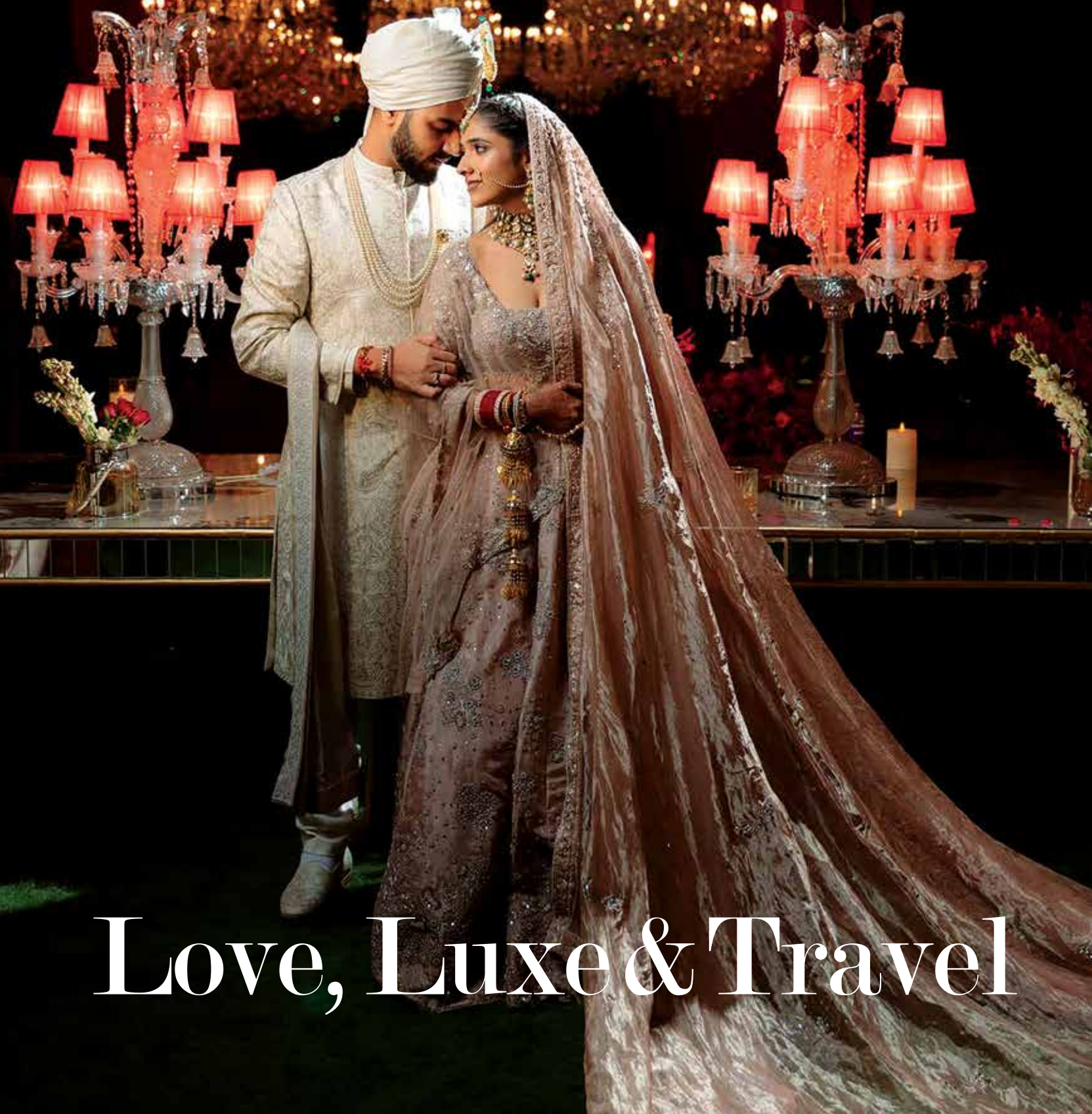


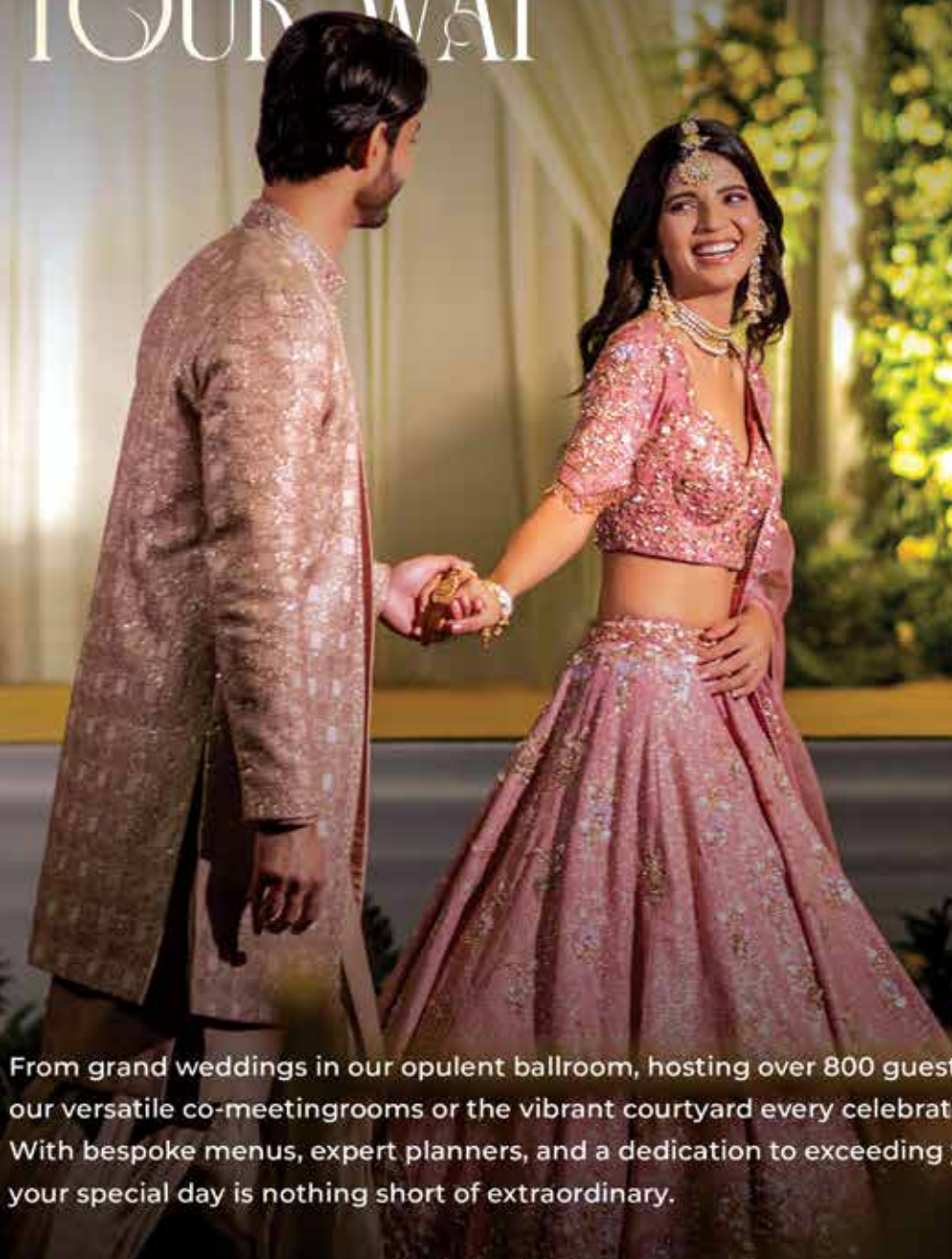
Wows & Vacay

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 1 | SEP - OCT 2026



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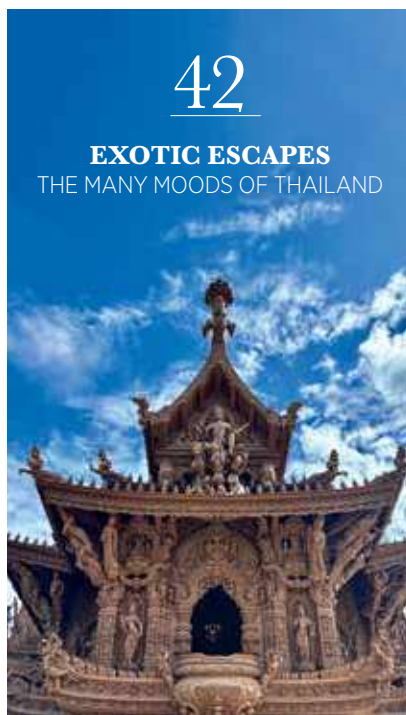
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Priyanka Saxena Ray
EDITOR
 (priyanka@bottindia.com)

Dear Readers,

There is something truly special about the wedding season. It arrives with a sense of celebration, but also with something deeper — hope, new beginnings, togetherness and, above all, love. Every wedding tells its own story, shaped by people, places, traditions, flavours and experiences that come together to make the occasion unforgettable.

