

Because Wellness Matters

GLOBAL SPA

VOLUME I. ISSUE 8 SEPTEMBER DIGITAL EDITION

Ananya Birla A SENSATION

Adapting
to the
New
Normal
ROUND
THE
CLOCK
SKINCARE

Transformation of Wellness



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There's a French iteration 'Jamais Vu' that signifies the "never seen". The opposite of Deja Vu. One that should feel familiar, but isn't. That's what it feels like today. A familiar unfamiliarity. Amidst the lockdown gradually lifting, life is at last blooming into normalcy, but it's all new and uncertain. While we roll out our September issue, we keep the same feeling in mind and wish to reach out to our readers with fresh perspectives on beauty, wellness, and lifestyle for days to come.

The longing to pack your bags first thing and fly off to another destination is slowly becoming a reality with some destinations opening doors with protocols. Tick off all your travel urges with our pick of fine destinations - from the traditionally eclectic South Korea to the City of Gold, Dubai. Further, your favourite bloggers across India let us in on their lockdown diaries as they unravel how they stuck to their best self and beyond dealing with the blues.

Gracing our cover with her sheer glory of a rising musician, popstar Ananya Birla shares with us not just her own emotions on success, life philosophies and new creations over the years, but also how music continues to bring all together as one.

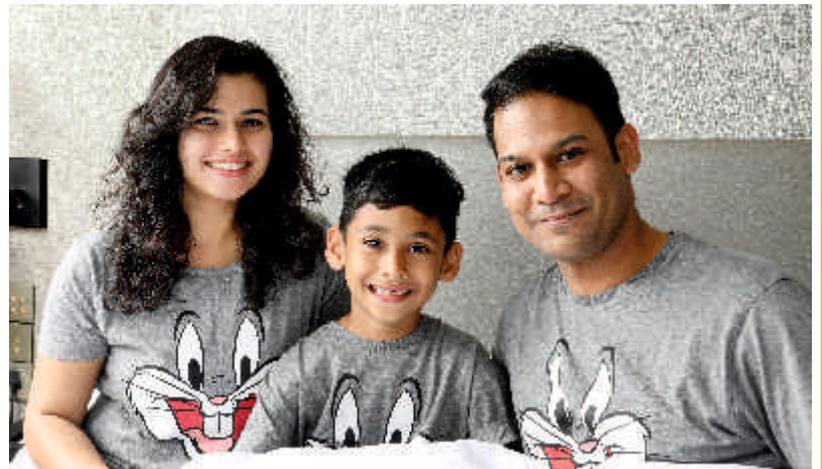
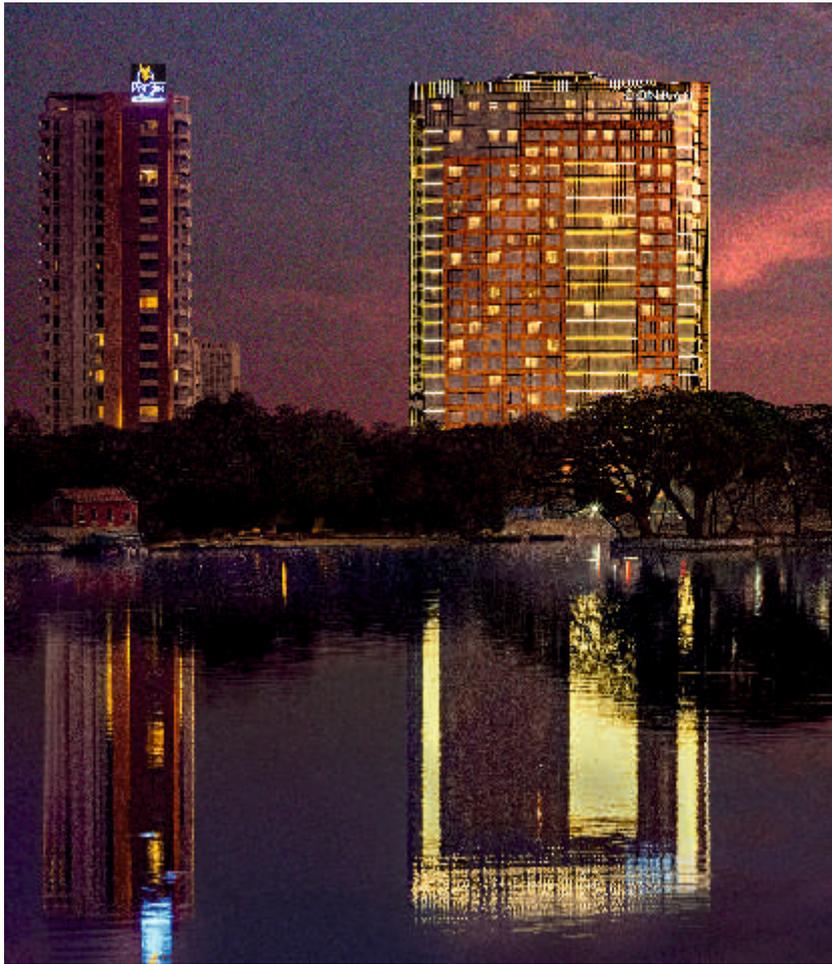
There's only so much more you can work on while life gets back on track. Luckily, we've made the vanity part easier for you. Flip through our pages and discover a round-the-clock skincare guide and how to look perfectly gym ready with MAC. Treating that little chef inside of you, try our healthy dessert recipes we've carefully crafted for the ones who simply can't resist the irresistible and don't want to feel guilty.

At last, we delve into the nature of what's the "new normal" wherein wellness could very well be transformed into a whole new dimension!

While we welcome the eager fall, let's give ourselves our own spring now - our very own blooming beginning.

Stay safe and stay healthy.

Parineeta Sethi
Chief Editor



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It's not common that you see someone dropping out of Oxford overnight because their passion for music runs deeper. Singer Ananya Birla dared to. Driven by her discipline, hard work, and an edging grit to pursue music, the Platinum singer today defines what it means to never give up on your dreams, no matter how far away they may seem.



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Sneha is a hotelier, creative stylist, and a body positivity activist. With a focus on balanced living, self-love and wellbeing, her instagram @kisslifehello gives insights that aim to empower and inspire you to take care of yourself through daily practices that support mind, body and spirit.



Smriti Notani

A Bombay based writer, blogger, and podcaster; Smriti Notani is a big believer in keeping it real. She spreads the message of self-love, advocates for feminism, and normalizes mental health conversations through her blog, Real Girl and podcast, Real Talk With Smriti Notani.



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Rupali Dean

Awarded as the 'Best food writer in the country' by the Indian culinary forum, WACS and the ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean is a familiar name in Travel & Food writing. Being a trained hospitality professional, a nutritionist, and a chef, gives her an edge over any other food and travel writer.



Madhulika Dash

Madhulika Dash is a seasoned writer and food columnist. Known for her food etymology stories, this former food manager of MasterChef India 4 is also into curating Chefs' Retreat and thematic curated tables under the title of Shepherd's Table and Time Travel.

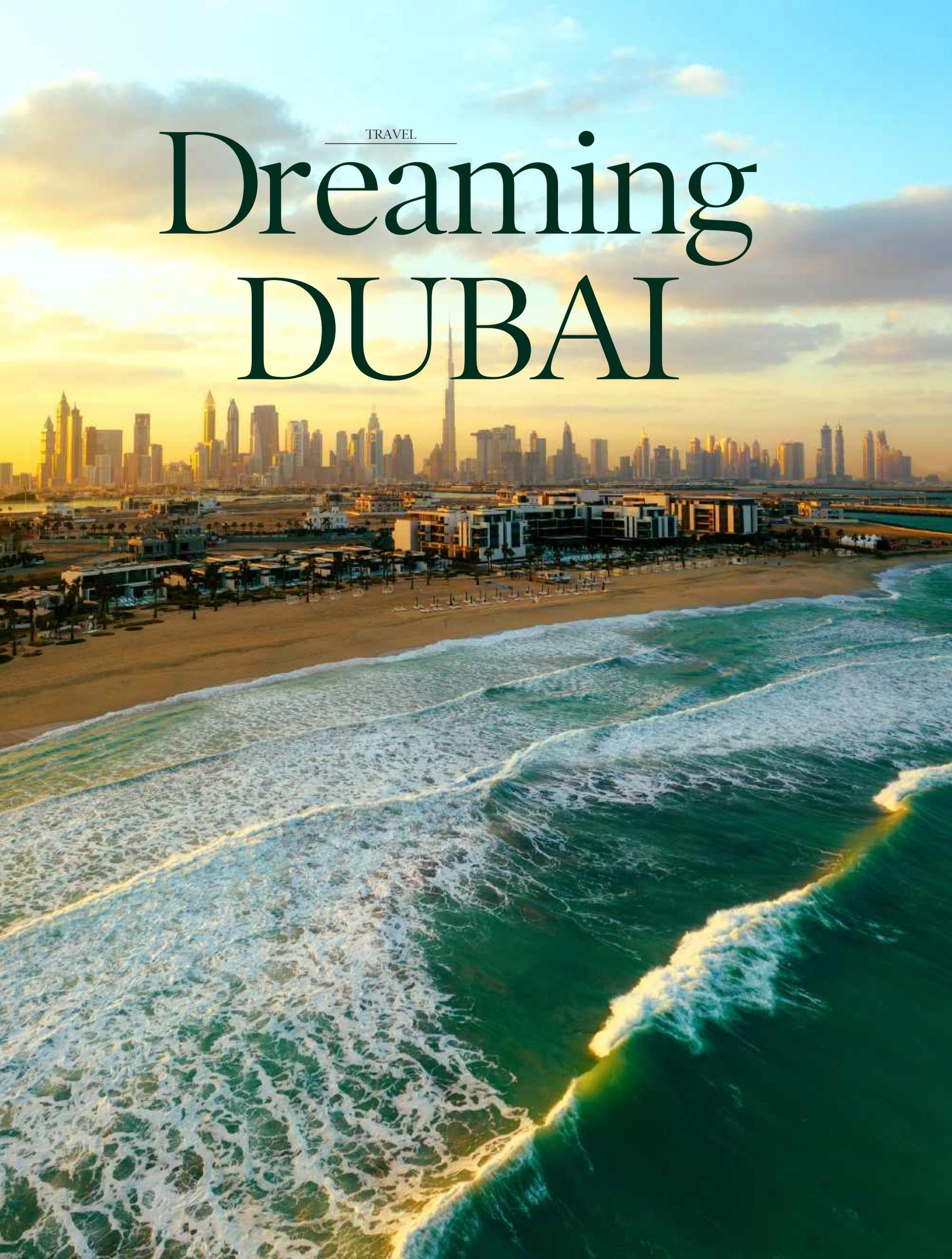


Andrew Jacka

Been involved in the Hospitality industry for almost 40 years, Andrew is the Director at Spa Origins Co., Ltd. A passionate believer in sharing knowledge, he is a sought after speaker, both as an industry educator, and as a passionate ambassador of the Asian spa industry. He has been actively involved in spa industry associations and events.

TRAVEL

Dreaming DUBAI



IT'S THE CITY OF GOLD, LIVING UP TO ITS NAME. NOT ONLY LITERALLY, BUT WITH ITS ABUNDANCE OF RENOWNED STRUCTURES, ENDLESSLY EVOLVING MALLS, AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER UNIQUE ACTIVITIES ONE GETS TO CHOOSE FROM. A CITY PERFECT TO OPEN DOORS FOR YOUR WANDERLUST, DUBAI IS THE PERFECT PLACE TO HEAD TO POST THE SKIES OPENING UP.

By **Parineeta Sethi**

The perils of lockdown are finally beginning to fade out. As countries all across the world are getting ready to initiate travel as per set rules and regulations, I am day dreaming about my favorite city and can't wait to pack my bags and head to Dubai as soon as it is possible. It has always been my go-to city and I never failed to visit at least 4 to 5 times a year.

Dubai tops many a people's top list including mine for several reasons:

SHOPPER'S PARADISE

There's new Dubai, and then there's Old Dubai. Explore the finest of the latter at Grand Souk Deira - one of the oldest and most fascinating traditional markets in the emirate. Whether you are just browsing or genuinely on the hunt for something pure, walk through the glittering Gold Souk to find designs in a variety of carats. You never need to worry about authenticity since the market is carefully regulated by the Dubai government. In addition to gold, look out for diamond-encrusted ornaments, strings of pearls, platinum, and silver. There is something for everyone.

The most popular malls in Dubai are Dubai Mall and the Mall of Emirates and any tourist visiting Dubai surely goes to shop at these 2 big malls. Though these malls are always on my list, I also like to shop at Festival City and City Center Mirdif.

A visit to the Mall of the Emirates is a must on any trip to Dubai. Home to a ski slope, cinema complex and 560 shops and boutiques, it offers fun attractions such as Magic Planet, VOX Cinemas and Ski Dubai. Besides the plethora of shopping options right



from the top brands to the mid-level and local brands, Mall of Emirates has the best of eating places to relax and enjoy a leisurely meal as well.

Next, you'd be thrilled to visit The Dubai Mall. The world's largest destination for shopping, entertainment and leisure, the mall features The Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo, the Olympic-sized Dubai Ice Rink, children's 'edutainment' concept Kidzania, and a massive indoor cinema complex. It's the ultimate family entertainment destination! A must not miss is the fountain show in the evenings.

Dubai Festival City has all the well-known brands housed in it but it is much less crowded than the tourist faves like MOE and Dubai mall. With a huge Ikea store in the vicinity you can literally spend a full day shopping and dining. This is a mall I frequently visit when in Dubai.

BLISS AT THE BEACH

Who says Dubai is all about the hot? Stake down that parasol, sip on lush martinis, bathe under the sun, or splash around at the city's whitest beaches.

Also known as Umm Suqeim Beach, Sunset Beach is the perfect





spot to relax with the sun, sand and Burj Al Arab in the background. One of the quieter ones, you could go for morning jogs and strolls and watch the sunset across the Arabian Gulf.

At Kite Beach, it's all about flying kites, and getting some active-me going. Throw in beach volleyball or try your balance at stand-up, paddle-boarding, and kayaking. There are plenty of non-aqua activities as well - a skatepark, an outdoor trampoline, and a toddler-friendly area. Post-swim, make your way to one of the many beachside cafes for a yummy bite.

The Black Palace Beach is another spot that catches the eye. Thanks to its location next to one of Dubai's royal residences, you're easy to discover an untouched shoreline flaunting views of Palm Jumeirah and Burj Al Arab in the distance. While there are no facilities at this beach, it's a great place to simply escape the rush and unwind.

FITNESS AND REJUVENATION WITH FRENZY FUN

Whether you need a break from the daily grind or want to go back to one, you deserve to restore and rejuvenate. A health club, spa, and pool in the world's tallest building, The Burj Club at Burj Khalifa is the hottest option with a gym complex, serene spa, and rooftop dining all.

Stealing stunning views from the building, you could opt a high-powered work-out, a day by the pool, or a light catch-up with your friends! The Burj Club Gym combines fitness sessions with spa treatments as well as tailored diet programs, turning your fitness journey as easy as possible. Post-routine, head over to the Rooftop Burj Club and enjoy the club's international menu. Whole roast chickens are always on offer along with a build-your-own style hot mezze station. Talk about healthy deliciousness.

Dubai has some of the most luxurious spas in the world besides the Spa at The Burj Khalifa. Some definitely worth trying on your next trip to Dubai are The Talise Spa at the Madinat Jumeriah, The Talise Ottoman spa at the Zabeel Sarai Jumeriah, The Armani Spa, The Anantara Spa at the Palm Dubai, and the Spa at The Palazzo Versace Dubai

TASTE OF DUBAI

From quaint little coffee shops and local street delis to their striking and eloquent restaurants, Dubai's food scene is one for the books.

Tucked away in Al Seef is the trend-hitting The Brass, boasting one of the most extensive coffee menus you would find in the city. They never fail to impress with original blends like lavender honey latte, cinnamon-infused elixirs, and a dairy-free coconut latte. Wild & The Moon is another





laidback hub that attracts the creative in Alserkal Avenue. They specialise in raw, vegan, and earth-to-table cuisine. Flow, Jones the Grover, and Craft Cafe are some of the many other amongst the warm palette of Dubai's cafes.

A plethora of international cuisines too await in Dubai. Kaleidoscope serves international cuisine from the likes of Arabic, Indian, Mediterranean and other various culinary specialties. The al fresco dining here offers serene views of the surrounding gardens - perfect for the cooler months. Karachi Darbar Feast plates delicious Pakistani, Indian and Chinese cuisine for the past 40 years since 1973. The latest addition to the city's thriving culinary scene, Indochine, is the first to explore exotic French-Vietnamese offerings. Signature dishes such as Vietnamese ravioli as well as inventive new creations such as special steamed sea bream are widely loved and a must-try.

ADVENTURES OF MIDDLE EAST

There may be no better way to discover Dubai than with Arabian Adventures. With more than 63 options, get ready to devour the city's landscapes encompassing everything from the sands to the skyline to the dunes.

The Desert Safari experience takes you on a ride through the dunes with an authentic Arabic dinner to indulge in afterwards. Tour the Jumeirah Mosque or soak in the views from the top of Burj Khalifa. How about you sailing along the coast with their Dhow Cruise excursion? With Arabian Adventures, you get to choose exactly the kind of experience you wish to have.

Grounded yet exhilarating, Mountain Town Hatta is an emerging hotspot. Multiple trails for beginner to advanced level riders have been set up by the Hatta Mountain Bike Trail Centre here, spanning across 52kms. The trails are free to ride and are self-guided with clear markers. A must visit here is the Hatta Dam, one of the largest water bodies in Hatta.

