

YOUR HOTEL...

In the ancient Indian city of Hyderabad, two new and very different places to



The futuristic façade of The Park Hyderabad

Hyderabad, located deep in the southern part of central India a two-hour flight from Delhi, is really the tale of two cities—or, this being India, the tale of 200 cities, past, present and future, all of them vying for attention, affection. Alas, among even very sophisticated travelers, it's often overlooked, dismissed as another one of those new, instant, high-tech capitals. But that's only part

of its story. The other is deeply romantic, chaotic, ravishing, hyperdynamic and fascinating. Two recent openings continue the tale: the brand-spanking-new, eco-impeccable, design-driven **Park Hyderabad** (rooms, from \$360; 91-40/2345-6789; theparkhotels.com), with 270 rooms, in the modern city itself; and the historic old city's **Taj Falaknuma Palace** (rooms, from \$450; 91-40/6629-8585; tajhotels.com), situated on a hill overlooking both new and old...and way far beyond.

OR MY PALACE?

ay reflect both an up-to-the minute modernity and a grand, old-world experience.



The garden-lined pool at the Taj Falaknuma Palace

With 45-year-old Park Hotel heiress and contemporary-art fanatic Priya Paul at the helm, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill has created a paean to the future in the vernacular of cool, mod, 21st-century India. It's full of young, groovy Indians who've come, without saris or turbans, via sports cars for the convenience of concierge parking and to enjoy the global fruits of their country's emerging caste of New Money. The Taj hotel group, on the other hand, has restored a Palladian palace to its

original 18th-century glory at Falaknuma, until 1967 a home to the last nizam of Hyderabad, whose granddaughter-in-law Princess Esra Jah oversaw every last detail of its decade-long and mind-boggling restoration. Here, a quieter, more sober clientele arrives by car and is taken by horse, carriage and be-turbaned driver to the palace itself. A tale of two very different Indias, to be sure—one out of the past, the other proudly hurling itself toward the 22nd century.

—R.D.S.