In this issue of *Vows & Vacay*, we celebrate those many dimensions of weddings and travel. For couples dreaming of romance after the celebrations, we take you to Paris, a city that continues to define the idea of the perfect honeymoon. Closer home, we explore Agra as a wedding destination, where history, grandeur and the timeless presence of the Taj Mahal create an extraordinary backdrop for celebrations.

Our travel pages also journey to Thailand, discovering its beautiful islands, wellness experiences and warm hospitality, while a solo trip to Kashmir offers a very different perspective — one of serenity, discovery and the joy of travelling at your own pace.

Beauty, of course, remains an integral part of wedding preparations. We bring you simple skincare tips and home remedies to help brides maintain that much-desired glow, particularly during humid weather.

And because no Indian wedding conversation is complete without food, we turn our attention to biryani — the evergreen favourite that continues to hold its ground even as international cuisines increasingly find their way onto wedding menus.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together — and find plenty of inspiration for celebrations, journeys and beautiful new beginnings.

Happy Reading!

Priyanka Saxena Ray
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Vows & Vacay

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HOUSE OF VAZANEH LAUNCHES 1ST FLAGSHIP COUTURE HOUSE IN NEW DELHI

House of Vazaneh unveiled its debut flagship destination in the surroundings of Sainik Farms, New Delhi, marking a major milestone for the luxury label. Spanning 2,500 square yards, the immersive space was personally designed by Founder and Creative Director Prbhjiit Maniktala. Moving away from traditional retail, the couture house mirrors an old-world European salon with maximalist interiors, featuring gilded furniture, ornate mirrors, and private fitting suites. Offering evening gowns, sculpted drapes, and bespoke bridal wear, the flagship aims to elevate client visits into unhurried, intimate experiences. The launch sets the stage for the brand's planned global expansion. ■

SABYASACHI UNVEILS MASSIVE FLAGSHIP STORE IN NEW DELHI



Luxury designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee has launched an expansive new flagship destination at The Citadel in Mehrauli. Spanning over 26,000 square feet, the space significantly expands the brand's Delhi footprint. The store brings together bridal couture, saris, menswear, ready-to-wear, and fine jewellery under one roof. Designed as an ode to Kolkata, the interiors feature 120 chandeliers, 200 antique carpets, and a Calcutta tramcar installation. The flagship launch coincides with the House of Sabyasachi's new multi-year collaboration with New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. ■



SAROVA HOTELS & RESORTS TARGETS RISING INDIAN DESTINATION WEDDING MARKET IN KENYA

Kenya's Sarova Hotels & Resorts is expanding its footprint in the Indian destination wedding market, offering tailored multi-day celebrations that blend luxury hospitality with safari and coastal experiences. Leveraging its Indian heritage, Sarova caters to traditional ceremonies like Mehendi, Sangeet, and Haldi across its properties, including the popular beachfront Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort in Mombasa. The group provides customised vegetarian, Jain, and Indian dining, alongside access to Hindu priests and local planners. Couples can pair beach weddings with wildlife safaris in the Maasai Mara, catering to the growing trend of experience-driven Indian celebrations. ■

ANANTA SPA & RESORT JAIPUR LAUNCHES HELICOPTER ENTRANCES FOR DESTINATION WEDDINGS



Ananta Spa & Resort Jaipur has elevated the luxury wedding experience by introducing helicopter arrivals for marrying couples. Designed to add a grand, high-octane touch to large-format destination weddings, the new service turns traditional entrances into unforgettable aerial spectacles. Nestled against the Aravalli Hills, the sprawling property regularly hosts massive multi-day celebrations. The helipad addition allows brides and grooms to make a dramatic entrance directly onto the resort's expansive grounds, catering to the growing demand for ultra-luxurious, experiential weddings in Rajasthan's royal capital. ■

RADISSON HOTELS

Redefining the Destination Wedding Experience

Priyanka Saxena Ray

▼
Destination weddings in India are moving beyond the traditional luxury locations. Which emerging destinations could become the next Jaipur, Udaipur or Goa?

The next phase of growth will not be defined by a single “next Udaipur.” It will come from several distinctive destinations, each offering a different experience.

Kumbhalgarh and Khajuraho combine heritage, culture and exclusivity. Nashik and the Karjat-Khopoli-Lonavala belt offers scenic settings with convenient access from Mumbai and Pune. Uttarakhand has considerable potential for mountain, wellness and winter weddings, while Kochi and Kerala’s backwaters offer an attractive blend of landscape, cuisine and local culture.

A destination’s success, however, depends on more than its visual

appeal. It needs a compelling identity, convenient connectivity, quality room inventory and a dependable ecosystem of planners, designers, entertainers and other partners. Destinations that bring these elements together will emerge as the next generation of wedding hubs.

▼
What significant changes are you seeing in wedding preferences, and how are hotels responding?

The change is not simply towards smaller weddings; it is towards more intentional weddings. Couples want the celebration to reflect their personalities, family histories and cultural influences rather than follow a standard template.

This is changing how hotels approach every element of the occasion. Spaces must be flexible enough to create a different

mood for each function. Menus are becoming more personal, incorporating regional flavours, family recipes, international influences and individual dietary preferences. Property buyouts, privacy and highly curated guest journeys are also becoming more important.

Service must be equally personalised. Families increasingly expect one coordinated team to manage accommodation, transportation, food, vendors and the flow of events. At Radisson, this thinking is central to The Art of Weddings—creating celebrations that are culturally attuned and individually designed, rather than simply offering a venue and a package.

▼
How do you see the concept of a “wedding weekend” evolving?

The wedding weekend is evolving into a curated destination festival.

***Nikhil Sharma,
Managing Director &
Chief Operating Officer
– South Asia, Radisson
Hotel Group shares how
the brand is responding
to changing wedding
preferences, emerging
destinations and more
immersive celebrations.
He also looks at what
will shape India's
luxury wedding market
by 2030.***





The main ceremony will remain its emotional centre, but the overall experience may include an arrival ritual, wellness mornings, local excursions, regional dining, cultural performances, sundowners, after-parties and a relaxed farewell.

Importantly, a well-designed wedding weekend should also leave guests with time to enjoy the destination. It should not feel like a continuous sequence of compulsory events.

This changes the role of the hotel. We are no longer simply hosting functions; we are curating the complete destination experience by bringing together local chefs, artisans, musicians, wellness practitioners and guides. The most memorable wedding weekends will be those where guests leave with a strong sense of both the celebration and the destination.

▼ **What can India do to strengthen its position as a leading global destination wedding market?**

India has an advantage that is extremely difficult to replicate: an extraordinary combination of heritage, landscapes, cuisine, craftsmanship, traditions and hospitality. Our opportunity is to package this distinctiveness with international-grade ease and predictability.

This requires stronger air and last-mile connectivity, simpler coordination for visas and event permissions, consistent service standards and destination-level partnerships between governments, hotels, airlines, planners and local suppliers. International families also need transparent information and a seamless planning process from the initial enquiry through to departure.

India should market itself globally not as one wedding destination, but as many different wedding experiences—palaces, beaches, mountains, forests, vineyards, spiritual locations and contemporary urban celebrations. India does not need to imitate an international destination; it needs to make its own distinctiveness easier for the world to access.

▼ **What will define the luxury wedding business for hotels by 2030?**

By 2030, luxury will be defined by personal relevance and flawless execution rather than scale alone. We will continue to see grand, multi-generational celebrations alongside intimate, high-spend experiential weddings. Both will be larger in imagination, though not necessarily in guest count.

Technology will become the invisible operating layer—supporting room allocation, transportation, itineraries, dietary preferences and real-time guest communication. However, human warmth, empathy and cultural understanding will remain the visible differentiators.

Sustainability will also move from being an optional feature to an expected standard through local sourcing, reusable design elements, responsible food planning and stronger participation from local communities.

