators can truly appreciate.



ROLEX GMT MASTER II

Nothing says a well-heeled traveller like a Rolex on your wrist. While this may not always work to your advantage (don't, for example, wear it in a rough neighbourhood), the GMT Master II's easy readability and second time zone hand make it a rare combination of functional and sartorial versatility, rugged and dressy, all at once.

150° 120° 90° 60° 30° 0° 30°



**VACHERON CONSTANTIN
OVERSEAS WORLD TIME**

A world-time complication is to a travel watch what salted peanuts are to beer. VC's Overseas World Time shows every time zone there is - including the half-hour ones, like ours. And with a Lambert projection world map artfully etched into the centre, it's one of the most exquisitely styled expressions of the unconquerable nomadic spirit.



**OMEGA
SEAMASTER
PLANET OCEAN**
Tropical vacations, deep-sea diving, Arctic exploration - the Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean is your go-to timepiece for any adventure. A hardcore dive watch at heart, rendered more practical by a dual-time zone mechanism, it's a decidedly modern alternative to the more traditional marine chronographs.



**BREGUET
CLASSIQUE HORA
MUNDI**

With its sharply cut moonphase sub-dial, dual-time zone complication and sheer good looks, this one packs the classical charm and visual sophistication of a glorious, bygone era mixed with a hint of the modern.



**ULYSSE
NARDIN
CLASSIC SONATA
LIMITED EDITION**

The traditional-looking watch has the sole distinction of chiming an alarm you'd want to wake up to, thanks to UN's use of cathedral gongs in it. Also being able to keep track of the time at home makes it a fitting companion for those densely packed business trips with little room for sleep.





GARMIN

FENIX 3 GPS SPORTS

For those who need to cut loose from civilization every now and then, with nothing but a backpack and a walking stick for company – and a GPS watch, like this one. Its fitness tracking capabilities can all but detect cell death, and its extended battery life means you can head into the mountains with wild abandon.



CASIO

G-SHOCK GA700

The Casio G-Shock has always been the Bruce Willis of quartz watches. However, unlike Willis, the GA700 seems capable of surviving an asteroid collision and then easily moving on to its next heroic venture. Equipped with a 3D dial and front-facing crown, this square-jawed super trooper also gives you access to 31 time zones that come in handy during all that planet-saving business.



SEIKO

ASTRON GPS CHRONOGRAPH

The Seiko Astron's appeal lies in just how understated and fuss-free it is. Targeted at the not-quite-mechanically inclined, the quartz-operated chronograph's got a GPS-based mechanism to calibrate its date and time, as well as a solar-powered battery. For those who value functionality above all else.



SKYCAPER

The **Longines** Avigation Type A-7 1935 is proof that vintage and aviation will never go out of style



What you're looking at is by no means a manufacturing error. Nor is it a contrived attempt to add some quirk to a conventional tribute to a tribute watch (the original Avigation Type A-7). Because the Longines Avigation Type A-7 1935 pays homage to a very specific period in American aviation history – a time when the lives of military personnel, the world over, depended on the mechanical integrity and precision of their on-deck chronographs.

It's an era Longines is quite familiar with – see: its long history with making aviation watches during and between both World Wars. In a lot of ways, this time was the perfect anvil for a watchmaker to forge its reputation on. Flying over the oceans, with nothing but your watch to guide you, even a delay of a few seconds could cause a pilot to go horribly off-course.

Fortunately, timing pilots is something of a stock-in-trade for Longines, which, besides manufacturing precise chronographs, also clocked famed American aviator Charles Lindbergh's cross-Atlantic solo flight.

The "A-7" classification in this timepiece was given to mid-Thirties aviation watches for military pilots, and was based on a particular design, readability and precision. The idea behind the offset dial was to allow pilots to read the time without letting go of the plane's yoke.

The design is perfectly in line with Longines' approach to tribute watches – unlike the original, which had a massive 51mm diameter, this one's far more wearable at 41mm. The dial is off-white to increase visibility, with bold, gothic numerals in a pale brown, to recreate the look of radium, worn out over time. Rounding things out is a single monopusher, placed in such a way as to be easily operable by the gloved hands of a pilot.

In addition to being a perfectly adequate ice-breaker at parties, the Avigation Type A-7 1935's unusual appearance can prove equally useful during everyday scenarios – like driving – though that is stretching its utility value. A perfect example of why Longines' austere approach to tribute watches always works. 🕒

The idea behind the offset dial was to allow pilots to read the time without letting go of the plane's yoke



The presentation area at The Korner House

RSVP

TIME TO CELEBRATE

In December, Asian Paints and AD invited some of Mumbai's most celebrated architects and designers for an evening of art and architecture. For AD, it was to celebrate the success of the Art Issue, while for Asian Paints, it was the launch of their new Wall Art collection. Guests were treated to cocktails and canapes at The Korner House.



Sejal Shah, Tejal Thakur



Kanhai Gandhi

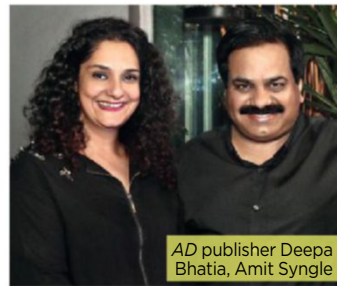
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Vishpala Hundekari, Namrata Asudani



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AD
ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

- Exploring the great outdoors with the 2017 Harley-Davidson Street Glide Special
- Is the Volvo S90 the future of executive luxury?

HIGHWAY STAR

The 2017 **Harley-Davidson** Street Glide Special is why the open road was invented

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **JIGNESH JHAVERI**

I strongly suspect that the 2017 Harley-Davidson Street Glide Special has a gravitational field of its own. And not because it's the size of a small moon. It's because its ability to gather a crowd is second to none. Toll booths, parking lots, bike wash stations, traffic signals – you'd have better luck slinking away unnoticed on a flaming Pegasus. In the eyes of all who behold it, the Street Glide is much more than a motorcycle; it's a seismic event. And it's a complete embodiment of what's made Harleys so popular in India – motorcycles that announce their presence long before they're in your line of sight. That leave you gobsmacked, perplexed, infuriated, envious and enthralled – without ever having swung a leg over one.

Despite its hulking proportions and that stealthy matte black paint job, this bike isn't a foreboding vision. On the contrary, it's a very inviting one, just like any grand touring motorcycle ought to be. Because any aches and pains you've acquired over the course of a busy work season can be shaken off completely after clocking sufficient time on that divinely cushioned saddle. Everything about this bike has been set up for comfort – right from the large moth-like fairing, designed to deflect wind for long-distance journeys, to the Barcalounger-like wide berth and relaxed riding position.

As big an event as the motorcycle itself might be, the unit powering it is an even bigger one. Because Harley has finally done away with its trusted Rushmore engine series and replaced →





it with the new, oil-cooled Milwaukee Eight, which understandably sounds like the title of a Wisconsin-based Western. The challenge for Harley was to retain the old-world, swashbuckling charm of its big twins while meeting modern-day requirements from a comfort, efficiency and emissions standpoint. It only took 15 years.

Which brings us to the big question: Has Harley been able to solve the conundrum of staying frozen in time while moving forward? In short, yes. The Milwaukee-Eight 107 V-Twin (1753cc) has successfully preserved the torquacious core that took Harley's machines from American highways and put them on the global map. Even in this particular trim, with a kerb weight well north of 300kg, the engine seems to tap into a reservoir that spools up miles like they were a bowl of spaghetti. And it does so while having ironed out the vibrations at idle and engine heating issues that are par for the course with a big, full-bodied Harley.

This isn't about the simple joys of motorcycling. It's about the grand, big-hearted motorcycling experience pioneered by Americans. The kind where you need nothing but a lungful of air, a full tank of gas and miles of endless, open roads. Of course, you'd also need satellite navigation to guide you through said open roads, and mark out restaurants and restrooms because, hey, we're not born to be *that* wild. (It's got that.) You'd need some music too, because highways can really seem endless after the first 800km, and riding a Harley into the sunset with Ray Charles pouring out of the speakers is about as good as the human experience can get. And that's why the Street Glide's massive fairing houses two speakers with enough acoustic firepower to fend off the engine's bipartisan thunder.

It also comes with two large saddlebags, so you can ride to the end of civilization and back without having to knapsack it like a scruffy gap-year student. No bungee cords needed, just a huge appetite for tarmac. Do note that handling the bike can be tricky around gridlocked traffic, since a lot of the bike's weight lies on the steering axis. The Street Glide is certainly a purpose-built bike, and that purpose isn't riding in city limits. That said, managing the bike's proportions depends entirely on how you manage your throttle – give it just the lightest dab and the Street Glide remains perfectly balanced at crawling speeds. Even at higher speeds, it never reminds you of its weight, except if you happen to hit a particularly large



THIS ISN'T ABOUT THE SIMPLE JOYS OF MOTORCYCLING. IT'S ABOUT THE GRAND, BIG-HEARTED MOTORCYCLING EXPERIENCE PIONEERED BY AMERICANS



pothole – at which point you'd need the arms of a longshoreman to wrestle it back into alignment. And its ability to gather momentum is greater than its ability to lose it, which takes some getting used to.

The Street Glide is truly in its element at about 140kph and 4,000rpm. Find a relatively smooth stretch and it's like skiing on marmalade. On city roads, you become acutely aware of just how much more the Street Glide has to offer, but despite its bulk, it can devour empty patches on the road with incredible vigour. Like most cruisers, it gives you a peculiar itch to ride that can only really be scratched after a good 600km of smooth, twisty, fast and slow riding. It's ideal as a getaway motorcycle, provided that getaway includes perfectly paved roads and glowing skies. That's how you scratch that itch. 🍌

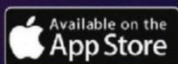
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Cool, composed and exceedingly clever. The **Volvo** S90's luxury game is on point

There's always been a simmering undercurrent of defiance about the Volvo. A maverick streak hidden under its tweedy exterior. After all, it's not easy, burning the "safe and sensible" torch and still being cool while the rest of the European luxury bratpack are busy blazing a trail of hot laps and hard corners, grabbing fistsful of the market share while they're at it.

Yet, it appears to have paid off for Volvo. The S90 is the second car in Volvo's all-new, future-driven →



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offensive, which includes a new design language, new platform and a new crop of engines designed to tackle emissions and efficiency-related woes. Pretty sensible so far. Having said that, the S90 is also probably the least understated car Volvo has made in recent years. Considering its barge-like proportions, it's more HMS 90 than S90.

Which isn't to say it's an ungainly sight. Far from it – the S90 has utilized that Scandinavian beauty gene to its full extent. It dispenses with all the faux-musculature of a car of its class, and has instead a sculpted symmetry that's minimalistic and grand at once. Much like the XC90 SUV, it's got the brand's signature fascia, punctuated by two slick "Thor's hammer" headlamps and a concave grille that still sports the diagonal slash that is unmistakably Volvo.

Refreshingly, Volvo hasn't bothered to make the car unnecessarily athletic at the expense of proper road-going comfort. And that's precisely what makes the S90 so unconventional. Volvo turned away from brochure-friendly attributes found in other Autobahn-munching executive sedans and consolidated its efforts towards sheer ergonomic splendour. Besides, expecting a car like this to take to the racetrack or even really acute B-roads is like expecting the Pope to take to recreational squash.

Inside, the S90 is exceptionally plush. So much so that the aeons spent at gridlocked traffic signals become infinitely more tolerable. Especially with that glorious Bowers & Wilkins sound system which, once set to "Gothenburg concert hall" mode, will have you questioning the wisdom of leaving your car at all. Even with a tornado on the horizon. During rapture.

The interiors are awash with white Nappa leather, which also coats the steering, as well as a walnut wood trim on the dash running across the transmission panel. It's noticeably "Ikea" in its execution, but perfectly in line with the Zen garden-like vibe. Volvo's new design philosophy has done away with the palette of buttons previously found in its cars. Instead, you get a large touchscreen unit that's the technological nucleus of the cabin. Through it, you can control anything from the infotainment system to the impressive "Lane Assist", which keeps the car on its path and prompts the steering to vibrate should it begin to veer off-course, to the park assist pilot, which uses sensors and a reversing camera to automatically slot the car into any relatively spacious parking spot.



