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Living

The PARK Magazine

03



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uture Thought



LIVING spotlights global trends, glimpsed through the unique telescope of The Park Hotels. It reflects on contemporary lifestyles, and the 21st century blend of good living that goes beyond mere luxury and towards responsible thinking.

This issue of LIVING heralds a brand new year by examining emerging viewpoints on the future of our earth – the single most important global issue of our times. It looks at how design, cuisine, media and lifestyles are morphing and evolving to revive the delicate balance between humans and nature, and ensure a more sustainable tomorrow.



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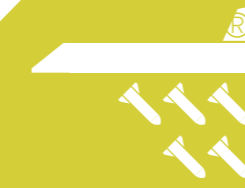
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Left Artist's 3-D rendering of The Park, Hyderabad currently being constructed combining cutting-edge design and the principles of sustainable architecture. Opening mid 2009



Future Thought

Sustaining Tomorrow

The environmental crisis has come home to us. We're subject to flash floods and micro-bursts, blazing summers and shifting seasons. Resource depletion and plundered eco-systems have caused water shortages and madly fluctuating fuel prices. No longer just scientific jargon, global warming and the extinction of species are issues being addressed in schools and debated in the UN. All human activity from eating and drinking to manufacturing, from entertainment to travel, is now measured against a standard of sustainability. The world is waking up and inhaling the pollution – and it's not a pretty scent.

Sustainability is being taken very seriously the world over, both at individual and government levels to restore the planet to a better place, one where future generations are not threatened with extinction. Many of us are switching to CFL lights, finding unique composting solutions, or simply cycling to work.

The economic crisis the world is facing right now has discouraged some nations (and private businesses) from investing in expensive green processes. However, the good news is that many governments recognise their responsibility to take up the onus of sustaining the future, starting with US President-elect Barack Obama who has the environment firmly on his agenda. In fact, the thinking among world leaders like Obama, Gordon Brown and Taro Aso as well as the United Nations, is that the recession might actually be turned around because clean technology development can propel to the fore a dynamic new sector of the economy. The establishment of renewable energy projects, the manufacture of hybrid cars, and advancing the next generation of bio-fuels is expected to create millions of new jobs, advance GDPs *and* promise a greener tomorrow.

Other international efforts are being made: Stockholm's Hammarby Sjostad is a unique urban ecological district that works on solar energy and considers recycling a religion. Indonesia, which sits on the geothermally active Pacific Ring of Fire, is turning to this huge, untapped source of power to deflect rising oil prices and an ineffective power infrastructure. India's first green housing project with integrated solar power is coming up near Kolkata in partnership with the government of West Bengal. Even China threw 1 million cars off the city's streets to make the air cleaner for the Beijing Olympics. Sustaining the world we live in with its beauty and natural wealth is now a point of collective action across the globe.

But how did we get here?

If we'd listened to the wisdom of the ancients, we might have found that inherent in that wisdom were ideas that helped maintain the delicate balance of the natural world. In India, a healthy respect for the forces of nature was the way of life – and often still is – in rural regions, passed down from mother to daughter. The palm leaf bowls we ate *channa* or *idlis* in on the roadside were thrown into piles to be eaten by cows, (who converted them into fertilizer and fuel), and are now being replaced by styrofoam trays. That railway station *matka chai* is not only environmentally low-impact, it also imbibes the flavour of the terracotta pots and so has its own special taste. Cheap plastic cups have made *matka chai* a rarity. The ubiquitous cloth bag advertising *beedis* in bright lettering that was a common sight with shoppers at the local vegetable market is now merely a kitsch item sold in boutiques, while your maid brings home your groceries from Foodworld in thin plastic bags. Because the old ways need more investment (of money, time and energy), they are in danger of dying out in the name of progress.

Most of the world has realised that this could cost us far more in the long run – cost us the earth, in fact. We've developed a long-term viewpoint – that sustainability must become second nature to humankind. Slowly people are also beginning to see that sustaining the earth and sustaining their lifestyles or comforts are not mutually exclusive. Lifestyles, far from being compromised by investing in green, are often enhanced by it. Cosmetics are more natural – they contain fair trade ingredients like espresso grinds, green tea and avocado oil, free from parabens and other chemicals. And, they come all wrapped up in biodegradable packaging. Holidays are healthier – Wwoofing (or World-wide Opportunities in Organic Farms) is how the *übercool* spend vacation time in Australia and Europe. Fashion is cooler – the trendy eco-fashion online label NAU proves that you don't have to be grungy to be green. Partying is more hip – in London, Surya, the ecological nightclub, has a dance floor that generates its own electricity when people move on it.

Sustainability is being seen as fundamental to the process of design, and not just as an afterthought. Consider the following: MBTs (Masai Barefoot Technology, in honour of the East African tribe); running shoes made of sustainable materials that improve performance because they are lighter; sheets made from locally sourced hemp fabric and home products made from felt scraps and recycled rubber that are *trés* chic as well as ethical; Dutch design students developing a hybrid autorikshaw which will reduce emissions by 30%; Cherry Pal, the worlds most affordable green PC that weighs 10.5 ounces and uses only 2 kilowatts of power, and is as fast as they come...

The Park Hotels believe that reconnecting with a healthy, meaningful and productive quality of life is the way to a more holistic sustainability, in a more abundant future.

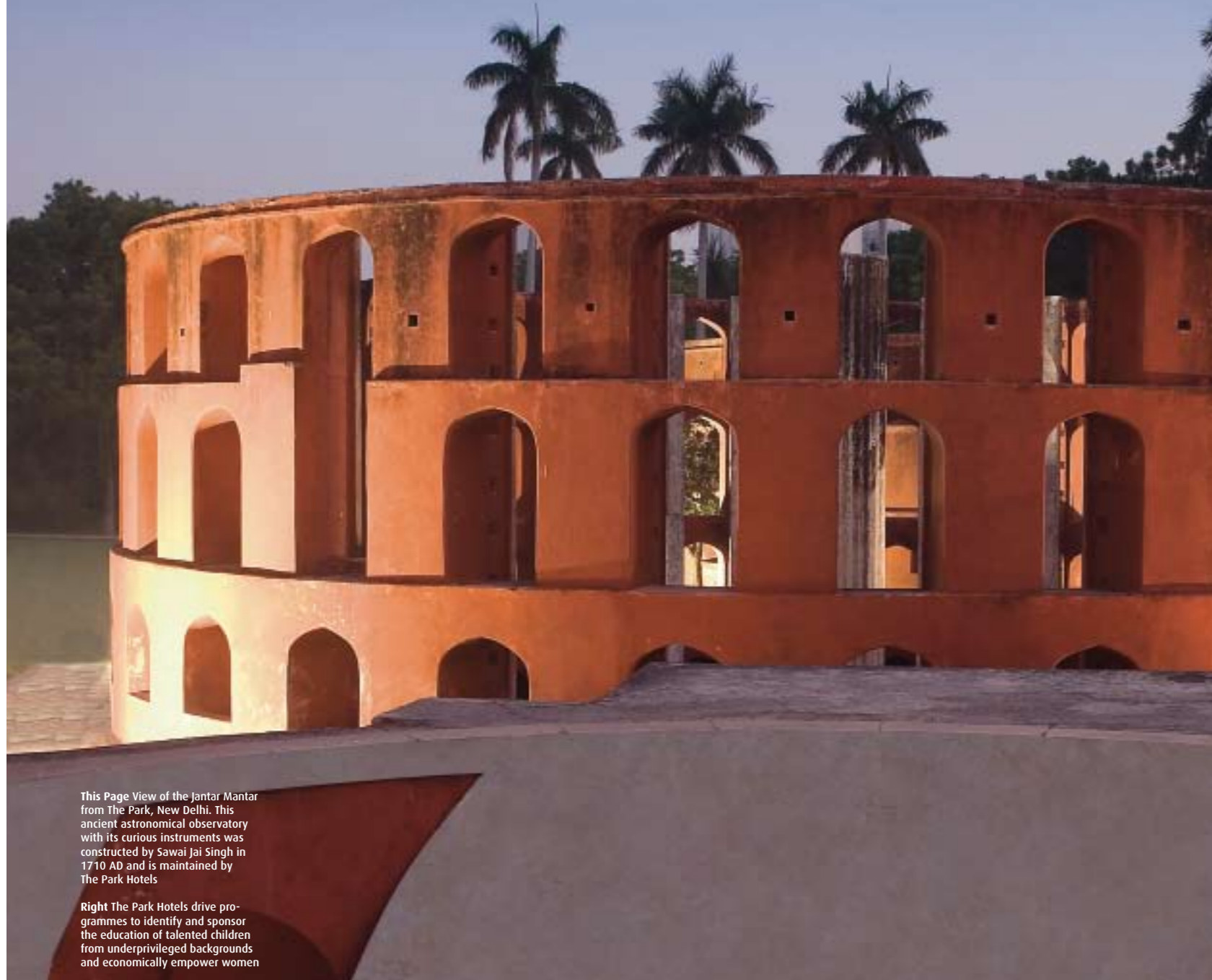
The new idea is that if we look at humans as a part of nature, rather than separate from it or in conflict with it, and if our goal becomes to improve the lives of people, then health, engaging with the natural world and protecting eco-systems follows as a logical consequence. As does building community values, sustaining historical learnings, connecting with local arts and crafts and traditional medicine.