Hotels will ultimately evolve from wedding venues into integrated celebration platforms. The winning model will be technology-enabled behind the scenes, highly personalised in its design and deeply human at every guest touchpoint. ■

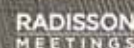
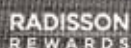
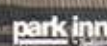
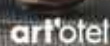
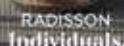
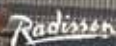


Global and Growing

With 10 distinctive brands and over 200 hotels across India, Radisson Hotel Group is one of the country's fastest-growing international hospitality companies.



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WED IN INDIA

AGRA

For Weddings written in Love



Home to the world's greatest monument to love, Agra offers a setting for weddings that few destinations can rival. With effortless connectivity from Delhi, magnificent hotels, grand lawns and Mughal-inspired splendour, the city turns a wedding celebration into a romance written against the silhouette of the Taj Mahal..

Vows & Vacay Desk

There are cities known for romance, and then there is **Agra**—a city where love is quite literally carved in marble.

For centuries, the Taj Mahal has stood as one of the world's most powerful symbols of love. Its story, symmetry and extraordinary beauty give Agra an emotional connection to weddings that no elaborate décor can manufacture. For couples beginning a new chapter together, there is something wonderfully poetic about celebrating in a destination whose most famous landmark was itself born from an enduring love story.

CLOSE TO DELHI, YET A WORLD AWAY

One of Agra's greatest advantages is its proximity to Delhi-NCR. At roughly 200 kilometres from the capital, the Yamuna Expressway makes the city easily accessible for guests travelling from Delhi, Noida and Gurugram, while strong rail connectivity adds further convenience.

For wedding hosts, this makes transporting décor, vendors and other requirements considerably easier than at more remote destinations. Yet, once guests arrive, Agra feels worlds away, surrounded by Mughal architecture, landscaped gardens, grand courtyards and glimpses of the Taj.

A HOTEL LANDSCAPE MADE FOR CELEBRATIONS

Agra has an impressive collection of luxury hotels suited to



everything from intimate celebrations to grand multi-day weddings.

ITC Mughal, A Luxury Collection Resort & Spa, Agra offers a distinctly regal setting with expansive Mughal-inspired gardens and a mix of indoor and outdoor venues. Dewan-e-Khas provides a grand indoor setting, while its landscaped gardens create magnificent canvases for sangeets, receptions and wedding ceremonies.

Jaypee Palace Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra is particularly suited to large residential weddings. Its architecture, courtyards, extensive lawns and multiple indoor and outdoor venues allow planners to create a different atmosphere for each celebration.

For contemporary luxury, Taj Agra combines modern



sophistication with proximity to the Taj Mahal. Its expansive event spaces, including The Mansion, ballrooms and outdoor areas, provide flexibility across a wedding weekend.

For couples seeking something more intimate, The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra offers a rarefied experience where views of the Taj Mahal become part of the celebration itself. Meanwhile, Courtyard by Marriott Agra offers flexible ballrooms and outdoor lawns well suited to modern destination weddings.

THE PRE-WEDDING SHOOT THAT NEEDS NO STYLING

And then comes perhaps Agra's most irresistible wedding moment—a pre-wedding shoot against the Taj Mahal. At dawn,

the light is softer, the air cooler and the marble gradually changes from misty ivory to pale pink and luminous white. It is a setting that demands understated elegance rather than excess—an ivory chikankari lehenga, pastel sari or flowing organza ensemble for her; a classic bandhgala or neutral kurta for him.

A couple walking hand-in-hand, a portrait framed through a Mughal arch, a trailing dupatta caught in the first sunlight or a silhouette against the marble dome—the Taj does almost all the styling itself.

For a destination wedding that brings together romance, history, grandeur and accessibility, Agra remains in a league of its own. ■



L'AMORE Weddings

Designing Celebrations that belong



For Gunjan Bansal, a memorable wedding is not defined by how much is added to it, but by how deeply it reflects the couple and the destination. Over nearly 12 years, the CEO of L'amore Weddings has curated Indian celebrations across India and Europe, from the dramatic landscapes of the Amalfi Coast to the timeless romance of Ravello.

Priyanka Saxena Ray



How did you enter the wedding planning space, and what inspired you to make it your profession?

I entered the wedding planning space almost 12 years ago, when destination weddings were still a relatively new concept for Indian families. I was living in the USA at the time, and my entry into weddings was almost organic. I discovered that I had a natural instinct for bringing together

people, places, design and experiences—and I became fascinated by the idea of creating celebrations that were much more than a ceremony.

What really drew me in was the emotional aspect of weddings. There are very few occasions where an entire family and their closest people come together with such anticipation and emotion. I realised that I wanted to create experiences that people would remember long after the wedding was over. That became

the foundation of L'amore Weddings.



How would you describe your journey so far, and what have been some of the defining milestones along the way?

It has been a journey of constant learning, evolution and, above all, trusting my instincts.

When I started, destination weddings were still very much a niche. Over the years, I have had



the privilege of planning more than 40 Indian destination weddings across India and Europe, including some incredibly beautiful celebrations in Italy and Spain.

Italy, in particular, has been an important part of my journey. Working in places like Ravello, the Amalfi Coast and Paestum taught me that destination weddings require a very different kind of sensitivity. You have to understand the destination, its architecture, its culture and its people rather than simply bringing a wedding concept and placing it there.

One of the milestones I value most is the relationships I have built—

with clients, families, venues, artisans and local vendors. In this business, your reputation is built wedding by wedding. Being invited to speak at a Destination Wedding Summit was also a particularly meaningful moment for me.



Tell us about your company, its philosophy and what you believe sets your approach to weddings apart.

L'amore Weddings is built around one fundamental belief: no two weddings should ever feel the same. I don't believe in taking a successful wedding and

reproducing it for another couple. Every wedding starts with understanding who the couple is, what their relationship is like, what their families are like and, importantly, what they want their guests to feel.

For me, luxury is not about excess. It is about curation, detail and execution.

We specialise in Indian destination weddings, with a particular focus on Europe. Our strength lies in bringing together the richness and emotion of an Indian wedding with the sophistication and character of the destination.

If we are in Ravello, I want Ravello

to be felt. If we are on the Amalfi Coast, I want the Mediterranean landscape to become part of the celebration. I don't want to fight the destination with excessive décor.

What sets our approach apart is that we don't simply plan events. We curate an entire experience—from the first guest arrival to the final farewell. And I believe the best compliment a wedding can receive is when guests say, "This felt completely like them."

▼
What are the key wedding and décor trends you are seeing currently, and which trends do you believe will shape celebrations over the next few years?

I think we are moving away from weddings that are simply visually impressive towards weddings that are emotionally and experientially memorable.

The biggest trend I see is personalisation. Couples are becoming much more interested in creating an identity for their wedding rather than following a particular décor trend.

In décor, I see a move towards more sophisticated, layered and architectural design. There is a growing appreciation for natural beauty, beautiful textures, considered lighting and colour palettes that complement the destination rather than overpower it.

I also think we will see a continued move towards intimate and highly curated celebrations. When you have fewer people, you can invest much more deeply in the experience of each guest.

Destination weddings will also become more adventurous.



Couples are looking for places that feel distinctive and have a strong sense of identity. The destination itself is becoming part of the story.

And I believe we will see much more integration between fashion, food, architecture, entertainment and décor. The boundaries between these elements are disappearing. A wedding is increasingly being treated as one complete creative experience

rather than a collection of separate events.

Ultimately, I think the weddings that will stand the test of time will not necessarily be the ones that followed the biggest trend. They will be the ones that had a strong sense of place, a strong sense of personality and an incredible sense of hospitality.

That, to me, is what modern luxury really means. ■

HONEYMOON HAVEN

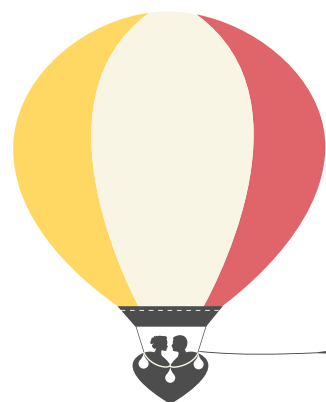
FRANCE

for Two



France and romance have always belonged together. Begin, of course, with Paris — then venture beyond the obvious to discover fairy-tale villages, Alpine hideaways, sun-kissed vineyards and storybook towns made for two.

Priyanka Saxena Ray



PARIS: WHERE THE LOVE STORY BEGINS

For a honeymoon in France, Paris is the first and most obvious choice — and deservedly so.

