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Living

The PARK Magazine

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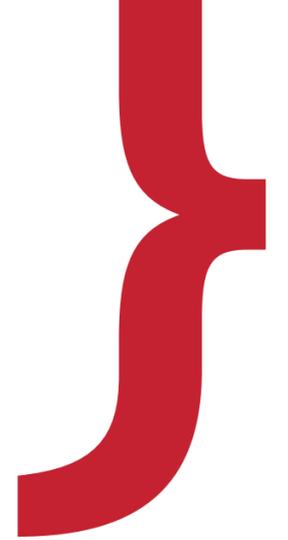
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Looking East

LIVING leads you to what's hot and now around the world, through the unique telescope of The Park Hotels. It brings to you unusual insights on contemporary life and trends, and spotlights forerunners of creativity in different fields.

This issue of LIVING captures the swing of the global gaze towards the East. It explores the changing hemispheres of influence that realign design and impact media. It investigates amplified interactions in culture, healing and the arts and layered inspirations in cuisine, that find true expression in The Park Hotels.



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Looking East

TOWARDS NEW DIRECTIONS IN CULTURE

The Park Hotels forefront a new world perspective. A multiplicity of influences in décor, cuisine and luxury that are not homogenous; that combine to form a new way of seeing and experiencing life. Led by a thinking that is distinctly East-leaning.

Rudyard Kipling once predicted that “ne’er the twain shall meet”. Had he lived long enough, he would have had to eat his words. The East has always collided with other cultures: Marco Polo and the East India Company pillaged the riches of the Orient for trade. The *Panchatantra*’s tigers and jackals became Aesop’s bears and La Fontaine’s foxes. Later, Ravi Shankar and the Maharishi injected inspiration and enlightenment into the phenomenon known as the Beatles.

But today, with centers of economic power shifting, the influence of the East is far more pervasive and layered. No longer are Eastern ideas just fringe influences. Booming economies mean burgeoning markets, and the Western giants have had to turn their gaze to the East. Not merely for consumers, but for trends and inspiration. Not merely for a diligent labour force, exotic materials and cheap manufacturing options, but for revolutionary concepts in design and media, technology and health. The East is becoming a nucleus for change, and not just for the West. India is looking eastwards too: China and India are making eyes at each other and new alliances are being forged.

Left The new i-Bar at The Park, Bangalore, is dominated by the long bar set against a huge, textured, pink sandstone relief inspired by the Qutub Minar



"Inspired by the Qutub Minar, the conception of the new i-Bar is one that belongs to a certain Indian landscape but which has translated to a contemporary setting."

James Soane, Project Orange

Think about this: Quentin Tarantino treats a whole flashback sequence in his film Kill Bill Vol.1 in anime. Soy is a byword in the health food industry, and the password to the delights of vegetarianism. Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri's writings are regular course material in English literature syllabi in many countries. *Sudoku* with their morning decaf is a habit that millions of people would find hard to break. The East is actively engaging with the rest of the world, impacting mainstream cultures and tastes – adding texture to international outlooks. Even among Eastern countries, a new vernacular of shared experience is coming to the fore.

The recently redesigned i-Bar at The Park, Bangalore, harks back to Indian traditional craftsmanship – handworked pink sandstone, carved screens. This is India looking inwards to provide a richer interpretation of social spaces, a new vocabulary of design: the western notion of a bar as an unwind locus fused with the very Indian elements and sense of luxury. James Soane, Founding Director of Project Orange who created the space, cites the Qutub Minar as his design stimulus for the bar. He says, "...the conception [of the space] is one that belongs to a certain Indian landscape but which has translated to a contemporary setting."

Right The carved sliding timber screens crisscross the new i-Bar at The Park, Bangalore, envisaged as a box within a box protecting an inner sanctum



At Zen, the pan-Asian restaurant at The Park Kolkata, the lotus inspires. The overlapping petals of the flower led to the idea of screens and partitions in different materials that form semi-private spaces within the restaurant. At the heart of the lotus is the open kitchen – a theatre that dramatises the experience of eating fine Japanese cuisine. A palette of black, bronze, cream, gold and vivid green accents inspired by Zen simplicity evolves a modern Asian aesthetic that employs an enhanced play of natural materials.

Borrowing from the East to embellish design, the arts and cuisine is not a new phenomenon in Western popular culture. Versace's interpretations of the saree, Madonna's henna fetish and fusion food are all examples of early flirtations with the East that arose from Western culture's need for exotic inspirations. But now, designers and artists look to the East as a center of trendsetting, and at its citizens as definitive influencers of style. Muji has transformed the way the world looks at stationery. South Korean TV mini-series command higher audiences in Japan than American shows. Hermes and Gaultier are declaring East-inspired fashion seasons, catwalking couture in new directions. There is evidence that yesterday's cultural consumer from the East, fed on a steady diet of Hollywood and hamburgers, is now directing cultural output much more than ever.

In the art world as well, glances are being cast eastwards. Contemporary Chinese fine artists like Yue Minjun and Wang Guangyi, and Indian artists like Atul Dodiya, Riyaz Komu and Chintan Upadhyay are being furiously coveted by important international collectors. The Park Hotels have always been at the forefront of promoting new Indian art. Lining walls at The Park Hotels, cutting edge work (often bought way ahead of its time) engages freely with guests. Allowing us a new perspective on our own Eastern-ness, which now speaks a different global tongue.