Once the night falls, simply pitch up a tent and sleep under stars at the Hatta Campsite. You can cook up a feast in the barbecue area or stroll down to the food trucks at the Hatta Wadi Hub. For a more luxurious stay, you could book a stay at the Hatta Damani Lodges or Hatta Sedr Trailers, both providing chic accommodation in the mountains.

SKYDIVING IN DUBAI

This is a new addition to the attractions in Dubai and an ab-

solute must try for the ones who have an adventure streak. The most exhilarating experience of freedom engulfs you when you are floating in the sky 13,000 feet above in the sky. An adrenaline rush like no other. The Palm drop zone gives you a stunning view of Dubai including the iconic palm Jumeirah and the desert drop zone which is 35 minutes from Dubai city gives you an astounding experience of seeing the undulating sandy dunes from high up in the sky.

Also freshly introduced is the Private flight over Dubai where you can see the city seated in a private helicopter. They have rides which last up to 12, 20, 30 minutes where you can see the sights of the city from high up in the air.

ALKERSAL AVENUE DUBAI

Started in 2008 this is the art and cultural hub of Dubai. This is a certain must visit to experience the culture of modern Dubai. The art and culture district situated in the industrial area of Al Quoz is dotted with boutiques, shops, art galleries, cafes and performance spaces.

The cafes in Alkersal are an experience not to be missed. Vibrant and cozy, the cuisine is just an add on to a perfect environment. Some not to be missed are FOMO, Perfect Chaiwala, Wild and the Moon.

DUBAI OPERA

And if you are a theater buff, you cannot miss to watch a show in Dubai Opera. Dubai Opera is the city's first purpose-built multi-format performing arts theatre and the definitive destination for quality entertainment productions and performances. Discover and explore one of Dubai's most iconic cultural destinations, blending visionary architecture with moments of magic.

DUBAI MARINA

Since I have a great interest in yachts and have attended the Dubai Yacht Show several times, Dubai Marina is a hot favorite for me. With a lineup of yachts and superyachts along the marina and water side restaurants and cafes, one can spend hours just enjoying the scrumptious food these cafes have to offer. Just sit back, relax, and simply savor the atmosphere.

An all-rounder of destinations, the Dubai experience is unmatched and I can't wait to visit again soon. ✨

IN SPOTLIGHT DESTINATION

A Pure

Z

E

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Experience



THE CHARM OF SOUTH KOREA LIES IN THAT IT OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. LET US EXPLORE HOW YOU CAN REDISCOVER YOURSELF AND FIND TRUE INNER BLISS AFTER MONTHS OF BEING CONFINED TO YOUR HOME.



No surprises that we are all planning our next vacation with anticipated glee. But contained in the excitement to travel is a big fear that we are going “out into the world”. Naturally, the choice of place to holiday will be one that has checked all the boxes in its measures to keep one safe- in every way. No country better emulates this than South Korea. It has put together formidable measures to assuage the fears of visitors and citizens and local businesses and tourist spots.

Three offerings of South Korea that are as unique as they are unforgettable: experiencing calmness at a Templestay or a Hanok Stay (traditional Korean house) or simply exploring nature by walking through healing forests and trails. You are guaranteed to find incomparable peace - both externally and within - after these experiences.

STAY IN A KOREAN HANOK

These traditional Korean houses are built in a specific architectural style designed to maintain balance with the surrounding environment (mountains, lakes, space, land contours) and are constructed using elements such as long curved roofs and alternating ondol and maru flooring that help keep the home warm in winters and cool in the summers.

Recently, Hanok houses have become very trendy as not only are they historical and beautiful, they are also very eco-friendly

and sustainable by using natural building materials (wood, clay, paper, stone) and harnessing natural resources such as the sun for heating. Kids can enjoy the surroundings aplenty with nature and beauty and traditional games. Mealtimes are fun because of a unique food spread which is diverse and enthralling. You learn so much about Korean culture just through how they cook, present and eat food.

Tea rituals are also as educative as they are calming to the mind. ‘Dado (tea ceremony)’ is one of the oldest customs in Korea that involves the process of boiling and serving tea. Traditional tea clears the body and mind, and the ceremony focuses on spiritual awakening which symbolizes purification, absorption, and meditation.

TEMPLESTAYS

Through a Templestay, you find an immense calm and inner happiness that readies you to face life’s most challenging aspects. As most Korean temples are located in the mountains surrounded by peaceful greenery, participating in a Templestay is a wonderful way to rejuvenate your soul and body.

Templestay is a unique cultural program which lets you experience the life of Buddhist practitioners at traditional temples which preserved the 1700-year-old history of Korean Buddhism - yes, you read that right!



A short templestay including chanting, meditation, conversation over tea, Buddhist meals, will give you a new perspective on your life. It may be just the experience you need to release all pent-up emotions that have pervaded your life force during an unprecedented difficult phase. In most temples in Korea, you must cross a bridge above a small stream, signifying the separation between the secular world and Buddha's world.

A QUICK CRASH COURSE ON THE PROGRAM

Each temple will design its own program and activities based on its unique location and particular spiritual focus. Most programs start with a tour of the temple and includes learning about Buddhist rituals such as yebul (ceremonial service), gongyang (monastic meal), bae (108 bows), chadam (conversations with a monk over tea) and a walk in the forest.

YEBUL: 'Yebul' is the most important event in the daily routine of Korean temples, with people paying their respects to the Buddha enshrined in the Dharma hall. Officially, yebul begins with Do Ryang Seok, cleansing of the temple, but for templestay participants, yebul begins with the beating of beopgo, the temple drum.

BAE: The most fulfilling yet most difficult part of the templestay is the 108 bae or prostrations. Similar to 108 chants in Hinduism. Why 108? It is a sacred number and the Buddha categorized humankind's agony into 108 sections, so to remove all the agony one by one- 108 prostrations are required.

CHAMESON- ZEN MEDITATION: One of the true joys of a temple stay is the chance to clear your mind and spend time simply being. Zen is known as 'seon' in Korean. There are two forms of meditation that you can choose from, which are 'jwaseon (seated meditation)' and 'haengseon (walking meditation)'.

GONGYANG- MONASTIC MEAL: Gongyang means offering food or necessary items to one's parents, teacher or neighbor with a respectful mind. In a Buddhist temple it simply means offering a prepared meal. Because Buddhist monks do not eat meat or five pungent herbs including garlic, green onion, leek, chives etc, all the meals are made based on vegetables. It is es-

sential to only take as much as you can eat, avoid speaking while eating, and washing the dishes after finishing everything on your plate.

CHADAM -TEA CEREMONY: Many Templestay programs include a traditional tea ceremony, during which a monk teaches you the formal rites for making tea. Oftentimes, the tea ceremony also incorporates a dialogue with the monk, where you are free to ask and answer questions. This is another truly liberating experience which will leave a lasting memory in your being.

Most official Templestay programs last for one or two days, including overnight. During this time, you are completely immersed in the monastic lifestyle, right down to the simple comfy cotton uniform you're expected to wear throughout the stay. You are expected to comply with the temple's etiquette. You are usually offered a choice of activities designed to harness spiritual concentration. There are dozens Buddhist temples which are part of Templestay (templestay.com), an official program that allows visitors to participate in monastic Buddhist life for short stays.

Before you leave, if you hear these simple words of wisdom from your monk, you know you've come close to finding your true being...and what could be better in times like these?

"Remember, as you leave, just to be. Be fully, 100%, in every situation. Don't think too much. Don't complicate things. Just be."

WALKS IN BLISSFUL NATURE

Nothing clears the mind and heals the soul better than the sunlight peeking through trees and resplendent forests, that radiate their healing magic. The air is clean and pure. And with each step you can sense you are closer to finding your true self than you ever imagined!

As an extension of nature walks, South Korea, offers a plethora of breath-taking parks and forests where you can wander and lose yourself. There is a focus on preserving the ecology and with that underlying theme, gardening and other eco-friendly activities are plentiful. ★



IN SPOTLIGHT DESTINATION

Forever Mighty

WITH SOME OF THE MOST STUNNING LANDSCAPES IN THE WORLD - CANYONS, ROCK SPIRES, SAND DUNES, LAKES, AND RIVERS THAT CREATE DRAMATIC SCENERY, WELCOME TO UTAH.

By **Joseph Fernandes, CEO, IndiJo Consulting**



One of the great pleasures of life is travel. But traveling to far off lands in the times of a pandemic is only but a dream. So right now, for most of us the best we can do is sit back, relax, and reminisce of the many travel adventures of years gone by. For me, my road trip through Utah is a memory that keeps coming back repeatedly.

Utah is a state in western USA that is blessed with the most breathtaking landscapes - indeed a photographer's paradise. The best way to see Utah is to take the road. Roads that wind through the Mighty Five national parks, seven national forests, 44 state parks and stunning vistas that make it difficult to keep one's eye on the road.

Our trip started in the state capital - Salt Lake City. Salt Lake City is one of the most picturesque cities in the world with tons to do and see. The Natural History Museum of Utah showcases Utah as the

state with the largest fossil records and has the most complete record of prehistoric life than any other geographic area on the planet. The museum itself is an architectural marvel that offers a panoramic view of the city nestled alongside the Wasatch Mountains. After our visit to the museum, it was time for an early dinner. This got us to Saffron Valley Sugarhouse, an Indian restaurant serving the most authentic Indian flavors in Utah. Owned and run by the very dynamic Lavanya Mahate.

That night, Utah's professional basketball team, the Utah Jazz were scheduled to play at the Vivint Smart Home Arena. It was a game we just could not miss, and I am glad we did not, cause the experience was just electric. The next morning, we planned to hit the road, but not before a visit to SLC's most famous landmark, the Salt Lake Temple which took 40 years to build and is one of the oldest



attractions in the area.

Our next stop was a 4-hour drive southeast to the Arches National Park. This awe-inspiring expanse named after the over 2,000 naturally formed stone arches is a landscape of the most brilliant colors – red rocks with patches of white snow against a bright blue sky. No visit to the Arches National Park is complete without seeing the ‘Delicate Arch’. In a park with over 2,000 stone arches, this free-standing arch is one of the most famous geological features of the world, widely recognized as the symbol of Utah. Also seen on license plates of all Utah registered vehicles. We stayed overnight at Moab, a city that attracts thousands of visitors who come to see the nearby Arches and Canyonland National parks.

The next morning with our google maps set, we hit the road again, traveling southwest to Bryce Canyon National Park to see the largest concentration of Hoodoos on earth. Hoodoos are irregular columns of rock, carved by the elements. We planned to hike down amongst the Hoodoos, however due to the exceptionally high snowfall, most of the hiking trails were closed. So, we just had to see this masterpiece of nature from the rim, which is also quite spectacular. But what was even more stunning was the stargazing that evening. The low pollution and high altitude of Bryce Canyon, makes it a prime stargazing location. A place to see millions of stars in the milky way. Bryce Canyon is Utah’s fourth national park, to receive dark sky certification from the International Dark-Sky Association.

Our next stop was Zion National Park, an outdoor wonderland with thousand feet rock canyons and dramatic surroundings. Zion National Park truly takes your breath away. Whether you are trying to catch your breath while climbing the trails, or watching the shadows change the look of Canyons.

Springdale, a quaint little town on the edge of Zion was the perfect place to spend the night and unwind, before ending our road trip the next day in Las Vegas, which is just a couple of hours drive. The next morning, we loaded up the car and headed to Las Vegas, stopping on the way at the Snow Canyon State Park. After all that driving it was time to do some horseback riding, through terrain cut by water, sculpt-

ed by wind and time. Letting our eyes wander up Snow Canyon’s Navajo sandstone cliffs

Driving past ghost towns, dinosaur footprints, and red rock towers, these open roads are destinations by themselves. It’s no wonder that this is where photographers come to capture compelling images, and where some of the most iconic Hollywood movies have been shot..... This is Utah. ✨



TRAVEL

SOUL Tripping

I HAD OFTEN HEARD 'IT'S THE JOURNEY THAT MATTERS, NOT THE DESTINATION' UNTIL I EXPERIENCED WHAT MAKES THE JOURNEY SO SPECIAL ON MY SOUL-SEARCHING SOLO TRAVEL.

By **Sneh Meghlan,**
Marcom Professional with Marriott India



After traveling from Amritsar to Haridwar to Rishikesh to Mcleodganj, it was time for my final destination- Bir Billing. Famous for Spiritual studies, home to Tibetan refugees, meditation, ecotourism, and being Asia's highest and world's second highest take-off point for paragliding, which made it come on the map of importance after hosting the first ever world cup of paragliding. I stayed at GoStops, an affordable hotel situated in a picturesque place to stay. While walking my way to explore nearby places, it seemed to me like a ghost town as I could only see a handful of people around, only a few cafes opened, and almost everything shut. Curiosity made me ask in one of the cafes and the lady there informed me that this is because of two reasons- the town goes to sleep

early, and it was off season. I picked up a book to read on the history of Tibetan Refugees in Bir Billing and their history there. From the very first day, Bir Billing enthralled me in its love like no other place. My next five days here would start with a visit to Chokling monastery located in the middle of Tibetan colony. I would go there daily to just sit in peace and sometimes have a conversation with the monks around. Nothing more blissful than the moments I spent there.

On the first day, I booked my slot for paragliding. Being my second paragliding experience, I was extremely excited! As I reached the take off site, it took my breath away. Flying in the midst of Dhauladhar ranges with views of terraced farms, smaller mountains be-

neath and a bird eye view of beautiful Kangra valley left me in complete ecstatic state. Next on my list was to visit Baijnath Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva for his 'God of Healing' form built in 1204 AD. The architecture is marvellous, in Nagara Style with engravings of shlokas and various gods and goddesses. The river Binduka flowing beneath the temple is now dry, which made me think if the views are so awe inspiring now, what it must have been ages ago when our eco system was not disrupted. On my third day, I cycled through the mountains on a quiet route through the pine forest with Buddhism prayer flags that leads to Sherabling Monastery. I encountered monks of all age groups on my way - playing, cycling, and meditating at spots which seemed quite unreachable.

Something about Bir made me extend my trip by two days. Here you will meet many artists from across the field for a good conversation. I happened to meet a painter whose work I still admire. Not to miss Deer Park Institute which was adjacent to the stay. It is a centre for the study of classical Indian wisdom traditions based on the ancient Indian tradition of Nalanda Institute, where traditions of Buddhism were studied and practiced. Many foreign nationals come here to practice spirituality and register for courses on Meditation, Philosophy, Art and Culture, Classical Languages, and many others. I had the opportunity to visit their library and wished to imbibe, if I could even the half knowledge present in that room. For my last two days, my entire day would be spent in this library and visiting monasteries.

Half-heartedly, I convinced myself to leave Bir but with much acquired knowledge. I could feel myself to be a different person by the end of my first solo trip. The people I met, the places I explored, the history I learnt, the unexplored paths I took, the unplanned trips I made – at every step I learnt something new about me. My solo trip was a Soul Tripping journey for me. I found my soul, I found myself. The promise I made at the end of this was to keep exploring and thankfully I have kept my promise. ★





*I love Nice
Below: Nice Beach Front*



TRAVEL

The AZURE Coast

A TRIP WHICH WAS PROMISED IN OUR 20S AND EXECUTED IN OUR 40S, HERE IS A LITTLE SLICE OF THE HEAVENLY FRENCH RIVIERA WITH MY GIRLS.

By **Sharmilee Agrawal Kapur, Founder-Director, Atmantan Wellness Centre**



left: Monaco; Above: Eze

On the eve of turning 40 (yes, we all did happen to cross into this decade the same year), we decided it was time to take that coveted trip to the Riviera. My 3 friends- Jessica P, Jovan M, Bharati K. and I were 'leaving on a jet plane' from the U.S, Canada and India, respectively, to reach Nice. Being the capital of the Côte d'Azur, it was our entry point into the French Riviera, the Mediterranean coastline of southeast corner of France which has under its belt 48 breathtaking cities, including the city-state country of Monaco!

We were here in May, exactly when Europe started going into a Holiday mode and you are greeted with happy tourists wherever you go. The locals all welcomed us with smiles, great hospitality and French-English repertoire. The Riviera is crescent shaped and is connected with a beautiful winding road much like a strip of concrete between the Mediterranean Sea and the picturesque cities. Once in Nice, all one needs to do is hop on to the local city bus that meanders up and down the coast, and all at the cost of Euro 1.20!

On our first day, we decided to head north towards Monaco- a sovereign city-state, country, microstate on the French Riviera, and the second smallest in the world after Vatican City. The first sight of Monte Carlo greeted us as a posh hill where glass and steel mansions intersected with classic old-world architecture. Monaco, known as the "Billionaires' Playground" is famous for its lavish wealth, casinos, and glamorous events such as the Monaco Yacht Show and the Monaco Grand Prix. We girls started our saintly tour on foot, and spent the morning at the Prince's Palace grounds with its square gardens and gigantic works of arts on display. The same afternoon, we relaxed in the green Japanese Garden followed by a guided tour of the iconic Casino Monte Carlo. This had to be the most developed nook of the Riviera by far, as money shone bright in every Buddha Bar, the yacht lineup at the harbor and even in the Grand Prix track with the world's most famous bend 'Fairmont Hairpin' was rightly glorified.

The next day we set off southwards to the town of Antibes. Entering the city through an authentic arch seemed like we were in an

old French movie. Our reason to visit was the Picasso Museum. We know art has to be pondered upon and not rushed through, well, we girls added giggles and anecdotes to the experience.