VOLVO TURNED AWAY FROM BROCHURE-FRIENDLY ATTRIBUTES FOUND IN OTHER AUTOBAHN-MUNCHING EXECUTIVE SEDANS AND CONSOLIDATED ITS EFFORTS TOWARDS SHEER ERGONOMIC SPLENDOUR

VOLVO S90



Space; Ride comfort; Safety; Design; Infotainment system



Lack of power; No paddle shifters

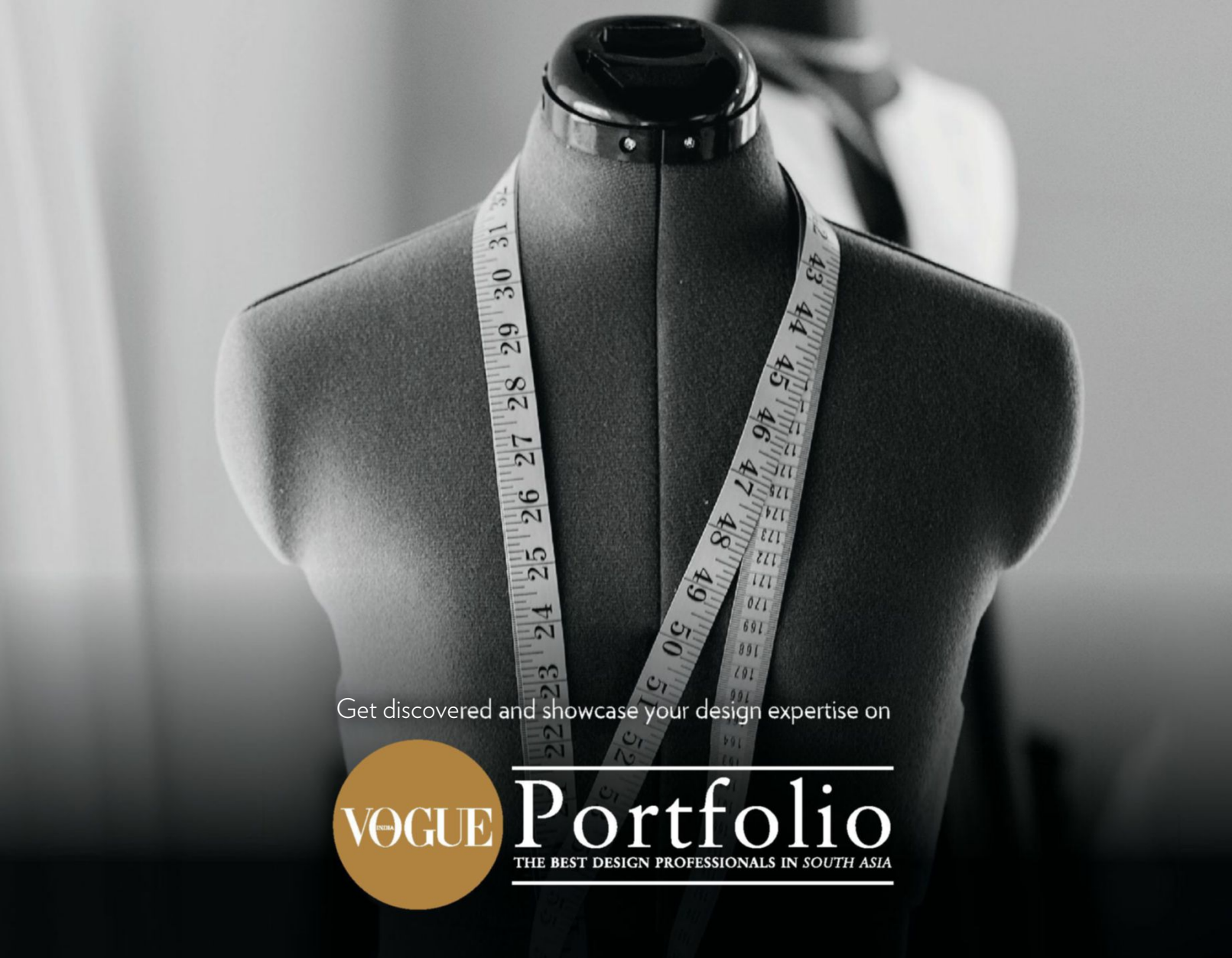
For all the Norse symbolism in its design, there isn't a lot of thunder to be found in the D4 diesel variant with "Inscription" trim, the only one currently available in India. It's got a gentlemanly 2-litre, four-pot turbo-diesel that makes a modest 190bhp of power. The motor settles down comfortably at a fairly brisk pace, with an inscrutable level of turbolag, which makes acceleration quite remarkable.

Even more remarkable is how the weight of the car tends to disappear when accelerating. This is a full-bodied executive sedan that shares its wheelbase with the XC90 – yet at no point does it lose its composure, adhering to the road right up to the precipice of its top-end acceleration curve. Everything from the cushioning of its seats to its perfectly sprung



suspension is tailored for comfort – however undulated the road may be, there isn't much that can or will make its way to your spine. Of course, body-roll sets in only if you're silly enough to tackle curving roads flat-out.

For a brand that has been synonymous with driver safety for the better part of a century, it would be remiss not to include all the safety bells and whistles. And so, for ₹53.5 lakh (ex-showroom, Mumbai), you get all said bells and whistles: including front and rear seat belt pretensioners, an emergency brake assist and Volvo's highly intuitive driver safety mechanisms. For the sort of technology and comfort on offer, the Volvo S90 is a serious bargain. It's a new direction for the Swedish carmaker, one that's likely to be very popular on Indian roads. 🟢



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THE WAITING GAME

Shahid Kapoor has that special, sometimes non-essential quality you find among Bollywood superstars: He has serious acting chops. But, film-wise, not much gets him excited, and not much has brought him the success he deserves. Months go by between movies. An arranged marriage announcement drops, a baby girl soon after. But this year, with collaborations with two intense, artistic minds – Vishal Bhardwaj and Sanjay Leela Bhansali – Kapoor seems poised to cash in on everything that's his due

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **TARUN VISHWA**

STYLED BY **VIJENDRA BHARDWAJ**

WRITTEN BY **MEGHA SHAH**



H

e walks leisurely, but with some weight, and there's no denying that the passage of the last decade has left its imprint not just on his facial features but on his demeanour too. He looks nothing like the Aditya of Imtiaz Ali's *Jab We Met*. A bristled mass of beard has taken over more than half his face. His eyes appear more deep-set. His long hair, tied in a top-knot, makes him look like an urban sophisticate rather than the boyish focus of a cultish group of mostly young girls who refer to each other as Shanatics. Still, it's impossible not to note that, at 36, Shahid Kapoor looks pretty damn good.

In the basement of his modern house, which opens up right onto a Mediterranean-style promenade on Juhu Beach, is his man cave: exposed brick walls, hipster light bulbs, large rugs, a DJ station and a large giant iron hook dangling from the ceiling, the purpose of which I can't figure out. There are squishy sofas, but Kapoor settles on the most uncomfortable chair, his back to the lone stream of daylight pouring in from the top of the stairs, shadows flirting with the crevices of his face, his smile polite, charming.

Kapoor's 13-year career has been that of an actor determined to go beyond the emblematic romantic role so beloved by Bollywood's leading men. Instead, he's put together an oeuvre that's an ongoing portrait of





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“WHEN THE STAKES GET HIGH IN ANY AREA OF YOUR LIFE, YOU NEED TO BE A BETTER OR DIFFERENT VERSION OF YOURSELF. YOU CAN’T BE THE PERSON YOU WERE, AND EXPECT THE SITUATION TO WORK AROUND YOU. IT WON’T”

the male psyche in various modes of fragmentation and despair, from the mercurial (*Kaminey*) to the obnoxious (*Udta Punjab*) to the deranged (*Haider*).

For a movie star of his generation – one who appears to be in competition neither with the Khans nor the “Rans” (-Bir and -Veer) but is orbiting in his own trajectory, with an appetite for working with auteurs – this constitutes a distinguished first act. All the more so because what really interests Kapoor is Act Two.

It’s all part of the new spiritual path he’s on. And his true nature is often at odds with who he wants to be. His mind seems fatigued, at 11:30am on a Saturday morning, but he has moments of lucidity when he shares a few pithy aphorisms, such as, “There’s no right, there’s no wrong. Everything is potentially good or bad.”

With his daughter Misha’s coos and wife Mira’s muffled lullabies wafting down, we start to talk about the most immediate changes in his life.

“Fatherhood is like taking a bath,” he declares. “It’s cleansing. It’s to love something so pure and so devoid of baggage that it feels like a new start.”

I ask him why Mira and he chose to become parents so early into their marriage. “It wasn’t planned actually, but I think we were ready for it. I was impatient to get married and have a family. My job is a lonely one. I was lonely for three or four years,” he says, smiling slowly, as though just realizing it.

“And Mira, who is just 22, would prefer to have a second kid soon as well. She wants to flip the norm, get the kids to a certain age and then be free to do what she likes.”

Amid rumours of him being a controlling partner to his famous alleged ex-girlfriends – who include Kareena Kapoor, Priyanka Chopra and Sonakshi Sinha – the announcement of his marriage to a 21-year-old college student was met with amazement all round.

“People were shocked,” he chuckles. “Friends, people in the industry, were like ‘What? To whom? How old? Arranged? Yeah, that’s not going to last.’ There was a fair amount of judgment mixed with it.”

So was the *Koffee With Karan* episode an attempt to give his relationship an image makeover?

“I don’t know if I really had time to think about what image people had. I knew at the back of my mind, but this was such a big change in my life, my focus was on what was actually happening.” A member of his staff descends the staircase tentatively and hands him a mug of something steaming.

“I’ve had long relationships, which have lasted four or five years, in the past, but I’ve never lived with anybody. I’ve been living on my own since I was 24, so it was a huge adjustment. And anybody who tells you to just be yourself in a relationship is bullshitting. That’s the worst advice ever.” He takes a big gulp and

bends forward, his elbows casually resting on his thighs. Right now, he could be that high school pal you’re meeting after a while, but with whom you can easily pick up from where you last left off.

“When the stakes get high in any area of your life, you need to be a better or different version of yourself. You can’t be the person you were, and expect the situation to work around you. It won’t.” He shrugs. “Marriage is hard work. But I’m more settled now. I think the reactions to the show were positive.”

Does he find himself surrounded by people who flatter him?

“Sometimes. It’s a natural consequence of my job – and theirs – but often I’m surrounded by people who’re constantly making you insecure. That’s the bigger problem. Because in films, there’s no right and wrong, there are only opinions. It’s a system thing. Actors are conditioned to stay insecure.”

He’s silent for a while, sipping from his cup reflectively. Another staff member, unaware of our presence, switches off all the lights and we’re enveloped in semi-darkness. He looks mildly surprised but continues talking.

“I have issues with situations I can’t control. But at the same time, I have this spiritual side where I know that nobody has control. I believe in that – that there are larger powers at play and you can participate in life, and try and mould it, but you can’t define what’s going to happen. It’s a struggle because I’m a worst-case-scenario person. I think it’s because I’ve had a rough ride. I know that when shit gets bad, it gets really bad.”

It’s unclear if he’s talking about his parents separating when he was three and their subsequent remarriages, resulting in three half-siblings (whom he appears to be quite fond of). Or perhaps of the widely held belief in the industry that Kapoor hasn’t seen the sort of success he deserves.

“Talent comes second, sometimes even third. Your talent has to translate into numbers. I’m always told I’m the guy who hasn’t got what I deserve. There are a lot of people who’ve hit big numbers, but their talent is average.” He looks at me closely, to see if I understand.

“Different people have different graphs. You just have to keep working and something will hit the right note. And that’s when it’ll happen. With me, it’s been a wait. And that’s changed me as a person.

“I’ve become process-oriented, instead of result-oriented,” he continues. “And honestly, by the time that kind of success comes to me, I won’t really care about it. There’s already a part of me that doesn’t care – because I know that’s one relationship I can’t afford to be emotional about.”

The next part he says with some seriousness, as though it’s crucial I hear it correctly. “But I know that success will come. It has to, otherwise my entire career won’t make sense.”

Much of our conversation seems to circle back to big shifts in his life, and the shedding of a past self to reveal a happier, more secure person.

“Three or four years ago, I was a bit snooty. I can understand why people may have found me arrogant or unapproachable.

“You know, when you start acting, you start with so many ideas.





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DESIRÉE FERNANDES
FASHION COORDINATOR:
SHAEROY CHINYOY
PRODUCTION: MEGHA
MEHTA, HYBRID 09

“I HAVE ISSUES
WITH SITUATIONS
I CAN’T CONTROL.
BUT AT THE
SAME TIME,
I HAVE A
SPIRITUAL SIDE
WHERE I
KNOW THAT
NOBODY CAN”

You’re idealistic. You want to show the world how things need to be done. And then it hits you, and you understand you’re only as good as the opportunities you’re given. You’re an actor – you’re going to be hired for a job.”

But Kapoor’s had some great opportunities, he’s played a number of memorable characters and will essay interesting roles in Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Rangoon* and Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s next magnum opus, *Padmavati*.

“I actively seek that. Being my father’s [Pankaj Kapoor] son and having had the kind of upbringing I’ve had, I always felt the need to play characters, and not just a persona. Which is what many superstars do. It’s just that persona, and different clothes. I need to physically transform myself. I try and create a new silhouette for the character. Which is why the long gap between my releases.

“And, often, you realize you’ve become a version of that character, even in real life. I sometimes wonder what I would physically look like, if I wasn’t an actor. I’ve changed my look so often, sometimes I can’t identify my original self.”

He stretches back, the streaming sunlight with glittering particles finally illuminating his face.

“I think every actor realizes there are many different versions of ourselves residing within. You’re experiencing, after all, what a normal person would in a few lifetimes.” 🍷





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Manga: Lindsay Pereira
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TALK



141 SCARE TACTICS

BY LINDSAY PEREIRA

MEET THE KING OF JAPANESE
HORROR MANGA

sometimes wonder how horror manga artist Junji Ito sleeps at night. It must be hard when a corner of your mind is busy conjuring up images that simply wouldn't make an appearance for the rest of us.

Consider the fish, for instance, that populate his horror manga work *Gyo*: *Ugomeku Bukimi* (*Fish: The Eerie Wiggle*), published in 2001. On the one hand, it's a fairly simplistic tale about nature fighting back, featuring all kinds of sea creatures rising from the depths. What makes them different are the metallic legs they grow, powered by an odour called the "death stench", as they lay waste to Okinawa.

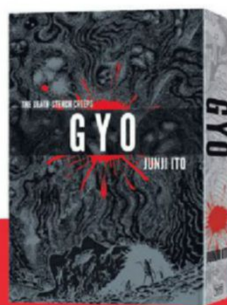
Ito, who worked as a dental technician and drew as a hobby before making it his full-time career in the Nineties, has reportedly said he was inspired by Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* and military experiments conducted by Japan during WWII while creating *Gyo*. It's a bizarre, creepy work that's part-zombie story, part-cautionary tale about our dependence on technology, with an awkward couple caught at the centre of the action. It's also extremely compelling because his art has a mildly hallucinatory power.