Right Zen, at The Park, Kolkata, is spanned by a dynamic screen of twisted fins made of black aluminium – a contemporary take on the Japanese ideal of privacy

Wasabi nuts and *bhujia* washed down with a cold Cobra beer. Fiery Thai curry and roast duck with real plum sauce made from fresh ingredients bought at your local grocer. Basil flavoured ice-cream for dessert. A fairly easily-put-together urban meal whether you're in Delhi, Singapore, Dubai, Adelaide or New York. Eastern food is now mainstream: think baby corn and *bokchoy*, tandoori and stir-fry. Think natural, think healthy. Think simple.

The Park Hotels are ahead of this trend in world cuisine. They enrich their menus with the simplicity and freshness of Eastern food, its textures and flavours. At the Zen, Kolkata, the *Teppenyaki* counter presents you with the real drama of Japanese food cooked in front of you on an open griddle. Lotus at The Park, Chennai, delivers regional specialties from Thailand. Bamboo in The Park, Navi Mumbai, presents new and old Chinese specialties that will make you forget chop suey forever. Together, these three eateries offer guests some of the finest Far Eastern food in the country. With expatriate chefs from China and Thailand who bring authenticity of ingredients and processes and combine them with contemporary presentation and service. Satisfying the world's new collective desire to access 'creative' cuisine – real local foods presented in an international way.



Right Bamboo at The Park, Navi Mumbai, gives you an array of choices between healthful steamed specialties, exquisite *dim sum*, and Chinese old country recipes





The new rooms at The Park, Kolkata, combine the ancient energies of the Chakras with a luxurious and contemporary experience. Creating a softened minimalism that is a blend of Eastern thought and modern design.



Eastern holistic philosophies and wellness systems have taken over the world's well being, and have emerged as mainstream preoccupations. Two generations ago, transcendental meditation was the domain of hippies and eccentrics and till recently, Deepak Chopra's new-age mantras were only for the spiritually aware. The new East facing milieu has changed this thinking. Yoga and *t'ai chi* are as much a part of a regular workout for fitness enthusiasts from California to Korea as is lifting weights. Meditation is being prescribed by doctors to promote longevity. Chinese medicine and acupuncture are highly regarded remedial procedures in any spa worth its name. People come to India from the far reaches of the globe to experience the wonders of *panchkarma*, the Ayurvedic purification.

At Aura, the spa at The Park, the Eastern values of serenity and the gentle aromas of lemongrass infuse the air. The spas offer traditional Ayurvedic, Balinese and Thai therapies with effective ingredients and innovative techniques that release toxins. Aura at The Park, Kolkata, has seven plush therapy rooms, each with a different colour representing ancient Indian values like truth, wisdom, prosperity, beauty and passion. Signature beauty treatments use rare combinations of natural herbs, flowers and spices. The couple package, *Ananda*, helps re-balance the bio-energy of the body through massage, facials and polishes. And all transplanted into this sense of Oriental calm that has now become the global definition of luxury relaxation.

The Park Hotels forefront the new world order of transculturalism. A multiplicity of influences in décor, cuisine and luxury that are not homogenous in any way. That combine to form a new way of seeing and experiencing life, led by a thinking that is distinctly East-leaning. At The Park, true Eastern hospitality, simplicity and warmth underscore every working, be it service or style. The Park Hotels are a model of a sensual culture that's being called the Global Soul.

Left The spa, Aura, at The Park, Chennai, embodies holistic ideals - health, beauty, tranquillity, energy and extreme wellness



James Soane is an architect, teacher and writer. He has worked at Conran & Partners, contributing to several major projects. In 2001 he moved on to set up Project Orange, a practice with a portfolio that spans residential, retail, hotel, school and restaurant design. In the past few years he has overseen the £60m fit out of the Raddisson Cavan Hotel in Ireland, the new Monsoon retail concept, and The Park, Navi Mumbai. He is currently working on the first boutique hotel in Russia. James has written a book, *New Homes*, published by Conran Octopus.

James Soane (right) & Christopher Ash, Directors, Project Orange

East goes East

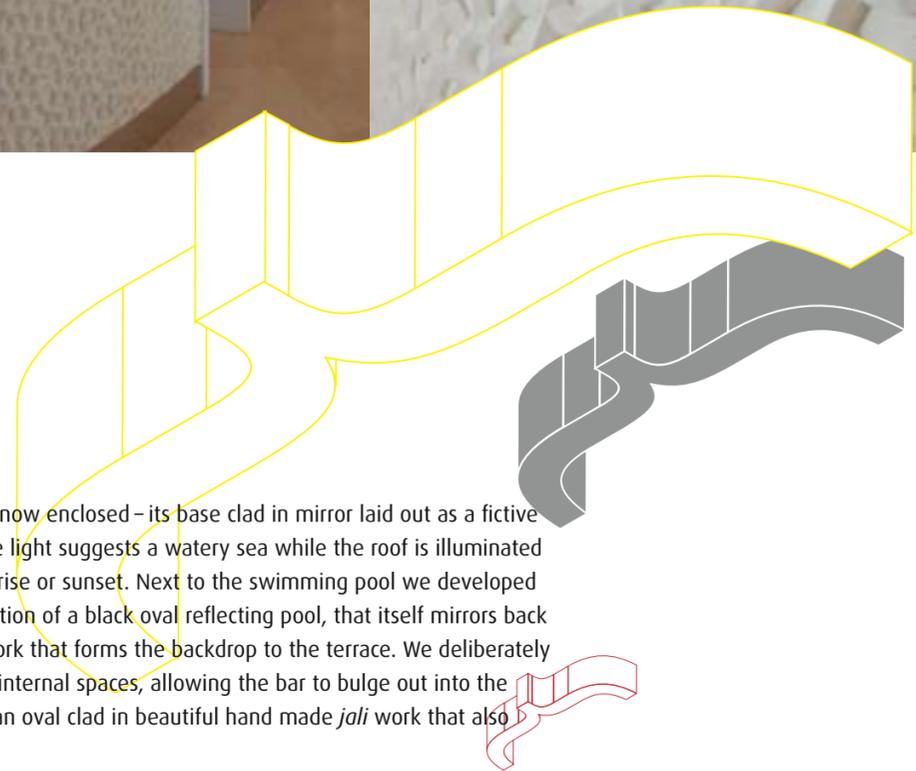
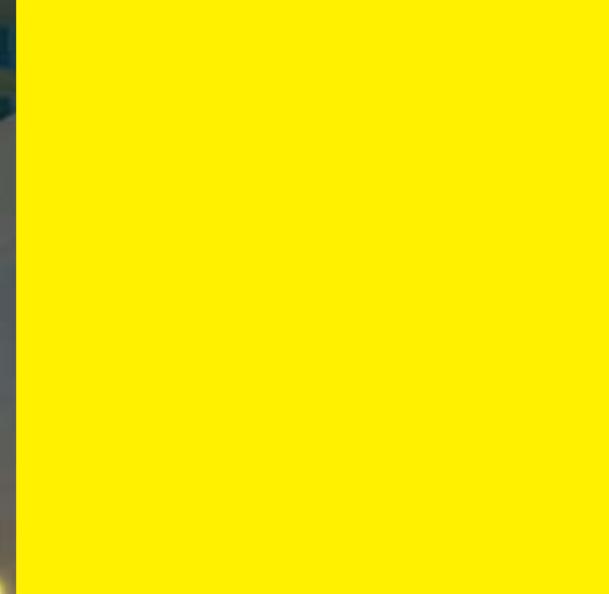
JAMES SOANE, DIRECTOR, PROJECT ORANGE