Few cities turn everyday moments into romance quite as effortlessly. Walk hand-in-hand along the Seine, linger over breakfast at a pavement café, watch the Eiffel Tower sparkle after dark or steal away to Montmartre for cobbled lanes, artists' corners and sweeping city views.

There are grand museums and Michelin-starred dinners for those who want them, but Paris is equally magical in its quieter moments — a picnic in the Jardin du Luxembourg, browsing little bookshops, sharing pastries in Saint-Germain or simply getting lost together in a beautiful neighbourhood.

Spend a few days soaking in the quintessential Parisian romance before setting off to discover a France that is quieter, less predictable and every bit as seductive.



ALSACE: A FAIRY TALE FOR TWO

If honeymoon dreams involve flower-filled windows, cobbled streets and villages that seem lifted from the pages of a storybook, Alsace delivers beautifully.

Begin in Colmar, with its colourful half-timbered houses and enchanting Petite Venise quarter. A boat ride along its canals is perhaps the most romantic introduction to the town. Culture-loving couples can visit the Unterlinden Museum and the Bartholdi Museum, dedicated to Colmar-born sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi,

creator of the Statue of Liberty.

Then rent a car and follow the celebrated Alsace Wine Route, linking a string of vineyards and picture-perfect villages between Strasbourg and Colmar. Make time for Riquewihir, where medieval streets, colourful façades and surrounding vineyards create an irresistibly old-world setting.

It is the kind of place where there is very little to “do” — and that is precisely its charm. Walk, taste wine, eat well and enjoy being together.





AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES: LOVE AT A HIGHER ALTITUDE

For couples whose idea of romance includes snow-covered peaks, roaring fireplaces and dramatic mountain views, the French Alps make a spectacular honeymoon setting.

For sheer indulgence, Courchevel and Megève are difficult to beat. Think luxurious mountain hotels, sophisticated spas, exceptional restaurants and days spent on pristine ski slopes. Couples looking for adventure can add sledging, tobogganing and other Alpine experiences to their itinerary before retreating to the warmth of their hotel.

Not quite ready to ski your way through the honeymoon? Head to Annecy, an idyllic town at the foot

of the Alps. Often called the *Venice of the Alps*, it has canals, pastel-coloured buildings, winding lanes and one of France's most beautiful lakes.

Spend a lazy afternoon beside Lake Annecy, take a boat ride or simply wander through the Old

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Spend a lazy afternoon beside Lake Annecy, take a boat ride or simply wander through the Old Town. Honeymooners should make a special stop at the Pont des Amours — the Lovers' Bridge. Local legend says that couples who kiss here will remain together forever. Whether or not you believe the tale, with the lake and mountains as your backdrop, it is certainly worth putting the theory to the test.



DORDOGNE À DEUX

And then there is the Dordogne Valley, one of those corners of France that deserves far more attention than it receives.



Here, romance comes wrapped in medieval castles, historic villages, prehistoric caves, beautiful countryside and the unmistakable French *art de vivre*. It is ideal for couples looking for a honeymoon that combines history, gastronomy and slow travel.

THE FRENCH RIVIERA & PROVENCE: SUNSHINE, ART AND SLOW ROMANCE

The French Riviera may conjure images of glamorous beaches and fashionable crowds, but there is another, gentler side to the Côte d'Azur.

Escape to Saint-Paul-de-Vence, a beautiful hilltop village overlooking the Mediterranean countryside. Its stone lanes, little cafés, art galleries and tranquil atmosphere make it ideal for couples who would rather slow down than be seen at the season's hottest beach club.

Art lovers should visit the Fondation Maeght, while everyone else can happily spend an afternoon wandering through the village, lingering over lunch and perhaps choosing a piece of art as a honeymoon keepsake.

Continue into Provence, where

romance takes the form of vineyards, lavender landscapes, sun-drenched villages and long lunches that somehow stretch into evening.

The Luberon is particularly lovely for honeymooners, with its hilltop settlements and landscape that has inspired generations of artists. Among its most beautiful villages is Gordes, dramatically perched above the countryside and filled with stone houses, winding lanes and irresistible old-world charm.

Explore its castle, stop at a café with a view and visit the nearby Sénanque Abbey, whose serene setting makes it one of Provence's most memorable sights.

This is honeymoon territory for couples who appreciate the pleasure of doing absolutely nothing in a hurry.

Explore Périgueux, where traces of ancient Rome sit alongside elegant French streets, before travelling onwards to Sarlat-la-Canéda, celebrated for its remarkably preserved architecture and atmospheric historic centre.

Food is an essential part of the Dordogne experience. Browse local markets, sample regional cheeses and foie gras, and, if you are travelling between December and March, look out for the region's prized black truffles — affectionately known as black diamonds.

Add castles, countryside drives and long dinners for two, and you have a honeymoon that feels authentically French without ever feeling predictable. ■

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POONAM NAIR
(General Manager)

Radisson Resort & Spa Hatgad Saputara

Conscious Celebrations

BY ROSEATE HOTELS & RESORTS



Roseate Hotels & Resorts brings its “Care by Roseate” sustainability philosophy into every wedding hosted at its properties, offering couples an elegant celebration that is thoughtfully aligned with environmental and social responsibility.

DÉCOR & FLOWERS:

Wilted wedding flowers are not discarded; they are recycled into handcrafted incense sticks and cones, infused with jasmine oil and citrus wood, which can double as unique, meaningful favours for guests. Event spaces themselves are designed around natural light and airflow, reducing dependence on artificial lighting and cooling systems even during large-scale functions.



FOOD & CATERING:

Wedding menus follow the brand's SLOW philosophy (Seasonal, Local, Organic, Wholesome) drawing on produce from Roseate Farms and an in-house hydroponic herb and microgreen garden for freshness and traceability at its Delhi hotels -- The Roseate New Delhi and Roseate House New Delhi.

At UK properties, 95% of ingredients are sourced locally, significantly reducing the food-related carbon footprint of catering for large wedding parties.





WASTE REDUCTION & HOSPITALITY:

All properties have eliminated single-use plastic entirely. Guests are served in-house alkaline Aheli Water in glass bottles instead of disposable plastic ones, a simple but visible way to cut waste at a large gathering. Properties also maintain 100% water recycling, use biodegradable packaging for takeaway items, and provide bamboo-based amenities for guests staying overnight for the celebrations.



GIFTING & SOCIAL IMPACT:

For return gifts or welcome hampers, Roseate offers built-in sustainable options: T-shirts made from recycled plastic bottles, and artisan incense handcrafted by a rural women's community. These give couples a way to send guests home with something meaningful, sustainable, and rooted in social impact rather than a purely decorative memento.■



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Aarti Makker:

Less MAKEUP, MORE YOU

In conversation with Vows & Vacay, Aarti Makker, Business Owner, shares her perspective on changing bridal preferences, timeless makeup, skincare preparation and the trends set to shape the coming wedding seasons.

Gunjan Sabikhi



Q Having worked with brides over the years, what are the biggest changes you have seen in the way Indian brides approach makeup and beauty for their wedding celebrations?

A I think the biggest change I have seen is that today's Indian bride is far more informed and individualistic. Brides are no longer looking at makeup simply as a way to look "made up"; they want to look like the best version of themselves while still feeling their best versions with second skin look.

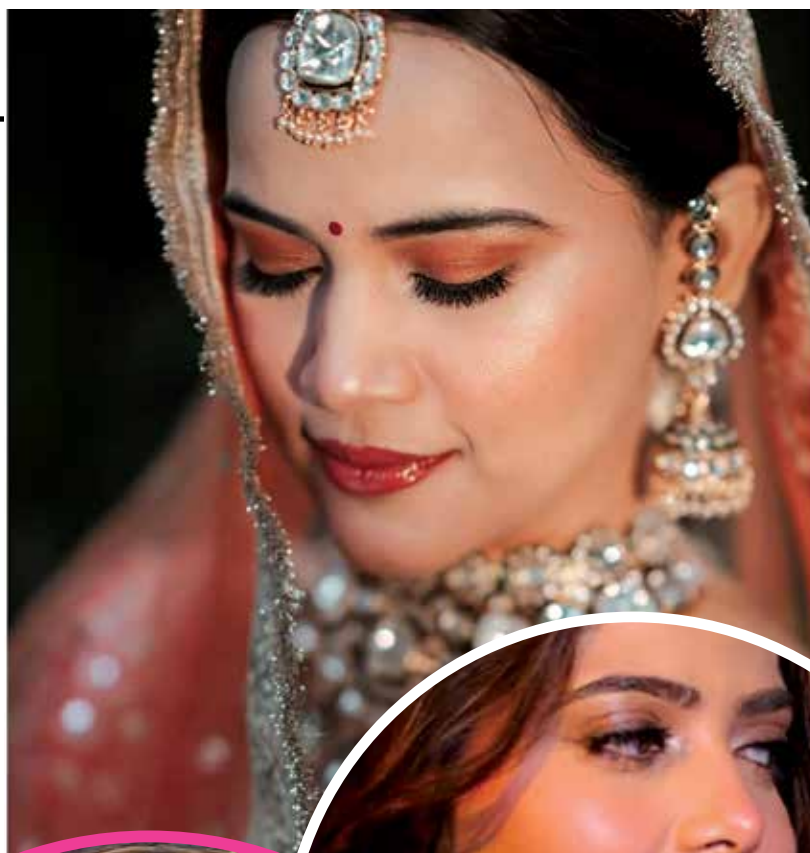
There is also a much stronger preference for skin that looks fresh, healthy and luminous rather than heavy, makeup. Brides are more open to experimenting with softer eyes, minimal or no lenses, and statement lips, depending on their personality. Most importantly, they want their makeup to complement their features.