The Park Hotels have embraced this humanistic definition of sustainability. They give the future real thought and engage in activities that work towards a greener environment as well as sustaining the overall quality of people's lives. The new Hotel in Hyderabad is designed as a path-breaking, iconic landmark that will alter the city's skyline, yet is being wholly constructed according to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. Lending credence to the idea that good design does not get compromised by involving the principles of green architecture. As a policy, all hotels undertake eco-activities in everyday operations like recycling, conservation of energy and chemical-free food offerings. There is great impetus given to local crafts in the design of the hotels and the items sold at The Box, the boutique store at The Park Hotels. The vibrant cultural energy created at the hotels through book readings, performances and art promotion, and the associations with tradition and history – like the upkeep of the Jantar Mantar in Delhi, reflect perfectly an essential thinking. That reconnecting with a healthy, meaningful and productive quality of life for humans now is the way to a more holistic sustainability, in a more abundant future.

Sources:
www.inhabit.com, www.ecofabulous.blogspot.com, www.ted.com – talks by John Doer and Al Gore
Ken Botnick, 'Innovation from Necessity' – A Tour of Discovery for Design Professionals

Sustaining Heritage

The Park Hotels believe in sustaining history, connecting the contemporary with the traditional. The Jantar Mantar in Delhi is one of India's finest monuments, illustrating the refinement of ancient Indian scientific thought. The Park Hotels entered a first-of-its-kind agreement in the year 2000 with the Archaeological Survey of India and the National Culture Fund to preserve and maintain this astronomical observatory and its environs. Beautiful landscaping is laid out around the structure, and a cohesive information signage system explains the yantras (or instruments) and their unique functioning has been put up on the site. Ambient lighting and adjective facilities have been added to make the site an attraction for tourists, or just a quiet place for contemplation and reflection in the bustle of New Delhi.



This Page View of the Jantar Mantar from The Park, New Delhi. This ancient astronomical observatory with its curious instruments was constructed by Sawai Jai Singh in 1710 AD and is maintained by The Park Hotels

Right The Park Hotels drive programmes to identify and sponsor the education of talented children from underprivileged backgrounds and economically empower women



Building Communities

The Park Hotels believe that to sustain life is to sustain our community. Following a vision of social accountability and growth, they channel resources into partnerships with several NGOs, serving social responsibilities in the areas of disability, children, youth, women, health, crafts, arts, heritage conservation, education and development. Educational programmes with orphanages and youth reach drives, like anti-drug campaigns involving employee volunteers, sustain future generations. Initiatives with hospitals, blood donation camps and the urban poor generate solutions for health and societal challenges. Planting of saplings, cleanliness campaigns and awareness generation make up a large part of the green initiatives at the Hotels. The Park Hotels strive towards serving the community, which is the hallmark of a good corporate citizen.

Promoting Green Products

The Park Hotels have always leaned towards integrating contemporary design with local craft, sustaining traditional knowledge. Accessorizing the rooms are well designed products that are also eco-friendly. Guest rooms in the Delhi Hotel have unbleached cotton laundry and newspaper bags, wood free pencils and jute slippers. In the Chennai Hotel, rooms are embellished with objects crafted from recycled materials like palm leaves and wood, and natural materials like cane, made in collaboration with local artisans and cottage industries. The Box, the in-house boutique at The Park Hotels, stocks exquisite eco-compatible products.



This Page Luxury Premium rooms at The Park Chennai, that utilize green products and sustainable processes

Right Place settings at Fire, the pan-Indian restaurant at The Park, New Delhi, where robust organic ingredients that replenish the earth are cooked in traditional ways that enhance flavours



Evolving Green Processes

The Park Hotels work towards sustaining resources, and providing a more productive environment for the well being of guests and employees, through innovative processes like: ISO 14000 for environmental management / no chemical pesticides / energy saving key cards for rooms / eco-friendly cleaning agents / stack emission to prevent air pollution / effluent treatment plants to remove water pollution / high wattage halogens replaced with low wattage and high illumination lamps / bamboo wood at 601 / waste treatment plants / solar heating / rainwater harvesting to recharge ground water / variable frequency operated lifts / sound proof windows and glass for hotel façades / skylights and ventilators to utilize natural day light / sewage treatment plants / reusing treated water in cooling towers, flushing systems and for landscaping / energy-efficient grills, fryers and heating systems in kitchens / staff trained on judicious water and energy usage / organic ingredients like grains, masalas and oils and traditional processes used / excess food distributed to food banks / leftovers given to animal shelters / lubricants converted into industrial use / kitchen garbage segregated

Defining New Green Directions The Park, Hyderabad

The Park Hotels' newest venture is a 280-room property in the heart of Hyderabad. The Hotel's design is holistic, weaving in green features from its conception. Besides working towards preserving the environment, these measures will improve the safety, comfort and productivity of the occupants of the Hotel, using the very latest technology. The Hotel is in line for a LEEDS certification, and has configured several inputs into its design to meet the stringent criteria of this energy and environmental design award. Conserving water and energy, treating waste, creating an atmosphere of natural light, good ventilation and a high quality of indoor air, as well as encouraging eco-awareness in patrons and employees – these are key aspects of the new building that is as beautifully designed as it is green.




All building materials have high **recycled content** like steel, aluminium, glass, fly ash-based blocks, and MDF wood with non-urea formaldehyde resins.

100% recycling of treated waste water and a storage and collection programme for waste generated in the building, including onsite decomposition of wet garbage.

Erosion and sedimentation control measures to reduce negative impacts on water and air quantity in accordance with the US EPA law.

High efficiency and **HFC** based chillers.

Charging points for electrically charged vehicles and earmarked areas for parking. Dedicated parking for **bicycles.**

Over deck roof insulation material with R value as per ASHRAE 90.1 (the efficiency standard for buildings).

A green roof or a roof with a high Solar Reflectance Index.



The Hotel envisages a **30%** reduction in energy consumption, & a **40%** reduction in potable **Water** consumption.

Water fixtures with **low flow.**

Additional Energy and **water flow meters** for measurement and verification.



Dedicated smoking rooms. Restaurants will be all **'No-Smoking'**

Installation of **return air fans** for Air Handling Units with Variable Frequency Drives.

The bar & nightclub will have a deck to deck partition with **negative pressure.**

All air filters will be replaced with **MERV-13** (a high standard of filters) and above.

Indoor air quality (IAQ) that meets ASHRAE 62-1999 standards.



High performance glass to reduce heat load and generate **more daylight.**



Left Dining Throne by Gunjan Gupta in silver, gold leaf and wood: locally made, sustainable design that commentators are heralding as the wave of the future

L

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Sustainability and Design
in a Post-Industrial World

Alice Cicolini

Alice Cicolini is a designer, writer and arts consultant based between New Delhi and London. Currently developing a book on contemporary Indian design, she was formerly Director of Arts & Culture for the British Council in India.



Exactly fifty years ago this year, Charles and Ray Eames were invited to India by the government of Jawaharlal Nehru to recommend a programme of design training that would equip India for the challenges of the latter part of the twentieth century. They wrote, “In the light of the dramatic acceleration with which change is taking place in India and the seriousness of the basic problems involved, we recommend that without delay there be a sober investigation into those values and those qualities that Indians hold important to a good life, that there be a close scrutiny of those elements that go to make up a Standard of Living.”