With our intelligence quotient topped up, we next headed down to Cannes, the famed Film Festival town to step up our glam quotient. Not realizing that we had walked into this city a few days before the coveted festival, we actually saw the city prepping up for the stars, and even the red carpet being rolled out. Walking along the Boulevard de La Croisette felt special and we spent the entire evening here sipping on our mochas, and talking about our days gone and those even better ones right ahead.

The next day we set our hearts on exploring the medieval village of Eze. Fresh on the Riviera spirit we spontaneously took on the hike up the famous Nietzsche trail! We drudged along in the French summer, while meeting happy hikers along the way, singing the 'are we there yet' song as we walked into the scented village of Eze. This charming village seemed like a tucked away hilltop gem with narrow streets and wide ivory cobbled steps. Local shops were tucked into corners, selling handmade treasures like the Parfumerie Fragonard (where we learn that perfume once dabbed should never be rubbed by the wrists) and the tourist cafes.

We spent our last few days exploring the nicest of Nice. We started mornings in the Old Town, tucked in Cathedrals, culminating at the ancient and steep Parc de la Colline du Château hilltop, midst church bells and grand city and sea views. This city envelopes the corners of old and new whether it be in its developed shopping district and local vendors existing with each other, or the timeless Place Masséna that stands historically since 1843 but with uber contemporary light installation of the Seven Statutes (2007).

All my evenings were spent dining with my best girls ever. Our week long tryst here came out tasting sumptuously divine cake mix which has the five cities of the Riviera, and to this we had added soulful flavourings of the bluest sea, breathtaking views, girly laughter and memories for the next decade....we bid au revoir to the Riviera as travelers and not tourists. ✨

SKINCARE

Round The CLOCK Skincare

A GOOD SKINCARE ROUTINE MEANS
THAT YOU HAVE TO MAKE TIME FOR IT.

By Ria Algoo





Embracing a good skincare routine means that you have to make time for it. It is time consuming when done properly, but just like all other routines - it requires discipline and you have to be devoted to the regime in order to see the results.

The first and the most crucial part of your skin routine is cleansing. More often than not, this is the step that we rush through or spend very little time on. Airborne bacteria, dirt, pollution, makeup and SPF needs to be removed properly.

I strongly suggest the Korean method of Double Cleansing. You can use coconut oil and massage it into skin for a minute to remove all residue from your skin. If you are acne prone, skip the coconut oil and use a balm like Clinique's 'Take the day off' Cleansing Balm. Rinse your face with warm water and a fresh damp washcloth to open up pores, then apply a foaming facial wash. You can pick Neostrata's 'Glycolic Facial Wash' where the glycolic helps brighten as it cleanses.

It's a good idea to use a mild exfoliate daily like Dermalogica's 'Daily Microfoliant', it has a bit of salicylic acid in it and rice enzymes break down the build up that traps acne. It's gentle enough to do every day and the rice enzymes are excellent for skin brightening. If you have acne scarring, it may be a good idea to use a gentle ubtan and keep it on like a face mask until it dries. Then gently rub (this doubles up as an exfoliator as well) and wash off while in the shower. A good ubtan to use for scars is the 'Soundarya' by Forest Essentials. It has turmeric and saffron among other natural ayurvedic herbs and spices and works well to give you glowy bright skin almost instantly.

Follow this up with a great Toner. REN's 'Ready Steady Go' Tonic boasts AHA and BHA properties to gently exfoliate and minimize pores whilst creating radiance. You will be surprised at how well this product works over time to shrink pores.

Next step is to use a sheet mask. My top recommendation in this category is DR Jart sheet masks - The 'Brightening Solution' Mask is made up of fine micro-fiber to help active ingredients penetrate deeply for ultimate brightening benefits. A powerful array of antioxidants, glutathione, niacinamide and α -bisabolol visibly brightens skin to reduce the appearance of hyperpigmentation such as dark spots, acne scars, and discoloration while inhibiting melanin production.

After 20 minutes with this mask on, you can discard and add an essence. A great skin essence such as InnisFree Orchid essence with Hyaluronic acid from Jeju. The green bean and oat extract will instantly firm up the skin and provide nourishment, giving a healthy natural glow to the skin. Essences are vital and a lot of people skip this step because they don't know a lot about essences and their role in a routine.

It's essential to use a good quality eye cream- I love the 'Caffeine Eye Serum' by The Ordinary and have seen a noticeable difference in puffiness and dark under eyes circles with this serum. Followed by a super hydrating overnight mask - a good one to invest in is 'Black Tea Overnight Mask' by FRESH cosmetics or marinate skin in Laneige 'Water Sleeping Mask'.

Rest assured, you will wake up to the most gorgeous glowing skin in the morning. This is how it's supposed to be done and repeated everyday! ✨

GET GYM READY

WHO SAYS GYMMING IS INEVITABLY UGLY? NAVREET JOSAN, NATIONAL ARTIST, M.A.C COSMETICS INDIA, GIVES US HER INSIGHTS ON LOOKING DECKED UP AT THE GYM WITH HER BEST MAKEUP TIPS ON THE TABLE.



By Vrinda Rastogi



Fitness spaces are finally opening doors, and so is the urge to look better than ever before as we start stepping out of our houses. If a dash of makeup at the gym is your esteem booster, we've got your questions already answered. National Artist at M.A.C Cosmetics India, here's Navreet Kosan on how to look as good as you feel while working out.

1. How can one make their face sweat-free? Any quick tips?

The quickest way to get rid of sweat and to look fresh is to first blot the sweat with a tissue, followed by a mattifying compact like MAC Studio Fix Powder Plus Foundation. It gives the skin a smooth, flawless look and reduces the appearance of pores while controlling sweat and shine.

2. What and how to apply makeup to keep it from sweating off?

Foundations with a matte finish work great to keep your face looking fresh and sweat free. Start with a mattifying Primer like M.A.C Prep + Prime Pore Refiner Stick. It's like a magic stick with a silicone-free formula that absorbs oil to leave a smooth matte finish. MAC Studio Fix foundation and Compact are perfect for this and have 55+ shades with some shades made especially for the Indian skin tone to ensure you find the perfect match. For the rest of your makeup, waterproof and matte textures help a great deal.

3. How much makeup should one apply while working out?

For the gym, you want to keep your makeup minimal – just enough to look groomed and pretty.

CONCEALER AND COMPACT Use a tiny bit of M.A.C Studio Fix 24-Hour Smooth Wear. Concealer on your under eye region and finish with a very sheer application of Studio Fix powder.

MASCARA Use a water resistant or waterproof mascara. I would suggest the M.A.C Haute & Naughty Waterproof mascara which has a dual brush for a natural as well as dramatic lash effect.

LIP COLOUR Finish the look using a nude lip colour – my new favorites are the MAC Powder Kiss Liquid Lipsticks in More the Mehr-ier, Mull It Over and Over The Taupe. A tinted lip balm is also a good pick.

4. What makeup products to completely avoid if one sweats too much?

Steer clear from creamy, glossy and shiny textures.

5. How should one manage their makeup after working out? Should it be immediately removed?

If you aren't going out, I would suggest removing it completely and following it with your skincare routine. If you are heading out post your workout and you have the time, it's always a good idea to remove your makeup and start fresh.

6. What advice would you give to the men on makeup while working out?

When it comes to makeup for men, less is more. To keep it natural, I would pick a concealer over foundation to spot and correct any dark circles and razor bumps using a sponge or fingertips. Finish with a light dust of MAC Studio Waterweight Powder. If you want to add a bit of warmth to your face, use a bronzer with a fluffy brush along the perimeter of the face and you're good to go. ✨



TÊTE-À-TÊTE

Wellness that WORKS

POOJA BEDI, THE WOMAN BEHIND A WELLNESS WONDERLAND CALLED HAPPY SOUL, IS READY TO LEAD YOU TOWARDS THE HAPPIEST AND HEALTHIEST VERSION OF YOURSELF.

By **Vidhi Gupta**



Pooja Bedi has traversed multiple roles, be it of a fiercely independent, open minded individual who has spoken boldly across various platforms on social causes, a daredevil who jumped off helicopters and lay in a pit with hundreds of snakes and rats in Fear Factor, a successful professional in the world of Media and Entertainment, a celebrated single parent of two children, and a woman who has lived and loved on her terms. And recently, Pooja played a role in her first web series 'Masaba Masaba' on Netflix! Beyond this, she has been leading the Wellness bridge in India with her venture 'Happy Soul' since 2015.

Happy Soul is an e-commerce platform which believes that Wellness is an umbrella that encompasses the well-being of our mind, body, energy, soul, and also our planet's. It provides diverse multi-vendor products which enables you to lead a life that is chemical free, organic, healthy and wholesome. What started as a company which conducted workshops in positive personal transformation, was later leased to and amalgamated with Magicians of Wellness (India) LLP, a Partnership company constituted by Pooja Bedi, founder of Happy Soul, and Namrata Thakker, founder of Entrepreneur Excel. We get into a conversation with Pooja to understand more about her and her idea behind Happy Soul.

What is your idea of wellness and how has it translated into Happy Soul?

It's well understood today that wellness is a synergy of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. It's incredible when you study the science of the human body and it's stored energy, that we pulsate and vibrate (we have over 37 trillion cells totalling over 70 trillion volts of electricity) with every thought and emotion in connection to our physical disease and health. What you eat, what you think and what you feel are all intrinsically connected. Happy Soul is a culmination of over a decade of my research and study in the realms of quantum physics, energy healing, brain science and Psychotherapy. It's fuelled by my desire to see the world around me happy and healthy. It's so easy, if you simply understand the science of you.

With a sudden surge of Vocal for Local how is Happy Soul promoting it?

Our e-commerce wellness focussed website is multi-vendor. Our country is abundant with incredible variety and quality in goods, services, travel & food. Happy Soul is thrilled to showcase and promote entrepreneurs, grassroots organisations, farmers and professionals from India who represent quality and standards in wellness. It's an oasis for wellness, and a tribute to all those in our country who symbolise it. When we can focus on building our own economy and our people, why shouldn't we?

How do you select products? Is there any criterion they have to fulfil?

We are very clear that all products have to fit the wellness quotient in every sense. For example, aromatherapy for wellbeing involves essential oil scented candles. However, if the candles are made of paraffin it defeats the purpose as you are inhaling chemicals. We feature only candles made from soy, beeswax or vegetable wax. All skin care and hair care brands must be paraben, sulfate, chemical free. All food

and drink must be natural, organic, and free from additives, preservatives, sweeteners etc. Eco-friendly, vegan, animal cruelty free products also feature in our wellness wonderland.

Being the founder of a health and wellness focused lifestyle brand, how do you incorporate wellness in your day to day life?

I focus on positive food, positive emotions, positive thoughts and positive actions. Which essentially means my diet is largely based on



food that's organic, fresh, and energy producing, I keep an attitude of gratitude handy at all times which keeps my happiness quotient pumping which in turn leads to well-being, I keep my thoughts focused on my dreams and not my fears, and I alternate between various forms of exercise, meditations and energy balancing techniques.

What are future plans for expansion of Happy Soul?

Gosh! So many! Happy Soul is a wellness wonderland and we are currently up with two verticals which include our ecommerce multi-vendor platform and retail, which we are franchising. Future plans include setting up the same multivendor e-commerce platform and retail model in UAE, UK and USA. We are also looking at manufacturing and creating our own range of Happy Soul products and merchandising, as well as starting wellness centres across the country. ✨

TÊTE-À-TÊTE True Tales

YOU ABSOLUTELY ADORE FOLLOWING THEM ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA. THEY HAVE MANAGED TO HELP YOU WITH INFORMATION OF YOUR INTEREST AND EXPANDED YOUR AREA OF KNOWLEDGE. GET TO KNOW THEM BEYOND THE USUAL SCROLLING THROUGH THEIR POSTS AND FOLLOWING THEIR INSTA STORIES. HERE IS WHERE THEY ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR LOCKDOWN DIARIES, SECRETS, FAVOURITE PLACE TO TRAVEL, AND THAT ONE THING WHICH THEY CAN'T WAIT TO DO ONCE THE PANDEMIC SITUATION EASES.

FARHANA BODI

@farhanabodi Fashion Influencer & Content Creator

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I used my time to heal my inner peace and started a workout routine at home to follow regularly. So, fitness was highly important during lockdown for me and so was eating healthy.

A fitness mantra you follow?

Eat Healthy, stay positive, and get enough sleep to stay fresh and active.

Your secret to healthy skin?

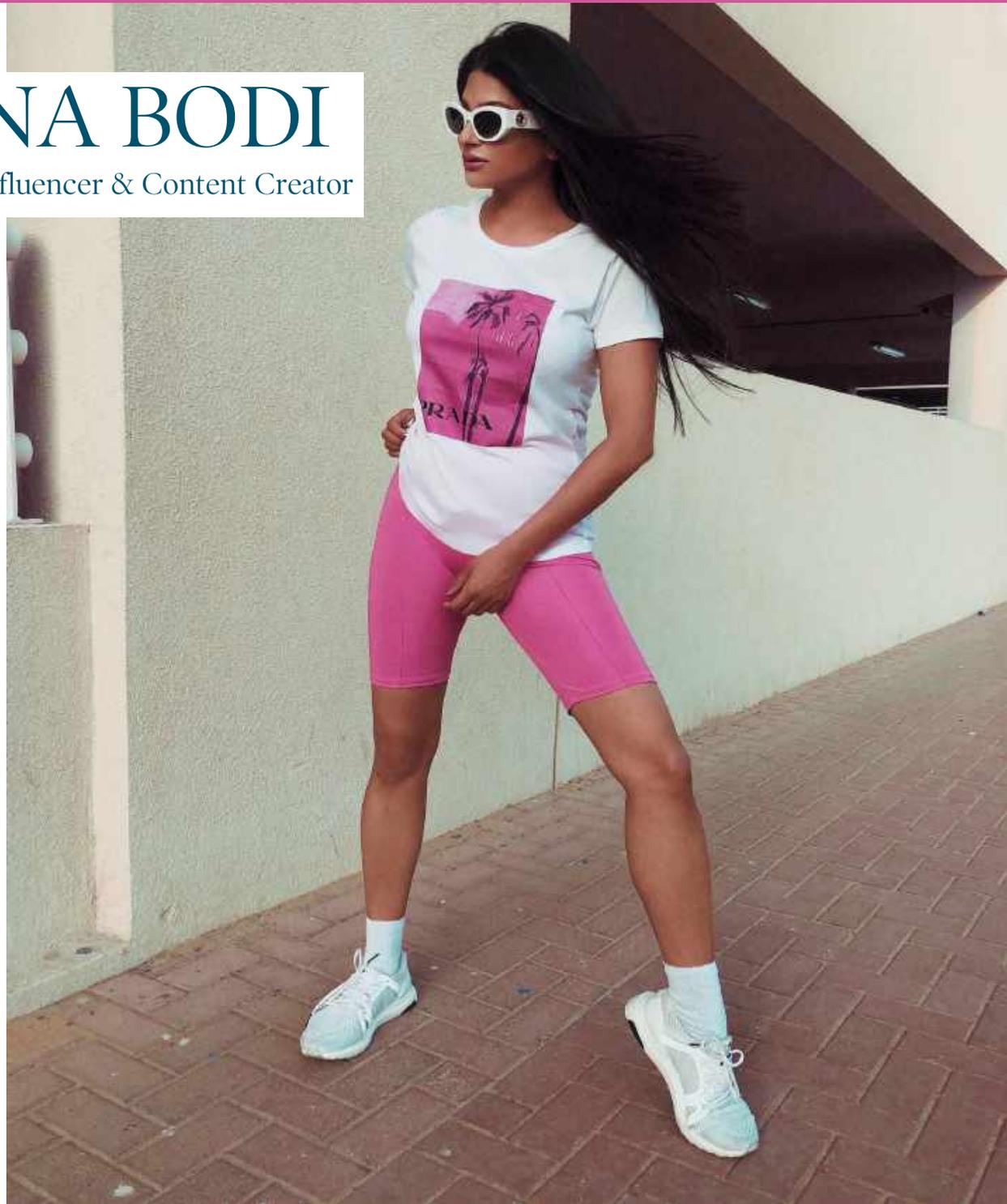
Drink lots of water and follow a good healthy diet which contains a lot of greens

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

I want to travel to Greece. It's on my travel list of places I have never been to.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Travel Travel Travel!





AANAM C

@aanamc Blogger

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I have tried to eat right but more importantly, started working out daily (after sulking about missing my gym for a while, hehe) and am glad that it's making me feel a whole lot better

A fitness mantra you follow?

Just to try and workout everyday even if it is just a little and try to consume less sugar.

Your secret to healthy skin?

Hydrating myself a LOT! And following a good regime.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

I can't wait to go back to LA or Queensland. I love the city-meets-sea vibe!

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Travel!!!! I miss traveling so much

NAMRATA PATHANIA

@namrata_pathania Blogger

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I am spending more time with my family and loved ones and that has helped me to maintain my calm. Now we have time to workout together, cook and eat healthy home cooked food. We sometimes play uno cards or ludo online and on some days we get nostalgic while sharing our childhood memories.

A fitness mantra you follow?

I workout regularly. My workout is a mix of cardio and muscle building exercises. I maintain a balanced diet and drink 2 cups of green tea everyday.

Your secret to healthy skin?

For me, hydration is the key for a healthy skin and body. So, I drink a lot of water and I have added Hyaluronic Acid (HA) to my skincare regime. It has been doing wonders for my skin!