Q With weddings becoming increasingly personalised and destination-led, how do you create bridal looks that complement the venue, outfits, weather and overall character of each celebration?

For me, every bridal look starts with understanding the bride and the story of her wedding. I look at the outfit, jewellery, colours, time of the ceremony, venue, lighting and weather, but I also consider the bride's personality and her vision for her big day.

A beach wedding in Goa, for example, calls for a very different approach from a winter wedding in Delhi or a grand indoor celebration. Humidity, heat and lighting can completely change how makeup behaves, so longevity and skin preparation become extremely important as per the weather.

I always aim for harmony rather than matching everything literally. The makeup should complement the outfit and surroundings while allowing the bride herself to remain the focus.



Q There is often a fine balance between following makeup trends and creating a look that remains timeless in wedding photographs. How do you approach this while working with a bride?

I believe trends should inspire a bridal look, but they should never dictate it. Wedding photographs are something a bride will look back at for decades, so I always ask myself whether a particular trend will still feel beautiful years from now.



I prefer incorporating trends subtly—perhaps through the texture of the skin, a particular lip colour, softer eye definition or a

modern blush placement—rather than creating a look that is completely trend-driven.

My philosophy is simple: enhance the bride's natural features, understand what photographs well, and then add a touch of what feels current. The result should feel modern today but timeless tomorrow.

Q What are some of the most common beauty or skincare mistakes brides make in the weeks leading up to their wedding, and what would you advise them to do differently?

One of the biggest mistakes brides make is experimenting too much just before the wedding. Trying a new facial, active skincare product, peel, treatment or even a new makeup product close to the wedding can sometimes lead to unexpected irritation or breakouts.

I always recommend consistency rather than experimentation. Brides should follow a simple skincare routine that works for their skin, stay well hydrated, get adequate sleep and avoid making drastic changes at the last minute.

Another important point is not to underestimate skin preparation. Beautiful makeup begins with

well-prepped skin, so I encourage my brides to start taking care of their skin well in advance rather than looking for a quick fix a few days before the wedding.

Q What bridal makeup trends do you see gaining prominence in 2026–27, and are there any trends that you feel brides should approach with caution?

I see bridal beauty moving further towards refined, effortless luxury—fresh, luminous skin, softly sculpted features, diffused eyes, beautifully defined brows and lips that feel sophisticated rather than overly heavy. Brides are also becoming more comfortable embracing their natural skin texture and choosing looks that photograph beautifully without looking excessively done.

I think personalised minimalism will continue to be a strong direction. It is not necessarily about wearing less makeup; it is about wearing the right makeup in the right places.

The trends I would approach with caution are anything that can overpower the bride's individual features—extremely heavy contouring, overly exaggerated lashes or brows, excessive glitter, and trends chosen simply because they are viral. Social media trends can look fantastic on a screen but may not necessarily translate into timeless bridal photographs.

Ultimately, bridal makeup should not make a bride look like someone else. It should make her look and feel like the most beautiful version of herself. ■

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Wyndham Garden
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Set against the serene Aravalli Hills, Wyndham Garden Udaipur brings together Rajasthan's palatial charm, expansive celebration spaces and warm hospitality. Spread across six acres, the 70-room retreat—with nine suites—offers couples everything from intimate pre-wedding settings to spectacular venues capable of hosting thousands of guests.

Priyanka Saxena Ray

There are few destinations that lend themselves to weddings quite like Udaipur. Its royal heritage, dramatic landscapes and unmistakable sense of romance have long made the city a favourite for celebrations. Adding another compelling address to its wedding landscape is Wyndham Garden Udaipur, located near Bhairavgarh Resort in Bhuwana, Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Spread across six acres, the heritage-inspired retreat blends Rajasthan's palatial character with the tranquillity of the Aravalli Hills. With 70 rooms, including nine suites, and an impressive 1,09,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor event space, the hotel has been designed to accommodate weddings and social functions of varying scales, alongside corporate conferences and offsites.

For wedding hosts, its greatest advantage is perhaps the diversity of spaces available. From colourful haldi and mehendi mornings and intimate sundowners to elaborate pheras, sangeet evenings and mega receptions, celebrations can move seamlessly from one distinctive setting to another.



‘AANGAN’ Intimate Celebrations under the open sky

For functions that call for warmth and intimacy, Aangan offers an inviting open-air setting surrounded by the peaceful charm of the Aravalli Hills. The venue is particularly suited to haldi, mehendi, welcome lunches and close-knit social gatherings, comfortably accommodating up to 160 guests in reception-style seating.

Its flexible dimensions and open layout allow couples and planners considerable creative freedom—whether that means floral mandaps, vibrant daytime décor or relaxed boho-inspired seating. By evening, the space can be beautifully illuminated for an atmospheric celebration beneath the sky. Aangan’s scale lends itself especially well to occasions where families can gather closely and every detail feels personal.

SURYA MAHAL Sophistication Indoors



For a glamorous sangeet night or cocktail celebration, there is Surya Mahal, a sophisticated indoor banquet venue spanning 3,950 sq. ft. and accommodating 125 guests.

Contemporary interiors accented with subtle royal influences give the venue an elegant, upscale character. Its fully controlled indoor environment allows lighting, sound and stage arrangements to be executed without external disruptions, while its flexible layout can adapt to different seating formats.

A well-planned pre-function area further enhances the guest experience and can be used for welcome receptions, hi-tea arrangements, networking or pre-event gatherings. While ideal for weddings and social celebrations, Surya Mahal is equally equipped for conferences and formal corporate events.



SURYA BAGH

Celebrating against the Aravallis

When the occasion demands something larger, Surya Bagh provides a magnificent outdoor canvas. Measuring 147 x 133 ft and covering 19,500 sq. ft., the lawn accommodates 700 guests in cluster seating, 1,600 in theatre format and 1,800 for a reception. Framed by the Aravalli Hills, it makes an impressive setting for wedding pheras, grand receptions and large outdoor gatherings. Its expansive dimensions allow for elaborate décor concepts, substantial stage installations and themed experiences without compromising the sense of openness.

Sunset ceremonies can make particularly striking use of the natural surroundings, while evening functions transform the venue into a celebration under the stars. Surya Bagh combines scenery, scale and grandeur in a setting designed for memorable occasions.

RATNAVALLI

FOR GRAND CELEBRATIONS

For couples dreaming of an extravagant, larger-than-life wedding, Ratnavalli is the property's largest and most magnificent venue.

With dimensions of 301 x 192 ft, the venue spans an enormous 57,800 sq. ft. and can accommodate 2,000 guests in cluster seating, 4,800 in theatre format and as many as 7,000 guests for a reception.

The sheer scale opens up possibilities for luxury weddings, mega receptions, concerts and large-scale corporate events. Multiple zones can be created for stages, dining, entertainment and customised guest experiences, allowing planners to conceptualise highly elaborate celebrations. Surrounded by natural beauty, Ratnavalli provides the scale and visual impact required for hosts who envision nothing less than spectacular.



ROOFTOP ROMANCE

For smaller celebrations with a view, the hotel's Rooftop Terrace brings a completely different mood. Overlooking the Aravalli Hills, the open-air setting is designed for intimate gatherings, cocktail evenings and sunset events.

The venue covers 800 sq. ft. and accommodates 200 guests, combining panoramic views with cool evening breezes, ambient lighting and an open sky. It works particularly well for a welcome cocktail, an intimate pre-wedding gathering or an evening celebration beneath the stars.