India was facing, they believed, change that was a “change in kind not a change of degree” as the world moved into the communication age. In the early stages of the twenty-first century, it is becoming harder to ignore the fact that the world is facing another “change in kind”, as the era of fossil fuels on which our economic growth is so wholly dependent begins to draw to a close, and as the environmental cost of the impact of industrialised human life on earth becomes more visible year on year. The Eames’ statement is no less powerful a call to arms than it was half a century ago.

India, says the UN, is one of the world’s most environmentally aware nations with over 60% of its population concerned about the impact of climate change, and with one of the lowest carbon footprints per person on the planet (the ratio, presumably, dramatically reduced by India’s low impact rural communities). Yet simultaneously, she is heading rapidly towards the kind of suburban, consumer-driven, oil-powered economy that is the root cause of many of the climate issues that are already beginning to affect the nation’s rural populace. Huge efforts are being invested globally in finding alternative sources of energy that will continue to support demand at current levels, including nuclear power, the dangers of which are no less acute than they were in the 1970s when it became a pariah of the energy world. Most of these solutions imply the kind of “blind eye” turning to the impact on the local communities in which these alternatives are located that informs most of urban life today; as long as its not our backyard it is easy to ignore the human cost to those who are not so fortunate.

An alternative, and one which is crucial for a new generation of designers in particular, is the possibility that this "change in kind" that the world is facing should be cause for everyone to scrutinize again the values that make up a Standard of Living. How much power, water, travel and, by extension, how many handbags does one family really need? Does it matter where things come from, and by whom and how they were made; whose lives and how have they touched on the way to our doorstep? Received wisdom has it that the environmental movement must take up the tools of capitalist consumerism and use them to its advantage (and the huge success of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* is testament to this theory). So far, environmentally aware design, particularly in the area of consumables (furniture, fashion and so on), has failed to find the same language of desirability that global brands exploit so successfully, or indeed that the organic food movement has leveraged so well in the Western world. Where a growing number of people are asking where their dinner came from, and rejecting the more obvious symbols of the oil-era (sales of SUVs have dropped by over 50% in the last 12 months in the US and Europe, and the Hummer, King of the Road, is a brand that faces the very real possibility of being withdrawn by its manufacturer General Motors), they are far less inclined to ask the provenance of the materials with which their homes and offices are built, of the textiles and metals that they wear, and the furniture on which they sit – partly because the low-impact alternatives just aren't as beautiful and/or desirable as their oil-era cousins. Whilst brands like Howies, People Tree and Edun in the UK are beginning to find a design language which supports the idea that it is possible to look good and save the world, for most design industries and companies there is a long way to go, and not only in terms of design but also in terms of what it really means to be environmentally aware. You might be wearing organic cotton, but what does that matter when its been airfreighted across the world several times before it arrives in your wardrobe? Your office maybe powered by solar energy, but if it is entirely built of concrete imported from the other side of the world, how environmentally friendly is it really?

This is where the language of sustainability becomes increasingly powerful. What could, or indeed does, sustainability really mean? One powerful interpretation espoused by several environmentalists is the notion of a rebalancing between the global and the local. These thinkers (such as George Monbiot and father of the Transition Town Movement, Rob Hopkins) are not modern-day Luddites, proposing a "return" to pre-industrialised agrarian life; rather they challenge us to think about the Standard of Living we desire, or are prepared to accept, in order to preserve the world for future generations. How much of what we need cannot be better produced in local communities? Not simply a question of environmental cost, it is also a question of appropriateness to context and therefore of social and cultural livelihood and survival. Whilst much of the design world remains in thrall to "more and bigger" (as last year's Milan Furniture Fair attests), there are a growing number of designers and design interventionists thinking about their role as conduits for traditional, local skills that are more appropriate to the context in which they are made.



Cabaret artist Jonathan Wooster, from *The New English Dandy* by Alice Cicolini, published by Thames and Hudson. Photo by Mark Blower

From brands such as American Apparel at one end (locally produced cotton, locally made t-shirts and at a competitive price) to individual designers such as New Delhi's Gunjan Gupta (locally made, sustainably produced luxury furniture) at the other, the possibilities for design to contribute at a consumer level to a new kind of sustainability are immense and exciting. Much of this shift is a shift in our thinking about the kind of design bulimia in which we have been engaged over the last 25 years. It is only a generation or two since people bought things they could pass on to their children and grandchildren; we have rapidly exchanged this "fusty" value-system for one of total disposability where clothes are made to last for a season, buildings for not much longer. But if it only took a generation to affect this change, by the same extension it should be possible to affect a re-evaluation of the cost of this "consume and purge" mentality within a similar time-frame. Not a simplistic question of a "burning of the brands", it is more about considering whether to invest our money in objects that have been beautifully made by local producers, and made to last. In the UK, traditions of bespoke manufacture of suits and shoes, made from locally woven textiles appropriate for Britain's very particular climate, are exactly the kind of sustainable craft skills this movement should be inclined to promote. In India, a nation where the richness of craft skill within local communities is one of its brightest and sadly, conversely, least valued and inventively supported commodities (at government level certainly), the potential for driving forward an innovative and revolutionary sustainable design movement is significant. How much more sustainable and appropriate to climate (and indeed visually distinctive) is Benares silk when compared to imported synthetics, Mangalore tiles to concrete boxes? The cost to the pocket maybe that much higher, but the overall cost to the world and its communities of continuing to reject locally produced options in favour of those produced using oil-sourced energies, freighted half way around the world, and made from non-biodegradable materials, is incalculable.

In addition, looked at from the perspective of "made to last" and "value for money", pieces that will survive and age with beauty cost far less over time than their disposable equivalents. It is time to re-evaluate the local, to reposition it from dowdy to luxury; is it really such a hardship, when considered in this light, to wear cotton *ikat* saris made from locally, organically produced cotton, woven locally by highly skilled weavers, to sit on rugs locally woven from wool taken from ethically reared Deccan livestock and to go home at night to a home built from locally produced materials? It is time, as with the Eames' call to action over fifty years ago, for another "sober investigation into those values and those qualities that Indians hold important to a good life, ... a close scrutiny of those elements that go to make up a Standard of Living."



Qutab Minar

Reaching into the sky over the teeming metropolis of Delhi, the Qutab Minar is India's tallest stone tower at 239 ft. Built by Qutb Ud Din Aibak as a mark of the victory of Islam in India, this 12th century sandstone tower tells poignant tales of history. It is surrounded by a number of monuments including Quwwat Ul Islam Mosque, one of India's oldest existing mosques, and set amidst manicured gardens. Try and wrap your arms around the Iron Pillar with your back to it. If you're successful, legend has it that your wishes will be granted.

Qutab Complex, Aurobindo Marg, Near Mehrauli
Open 9am to 9pm

Heritage Walks

'Exploring Shahjahanabad' is a walk that lets you experience Delhi's past in the labyrinth of the old city. Starting from the Red Fort, it goes into Chandni Chowk. Crisscrossing through Sunehri Masjid and the Digambar Jain temple, it traverses Mirza Ghalib's ancestral home. Walkers meander past the famous Paranthewali *galli* heavy with the aroma of delicious traditional fare, through secret alleys in Dharampura and Kinari Bazaar lined with beautifully carved walls and exquisite silverware, accompanied by interesting snippets from the guide. And what better way to explore the seat of Emperor Shah Jahan, than the way its denizens do - on foot. Contact the Programme Coordinator, INTACH Delhi Chapter +91 11 4641304/24692774 Extn 105 intachdelhi@rediffmail.com

IBEX Expeditions

From challenging treks to historical tours, explore India with this bunch of intrepid adventurers. Perhaps the country's most professional tour operators, they're also the most environmentally responsible. Delhi is a great starting point for a sojourn in the Himalayas, the deserts of Rajasthan and the wilderness of Corbett. Call the experts at Ibex for a rewarding Eco-Tour, where you can plant saplings, enjoy the hospitality of the local community and feel the satisfaction of responsible travel. G-66 East of Kailash +91 11 26912641/26828479 www.ibexexpeditions.com

Jantar Mantar



Built in the early 18th century by Maharaja Jaisingh II of Jaipur, the Jantar Mantar was a cosmic observatory far ahead of its time. Its striking form and imposing scale are matched only by the complex functioning of its *yantras*, or instruments. One of the five such labs built by the king across the country, the observatory comprises six geometric devices for measuring time, predicting eclipses, tracking stars in their orbits, and ascertaining the declinations of planets and celestial bodies. An object of curiosity for scientists, historians, architects, artists and tourists, Delhi's Jantar Mantar is today also the favoured venue for peaceful protests for the city's social activists. **Parliament Street (Sansad Marg), Opposite The Park Hotel** Open 9am to 9pm Ticket Rs. 5