*Project Orange won a gold in the 2006 Roses Award scheme, was chosen as one of the 40 best architects under 40 in 2005, and has exhibited at the V&A Museum. A new book, *Catalogue, on the work of Project Orange* has been published by Black Dog Publishing. In 2007, 266 Glossop Road, their first building, received a RIBA award.*

Nothing could quite have prepared me for the building site at Navi Mumbai. We all arrived after a 12 hour flight and almost a 2 hour car ride through the old city and into the new one. Pulling into the rusting gates of the compound I got out to see this hulk of a fortress-like, concrete building with no windows. The idea, to transform this shell into an elegant and sophisticated Park Hotel for a moment seemed impossible. And yet... as we clambered around the building, shafts of strong sunlight cast dramatic shadows onto the façade, penetrating deep into the plan. We came to an internal open courtyard that, despite the blackened plaster surface, managed to look heroic and modern. Standing on the roof we could see the city around us, much greener than downtown and more spaced out. The experiment started by Charles Correa some 30 years ago was beginning to work. As we left the site to drive back, I took a photograph of a shadow cast by a breezeblock screen onto a vertical wall. When we got home this image became a touchstone for the whole project. The building was a memory of something long forgotten, a shadow of itself, and we had to find out what that was.

As an architect I am affected not just by what I see and feel, but by the thoughts and ideas they trigger. This building, although not finished, has a very clear Indian heritage. Although designed in the late 1970's, the tectonic expression, often coined as 'brutalism', owes its roots to Modernism and the works in particular of Le Corbusier. And when he came over to India and started designing Chandigarh during the 1950's he succeeded in not only introducing a new aesthetic for the Capital, but also transforming it into something uniquely Indian. Interestingly much of what influenced him was not what was happening in the West, but the culture he was learning in the East.

I say all this because none of us work in a vacuum – we are shaped by what we know and our personal experiences; and it is never just one strand of thought, it is many. Here at the hotel, we wove together these different strands to create a collage of textures, patterns and experiences. From the outside the building is white and modern, but by night it is painted with light-blue on the road side and amber from the approach.



Within, the cool, crisp atrium is now enclosed – its base clad in mirror laid out as a fictive garden. However, by night, blue light suggests a watery sea while the roof is illuminated in deep orange, suggesting sunrise or sunset. Next to the swimming pool we developed the plan as an abstract composition of a black oval reflecting pool, that itself mirrors back the huge colourful mosaic artwork that forms the backdrop to the terrace. We deliberately subverted the geometry of the internal spaces, allowing the bar to bulge out into the outside, while the reception is an oval clad in beautiful hand made *jali* work that also encloses a silk padded boudoir.

Our own journey East led us to consider new materials and crafts. In particular, the bedrooms shy away from the plush upholstered look of most five star chains in favour of a more pared down and minimal aesthetic. Only the curtains have a decorative motif, flowers, that project their shadow for a moment onto the floor and walls when the sun shines through them – a reminder of our first encounter with the site.

Of course, a hotel is not just the bricks and mortar – it has just as much to do with the service experience, the food and drink and how well you sleep! What is extraordinary here, is that from a very unpromising start, a new microcosm has evolved. It certainly blazes a trail for Navi Mumbai and is a symbol of regeneration and the future. Yet unlike some of the new malls and offices going up nearby, it remains restrained and an oasis of calm. It shows how good design makes places that are both a destination and a retreat. This seems to be something that The Park Hotels understand. It also reminds us of the rate of change right now in Asia. My hunch is that while many people, developers and hoteliers included, are looking West for their inspiration, I think there are a few who look East. Ask me and I'll tell you: this is where you'll find the smart money.

Above Handmade *jali* work that decorates the reception at The Park, Navi Mumbai

Right The *Vishnu Mudra* sculpture by Prafful Singh stands as a foil to the very modern exterior façade of The Park, Navi Mumbai

I say all this because none of us work in a vacuum – we are shaped by what we know and our personal experiences; and it is never just one strand of thought, it is many. Here at the hotel, we wove together these different strands to create a collage of textures, patterns and experiences.