FLAVOURS FOR EVERY CELEBRATION

Food remains at the heart of any Indian wedding, and Wyndham Garden Udaipur's dining experiences extend beyond the events themselves.

The hotel's signature all-day dining restaurant, Kesar, celebrates Indian, Rajasthani and international cuisine through lavish buffet spreads, interactive live cooking stations and a carefully curated à la carte menu prepared using fresh ingredients.

Warm interiors are complemented by alfresco seating overlooking the picturesque Aravalli landscape, making Kesar an inviting option for breakfast, lunch, dinner and everything in between. For wedding groups, it also provides

an appealing space for guests to come together informally between celebrations.

By the pool, Surahi offers a more relaxed experience. Framed by tranquil waters and views of the Aravalli Hills, the poolside dining venue and bar is ideal for leisurely afternoons, sunset cocktails and unhurried evenings.

Its menu spans appetisers, grilled favourites and global comfort food alongside signature cocktails, premium spirits, wines and refreshing mocktails, all accompanied by attentive service and a laid-back ambience. For destination wedding guests, it offers the kind of easy-going setting where celebrations can continue even between the main events. ■



BIRYANI *Forever*



As wedding menus become increasingly global, featuring everything from sushi and dim sum to Mediterranean grills and artisanal desserts, one dish continues to command an unshakable place of pride — the biryani. Rich, aromatic and deeply celebratory, it remains a flavour that Indian weddings simply cannot do without.





At an Indian wedding, food is never merely part of the hospitality — it is often one of the most remembered elements of the celebration. Long after the flowers have been taken down and the music has faded, guests will still discuss the menu: the chaat that stole the show, the dessert counter that seemed endless, and invariably, the biryani that had everyone returning for another helping.

Over the years, wedding cuisine has undergone a remarkable transformation. Contemporary celebrations now offer elaborate culinary journeys spanning continents. Japanese sushi stations sit alongside Italian live counters, Thai curries compete with Middle Eastern mezze, and gourmet European dishes have become increasingly familiar at luxury weddings. Yet amid this exciting international spread, biryani has remained reassuringly constant.

Perhaps its enduring appeal lies in its ability to feel both luxurious and familiar. Few dishes possess the

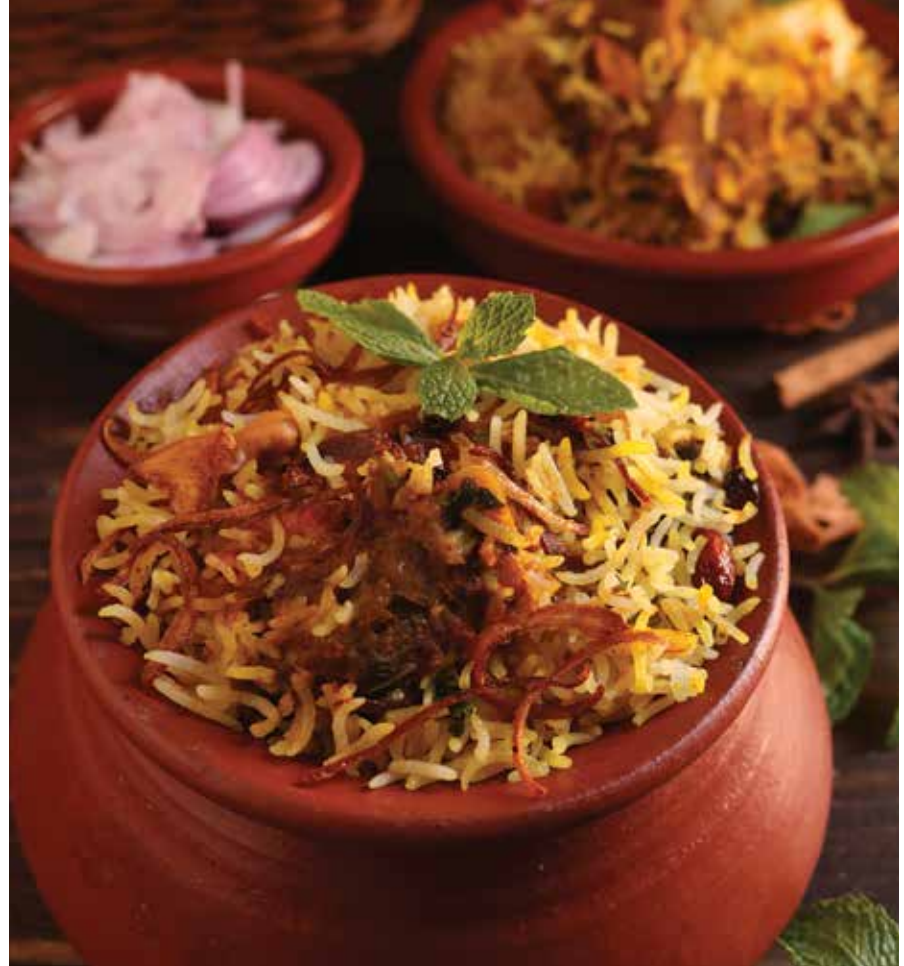


theatre of a perfectly prepared biryani — the moment the sealed handi is opened, releasing fragrant clouds of saffron, cardamom, rose water and slow-cooked spices. Each grain of rice carries flavour, while the layers beneath reveal tender meat, vegetables or aromatic accompaniments. It is a dish that announces celebration even before it reaches the plate.

Indian weddings also allow biryani to showcase its remarkable regional diversity. A delicate Lucknowi biryani may appeal to those who enjoy subtle flavours, while the robust Hyderabadi version brings intensity and spice. Kolkata biryani, with its distinctive potato and gentle aromatics, has its own loyal following, while Awadhi, Malabar and traditional dum preparations add further character to wedding menus. Vegetarian biryanis, too, have moved far beyond being an alternative and are now thoughtfully crafted centrepieces in their own right.

Alongside biryani, several Mughlai favourites have retained an equally cherished presence. Rich kebabs, succulent tikkas, kormas, nihari, galouti kebabs and creamy gravies continue to sit comfortably beside modern international cuisine. Their richness, slow-cooked complexity and unmistakably festive character make them particularly suited to grand wedding celebrations.

The beauty of biryani is also its universality. It works equally well at an intimate mehendi lunch, an elegant sangeet dinner or a lavish

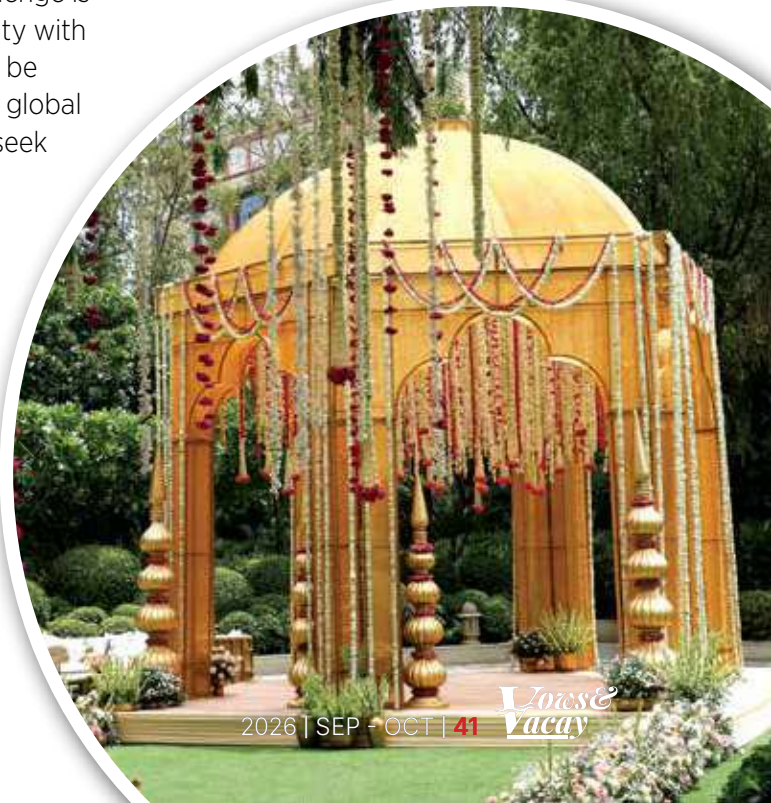


wedding reception. It can be presented traditionally in ornate handis, elevated through tableside service, or reinvented as individual portions for contemporary celebrations. However sophisticated the presentation becomes, its soul remains unchanged.

