

# travelo

*Hospitality*

Putting the zing back to exploring the world

*Hotel Review*

**Fort Jadhavgadh**

**DINNING  
DESTINATIONS**

**Alfresco  
Extravaganza**

**TALKING POINT**

**Sanjeev Kapoor**

**WORLD HOTELS**

**TAJ TASHI**

*Page Turner*

**^ With  
Salma Husain**

**COVER STORY >>**

**Who's  
Serving  
You?**

Are IHM's in India  
able to provide  
enough trained staff?



**Banner With  
Kailash Khur**  
**₹ 60**

# DISCOVERING NEW DESTINATIONS

■ Sumant Batra

In the growing array of exciting travel options, a bit off-the-beaten-track destinations are rapidly carving out a vital space for themselves. The travel industry is experiencing a swiftly growing interest in the travel segment that is prepared to take an extra mile to explore the less visited nick and corners of the country. The affluent middle class traveler has evolved over the last decade and is demonstrating preference for non-descript locations over the standard mainstream tourist destinations in India and abroad. It is no longer a tick-box approach to holiday planning. Neither are holidays any longer only about boarding airplanes and traveling to the foreseeable and conventional holiday places. The traveler is willing to explore the unknown, hit the road escorted by a map and experience the unexpected.

The professionals working in multinational corporations today, travel extensively across the globe for their work. When it comes to holiday, they yearn to make a departure from their business-style traveling and undertake something dissimilar and fresh. They are willing to try out lesser known places and experiment. A discreet location connected with nature offers a greater opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends while also acting as a stress buster. Off beat locations are promptly emerging as perfect option be it a holiday, long weekend or a just a day trip.

This shift in the trend has compelled the tourist boards to notice the small locations with potential to attract travelers. One can find increased mention of these locations in tourist board promotional materials. Many hotels and resorts ranging from home stays to boutique luxury hotels of varied sizes have come up in short time in many such locations across the country. Quality of many of these hotels and resorts is however yet to benchmark. Absence of infrastructure support and lack of resources also act as a constraint in offering quality. Back-end of these hotels is often weak. These hotels argue that if they introduce features similar to bigger hotels it will take away the original character of their properties. While the argument may not be without merit, many excellent examples exist that it is possible to offer quality and introduce standards without spending exorbitant amount or adversely impacting the earthly charm and character of these properties.

An interesting trend noticed in recent times is that many travelers who travel to or pass through these locations tend to fall in love with the place and give up their prosperous lives or plum jobs to settle down in there making living by offering home-stays or setting up modest hotels. In many cases they have turned their visits into greater business opportunity and established a small hotel or sometimes more in different off beat locations. Making hotels viable in such locations is not without challenges. It is critical to study the feasibility carefully and get the put the right model in place.

Social media has played an important role in promoting these off beat locations. Travelers share their experience on platforms like Facebook and twitter triggering awareness amongst their friends and contacts. Blogs written on these locations also generate interest. Travel magazines are also dedicating space to features and stories on such destinations or properties.

It is important that these off beat locations do not fall in the trap of replicating typical tourist destinations and remain charmingly content with what they are.

*Sumant Batra is Chairman of The Treepie Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. and Chairman & Mentor, Kesar Duss B & Associates, Corporate & Commercial Lawyers*