NEW MARKET Visit this 140 year old bazaar that is seeped in the old world charm of colonial Kolkata. Find everything here! Meander through fresh fish stalls and browse at ethnic silver and accessory shops. Bargain for yards of colourful fabric that form a backdrop for fruit sellers, and take in the aromas of creamy confectionery that emerge from the historic Nahoum's bakery. Lindsay Street

KEWPIES They call themselves the 'Purveyors of Authentic Bengali Cuisine', and they are! Started by Meenakshi Kewpie Dasgupta, Kolkata's famous food connoisseur, Kewpie's is where Kolkatans head for traditional delicacies and a good, wholesome Bengali meal in a cozy ambience. 2 Elgin Rd. +91 33 2475 9880

SEAGULL ARTS & MEDIA RESOURCE CENTRE This vibrant cultural resource centre is a venue for film screenings, art exhibitions, book releases and theatre from all over the world. Its library houses an extensive collection of books, art research materials and audio-video archives. The culture vulture's favourite perch. 31-A S P Mukherjee Rd. +91 33 2476 5869/65

VICTORIA MEMORIAL This white marble testament to Kolkata's pre-eminence in the British Empire completed in 1921 to commemorate the Queen, is a fusion of Mughal and European architectural styles. Stroll in the manicured gardens and browse through the museum – a treasure trove of paintings, armour, swords, guns, letters and other memorabilia of the time. In the evenings there is a sound and light show with narration in English about Kolkata's history. 1 Queen's Way +91 33 2223 1889/90/91

TANGRA Once the centre for leather tanneries, Kolkata's new Chinatown is now more famous for its original Tangra-style Indian Chinese food. With countless family kitchens lining the winding lanes and by-lanes, you have a lot to choose from. Our pick of the restaurants is Beijing. Try and catch the Chinese New Year celebration in January or February to feel a little China in the middle of Kolkata.

85 LANSDOWNE A high-end designer store ensconced in a sprawling 70 year old Bengali mansion – both the design and the couture spell style. With 24 of India's best designers, including Kolkata's very own Sabyasachi Mukherjee and Kiran Uttam Ghosh, it is the city's fashion destination. 85-B Sarat Bose Rd. +91 33 2486 2137

TRAM RIDE Slow, old and terribly charming, the trams that crisscross Kolkata have stood the test of time and the onslaught of technology. They've been phased out in most cities of the world, so hop on to one just for the thrill, or you might never have the pleasure. Be prepared to be stuck in traffic though, as jams inevitably block the tram tracks.



GIRISH CHANDRA DEY & NAKUR CHANDRA NANDY A sweet shop that dishes out exquisitely flavoured *sandesh* (a typical Bengali sweet made from cottage cheese), every Kolkatan swears by Nakur Chandra's truly *bangla mithai* and its secret recipes. One of the oldest in Kolkata, this sweet shop is something of an institution. 56 Ramdulal Sarkar Street Hedua +91 33 2241 0048

BELUR MATH The pristine *math* by the banks of the Hooghly is the headquarters of Swami Vivekananda's Ramakrishna Mission. You needn't have a religious bone in your body to be touched by its spiritual serenity. Experience the evening prayer ritual or *aarti* and you'll know what we mean. Howrah +91 33 2654 1144

TOLLYGUNGE CLUB This beautiful colonial-style club was built by the British on the remnants of a Tipu Sultan property in 1895. Tolly, as it is fondly called, boasts the best greens in the city for golfers. Members can swim, play a sport or just hang out sipping a cup of tea in the sprawling lawns on a lazy afternoon. 120 Deshapran Sasmal Rd. Tollygunge +91 33 2417 6022/2472 8754

GALLERY 88 A definite stop in the art aficionado's itinerary. One of Kolkata's premier art galleries, Gallery 88 is associated with leading contemporary Indian artists including Akbar Padamsee, Paritosh Sen and Yusuf Arakkal. A nerve centre for contemporary art, it hosts artist workshops and has published several books on subjects ranging from the art of Ganesh Pyne to the Bengal Modern Art Movement. 28-B Shakespeare Sarani +91 33 2290 2274/2283 5394

FLURYS You can't miss Flurys while you amble along buzzing Park Street. The legendary tea room founded in 1927 is now a flamboyant contemporary European café with a touch of the 1930's and oodles of colonial charm. Forget the calorie count and indulge in its delicious Swiss confectionery, strong coffee and scrumptious continental fare. 18 Park Street +91 33 2229 7664