There are a number of theories about why Japanese horror tends to be as powerful →

as it is, and why it's one of the few genres with cross-cultural appeal – unlike reality shows, for instance, or films on teenage Hikikomori, who completely withdraw from society, which have failed to find fans outside. So much of Japanese horror is psychological, as opposed to the schlocky tropes of zombies and sadists that we're used to from the likes of *The Evil Dead* and *Saw*. There's more emphasis on building up tension than the simple appearance of something terrifying.

This shines through in much of Ito's other work too, from the short story "The Enigma Of Amigara Fault" to the epic *Uzumaki*. The former is about human-sized holes that appear on a mountainside after an earthquake, enticing people to crawl into them. It doesn't really end, but only implies that these people are suspended in some sort of continuum the minute they find a hole that fits them. The latter makes use of spirals to create a tale that's Lovecraftian in scope and execution, with their sudden appearance all over a town slowly driving its citizens into a state of chaos.

Then there is the importance given to *Yōkai* – a class of Japanese spirits and demons. A lot of Japanese horror manga, fiction and films focus on these ghosts or supernatural presences, also referred to as *mononoke* or *ayakashi*, who can be



SO MUCH OF JAPANESE HORROR IS PSYCHOLOGICAL... CONSIDER *HOMUNCULUS*, IN WHICH A MAN UNDERGOES AN EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE INVOLVING A HOLE DRILLED IN HIS SKULL, AND THEN STARTS TO EXPERIENCE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY. OR FURUYA USAMARU'S *JISATSU CIRCLE*, A MANGA ABOUT 54 YOUNG WOMEN WHO COMMIT SUICIDE BY JUMPING IN FRONT OF A TRAIN TOGETHER.

as benevolent as they can be malevolent. Powerful examples of the latter appear in films like *The Ring* or *Ju-On: The Grudge*. The manga *Kouishou Radio* by Nakayama Masaaki features spirits that manifest themselves in the form of human hair. The young female protagonist of Kanako Inuki's *Presents* doesn't get any gifts on her birthday, and exacts revenge by turning into a spirit and gifting people a number of gruesome things.

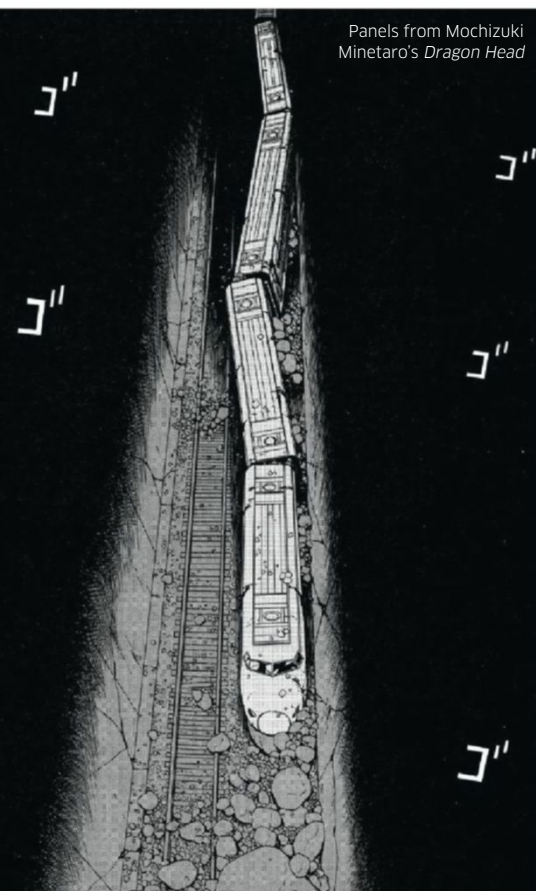
Horror manga also makes use of elements found in the teachings of Shinto, the religion most prevalent in Japan. Much importance is given to the soul and the notion that excessive emotion can lead to it being left behind with the living even after a person's death. Another facet of the

religion that makes its way into manga is the acceptance that the universe is beyond our understanding. This frees artists and writers to conjure up worlds that can be completely devoid of rules, safe in the knowledge that their audiences will suspend disbelief without too much fuss. Consider *Homunculus* by Hideo Yamamoto, in which a man undergoes an experimental procedure involving a hole drilled in his skull, and then starts to experience the world differently. Or Furuya Usamaru's *Jisatsu Circle*, a manga about 54 young women who commit suicide by jumping in front of a train together. Only one survives, and goes on to become obsessed with death herself. Ito's short story "Army Of One" depicts murders involving increasingly large groups of people, all of whom are found naked and sewn together with no signs of trauma.

A number of manga classics focus on death, an obsession in a country with one of the highest suicide rates, where a reported 70 suicides occur daily. Minetaro Mochizuki's *Dragon Head* starts with the derailment of a train carrying students. Many die, and those who survive make their way through the mutilated bodies of their classmates only to come out into a world that isn't the same any more.

I go back to Junji Ito's work often. I know how the stories end, of course, what befalls the characters, even where the surprises are. And yet, I still find myself being unnerved at the turn of a page when I least expect it. It's that feeling you get when you walk into your kitchen in the wee hours, and come across your cat sitting patiently in the dark. 🐈

Lindsay Pereira is a freelance journalist



Panels from Mochizuki Minetaro's *Dragon Head*



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SOUL CALL

BY SANDIP ROY

A RIOTOUS TAXONOMY OF BENGALI GHOSTS

I thought nothing could surprise me in a Bengali soap opera any more. The good matriarch is imprisoned by the villain and replaced by an evil duplicate and no one is the wiser. The saintly bahu is forced to leave the house but returns disguised as a maid and her husband has no inkling – until he tastes the cup of tea she makes. My mother stomached every ludicrous plot twist until the bahu killed herself. It turned out she exited life, but not the show, and returned in the next episode as a ghost; though, poor thing, she was doomed to wear the same sari in every episode going forward. After 27 seasons, my mother's saas-bahu soap had, without warning, turned into a saas-bahu-and-ghost soap, and dispensed with even the pretence of logic.

"Uff, ridiculous, I don't want to watch it any more," huffed my mother.

ILLUSTRATION: SUMEDHA SAHA



EVEN THE BRITISH COLONIAL SAHIBS WERE SOMEHOW LESS FORMIDABLE WHEN THEY RETURNED AS GHOSTS. WARREN HASTINGS' GHOST IS SUPPOSED TO COME BY HORSE CARRIAGE TO HIS OLD MANSION EVERY NEW YEAR'S EVE AND RUMMAGE IN THE HOUSE FOR MISPLACED PAPERS.

But come to think of it, it's not that ridiculous at all. Ghosts in Bengal are considered more familial than supernatural. We have just about as many names for them as we do for aunts and uncles. The *Brahmodaityo* is the ghost of a Brahmin and can be helpful, if pompous, about all his Sanskrit learning. *Skondhokatas* are headless ghosts, especially those who lost their heads on a railway track. They sound terrifying, but because they have no heads, you can trick them easily. *Shakchunnis* are the ghosts of married women still wearing clinking shankha bangles. *Petnis* are women who died with unfulfilled desires (that should pretty much cover everyone). *Mamdo* bhoots are skull-capped ghosts of Muslims past. And no family tree of Bengali ghosts can be complete without a *Mechho* bhoot, or Fishy Ghost, who will whine, beg and steal – all for a piece of fish. It's easy to spot these ghosts: their feet point backwards.

Of course, they are not all benign. The *Gechho* bhoot, who lives in trees, can jump on your shoulders and twist your neck just for the heck of it. The *Nishi* assumes the voice of a loved one and calls you by name and leads you away, never to be seen again. But we still live with our ghosts the way we do with neighbours – fractious yet affectionate. In our childhood tales, the ghostly *Shiji* and *Guji* slither up water pipes and tell exciting stories about sea adventures and crocodiles to human children. Or there's *Shibu*, who wants freedom from his wife, dies of cholera, becomes a ghost living on a treetop in *Bhushundir Mathe* but then gets terribly lonely and starts looking for a wife – a supernatural Tinder story of sorts. In Satyajit Ray's film *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*, the ghosts dance in the forest and give out boons. In the novel *Goynar Baksho* (*The Jewellery Box*), the ghost of a child widow craves dried fish, plots extramarital affairs and demands to find out what sex feels like.

The “real” ghosts are just as colourful. The ghost of George Williams' prize-winning white horse is said to still roam the Royal Calcutta Turf Club in a gust of white fog. Even the British colonial sahibs were somehow less formidable when they returned as ghosts. Warren Hastings' ghost is supposed to come by horse carriage to his old mansion every New Year's Eve, and rummage in the house for misplaced papers. Meanwhile, Bengali ghosts remain insufferably Bengali. A studious graduate student of English literature who died at the National Library is reputed to visit during odd hours to complete his unfinished research paper.

But my childhood years were also more suited to ghosts. The electricity would fail and the neem and bael trees near the house, utterly nondescript by day, would cast eerie shadows in the light of a flickering oil lamp. You could imagine ghosts sitting on those branches, their legs dangling, as they eavesdropped on our lives. “Don't break the branches of the bael tree,” my great-grandmother would tell us. “You'll disturb the *Brahmodaityo*.”

We cannot break those branches now because the tree itself is gone, chopped down to make way for an apartment building. We live 2BHK-1-Bath lives now and unless the *Brahmodaityo* wants to live on the balcony where wet towels are hung out to dry, there's no room for a ghost. In his famous *Of Ghosts And Other Perils*, the 19th-century fantasy writer Troilokyanath Mukhopadhyay laments that under colonial rule, all indigenous business enterprises had vanished – and that includes “the business of possession by spirits”: “The people of

this woebegone country have become so English-minded that they call being possessed by ghosts or devoured by witches, hysteria!”

The English are gone now, but so is the darkness.

Our nights are lit up with neon lights. Even our mobile phones glow fiercely bright. Ghosts haunt

mouldering mansions and mossy ponds, not aquamarine swimming pools with colourful floats in gated communities with names like Rosedale and Fort Oasis.

My friend, the Vietnamese-American writer Andrew Lam, often told the story of how his grandmother would fret that his grandfather, who died during the war in Vietnam, never came to see her in her dreams in America. Child, his grandma would ask, do you think ghosts can cross the ocean?

That had seemed terribly poignant then. But coming back to India from California, it seems sadder to think of a great spectral family of *Shakchunnis* and *Petnis*, *Mechho* bhoots and *Gechho* bhoots all rendered homeless in their own homes, doomed to an eternity of going up and down the escalators of shiny fluorescent malls, listening to the same muzak on loop.

That's surely a fate worse than death. ☹️

Sandip Roy's novel *Don't Let Him Know* has a dead great-grandmother, but no ghosts.



Untitled (In His Office), 1975, by Bikash Bhattacharjee. Conté with thick lacquer coating on paper pasted on plywood, 35.5x29.25in



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HOUSE OF HORRORS

BY KISHORE SINGH

LIVING WITH NON-PG ART
POSES UNIQUE CHALLENGES

I recently ran into an acquaintance whose husband had begun collecting an alarming number of nude works. While it's important for a collection to have focus, my friend seemed uncertain about the more – misogynist? – among the works and had banished them from her home, advising her husband to display them in his office instead. “Better at home surely,” I suggested, alarmed at what colleagues might make of a boss with a penchant for exhibiting distorted body parts in a place of work. “Hardly,” she responded tartly, pointing to her teenage daughter

and the presence of house help that might get the wrong idea about its residents should she permit such laxity in their living space.

So where do you keep art that depicts gore, violence or overt sexuality? And what does it say about you? I have been forced to ponder the question every time my buddies join me for a meal in our dining room, where a drawing by Rabin Mondal depicts a naked man being interrogated under a harsh overhead light – a work that reeks of torment and subjugation. I fail to see their point about dinner being preferable over a still life of fruits and flowers when television news is rampant with incest and rape, murder and arson. Why this need for escapism?

Frankly, much of modern and contemporary art is not “pretty” in the conventional sense, that trope having disappeared in the early decades of the last century. FN Souza’s women are ugly; MF Husain’s work smacks of primitivism; Tyeb Mehta paints dismembered bodies; Bikash Bhattacharjee’s canvases suggest an oncoming holocaust; Ganesh Pyne’s works haunt you long after you’ve glimpsed them. There is little escape from the grittiness of painterly realities. GR Iranna’s naked fibreglass installations might be soldiers of fortune or victims of misfortune; Raqib Shaw’s fantastic embroidered canvases and Rashid Rana’s deceptive digital collages might fool you for a moment before you spot unfolding entrails and macabre scenes underneath; blood splatter, menstruation fluids, semen and skin seem preferred choices of so many artists, it’s difficult to comprehend the idea of beauty unless you’re willing to see it in the dross and drudgery of daily life.

As art tackles everything from gender and economic disparity to climate change, artists’ works have begun to reflect these as deeply moving or provocative experiences if they are to have any contemporary relevance. Collecting them may appear like the foundation for a house of horrors, but beauty does lie in the eye of the beholder – especially if that beauty is to be found in a perspective of truth. I visited the home of Pakistani art collectors recently, only to discover that what appeared to be works with exquisite detailing and loveliness

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were, in fact, a status report on honour killings, genocide and betrayal. In their chandelier-lit rooms, they surrounded themselves with the harsh reality of the world as a cauldron of hatred and distrust under its civilized and, indeed, superficially seductive veneer.

Art lovers see no dichotomy in embracing this grim truth, finding – even seeking – sanctity in an artist's depiction of this alternate reality. Indeed, to ask them to create spaces where one may have breakfast, or a cup of coffee, while overlooking a sculpture, or painting, that

panders to sentimental romanticism, is to question their very idea of collecting. Those who cater to such debased tastes are seen as dilettantes without any real understanding of art.