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

Before the lockdown was imposed, my tickets were booked for a vacation with my family to Leh and another one with my friends to Goa. We obviously had to reschedule them but as they are still on my list, I can't wait to tick them off and travel again, hopefully, soon.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Given the lockdown, I couldn't travel to my hometown and meet my grandparents. Once the pandemic is over, I will surely be spending time with them. And after that I can't wait to be back for outdoor shoots and events!



HARPREETH KAUR

@momwearsprada Blogger



How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I knew what was coming my way, so I trained mine, my kid's, and family's mind in a way that we will have victory over this and nothing can deter us. We made mental health our priority.

A fitness mantra you follow?

In the evening, me and the kids come out in the garden to play while I cycle around.

Your secret to healthy skin?

I use a lot of natural and organic ingredients for my skin. Most are from my kitchen, and these desi nuskas have become really popular on my instagram.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

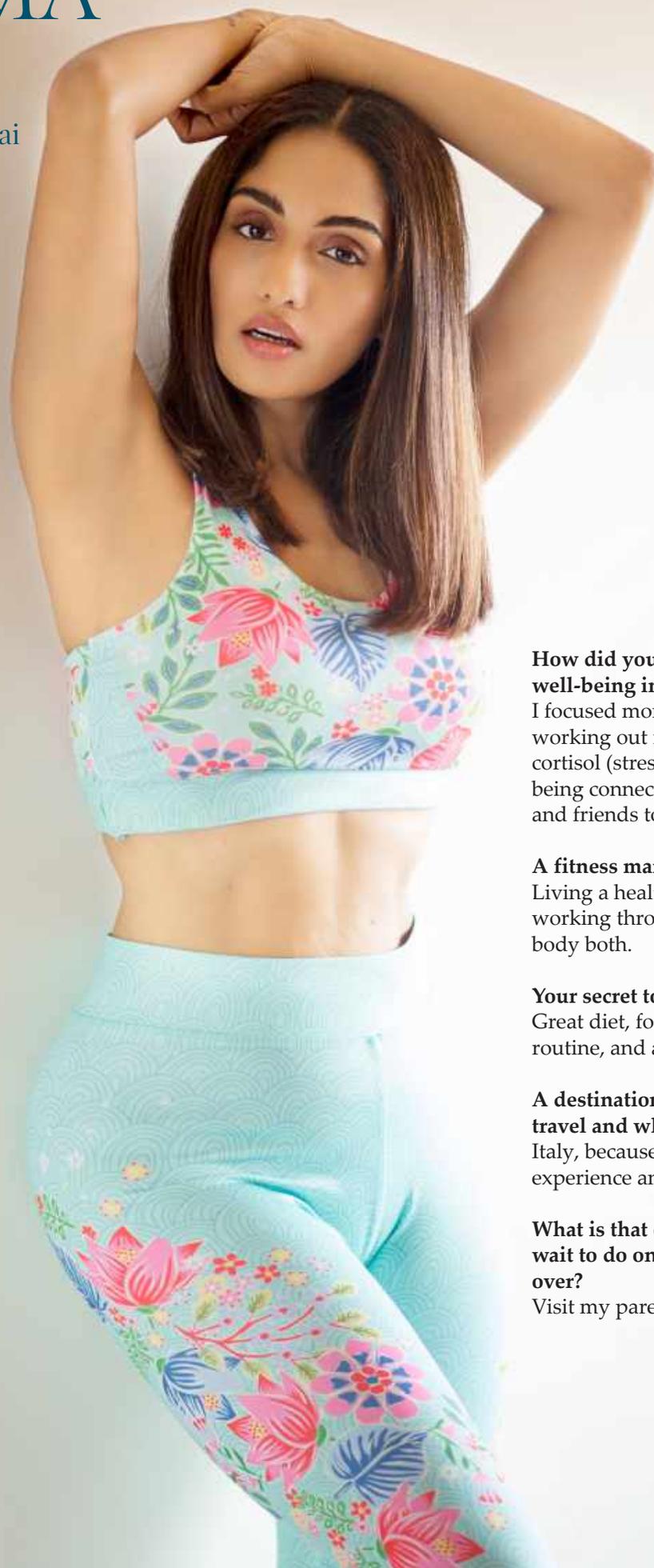
I absolutely love Florence, Paris, and Thailand! Florence for shopping, Paris to just sun soak in the garden, and I think my first flight is going to be to Thailand and visit Bangkok and Koh Samui.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Nothing. This pandemic has taught us that we are self sufficient and we don't really need anything. We just need basic amenities like food, being around our family, good health, and happiness. I am satisfied by the way my life has turned out.

SHRIMA RAI

Blogger @shrimarai



How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I focused more on meditation, working out regularly to keep my cortisol (stress) levels down and being connected with my family and friends to keep my spirits up.

A fitness mantra you follow?

Living a healthy lifestyle is about working through your mind and body both.

Your secret to healthy skin?

Great diet, following my skincare routine, and a good dermatologist.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

Italy, because it is a beautiful experience and I love pasta!

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Visit my parents in Mangalore.

ABHINAV MATHUR

Digital Creator @_abix_



How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I have been practicing Yoga for about a year. A good 10 mins of it everyday along with some bodyweight exercises kept me active and fit.

A fitness mantra you follow?

I feel it's very important to listen to your body. Understand what doesn't sit well with you when you eat something, do more of what makes you feel active and happy. Striking this balance keeps me fit.

Your secret to healthy skin?

I drink a lot of water and have gotten into the habit of adding neem leaves to my water overnight and drinking it the first thing in the morning.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

I absolutely love Bali. The food, atmosphere and overall vibe of the country is rather relaxing and vibrant at the same time.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

I love taking vacations with my family, it's a great way for all of us to bond and spend time with each other as we are away from our busy schedules. Making those memories is what I look forward to.



SHAKTI SINGH YADAV

@thefebruaryboy Lifestyle Influencer

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I was lucky to be at home with my family during this time. It is because of them I have been sane, to be honest. I tried and kept myself busy with work. In a way I utilised this time to do everything i wanted to and couldn't do it because of the lack of time. One thing that's helped me a lot during this time was - Meditation and Yoga. I'm glad i picked up these great habits.

A fitness mantra you follow?

My fitness mantra is to eat clean, workout daily, cheat on food once in a week and incorporate fitness in my lifestyle in a way that I don't get tired of it.

Your secret to healthy skin?

I believe in following a basic skincare routine which consists of 3 steps- Cleansing, Exfoliating and Moisturising. I try to eat clean and drink lots of water because what you put in your body shows on the skin.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

Srilanka has been in my travel list for quite some time, I actually had plans to visit this year but I obviously couldn't. I'm waiting to spend endless time at the beach, chilling, and having the best food.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

I really want to travel with my Family, go for outdoor shoots and meet my friends.

RIAAAN GEORGE

@riaangeorge Blogger

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I am always about the work life balance. Even before the lockdown, I haven't been someone who stresses up on work and gets tired. I used the lockdown to slow down because I thought it was alright for me to be less productive and that kept me happy. Since my job requires me to travel a lot, now I have been spending time with my family and enjoy being at home. And I haven't stopped working out in the evening.

A fitness mantra you follow?

I love working out. As I am a very outdoorsy person, I will workout 4 times a week outdoors with my trainer in the backyard.

Your secret to healthy skin?

Of course it involves a lot of exercise, drinking lots of water and using as little cosmetic products as possible. I just like to use basic things like moisturizer and a good face wash. Follow ups to these would include eating good food and sleeping well.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

I was supposed to go to New York but that got cancelled. I really can't wait to go there. It is my favourite city from a cultural standpoint. There are a lot of things to see, to do, to eat, and most importantly it is a city which is welcoming for all travelers, whether you're a budget traveller or a luxury traveller. You will always find something to do in New York - it is still an experience if it means walking the streets with a coffee in your hand.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Just go on a nice beach holiday with my friends. I am based in Mumbai, but I am from Colombo, Sri Lanka and I haven't been back to Sri Lanka for a while (I am usually there once a month). I miss the beach, but most importantly being on the plane. I love being on a plane!



CLINT FERNANDES

@urbanchokra Makeup Artist



How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

I kept busy with research and development of my new skincare brand. I did keep in touch with friends and family regularly, and worked on my skill sets. At times, I felt that this time was more busy when compared to the days before the lockdown. I did stick to a time table especially when it came to going to bed and waking up.

A fitness mantra you follow?

I prefer high resistance workouts, mixed with cardio and strength training.

Your secret to healthy skin?

I believe how you are internally shows up externally. Eating right, a balanced diet, being hydrated, and exercise does lead to a good skin. Obviously one should take care of external elements like moisturising and using a sun-screen regularly.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

Paris, as it feels like home to me. I know the city really well. I love the art, history, and culture the city has to offer. Besides, the food there is out of this world good!

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Burn these masks!

SARANG PATIL

Blogger @heisgotthestyle

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

Well I think the most important thing which I was ignoring since last few years was my health and sleep. During this lockdown I could actually take time to look after my health and rest in a wholesome manner. I started following a schedule for work, workout and rest backed up by nutritious food.

A fitness mantra you follow?

20 mins hardcore workout and 5 minutes meditation is what I follow irrespective of whether I am travelling or having a busy day. I strongly believe in meditating in the morning right after getting up to collect all the positive energies around you.

Your secret to healthy skin?

Detox water, apple cider vinegar and a healthy diet which consists of a lot of leafy vegetables. I follow a simple skincare routine which is cleansing, toning and moisturising. In the night I use a night cream and an under eye roller.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

New York! It has been on my list for the last two years, and I couldn't make it for some or the other reason. I think I would like to celebrate my birthday this year in New York.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

The one thing I would love to do once the pandemic is over is drive around the city aimlessly and just appreciate the beauty, which I missed during the lockdown



RAHUL JAGTIANI

@rahul.jagtiani Entrepreneur

How did you manage your well-being in this lockdown?

Apart from the obvious disappointment of loss of revenue in business, which is the case for most people, I have actually enjoyed this lockdown. My job involves a lot of travel, so this has allowed me to slow down a bit and focus on doing other things that I like. Streamline our business, invest in myself by up-skilling through online courses, reading books, writing on travel, and most importantly spending time and bonding with my family.

A fitness mantra you follow?

I work out 6 days a week. I love the outdoors and adventure sports. I enjoy lifting weights in the gym too, but since gyms are currently shut. I've been doing a lot of cardio. I eat healthy for the most part. Mental fitness is as important and I make sure that I read something or listen to a podcast everyday that aids in my personal growth. Fitness isn't just about having a good body, but it requires a more holistic approach that goes a long way in having a positive outlook towards life.

Your secret to healthy skin?

A healthy diet, drinking plenty of water, sweating it out everyday, and the ability to manage stress well.

A destination you can't wait to travel and why?

Hard to pick one. I'd love to visit Greenland as it's so remote and the landscape is so different from the places I have been to. Another one is the north east region of India as I haven't explored our country as much as I would have liked to and I'm fascinated by its beauty and culture.

What is that one thing you can't wait to do once the pandemic is over?

Getting a decent haircut!





ananya birla

A SENSATION

IT'S NOT COMMON THAT YOU SEE SOMEONE DROPPING OUT OF OXFORD OVERNIGHT BECAUSE THEIR PASSION FOR MUSIC RUNS DEEPER. SINGER ANANYA BIRLA DARED TO. DRIVEN BY HER DISCIPLINE, HARD WORK, AND AN EDGING GRIT TO PURSUE MUSIC, THE PLATINUM SINGER TODAY DEFINES WHAT IT MEANS TO NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS, NO MATTER HOW FAR AWAY THEY MAY SEEM. IN CONVERSATION WITH THE POPSTAR, HERE'S WHAT ANANYA UNVEILS ON HER NEW MUSIC, ON STAYING WELL, AND CREATING MELODY IN LOCKDOWN...

By: **Parineeta Sethi**





...it reminded me again that by far the most important thing in life is Love, in all its forms

First of all, congratulations on your latest project “Let There Be Love”! Tell us a bit about your inspiration behind this song?

Thanks so much! So, I wrote this track in lockdown, as a response to these unprecedented global events and the situation we all found ourselves in because of them. I am immensely lucky and grateful to have been kept safe from a virus which has killed so many and threatened so many livelihoods. I suddenly found myself stuck in LA, not being able to visit family for an extended amount of time, and it reminded me again that by far the most important thing in life is Love, in all its forms. It reminded me to stay connected with my loved ones because really that’s everything. That’s what the song is basically about; about Love and finding beautiful things even in the darkest times. If you look at the lyrics, I have spoken a lot about family.

For any musician in today’s time, seeing your name on the official charts is a big deal, and you’re the first

Indian artist ever to do so even prior to your song’s release. How does that make you feel as an artist?

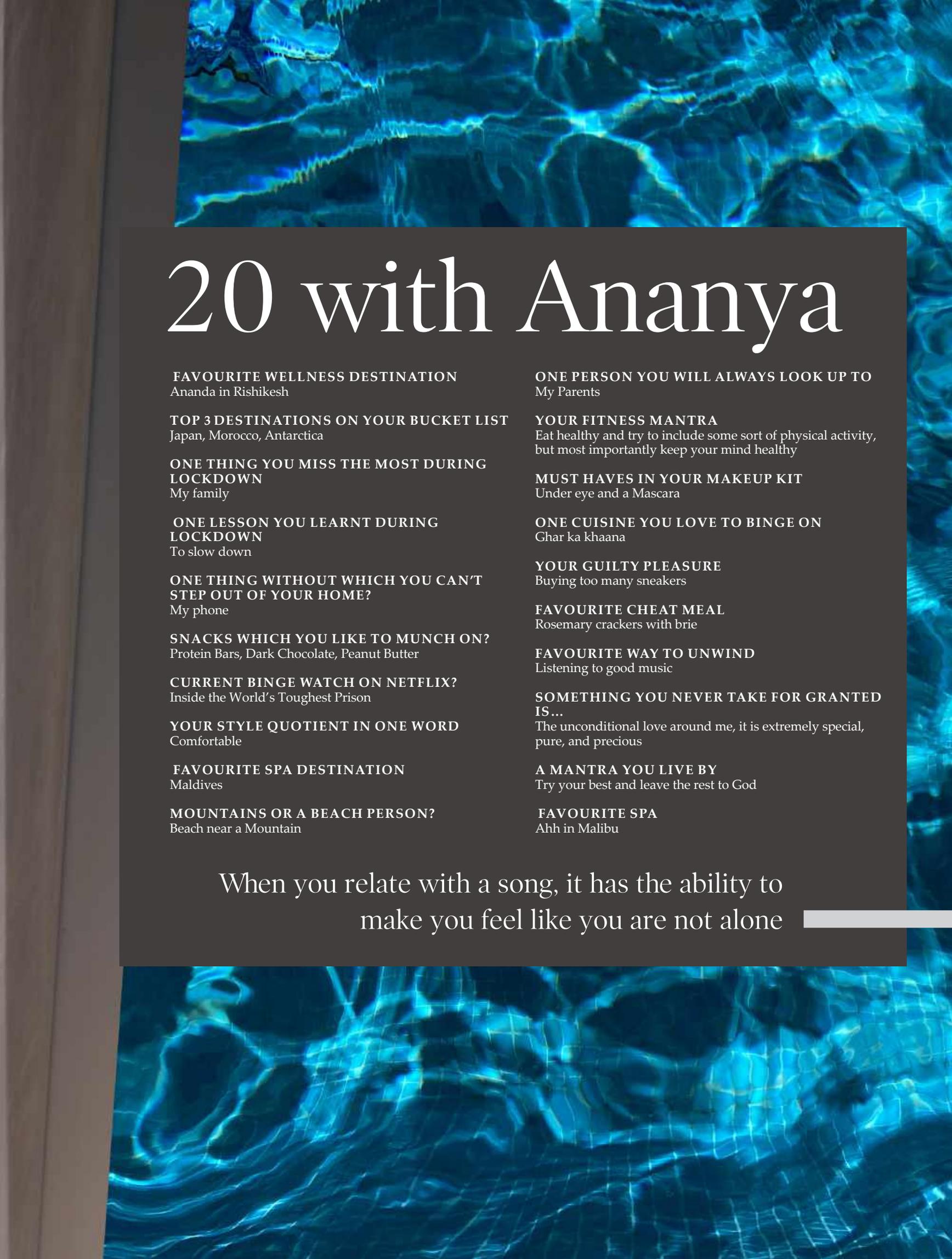
It’s pretty surreal but it makes me feel unbelievably proud to have been on Sirius Hits Top 40! And then to hear the song play on Radio Disney and Nickelodeon which I used to be a fan of when I was younger – I can’t describe the feeling!

I feel really honoured to represent India internationally with my music. When people from the West think of Indian music, the first thought that comes to their mind is film music. In fact, there’s so much amazing music coming out of India right now, in all genres – hip-hop, electro, rock, pop. I want to help people embrace our music and make India proud in doing so.

3. What’s the biggest difference you feel after signing out as an independent artist?

I wanted to do more internationally, and not having a label allows me to be a lot more flexible with where I





20 with Ananya

FAVOURITE WELLNESS DESTINATION

Ananda in Rishikesh

TOP 3 DESTINATIONS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST

Japan, Morocco, Antarctica

ONE THING YOU MISS THE MOST DURING LOCKDOWN

My family

ONE LESSON YOU LEARNT DURING LOCKDOWN

To slow down

ONE THING WITHOUT WHICH YOU CAN'T STEP OUT OF YOUR HOME?

My phone

SNACKS WHICH YOU LIKE TO MUNCH ON?