The Café at Triveni

The Café at Triveni Kala Sangam is usually buzzing with ideas and intellectual discussions, and is a throwback to a more revolutionary time. The complex has four art galleries including Art Heritage. Set against an open air garden theatre that resounds with the haunting beat of the *midangam* as graceful *Chhau* dance to it, the ambience of the café is difficult to find in any other in the capital. The food is good, but don't expect prompt service - the whole trip is to soak in the atmosphere at a leisurely pace, and flit in and out of the various art and photography exhibitions and the well-stocked bookstore, often with a *kathak* class happening somewhere within earshot. **205 Tansen Marg** +91 11 37718833 triveniks@vsnl.net

Oxford Bookstore

While you saunter through the colonial buildings at the horseshoe-shaped Connaught Place, don't miss a rendezvous with books over organic tea at the Oxford Bookstore. Besides well-stocked bookshelves with everything from cookery to yoga and Shakespeare to Amartya Sen, the bookstore plays host to exciting interactive readings by well known authors, both Indian and international. The chic Cha Bar within the store is a funky place to catch up with friends or to leaf through some of the best international magazines. The Oxford Bookstores have been sanctuaries for book lovers across Indian cities for over 80 years. **Statesman House, First Floor, 148, Barakhamba Road** +91 11 2376 6083 www.oxfordbookstore.com

Crafts Museum



The Crafts Museum is a showcase of folk and tribal art including toys, puppets, masks, utensils, metal ware, jewellery, textiles and paintings collected from across the country over 30 years. Housed in a building designed by Charles Correa that is a perfect foil for the objects displayed, the exhibits show precious antiques and artistry that's now almost extinct. Browse through the Visual Library which archives 15,000 artifacts. Buy trinkets and handicrafts from the bazaar in the museum's courtyard. Don't forget to visit the Crafts Museum Shop for souvenirs, postcards, books and other memorabilia. **Gate No. 2, Bhairon Road, Pragati Maidan** +91 11 23371641 Open 10 am to 5.30pm, closed on Mon Ticket Rs. 5

Khan Market

Delhi's trendiest market, this is an eclectic collection of bookstores, boutiques and cafes. Start at Good Earth and choose a silk bedspread and sequined cushions. While that's being packed, pop into Anokhi for some block-printed *kurtas*. Wander into The Bookshop and pick up the latest Booker Prize novel, or if you're into spirituality, check out Full Circle for books on meditation. Grab a cup of herbal tea and a spinach *quiche* at the organic Café Turtle. On your way out, tuck into the fabulous *banoffee* pie at The Big Chill and buy some imported cheeses and *pâté* from one of the stores on the back lane. Not surprisingly, Khan Market's a favourite with expats!

Janpath

Loosely translating into 'people's path', Janpath is as much for the shopaholic as for the curious traveller. A profusion of colours and hawkers hollering unbeatable prices in that inimitable Indian pitch, the circus of Janpath is exhilarating. Souvenirs and curio stalls jostle for space with export surplus clothing, Tibetan necklaces, leather and Rajasthani bedspreads. Bargaining is part of the deal here! If you need a break from rummaging through the piles of irresistible merchandise, grab a coffee at Barista or a burger at Wimpy's. And do check out the State-owned Cottage Industries Emporium on the opposite side of the road for a better quality of Indian crafts.

Navdanya

Navdanya stands for the nine crops that represent India's collective source of food security. This organic food store in South Delhi makes wholesome food accessible to even the laziest green freak. Organic rice, *daals*, *ragi*, *atto*, tea and even pasta line the shelves of this little shop in Hauz Khas, all from small farms that conserve soil and water and are chemical free. Pick up biscuits, juices, jams and pickles. Or try out their massage oils and soaps. The 100% chemical-free products come from the collective started by scientist and environmentalist Vandana Shiva. **A-60, Hauz Khas** +91 11 26535422 www.navdanya.org

Dilli Haat

This sprawling 6 acre property bang in the middle of South Delhi recreates the vibrant buzz of an authentic Indian rural market. Browse through rosewood and sandalwood carvings, embellished camel hide footwear, gems, beads, brassware, metal crafts, and silk and wool fabrics. Craftspeople from all over the country hire stalls to sell their wares in this beautiful space. Over 25 other kiosks serve varied pan-Indian foods. Try *momos* from Sikkim or the bamboo chicken from Nagaland, *kahwa* & *kababs* from Jammu, *pooranpoli* from Maharashtra, *appams* from Kerala or the Gujrati *dhokla*. Food is reasonably priced (as is everything here). **Sri Aurobindo Marg, Opp. INA Market** +91 11 4629365/6119055 Ticket Rs. 15 for adult and Rs. 5 for child. Wheelchair access available

Nature Morte

A cutting edge gallery for contemporary art, Nature Morte features experimental works from artists working in a variety of media. In 2003, it expanded its scope to a more global stage by partnering with Bose Pacia, New York. Focusing on conceptualist and *avant garde* art, and looking at the politics of identity and representation, this space hosts exhibits by Thukral and Tagra, Dayanita Singh, Subodh Gupta, Jitish Kallat, Pushpamala N. et al. Acquaint yourself with the new face of Indian art at this three-floor gallery which was started by acclaimed artist Peter Nagy in New York in the '80s. **A-1, Neeti Bagh** +91 11 41740215

People Tree

This funky store has, for the last 17 years, been providing *dilliwalas* with quirky tee shirts, and combining ethnic crafts (like *Madhubani*, *Bastar* and *Warli*) and contemporary sensibilities to create modern folk art. It also sells eco-friendly stationery and accessories as well as books and cds preserving the alternative in politics, music and design. The founders are into ecological responsibility and only use natural, non-toxic and biodegradable materials. This space is also a locus for the coolest people in the green scene. Check it out for urban-folk, industrial-pop design "free from the demands of (heartless) markets and (artless) clients" **No. 8, Regal Building, Connaught Place** +91 11 23340699

The Garden of Five Senses

This is one couture retail space that has made Delhi's designer-weary shoppers sit up and take notice. Set amidst a 20 acre park, the shops sell *prêt* and runway collections by Manish Arora, Raghavendra Rathore, Alpna Bawa, Citrus, Anamika Khanna, Rajesh Pratap Singh, A+B, and Muzaffar and Meera Ali. If you're not into shopping, indulge your other senses strolling through Mughal style gardens, engaging with installations of ceramic bells, peering at limpid pools of water lilies and plants of a 100 different species. Walk along a row of fountains, catch a show or performance at the amphitheatre and sample some fare at the food court or the nouvelle cuisine restaurant. **Said-ul-Ajaib, M.B. Road, South of Saket** +91 11 65651083, 29536401

Humayun's Tomb

The inspiration for the Taj Mahal, this is probably the most magnificent heritage structure in all of Delhi. Beautifully preserved (it's on UNESCO's World Heritage List), the 450 year old red sandstone mausoleum stands testament to the creative might of the Mughal dynasty. The landscaped gardens in the *char bagh* style are stunning and the water courses are a refreshing change in dusty Delhi. A harmonious mix of Persian and Indian styles, it houses the tombs of several Mughal rulers. But it is the serenity and aura of the monument and its environs that makes it a must-see for any visitor to Delhi. **Mathura Road - Lodhi Road Crossing** Open everyday from sunrise to sunset



THE PARK Explorer



New Delhi

For more information or bookings for any of the above please contact The Box at The Park, New Delhi +91 11 23743737



Sirish Rao is amongst the most exciting new voices in contemporary Indian writing. He has written 16 books, ranging from novels and children's books, to retellings of myths and collections of pop art. Sirish Rao's books have been translated into Dutch, Italian, French, German and Korean. His writing reflects his interest in nature, mountaineering, travel, eccentric people and the oddities of language. He is currently working on a novel for adults, called Nirvana Ltd.