For families planning wedding menus today, the challenge is often to balance novelty with nostalgia. Guests may be delighted by inventive global cuisine, but they also seek flavours that feel connected to home, tradition and celebration. Biryani effortlessly bridges those worlds. Wedding food trends will continue to evolve, and new cuisines will undoubtedly find their way onto the Indian wedding

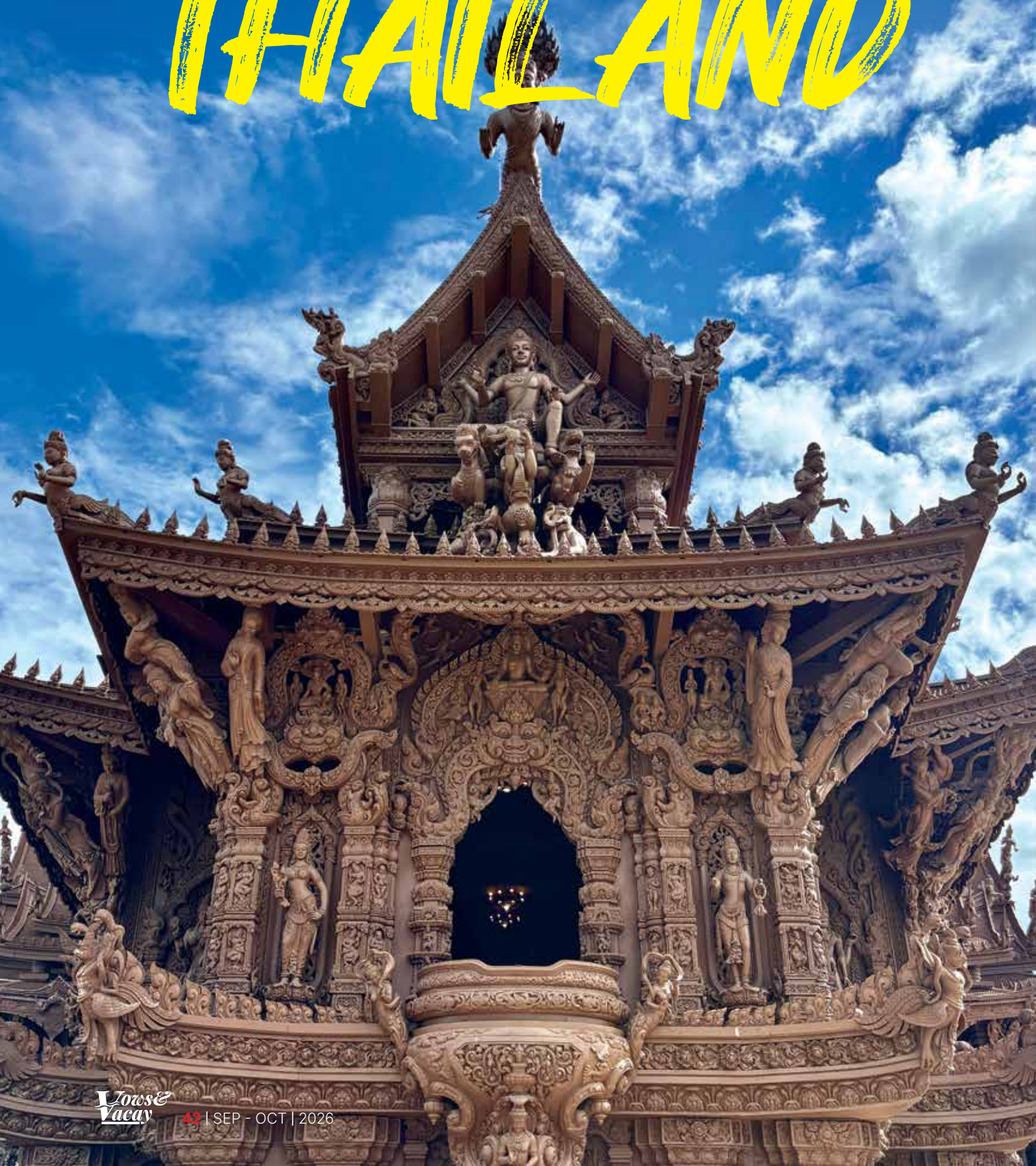
table. But some classics are simply too deeply woven into the celebration to disappear.

And when the festivities are in full swing and the dinner counters open, chances are there will still be a fragrant handi of biryani waiting — timeless, comforting and forever irresistible. ■



EXOTIC ESCAPES

THE MANY MOODS OF THAILAND



From vibrant Pattaya to the tropical beauty of Koh Samui and Koh Phangan, Thailand reveals a world of immersive experiences, soulful wellness, island escapes and heartfelt hospitality far beyond its bustling capital.

Somya Deep



PATTAYA city



There is an undeniable magic to embarking on your very first international journey. Leaving a midnight-cloaked city aboard a Thai Airways Boeing 777-300, my initial travel anxiety instantly melted into a serene chill. Settling into in-flight movies and authentic Thai cuisine, I caught my first glimpse of the celebrated hospitality that makes the ‘Land of Smiles’ a globally revered leisure destination.

PATTAYA: BEYOND THE SURFACE

Landing in Bangkok, I quickly secured a local SIM card (399 THB)—an essential first step for any modern traveller—before our group journeyed by road toward Pattaya.

Our destination was Sea Sand Sun Resort, nestled a



comfortable 90 minutes from Suvarnabhumi International Airport. Delegates for the Thailand Travel Mart Plus (TTM+) were already gathering along the



property's serene beachfront. We were warmly welcomed by an Indian staff member from Jharkhand, who guided us through the tropical property on a buggy. As a vegetarian, I was pleasantly surprised to find a thoughtful spread waiting at early breakfast—from pasta and chilled iced coffee (served with generous ice, just as the locals love) to vibrant, juicy fresh fruits.

The General Manager, Patitta Chinin Adinolfi, set an exceptional tone by personally taking photos with us. Down at The Horizon Seaview Restaurant, the staff went out of their way to spot vegetarian diners, curate tailored meals, and frame perfect golden-

hour photos against the crashing waves.

My real initiation into local flavours happened during our first official lunch, a fiery Papaya Salad (strictly for bold spice lovers!) and a plate of Mango Sticky Rice—a dish that won my heart at first bite. Thai courtesy is a tactile experience; the quiet, respectful grace of a folded-hands Sawasdee is woven into every interaction.

PATTAYA PROVED TO BE A VIBRANT CANVAS OF UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTERS:

- The Sanctuary of Truth: A breathtaking, hand-carved wooden monument constructed entirely without metal nails. Reflecting the shared heritage of Hinduism and Buddhism, intricate carvings of Lord Vishnu and Ganesha stand beside gable sculptures depicting parental love—pure, unselfish, and refreshing as a mountain stream.
- Pado Media Art Space: Pattaya's first immersive media exhibit. As a fan of floating lanterns, experiencing the lit-up Aurora and Wish room—where digital lanterns carry silent hopes—felt like stepping directly into a fairytale.
- Fairtex Muay Thai: A high-energy, beginner-friendly group session with

professional trainers that proved martial arts can be as family-friendly as it is exhilarating.

- Ripley's Believe It or Not!: A playful labyrinth of oddities, wax figures (including a photo-op with Miley Cyrus), interactive horror hospitals, and intriguing historical lore that keeps every age group guessing.
- Tappia Floating Restaurant: A short speedboat ride delivered us to a serene floating platform where guests can try their hand at squid fishing, meet resident friendly cats, and dine on the open water.

Wellness in Thailand is an art form. My first session at The Oasis Spa began with personalised health preference form and custom welcome drinks, culminating in deep relaxation followed by hot tea and Mango Sticky Rice.

KOH SAMUI & KOH PHANGAN: ISLAND MAGIC AND ECO-LUXURY

To venture further south, we boarded Bangkok Airways—Asia's boutique airline. A brief stop at their Suvarnabhumi lounge greeted us with Banana Sticky Rice and warm hospitality. Landing at Samui Airport feels less like arriving at a transit hub



and more like stepping into a lush, open-air tropical sanctuary.

Over a lunch featuring fragrant Pineapple Fried Rice, I learned how Koh Samui's roots remain deeply tied to its local fishing and farming communities.

