

Beatific & Bespoke

Looking at luxury travel anew

The travel and hospitality industry in India is offering guests a chance to indulge in bespoke high-end experiences - a realm where global outreach meets local know-how and superior service

By: Megha Sharma



Picture: Vivanta by Taj, Holiday Village, Goa

The essence of exclusivity in travel lies not in creating a lavish version of an otherwise commonplace experience, but in rendering a highly-personalised edition of an inimitable encounter with life, which was rare to begin with.

With ever-changing definitions translating the concept of 'luxury' into something with a much wider ambit of interpretation, the hospitality industry is now undertaking an even more imaginative approach towards crafting packages and itineraries wherein all activities included are entirely adaptable to the specific needs of the guests – be it personal tempo, passion, hobbies or family.

Here are a few veritable offerings that impress owing to their sheer detailing towards creating a perfect escape from all things chaotic.

Vivacious Vivanta

Vivanta by Taj Hotels Palaces & Resorts comprises stylishly sophisticated properties, which bring together the best of contemporary luxury with the inimitability of Taj hospitality.

Lending remarkable form to the thought behind the concept of 'bespoke' is Vivanta's 'Renewal of Vows - Never Ending 1 Dos' package. A bouquet of seven eclectic packages spread across seven elite addresses, with serenely opulent ceremonies, bespoke dining where three's a crowd, painstakingly curated adventures for the couple and signature wellness rituals at the award-winning Jiva Spa, each Renewal of Vows experience is like a glorified memoir, meant to be narrated over and over again.

The divine spirituality of Bekal, Kerala; The magical revelry of a living rainforest at Madikeri, Coorg; The sweeping spirit of the mighty Bay of Bengal at Fisherman's Cove, Chennai; The sparkling sands of Fort Aguada or Holiday Village in Goa; The shimmering azure of Coral Reef, Maldives; The rich and vibrant heritage of Surajkund - a multi-hued range of canvases are on offer for you to choose from and paint your own personalised-to-the-last-detail dream sequence.



Picture: Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa

Pristine Park Hyatt

Nestled along the peacefully beautiful Arossim beach, Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa wonderfully captures the heritage, spirit and architectural ethos of Goa. Verdant tropical greens and lush flora make it the idyllic location for a romantic rendezvous. Offering a range of bespoke services and packages that cater to all your needs and tastes, Park Hyatt Goa is an oasis of opulent relaxation.

"With an increasingly well-travelled audience looking at travel for personal enrichment, it is essential to offer guests bespoke services. At Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa it is our constant endeavour to provide our guests authentic hospitality with services that are true to the Park Hyatt brand," says Thomas Abraham, General Manager, Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa.

Of the many tantalising packages available, 'Romance at the Park' deserves a special mention. Whether it is your honeymoon, an anniversary, a vow renewal or just an intimate occasion, which you seek to celebrate – this couples' package is sure to render it extra special.

Pamper your palate with scrumptious daily breakfast and dinner from the kitchens of chefs par excellence; indulge in a fragrant petal bath to enliven your



Thomas Abraham
General Manager, Park
Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa

senses; give in to a 60 minutes-long lavish couples' treatment of your choosing at the renowned Sereno Spa and enjoy being surrounded by utter comfort as luxury cars transfer you from one destination to another. In a sinfully decadent sign-off, a box of chocolates helps sweeten the agony of bidding adieu to such bliss.

Splendid Samode Palace

Combining the finest features of Indian and Mughal architectural styles - the 475-year-old Samode Palace has been meticulously restored in order to retain its distinctive regal appeal.

'Affairs of the heart' demand special



Picture: Samode Safari Lodge, Bandhavgarh



Picture: Detoxify at Niraamaya Retreats



Picture: Samode Safari Lodge, Bandhavgarh



Manu Rishi Guptha
CEO, Niraamaya Retreats

attention and dedicated care, and no one seems to understand it better than the courteous staff at the magnificent Samode Palace in Jaipur. Lose yourself in bougainvillea covered courtyards and quaint staircases, or lounge in charming spaces that come replete with stunning arches and exquisitely painted walls and ceilings.

