

The Royal Charms

We are a nation that treats guests as gods. In a world of globetrotters, India takes pride in being a warm host. Keeping our traditions, culture and values intact, heritage hotels are India's pride. Kuhu Kochar explores the royal charms of Narain Niwas Palace, a heritage hotel in the heart of the tourist city Jaipur.



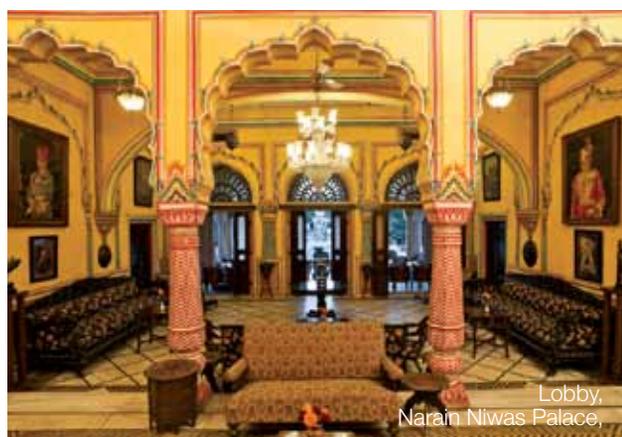
Reception and main building, Narain Niwas Palace



Open air sitting area, Narain Niwas Palace,



Standard room, Narain Niwas Palace



Lobby, Narain Niwas Palace,

The land of kings and palaces, Rajasthan echoes tales of India's glorious past, the dynasties that ruled and their exploits at the war fields. These legends of time are brought back to life by our royal heritage hotels. Standing grand amidst modern-day Jaipur is hotel Narain Niwas Palace.

“Brave deeds live, though bodies die,” reads the crest of Narain Niwas Palace hotel. Traditionally, ‘niwas’ means a home of the royals. An embodiment of the same sentiment is this palace, which was built in 1928 by General Amar Singh, Thakur of Kanota and commander of the Jaipur state force. The hotel served as his country residence where he could withdraw when he wanted a change from his busy administrative and court life. A stroll through this Anglo-Indian garden house, which is now a beautiful heritage hotel, is like travelling back in time and rediscovering the treasures of history.