Left The Peacock. "When the peacock dances in the forest, everything watches, and the trees change their form to turn into flaming feathers." Illustration by Ram Singh Urveti and excerpt from The Night Life of Trees



The Night Life of Trees

Sirish Rao,
Tara Books

"Draw us a man," we asked Ram Singh Urveti. He drew a man sitting under a tree.
"Draw us a bird, then."
He drew a bird, sitting on a tree.
"How about a river?"
And he drew a river flowing... next to a tree.
"Is there a tree in all your drawings?"
"What to do?" he shrugged.

And so the idea for the book *The Night Life of Trees* was born. Ram Singh Urveti, along with Bhajju Shyam and Durga Bai is one of the finest living artists of the Gond tribe in Madhya Pradesh. All three artists have been working with Tara Books for over five years now, in a series of collaborative projects that has led to some of the most unusual books to come out of India.



BHAJJU SHYAM



DURGA BAI



RAM SINGH URVETI

The Night Life of Trees was sparked off by Ram Singh’s drawings, and what he told the team at Tara about the Gond relationship to trees. In Gond belief, trees are the central form of life, and the spirit of many things live in them. They are busy all day, giving shade and support and shelter and food to many creatures, and it is only when night falls that they can find rest for themselves, and then, under dark skies, the spirits that live in them are revealed.

To do justice to this powerful imaginative world – and to the stunning drawings created by the three artists – meant that we at Tara had to re-think the form of the book itself. Our designer Rathna Ramanathan (who teaches graphic design at Central St. Martin’s in London), came up with the idea of using black handmade paper, and screen-printing the images by hand, to create a glowing, luminous feel. Each drawing (originally rendered in black and white) had to be assigned a colour palette and then placed in its own jet black page. We wanted to try and recreate on the printed page the familiarity and awe with which the Gond people view the cosmos.

No problem Equally awe-inspiring is the making of the book itself. The Night Life of Trees is part of Tara’s series of handcrafted books. In a climate of declining independent publishing and global takeovers, we decided to return to an older form – the book made entirely by hand, which returns the feel, smell, and beauty of ink on paper, and brings the senses back into the experience of a book. All our handmade books are produced in-house, at a print workshop run by C. Arumugam, whose motto is “Nothing is Impossible”, which he sometimes shortens to “No Problem.” The son of a subsistence farmer from a small village in South India, he came to Madras in the early nineties where he learnt his skills entirely on the job, silk-screening business cards in a tiny room that he shared with 6 others. His equipment was all in one tin trunk which he stored under his bed. In 1995, he met Gita Wolf, who had just started Tara. Impressed by the quality and precision of his work, she asked him to do a few test runs of a children’s picture book using the silk-screen process – something that hadn’t been done before. What began as an experiment has now grown into an enterprise that has won worldwide recognition for fine bookmaking. Among others, the handmade series have won the IPPY Best Book Craftsmanship award in the US, first prize at the Association of American Museum Publications and the Johannes Gutenberg Award for excellence in printing.

Each page of every book created in the workshop is silk-screen printed or letter-pressed on handmade paper and bound by hand, making each page an original art print. But these are not esoteric artists’ volumes: they are individually made, yet match the price and consistency of mass produced books. The challenge lies in how many times a book has to be handled, while still maintaining precision and perfection.

On an average, the printer pulls the ink over a screen placed on the paper about 100 times to make a 32 page book with three colours. That’s half a million pulls by hand for a book with a print run of 5000 copies. The books are also hand bound (a process involving punching holes with a mallet and nail and stitching the forms together). Some books involve additional tipping-in (hand sticking) of pictures, or embellishments like ribbons, beads, special boxes or cases. Over the last decade, the workshop has produced over 120,000 such books. As far as we know, no one else in the world produces books by hand in these numbers. What we wanted to do is to use the rich resources that India offers in the service of fine contemporary bookmaking. The workshop is run on fair trade practices, offering employment to a dozen skilled craftspeople from local villages. All the members of the workshop live and work together, sharing household as well as printing tasks.

We see sustainability not only in terms of materials and recycling, but also in terms of artistic traditions and artisanal skills. Along the way, re-inventing traditional skills in the service of fine contemporary bookmaking has led to the book itself being re-defined as a cultural object.

Waste is best All our books use handmade paper specially manufactured at the Aurobindo Handmade Paper Unit in Pondicherry or by traditional papermakers in Sanganeer, Rajasthan. The paper is tree-free paper, usually made from a mixture of cotton cloth wastes, bark, rice husks, or grass. We have recently begun to use non-toxic screen printing inks and there are no machines involved in the making of our handmade books.

We have also tried to use innovative methods of recycling. For instance, the boards used to bind our hardback editions are taken from other books on their way to being pulped or recycled (usually remaindered books from abroad which are put up for sale on a weight basis on the junk market). So the backing board for one of our handmade editions could well once have been the backing for The Illustrated Guide to the Central Nervous System. At other times, accidents and mistakes lead to a new line of products. For example, we discovered that the waste sheets and test papers on our bookmaking workshop floor looked really beautiful, overlaid as they were with a series of images and test prints. Artists who visited our workshop always asked if they could take some of the sheets to use in their work. That led us to think that we could find a use for the sheets, and a new

Above Left “Even though many of the Gond artists no longer live in the old way, their imagination is still linked to the forest. The tree is at the heart of it, providing not just shade, shelter, and nourishment, but also a rich imaginative universe of narratives and beliefs.” Illustrations and excerpt from The Night Life of Trees



Left The Home of the Creator "The Peepul tree is the home of the Creator...so perfect that seen against the sky, it seems to have the same shape as its own leaf." Illustration by Bhajju Shyam and excerpt from The Night Life of Trees

line of stationery called 'flukebooks' was born. This is a range of notebooks and diaries bound in one of our test sheets. Every cover is stamped "Edition 1 of 1" and it's true – you'll never find one flukebook exactly like another. They're random by design!

The book as a cultural object We see sustainability not only in terms of materials and recycling, but also in terms of artistic traditions and artisanal skills. For artists like Ram Singh, Durga Bai and Bhajju Shyam, the book is also becoming an important platform for their art. Both as a creative collaboration and a commercial avenue, books have been good for them. The Night Life of Trees has already been published by several of Europe's finest houses, with editions in Italian, Spanish, German and French already out. Earlier this year it won the prestigious Ragazzi Award at the Bologna book fair in Italy and images from the book have been licensed far and wide – from Patek Philippe Magazine to the cover of Kiran Desai's Inheritance of Loss. We have also taken great care to explain the concept of royalties to all the tribal and folk artists we work with, since this is a very new practice for them.

Most of them believed that if someone bought their art, they had the right to reproduce it as well. We have royalty contracts with all our artists (to this day, Durga Bai still rings us up when she receives her yearly royalty cheque to ask "Why are you paying me again?"). Somewhere along the way, re-inventing traditional skills in the service of fine contemporary bookmaking has led to the book itself being redefined as a cultural object. When authors, artists and book designers work closely with a community of book craftsmen, they merge modern art and design sensibilities with an older sense of bookmaking as a craft. So the book becomes a complex cultural object: a home for ideas, a source of pleasure, and a site where art can happen.

We're very pleased that our various forays and experiments have paid off. Tara now has a strong reputation in India and partners with some of the finest publishing houses and museums worldwide, including a specially commissioned handmade line for the J. Paul Getty Museum. Tara books are available at museums like the Tate Modern, the Victoria and Albert, Guggenheim, MoMA and Smithsonian as well as in stores like the Conran shops.

We hope to keep exploring new forms of the book, and ways of bringing different visions to our readers by creating unexpected contexts for traditional genius to gain a contemporary form.

The Nightlife of Trees by Bhajju Shyam, Durga Bai and Ram Singh Urveti. Adapted & Edited from the original Hindi narratives by Gita Wolf & Sirish Rao.

Tara's handmade book, The Night Life of Trees, was awarded the 2008 Bologna Ragazzi award for New Horizons. The Ragazzi awards are among the most prestigious international awards conferred each year in the world of children's book publishing.

TARA BOOKS are available at The Box in all The Park Hotels.
www.tarabooks.com



5

Reasons I Love THE PARK



What keeps people coming back to The Park Hotels



Ranvir Shah is the co-founder of the Prkruthi Foundation which showcases brilliance in music, dance, art, photography, painting, theatre and art history – not just as performances but as points of view to witness and discuss. A businessman and philanthropist, he curates festivals like The Other Festival and The Park's New Festival. Ranvir frequents The Park, Chennai because it engages with his interest in sounding the many voices of interest that make up the contemporary culture of India.