Not that there is a shortage of artists who create – and with great skill – works that fulfil the criterion of acceptable taste. And while Chittaprosad Bhattacharya's famine drawings may not be living room fodder, they can find a place in a thinking man's library, or den. The essence of art lies in its ability to communicate feeling and emotion,

Kali, 1989, by Tyeb Mehta.
Oil on canvas, 67x54in



I VISITED THE HOME
OF PAKISTANI ART
COLLECTORS RECENTLY,
ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT
WHAT APPEARED TO BE
WORKS WITH EXQUISITE
DETAILING AND
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REPORT ON HONOUR
KILLINGS, GENOCIDE
AND BETRAYAL

and connoisseurs will tell you to ignore banal landscapes and paintings of bathing beauties in a quest for a higher rationalization of art's *raison d'être*. "Art is no family picnic," a particularly egregious collector friend tells me. "It needs bravehearts to manage it." "Art is about celebration," says another. The truth, as usual, lies somewhere between the two.

Meanwhile, it does place a burden while displaying your collection. Amid silk carpets and silver artefacts, images of overarching horror sit uneasily. How does one select works that are not antagonistic to the space they occupy? For a start, get rid of interior designers, who cringe if the colours of their chosen wallpaper don't match the tones of a painting. They are rarely arbiters of taste, or at least of art. If the aim is to impress the neighbours, or if you're worried that your domestic staff (or office colleagues) will think poorly of you, you won't be able to overcome your own hesitations.

Art makes you think lucidly, fearlessly. It is a pointer to our lived realities, just as literature is. And while not all art must be – or is – grotesque, the quest to unravel the darker side of humanity drives many artists. We might mistake Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* as just another historic masterpiece without questioning its disquieting sense of suspicion and betrayal, but it remains, nonetheless, a deeply disquieting work of art. 🚫

Kishore Singh is an art consultant and curator

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SCREAM OF THE CROP

BY BARADWAJ RANGAN

SOME OF THE MOST
INTRIGUING HORROR FILMS
IN RECENT TIMES ARE FROM
THE SOUTH

Why aren't our horror films better known? One reason may be that we don't really have the stomach for true genre movies. Years of one-size-fits-all conditioning, the needs of catering to cities as well as "mass" centres and the full-course-meal logic (the audience wants a bit of comedy... And action... And romance...) have ensured that. *The Exorcist* was the second-highest grossing film of 1973. *Raaz* was a blockbuster in 2002, but is it really horror when there's a Nadeem-Shravan track every 15 minutes? You won't find a pared-down *Gehrayee* or one of Ram Gopal Varma's songless shockers (*Bhoot*, *Raat*) in a similarly exalted position, and the Ramsay Brothers' oeuvre is, of course, too tawdry to be taken seriously. It's precisely this scenario that makes a film like Pavan Kirpalani's *Phobia* so surprising.

The film opens with the heroine, Mehek, being molested by a taxi driver. She subsequently becomes agoraphobic. A horror movie typically gets its juice from the unnatural, the imaginary, the otherworldly – but what if the natural world becomes the source of dread? "Within this story, there is the larger issue of our urban spaces and how violence in society is getting to people," the director stated in an interview last year. No one who saw the trailer, with its "Boo!" effects, could have foreseen this premise.

And here's what's even more curious: similar films in the psychological horror subgenre are being made in the South, despite a limited market. At least a film like *Phobia* gets a multiplex release in

Radhika Apte in *Phobia* (2016)

the major urban centres across the country. A Tamil film without big stars is lucky if it finds a release in Chennai and Coimbatore. Multiplex Hindi cinema has begun to deal with niche subjects because high-end multiplexes, with high-end ticket pricing, make recovery easier. Ticket prices in Tamil Nadu are fixed at ₹120. Now imagine the chances of a film like *Phobia* – but one that opens with God saying “Let there be light,” and moves on to Adam and Eve and the original sin. I’m talking about Shiv Mohaa’s *Zero*, released in 2016.

Did I say Adam and Eve? It should be Adam and Lilith, really. As the film tells us, Lilith came before Eve. But unlike Eve, she wasn’t made from Adam’s rib. She was created from the same dust as Adam. She was his equal in every way, but Adam sought her subservience. She refused. God tried to make peace, and when Lilith refused to listen, God said all her children would die. She left Eden. God created Eve. And all of this feeds a modern-day story revolving around Bala (Ashwin Kakumanu), and Priya (Sshivada), who alternate between this world and one filled exclusively with women.

Like *Phobia*, *Zero* uses horror tropes as an expressionistic tool to prise open the female psyche – at least to the extent that a genre film will allow. A typical horror film shows women being stabbed by pronged metal implements – it’s the ultimate penetration, a sickening



2017 could see some truly scary films, thanks to a deal between Blumhouse Productions (the studio behind *Paranormal Activity*) and Phantom Films

THE GENRE IS NOTORIOUS FOR ITS MISOGYNY (NOTE HOW GHOSTS ARE ALMOST ALWAYS FEMALE). AND YET, THESE AREN'T MISOGYNISTIC FILMS. THEY AREN'T ABOUT MALE SAVIOURS. *U TURN*, IN FACT, IS DRIVEN BY THE HEROINE. SHE CONDUCTS THE INVESTIGATION WHILE THE NOMINAL HERO IS LEFT WONDERING WHY SHE'S NOT ANSWERING HIS CALLS

characters on screen as well as the audience. In *Lucia*, an insomniac takes refuge in a drug that blurs the lines between fantasy and reality. *U Turn* is a ghost story, involving a mother and daughter, in which the victims are women. As are the victims in the films mentioned above. That’s no surprise. The genre is notorious for its misogyny (note how ghosts are almost always female). And yet, these aren’t misogynistic films. They aren’t about male saviours. *U Turn*, in fact, is driven by the heroine. She conducts the investigation while the nominal hero is left wondering why she’s not answering his calls. He also is the “damsel in distress”. It’s up to her to save him.

This clutch of films is too small a sample for sweeping claims to be made. Also, they’re more interesting for what they try to do, rather than what they achieve technically. In 2016, Bollywood gave us *1920 London* (featuring a witch) and *Raaz: Reboot* (which exhorts the protective powers of the mangalsutra), potent reminders that we still haven’t made a single visceral horror film on par with Western or Far Eastern standards, capable of turning the insides to jelly. But that may soon change. In 2014, Phantom Films announced a collaboration with Blumhouse Productions and Ivanhoe Pictures to produce unique Indian horror films. Why is this important? Because Blumhouse Productions gave us *Paranormal Activity*, *The Purge*, *Insidious* and *Sinister*. Some of the films from this co-production deal will soon be in theatres. But let’s hope that more films like *Phobia* and *Zero* also find a way to get made. As fun as it is to jump out of one’s seat, it’s also good to be reminded that no haunted house can match the terrors of an unhinged mind. 🚫

Baradwaj Rangan is a National Award-winning film critic. His favourite horror film is *The Shining*

fantasy of the superiority of the phallus. (Think of the shower scene in *Psycho*, or even *The Exorcist*, where a crucifix becomes a substitute penis.) Here, Priya stabs Bala and chants, “You can’t touch me, you can’t touch me...” In terms of genre conventions, it’s a triumphant role reversal. *Zero* suffers due to a budget that’s inversely proportional to its imagination (God resembles a lava lamp!), but the key scenes deliver.

The 2015 Kannada film *Rangitaranga*, directed by Anup Bhandari, shares at least a couple plot points with *Zero*. A diary that tells all. And a pregnancy. The film begins with a pregnant woman driving a car, on a rainy night. Something scares her and... We cut to another woman. She is pregnant too. As is another woman in a flashback that reveals motive. In all these films – *Phobia*, *Zero*, *Rangitaranga* – sex plays a major part. The trauma resulting from molestation, the trauma around a pregnancy, the trauma around adultery – these films may feature actual ghosts, but the horrors rise equally from the psyche. The unconscious may be the scariest monster of all.

Then we have Pawan Kumar’s *U Turn* (Kannada, 2016). If you’ve seen his earlier film, the justly acclaimed *Lucia*, you already know he’s interested in psychological disorientation – of the



Still from *Rangitaranga* (2015), directed by Anup Bhandari

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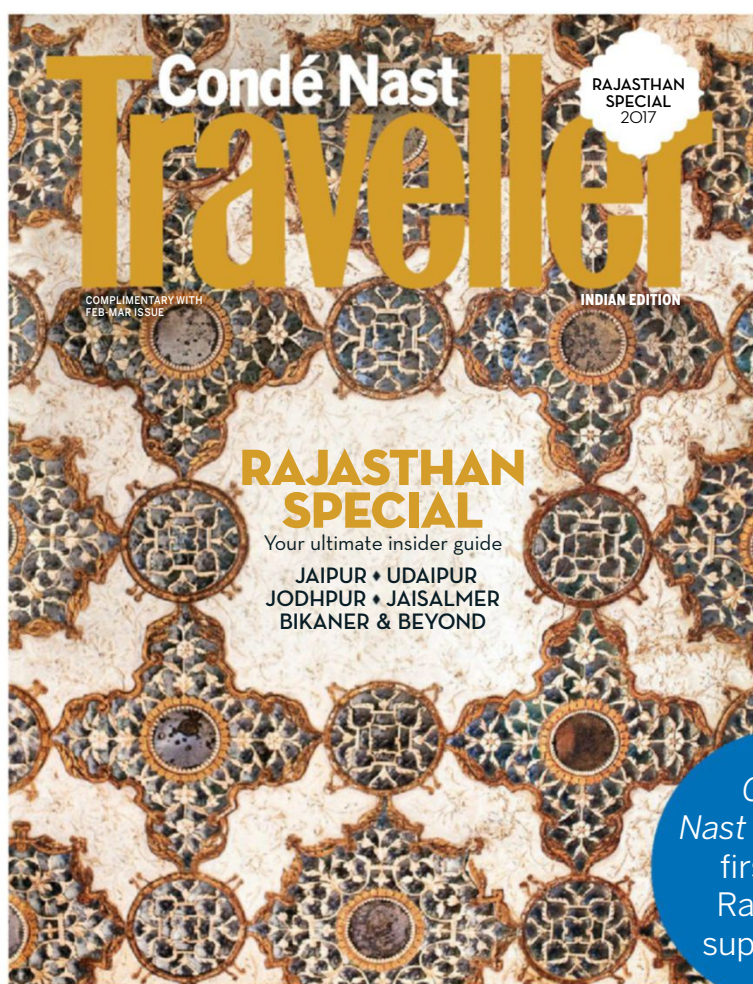
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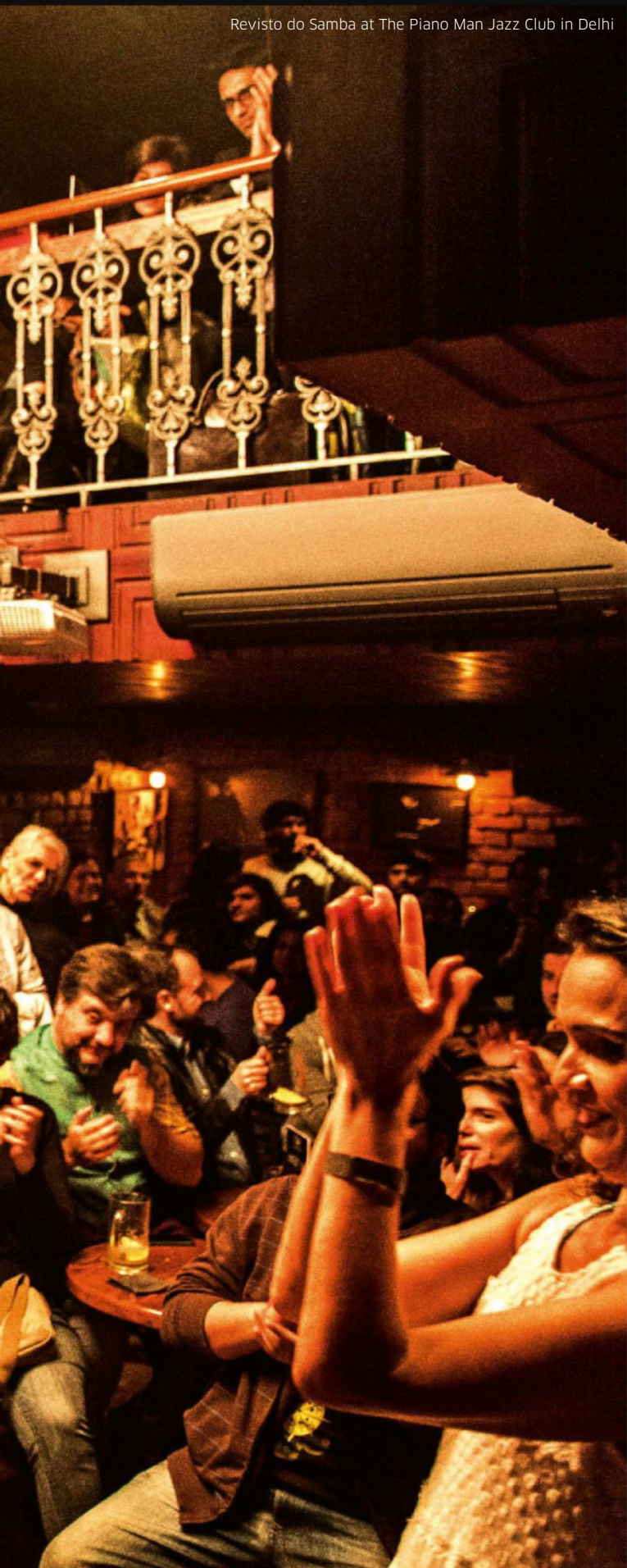


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SWING TIME

The 'Golden Age' of Indian jazz may have come and gone. It may never again occupy the pre-eminent spot in urban India's nightlife that it did in the Fifties and Sixties. But reports of its demise are premature. Because, as **Bhanuj Kappal** discovers, thanks to the efforts of a new guard, Indian jazz isn't just alive and kicking, it's on the verge of a long overdue resurgence

