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The Claridges Spa located at Surajkund in Delhi, is well equipped to sooth the body, mind and soul through a combination of luxury facilities, exclusive treatments, a healthy spa cuisine and service excellence to deliver the ultimate spa experience.

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We would like to Thank you so much for the excellent arrangement made for our trip to India. The Delhi/Agra/ Jaipur trip was very memorable one... [read more](#)



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From the CEO's Desk



Dear Partners,

Here we are at the start of yet another year, one that looks extremely positive for all of us in the travel industry. The upward trend in the global economy is a definite relief for us, some markets may still be sluggish, but hopefully they will come around. Our focus remains on our key source markets and developing new marketing strategies for markets which are now showing a higher level of interest in India, primarily for the rich experience it offers.

We continue to reinforce our branding activities, be it via the trade show booths, the travel collateral or even our communication to you, everything is a reflection of our corporate values, Reliability, Authenticity and Passion.

In this issue we touch upon transformative tourism, travel which is not for pleasure alone, but also for broadening the traveller's horizon. It is yet another aspect of sustainable tourism, one that remains integrated in our core business functionality. As the year goes by we promise you an interesting read, do stay tuned for more on Interesting India.

On behalf of my entire team in India & South Asia, I wish you a great year ahead and thank you for your continuous support.

Regards,

Dipak Deva



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Stay at



The Marari Villas

Marari Villas offers boutique serviced villas, beach houses and cottages on the beautiful Marari Beach in Mararikulam, central Kerala. The unique combination of garden and pool villas, includes traditional Kerala heritage houses and contemporary cottages with luxury facilities such as private beach, personal chef, butler / villa host, housekeeping and taxi services to cater for individual needs. The properties are ideal for families with children, honeymooners, romantic couples, friends or individuals.

Marari Villas is a concept developed by a couple; Rupert (British) & Olga (Russian), who live on Marari Beach. They manage all properties themselves to ensure high standards of hospitality are maintained. They understand the local culture, people and way of life to help you experience a different side of Kerala and will show you the best sights, activities and hidden secrets of this amazing destination. Their aspiration is simple - to ensure you have a wonderful holiday in a unique property and on a marvellous beach.

Mirvana Nature Resort

A perfect getaway this nature retreat is located amidst the sun kissed Thar Desert. The resort lies nestled in a verdant oasis, 55 kilometers away from Jaisalmer. The goal of its owners is that you leave feeling better than, when you arrived. The resort has an organic farm and orchard, abundant with fruit, vegetables and flavorful herbs. The dairy and poultry products are farm fresh. All the tents have been crafted by hand using natural and local materials. A lot of the work at Mirvana Nature Resort is done by the rural people of Sodakore, which is their way of contribution to rural and responsible tourism. This also helps provide employment to the village folk.

Lotus Resort, Udaipur

The Lotus Lake View Resort is ideally located on one of the hills of the Aravali Ranges, a mere 7 kms away from the railway station and 28 kms from the airport. The Lotus Lake View Resort is a place where you can relax and get pampered. The resort offers a panoramic view of Lake Pichola as well as of Lake Fateh Sagar. All the bedrooms are picturesque, each decorated with individual character. Most of the rooms are built with a view of both the lakes, the Palace of Udaipur and the majestic Sajjan Garh, also known as Monsoon Palace.



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Lifestyle



The Claridges Spa

The Claridges Spa located at Surajkund in Delhi, is well equipped to sooth the body, mind and soul through a combination of luxury facilities, exclusive treatments, a healthy spa cuisine and service excellence to deliver the ultimate spa experience. Modern design interiors reflecting the traditional Indian Baoli, evoke a feeling of welcome, replenishment and revival. The Claridges spa uses top-of-the-line international product ranges. A selection of exclusive body rituals and luxurious treatment offerings take the spa to a completely new and unsurpassed level of spa experience. Beauty and hair services from exclusive product ranges are also available.

The Spa welcomes non-members and non-hotel guests as well with a mandatory minimum booking of two hours of treatment time. Guests are also requested to arrive 45 minutes before the treatment starts, as this allows optimum time for total enjoyment of the spa facilities.



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Responsible Tourism



Shaam-e-Sarhad Resort - Rural Tourism Project at Hodka Village

Shaam-e-Sarhad Resort is one of the many Rural Tourism Projects that was conceptualised in 2003 by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Resort is located at Hodka Village in the Kachchh district of Gujarat. Designed in local style, and exquisitely decorated with mirror work, textiles and other local crafts, the Shaam-e-Sarhad Village Resort is the perfect gateway to a genuine travel experience in India.

