



Dear Industry Colleagues,

Namaste from Peirce & Leslie in India!

We hope you're having a great start to the year; we certainly are! It's been a while since our last update. Truth be told, the last couple of months (particularly December) were extremely busy for our team and we were more than happy to see travel to the Indian subcontinent bounce back in the way that it did. We suspect that 2024 is going to be even better with more people planning trips to our part of the world.

And so, as we navigate our way through another fulfilling season of travel, we hope our help helps your clients engage with the local communities and travel slower, but in more meaningful ways.

As always, thank you for your support. We look forward to planning more trips to India, Bhutan, Nepal & Sri Lanka with you.

Cheers,

Anil Pathak



### **Hemis Festival, Ladakh (June 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024)**

Have clients who are thinking of visiting India in the summer? Plan a trip to the vast highland desert of Ladakh in the far north of India to catch the flamboyant Hemis festival. During this time, the nooks and crannies of the town come alive with a burst of color, activity, pomp and gaiety. This festival is held in the famous Hemis *Gompa* or monastery and provides the perfect opportunity to blend with the locals and learn more about their culture. Celebrating the birth of *Padmasambhava*, the Tibetan saint – the festival marks the victory of good over evil (don't we need this now more than ever!). Travellers can also take some time out to watch the sacred plays that are performed by the *lamas* – they are quite insightful!

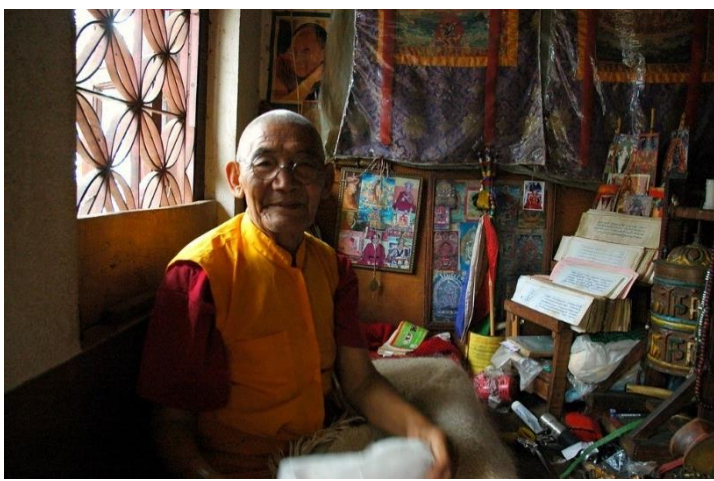
**Peirce & Leslie recommends:** The highlight of the festival is the *Chaam* (masked dance) where the *lamas* (Tibetan monks) dance to the rhythmic beat of drums and trumpets.



### **The Best of Rural Rajasthan at Chanoud Garh, Pali (Rajasthan)**

A magnificent fort-palace steeped in history, **Chanoud Garh**, is located in a tiny village in Rajasthan between Jodhpur and Udaipur. The over 300-year-old palace hotel is the family home of Thakur Ajeet Singh and his family who still live in a separate wing in the palace. It is spread across two central courtyards and comprises just ten suites, each unique in its design and thoughtfully restored to showcase the history of this intriguing fort. Chanoud Garh is the perfect off-the-beaten-track stop during a busy tour through Rajasthan and offers one a rare opportunity to see life in rural India. They also offer a range of cultural excursions for in-house guests including, celebrating local festivals with the family, a cooking class, visits to the local village and surrounding farmlands where you can interact with the shepherds and their families, and an open jeep sunset safari to the nearby salt flats. *Note: The heritage palace hotel does not have a pool and is closed from May to August every year.*

**What we love about the heritage fort palace:** The exceptional hospitality and the superb food! It is an integral part of the entire experience, and every meal is curated using recipes that have been in the family for generations.



### Authentic, Unfiltered & Local

They say it's the people that make a place. What better way to get to gain a deeper insight into Nepal, than by spending quality time with the people who call this Himalayan kingdom home? From respected monks to *sherpas* who have successfully climbed Mt. Everest and from noted economists to writers – everyone has a story to tell. Discover the country through their eyes as they share their experiences with you over a sumptuous meal. Better yet, your clients can explore the popular landmarks in Kathmandu with a heritage conservationist who has been actively engaged in restoring the monuments that were affected by the 2015 earthquake.



### Paradise on Earth: Kashmir

One of the most beautiful places on earth, Kashmir is an ideal destination for your clients who are looking to travel to India in the summer. The region is surrounded by pristine alpine scenery, soaring mountains, crystal clear lakes (particularly the mesmerizingly placid Dal Lake), beautiful Mughal gardens and flower-dotted valleys. Its capital, Srinagar, has a distinct Central Asian flavour, and the old town (a must visit) contains a maze of unique, dilapidated wooden buildings of great architectural value, as well as intricate mosques and bustling bazaars. And the food, particularly the *wazwan* (multi-course meal) is absolutely to die for!



### Meet one of our Guides

Earlier, we said we would introduce you to one of our guides each quarter. This time it is **Manoj Vasudevan**, a well-known tour escort and travel photographer who has been in the industry for over two decades. After graduating with a diploma in Public Administration, he worked briefly with the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation, before passing the tour guide's exam. Just a few years later, he received the "Best Tourist Guide" award from the state of Kerala! Through his travels, Manoj seeks to capture images and stories that he hopes will inspire people to step out and embrace adventure. His favorite place in the world is always his next destination. Interestingly, he has also featured in a few popular travel shows like, "Weekend Explorer" with Jeffery Lahnman and the Emmy Award winning series, "No Reservations" with Anthony Bourdain.



### In the news...

- The latest addition to the Indian Hotels Company's (IHCL) collection of hotels are the **Gorbandh Palace in Jaisalmer** (80 rooms and 3 suites), **Taj Sawai in Ranthambore** (56 rooms and 4 suites), **Taj Taal Kutir in Kolkata** (64 rooms and 11 suites), **Taj Guras Kutir Resort & Spa in Gangtok, Sikkim** (69 rooms), and **Taj Vivanta in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh** (60 rooms and 20 suites).
- **The Leela Palace in Jaipur** has recently joined Signature Travel Network's Preferred Hotels & Resorts Collection making it the third property in their portfolio (the others being The Leela Palaces in Delhi & Udaipur) to be a part of the collection.
- CGH Earth recently added **Lockhart Bungalow in Munnar** to their portfolio. Set in one of the oldest tea plantations in the region, Lockhart Estate, it features 3 refurbished rooms that is perfect for families and small groups.

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