

PRIVATE WEEKEND GETAWAYS: WHERE THE SWISH SET HAVE VACATION HOMES

TRAVEL + LEISURE

INDIA & SOUTH ASIA

AUGUST 2015/₹ 150

INDIA ON THE TABLE

• LUXE • TASTE • STYLE
• ART • MUSIC

AMALFI
SEYCHELLES
VENICE
COPENHAGEN

PERU
GENTLY
FOR FIRST
TIMERS

5

NEW MACHO
HOT RODS
& ROUTES



\$ 4.50 / S.R. 450 / NPR 35 / MYR 60
PKR 300 / BTN 200 / TAKA 330



Looking out at Mansagar Lake from the restored Jal Mahal, Jaipur.

AMV MANN

india de luxe

Ten of India's most stimulating artistic personalities offer T+L their glimpse into a vividly luxurious India.

BY SIDDHARTH DASGUPTA

The hypnotically insistent beats of an experimental dance track; the wild flourishes within a canvas of no fixed shape or form; the incisive depth of a camera as it pierces into its subject's soul; the suitably eclectic personae packed within a performer's suitcase... these are just some of the seemingly disparate threads that are slowly coming together to form a new portrait of India. And they're being strung together by an imaginative, motley crew of creative souls bred and nourished by this land.

We're talking entrepreneurs, musicians, photographers, writers, artists, and entertainment impresarios, who find themselves at home anywhere in the world and yet are rooted to a philosophy called India. Through each creative endeavour of theirs, this collective is discovering another layer, another texture to the fabric of the soil, one graced with a sufficiently lavish dose of luxury.

Theirs is an India unfettered by misgivings of the past and trepidations about the future. Theirs is an India disdainful of old geographical battles and the West's general misconceptions. Theirs is an India dripping in style and brimming with a swagger that is as rare as it is adamant. Perhaps most compellingly, theirs is an India blessed with an uncommon interpretation of luxury as seen in some of the most luxurious palace resorts, boutique beach hideaways, clandestine mountain detours, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences to be found anywhere in the world.

Some of the people featured here are veterans at cultivating their craft through that fickle beast called inspiration while others are lauded new talents keen on leaving their mark on the global map, but all of them adhere to a stylish mantra for life. T+L takes you through some of their adventures and experiences played out across some stunning addresses. This is their India. These are their stories.



LUXURY WITH A DECIDEDLY ARTISTIC FLOURISH

MAHESH MATHAI

AD GURU/DIRECTOR OF HIGHLIGHT FILMS/FOUNDING PARTNER AT BLUE FROG

The smell of spices waft through from the warehouses conjuring up images from *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Walking along the narrow lanes of Mattanchery we were greeted by exotic whimsical wall art that blends Western and Indian classical kitsch.

These were the first signs of the treasures that awaited us at the Kochi Muziris Biennale, an international exhibition of contemporary art—in its second edition. The wonderful old structures of Fort Kochi like Aspinwal House, David Hall, and Pepper House, during this time come alive with performance art, film, installation, painting, sculpture and new media. The sleepy old town feels like a culturally vibrant international hub with Indian and international artists and visitors rubbing shoulders between the exhibits in very unique surroundings. Bose Krishnamachari and Riyas Komu can be seen hobnobbing with visitors, artists, gallerists and dignitaries. They are both eminent artists, and both from Kerala, and are the directorial and guiding force behind the Biennale.

The change in Fort Kochi from the time the Biennale came here is wonderful. From a place that had little more to claim than Chinese fishing nets, spice warehouses, and Jewish Synagogue, it now boasts galleries, artisanal craft shops, cafes and restaurants with all manner of international fare, bars on the waterfront, wonderful local cuisine and hotels to suit every kind of traveller.

The 16-room, waterfront Kandari Harbour is a fine example of international design meeting local architecture. Built in an old warehouse that has been beautifully repurposed it has all the luxuries a discerning traveller would want, especially a restaurant with a menu that combines the best of local and European tastes. At the start of Mattancherry, it is a walk away from all of Fort Kochi, the galleries and eating places. Willingdon Island and Ernakulam are minutes across the water. During the festival, we took the boat to get to the closing ceremony of the Biennale at the Durbar Hall. We definitely will be back for the next edition of the Kochi Muziris Biennale.