Because the service at every restaurant is so good and the staff so friendly, that I feel like I'm at home, or even better!

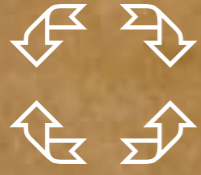
Because the thin crust pizza at 601, the coffee shop at The Park, has delicious gourmet toppings you can choose and share, and has been consistently delicious for the last 6 years that I've been going there.

Because when The Park, Chennai opened, I had my 40th birthday there a month later – and the entire team made it fantastic by having it in the lobby and getting the terrace ready for that day. It showed that they would go the extra mile.

Because the Leather Bar is the most rocking nightspot in the city.

Because the Hotel is open to alternative cultural happenings in its spaces – like poetry readings in the nightclub, music shows on the terrace and dance in the lobby.

Left A still from the Dhara Lila project performed at The New Park Festival, 2007. The Project works on dissolving the conventional demarcations between folk and classical dance forms in Orissa



→ Adopt the mantra of Reduce Reuse Recycle.

→ Go to your local library instead of buying new books.

→ Go paperless. Consider reading your newspaper and magazine subscriptions online. Switch to electronic banking and credit card payment too.



→ Reuse envelopes and both sides of paper.

→ Start recycling and waste management.

Try www.ecoreco.com
for recycling e-waste and computers
http://www.alibaba.com/showroom/Waste_Management.html
online products for managing waste

→ Turn your car off if you're going to be idle for more than one minute.



→ Shop for eco-smart products.

<http://greenindiabiotek.com/products.html>
India's first biodegradable plastic bags

www.indianindustry.com/fabricstextiles/7938.html
a list of organic cotton manufacturers

www.anitadongre.com
a designer who creates ethical fashion



→ Return unwanted mail and ask for your name to be removed from junk mailing lists.



→ Share magazines with friends and pass them on to the doctor, dentist or local hospital for their waiting rooms.

→ Use rechargeable batteries.



→ Purchase solar powered products.

<http://www.tatabpsolar.com>
solar powered products for the home



→ Try LED lighting. It's even better than CFLs.

→ Go on holiday during the off-peak period to prevent over-straining resources – you'll also avoid the crowds!

→ While on holiday, don't litter or disturb habitats whether on land, on the coast or underwater.



→ Eat organic. Locate organic food stores in your city. Try

www.fabindia.com
www.navdanya.org
www.consciousfoods.com
www.naturally-auroville.com
www.24lettermantra.com
www.wholefoodsmarket.com
<http://thecookscottage.typepad.com>

→ Buy fruit and vegetables that are in season to help reduce enormous transport costs.



→ Store food and other products in ceramic containers rather than foil and plastic wrap.

→ Plant a tree.



→ Try rainwater harvesting – its easy!
www.rainwaterharvesting.org

→ Use washable nappies instead of disposables if you can.

→ Use a solar-powered calculator instead of one with a battery.

→ Water gardens just after sunrise or just after sunset to reduce evaporation.

→ Install drip irrigation systems in your garden.

→ If you have a little space in your garden, make a compost pit to turn organic waste from the kitchen and garden to manure.

Check out www.thedailydump.org

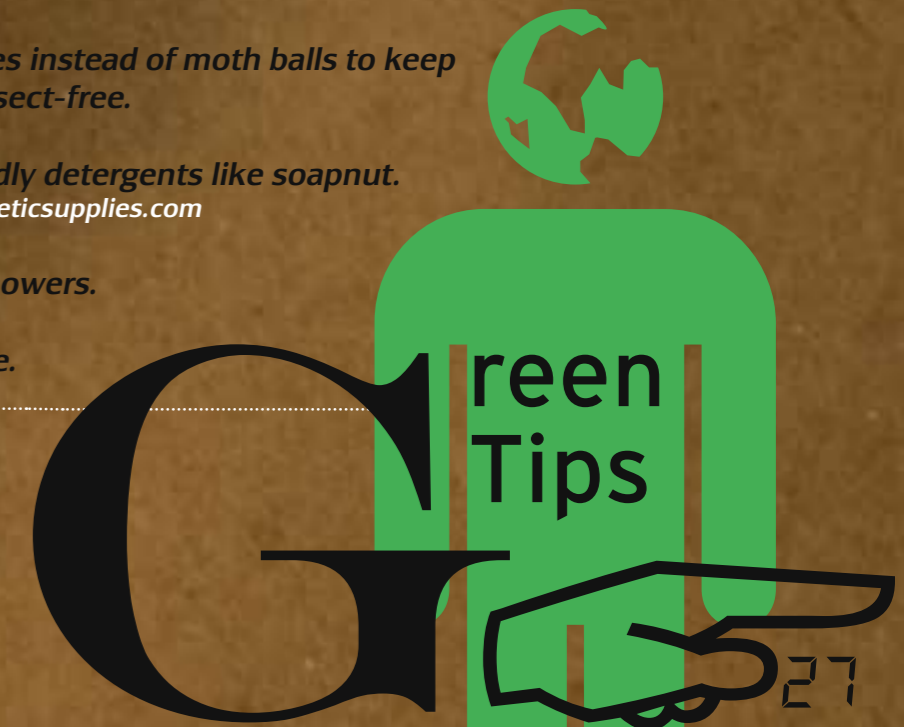
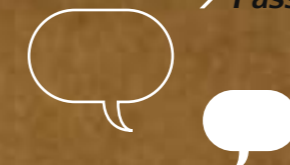
→ Use neem leaves instead of moth balls to keep your clothes insect-free.

→ Use earth friendly detergents like soapnut.
www.naturalcosmeticsupplies.com

→ Take shorter showers.

→ Carpool or cycle.

→ Pass the word!



"At Fire, we've switched to organic ingredients because we're thinking of soil, environment and health. We've changed all lentils to organic, while organic bread, rice and vegetables are available as an option to patrons who ask for them. We have an organic vegetable and *daal* of the day – depending on the supply.

We buy grains from Navdanya, an organic produce NGO started by Vandana Shiva. They source grains from farmers around Delhi and support them. They are also pioneers of the Slow Food movement in India. We also source ingredients from Dadimaa's Foods and Fab India. Although organic ingredients are more expensive, we don't charge customers more because we want to promote organic food."

Chef Bakshish Dean

"In our Hotel, we try to use food products that are locally produced or at least produced in India if possible. We discourage high levels of saturated fats and trans-fats. Healthier oils with un-saturated fats like olive oil are the preferred cooking medium. Based on availability, some vegetables like pumpkin, local greens, carrots, snake gourd etc. are used as organic specials. Sometimes, in season, we even get organic mangoes! We do not use or support anything that has been genetically modified."

Chef Rajesh Radhakrishnan

Ingredients



"We're attempting a holistic organic experience – we use organic *masalas* and organic cooking mediums like *ghee* and mustard oil to cook the organic ingredients. Also, energy and water saving initiatives are very integral to our kitchen."

Chef Bakshish Dean

"We have our own compost pit with the mulch of vegetable trimmings and other organic stuff (hay, dried leaves, twigs, cow dung & river sand), and the product of this is used everywhere instead of chemical fertilizers. We're also encouraging our pest control contractor to use *neem*-based pesticides."

Chef Srinath Sambandan

"At present we are the only hotel supporting the organic movement to this extent in Kolkata. We've been invited by farmers and NGO's to visit organic farms and collaborate with their efforts."

Chef Sharad Dewan

"Our preferred cooking techniques are healthier alternatives like grilling, steaming and low-fat roasting. We purchase the most energy-efficient equipment – from grills and fryers to heating systems – coupled with everyday energy-saving practices, such as running equipment only when necessary. Leaking taps are efficiently rectified and staff is trained on judicious water and energy usage."

Chef Rajesh Radhakrishnan

Methods



Slice of THE PARK

Recipes for sustainability at The Park Hotels by Chef Sharad Dewan, Kolkata; Chef Bakshish Dean, New Delhi; Chef Rajesh Radhakrishnan, Chennai and Executive Chef Srinath Sambandan, Vizag

Menus

"We get a lot of international guests asking for organic food, and they are usually very pleased and surprised to find it on our menu. Recently one gentleman wanted to sample a traditional Indian grain, so we made *ragi* bread from organic *ragi*. He was blown away and ordered the entire organic meal! Along with this, we have food cooked in the traditional manner, so the tastes and flavours of our dishes are unique.