While every property on our itinerary was exceptional, Conrad Koh Samui stole the show. Perched dramatically above the ocean, 15-year-old luxury estate features private pool villas overlooking endless blue. Small, thoughtful details defined the stay—a personalised, engraved room-key souvenir, an attentive staff member who instantly materialised with an umbrella when they noticed me struggling with the midday heat, and a culinary team serving exquisite Pad Thai. Though it hasn't hosted

an Indian wedding yet, its cliffside backdrop makes it an absolute dream venue for high-end celebrations.

A short hop away lies Koh Phangan and the hillside Panviman Resort. Recognised for its Hindi-speaking staff and striking views, the property offers accessible nature hikes ending in dramatic rocky viewpoints over the coast.

CULTURAL MARVELS AND FOREST SANCTUARIES

No island itinerary is complete without honouring local traditions and natural wonders:

- Big Buddha Temple (Wat Phra Yai): Situated on Koh



Fan, this striking 12-meter golden statue built in 1972 sits atop a 75-step staircase, surrounded by local markets and fascinating cultural customs—such as locals offering colourful soft drinks at sacred shrines.

- Hin Ta and Hin Yai: The famous 'Grandfather and Grandmother' granite rocks on Lamai Beach, steeped in local folklore about devotion and nature's timeless sculpture.
- Tamarind Springs Forest Spa: An unforgettable sanctuary where the 30-minute pre-treatment wait is part of the therapy. Guests drift between natural rock pools, forest showers, and herbal steam caves before enjoying healthy snacks prior to their massage.

We closed our island leg at The Sarann Resort, an intimate oceanfront escape on Chaweng Noi Beach designed to live up to its name—a place where all worries simply drift away. ■



Kashmir, Kehwa

and a Journey within



My first solo journey to Kashmir was more than an escape from the ordinary. Between serene Shikara rides, snow-covered peaks and the warmth of Kashmiri hospitality, it became a journey of discovery—of the destination, and of myself.

Shreya Shimpi

“East, West, South or North makes little difference. No matter what your destination, just be sure to make every journey a journey within. If you travel within, you’ll travel the whole wide world and beyond.”

— The Forty Rules of Love

I couldn't have thought of a better way to begin the story of my first solo sojourn. This quote perfectly encapsulates the thoughts I had as I embarked on my first solo adventure, with Kashmir as the backdrop. Having travelled a bit, it was now time to travel differently—to escape the ordinary, alone!

Ask me anything, but how did I find the place? How does one describe the swan-white mountains kissing the azure skies amidst a veil of foggy clouds? Or how the emerald valleys meet rivers that dance cheerfully among the boulders? It's ineffable! Perhaps the answer lies in my pictures and memories. My eyes and my smile reflect the happiness of a thousand splendid suns. This voyage made me realise that some journeys are meant to be explored twice—once through the eyes and once from within.

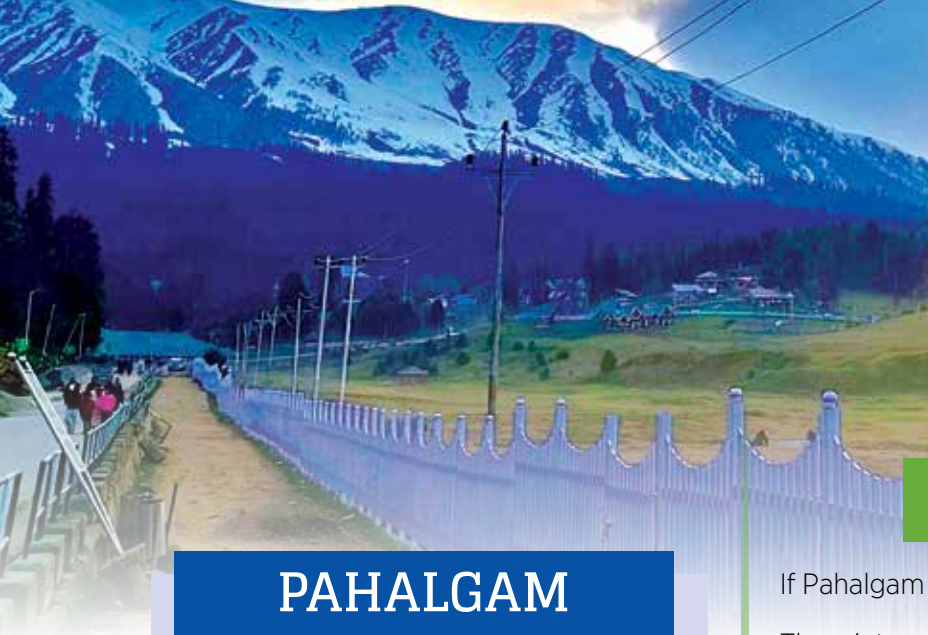


SRINAGAR

I experienced *Meraki*—the joy of small things—as my slow mornings unfolded cosily in a Shikara, sipping Kehwa over Dal Lake. The majestic Zabarwan and Pir Panjal ranges painted an idyllic landscape. The Mughal Gardens and the *Badamvaer* were a floral fairy tale, while *Pari Mahal* felt like Srinagar's undiscovered treasure.

The 240-step hike up to the Shankaracharya Temple rewarded me with magnificent panoramic views of Srinagar. I stayed at the 'Island Hotel' on Dal Lake. The enchanting view from the hotel, warm hospitality and strategic location of the property left me spellbound.





PAHALGAM

‘Faiz This Raah, Sarbasar Manzil’—the journey to Pahalgam itself is the destination in many ways.

Pahalgam greets you with postcard views as you drive past the melodious Lidder River. The meadows and snow-capped mountain ranges captivate your attention. My stay in Pahalgam was at ‘Pahalgam Days’. The heartfelt hospitality, stunning location and soulful food made Pahalgam even more special to me. The Aru Valley and Betaab Valley remain key attractions in this paradise, as Pahalgam heals and awaits a significant revival of tourism. I visited Pahalgam exactly a year after the unfortunate terrorist attack, and it felt safe. There are stringent security measures in place, and the valley and its people are keen to welcome tourists.



GULMARG

If Pahalgam is poetry, Gulmarg is transcendental.

The winter wonderland, home to Asia’s highest gondola, is a traveller’s Alpine dream come to life. The *Apharwat Peak* (14,000 feet) is a pristine, snowy retreat and a haven for adventure lovers. I was lucky enough to experience some snowfall at Phase 2 too—an unmissable experience.

The *Matarani Temple*, Strawberry Valley and the Golf Club are some picturesque places worth visiting. Through its peaks, valleys, vistas and scale, Gulmarg evokes feelings of happiness, awe, wonder, melancholy and humility—all at once.

“It’s not the place, it’s the people.”

Having experienced the exemplary hospitality of Kashmir during my last visit, my heart carried no doubts while revisiting the valley. It is safe and truly a paradise on earth—one that you need to experience for yourself.

‘I travel not to see places, but to see different versions of myself in those places.’

This trip was my pursuit of happiness, my quest for serenity and a test of my resilience. Did it overwhelm me? Did it scare me? No! It only made me happy to move beyond my comfort zone.

What’s the best travel souvenir I got from this trip?

The version of me that came back! ■



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Pure aloe vera gel can be refrigerated and applied in a thin layer to calm the skin after a long day. Its light texture makes it particularly suitable for humid weather, when heavy creams may feel uncomfortable.



ROSE WATER AS A REFRESHING MIST

A chilled rose-water spritz is one of the easiest ways to refresh the face during warm days. Use it between skincare steps or whenever the skin feels tired and overheated.



OATS FOR GENTLE EXFOLIATION

Finely ground oats mixed with plain yoghurt or water can make a mild face pack. It helps remove surface dullness without the harshness of abrasive scrubs, leaving the skin feeling soft and comfortable.



CUCUMBER FOR COOLING CARE

Chilled cucumber slices or freshly blended cucumber applied briefly to the skin can offer a cooling effect, particularly around tired-looking eyes after hectic wedding preparations.



HONEY FOR A HYDRATION BOOST

A thin layer of plain honey used occasionally as a short mask can help the skin feel supple and hydrated. Rinse well and always patch-test first.



HYDRATE FROM WITHIN

No beauty ritual can compensate for dehydration. Drink enough water, include seasonal fruits and vegetables, and limit excessive salty or sugary foods in the days before important functions.

Most importantly, avoid experimenting with aggressive home remedies such as lemon juice, baking soda or strong scrubs close to the wedding. Bridal skin benefits most from consistency, rest and gentle care. When the skin feels healthy and comfortable, that coveted wedding-day radiance tends to follow naturally. ■



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FOOD & BEVERAGE



Samaa



WELLNESS



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