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **ABHISHEK BALI**



“sn't this amazing?!” a dreadlocked hipster with painful looking piercings and the wild-eyed look that comes from ingesting a pharmacy's worth of psychedelics in one go shouts in my ear as he jostles past me. It's 2am on a Saturday night, and we're at Rajasthan's Alsisar Mahal for the fourth edition of Magnetic Fields – India's go-to festival for the most cutting-edge electronic music from around the world. Elsewhere in the palace, a few hundred people are raging out to the apocalyptic techno of Hamburg producer Helena Hauff. But Mr Dreadlocks and I – along with a small crowd of Zara-wearing hipsters and ragged, burned-out ravers – are taking a break to check out the cosy basement club (“The Dungeon”) where a motley collection of Indian and foreign jazz musicians are making their way through half a century's worth of jazz standards. For two nights of the festival, The Dungeon has become a temporary outpost of Delhi's The Piano Man Jazz Club, where you can chill out to New Orleans swing and West Coast jazz. And while jazz might seem like a weird fit for a festival better known for screeching synths and 808 thumps, the club is packed to the gills on both nights. →



“It was a sexy idea, doing jazz in a dungeon,” says Arjun Sagar Gupta – Mr Piano Man himself – when I sit down with him for a chat a couple of days later in Delhi. At only 31, the electrical engineering graduate and professional pianist has become one of the key figures in this musical revival. In September 2015, he gave India its first – or at the very least, only – dedicated jazz club, with Indian and international acts taking the stage every night of the week. Even at 11am, stepping into the club – with its dark wood panelling, naked red bricks and smoky speakeasy vibe – is like entering a portal that transports you from New Delhi to New Orleans. That feeling only intensifies in the evenings, when a mix of broke students, scruffy musicians and some of Delhi’s most well-heeled industrialists and politicians crowd around the tables and the mezzanine bar to listen to homegrown acts: like the Aditya Balani Collective and the Ron Cha Trio, who bring their own chops and innovation to this 120-year-old art form. Without sponsors or investors, Gupta has built the club into an edgy incubator for both jazz musicians and audiences. Over 400 acts have played since it opened its doors; and he’s done it in a city with a much less illustrious history of jazz than other metros like Mumbai and



Revisto do Samba

Kolkata. But none of this would have happened had Gupta listened to the sceptics. "Every person I talked to said I'd crash and burn within three months," he laughs.

The Piano Man Jazz Club isn't the only venue in the country that welcomes jazz music. Delhi also has Depot29 and Depot48, while Pune has the long-running Shisha Jazz café, with its curious mix of jazz music and Persian decor. Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata too have venues that programme jazz acts on a regular or semi-regular basis.

But two things set The Piano Man apart. The first, of course, is that it's the only venue where you can find live jazz music every night of the week. Whether it's Delhi luminaries like Drift, Artistes Unlimited and Nik & Nat or artists from other cities like Mumbai's Karan Joseph or Kolkata's The Bodhisattwa Trio, they've all headlined here. The second is that it upends the first rule of running a live venue in India: At The Piano Man, the musician – and not the customer – is king.

"I have no interest in how the music scene currently functions, where the artist has become a piece of furniture," says Gupta, who's played



Delhi is rapidly establishing itself as the epicentre for contemporary jazz



Berklee-trained musician Aditya Balani fronts the Aditya Balani Collective, and is a co-founder of the Global Music Institute



BEFORE THE RISE OF CLUBS
LIKE BLUE FROG AND THE
PIANO MAN, THE MAIN
PLATFORM FOR INDIAN JAZZ
MUSICIANS TO PLY THEIR
CRAFT WAS THE JAZZ FESTIVAL

across the country with the erstwhile blues band Soap and long-running jazz act The Variety. "The customers are so engrossed in their own conversations and their own world, they don't give a fuck about the person bleeding his heart out on stage. Why not just put on a CD?"

"We've had very rich people come here and say 'band khatam ho gaya, abhi bhangra laga do'," he continues. "They'll have two bottles of single malt on their table, I know I can probably bill them for a lakh. But I won't compromise my club's identity by doing that."

In a city known for its outsized egos, such an approach is guaranteed to rub some people the wrong way. But over time, Gupta's insistence on audience etiquette has acted as a filter, keeping out the crowd likely to create problems. In fact, one of the highlights of a night at The Piano Man is the "silent song", where, for at least one song, the bar is closed, all service stopped and the audience not permitted to speak at all.

Going forward, Gupta has bigger ambitions for the brand. He's spending his own money to record all the acts that play at the club, to create an online repository of live sets. He talks about creative new ways to monetize music, to ensure India's growing crop of young musicians can earn a living off playing jazz. He even hints at getting involved in the education side of things. "We have a lot of plans to see how to fix the scene," he says. "That's a controversial thing to say, but the scene is broken from my perspective, and I will do what it takes to make it better."

Before the rise of clubs like blueFrog and The Piano Man, the main platform for Indian jazz musicians to ply their craft was the jazz festival. Through the Seventies and Eighties, non-profit organizations like Jazz India organized festivals across the country, ➔

to which thousands of fans thronged to watch their favourites live. The first festival in 1978 – the Jazz Yatra, at Mumbai's famous, and now defunct, Rang Bhavan amphitheatre – saw American legends like hard-bop saxophonist Sonny Rollins and avant-garde multi-instrumentalist Don Ellis perform, alongside Indian purveyors including Louis Banks and Rudy Cotton. Kolkata had its own festival, which brought down everyone from icons like Herbie Hancock and Dizzie Gillespie to innovators such as Jonas Hellborg and Erik Truffaz.

But the Nineties were not kind to these festivals: The Kolkata JazzFest shut down when chief organizer Satrajit Roy Chaudhury left for the US. Jazz Yatra disbanded in 2004, a year after the Bombay High Court barred Rang Bhavan from hosting any more concerts. Others saw both their funding and audiences wither away as other genres like rock, metal and electronica took over.

But things have been looking up, with new festivals cropping up and old ones being resurrected. In Delhi, an offshoot of Jazz India called Capital Jazz has been running a small festival called Jazz Utsav since 2005. Recently, it decided to step things up by reviving the Jazz Yatra. There's also the six-year-old International Jazz Festival, organized by the ICCR, cementing Delhi's position as the epicentre of contemporary Indian jazz. In Kolkata, a group of jazz veterans called Congo Square revived the Kolkata JazzFest in 2003. Even The Piano Man has its own festival called the Giants of Jazz, with international acts taking the stage for 11 straight days in November. Corporate sponsors may still be hard to come by – unlike India's many cash-rich indie and electronica festivals – but these festivals are attracting bigger crowds, many of them much younger than the stereotype of the suited up, grey-haired, middle-aged fan.

"The younger crowd is increasing because they're realizing that jazz isn't just boring and old, which is the stereotype all over the world," says Emmanuelle de Decker, who's been pushing the genre in India for over 13 years. The French émigré – who headed live programming for blueFrog Mumbai from 2008-2012 – runs event management company Gatecrash and is in charge of curation for the four-year-old Goa International Live Jazz Festival and the jazz/funk/soul-oriented Nariyal Paani in Alibaug, apart from being the artistic advisor for the Dhaka Jazz & Blues Festival. "The key is making sure your programming is cutting-edge – mixing funk, hip-hop, punk and electronica with a young, contemporary style of jazz."

Over the years, de Decker – who also runs the website Jazz In India – has exposed Indian audiences to some of the jazz world's most exciting left-field music: whether it's The Shuffle Demons' blend of hard bop and rap or the funky, Japanese-influenced compositions of Nik Bärtsch's zen-funk group Ronin. Such an adventurous line-up often attracts criticism from purists who believe that if it doesn't have a saxophone or heavy-handed nods to Blue Note, it isn't really jazz. But de Decker rejects such a conservative view. "I don't believe that jazz can be put in a box, and that's why I like it so much. You can have straight jazz, you can mix it with world or African music, you can mix it with punk rock. Jazz is more than a sound or a style. It's an art form."

I'm at the bar buying a drink when Aditya Balani – dressed in slacks and a sharp dress shirt – walks onto the tiny stage set into one corner of The Piano Man. The place is packed now, people sitting on the steps, on the floor, anywhere they can find a square foot of unoccupied space. But the cacophony of drunk voices I'm used to at venues has been replaced by a respectful murmur. If people talk at all, they do so in whispers. There's something transformative about the music Balani and his band play, a sense of being





THE MUSIC I GENERALLY LISTEN TO – PUNK ROCK, INDUSTRIAL, NOISE – FOLLOWS THE SAME DIRECTIVE, BUT WITH METHODS THAT ARE MORE PRIMAL AND INSURRECTIONIST. IT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF A WRECKING BALL, SMASHING ITS WAY INTO SONIC FUTURES. JAZZ, ON THE OTHER HAND, TAKES A MORE SUBTLE, INCREMENTALIST APPROACH TO INNOVATION



Sentirelna Lucia and Aditya Balani

adrift from time and place. You can hear echoes of the sarod and the oud in his unique guitar style, which marries modern jazz's freewheeling experimentation with centuries-old Indian classical traditions. This is what true fusion means, not the anodyne tripe usually marketed under that label. And it embodies the one thing that has kept jazz from calcifying into a dead formula for so long (rock, in contrast, stopped being a creative force in just four decades): the constant need to push the envelope and break new musical ground, something that's hardwired into the form's DNA.

The music I generally listen to – punk rock, industrial, noise – follows the same prime directive, but with methods that are harsher, more primal and more insurrectionist. It's the equivalent of a wrecking ball, smashing its way into sonic futures. Jazz, on the other hand, takes a more subtle, incrementalist approach to innovation. Its weapons of choice are virtuosity and technique, and you can't just pick up either by doodling on your guitar. It requires professional education. "You need to spend a lot of time on your instrument to be able to execute the kind of vocabulary that a jazz musician needs," explains Balani. The 30-year-old and his 28-year-old brother Tarun, who plays drums and heads up the Tarun Balani Collective, are two of the most exciting names in Indian jazz. They're also graduates of the Berklee College of Music. "And since a lot of jazz music is like a conversation on stage between your instruments, you need that musical vocabulary to be able to jam, to converse with other musicians."

For the longest time, to get a proper jazz education you either had to track down and convince one of the very few old masters still plying their craft in the country to take you under their wing, or you had to pay thousands of dollars to study abroad. Much like the Balani brothers, most young jazz musicians in India have at least a short stint in a foreign music school under their belts. So if you didn't have the big bucks, well, you were shit out of luck. That's no longer the case, with music schools around the country making it possible to get a quality jazz education without breaking the bank. In Chennai, the Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music – set up in 2009 by Prasanna Ramaswamy – has been churning out musical prodigies, the latest being 20-year-old Mohini Dey, who is now a part of AR Rahman's band. In Mumbai, you have the three-year-old True School of Music, the brainchild of blueFrog co-founder Ashutosh Pathak, where students can learn under a rotating faculty from some of the world's top music schools. And in Delhi, there's the Global Music Institute, set up by the Balani brothers.

"Both Tarun and I felt that we'd had a lot of difficulty finding good teachers when we started out," says Balani. So when they came back to India in 2010, they started teaching their friends what they'd learned at Berklee. As those classes in their home studio grew bigger and bigger, they realized there was a real need for a formal education space.

From its initial two-month programmes taught →

out of a three-storey building in Lajpat Nagar, GMI is now a Berklee-affiliated institute that offers two-year diplomas and operates out of a state-of-the-art residential campus in Noida. With regular workshops, concerts and public lectures, GMI has become a hub where Delhi's small jazz community hangs out, jams and learns from each other.

2016 saw jazz influences and musicians appearing on some of the year's biggest records – Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, Kendrick Lamar's *To Pimp A Butterfly*, David Bowie's *Blackstar*. Meanwhile, artists like saxophonist Kamasi Washington and bassist Thundercat – both on Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder Records – are leveraging their hip-hop connections and credentials to become popstars in their own right. After a couple of decades in the wilderness, it seems jazz has found its way back into the pop mainstream. In India, it's making its presence felt on club dance floors and indie festival stages through jazz-influenced producers like

Sandunes and Nicholson, or gleeful jazz-meets-other-genre bastardizations like, well, the Jass B'stards.

"A lot of the electronica artists on our 2016 line-up come from jazz backgrounds – Dorian Concept, Floating Points. There's a big cross-over of classical/jazz musicianship and contemporary electronic music," says Munbir Chawla, who runs the Magnetic Fields festival and the WildCity website with his wife Sarah Fatemi. "I think, more and more, people are interested in musicianship and the craft that goes into making music and I think jazz provides a lot of that."

And if Indian jazz musicians need a roadmap to find their way into the indie/electronica mainstream, they need look no further than another artist on the Magnetic Fields line-up: Sarathy Korwar. The son of two Hindustani classical music enthusiasts, Korwar grew up studying the tabla before turning his attention to drums at the age of 15. Ever since, he's been immersed in both the worlds of Hindustani classical and jazz. Eight years ago, he moved to the UK to study music. Last year, he combined his own compositions at London's Tech Music



Sarathy Korwar at the Magnetic Fields Festival in Alsisar in December 2016



"A LOT OF THE ELECTRONICA ARTISTS ON OUR LINE-UP COME FROM JAZZ BACKGROUNDS – DORIAN CONCEPT, FLOATING POINTS. THERE'S A BIG CROSS-OVER OF CLASSICAL/ JAZZ MUSICIANSHIP AND CONTEMPORARY ELECTRONIC MUSIC," SAYS MUNBIR CHAWLA, WHO RUNS THE MAGNETIC FIELDS FESTIVAL AND THE WILDCITY WEBSITE



School, after which he proceeded to focus on folk music while studying ethnomusicology at SOAS with field recordings of Siddi folk musicians – an ethnic group in India who are descended from the Bantu peoples in Southeast Africa – to create his debut album *Day To Day*. Released on Ninja Tune – the prestigious London indie label that has the likes of Jaga Jazzist, Amon Tobin and Bonobo on its roster – the album was supported by the Steve Reid Foundation, which counts electronic music giants Theo Parrish, Four Tet and Floating Points among its trustees. *Day To Day* earned Korwar rave reviews, and a tour alongside Brainfeeder musicians

Kamasi Washington and Jameszoo. While on tour in India, Korwar and his band avoided the jazz circuit, instead playing everywhere from electronica festivals to club gigs.