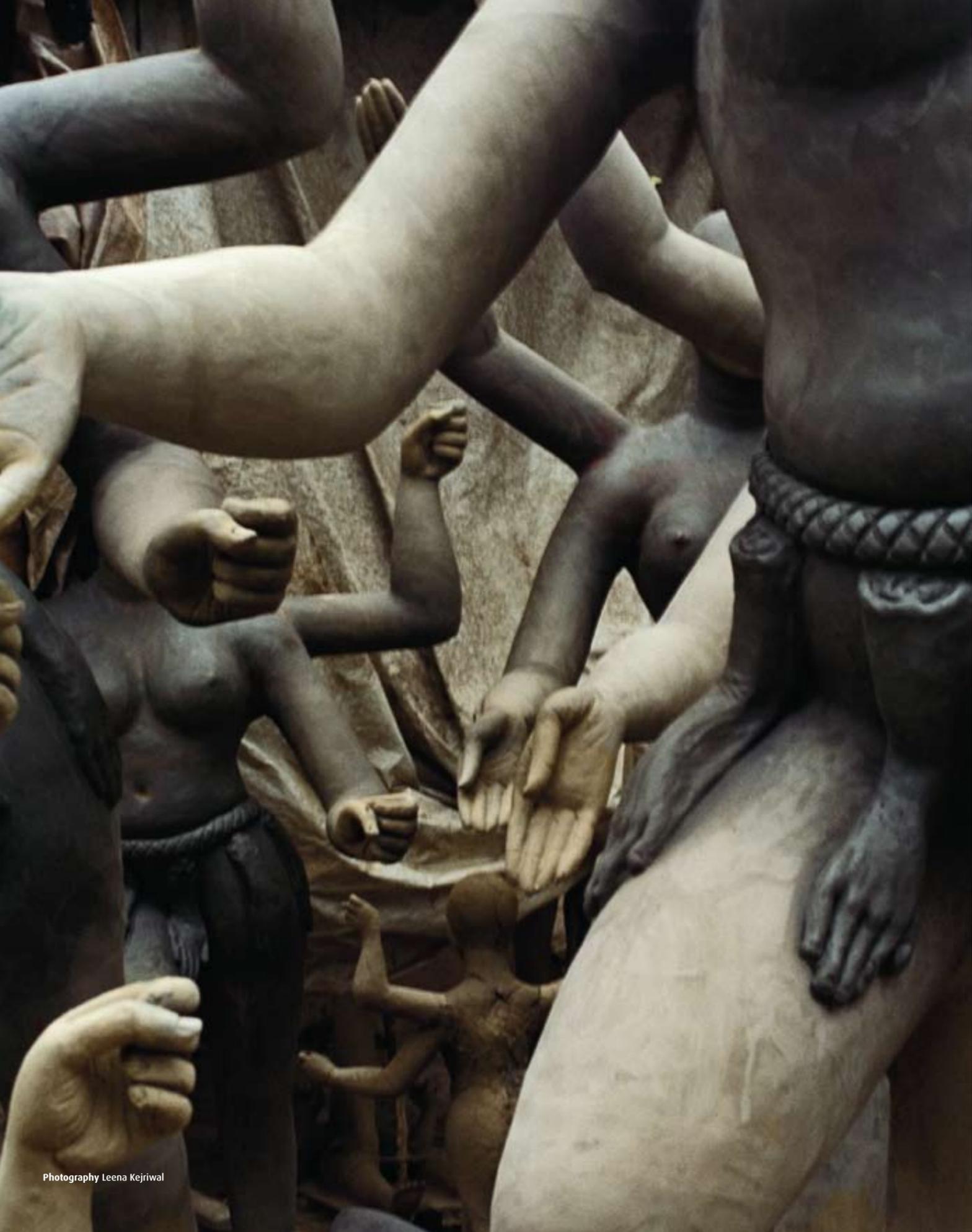
WEAVERS STUDIO If textiles turn you on, check out the exquisite collections of Indian fabric and weaves available at this studio. Combining techniques from around the world and collaborating with designers to exchange expertise, the studio is a platform for the arts – hosting exhibitions, workshops and readings. 5/1 Anil Moitra Rd. Ballygunge Place +91 33 2240 8926/27

OXFORD BOOKSTORE Evolving from the quaint Oxford Books and Stationery to what is now Oxford Bookstore and Gallery, Kolkata's favourite bookstore (and so much more!) has held sway on Park Street for over 80 years. Sip a cup of exotic organic tea at the fashionable Cha Bar while you leaf through your latest acquisition – it's a must-visit even if book-shopping isn't on your agenda. 17 Park Street +91 33 2229 7662

The Park Explorer

Kolkata

For more information or bookings for any of the above please contact The Box at The Park, Kolkata +91 33 2249 9000



Photography Leena Kejriwal





*Bunny Gupta & Jaya Chaliha are freelance journalists and writers. Bunny is also a teacher and an innovative cook. Jaya works with craftspersons and under-privileged women and children. They have been writing together for over a decade. In 1995, along with Meenakshi Das Gupta, the celebrated food writer, they co-authored *The Calcutta Cookbook – A Treasury of Recipes from Pavement to Palace*. Bunny Gupta & Jaya Chaliha live and work in the city they love, Kolkata.*

Bowls & Chopsticks

Far East Front Seat On Kolkata Tables

BUNNY GUPTA & JAYA CHALIHA

The world turns its gaze eastwards in search of a panacea for its restless spirit and in so doing, discovers some of the Orient's other aspects such as its cultures, crafts and cuisines. Our culinary focus is now very much on Far Eastern Asia and Japan.

Our history books tell us of Chinese travellers and learned scholars who came to our universities many centuries ago. The maritime links of Bengal with the 'East Indies' date to the 13th and 14th centuries when the legendary Chandsadagar sailed the seven seas to *Subarnabhumi*, the Golden Land. The Indian merchants carried a religion, precious commodities and the technique of dyeing and batik and returned with their *mayurpankhis* laden with gems, lac and unacquainted spices now indispensable in our daily diet. The lost art of batik was revived by Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan.

Our travellers to the East Indies and neighbouring countries on the mainland must have felt at home with living conditions similar to their own – the thatched homes, forests and an abundance of grain, of fruit and vegetables. Varieties of banana and the coconut, of which every part was eaten or used, from the flower, the fruit, the pith and the leaves. Fish was plentiful and species of carp which were palatable to the deltaic Bengalis who like the inhabitants were originally hunters and gatherers. The use of clay pots and leaves to cook in were also common.

The European colonisers brought fruit trees and vegetables to their factories and colonies along the Indian coastline. And so the largest citrus fruit, the green *pomelo* from Batavia locally named *batabi lebu*, the *sago* palm from Malaysia and bananas – the plump, yellow, velvety, *marataman* from Martaban district in Burma and the long green *singapuri* or *jahaji kol* and golden Queen pineapples are now all but indigenous. Muslim settlers brought in their alfresco food like grilled kababs and the many kinds of bread, further enriching the cuisine.

