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INDIAN EDITION

India Special

The country like you've never seen it before

The new
New Delhi

DISCOVER THE
CAPITAL'S HIP AVATAR

Amitav Ghosh
TAKES THE ROAD TO
SHANGRI-LA

Ruskin Bond
ON A LIFETIME
OF TRAVEL

30
STYLISH
ECO RESORTS

FROM KASHMIR TO KERALA

In search of

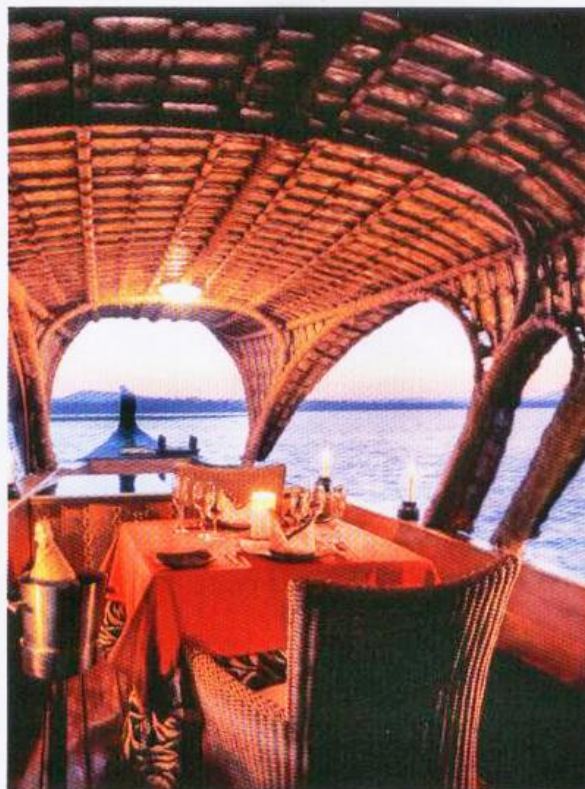
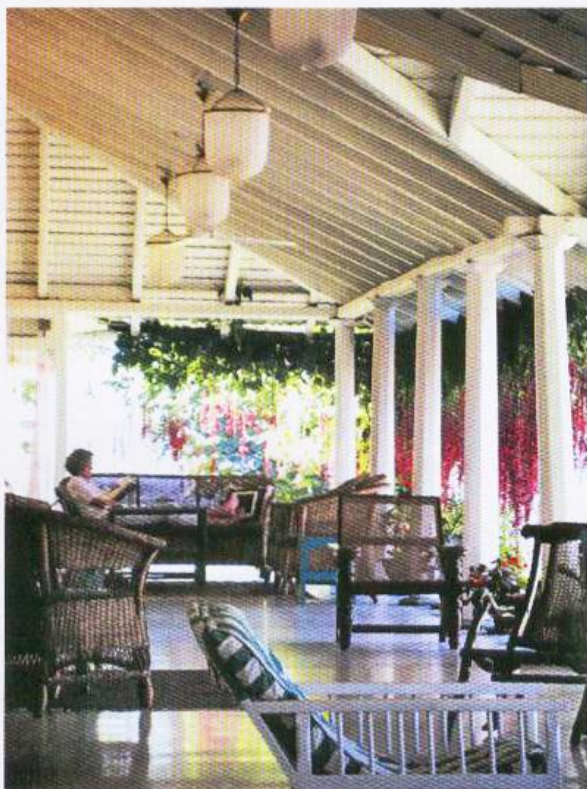
BUDDHA

Jeet Thayil seeks poetry in Bihar

HARI KUNZRU ★ FREIDA PINTO ★ CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN ★ TINA AMBANI

Lisa Haydon at the
36,000 sq ft central
reflection pool at
The Oberoi, Gurgaon

Where to stay



Glenburn Tea Estate's welfare trust sponsors primary education in nearby schools and supports local communities

GLENBURN TEA ESTATE Darjeeling, West Bengal

What makes it great It's a restored, working colonial-era tea plantation set against a stunning Himalayan backdrop.

What makes it green Owners Husna Tara and Anshuman Prakash grow fresh herbs, vegetables and fruit, and create menus using local ingredients. The estate's Glenburn Workers Welfare Trust sponsors primary education in three nearby schools, facilitates traditional performing arts and supports local communities in seven villages. Guest activities focus on outdoor pursuits like hiking, bird-watching and angling. (0983 007 0213; www.glenburnteaestate.com) Doubles from ₹22,000

STOK PALACE Ladakh

What makes it great Stay at a 186-year-old Ladakhi palace in the company of true-blue royalty.

What makes it green Built in 1825, every detail of the Stok Palace is handcrafted by local artisans, from the rugs to the brightly painted woodwork. The palace and museum,

owned by Ladakh's King Jigmed Wangchuk Namgyal, displays family treasures like the Ladakhi queen mother's ancient turquoise-and-gold crown and a collection of thangka (Tibetan silk paintings). The king is also involved in using part of the hotel's revenue for the restoration of monasteries in Ladakh. (0198 224 2010) Doubles from ₹11,500

ORANGE COUNTY RESORT Kabini, Karnataka

What makes it great Experience traditional South Indian culture amidst low-key luxury.

What makes it green Owner Cherian Ramapuram built this resort according to the principles of responsible tourism. Waste water is treated for use in its gardens, efficient lighting systems ensure energy saving, and food and kitchen waste is used in its biogas plant. Tribal culture is showcased through ethnic cuisine, interactive storytelling sessions, a slow cruise down the Cauvery on a coracle, and evening performances of traditional tribal dance forms. (0822 826 9100; www.orangecounty.in) Doubles from ₹23,000

Above left: The verandah at Glenburn Tea Estate's Burra Bungalow. **Above right:** One of Orange County Resort's traditional houseboats

THE MALABAR HOUSE Kochi

What makes it great With its turquoise walls and much-loved chocolate samosas, this cool 17-room mansion has managed to preserve its heritage while bringing contemporary style to Fort Kochi.

What makes it green The first Indian property to obtain the international Green Globe 21 Certificate, its owners Joerg Drechsel and Tzuku conserve local heritage and promote the revival of art forms, positioning Kerala as a bridge between the East and West. The restaurant serves delectable, sustainably-sourced seafood, and from the spa to the bathrooms, all materials are natural and eco-friendly. (0484 221 6666; www.malabarhouse.com) Doubles from ₹13,800



SHAAM-E-SARHAD **VILLAGE RESORT** Bhuj, Gujarat

What makes it great Stay in a bhunga, or mud hut, and experience the richness of Kutchi culture at this resort bordering the Rann of Kutch.

What makes it green Shaam-e-Sarhad Village Resort has been set up in Hodka village as part of its Endogenous Tourism project, which helps promote local culture and craft-based tourism. The eco-friendly resort, built entirely by locals, has 12 rooms decorated in traditional mirrorwork and embroidery. The project has also improved employment opportunities by encouraging locals to work as guides and sell their crafts at the resort. (0280 329 6222; www.hodka.in) Doubles from ₹3,200



INDECO HOTEL **SWAMIMALAI** Tamil Nadu

What makes it great Sample Tamil art at this heritage hotel, which also houses a museum of local artefacts.

What makes it green This eco-friendly heritage hotel is a result of the restoration of an entire 19th century Tanjore village. The INDeco Hotel Swamimalai has 30 suites, each designed in indigenous ethnic style. In addition, this vegetarian hotel employs only local people. (044 2498 4114; www.indecohotels.com) Doubles from ₹4,800