The project aims at Endogenous or "transformative" tourism, travel not for pleasure alone, but also for broadening the traveller's horizon. It seeks to transform attitudes and mindsets, by promoting a mutual understanding between the local community and the visitors, where each appreciates and learns from the other.

The Shaam-e-Sarhad Village Resort has been set up at Hodka to host guests eager to experience this new responsible, and therefore sustainable, eco tourism.

Sustainable visitor strategies based on art, craft, cultural, natural heritage and environment care, aim to target tourism yields, which contribute significantly to conservation and the rural sector in particular. The Project facilitates interactive experiences of rural life for the visitor, who is the direct income route for the local communities. The project's key action routes include the formation of rural self help groups, tourism marketing and governance structures, backed by convergent support to sustainable village infrastructure, waste management and environment care. The focus is thereby on sustainable capacity building with local stakeholder participation, wherein women and the rural poor are target beneficiaries.

The Resort is open during October to March only.



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Interesting India



Blind With Camera

Blind with Camera is a photo centric social enterprise that empowers and integrates the visually impaired into the mainstream society through the art of photography. Since inception, Blind with Camera has benefited 30 visually impaired people by training them in photography and showcased their pictures at exhibitions across India attracting more thousands of viewers.

The visually impaired want to explore photography as they want to experience the "process" of creation more than the final result, they can take pictures using non-visual senses and cognitive skills, to communicate their "mental images" which would otherwise not seen by the sighted. And to challenge perceptions and inspire social change.

Partho Bhowmick, based out of Mumbai with a passion for photography, stumbled across an article on a blind photographer in 2004. Excited by the concept of "seeing the world through the eyes of the blind," he got in touch with several blind artists across the world. He then aimed to start something similar for the blind in India. He was recently awarded the Karmveer Puraskaar Award by the Indian Confederation of NGOs for this initiative.



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Destination Insider



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to you all. 2010 was a fantastic year for all of us here at Kuoni, one of the learnings was that, knowledge is the key if you want to stand out in the clutter. In 2011 the Destination Knowledge Centre has chalked out an ambitious Q1, where this time around, we will explore South India. By the time our Newsletter reaches you, I will be on the road yet again in search of compelling stories and to make new friends starting with Hyderabad, cutting across the Deccan through the magnificent ruins of Hampi and ending at the fabled OM beach close to Goa for a week of Yoga, Meditation and Art. The [Falaknuma Palace](#) in Hyderabad which once housed royal dignitaries from all over the world has opened its doors again after a decade long painstaking renovation and the New York Times has listed Hyderabad in its [41 places to go in 2011](#).

I am back on the first week of February and will hopefully have great stories to share. In the meanwhile [here are 5 Albums from iTunes which will keep me company during my trip – Click Here](#)

Kuntil Baruwa



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Festivals



Punakha Festival, Bhutan 09th February-15th February 2011

Punakha Festival consists of the Dromche and Tsechu. Tsechus are festivals extolling the great deeds of the Buddhist Saint, Padmasambhava, popularly known as "Guru Rinpoche" in the mountain kingdom. The main days are from 12th–15th February. Punakha Tsechus festival is one of the most interesting and unique festivals in Bhutan. Its main feature is the recreation of the battle scene where Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (the unifier of Bhutan) tricked the invading Tibetan army. In 1639, a Tibetan army invaded Bhutan to seize the country's most precious relic, the Rangjung Kharsapani (a self created image of Chenrigzig/Buddha of Compassion). Zhabdrung concocted an elaborate ceremony in which he pretended to throw the relic into the Mo Chu River and thus the disappointed Tibetans withdrew. Today the procession of singing and cheering monks and warriors accompany the Je Khenpo/Chief Abbot to the river. The Chief Abbot throws a handful of oranges representing the scared relic Rangjung Karsapani into the river.

Most of the Festival dates are decided by Solar / Lunar calendars practiced in India, due to which the dates are subject to change.

You may plan some special departure based on these festivals. For any assistance please contact us.



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Impressions



From: prathap
Sent: Tuesday, January 04, 2011 8: 33 AM
To: info; md@catalysttravels.com
Subject: THANKS

Dear Prachi,

Good Morning!

We are back from our holidays and back to work.
We would like to Thank you so much for the excellent arrangement made for our trip to India. The Delhi/Agra/ Jaipur trip was very memorable one. Except the small disturbance at the hotel, everything was exciting and KUONI's service was superb.

Much appreciate your immediate intervention and to make us happy end of the day. The guides and drivers were also really very good.

Once again thanks and lot to the entire team and Wish you all a very happy new year.

Regards
Prathap & Family