The menu at Fire has some unusual organic dishes, as well as contemporary takes on old favourites. The organic red rice and the *Red Amaranthus* bread/*roti* are favourites. All our *daals* are organic, and the specialities include authentic tomato *pappu* – an Andhra *daal* flavoured with garlic curry leaves and red chillies, and the Rajasthani *channa moong daal* which is slow simmered for three hours, and garnished with organic *ghee*. Vegetable and lamb *haleem* are slow cooked as well for that delicious flavour. Old-style dishes from Hyderabad, Goa, and Kerala cooked in Syrian style are on our menu as are interesting *tandoori* and *chaat* experiments.

In Mist (the all hours restaurant), the buffet has several organic dishes, including the bottle gourd tossed with chilli and garlic." **Chef Bakshish Dean**



Left-overs

"Leftovers from the daily buffet (those which have not been put on the table) are sent to Mother Teresa's food bank, and feed 2-3 orphanages in Delhi for 2 meals a day. Meat trimmings and bones from the butchery are given to Circle of Animal Lovers everyday to feed strays and homeless animals. Leftover bread is given to a person who comes from Aligarh every 3 days to take to a piggery."

Chef Bakshish Dean

"Left over oil is given to a certified vendor who uses it for industrial purposes – the making of grease, soap etc (not for human consumption). No oil is allowed into the drains."

Chef Sharad Dewan

"We segregate garbage into 3 sets – wet garbage; tins, cans and bottles; paper, cardboard and plastics."

Chef Rajesh Radhakrishnan



Above Right Sample the fresh, healthy salads at Mist, the coffee shop at The Park, New Delhi

T hought for Food

Sustainable food has yet to sustain itself

Chef Bakshish Dean



Most ecologists believe that the goal of sustainability is not necessarily economic development, but quality of life. One important area of great impact on sustainability is food consumption. Eating a diet primarily consisting of fresh, locally grown, organic vegetables and fruits creates sustainability in many ways: reduction in global warming, nitrogen and methane generated during inorganic agriculture and meat production and also a reduction in the amount of energy required to bring food to the table. Sustainable practices meet the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Despite this, most people feel that if you can buy a burger for Rs 30, why buy an organic whole wheat bread sandwich that costs Rs 150? And this particular question represents the resistance facing the sustainable food movement globally. Sustainable ingredients are definitely much more expensive than those that are conventionally produced. This is because the whole process of growing them is labour intensive and yields less than farming using chemical fertilisers, pesticides and growth enhancers. And sustainable dishes are often *avant garde* or gourmet. These trends have given sustainable food the reputation of being fancy or elitist. But I fail to understand why more people aren't worried about what they are eating. The answer I feel, is to make sustainable food more broadly available and affordable. And that's happening in a few places (thanks to farsighted policymakers).

Trend researchers predict that organic food consumption worldwide will boom even more in the future. A transition to real organic farming is ongoing. Health and wellness enthusiasts always look out for the "authentic" through connections to people and places that stretch across the globe. Many consumers avoid foods containing pesticides and genetically altered foods and are turning to organic options more often. Just a few years ago organic foods were sold only in a few shops or chemist stores for people with special health needs or to those who practiced certain religious beliefs. But today organic food seems to be a trend that's catching on.

On my recent vacation to the Six Senses Soneva Fushi at The Maldives I was extremely impressed by their "No-No" list. This resort aims to offer the best selection and quality of food and drinks to all guests, whilst remaining in harmony with the fragile nature of the pristine environment. Any resources that are endangered or mismanaged, genetically modified or ill-treated are not served, and are added to the list. For example the meat used is free range; and the majority of vegetables are grown on the island itself and are 100% organic.

A graduate from the Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Ahmedabad, Chef Bakshish Dean started his career in 1991. For the next decade, he worked with various prestigious hotel chains, stand-alone restaurants and cruise lines in training food production personnel and as food consultant. He joined The Park, New Delhi as Executive Chef in 2002 and now choreographs the entire food production operation for the hotel. He is the originator of the classic Indian fare served at the contemporary Indian restaurant, Fire, as well as the creator of innovative recipes at Agni bar, Mist and the poolside terrace Aqua.

Right The wall of light at Fire, the contemporary Indian restaurant at The Park, New Delhi, symbolizes the use of fire as a dynamic, life-giving, elemental energy



Another movement that has become a passion for me is the Slow Food movement which had its origins in the 1980's in Italy, and is becoming a rage all across the globe owing to its numerous benefits. The name Slow Food contrasts with fast food values and the mass-production and homogenization of food; it's like living an unhurried life, beginning at the table. The Slow Food movement aims to preserve cultural cuisine and in so doing, to preserve the food plants and seeds, domestic animals and farming within an eco-region. Slow Food is known to combat stress and help maintain weight, and its job is to make it easier, even for city dwellers, to appreciate the taste and quality of naturally produced, properly prepared food. After I read Carlo Petrini's book *Slow Food*, I found that it resonated with me on many levels. Since then Slowness has come to play a major role in my life. My horizons were further broadened when travelling in Italy. I marveled at how people defined themselves so strongly by the food that they ate and the history of their culinary culture. We at The Park are doing exactly this – we use a lot of locally available foodstuff and adapt traditional cooking methods that are dying out otherwise because of globalization and commercialization, and the need for quick gratification.

The Park, New Delhi, strongly advocates organic food. I plan visits to local farms with my kitchen staff regularly and I feel it is my idea of heaven. We show livestock, grains and vegetables to the Management Trainees & Kitchen Executives in order to practically demonstrate how important a good ingredient is, how it is reared/cultivated, processed and how it reaches us. Television is another medium which can create awareness, and most of The Park Hotel Chefs are regularly featured on food shows creating and discussing this epicurean revolution.

Our Indian restaurant Fire's menu has many delicious organic dishes that our guests appreciate greatly. In a recent review in Outlook Envy, Fire was rated extremely well and the writer also mentioned in her write up that, "*The khatti lobia* (tangy black eyed peas).....and interestingly this organic version is red and not the usual white in colour and is a highlight, particularly when accompanied by steamed brown Basmati rice – so perfect for sopping up the tangy gravy. The piece de resistance was surely the *tinda masala*, (round gourd in a spicy sour gravy) a superb preparation that is one of its kind; I must add that the humble *tinda* couldn't have tasted any better and I recommend you switch over to the organic version at home too as it's cooked just right – crisp yet soft."

Sometimes I feel that in a culture where food production takes place in such abstraction, food is more of a ritual of ingestion, digestion, and expulsion. Understanding more about our food, how it tastes and where it comes from makes the act of eating all the more pleasurable. There ought to be practical lessons in school (as integral as a music or dance lesson) wherein children are taught to gather fruits, for example strawberries/guavas/berries. Together, in a much-needed exercise for all ages, they're learning exactly where our food comes from, how it gets onto our plates, and why eating locally grown vegetables and fruits, which equates to sweet tooth-friendly strawberry shortcake, is the first step in global salvation.

T

HE PARK Scoop

What's New • Accolades • Happenings



What's New

Kolkata The Street is the new café at The Park, Kolkata. Designed by Conran & Partners, UK, this is a one-stop destination for street foods from around the world, from the American hot dogs and waffles or the Middle Eastern *Shawarma*, to English style sandwiches or the Indian *Kathi*, the French *crepe* or Italian *gelato*. They also stock gourmet foods from around the world and organic foods sourced from Bengali farmers.

Visakhapatnam Aura, the luxury day spa and gym opens at The Park, Visakhapatnam. Relax at this award-winning spa with skillfully delivered wellness therapies from all over the world, as well as a world class gym, pool, and yoga on request. **8 am to 8 pm, everyday**

Happenings

New Delhi Freaky Fridays @ Agni High decibel excitement unleashed to kick-start another rocking year of partying with the most happening DJs on the party circuit. Retro bollywood disco nights are back. DJ Suketu **January 23** DJ K&G **February 13** DJ Aqueel **February 20 10 pm onwards**

Retrospective Fridays @ Aqua Music addicts can rock to the greatest era in the history of music, the Woodstock days. Eat, drink, cheer, whistle, shake a leg, unwind and rewind as yesterday comes calling. Also check out BBQ nights every Friday and Saturday with offerings like Jumbo Tiger prawns to Scottish Salmon to Australian Lamb Chops and Chicken *Shawarma*, alfresco in the moonlight.