Pamper yourself and your better half in the gorgeous Royal Suite, bathed in warm light of scented candles amid

rose petals and sensuous incense. Enjoy bespoke meals in the comfort of your room or private courtyard or by the poolside. Take pleasure in a breathtakingly romantic candle-lit dinner at an exclusive location, and then take home the memories in the form of a special souvenir.

K.P. Singh, Director, Sales & Marketing of Samode Hotels opines, "In today's world where travellers have plenty of options of destinations and hotels, it is essential to create a unique or distinct memory and experience for travellers, so as to stand out and be different."

Nirvana at Niraamaya

A slice of paradise in God's own country, Niraamaya Retreats offer exceptional experiences, which take guests far from the madding crowds. Niraamaya's award-winning Surya Samudra at Kovalam is a heritage property, which not only boasts a fabulous location with verdant greenery on one side and the Arabian Sea on the other, but also a state of the art spa,

which has acquired global acclaim.

The property has 31 heritage cottages, built in the likeness of traditional Keralite homes, with the rooms exhibiting a fine balance of old world charm and modern comfort.

On offer here are packages that are a convergence of therapeutic rituals and an abundantly relaxing retreat. Guests can combine their holiday with a bespoke wellness package or an intensive detoxification program for thorough rejuvenation. The therapists at Surya Samudra's spa have mastered Ayurveda and are trained in Yoga, authentic Thai and Western relaxation techniques and traditional Asian therapies.

"Since time immemorial, people yearn for a place that brings the body and mind into balance and rids them of all accumulated worries. That is exactly what Niraamaya's philosophy is all about. It brings in the concept of customised wellness holidays, which can be altered according to the requirements of the guests," says Manu Rishi Guptha, CEO, Niraamaya Retreats.



Picture: La Villa, Pondicherry



Picture: Niraamaya Retreat, Kovalam



Picture: Fragrant Nature Resort, Kerala

Luminous La Villa

An intimate haven located in the old town of the former French colony of Pondicherry, rich with heritage of its colonial architecture, the newly opened La Villa is a refurbished 19th century manor where history seamlessly merges with contemporary amenities and style.

All exclusive, with only six splendid suites, a swimming pool and a restaurant – La Villa is steeped deeply in its Pondicherian past. The magnificent ground floor of the property retains the original walls of the manor, with the entrance displaying use of handmade tiles sourced from the villages of Tamil Nadu. The property's native ethos are carefully preserved through ample use of local craftsmanship.

Also available to be booked in entirety for private use, each stay at La Villa promises to deliver a bespoke experience like no other. The poetic intimacy and non-ostentatious luxury of this lovely villa hotel distinguishes it from hordes of others that do not live upto the claims they make.

Fabulous Fragrant Nature Resort

A RARE property, the Fragrant Nature Resort is one of the only two Small Leading Hotels in the World situated in the backwaters of charismatic Kerala. With 29 opulent options for accommodation, the resort stands besides the breathtakingly beautiful Mala Lake near Paravur in Kollam district.

With amenities such as a renowned spa, pool, Jacuzzi, fitness centre and recreation area for indoor games – Fragrant Nature Resort also offers a horde of activities that can be customised as per individual specifications.

Take your pick from tailor-made Ayurveda rituals; visit to cashew and coir factories, to villages where cooking demos are carried out in the homes of the locals; romantic candle-lit dinners and backwater cruises. With a pedal boat at your disposal, Fragrant Nature Resort has all that it takes to deliver that 'just right' personalised holiday.

Sowmya Vijaymohan, Co-Director of RARE aptly sums it up, "An evolved traveller has exacting needs and has been



Sowmya Vijaymohan
Co-Director, RARE

gravitating towards a more experiential holiday. RARE has been promoting bespoke travel experiences in India for the last 10 years, and has seen this market mature to stand at par with the rest of the world. Properties like Fragrant Nature Resort focus on rich customisation and attention to detail that go far beyond cuisine and activities within the property, while also leveraging their local connections to provide a truly bespoke experience in that destination." **SWT**