Protein Bars, Dark Chocolate, Peanut Butter

CURRENT BINGE WATCH ON NETFLIX?

Inside the World's Toughest Prison

YOUR STYLE QUOTIENT IN ONE WORD

Comfortable

FAVOURITE SPA DESTINATION

Maldives

MOUNTAINS OR A BEACH PERSON?

Beach near a Mountain

ONE PERSON YOU WILL ALWAYS LOOK UP TO

My Parents

YOUR FITNESS MANTRA

Eat healthy and try to include some sort of physical activity, but most importantly keep your mind healthy

MUST HAVES IN YOUR MAKEUP KIT

Under eye and a Mascara

ONE CUISINE YOU LOVE TO BINGE ON

Ghar ka khaana

YOUR GUILTY PLEASURE

Buying too many sneakers

FAVOURITE CHEAT MEAL

Rosemary crackers with brie

FAVOURITE WAY TO UNWIND

Listening to good music

SOMETHING YOU NEVER TAKE FOR GRANTED IS...

The unconditional love around me, it is extremely special, pure, and precious

A MANTRA YOU LIVE BY

Try your best and leave the rest to God

FAVOURITE SPA

Ahh in Malibu

When you relate with a song, it has the ability to
make you feel like you are not alone



I have had my struggles with my mental health
in the past and was lucky enough to get the help I needed.
I felt I should try and return the favour



am working and who I get to work with. It was less restrictive for me, and in a world that is opening up more and more digitally with ever-decreasing physical touchpoints, it has become a much more level playing field as an independent artist. I would love to tell all artists out there who may be waiting to be signed that you don't have to be signed to realise your dreams.

What do you want people to take away most from your music?

I write a lot of my own experiences into my music; good or bad. Nothing makes me happier than when someone gets in touch and tells me they connected with one of my songs and that it helped them feel less alone.

In terms of music, has this lockdown shaped you in any way?

I got the chance to create for the sake of creation without a deadline and as a result I now have over 200 songs! Some turned out great, and some turned out okay. I also learned a lot on the engineering side of things. Normally when I'm cutting a record I'm used to going into a studio. Making 'Let There Be Love' was a whole different ball game! It took longer than usual, as I had to record everything myself. I actually built a makeshift studio in my house here in LA; we hung up blankets against the walls to prevent the sound from reflecting, and then worked with my producer over Zoom.

What are your thoughts on the connection between music and wellbeing?

To me, the two are inextricable. And I'm not alone! There are so many studies proving that listening to music has a positive impact on our mental and physical health. It can reduce stress, boost our mood, motivate us and even ease pain! Also, when you relate with a song, it has the ability to make you feel like you are not alone.

Are you a fitness freak? What does your workout regime look like?

I keep fit, but I do that to maintain my health rather than for aesthetic reasons. I mix it up between yoga, running, interval training and bodyweight exercises depending on what I want to focus on. I also love playing football so I would try to get a game in whenever I could pre-lockdown.

You're one of those many artists that constantly voice and support for many causes, including your own: MPower and Svatantra. Why are they an important aspect in your career?

Both are hugely important to me. My mother and I founded our mental health initiative MPower in response to India's mental health crisis. In a population of 1.4 billion Indians, where nearly 150 million people need mental health care, we have fewer than 4000 psychiatrists! Mental illness is still this massive taboo, fuelled by ignorance, and a fear of judgement.

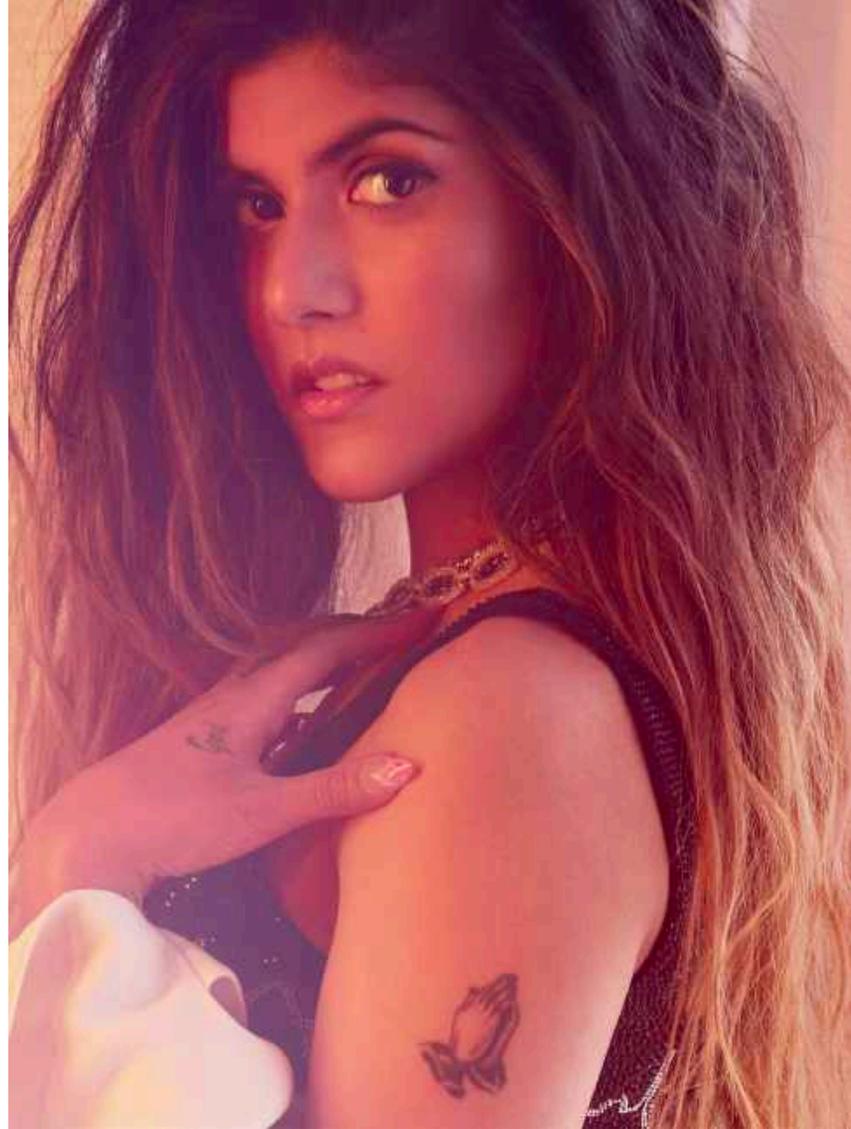


I have had my struggles with my mental health in the past and was lucky enough to get the help I needed. I felt I should try and return the favour.

In terms of Svatantra: growing up, I was always incredibly aware of the income gap in the country. I've always known that I'm incredibly lucky to have so much when there are others with nothing. I wanted a sustainable way to address the issue, and Svatantra - where we grant microloans to women in rural areas so that they can start their own businesses - is the result. We now have a presence in over 60,000 villages across the country. The women are so inspiring, hardworking and enterprising!

Mental health is a really important topic the whole world is having during this time, so how are you keeping in check your mental health these days?

For me, it's all about balance. I'm a bit of a workaholic, but now I try and ensure that I'm not overdoing it. I exercise regularly, I do a lot of meditation, I make sure I stay connected with my loved ones and I journal every day just to check in



But really I am just like any other girl who dares to dream

with myself and look within.

Personally, what does wellness mean to you?

Wellness is about maintaining mental, emotional and physical fitness, in a way that suits your body and mind the best. Every individual responds differently to different things.

Who is Ananya beyond her music?

There are so many different aspects to my life. My business Svatantra and my mental health advocacy are incredibly important to me, and I'm always tuned into them, no matter how busy I am with my music. I love to travel, not just for work but to explore, and get under the skin of different places and cultures. I read a lot but I'm a sucker for Netflix. The most important loves in my life are my family, my friends and my puppies. They mean everything to me. But really I am just like any other girl who dares to dream. I also love a good game of chess or Connect4!

How has the entire journey of your career shaped you? The learnings, or fears that you have overcome?

My musical journey has been a rollercoaster - I have had a number of learnings along the way. I think the most enduring lesson I have learned was to stay true to myself. Many people

may try to push you in different directions but authentic music is what connects with people. Always surround yourself with people who uplift you and are honest with you.

Tell us the craziest thing the lockdown has made you do?

Organise all of my sneakers under my own special little accounting system.

Tell us about your favourite Spa experience.

My favourite spa experience was perhaps in Napa Valley. I was at this spa with an incredible view away from the bustle of the cities.

Lastly, what are you focusing on for the future? Anything new we should keep an eye out for?

I've got plenty of new music in the mix, so stay tuned for that. I feel so lucky to do what I love more than anything every single day. My ultimate aim is to continue doing that - and to hopefully make a positive impact in the process.

This is our third association after the cover of MillionaireAsia, PEAKLIFE and now GlobalSpa - how does it feel to be on the cover of different genres of the magazines?

I feel really blessed! Thank you guys so much for having me again. You have been incredible. ✨



SPARKING WELLNESS: The Magicrise Secret

DAWNING INTO WELLNESS WITH A FORTRESS VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS SPACE AND INDUSTRY, MEET RAKHEE MEHTA. SHE HAS VENTURED FROM A FLOURISHING CORPORATE CAREER TO BUILD A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE PAIRED WITH COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS, WHICH IS CURRENTLY LACKING IN THIS SPACE.

She's fondly called the Global Business Gypsy and Wellness Architect. Having garnered close to 17 years of experience in the fields of retail, brand building, wellness and entertainment, her bouquet of work has been captured on multiple platforms namely, Faces of Entrepreneurship - Nasdaq, Entrepreneurial Center, Twice on Shark Tank - India, WSJ, Business World and many more. Meet Rakhee Mehta - committed to creating value-based revenue models with end-to-end benefit, right from conception to execution.

The genesis of the platform were the generic stats of how as a population we are moving fast towards obesity, diabetic conditions and more laidback lifestyles. Rakhee believes that there is too much talk around wellness but no platform that actually motivates people to drop their inhibitions and imbibe wellness as a daily lifestyle. Basically, go from zero to one, we can bring the horse to the well but how do you make it drink water? Magicrise was curated as a niche idea to solve this problem, where people could meet, interact with like minded folks and get their own personalized solution once they are comfortable. Today this idea has evolved into a tech platform redefining the whole experience around wellness.

In a world with quick changing options where gyms and multiple aggregated membership platforms are becoming overcrowded, Magicrise, is a fresh take on wellness. Rakhee wants to bring back old school roots of wellness in India and blend in with a new age touch of brands that talk from biohacks to Ayurveda as a softer integration in her platform since she believes "knowledge is everything."

A UNIQUE CURATION OF COMMUNITIES

Magicrise events have a quasi-dimension which is intentional;

they are building the modern age version of a Chaupal or Town-square 2.0 version of a gathering space essentially like a community center. It brings you a diversified culture throughout the world with over 5,000 forms of wellness sessions to transform 'existence' into a 'lifestyle' - online or offline!



They want people to think about the importance of not only physical but mental and creative wellness as well. Imagine a 'Mind Gym' - that is the experience their audience should collect.

Rakhee's vision, has led Magicrise, to grow to 15 cities and 2 countries with over 3500 trainers across the globe, wellness content development, 500++ events and a huge corporate clientele. She has successfully created an artful experience of wellness events, retreats, classes, corporates and personalized sessions in just two years!

Even during this lockdown, the unique concept of wellness events aims to fly higher with their Global - Digital Party : Unlocked Quarantine Soul Party with US collaborators, which cre-

ated connection rooms and left the audience hungry for more. A global awakening towards health, immunity, fitness, mental well-being and lifestyle.

"We want people to work on making friends, forging connections, and get a head start on finding community. Magicrise is a wellness movement for everybody," assures the wellness aficionado.

All Magicrise experiences are available on www.magicrise.in and the app in beta testing stage is now on android. Their main interaction with the audience digitally still continues via SM handle: Instagram/FB/Twitter/Youtube/Zoom :

@magicrisewellness. ✨



KNOW YOUR BRAND

Sipping Sus-Tea-Nable

WITH INCREASING AMOUNTS OF CARBON EMISSIONS AND TRAPPED HEAT, CLIMATE CHANGE IS A GRAVE CONCERN THAT OUR PLANET IS FACING TODAY. IN LINE WITH LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND THE UNITED NATIONS' SGD GOALS, INDIA'S FINEST VAHDAM® TEAS ARE NOW CERTIFIED CARBON NEUTRAL AND PLASTIC NEUTRAL - MAKING IT ONE OF THE FIRST ASIAN BRANDS TO ACQUIRE BOTH CERTIFICATIONS.

Known as India's finest homegrown global brand spread over 100 countries, VAHDAM® Teas motto has always been DO GOOD BY DOING GOOD. Resonating with the same philosophy, the dual certifications of Carbon and Plastic Neutrality now balances the brand's carbon footprint through major contributions towards green and energy-efficient projects.

"Becoming Climate Neutral and Plastic Neutral are steps in the right direction as we strive to become a more sustainable and responsible brand. Our commitment has always been purpose beyond profits, relationship beyond ratios, and value beyond numbers." says Bala Sarada, Founder & CEO, VAHDAM® Teas.

BECOMING CARBON NEUTRAL

Certified Carbon Neutral by 'Climate Neutral' - a not-for-profit organisation based in the United States - VAHDAM® measured its direct and indirect CO2 emission using a 'Climate Neutral' model where its farm-to-consumer carbon footprint was offset via investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in India.





PROGRESSING PAST PLASTIC

The brand has been certified Plastic Neutral by 'rePurpose Global', the world's first plastic credit platform and an independent body based in the United States. The bare minimum quantity used by the brand for ensuring safety and freshness of its products is 'neutralised' and offset through investments in projects that include ethical disposal and sustainably recycling of plastics in India. VAHDAM® is also committed to progressively reduce its plastic footprint through use of sustainable packing materials wherever viable.

SUSTAINING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Government of India to implement a national lockdown across the country, the tea industry was left severely impacted. Millions of tea estate farmers and owners in India faced tremendous hardships due to failing crops, low cash flow and zero revenue. For the tea industry, the largest employer of organised labor, the lockdown came at a time when the tea plucking for the new season had just commenced and operations had to be suspended abruptly.

During this unprecedented time, VAHDAM® came forward to extend a helping hand. It offered 100% interest-free loan of up to US \$100,000 (INR 73,77,490) in partnership with renowned NGO - CRY (Child Rights and You) for distribution of Family Ration Packs, Hygiene Kits and Sanitisers to over 1100 tea growers' families.

Moreover, VAHDAM® also launched an independent fundraiser on the crowdfunding platform Ketto, and raised US \$18000 (INR 13,27,936). Relief work was also carried out at Gopaldhara, Rohini and Okayti Tea estate in Darjeeling and Bilimalai tea estate in the Nilgiris. In the USA, VAHDAM donated

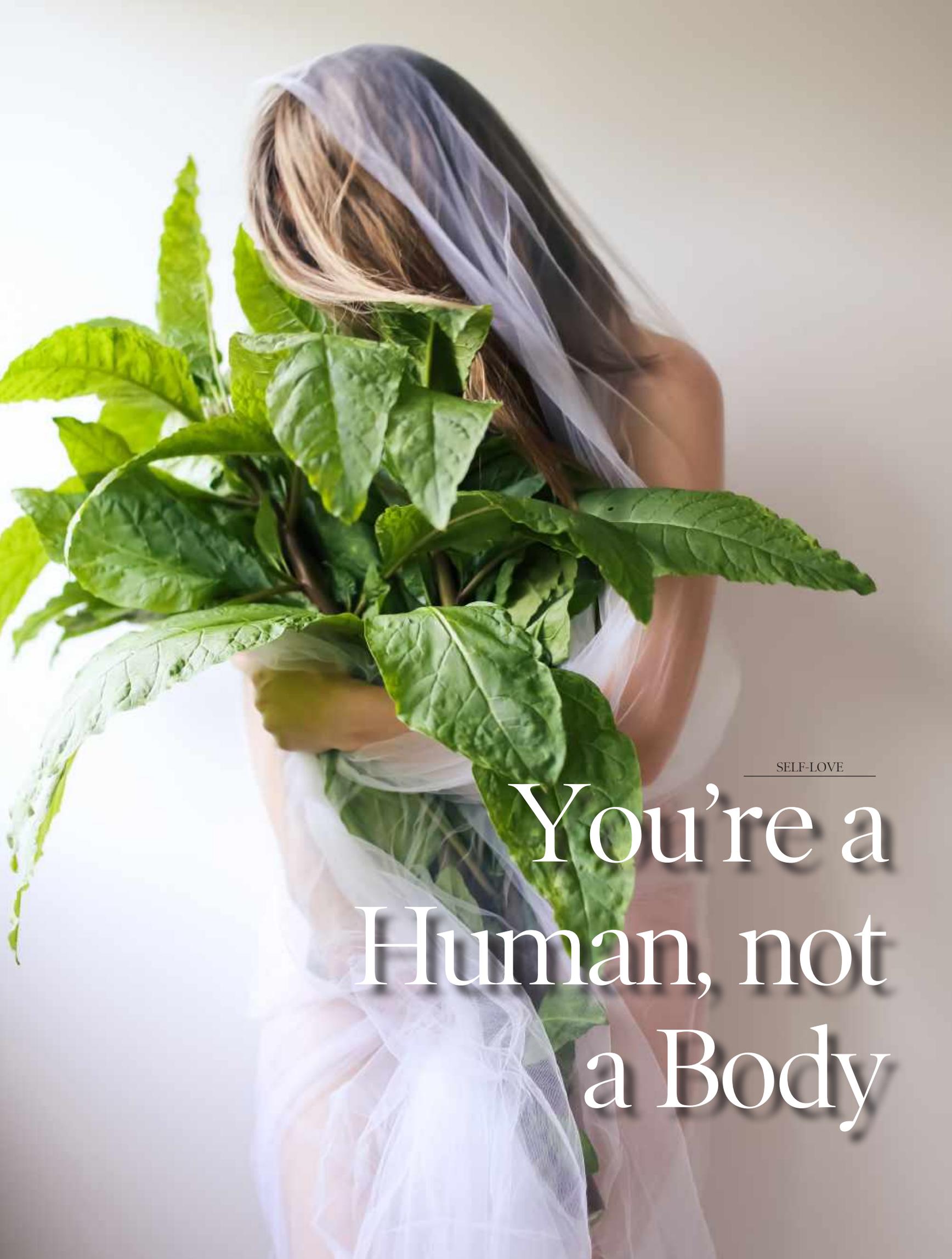


over \$300,000 (INR 2,21,32,215) worth of gift tea sets to frontline medical workers across various hospitals in New York.