At Magnetic Fields, Korwar's set comfortably straddles two worlds: the jazz world he's grown up in and the electronica milieu of the festival. Most musicians would tone down some of jazz's more idiosyncratic conventions when playing to a crowd that was just raging to Daisuke Tanabe's breakbeat-meets-hip-hop sound. Korwar instead goes all in, weaving a complex tapestry of live instrumentation and electronic elements. There's even a free noise jam. To which the crowd responds with loud cheers.

"People are seeing what's happening abroad, with all these records like Kendrick's or D'Angelo's which have all these strong jazz influences on them," he says. "People are getting used to the sound of more experimental music, more improvised sections. Sonically, there's a shift towards jazz coming back into pop music anyway."

When Kolkata bebop legend Carlton Kitto tragically passed away last November, it set off a round of nostalgic, teary-eyed paeans to Indian jazz. Music and culture writers of a certain vintage dusted off their old records, went rummaging through their boxes of sepia-toned memories and sat down at their computers to wax eloquent about smoky nights at Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel or Pam Crain's marathon six-hour sets at Kolkata's much-loved Mocambo restaurant. In writing Kitto's obituary, they were also writing the obituary for what many call the "Golden Age" of Indian jazz – when Mumbai and Kolkata would be regular stops for American legends on their (CIA-sponsored) Jazz Diplomacy tours, when "hot music" ruled the stage at the country's hippest restaurants and clubs and when Goan musicians like Chic Chocolate and Frank Fernand were introducing Hindi film audiences to the joys of swing and bebop. For these Golden Agers, Indian jazz is dead and has been for a long time.

A couple of weeks later, at Magnetic Fields, I head to The Dungeon's smoking section for a cigarette, whisky in hand. Gupta and his band are playing. In one corner, two girls – unburdened by the baggage of musical history – jive to the music being piped out of the smoking section's speakers. We – I, Mr Dreadlocks and a few other other mildly drunk refugees hiding out from the floor beats – look on as they dance for ten, fifteen minutes. When they finally sit down to finish their drinks, an appreciative audience breaks out into applause. If Indian jazz is dead, I find myself thinking, it's enjoying a hell of an afterlife. 🍷

THE

finest CUT



A classic accessory is timeless and will upgrade your style in more ways than one. Here's proof

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **GREG DELVES**

CALFSKIN BAG
WITH CROCODILE
STAMPING BY
PHILIPP PLEIN

OPPOSITE PAGE:
LEATHER BROGUES
BY **SALVATORE
FERRAGAMO**





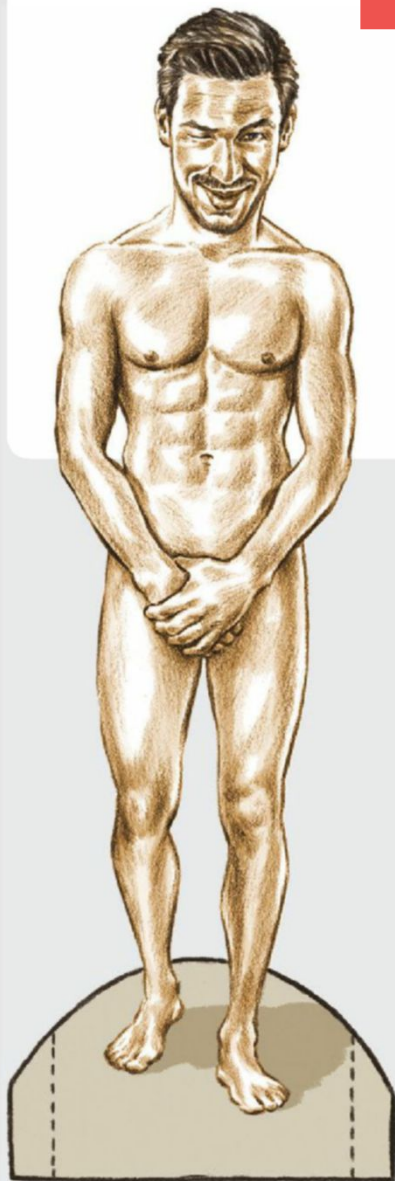
LEATHER MONKSTRAPS
BY **SANTONI**. LEATHER
DUFFEL BY **GUCCI**

OPPOSITE PAGE:
SACHEL BY **BURBERRY**



HOW TO

Do a first date in the Age of Tinder



Yeah, hooking up and getting to the first date got way easier in the past few years, thanks (and sometimes no thanks) to apps. But one thing never got easier, and maybe even got harder: what to do once you get there. GQ presents a guide to the physical, face-to-face, real-time, non-emoji-assisted first date

ILLUSTRATED BY TIM TOMKINSON



AFTER WORK

If you're a suit guy, leave the suit on – but take the tie off, keeping the top button buttoned. If you wear jeans and a T-shirt to work, wear that. Just make sure it's the best version of your everyday outfit.



SATURDAY NIGHT

What's the last purchase that you were really excited about? What's the thing you always feel confident in? You can't answer either question? Chelsea boots. Distressed jeans. Leather jacket. Done.



SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Show your date that you can relax in style. Wear easy, slim sweats (like the ones that Shahid Kapoor wears that don't signify "sweats") and a T-shirt. This is the only dating time when overdressing is worse than underdressing.

The style guy's guide to the first-date uniform

You matched. Now, what about your outfit?

—MARK ANTHONY GREEN

How to pick the perfect spot

Follow these rules – as valid now as they were in days of yore – to locate the ideal date destination.

—LAUREN LARSON



1

The bar must offereth two of the following: ale (beer), wine or cocktails.

Another thing: After thy date's second drink, she shall require a few of thy fries.



2

Thou shalt not wait more than ten minutes for a seat.

Every minute of idle small talk shall correspondeth to one fewer blow job down the line.



3

There shall be no TV in the bar.

Thou shalt not watch the game over thy date's shoulder. Thy date is not fooled by thy lying eyes.



4

The bar shall be close to thy date's place of work.

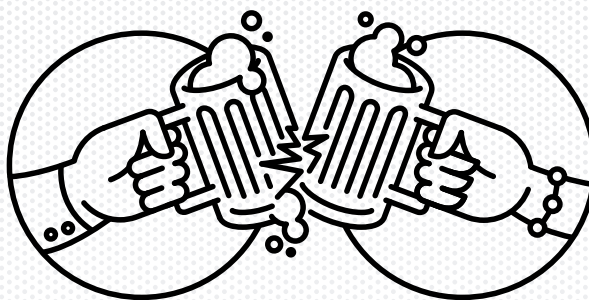
Thy wench can get there easily, but she doth not have to tell thee where she lives.



5

There shall be no trivia.

The drunken masses shall not shout "grappa!" and "Mamma Mia!" to the rafters while thou art describing thy backpacking trip in Greece.



I ALWAYS TAKE MY FIRST DATES TO THE SAME SPOT

The last thing you want on a first date is to worry about anything other than her. Too much noise? Too little noise? Lights so bright she'll wonder if you're going to get that mole checked out? Not if I can help it. If she has a place she loves to go, great. But if not, I suggest the bar at a casual drinking joint. It checks all the boxes – good drinks, good food (if it comes to that) – but it doesn't itself inspire a lot of commentary ("I've never had lingonberry bitters before!" "Really? I love them!"), which would allow you both to gloss over the fact that there's no connection. The responsibility for connecting falls on us. As it should. So when it works, it feels more like a tenth date than a first.

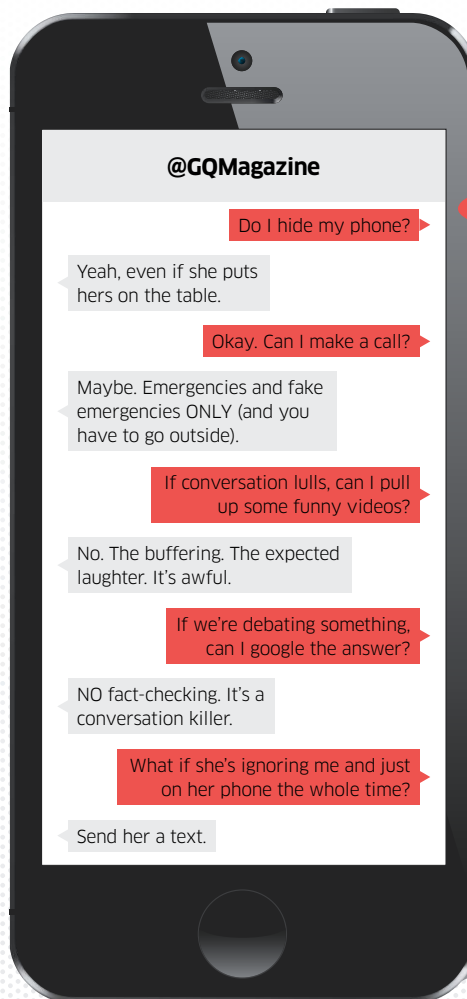
—ANDREW GOBLE

THE SAME SPOT?! THAT'S CREEPY

If you return to the same place for all your first dates, someone – the bartender, a waiter – is on to you. They know this is your move. You're the guy who has his first dates here. You don't want to be that guy. That guy is unoriginal. That guy is timid. That guy is, frankly, a little creepy.

I get it: Retreating to a safe space alleviates anxiety. But you're actually creating more stress for yourself. Because at some point, someone is going to say, "You're back! Club Chicken Sandwich again?" I promise, this will (or should, at least) make you more tense than not knowing whether you're enchanted with her or with the establishment's imported spirits list.

—ANNA PEELE



Hold the phone (Actually, keep it out of sight)

Our guide to what to do with your device



Crucial advice from a real dating expert: **YOUR BARTENDER**

Tips and tricks from the men and women who've seen more awkward encounters than anyone else.

—AS TOLD TO JESSIE MOONEY



“Schedule your date on a Monday or Tuesday evening. Bars and restaurants are emptier – you don’t need to worry about noise when you’re trying to get to know someone.”



“Every date starts off with closed postures. Crossed arms and legs. About an hour in, take a chance and move the body language to a friendlier place. That’s when the conversation takes off.”

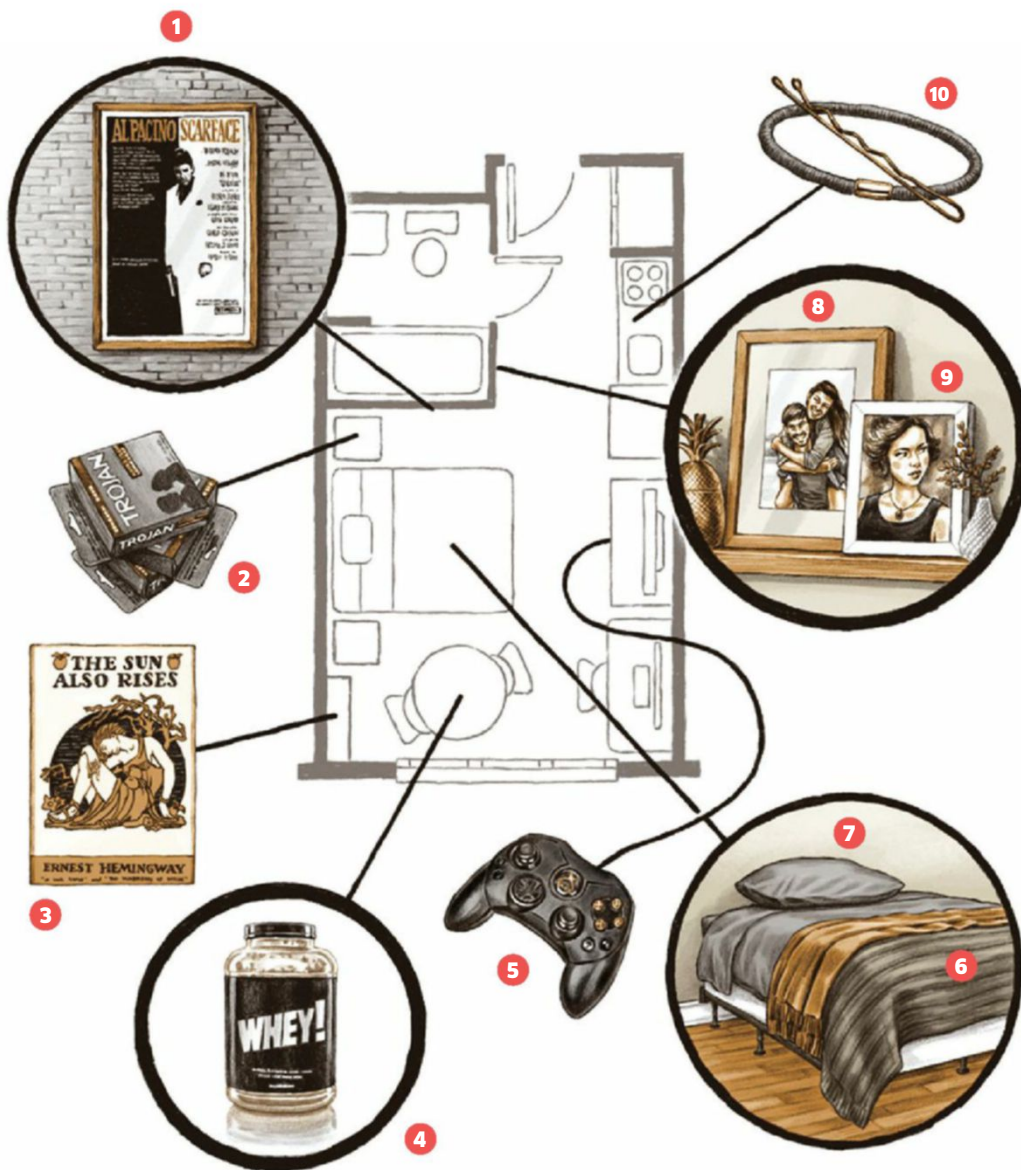


“Make the bartender your friend. Arrive a bit early, introduce yourself to the bartender and buy a simple drink – and leave a good tip.” (Now you’ve got an ally for the rest of the night.)