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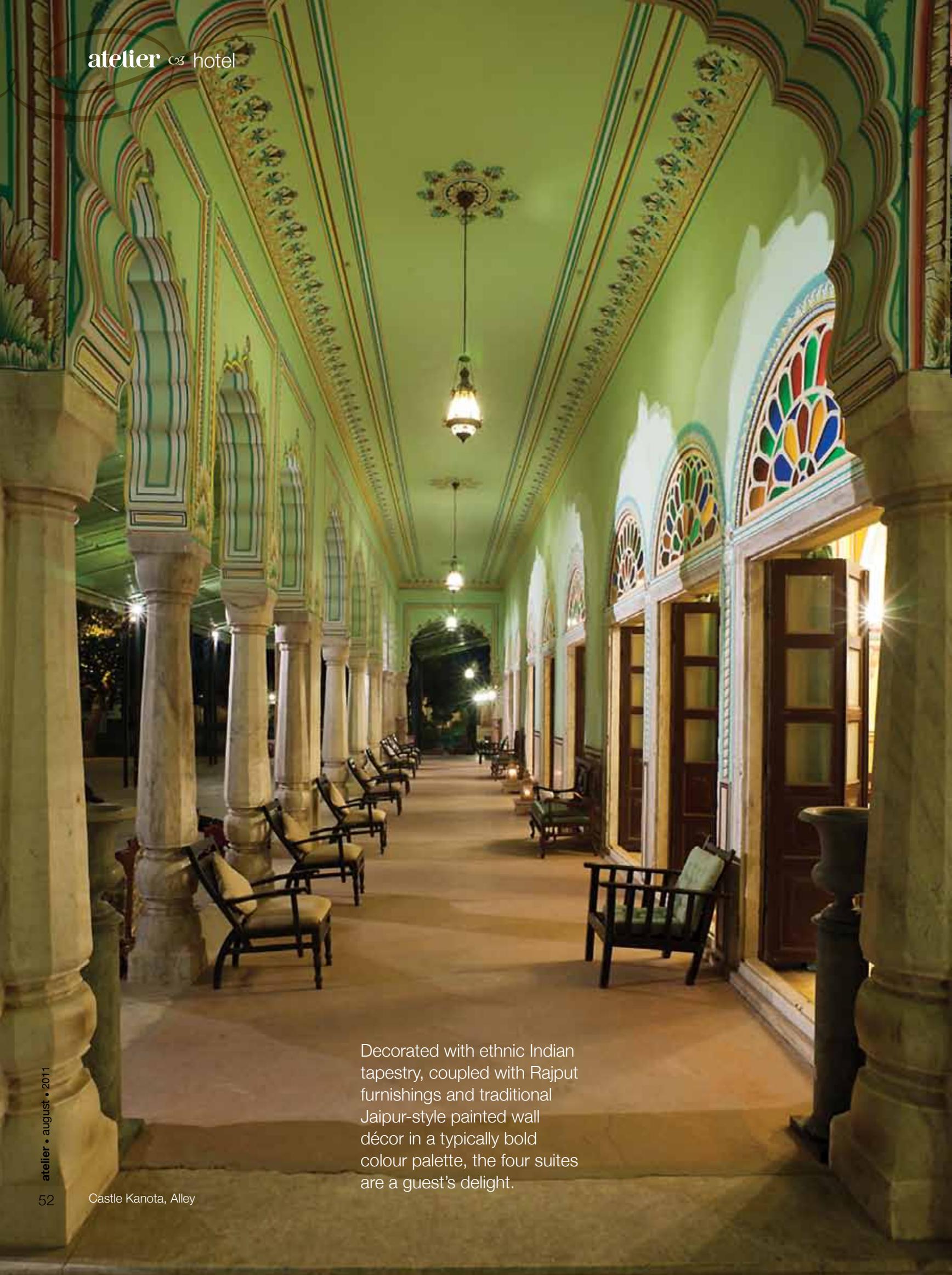
As you enter, you are welcomed like a king or queen and have personal attendants waiting on you. The stay here is nothing short of a king's life. The hotel has acres of beautiful gardens and orchards, which are refreshingly soothing to the mind and soul, for they take you away from the brick and mortar lives of the modern day. The high ceilings, exquisite chandeliers, four-poster beds, ornate tapestry, rose petals in bath tubs, all speak eloquently of Rajput elegance.

Offering a memorable Rajasthan experience, the structure and interiors retain the charm of yesteryears. Pratap

Singh Kanota, the youngest entrepreneur in the Kanota family, takes pride in sharing that the original furniture and decoration were lovingly restored and refurbished while renovation. Sepia tones, frescoes and original artworks adorn the beautifully painted walls, bolstering its character.

Each of the thirty-seven rooms is a marvel more wondrous than the previous one. Elegant and tasteful, every room has its own distinct characteristics. Decorated with ethnic Indian tapestry, coupled with Rajput furnishings and traditional Jaipur-style painted wall décor in a typically bold colour palette, the four suites are a guest's delight. The rooms showcase the skill set of Rajasthan's artisans and craftsmen while providing all the amenities that meet the needs of present-day globetrotters.

Canons and guns that were part of the Jaipur state defense equipment make for great artifacts and are placed around the palace. Exchanging a few pleasantries may even get you some great trivia! The hotel



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Spa,
Narain Niwas Palace



Bar, Narain Niwas Palace



Royal Kanota meal,
Narain Niwas Palace



Foliage,
Narain Niwas Palace

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themselves and have handpicked recipes, which were collected over a long period of time from various royal kitchens of the country by General Amar Singh. What makes them even more special is their exclusivity: These recipes have never been published and are a closely guarded family secret. Served on traditional, ornate silver crockery, these meals are truly one-of-a-kind.