TEACH ME BY VAHDAM®

Assuring sustainability as a brand in force, VAHDAM® Teas has also been working towards education of tea-workers at various estates in Darjeeling and numerous tea-growing regions in the country through their social initiative TEACH Me. Started in 2018, the campaign today earmarks a minimum 1% of revenue towards the education of their tea workers' children in India.

While still a growing company, VAHDAM® Teas has been keeping up to continuously grow as a responsible brand committed to sharing success, and making a difference wherever possible. ✨



SELF-LOVE

You're a
Human, not
a Body

THE ROAD TO SELF-LOVE AND BODY ACCEPTANCE ISN'T ABOUT GETTING TO THE FINAL DESTINATION, IT'S ABOUT THE JOURNEY AND THE LESSONS YOU LEARN ALONG THE WAY.

By **Sneha Sangani**

Body autonomy is a thing. It means you can do what you want with your body at all times and it doesn't mean it's for anybody or anything. Bodies are not innately sexual, that's a lens we see them through. Sometimes that's the intention, it's something to be embraced and appreciated at the appropriate time, but oftentimes it's not. There is NOTHING wrong with celebrating your body and feeling 10000% beautiful and confident in your own skin.

Are our bodies our own? Yes. But the media keeps telling us to look a certain way and exercise obsessively and try this diet and avoid this food. Society tells us all the issues will be over as soon as we have the perfect body and fair, flawless skin. The obsession with fairness has been there since time immemorial

be sure that when you do it, you are treating your body right and not body shaming yourself while dieting. Encourage yourself and be active. Being healthy mentally is just as important as being healthy on the outside.

And like any relationship, the one that you have with your body will never be perfect. You will go through trials and tribulations and sometimes things will happen that are completely out of control but it's the way in which you deal with it, heal from it, and continue to move forward to something that really matters. It is ok to sometimes feel that your body isn't what you thought it would be or that it may have let you down. The road to self-love and body acceptance isn't about getting to the final destination, it's about the journey and the lessons you



and is more a cliched image created by a demanding society to create a difference and set its standard of what's beautiful and what's not. There are so many messages around us that are like this that we are subjected to daily. In commercials, magazines, ads on social media, etc., everyday we can choose to believe that we need to be fixed. OR we can stand up and say that we are already beautiful. We don't have to change our appearance to suit anyone's idea of what beauty is.

You need to realize that true self-love isn't about changing your appearance. It's about accepting who you are underneath that appearance. Maybe you need to shift your focus. Remember that you are a HUMAN and start viewing yourself that way. There is nothing wrong with deciding to lose weight but

learn along the way. And those flaws and imprecations you see one day will become things you learn to love and realise that they make you unique and special.

Most importantly, focus on becoming a person that you love. Living a life that you love. Nourish other areas of life besides health and wellness. Say YES to more things - make time for the things that nourish your SOUL. Stop letting aesthetics hold you back from LIVING. Once you start filling your life with other things, you become happier and you focus less on the body that you are and more on the human.

You can't heal the inside by focusing on the outside. Create a beautiful soul, not a beautiful body. That's where true self love lives. ✨

SELF-CARE

Adapting To The NEW NORMAL

'THE NEW NORMAL' – WORDS THAT SEEM EMPTY AND SO WEIGHTED,
ALL AT ONCE, RIGHT? HOW CAN WE CALL IT THE NEW NORMAL WHEN
NO PART OF IT FEELS NORMAL?

By **Smriti Notani**





Is it normal to not see your loved ones for months on end? Is it normal to not take in the sights and sounds our magnificent world has to offer? Is it normal to not go to a movie theatre and devour cinema with Dolby sound with hot, buttered popcorn to boot? Is it normal to not take a chai break with a colleague when work is stressing us out but ping them on Whatsapp instead? For that matter, is it normal to be worried about the economy to the point where our own jobs and futures seem insecure? Just the thought alone makes me shudder. To be completely honest, I have begun to detest this term 'new normal'. Having said that, I would be the biggest nincompoop if I didn't wake up and smell the coffee: nothing is how it used to be! So where does that leave me? There's only two ways to go from here: be stuck in limbo (doesn't sound appealing to me) or to pivot. At the risk of sounding like American Television's favourite nerd, paleontologist Ross Gellar from FRIENDS, I'm screaming 'PIVOT' at the top of my lungs to anyone who's willing to listen!

I think dealing with change, no matter how begrudgingly, is something we are all going to have to do. But I have a list of pointers that I use as a personal ready reckoner and I invite you to use it too.

1) What is the new best-case scenario?

Allow yourself to dream all over again. Now you have new information at hand, so take the facts (For example: business reduced by 60% in the past 3 months) and go back to the drawing board. Make a new plan with new targets. This is a simple and effective way to accept this new reality but still dream of a bright future. Because dream, we must!

2) What have I learnt about myself during this global

pandemic?

It's safe to say we all amazed ourselves with skills we didn't even know we had, right? Take time to assess these skills and maybe use them to your advantage in the new plan that you're making for your life.

3) What keeps me strong when the world around me is crumbling?

Is it your spiritual practice? Is it a person who is the wind beneath your wings? Or is it your very own indomitable spirit?

4) Where do I see myself 2 years from now?

It's easy to think this phase will never end but it will. What does 2022 look like in your mind?

5) Take care of your mental health

If there's one thing we ought to learn from witnessing a global pandemic it's this: mental health is important. Nothing in life is certain and it takes a certain mental resilience to deal with the inevitable vicissitudes of life. This we can build over time with mental wellness practices, which include a mix of physical exercises, therapy, good lifestyle habits.

6) Power of real

How can someone who calls herself Real Girl not include a point on keeping it real? On a serious note, it's time to summon your true self. Please be absolutely raw and honest with yourself and with those around you. The time to make small talk is over. Learn to have open and honest conversations with those around you. If someone in your life is struggling with change, they should know they can be vulnerable with you. ✨

Wellness Initiatives in The New Normal

AS WELLNESS GOES FROM NICHE TO NEW NORMAL, HOTELS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE FINDING CREATIVE WAYS TO INSTRUMENT THIS INTO EVERY COMPONENT OF THE GUEST EXPERIENCE, FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN TO EVERYDAY OPERATIONS. NO LONGER EARMARKED FOR ELITE SPAS, WELLNESS NOW IS MERGED INTO HOTELS OF ALL SCALES, WITH MILLIONS DEVOTED IN MAKING FIT AND SAFE TRAVEL REACHABLE TO THE GUESTS.

By **Rupali Dean**

VANSHIKA AHUJA

Director, Karma Chalets



A designer by profession and hotelier by default...Vanishka completed her schooling from Vasant Valley, which gave her a wholesome, well-rounded education. She excelled in academics, basketball, football and Bharat Natyam and developed a love of adventure, trekking and the outdoors. Her art teachers provided her a strong structure to explore her area of interests in depth. It led her to pursue Communication Design in college and from there on, good design became a prerequisite and almost a way of life for her.

A family project consisting of a boutique hotel with 30 quaint rooms, fell quite literally into her lap, and the experience has been almost life-changing. She soon grew to learn that everything - an empty space, a dining plate and even a garden - is a canvas. Design helps one pay attention to detail - to approach and create a smooth, seamless 'guest experience' as a personalized curation of the most minute details, where every touchpoint evokes an emotion, makes one stop and 'take it all in'. It is majorly design itself that has helped her bring a soul into this space - this hotel that she calls home.

WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Karma Chalets has always placed great emphasis on wellness, health, nature, hygiene, safety and the environment. These are the five pillars of Karma Chalets. "Being nestled within nature at Karma Lakelands, a property close to 280 acres, gives us some natural advantages. With no elevators in

the property, the corridors to reach each chalet is through an open pathway through a garden. Each Chalet has their own AC unit and with verdant green spaces, the opportunity of personalised dining in the open, too is a USP. "Additionally, we are using the internationally acclaimed and considered as best in the world "Diversey" products - Sanitisers, Disinfectants, floor cleaners, table top cleaners etc. Professional services and doctors are on standby to deal with any guest who displays covid symptoms", says Ahuja.

WELLNESS CUISINE

"Our chefs at Karma Chalets go to great lengths to form strong connections with local producers, social entrepreneurs and farmers practising honest agriculture, in an attempt to not only source indigenous ingredients but also have a lasting effect on the food chain. With a vegetable garden just next door, more than 70% of the vegetables used are grown by us on our farm without the use of any chemical pesticides. We believe, when produce has been lovingly created in partnership with the chefs who'll end up cooking with it, flavour becomes king. We may not have a particular dish available on a day but would offer you alternatives, this is because it may not be ready for harvest on the day. Come explore culinary emotions in surroundings that serve as nature's lap. We are certain you will take home a bit of the 'Under The Neem' experience and lifestyle", adds Ahuja.



KUSH KAPOOR

CEO – Roseate Hotels & Resorts



With over 22 years of experience in the hospitality industry and many laurels to his head, Kush Kapoor has covered the most iconic hotels during his hospitality career across India. He has benchmarked a SIX SIGMA Green Belt, Black Belt Trainer & Master Black Belt, certified by RABQSA and holds a Psychology and Tai Chi certification from Oxford and Harvard University respectively as well as General Managers Program from Cornell University. As a veteran in launching several hotels, he successfully launched Roseate House New Delhi and The Roseate Ganges in Rishikesh, and made Roseate Hotels & Resorts an iconic Luxury hotel Brand in India.

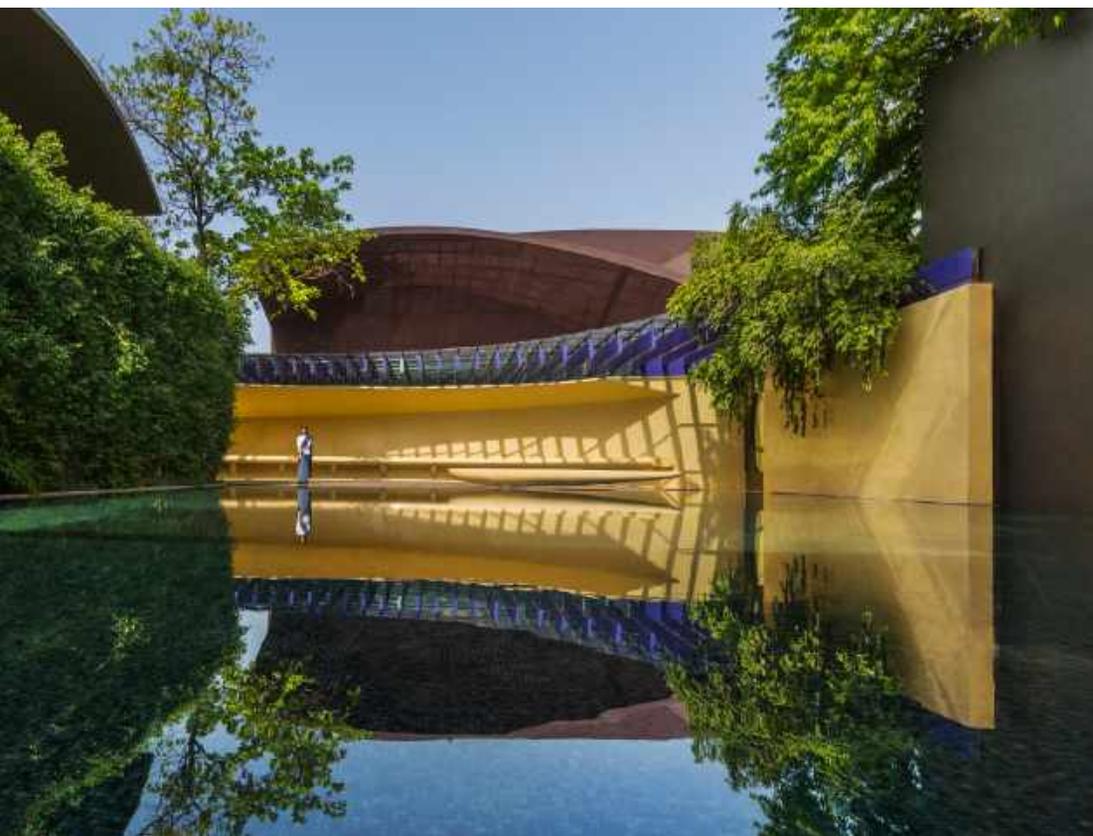
WELLNESS INITIATIVES

The Roseate Ganges in Rishikesh, perched atop a hill in the serene greens of Himalayas, overlooking the pristine waters of the Ganges River and surrounding valleys, fuels your wellness journey with its holistic and natural approach to self-healing and care along with stimulation of your body mind and soul. "Early morning yoga by the private beach followed by meditation is stimulating as you watch the sunrise - a great refreshing start to your day. We recommend going gadget free during your stay. At Aheli spa, internationally trained therapists weave magic on your body to rejuvenate and heal your muscles keeping in mind each body type and needs. Oils used are essential to recover, containing

ingredients like safflower, camphor and eucalyptus known to relieve and heal the body. Immerse yourself in traditions and relive history with a soulful traditional 'Ganga Aarti' experience by the holy Ganges banks, a visit to Sivananda ashram and a walk into the famous 'Beatles' ashram. Nature trails like a visit to Rajaji National Park and local organic farms give you a perspective. Roseate Wellness Packages for 3 days and 7 days can be curated by the spa team", shares Kapoor.

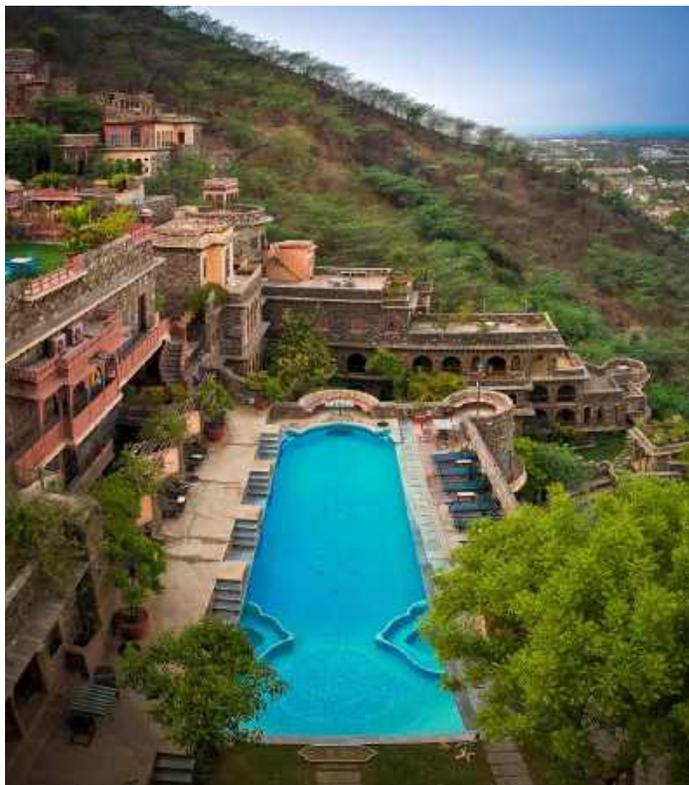
ON WELLNESS CUISINE

The well-defined cuisine philosophy at the resort revolves largely around celebrating the rich and varied produce grown and sourced from different parts of Uttarakhand. "Guests will experience a blend of local cuisine from the kitchens of Garhwal and Kumaon homes and novel interpretations of international flavours and dishes using fresh, seasonal local ingredients at Chidiya Ghar all day dining. Don't miss out on yummy yet healthy dishes like homemade ragi banana bread with Turkish eggs during breakfast, the popular karele ki chaat and beetroot falafel for starters followed by millet risotto, grilled Himalayan trout, organic fed grilled chicken paired with ragi phulka or Indian breads to name a few. Organic and custom diet meals can be curated post consultation with the chefs, basis personal requirements and body types of guests", adds Kapoor



SONAVI KAICKER

CEO, Neemrana Hotels



A Rhodes Scholar from India, Sonavi has been an active part of the Indian hospitality field for over 14 years and is accountable for evolving structures of creative replication and structuring within the “non-hotel” Neemrana model, while always keeping the Company’s inventiveness and nimbleness to change to varying tourism realities that will endure the internal and external market of India. She has vigorously underwritten the Neemranification movement since 2010. A former nationwide golf champion and the only Indian woman to grip an Oxford Half-Blue, she did her Masters in Research in Psychology and then took a second master’s degree in Management Research. She won the 4th Hospitality Leaders Industry Choice Award in the category “Visionary Rising Star of the Year 2018” at