The major import to these parts was perhaps the curry as we know it from South India flavoured with more of their own herbs and less spices. The Thais added lemon grass, Thai basil and *galangal* to their green curry and the red chilli, a New World import to the *Massaman* curry. Perhaps Thai food has become popular in Bengal because the flavours and textures are similar – hot, sweet and sour. In our book co-authored with Meenakshi Das Gupta who made it to the historic Culinary Biographies, our prediction that Thai food would become a 'table-topper' has come true. Calcutta has a few dedicated Thai restaurants and many others advertising pan-Asian dishes to their multicuisine menu.

With China our ties are long and tenuous. In 1780, Warren Hastings granted the first Chinese settler in Bengal, Atchew, land for a sugar plantation close to Calcutta. After his death, his compatriots moved to Calcutta from Achipur, named after the founder, and were joined by a group of Chinese sailors who had deserted their ship Macao. The opium clippers loaded their cargo at Sutanuti, one of the three villages that became Calcutta and the name Apling Chowrasta remains in Burrabazar. The Chinese here grew into the largest group in India during the turbulent times of the Kuomintang rule. Many migrated after Indian Independence, uncertain of their future status. It is not surprising that Chinese tastes from Canton, Manchuria and Schezwan here hold their own among the more recent tastes from the Far East, and different parts of India have their localised version of Chinese food.

China Town moved from the smoky opium by-lanes of central Calcutta to Tangra in the eastern part and added Tangra-type to the tastes we already knew. Calcuttans got their first taste of Chinese food at Nanking in the old China Town which started as a Traveller's Inn with a chapel and later a dining hall was added where it was possible to have a Chinese banquet with Peking Duck, stuffed crab, Bird's Nest or sharkfin soup, Mandarin Fish, the taste and flavour of which cannot be compared with preparations available today.



Shortly before the old China Town gave way to urban development, the Dalai Lama's office in exile bought the popular Ta Fashun restaurant and renamed it Kunga and the filled dumpling – what else! the *momo* – soon became a favourite in this city of catholic tastes. Hungry tiffiners look forward to chowmein, chicken chilli and *momos* in pavement eateries.

Today Chinese food has almost entered the Bengali kitchen, appearing literally from the pavement to the palace. At wedding feasts fried rice is substituted for *pilau* and the much favoured Prawn *Malai* curry is an adaptation of the prawn and bottle gourd Malay curry.

The soya bean, hitherto unknown to us, made a brief appearance in the late 1930's in the form of a health drink in *Swadeshi* families. Was it, we wonder, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, recognising its food value for his soldiers and his people who brought it to India? The same drink heated, curdled and transformed into bean curd was cooked in Chinese and Japanese dishes.

For over two centuries it was Western food that influenced the Calcutta kitchen. Be it the Portuguese *Vindaloo*, the English roast, the crumbed cutlet, the meat rissole or the French Milly Filly, all took forms as chop, cutlet, *alu chop*, *panthras* and fish fry and these and others went to create an innovative cuisine – Anglo Indian food. The *bawarchee* or cook ruled the *Memsahib's* kitchen with a stern wooden spoon. Just imagine the expression on his face should the order of the day be changed to *Nasi Goreng* or *Sukiyaki*! Familiar with roasts and soufflés, the master of the kitchen's knowledge of Eastern foods was limited to a wishy washy curry. Some may have learnt the Three Palm Pudding made of *sago* pearls, palm molasses and coconut milk, the recipe brought from Singapore by his *Memsahib*. A few were acquainted with Burmese *Khow Suey*, a curry and noodles, the most basic of Burmese food, introduced by families of civil servants, doctors and lawyers, who worked in Burma, an extension of the British Empire to the East. Burma had an Indian population many of whom had to be evacuated by ship while others trekked back to Bengal during the Japanese invasion in WW II, bringing with them only their memories and some recipes.

How the tables have turned!

With package tours and cheaper air tickets, travel to the East has become more affordable than holidaying in our own country. Tourists and erstwhile residents have returned home with recipes and ingredients for Thai, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Balinese dishes of their choice to be cooked and savoured here. Now our supermarket shelves are loaded with a wide choice of sauces, condiments, curry pastes, pickles, and pastas of every shape that Marco Polo introduced to his homeland from his travels in the East. What is more, enterprising growers have added herbs and vegetables for a Far Eastern meal to their vegetable patches. Flat dwellers shop in the municipal markets for fresh Chinese cabbages, lemon grass and basil nestling among bunches of coriander, mint and parsley leaves. There are substitutes for the real thing, *aam ada* for *galangal* and green *tulsi* for Thai basil.

And so, as the comings and goings continue, so does the give and take. Globalisation of food is perhaps a way to world peace and harmony.

TIME TRAVEL

BAMBOO **Chinese** The Park, Navi Mumbai

CHEF LI XUN QU-CHEF DE CUISINE,
BAMBOO, NAVI MUMBAI

“At Bamboo I want to give guests something different in Chinese food whether it’s authentic or contemporary cuisine.”

Historical records of the Dong Jiang Guangdong area state that cooked chickens wrapped in tissue paper were preserved in salt mounds. Their golden colour and moist, delicious taste were much appreciated by businessmen and bureaucrats of the area. At Bamboo, ancient recipes like the Salt-Baked Chicken are recreated in the menu.

Engaging with contemporary trends, the menu at Bamboo leans towards healthful foods like Chef Li’s famous steamed specialties – the stuffed sweet jalapenos with chilly lemon sauce and the drunken chicken; beef tenderloin in a sauce that uses secret healing Chinese herbs. The extensive tea selection promotes digestion and soothes, and occasionally, like the earthy black tea known as *Puerh*, even has medicinal value.