“Ask her questions. Guys assume they’re getting interviewed and forget to ask questions back. I can tell you where the guy went to college, where his brother went to college, but not a thing about her.”

WORDS: (L-R) ANNE VAUGHAN (WHISLERS, AUSTIN), MARY ELISE HAYDEN (THE CONTINENTAL CLUB, LA), BRIAN BARTELS (BAR SARDINE, NYC), JT ALMON (CAFE MOCADOR, NYC)



Is your place ready for a guest?

A man's home can be a minefield. Here's a list of things to avoid

1 POSTERS

That Ikea poster frame isn't fooling anyone.

2 MORE THAN ONE BOX OF CONDOMS IN THE NIGHTSTAND

Just what in the world do you think is going to happen here?

3 THE HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY

I also liked Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, but there are other books.

4 PROTEIN POWDER

It's aggro baby food.

5 ONLY ONE XBOX CONTROLLER

For the man who does literally *everything* by himself.

6 DARK-COLOURED SHEETS

What are you hiding?

7 ONLY ONE PILLOW

Really didn't think this through.

8 PHOTO OF YOUR EX

Bury it in a box with the rest of your emotions.

9 PHOTO OF YOUR MOTHER AS A YOUNG WOMAN

Presented without comment.

10 BOBBY PIN (or any token of previous lady visitor)

Women are trained to zero in on signs of our own kind.

-LL

Who won your date?

If dating apps are a game, there must be a winner!

Give your date...

-2 points if they added you on social media before you've even met IRL (-3 if it was on LinkedIn).

Give yourself...

-1 if you're late because you are standing outside texting your friends.

+2 when you realize your date is, too.

Give your date...

+1 for every question they ask you about you.

-2 if one of those questions is about your bank balance.

Give yourself...

+2 for every question you ask them.

-1 if you begin a sentence with "I'm a feminist, but..."

Give your date...

-2 if they check their phone while you are talking.

-3 if they bring up their ex.

-20 if they bring up their spouse.

Give yourself...

+4 if you bravely suggest a nightcap.

-15 if you use a *Family Guy* voice.

OVERTIME

Give your date...

-5 if they're "active" on Tinder an hour after your date.

+5 Then again, so are you.

KEY

Whoever scores the most points is the winner and is officially allowed to never text back the loser. 📶

-HALLIE CANTOR



SWEATSHIRT BY
BALENCIAGA FOR
MYTHERESA.COM.
RINGS BY **SUAREZ**

TAP THAT



Pure, unadulterated beauty does exist on social media. Proof: 18-year-old Spaniard **Cindy Kimberly**, who rose to model-level stardom after Justin Bieber's Insta hunt to find her

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **RAFA GALLAR**





TOP BY **ZARA**
SPORT SKIRT BY
ALTUZARRA
FOR MYTHERESA.
COM. DIAMOND
NECKLACE,
BRACELETS;
ALL BY **CARTIER**.
RINGS BY **SUAREZ**

OPPOSITE PAGE:
DRESS BY **ZARA**

PRODUCTION:
CRISTINA PÉREZ
HERNANDO

A few good men

THE INDIA DIARIES

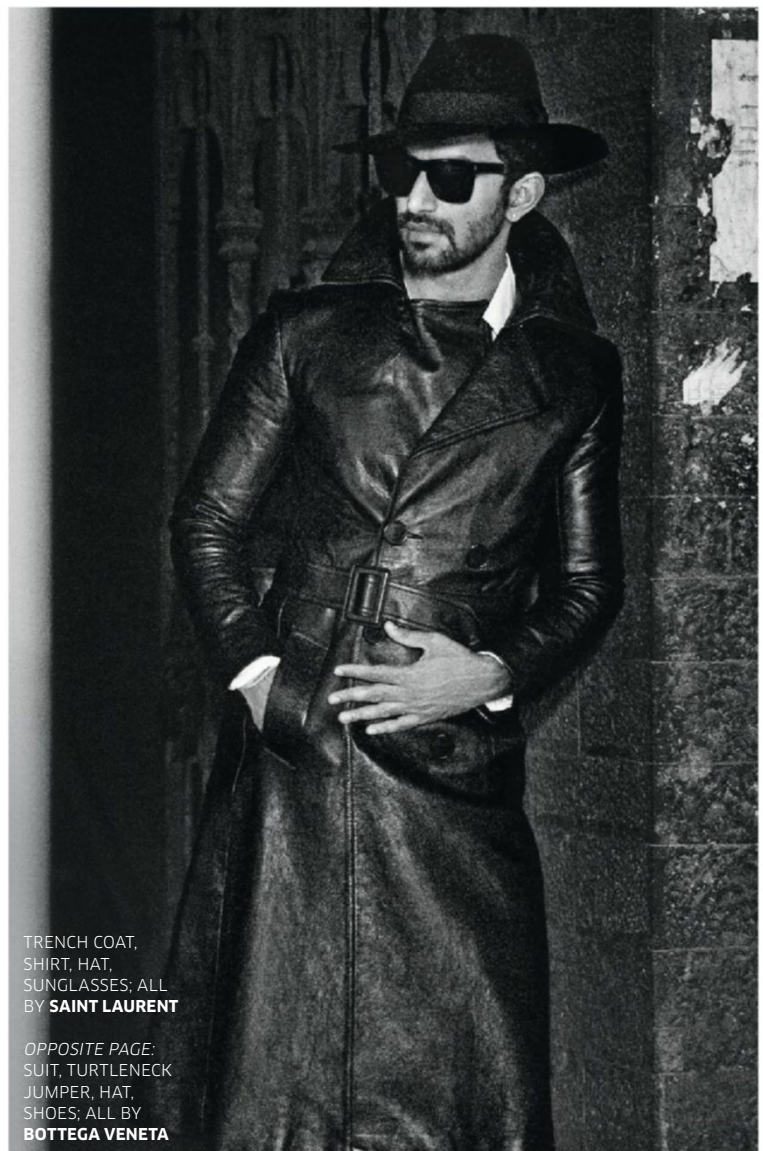
From breakthrough actors to primo hoteliers, the country's top style contenders take on the streets of Mumbai in vintage fashion

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **FRANCESCO CARROZZINI**



COAT BY **GIORGIO ARMANI**.
SUNGLASSES BY **PERSOL**

Jaisal Singh, HOTELIER, ENTREPRENEUR



TRENCH COAT,
SHIRT, HAT,
SUNGLASSES; ALL
BY **SAINT LAURENT**

OPPOSITE PAGE:
SUIT, TURTLENECK
JUMPER, HAT,
SHOES; ALL BY
BOTTEGA VENETA

Manvendra Singh Shekhawat, HOTELIER





T-SHIRT, BLAZER;
BOTH BY **BOSS**.
FRAMES BY
OLIVER PEOPLES

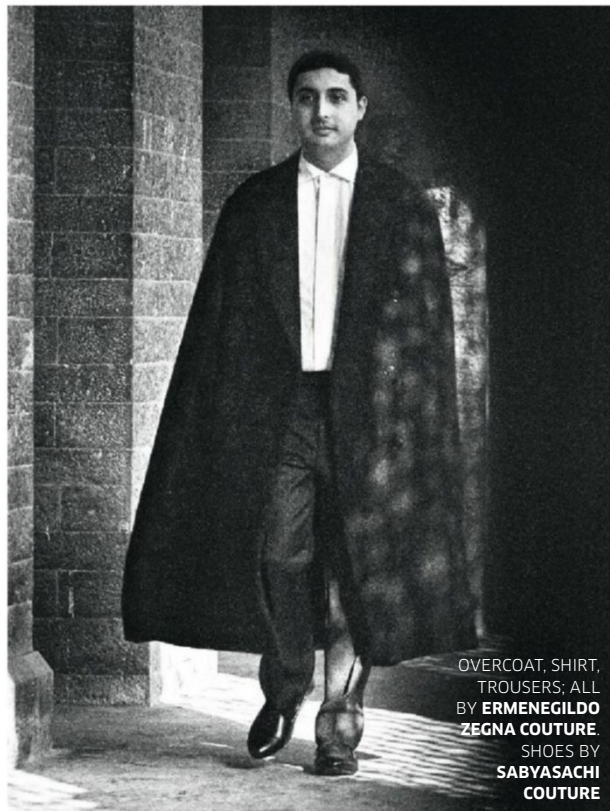
**“I DON’T
THINK
FASHION
HAS TO
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EVERY FIVE
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I’D LIKE
THESE TO
BE CLOTHES
YOU CAN
WEAR FOR A
LONG TIME.”
—TOM FORD**

Raisinh Jadeja, HOTELIER



JACKET, TROUSERS;
BOTH BY **SALVATORE
FERRAGAMO**.
SHOES BY
SABYASACHI COUTURE

Ashiesh Shah, ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER



OVERCOAT, SHIRT,
TROUSERS; ALL
BY **ERMEGILDO
ZEGNA COUTURE**.
SHOES BY
**SABYASACHI
COUTURE**

Rooshad Shroff, ARCHITECT AND INTERIOR DESIGNER



Gaurav Malaker, MUSICIAN, DJ AND PRODUCER

TURTLENECK, PANTS;
BOTH BY **DIOR**
HOMME. BASEBALL CAP
BY **VANS**. BOOTS BY
COSTUME NATIONAL

“I WEAR MODERN... VINTAGE.” —LUCKY BLUE SMITH

Jim Sarbh, ACTOR

COAT, SHIRT, TROUSERS:
ALL BY **LANVIN**.
BOOTS BY **COSTUME
NATIONAL**



STATUTORY WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH



Vicky Kaushal, ACTOR



COAT, TROUSERS,
SHIRT, SCARF: ALL
BY **GIVENCHY**

FASHION ASSISTANT:
SEMIH GUNGOR (ON SET),
STEPHANIE KHERLAKIAN
HAIR:
CLEMENT VANNOYE/TFM INDIA
MAKE-UP:
ROBERTO CASEY/TFM INDIA
PRODUCTION:
MANISHA AGRAWAL,
GOVIND AGRAWAL/ EPITOME
PRODUCTION LLP, INDIA
FASHION EDITOR:
ROBERT RABENSTEINER
LOCATION: COURTESY TAJ
MAHAL PALACE HOTEL, MUMBAI





THE IMPROBABLE LIFE AND STUNNING DEATH OF A CHILD WARRIOR

When his father was murdered, **Wasil Ahmad** vowed revenge. He was barely old enough to hoist a rifle, but still he trained to fight the Taliban. Finally, when the insurgents returned, Wasil found his chance. What he did next made him a legend. And then, of course, it made him a target

BY JOSHUA HAMMER

A Il wars breed heroes, but some come in unexpected form. Wasil Ahmad was one of the unlikeliest. He was only eight years old when the war in Afghanistan, already a family affair, set him on a path for vengeance.

One morning, about an hour's walk from the family compound where Wasil slept, his father and three uncles stood guard at a newly built police checkpoint. For years, as the Taliban and the Afghan government had traded control of this stretch of southern Afghanistan, Wasil's family see-sawed between both sides. Now, with the Americans pulling out, the men in Wasil's family glimpsed new opportunity – and new jobs – as leaders of a US-backed police force. They pledged to fight the Taliban, to defend their valley from the insurgents.

They girded themselves for battle, which came that morning in the summer of 2012, as the Taliban swept down from the hills of the Uruzgan province and attacked the new checkpoint of the

Afghan Local Police. Soon, the crack and pop of gunfire rattled through the valley of Nawa Sultan Mohammad, and the fighting spilled into the surrounding fields. The police, commanded by Wasil's uncle Samad, fought the insurgents throughout the afternoon and into the evening, managing to kill 10 Taliban fighters before the attackers were subdued. But three of their own had been gunned down, too – including Wasil's father, Hamidullah.

That night, as darkness enveloped the family's three-storey mud-brick compound, Wasil's uncles shuffled Hamidullah's bloodied corpse inside. The boy drew close, his cheeks wet with tears. In the low light, he could see the blood that stained his father's clothes. He was a child, yes, but he knew enough of his world to realize, without even asking, who had killed his father. And he knew what it meant for him.

In the weeks that followed, Wasil's anger hardened into a grim and brutal ambition – one that would launch him towards fame and then towards tragedy. "Teach me how to shoot," Wasil said to his uncle Samad when he had resolved himself to retribution. "I want to kill my father's killer." ➔



His family's own complicated relationship with the Taliban went back years, to the days before 9/11, when the group first came to power and Wasil's uncle Samad became an eager climber in the local power structure. It wasn't religious devotion that drove Samad but, rather, expediency. Like many, he wanted what the Taliban could offer. "At that time, I didn't know what was good or what was bad," Samad told me. "Everybody likes to have vehicles, a little power, to be on the government's side. The Taliban provided us with fuel, with a better life."