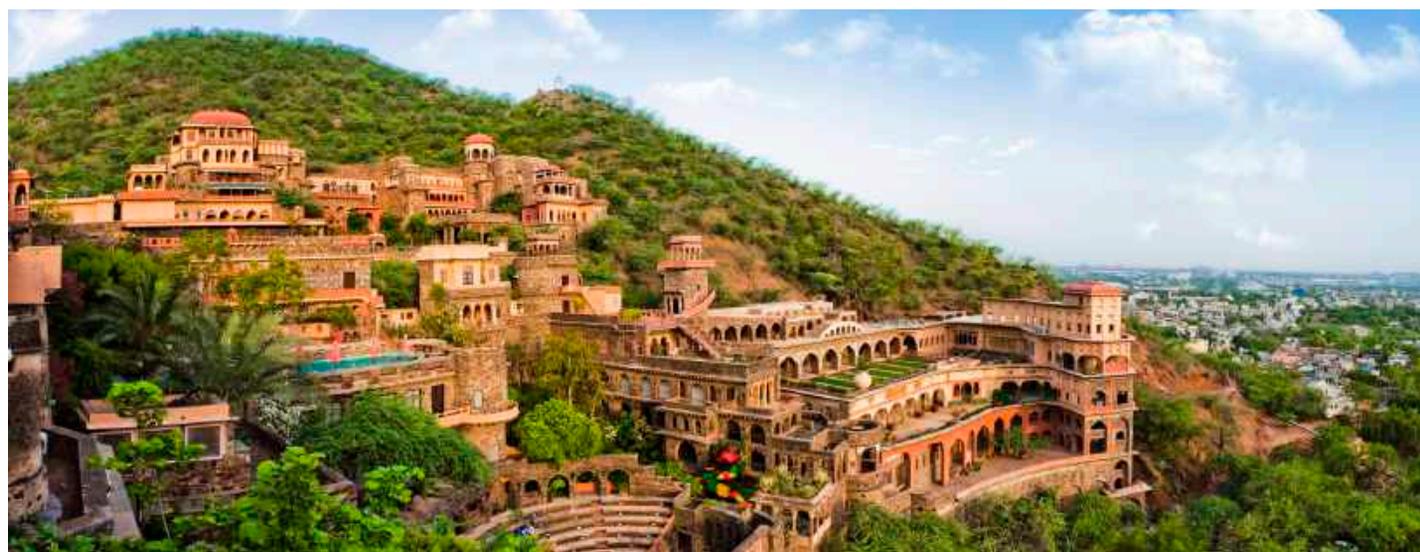
Mumbai and is an Honourable Member on the Amity University Advisory Board.

WELLNESS INITIATIVES

A pioneer of heritage and experiential hospitality, Neemrana believes that standing at the foot of eternity, one must understand that even though we are specks on this planet, it is the smallest joys which can offer us all the fruits of the cosmos. “Life is not all about escalating into ‘luxury’ – to get ‘more’ from less is what India can teach from its vantage point in philosophical evolution. Eventually, it is simplicity which is the ultimate style. Hanging gardens, two pools (one heated) to swim out to the horizon, a health club and an Ayurveda spa that extends your private past into your future, just as Neemrana Fort-Palace does to history! Ride a camel/camel cart or a vintage car. Walk out to the Neemrana eco-farm or the 16th century step-well which descends 7 floors into the earth. Guests can interact with the Chefs and enjoy learning original Neemrana recipes, visit the homes of our friendly staff and enjoy simple walks in real India”, says Sonavi. The Covid-19 safety program called “Pavitr” includes all the aspects of the Ministry of Tourism protocols.

WELLNESS CUISINE

Neemrana Hotels has always focused on increasing the degree of self-reliance for food in the local and regional community. The dependence on local and seasonal raw materials reduces food wastage and helps the environment too. Neemrana encourages guests to ask for unfamiliar, local foods and discover how they make the taste buds tingle. The 18 Neemrana properties across India offers guests the opportunity to relish local Rajasthani, Kumaoni, Garhwali, Punjabi, Marwari, Kerala, and Chettinad cuisine. Guests can relish fine thali eating with desert-spiced delicacies and enjoy the home-made breads, desserts and ice creams at the Neemrana non-hotel Hotels. The Neemrana orchards at The Ramgarh Bungalows in the Kumaon hills hang with apricots, plums, peaches, pears, and apples through the summer. “Natural Neemrana jams are made here – without preservatives so that they preserve your health too and are served at all Neemrana hotels across the country” says Sonavi.



NITESH GANDHI

General Manager JW Marriott, New Delhi



With an experience of over 18 years in hospitality, Nitesh is a seasoned hospitality professional with renowned accolades such as 'South Asia General Manager of The Year' by Stelliers - Asia & South Asia Awards, 'General Manager of The Year 2019' by Marriott International and 'Most Innovative General Manager' to his name. As a General Manager at JW Marriott New Delhi, Nitesh is responsible for promoting and marketing the business, positioning, budgeting, setting and achieving sales and profit targets, and recruiting and training associates. Nitesh joined JW Marriott New Delhi in 2017 and since then has ideated and executed some exceptional initiatives, events and campaigns.

WELLNESS INITIATIVES

While focusing on a brand concept of "The Whole You", JW Marriott New Delhi promotes a sense of well-being to pursue wholesome experiences that create mindful moments. "Wellness is defined as being fully aware of your health and surroundings and in the new normal, it is eminent that we focus on providing safe accommodation, healthy and crafted food choices, rejuvenation to let our guests explore their surroundings and indulge. With a 24-hours open Quan Spa (which right now is temporarily closed), temperature-controlled outdoor Swimming Pool and a modern Fitness Centre, we focus on our guests' well-being and offer services such as Yoga classes, Meditation exercises and relaxing therapies. With vivid concepts like the 'Family by JW' program, we also aim to bring together families to enjoy each other's company with interactive activities, reimagined flavours and luxurious set-ups. The sustainable activities as part of the wellness design of the hotel include the plastic-free journey, initiated last year, which eliminated the use of 20,00,000 plastic wa-

ter bottles in a year and replaced it with glass bottles, all produced at the hotel's artificial-intelligence enabled water treatment and purification plant. All the guest floors and corridors are equipped with high capacity electrostatic precipitators which reduce PM 2.5 and 10 by 90%, thus providing clean and healthy air for guests to breathe in. Another initiative to promote wellness & sustainability is 'The Experience Series', which is an annual marketing event, last year whose theme was "Sustainability & Serenity", proving on our tenets of doing responsible business. All the decision-makers of these corporates had put together their sustainable resolutions that they are committed to implementing. This enthusiastic session was an important part of the drive. We also intend to host a sustainability round table this year to mark our collective progress", says Gandhi.

ON WELLNESS CUISINE

At JW Marriott New Delhi, wellness cuisine is not just about providing food choices to guests with fresh ingredients; instead, it is a process that begins right from the sourcing to bring this concept of wellness to guests & diners. "All our menus will soon feature fish obtained from sustainable sources and it will be the same for almost all other ingredients. There is a concise effort to ensure that at least 70 percent of our ingredients should be organic and we are also looking at growing our lettuce hydroponically at the hotel. IQ, in the new normal, will be the Immunity Quotient and it will be showcased by way of super seeds, Greek yoghurts and a raw poke theatre. At our Asian kitchen in the hotel, we want to do away with fried snacks on our Asian buffets and instead, feature wok-tossed ingredients with low sodium soy. Also, immunity boosters will be an essential part of our juice bars", says Gandhi.



MANU RISHI GUPTHA

CEO, Niraamaya Retreats



Manu Rishi Gupta, holds an MBA from Warwick Business School and has over 20 years of experience in various sectors such as Hospitality, Finance, Casinos, and Shipping. He has been instrumental in setting up unique projects which have been significant milestones in the Tourism Industry. He likes to simplify complex situations and comment on them. He believes in an efficient market theory and combines it with the philosophy of karma and destiny. In his initial years, he was social and a party buff but has come to believe that one should invest time only on friends and relations that are for a lifetime – not for a season or a reason.

WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Niraamaya Retreats have been pioneers in traditional Ayurveda for over 10 years and along with that they have always offered Yoga retreats and focussed on nutrition. “We are now diversifying and expanding our scope into functional medicine along with Daivam Wellness who are pioneers in this field. This collaboration will help widen the spectrum of our offerings at the Retreats and add a new dimension to our wellness initiatives. The programs that we have developed along with Daivam Wellness will specifically target the 4 lifestyle issues such as diabetes, obesity, stress, and hypertension which are currently afflicting the planet and are the root cause of 90% other morbidities. These programs are meant to specifically reverse and cure rather than just pre-

vent. Our flagship immunity rejuvenation program is a game-changer that will ensure that you are set on the path to true wellness and good health”, says Manu.

ON WELLNESS CUISINE

Their very elaborate set of wellness menus are designed specifically in line with the science of Ayurveda and body composition. When people opt for specific wellness programs at the retreats, they recommend these menus for their condition or the objectives for which they visit us.

“In the kitchens of Niraamaya Wellness Retreats, our chefs are always creating exciting new dishes that take guests on not just a gastronomic journey, but also on a path to wellness. We break the belief of ‘Healthy cannot be tasty’. Our Chefs continue to experiment with the same ingredients but use cooking techniques that optimize their nutritive powers. For example –we use a local fruit-vegetable like jackfruit, very commonly used in Kerala to make a jackfruit cheesecake made from stevia leaves instead of sugar. Jackfruit flour that is rich in dietary fibre and regulates blood glucose levels is used to make Chapati or Phulka. It is a great option for people who are looking for gluten or dairy-free food. When people opt for specific wellness programs at our retreats, our Chefs in consultation with an Ayurvedic doctor design menus specifically for their condition or the objectives for which they visit us”, adds Manu.

WELLNESS WISDOM

Transformation of Wellness

IN THE 'NEW NORMAL' WORLD POST COVID-19, WELLNESS WILL COME TO THE FORE WITH EVEN GREATER IMPORTANCE. THIS IS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE AN EFFECTIVE VACCINE OR OTHER RESTRICTIONS BEING EASED, THE WORLD WILL GET BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS OF BUSINESS. By **Andrew Jacka**



Wellness had already started to transform the world before COVID-19 turned it on its head. Global initiatives such as 'Plastic Free July', a commitment to reduce plastic pollution launched in 2011, Global Wellness Day - a global social movement launched in 2012, the United Nations World Happiness Report launched 2012 or Sustainable Development Goals, a United Nations initiative ratified by governments around the world in 2015, or World Wellness Weekend launched 2017 - all these initiatives have already moved to change the wellness landscape, even though for some, their role in wellness is not immediately obvious.

Equally one might not see the connection between these initiatives, Electro-Chemical Activated (ECA) Water and wooden toothbrushes yet they and many other actions are all undeniable contributors to our wellness – be it at the macro level where you

have little or no control or the micro level where you have total control.

The spa and wellness sector (like many other industry sectors) has taken a big hit as a result of the pandemic, with both restriction of movement and reduction in discretionary spending, significantly impacting business levels. This has resulted in large scale redundancies and the closure (temporarily or permanent) of businesses across the industry. At a time when one would have thought that services offered by spa and wellness operators should be seeing a significant uptick in demand as a result of hygiene standards employed and 'preventive' health benefits which they yield, we have instead seen business after business suffer and forced to close when they should have been a viable part of the solution. Despite governments (and consumers) focusing on 'relaxation' as the primary goal for a spa business, they





can provide much more. Relaxation if practiced regularly, can strengthen the immune system and produce other medically valuable physiological changes including the promotion of mental wellbeing.

Spa is part of wellness, but wellness is much bigger than the spa. In a post COVID-19 world, spas are likely to become more clearly defined by industry, regulators and consumers as a 'last century fad' and part of the 'pampering quick fix – feel good services', while the role of wellness is better understood to be a broader offering of services to achieve a state of being healthy – physically, environmentally, emotionally, spiritually. There's likely going to be significant challenges with the regulators when they finally realise that spa and wellness are not one and the same thing.

Wellness is acknowledged to encompass eight dimensions: Emotional Wellness, Environmental Wellness, Financial Wellness, Intellectual Wellness, Occupational Wellness, Physical Wellness, Social Wellness, and Spiritual Wellness. Each of these dimensions can bring its own challenges in their deliverance, but the results yield sustainability and addressing them all in a practical, cost effective manner will ensure that the end product is truly a wellness facility. As to how far down this path we travel, whether we specialize in one dimension or seek to incorporate all will depend on a multitude of factors not least of which will be customer demand.

There will be wellness spas – businesses that have spa at their core but offer multiple hour/day packages and programs to assist their guests in their journey towards improved sustainable health, yet you can also expect to see a growth in business that focus on an individual wellness dimensions that is seen as far removed from the 'wellness industry'. Having a healthy relationship with a loved one, using wooden toothbrushes instead of plastic ones,

using vinegar or lemon to clean benches, buying your vegetables 'loose' instead of prepackaged, borrowing a book from the library, avoiding credit card debt, learning to play a musical instrument, establishing a work-life balance, dancing, gardening, volunteering your time to a good cause are examples of wellness and why regulators will have their work cut out for them to try and regulate what in many instances is unregulatable.

Each dimension of wellness can require a balancing act to achieve as each brings its own distinct challenges with varying levels of commitment required to successfully achieve this. However the rewards are immense for the mind, the body and the soul when you attain a healthy state of being.

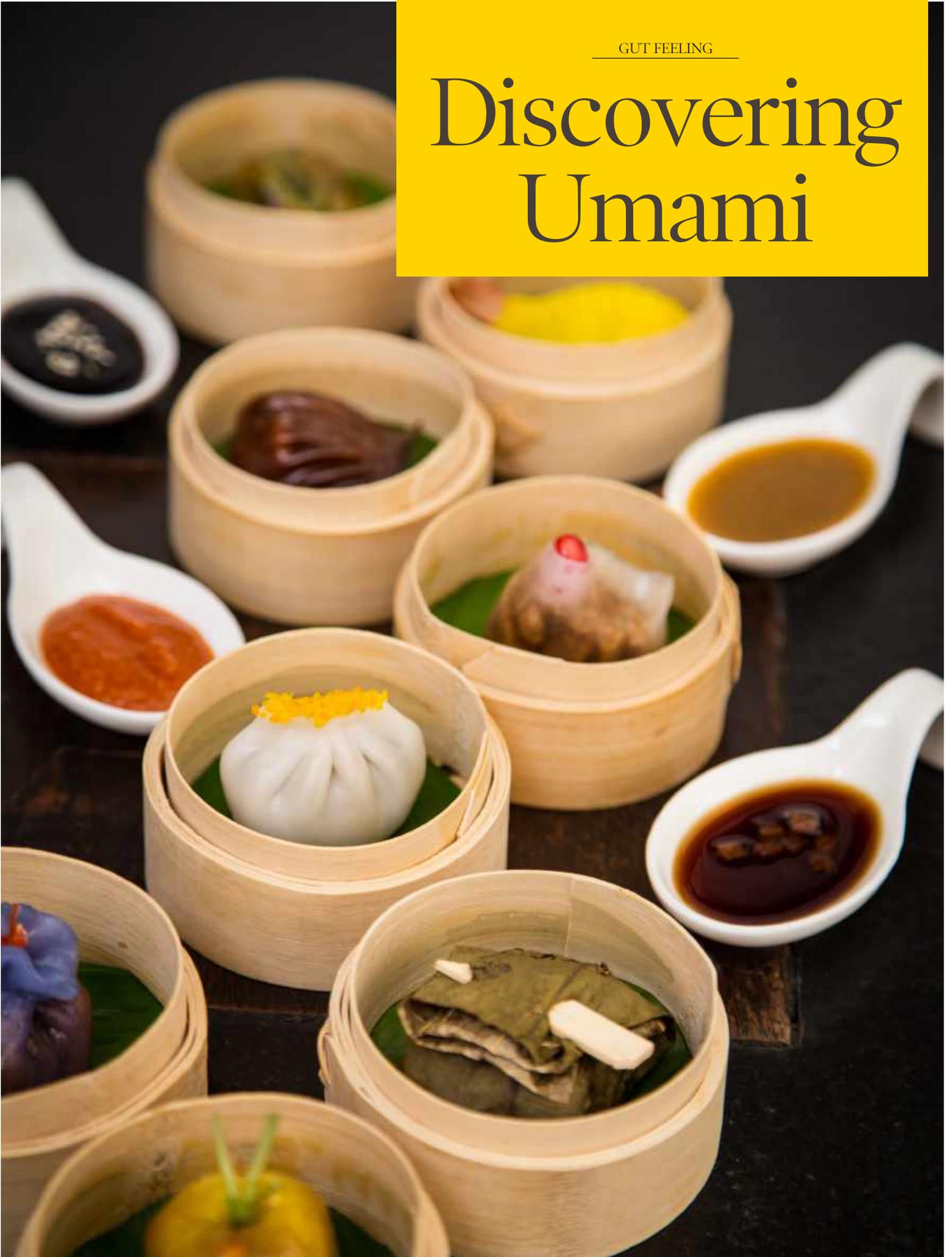
Wellness is clearly defined by its dimensions, yet how this fully translates in the business world is still being explored and will be fraught with the highs and lows of adapting to a 'new normal'. Whether wellness is just a marketing word, or it is a viable business model that does not fall foul of regulators will take time to determine. To minimize consumer confusion, we need to commit to a universal definition of wellness and not try to put our own marketing spin on it, as we have done with spa. Spas only causes confusion across the industry, media, those responsible for its governance, and with consumers.