DRAMA

ZEN **Pan-Asian** The Park, Kolkata

CHEF NUT KUNLERT-ORIENTAL CHEF,
THE PARK, KOLKATA

“People are the mainstay of my art. They inspire me to experiment and edge me on to perform my best.”

The Japanese bar counter at Zen is the nucleus of the *Teppenyaki* cooking and a theatre for the drama of Japanese food. Chef Ananchai is a born performer and an artiste of cuisine. The flashing tools of his trade are a knife, a fork and two metal spatulas. In spectacular displays of dexterity, he cuts, stirs, seasons and divides portions on plates on the *teppan*. Watching him perform, and interacting with him while sitting at the bar counter is an integral part of the Zen experience created by Chef Nut.

Chef Nut, like all the Chinese, attaches supreme importance to the aroma of a dish, because he understands the evocative drama of the senses. The open kitchen in Zen creates fragrant magic with the mingling of aniseed, Chinese prickly ash seeds, cinnamon, sesame oil and other spices to give you an authentic Chinese feel.

A Slice Of The Park

ORIENTAL CUISINE AT THE PARK HOTELS



INNOVATION

LOTUS **Thai** The Park, Chennai

CHEF PRAKOB SAMRANRUEN-
ORIENTAL CHEF, LOTUS, CHENNAI

One of the most accomplished Thai chefs in the country, this Thai Buddhist introduced and popularized the Thai Claypot lunches at The Park, Chennai.

Chef Prakrob experiments with diverse ingredients and processes. His *Tedsakran Dok Rear Pol* or the Thai flowers & fruits festival at Lotus featured dishes made up of exotic Eastern flowers! Starters made from lily, bougainvillea, frangipani and orchid petals; a spicy salad of water lily flowers on minced chicken, stir-fried sunflower with large prawns in hot mild sauce, and sweet *agar agar* jelly with jasmine flower buds to end.

To cool you down after the curries, the bartender at Lotus conjures up a variety of unique cocktails. Lotus Cooler is a zesty combination of Bacardi, home-spiced vodka, triple sec, tropical fruits. The Galangal Caipiroska is *galangal* flavoured vodka, lime, sugar, crushed ice. The house special Tomyumtini is a peppery blend of *Tom Yum*, vodka, and grenadine.



Reasons I Love The Park



What keeps people coming back to The Park Hotels?

Manish Arora has been at the cutting edge of fashion since he launched in 1997. This award-winning designer has shown his work on ramps in Paris, Miami and London, and currently stocks at 75 stores worldwide. He has collaborated with Reebok and Mac, Indian and Japanese artists, Disney and Swatch to produce some of India's finest couture and designer consumer products. He frequents The Park, New Delhi, because he plugs into its spirit of collaborative design and its funky outlook to recharge his creative energies.

I love the light-as-air wood fired pizzas, they practically dissolve in my mouth!

I love the bright bindis in the funky Bharati Kher painting in the lobby of the Delhi hotel.

I love the combination of Agni & Fire with flames and orange lighting at the bar, and deep comfy seating.

I love the Aqua poolside – a modern space in the heart of Delhi that overlooks the ancient Jantar Mantar!

I love the retro lobby at The Park, Delhi, with its glass beads and dramatic lighting.

Left Pop Art inspired outfit
from Manish Arora's Spring/
Summer '08 collection

The Park Scoop

WHAT'S NEW • HAPPENINGS • ACCOLADES

The new Aura at The Park, Kolkata, offers healing techniques in plush rooms suffused with colour and oriental calm.

WHAT'S NEW

Pune This mini-metro will soon play host to the newest of The Park's contemporary luxury boutique hotels. Bearing the unique take of the Park on design and its eye for innovation, this 220 room property will be launched by 2010.

HAPPENINGS

BANGALORE

i-t.ALIA Enjoy new delicacies from this purveyor of authentic Italian cuisine. Executive Chef Mandaar Sukhtankar who has cooked alongside Chef Antonio Carluccio at the Neal Street Restaurant, London, worked for months to create a repertoire of classic & innovative Italian recipes to indulge your every desire. **Starting May**

The Fresh Salad Lunch @ Monsoon Chill out this summer with the new salad menu at Monsoon. Cool down with smoothies, cold soups & vitalizers. Beat the heat with the freshness of the live salad bar where chefs use exotic summer fruit, vegetables, cheeses, meats, dressings & garnishes to whip up light, healthy fare.

Retro Nights @ i-Bar Wednesdays at the new, glamour-laden i-Bar will boogie you down memory lane. DJ Shan presents a set of rocking tunes that evoke the good old days and get you partying like never before. **May 1 onwards**

KOLKATA

Aura At Aura, the award-winning spa, experience total relaxation, guided by gentle hands that help you rejuvenate your mind and body. Thai and

Kerala massages & signature beauty treatments like scrubs and body wraps send you on sensory journeys with visible and lasting results.

Soul Curries @ The Atrium Cafe Feast on popular curries from around India that excite your palate while live soul music inspires your being. **June 1 onwards**

CHENNAI

Book launch and reading @ Sansara Banquet Limping to The Centre of The Earth by Timeri S. Murari is a true and engaging account of the author's 200km trek to Mount Kailas. Hear excerpts from this insightful book that describes a remarkable journey to one of the most inhospitable regions of the world. **June 26**

Desi Nite @ Pasha DJ Kunal spins the deck with Bollywood beats and Hindi remixes. The city's most

fashion forward crowd rocks on Wednesdays, making it the best night of the week!