But by the time Wasil was eight, Samad was having doubts. In early 2012, as American and Afghan authorities were working hard to win the loyalties of fighters like him – offering them jobs and other incentives – Samad broke ranks with the Taliban. Along with 13 of his men, he pledged allegiance to the US-backed Afghan government.



The Taliban, which have stormed back to power in recent years all over the country, have been using child soldiers in even larger numbers than the government. In the north, in the Kunduz province, where the Taliban briefly captured the capital last year, insurgents used the schools to train children to fight on the front lines – instructing them in making and planting IEDs and detonating suicide vests at checkpoints. “The Taliban’s apparent strategy to throw increasing numbers of children into battle is as cynical and cruel as it is unlawful,” said Patricia Gossman, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Between September 2010 and December 2014, suicide attacks were carried out by 20 boys under the age of 18, according to a report from the UN. In one incident, an IED was attached to a bicycle that a boy was made to push towards an Afghan National Army vehicle. The blast killed eight civilians as well as the child.

Still, as he joined the growing army of kids being called to fight, Wasil was different. Deeply committed and poised beyond his years, he was eager to fight. And unlike the rest of the child soldiers of the war, Wasil would soon be asked to lead.

By early 2015, Samad had a new reason to let his young nephew inch his way towards the fight: He needed the men. Across Afghanistan, the resurgent Taliban were a gathering threat. It hadn’t helped Samad that some of his own policemen – newly powerful and suddenly unruly – were making the prospect of a return to Taliban rule a bit more enticing to the locals in the valley. Several of his men had been implicated in assaults and robberies. And in a bid to amp up security, his cops increasingly resorted to harsh tactics: They rounded up elders and cut their beards to punish them for cooperating with the Taliban; they ordered the villagers to leave their doors open at night, in case the police wanted to search their homes.

Just 20 miles from the family compound, a force of roughly 2,000 newly emboldened insurgents had ventured from the mountains to besiege the Afghan Local Police’s district headquarters in Khas Uruzgan. From here, the Taliban set their sights on Samad’s unit and the valley from which he’d evicted them three years earlier.

By late May, the Taliban had begun their assault, targeting police checkpoints and forcing Samad’s fighters to withdraw

farther and farther. In July, the police gathered their loved ones and planned one last retreat: They’d fall back to Samad’s three-storey compound, where Wasil and his family were already ensconced. From there, they’d wait for rescue – or make their final stand.

Primed for what could come, Wasil was wearing the tiny grey police uniform his mother had stitched. He was 11 years old. He’d gotten pretty good with a rifle, but he had never fired a shot in battle, had never experienced the adrenaline rush and the terror of combat. But this was what he’d been training for.

As the police and the families made their way to the compound, Taliban snipers opened fire on them – killing two policemen and cutting down Samad, who took a pair of bullets, one in the leg. From the roof of the compound, Wasil could see beyond the walls to where his uncle lay in the dirt, possibly dying; the Taliban were bearing down. Wasil’s uncle Merwais remembers vividly what happened next. He watched Wasil, crouching behind sandbags, take careful aim with a Russian-made machine gun. The boy squeezed the trigger and began working to pin the Taliban in place, buying enough time for the men inside the compound to reach the dead and injured and to haul them in.

A wounded Samad was hustled to a second-floor bedroom, where he named his nephew the surrogate commander. The police unit contained 26 men at that point – and putting a boy in charge as the battle began, Samad told me, made perfect sense. “He was intelligent, brave, and calm under fire, and well trained.”

The child leapt to duty, now commanding a makeshift fortress of last resort. Outside, the Taliban soon had the place surrounded, hundreds of them firing from the mountains above and the valley below. Day and night – across what would eventually become a three-week siege – Wasil kept watch from the roof, pointing out Taliban positions to his fellow marksmen. “Wasil was telling the soldiers to go to this position, that position, and giving them ammunition, and shooting the heavy machine gun,” said Merwais. He may have been only a boy, but Wasil cut the figure of the military leader he had now become.

In early August, as Wasil worked from the rooftop, a Taliban gunner sent a rocket-propelled grenade into the thick mud-brick wall on the compound’s second floor. From a corner bedroom rose the smoke and flames of burning mattresses and wooden furniture, as two terrified children trapped inside cried out for help. Throughout the compound, there was confusion, but Wasil was calm. He grabbed a radio receiver and shouted to a Taliban officer on the other end.

“We want a cease-fire,” he screamed, his voice high-pitched and crackling over the radio. “There are two kids in that room, and we need to get them out.”

More shots rang out.

“You guys are not men,” Wasil screamed over the radio. “Just give us time to take the children out.” There was something about Wasil’s insistent tone, his confidence in the face of danger, that the Taliban commander noticed. He gave the order that silenced the Taliban’s guns. Wasil had the children pulled from the burning room.

But the truce was short-lived. The hardships stacked up. Food ran low, and Wasil’s men →

As the US pulled out of Afghanistan, police units – like Wasil’s – took up the fight against the Taliban



were reduced to eating grass boiled into a kind of porridge. Throughout August, as the siege dragged on, Wasil and Samad pleaded with army commanders and government officials to get them out. But the Taliban held the roads.

Unbeknown to those trapped in the compound, Taliban engineers had been digging a tunnel towards them. And on August 21, they used it to place about 3.3 tons of explosives beneath the rampart. A deafening explosion blew a hole in one of the mud walls, killing two of the policemen. Amid the confusion, Wasil got on the radio to the chief of police in Tirin Kot. "They've broken down the wall. They're coming to get us. We need a helicopter rescue," he begged.

Twenty-four hours later, four Russian Mi-17 helicopters filled with Afghan special forces flew out of Tirin Kot towards the compound. A US gunship accompanied them, raining fire on the Taliban and sending them scurrying for cover. The four Mi-17s touched down in front of the mud fortress, and Afghan soldiers raced inside. Samad, Merwais, 15 more fighters, Samad's two wives, Wasil, his three brothers, three cousins, and his mother dashed out, ducking low beneath the swirling rotor blades and rising dust, and climbed aboard. A short time afterwards, according to the district governor, the Taliban swarmed the compound and burned it to the ground.

The Taliban had taken the compound and the entirety of the valley, but stories were already spreading, tales that would captivate the country. Reports of how Wasil had fired 120 mortar rounds in a single day's fighting; how he'd manned a Kalashnikov long enough and well enough to take out six Taliban fighters, how he'd coordinated food and ammo drops that saved his soldiers' lives. Stories spread of how he had negotiated the rescue of those children – and of how, finally, he had arranged that daring evacuation by helicopter. "He fought with the courage of 100 men," the district governor would say. He was hailed as a "lion"; even the Taliban would speak of him with a measure of respect. But it was too soon to know what that growing fame would eventually inspire.

Wasil stared out of the helicopter as it sailed over green valleys, barrelling toward Tirin Kot. "We're out of danger, we can relax now," he told his nine-year-old brother, Rabbani. Then, having comforted the boy, he turned back to the disbelieving men who'd just rescued him, the troops from the Afghan special forces who wanted to know how this boy had defended the compound for three harrowing weeks.

Just beyond the gates of Tirin Kot, the chopper zipped over the blast walls of the heavily fortified Afghan National Army base and came to rest on the ground. Rahimullah Khan, then the deputy police chief of the Uruzgan province, was waiting for them at the airfield. The boy, his uniform covered in dust, a sidearm on his waist, shook Khan's hand and then jumped into the front seat of a police car. "He was tired, and happy to be out of the war," Khan told me.

Tirin Kot, a sprawl of mud-walled houses, was, then as now, a city under siege. The Afghan government's control extended for just a few miles beyond the walls. Checkpoints and sandbagged posts ringed the city of 70,000, but Taliban infiltrators had still managed to slip into town and strike periodically, planting IEDs on the streets.

To help ease Wasil back toward normalcy, deputy police

chief Khan put the family up in his guarded guesthouse, gave them a monthly stipend and arranged for Wasil to attend a nearby school. Khan also removed the boy's sidearm. "The pistol is our enemy," he told me. "When you have a pistol, you are a target, you are in the fight."

It wasn't easy for Wasil to accept that his fight was over. Family members and others who had survived the siege treated him like a legendary warrior. Samad, in particular, was proud of his nephew's celebrity and wanted to honour him as a hero. He resented anyone who downplayed the boy's achievements. "We fought with the Taliban for many, many days, fighting 500 people," he said. "They should have given us medals."

This sort of hagiography worried Khan, who was stunned to see Wasil's family play up his heroic exploits on social media. "They said, 'Wasil did this.' 'Wasil did that,' bragging about the kid, how he killed this person and that person," he told me. The deputy police chief urged the family to lower the boy's profile. He was afraid that Wasil's growing status as a folk hero was likely to put him in the Taliban's sights. He pleaded with Samad to protect his nephew. But Samad, always ambitious, brushed off the warnings. "The family didn't accept my help," Khan told me. "They went the wrong way."





“They’re coming to get us. We need a helicopter rescue,” Wasil begged

After a couple of months, Wasil’s family moved out of Khan’s guesthouse, saying that they needed more space. Samad was eager to keep stoking the mythology growing around his nephew and cultivated in the boy a sense that he wasn’t beholden to the same rules that governed other people: He allowed the 11-year-old to drive around town in a police-issued Ford Ranger pickup truck. Khan thought the truck was a bad idea: Giving a boy a police vehicle was hardly going to encourage him to behave like a kid. “I was trying to get Wasil into a school in Kabul to get him more educated,” Khan told me. “But his mind was being changed again.”

Wasil was being pulled in conflicting directions. “He played soccer and cricket, but he was not like a child,” a schoolmate told the press. “He was more like a grown man – always serious.”

Most mornings, after breakfast, Wasil, along with his brothers and cousins, worked for three hours with a tutor who taught English, Persian and chemistry. And by all accounts, Wasil was making progress – despite a frequent preoccupation with his past life as a soldier. “He was an intelligent guy, with an open mind; he was grasping things quickly,” Wasil’s teacher, Mahmoud Khan, told me. “But he was thinking about guns, he was talking about guns. I told him, ‘You should leave these things behind. You should focus on learning.’”

In early February 2016, six months after the siege, Wasil and two of his cousins finished their midday prayers and strolled outside their compound, hoping to buy some fruit. Normally, the family discouraged them from venturing into the streets without police guards, but there was a fruit-and-vegetable stall just across the wide road, a 30-second walk away.

Wasil crossed the road while his two cousins peeled off and headed for another shop. As he inspected the oranges, bananas and apples and chatted with the grocer, two men on a motorbike pulled up behind Wasil.

Then two pistol shots rang out, and Wasil staggered back. “After the first shot, he was just saying, ‘I’ve been hit.’ Then the second bullet hit him in the head, and he fell,” a witness recounted. “The apples he bought were covered in blood.” The assailants raced off on their bike and disappeared.

At home, Samad had been napping but was roused suddenly by his shouting nephews. “Wasil’s been shot,” they cried. Wasil’s uncle ran outside and saw the boy lying in a pool of blood, unconscious. An ambulance rushed Wasil to the local hospital, and then he was airlifted to Kandahar. Wasil died en route.

The next day, Wasil’s family wrapped his body in a white cloth shroud and bore him in his Ford Ranger to the cemetery. Six hundred people attended his burial. The sight of the small boy’s body moved many to tears. “This was a small child,” the journalist Najeed Lattif, who attended the funeral, told me.

Samad was also crying. “He was saying, ‘They killed my right-hand man,’” Lattif said.

Six weeks after Wasil’s assassination, I joined his younger brother Rabbani and his uncle Merwais on a visit to Wasil’s grave. (Samad had relocated to Khas Uruzgan to begin a three-month trial as the district police chief. “He is a good fighter,” Uruzgan’s new governor, Wazeer Khararoti, told me. “He knows how to fight the Taliban, but you have to rein him in like a horse and not let him go so far.”)

We crammed into an armoured 4x4 and joined a convoy between a black Land Cruiser and a Humvee filled with a dozen policemen. We reached a barren hillside covered with grave markers – spindly branches strung with decorative flags. The police took up positions, and I followed the uncle and brother to Wasil’s grave, crudely marked with stones, chunks of cement and two willow branches adorned with coloured cloths. It was only temporary, Merwais told me. “We will take him home,” he said, “as soon as Nawa Sultan Mohammad is no longer in the Taliban’s hands.”

In the days just after Wasil was shot, as paeans to his bravery flooded social media, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the assassination, according to *The Independent*. But when I reached the insurgents’ spokesman on the phone, he backed off, saying only that it “was possible” that the Taliban had killed him. He rebuked the Afghan police for encouraging the boy to fight and for then celebrating him as a hero.

That sentiment – that the breathless tales of Wasil’s exploits had contributed to his death – is shared by the region’s governor, Wazeer Khararoti. “He was a child, and we don’t have the right to make him a hero,” he told me. “If some kids are seeing this, what will they think? They will just leave the school and tell themselves, ‘I am going to become a hero.’”

But among the hard men who fight and die in Afghanistan’s violent backcountry, the governor’s perspective is not widely shared. There’s a grudging acceptance of the grim cycles that war perpetuates.

When I was in Kabul, I met with an old mujahideen fighter – a loyal friend of Samad’s – who now serves in parliament. His name is Haji Obaidullah Barakzai, and five years ago a Taliban fighter assassinated his 27-year-old son, as his son – Barakzai’s grandson – watched from a nearby car. The incident was eerily similar to the one that had put Wasil on his path for revenge, and it inspired in this boy the same response. He’s eight now, and he’s been consumed by one thought. “I want to kill the Taliban who killed my father,” he told me shyly.

Barakzai hadn’t yet taken him to the firing range, but that day, he said, was not far off. “I’m buying plastic guns for the boy,” he told me, “so that he will be ready.”

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