The Kanota archives have secrets to true fine living. Along with food recipes, they also have many recipes for distilling fine alcohol. Made with great care, production of these liquors is an arduous process; this dying art has been kept alive by the Kanota family over generations. Allowing a sneak preview into this world of many charms, they recently gave the Rajasthan government one such recipe. The government then launched 'heritage liquor', which was made following the royal recipe called 'Chandr Haas'.

Thakur Man Singh shared some of the recipe with us: "This splendid drink

is made from eighty types of herbs, spices and dry fruits and distilled and matured in wooden casks before it's ready." He suggests that the drink be enjoyed on the rocks and not mixed with citric and acidic drinks. The hotel's state-of-the-art bar has a separate structure located in a cozy garden offering a view of the central fountain.

The charms of Narain Niwas have dazzled Bollywood many a time. Some memorable movies have been shot here, like *Zubeida*, *Paheli*, *Bhool Bhulaiya*, *Iski Topi Uske Sar* to name a few. Stars like Lara Dutta and Vinay Pathak have been guests at the hotel for over many months at a time.

And one can see why. The place is soothing and serene. For the ultimate experience, one could unwind at the Narain Niwas spa, which is located in a sequestered green corner of the property. The spa offers a repertoire of specially crafted treatments, including Ayurvedic, Tibetan, Chinese, Mediterranean and European techniques. The luxuries on the menu here draw people from the world over to enjoy, relax and rejuvenate. And if you have an intention of making a splash, just take a dip in the pool.

As the sun goes down, the beats of Rajasthani folk numbers start filling the air and fascinating dances absorb the guests, while puppet shows keep the children happy.

If you wish to get away from the city,

staff always have many tales to tell.

But visual pleasures aren't the only delight here. Narain Niwas restaurants, bar, swimming pool and spa will transport you to a land absolutely sublime. Apart from authentic Rajasthani food, the hotel is also famous for its Indian, Chinese and Continental cuisine. The hotel has two restaurants – Mohan Bagh, the garden restaurant and the in-house dining hall. They are open to both hotel guests and visitors. Their special 'Royal Kanota' meals are a connoisseur's treasure. These multi-course meals are prepared under the supervision of the Kanota family members

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Front Facade, Castle Kanota

www.hotelnarainniwas.com

the Kanota family has two other great properties which are located a little distance away from the main city. Raj Mahal and Castle Kanota, the last fort to be built in the Raj. The latter is a massive estate with eighteen palatial rooms and a state-of-the-art restaurant. Here, you get not just a royal ambience to live in but also a peak into a royal family life. The Kanota family resides in the same premises and guests can interact with them for insights into traditional Rajput lives. A reader's delight, the Kanota library offers more than 500 rare books and one of the longest existing diaries in the world, General Amar Singh's diary, which provides an unparalleled ethnographic account of Rajput life in princely and imperial India.

These palaces are the historians of time and conservators of our heritage. They exemplify the spirit of Indian hospitality. 

Just as you enter this hotel of many charms, reflecting the austerity of the Pink city is Hot Pink, the first concept store in Rajasthan. Hot Pink gives the visitors a peak into the newfangled vision of modern day India. It brings together a perfect blend of traditional Indian techniques, international wearability and appeal. Well-renowned designers like Abraham and Thakore, Namrata Joshipura, Manish Arora, Zubair Kirmani, to name a few, house their products here. Hot Pink's in-house label *lalli* plays with quirky prints and vibrant tie and dyes, which are designer Thierry Journos trademark. Offering a wide range of products, from personalized accessories, ready-to-wear apparel and home furnishings. What's a little Pink city fun without some Hot pink shopping bags?



Hot Pink, Concept store





DISCOVER WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING.

In this alluring country where great value can be found at every turn, where variety is truly the spice of life, and where shopaholics are spoilt for choice, here you'll discover just how good retail therapy can be.

amazing
THAILAND
Always Amazes You

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