DELHI

Aqua Keep fit with some pool volleyball so you can freely tuck into the grill & barbeque offered at the poolside. Live music by Jalebee Cartel eases you into the new week every other Sunday evening.

Mist The Sunday Champagne Brunch is more popular than ever with its Moët & Chandon and live grills. Keep the kids happy with activities at the Kids Zone and the caricature artist, and let the Tarot card reader predict the week ahead.

Banquets If you enjoy a little culture, let the drama of supper theatre sweep you away. "Murder on the Menu" by Raell Padamsee is on **May 6**

NAVI MUMBAI

Dusk Sip Martinis and swirl Caiproskas with Ciroc, one of the world's finest vodkas. **May 4 onwards**

Zest Try out the Bengali Food Festival with its exclusive selection of traditional and home style Bengali food on the buffet. **May 9-18**

Aqua Enjoy the excitement of T20 on a big screen with The Park's special Grill Buffet on match days.

ACCOLADE

Chef Rajesh We're proud to announce that this talented chef from The Park, Chennai, is one of the five Indian chefs who have got international accreditation from the prestigious WACS (World Association of Chefs' Societies), a global network of chefs.

For reservations and information contact:

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The Park Spotlight

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE MONARCHS OF STYLE

Interested in the notion of luxury, Gunjan Gupta is a modern alchemist of sorts. Her company, Wrap Art and Design, functions on the premise that by wrapping something, a new set of values is attached to it. And so, contemporary furniture in wood and stone is wrapped in 24k gold and pure silver. Traditional techniques of gold leaf are combined with modern thought and ergonomics to create design that is comfortable, yet highly innovative. Gunjan did her Masters in Furniture Design from Central St Martins College of Art & Design in London, and was awarded the International Design Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the British Council, India in 2007. Her design is socially sensitive and culturally complex, skillfully balancing material audacity with austerity in form. Her work has been exhibited and sold in India and Europe.

Gunjan Gupta



When it comes to premier film academies of the world, few Indians make the cut. Ashvin Kumar enters this extraordinary league with his short film, Little Terrorist winning a BAFTA and nominations for both the Oscars and the European Film Academy Awards. A graduate in Media and Communications from the University of London, he began with theatre, went on to edit television programs and then made his first short film, Road to Ladakh under his UK based Alipur Films. He is currently working on Routeless, a feature documentary that narrates a 3 month journey from Trivandrum to Delhi, reflecting urban youth culture and globalisation amidst the rich heritage of the sub-continent. The script for Kashmir, a 'western' set against the geopolitical situation in the valley, with a fresh look at terrorism and its motivations, is waiting to hit the sets. Watch out for his debut feature thriller, The Forest, set in the thickets of North India, soon to be released. Ashvin's talents as a producer have brought together the best international professionals to create Indian films for a global audience.

Ashvin Kumar



Jalebee Cartel

Steering the sound of *desi* dance groove away from *balle balle*, Jalebee Cartel have put India on the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) charts. DJs Ash Roy, Ashwin Mani Sharma and Arjun Vagale bring their unique style, skill, influences and yes, their all important Macs to churn out much-admired electronic tracks (Destiny was voted the Best Sunset Soundtrack on the BBC). The hint of ethnic sounds in their music sets it apart. From progressive house to psytrance, Jalebee Cartel does it all, fusing genres to create a raw, electric style of urban dance music. Besides pumping up Lille 3000 in France and The Big Chill in Goa last year, they have also composed music for Cherry on Top, the independent movie, MTV Style Awards and India Fashion Week. The group has had original releases and remixes on European labels like Baroque Records and SoulTribe Records, among many others. Radios from Argentina to Europe dish out their stuff, and then there's their own monthly show Deep Fried Jalebee on Frisky Radio, bringing in over 1,000 listeners. Watch out for their full length debut album this year.



Leena Kejriwal makes magic out of the most ordinary scenes, giving them a sublime energy of their own. Her subject matter meanders from Shiva and Durga to Hampi and the cottage industries of her home town, Kolkata. Leena is a licentiate member of the British Institute of Professional Photography and a professional member of Photographers Guild of India. Hers was among the top 10 prints selected from the lineup of India's best photographers at Exhibit A (2004 & 2005). On the Streets of Paris reflects her experiences as a part of the Indo-French Artists-in-Residence program initiated by the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in India. She also captured on film the charm of Flurys, the Swiss confectionery and Kolkata landmark before it was renovated for the Apeejay Group. Besides her many exhibitions and photography for books, her work has been exhibited at several Indian and international galleries.

Leena Kejriwal



Heralding the arrival of the Renaissance woman, the multi-talented, Chennai-based writer-dancer-poet Tishani Doshi is a new and bold voice in the Indian literati.

Her poetry carries evolved perspectives couched in an effortless writing style. Her frequent and curious travels give fodder for unusual writings and clever verse. After graduating with a Masters in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University, she returned to India where she started working with choreographer Chandralekha, even though she had no previous dance training. She has since toured the world as a dancer and is also a notable name in poetry festivals including the Guardian Hay Festival 2006 and the Cartagena Hay Festival 2007. The launch of her collection, Countries of the Body, which went on to win the prestigious Forward Poetry Prize (2006) for the best first collection, shared the stage with Margaret Atwood and Seamus Heaney, among other remarkable contemporary poets. She is currently working on a biography of Sri Lankan cricketer Muttiah Muralitharan and a novel, The Pleasure Seekers (Bloomsbury) is in the pipeline. Doshi is being touted as a brand new page in Indian English literature.

Tishani Doshi



Looking **East** WITH
THE PARK HOTELS

History } Geography } Art } Craft } Culture } People



Mural by Chintan Upadhyay on the exterior facade of The Park, New Delhi