Chennai International DJ Cheb i Sabbah @ Pasha The music of the world converges through the productions and remixes of Algeria-born and San Francisco-based DJ Cheb i Sabbah. **February 6**

Launch of the Asian Bistro lunch @ The Leather Bar The Asian Bistro lunch features a great selection of fused Asian/Western cuisine. Serving freshly prepared sandwiches with an Asian touch, salads ranging from the Soba noodle salad to the Vietnamese rice paper rolls and an array of dishes from Vietnam, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia. **Mondays to Fridays**

Navi Mumbai Aqua Dinner at this signature poolside space will focus on the kabab, the most famous of Indian dishes. The experience starts with *shorba* followed by kababs, curry, *daal*, tandoori breads and followed by biryani and *raita*. Finish off with something sweet, and you have a meal for all the gourmands of Indian cuisine.

Bangalore Bangalore Mud Cake Madness @ Monsoon For the uninitiated, the Mud Cake is Monsoon's signature dessert, revered by all chocolate lovers. Its a rich, baked chocolate outside that gives way to sinful molten chocolate the moment you dig into it. And it gets even better as our chefs infuse it with liqueurs, coffee, fresh fruit, nuts, berries & much more. **Till February 15**

Accolades

The Park Chennai Indian Federation of Culinary Associations- Culinary Challenge 2008

There were 250 participants from South India with International Chefs on the jury panel. Chef Rajesh (Executive Chef) was presented the prestigious Silver Hat Award. Chef Abhishek Basu (Executive *Sous* Chef) won the gold in the

Custom Culinary Live Cooking Challenge. Chefs Dominic, Megha, Radhica & Lenin with Arun won the silver in the Culinary Team Buffet Challenge.

601 & Lotus Voted two of Asia's best restaurants. Both these restaurants will be profiled in The Miele Guide (2008/2009 edition), Asia's first annual authoritative and independent restaurant guide.

Frappe Lifestyle Awards 2008 The Park won Best Star Restaurant (Asian): Lotus ; Best Coffee shop: 601; Best Lounge Bar: The Leather Bar

The Park, Navi Mumbai Listed among the Top 50 Business Hotels worldwide by Wallpaper and Fortune magazines. The Hotel was one of the only two hotels selected from India to appear on the list.

The Park, Vizag Won the prestigious Tourism Excellence Award in the 5 Star hotel category awarded by the Department of Tourism, Andhra Pradesh, for the third year in a row.



For reservations and information contact:
Anushree at The Park, New Delhi - Tel +91 11 2374 3737. Deepa at The Park, Bangalore - Tel +91 80 2559 4666.
Amit Gupta at The Park, Navi Mumbai - Tel +91 22 6758 9000. Amlan at The Park, Visakhapatnam - Tel +91 891 275 4488
Sarah at The Park, Chennai - Tel +91 44 4267 6000. Namrata at The Park, Kolkata - Tel +91 33 2249 9000

THE PARK Spotlight

A bird's eye view on the monarchs of style



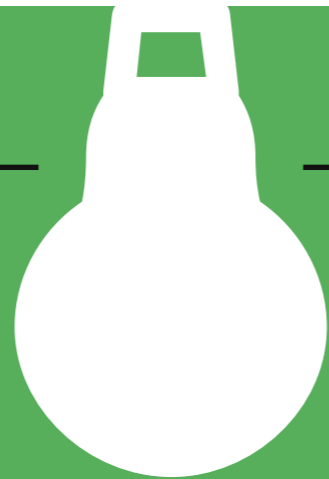
"Rooted in tradition and contemporary in form" is how this multifaceted designer describes his art. Atul Johri's ideas translate into functional products that are distinctive, and environment friendly. His work leaves you wondering at its dramatic simplicity. The play of light and texture in his signature handmade paper lamps, which have been appreciated internationally, has injected much needed life into a vulnerable and disorganized industry. Perhaps his most interesting work is a line of contemporary lifestyle products including vases and candle ware crafted with traditional Channapatna lacquer techniques. Atul's creations have been featured in design magazines like Paper Asia (Singapore) and Living Design (Japan). Besides art exhibitions across India at venues like Max Mueller Bhavan (New Delhi) and the cultural centre at The Embassy of Portugal, his collections have been a part of the international fair Expo 2000, Hannover (Germany), where he designed lighting and installations for the international pavilion, Basic Needs.

Atul
Johri



Good design which intersects with making the earth a cleaner and greener place is the wave of the future. Meet Poonam Bir Kasturi – industrial designer and passionate *com-postwali*. Her organization, aptly named The Daily Dump, aims at popularizing composting in every household and helps people do it conveniently, hygienically – and aesthetically! In a competitive market of motorized composting machines, hers is perhaps the only 100% green composting solution producing natural fertilizer. And to add to their appeal, the composting units are made of terracotta and painted in funky patterns by economically challenged potters. Turning biodegradable waste (75% of the garbage generated by the average household) into a natural resource, designing beauty that is more than skin deep, is made easy – by giving people the necessary knowledge and tools. Socially proactive citizens like Poonam and her team are making these accessible.

Poonam
Bir Kasturi



Who'd have thought paper cones that you eat *masala* peanuts from on the street could become high fashion accessories? Or colourful plastic brooms, for that matter? Mumbai-based stylist/designer, Shilpa Chavan sees the world differently. Her art is startlingly unique, almost bordering on the eccentric. She makes magic out of the everyday, unveiling India in all its colourful splendour, (without the overdone *desi* kitsch). When it comes to accessorising their couture collections, the country's fashion look no further. Needless to say, her products aren't for the tame. Shilpa has worked with designers like Manish Arora and Wendell Rodricks for Fashion Weeks in London and India, as well as for Miss India pageants. She also creates clothing and jewellery from alternative materials like paper, and has shown at the Trafalgar Square Festival, the Victoria and Albert Museum London and India Fest at Lille 3000, among other venues.

Shilpa
Chavan



Photographer Ashima Narain has captured brilliant fashion frames for Vogue, GQ, Elle, L'Officiel and Cosmopolitan. But a trip to polluted Mumbai's Sewri Bay opened her eyes to a wildlife spectacle that was hard to comprehend or ignore. That was how *In the Pink*, an award winning documentary (later bought by the Discovery Channel) on the flamingoes of Mumbai started. Exploring and raising important questions about the environment and the species itself, the film has featured in numerous international ornithological and wetland conferences including Wild Talk Africa (Durban) and has won awards at the Japan Wildlife Film Festival and Vatavaran (New Delhi). The film brought Ashima the UK Environment Film Fellowship to make a film on the dancing bears of India. Called *The Last Dance*, the film exposes this cruel wildlife crime and also explores a solution for the *Qualandars*, a community that has for centuries depended on performing bears as a means of livelihood. Both *In the Pink* and *The Last Dance* have been nominated for the Wildscreen Awards/the Green Oscars this year.

Ashima
Narain



Amrish Kumar is a fashion designer-turned-musician, with no formal training. All he began with was his love of music, and an attitude influenced by the west but deeply Indian in identity. Mummy Daddy Records, his new label (also the name of their debut album), brings together talented alternative sounds from across the country that transcend genre and fuse the East and the West in a style entirely their own. Progressive house, rhythmic rock, Indian funk – there's something for everyone, bringing the hidden world of Indian underground music to the global stage. The album features artists like Jalebi Cartel, Parikrama and Midual Punditz, besides young and promising artists like Papon from the rock band East India Company who are looking for a break. Mummy Daddy Records aims to create – through compilation albums mainly – a platform for musicians who speak this global tongue but are quintessentially Indian, preserving a rich cultural heritage by adapting to a new world view of music.

Amrish
Kumar





FUTURE THOUGHT AT THE PARK HOTELS

History + Geography + Art + Craft + Culture + People

Left Detail, UNTITLED by Sonja Weider.
(3' x 3' mixed media on 6m acrylic sheet/06 - A - 05)

The artist uses materials gathered from the natural world surrounding her Goa home. Leaves and jackfruit seeds, husks and pods, even an occasional discarded snakeskin create textures and tactile dimensions in her work. Sonja's work is exhibited at 601, the coffee shop at The Park, Chennai. It blends seamlessly with the ethos of sustainable design and functioning of The Park Hotels

Above Hand-carved wood box; silk bag with tribal motifs; clay soapdish; papier mâché figurine. Available at The Box, at The Park Hotels.

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