In a post COVID-19 world, the eight dimensions will evolve (and who knows – perhaps over time this will become nine or more) but the essence of these dimensions must remain unchanged so that we have a common understanding.

Wellness has started to, and will increasingly influence all aspects of life. Social Wellness, Occupation Wellness, and Physical Wellness are intrinsically linked with other dimensions, so whether business operators focus on one or more, we as a society must focus on all of them so that we as individuals can be well, society can be well and our planet can again be well. ✨

GUT FEELING

Discovering Umami





SEASONED CHEFS WAX ELOQUENT ON WHY THE FIFTH ELEMENT HAS GARNERED SO MUCH PRESS LATELY – AND THE ONE BIG REASON THAT THE TREND IS LIKELY TO STAY FOR A LONG TIME.

By **Madhulika Dash**

Ever wondered what is so fascinating about ketchup that it simply makes anything taste great? Or why Chinese cuisine with its sour on sour combination has become such a world phenomenon? Or what is exactly about commercial chips that makes them taste so much better than home-made ones?

The answer, says seasoned Chef Sabyasachi Gorai (owner, Fabrica By Saby), “is an ingredient called Monosodium Glutamate or MSG – the term that in the past one decade has earned more bricks for being responsible for quite a few health issues (mostly unproven) than credits for being the miraculous tastemaker that it is.” Adds Chef Gorai, “it is MSG that cranks up the deliciousness in a dish – be it your ketchup, soup, smoked pork, mustard over hot dog and even the kasundi ilish we make in Bengal – and make it so addictive and memorable.”

The reason why we connect more with food that has glutamic acid, says Chef Vikas Seth (Culinary Director,

Sriracha) is because of in-built receptors in our body that recognise this flavour and send it to the brain which interprets it as delicious or tasteful.”

It was this very science that Professor Kikunae Ikeda unearthed, when one day he found his Dashi broth soup to be tastier than other days - he figured that this was from the addition of kombu, a type of microalgae and flakes of fish known as katsuobushi. He then went on to create monosodium glutamate (MSG), which he called Ajinomoto and the rest is history. Unable to decipher how to describe the taste, which falls somewhere in between all major taste profiles, he termed it Umami – the Japanese word for deliciousness.

This was 1907. While his discovery introduced the food world to the fifth element of taste, Umami, it also created an uproar around 2004 of its unhealthy side effects. However, David Chang of New York’s famous Momofuku defended MSG calling it an “fabulous taste enhancer that was natural and safe, unless proven otherwise.”

Incidentally, the talk which delved into the Asian use of Umami in a dish unleashed two big trends in the culinary world: first, the concept of Umami became a subject of curious contemplation; and two, those familiar with it began finding ways to creatively harness the fifth element from natural resources.

Contrary to popular believe, says culinary consultant Pradeep Tejwani (Owner, Young Turks), "Umami's ace on its flavour peers is that while it appears naturally in some produce like tomatoes, mushroom and legumes; it is a factor that can be harnessed as well by using different methods and also can be cranked up as and when required. An excellent example is of course soy sauce, kimchi and the omnipresent ketchup.

Chef Seth who uses a dash of kimchi and miso to give the soups their distinct taste and deliciousness concurs. "The beauty about working with Umami produces and creation is that they can up the flavour by several notches" adds the Oriental specialist who has been working with cheese and soy to create their interesting dips that often are served with grills to add that zing of good taste and experience.

Likewise, Chef Gorai whose introduction of kasundi mustard as a dip with his food at Lavaash By Saby and then at Byg Brewski not only made the dish a best seller but also upped the ante when it came to a delicious experience. The culinary chronicler found traces of Umami presence during research of food in the Indus Valley Civilisation. "There are

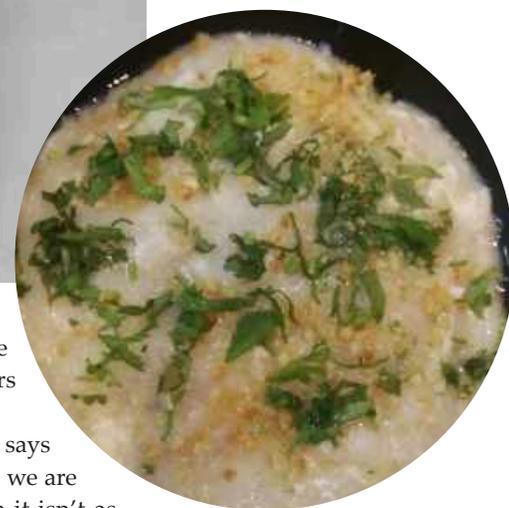
many dishes", he says, "which use dried meat and fish as they act like flavour bombs that can turn any meal interesting and satiating."

Clearly, says Chef Sharad Dewan (Regional Director, Food Production, The Park Hotels), "Umami as a taste concept existed in the past and was an important aspect of every ancient food culture, not only Japanese. A good example of this are the cheeses or the sukhua (dried seafood) that is used extensively in Eastern and Western part of Odisha."

Agreed culinary custodian Alka Jena (founder, CulinaryXpress), whose experiments with tomatoes, one of the naturally rich sources of glutamate, in various Indian dishes has been a lesson in how Umami works in taking a good dish into a great dish. Incidentally, says Jena, "the umami-ness of tomatoes is one of the key reasons why tomatoes, a produce not native to India, became such an integral part of our cooking. It isn't just a souring agent like tamarind or kokum but also imbibes this a little savoury-sweetness that adds to the appeal of a dish."

The creation of tomato khatta, an Odia relish made by purely harnessing the Umami virtues of tomatoes is an excellent example of how the fifth element works in turning a dish, a craving. Another ingredient that has proven the kind of contribution Umami has towards creating a great experience of food is mushroom, says Chef Praveen Shetty (Executive Chef, Conrad Bengaluru), who uses the fungus often to create a different mouthfeel and perception to a dish. It is the





savoury kind of meatiness in mushroom, says Chef Shetty, “which has not only made it popular but also lends it that distinction of being the hero of a dish that is the main flavour player.” A fine specimen of how mushroom’s savouriness has worked for it is the Kumbh Galouti – a dish that uses the presence of the glutamine acid in the mushroom to create a level of flavours that make it a decadence of a dish.”

Fascinatingly, it is the ability to constantly tweak, upscale and even crank up the natural source of Umami to create dishes that one would constantly crave and enjoy immensely that has been at the centre of many experiments by chefs in the recent past. As chefs, adds Chef Dewan, who uses a multi-level harnessing of umami by using two or more sources to create a flavour that is hard to forget. Take the case of the congee we serve at Zen on request, says the culinary expert. “While making this simple gruel, we often play around with miso and dried shrimp or smoked pork to give it that amazingly soothing yet pleasurable mouth feel. Just a few clever additions can make street food evolved enough to be a part of any gourmet experience.”

It is much like the hing we use in our kitchen, adds Chef Tejwani, “a little pinch of it can make a world of difference to the dish, but one needs to understand the when and how much of it is required as well.”

It is this discovery by Chefs that has led to a series of gourmet experiences that have ruled the culinary tables pan India in the past five years when Umami became an integral part of our dining grammar. Like the Epic Table hosted by Chef Abhishek Gupta (Executive Sous Chef, The Leela Ambience Gurugram) whose work on fermentation and Umami has been a work in progress as to how different elements when treated differently can add to the value of a dish – and create an experience. And Chef Seth’s sense and sensibility where diners are

given an experience to explore the nuances of different flavours including Umami.

The good thing about Umami, says Chef Seth, “is that it isn’t a taste we are not familiar with, even though it isn’t as easy to explain as sweet or sour. Thanks to our cultural diversity we have had many examples of Umami that have been hugely popular like Masor Tenga of Assam or Mumbai Bombil fry and Bengal’s Shorshe Maach, especially the one that uses fermented mustard as base; and a few where we add Umami-ness to create the special dish like those using mushroom, cured meat like Goan Chorizo and of course the many Indian curries, where tomatoes are added to boost the khatas (a word that somewhat describes Umami).”

Thus, adds Chef Gorai, “the use of it to create interesting gourmet experience by chefs is a rather obvious outcome. What is interesting now is the constant clear understanding where we are using a combination of scientific and culinary techniques to harness flavours to create exceptional gourmet products that are natural, safe and still have the same level of ‘addictive deliciousness’ as before.”

That, add the experts, “is a trend that is likely to stay as we discover different facets of umami and how it can help us develop food that is gourmet.”

Of course what adds to the zest of Umami in the culinary world, adds nutritional therapist, Sveta Bhassin, “is the health side of this inexplicable fifth element which works not only in calming a stressed system by balancing the circadian rhythm – the three doshas as explained in Ayurveda – but the glutamine in them can actually help calm the mind and repair any damage caused by stress.” Thus, making it a tastemaker that does more than just making food delicious. ✨

Everything Sweet



Chef Neha Shah

Masterchef India Season 4 finalist, Co-founder of Meraaki Kitchen and Cafe White Sage
@nehadeepakshah

SUGAR FREE RASMALAI

6-7 pieces

Ingredients:

- 1 litre Toned milk (Non homogenized)
- Vinegar, yoghurt whey or Lime Juice to curdle the milk
- Cardamom powder and Saffron for flavour
- A little Jaggery to sweeten the Rabri. (you can use any natural sweetener of your choice) If using Honey, avoid heating. Add once cooled
- Pistachio, rose petals and silver varq for garnish

Process:

For Chenna-

- Heat the milk in a pan and curdle it with Vinegar and some water. (2tsp vinegar + 2tbsp water). The temperature of curdling is very important where the milk should be just below boiling temperature 75 to 80 degrees
- After Curdling, do not stir it vigorously as it will disturb the chenna
- Stern the chenna in a muslin cloth and immediately add cold water to it. Squeeze the water out, but make sure not to over squeeze
- Leave it aside for 20 minutes
- Take your chenna out of the cloth, gently crumble it, and start kneading it
- Add 1/4th tsp cornflour to your chenna and knead it till it becomes a smooth dough for 3-4 minutes
- Divide the dough in 6-7 pieces and shape them in a disc
- Take a pan with a lid and boil some water. Put the discs in the water when it is bubbling for 15 minutes
- Take them out and put in chilled water. Leave it aside for 20 minutes

For Rabri-

- Take another pot with 500 ml of milk and reduce it to 300 ml to make



the rabri

- Add some elaichi powder and some kesar
- Keep on stirring it gently and make sure to cook it on a low flame
- Add some jaggery or honey
- Keep on cooking the rabri till it thickens enough. Cool it down and bring it to room temperature

Plating-

- Squeeze those discs to remove the water and put it in the rabri
- Keep them in the refrigerator for 3-4 hours
- Garnish it with some chopped pistachios and rose petals

Tips-

- The consistency of chenna is the key. If it is too dry then the final result won't be as spongy and if it is too wet, it will disintegrate while cooking.
- While cooking, the temperature has to be high. Set the flame to high at all times. It has to be constantly bubbling.
- Do not touch the chenna when in cold water for 20 minutes.
- Squeeze the chenna disk extremely well to ensure it soaks the rabri well to make it juicy.
- Add Jaggery after the rabri has cooled a bit, older jaggery has the tendency to curdle the milk if it is slightly acidic.
- Serve Chilled.

Shivesh Bhatia

Self-taught Baker, Author of Bake with Shivesh
@shivesh17

NO YEAST EGGLESS DONUTS

Ingredients

For the donuts-

- ½ cup milk
- 1 tsp vinegar (optional)
- 1+ ½ cup maida + 1 tbsp (if needed)
- ¼ cup castor sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder + ¼ tsp baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- ¼ tsp grated nutmeg
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 1 tbsp curd
- Oil for frying

For the glaze-

- 1 cup chopped chocolate
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil

Process-

- In a bowl add vinegar to the milk, mix and let this mixture stand for 5-10 minutes
- In a separate large bowl, add the flour, castor sugar, baking powder,



baking soda, salt and nutmeg. Mix all dry ingredients well

- To the dry ingredients now add the milk and vinegar mixture, butter and curd. Mix everything until the dough comes together. If the dough feels very sticky, add a tbsp of flour. Let it rest for 30-40 minutes
- Heat a pot with oil and bring it to 185C to 190C
- Dust the counter with flour, divide the dough in half and roll the dough to ½ inch of thickness. Cut the dough using a cookie cutter or large lid for the outer circle and small lid for the center
- Carefully add the donuts to hot oil to fry and let it fry until the donuts become fluffy and they rise, flip and cook until golden brown
- For the glaze chop the chocolate and add to a microwave safe bowl. Add the oil and microwave it in 30 second intervals until the chocolate is fully melted
- Glaze the donuts with the chocolate glaze, top with crushed almonds and enjoy!

Tips to make perfect donuts-

- While making the dough it will be slightly on the sticker side and that is okay! Do not add extra flour by looking at the consistency or roll the dough vigorously as this will make the donuts tough.
- Rest the dough for 30-40 minutes so that the leavening agents can get activated and our donuts turn out pillow-y.
- Add the vinegar to the milk and let it rest for 5-10 minutes, this extra step will make the donuts soft and texturally perfect.
- Add my secret ingredient-nutmeg. Nutmeg adds a beautiful flavour and smell to the donuts. This will have your donuts taste just like you have picked them off a bakery counter.
- Make sure the frying oil is at the right cooking temperature which is usually between 185-190C. The oil will be VERY hot, so please be careful and ask for help if need be.





Archit Agarwal

Food blogger

@architlost

CHOCOLATE WHISKEY CAKE WITH A MILK CHOCOLATE FROSTING

Ingredients-

For the cake

- ¾ cup vegetable oil, plus more for pan
- 1½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder (preferably Dutched cocoa)
- 1 tablespoon instant coffee
- 3 medium eggs (to make it eggless: swap the eggs for 1/3 cup of greek yogurt or hung curd)
- 1 cup milk
- 60 ml whiskey
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract

For the frosting

- 170 grams of semisweet chocolate (or compound chocolate)
- ¼ cup icing sugar
- 60 ml whole milk
- 150 grams unsalted butter
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract

Process-

- Whisk all your dry ingredients together in a large dry bowl: flour, cocoa, salt, instant coffee, baking powder and soda along with all the granulated sugar
- For your wet ingredients: add your eggs, oil, whiskey, and vanilla extract in a medium bowl until well combined and creamy, about 30 sec-

onds. Using a spatula, mix egg mixture into dry ingredients until fully incorporated. It will be thick and pasty, that's okay!

- Warm 1 cup milk in a small saucepan over medium heat until it comes to just a bare simmer—make sure it doesn't come to a boil. Whisk warmed milk into batter until lump-free and just combined; do not overmix

- Immediately transfer batter to the prepared pan. Tap the pan a few times on the work surface to encourage some of the bubbles to escape. Bake cake in an oven at 160 celsius for 40-50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean

- For the frosting: Melt chocolate and butter in the microwave or in a double boiler until completely melted. Using a hand mixer, whip the chocolate mixture, slowly adding milk and icing sugar (sifted). Mix all the ingredients and place the mixture in the fridge for 30 minutes. Remove and whip again for 5 minutes. Place in the fridge and follow the same process again until you create a glossy thick frosting (I repeated the process twice. The more you whip, the more air would build into the frosting and the lighter the color would get)



BY INVITE ONLY

WOMEN FOR WELLNESS WITH FSSA

CREATING NEW STANDARDS FOR WELLNESS APART FROM MIND AND BODY, FSSA MS. WELLNESS INDIA 2020 LED A UNIQUE VISUAL CONTEST FROM 16TH TO 18TH JULY 2020 - BEJEWELING WOMEN FROM ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH TITLES AS PER THE FITNESS AND SPORTS SCIENCES ASSOCIATION.



With a mission to empower wellness around the world using education, awareness and collaboration with professionals and corporates, Fitness and Sports Sciences Association (FSSA) Ms. Wellness India crowned women based on not just the mind and body, but many other parameters including their journey, introductions, impressions, flexibility, physical ability, mental health aptitude, emotional and adversity quotient, overall screen presence, and a final Q&A round with the jury.

At the end of a three-day event, the following women emerged victorious in their respective categories: Ms. Urvashi Parwani - Category YOUTH; Ms. Swapnali Jambe - Category YOUNG ADULT; Ms. Shabhna Sriramakrishna - Category PRIME; Ms. Neeru Dahiya - Category CLASSIC; Ms. Neelam J - Category CLASSIC.

Mr. Gurnit Singh Dua, CEO of FSSA, stated, "It is an overwhelming feeling to see a dream being executed, a dream

which has now become larger than life."

Industry experts Ms Parineeta Sethi, CEO, Global Spa, announced the titleholders in the Classic category, Dr. Aditi Bhatnagar, Celebrity wellness consultant, announced the titleholders in the Youth category, Mr. Sushil Khaitan, CEO Pure Nutrition, announced the titleholders in the Young Adult category, and Ms. Sayali Bhagat, Former Miss India and Bollywood actor, announced the titleholders of the Prime category. Master classes with experts Ms. Parineeta Sethi, Dr. Aditi Bhatnagar, Mr. Sushil Khaitan, Ms. Sayali Bhagat, Dr. Ankita Malhotra, Ms. Niti Luthra and Mr. Gurnit Singh Dua, added to the contestants' learning experience.

A massive success in its first edition, the FSSA Ms. Wellness will return in 2021 in February, this time on an international platform around EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Asia) - the idea being to reach out to as many people across the world as possible. ✨

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