

# HOSPITALITY *h*ORIZON

HOTELS • F&B • TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE

## WED IN STYLE

Hotels are upping the ante as far as weddings are concerned by offering bespoke experiences

## SOMETHING IN THE AIR

Daniel Wood, GM, Ana Mandara Villas Dalat Resort & Spa, on wooing Indians to Vietnam



# FAIRYTALE NUPTIALS

BILLED AS ONE OF INDIA'S LEADING HOTELS FOR WEDDINGS, NOORMAHAL PALACE IS THE DREAM DESTINATION FOR MAJESTIC MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS

# wed in style

HOTELS AND RESORTS ARE UPPING THE ANTE AS FAR AS WEDDINGS ARE CONCERNED BY OFFERING BESPOKE EXPERIENCES TO MAKE THE ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME DAY MEMORABLE

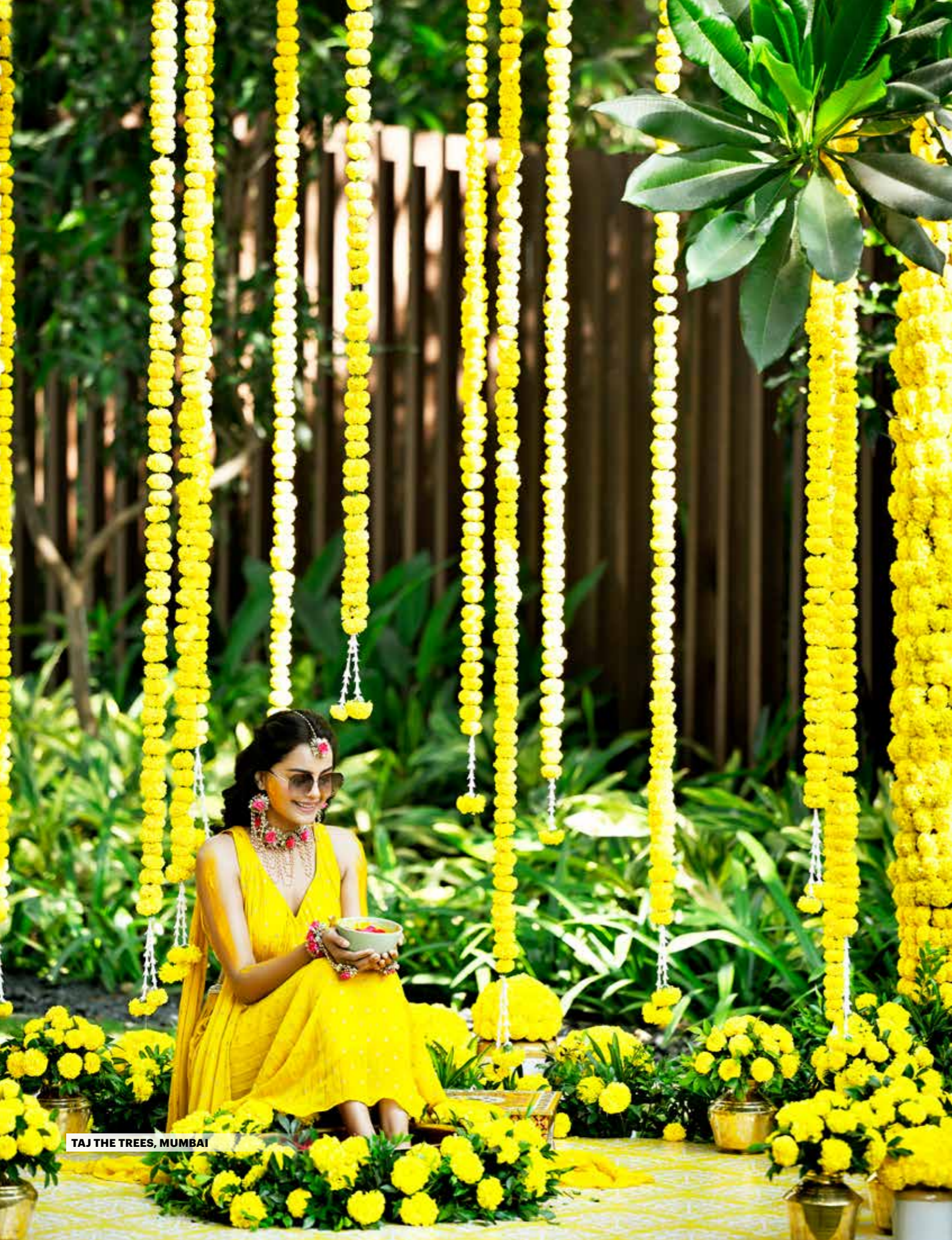
BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

**R**ecently, when Bollywood couple Rakul Preet Singh and Jackky Bhagnani tied the knot, it was their wedding venue ITC Grand Goa Resort & Spa at Arossim that also grabbed as many eyeballs as possible for its pleasing ambience and decor. Celebrity weddings apart, hotels are slowly becoming the preferred choice for weddings – whether you want something intimate or lavish, there are all kinds of hotels that can help you make your day special.

## WOW WEDDINGS

Hotel venues are being meticulously designed to offer intimate luxury that guarantee unparalleled exclusivity for each wedding hosted. To ensure that every moment of the celebration is nothing short of extraordinary, there is a team of experts dedicated to curating unique and personalised experiences.

“At Taj The Trees, Mumbai, our expert chefs engage with our guests to understand their preferences and requirements, crafting curated menus for every meal period. From local delicacies to international favourites, our selection of live and interactive offerings ensures a gastronomic experience that caters to our guests’ unique tastes,” said Bhavna Singh, Director of Sales & Marketing, Taj The Trees, Mumbai. He added: “Our award-winning wellness centre, J Wellness Circle, and premium salon, Niu and Nau, offer bespoke wedding wellness and makeup packages. Our Suite Surprise Package offers guests a stay in our premium Luxury Suite, especially curated to cater to their wedding needs.” →



TAJ THE TREES, MUMBAI



CROWNE PLAZA GREATER NOIDA

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#### BESPOKE EXPERIENCES

Hotels like Marriott have created wedding concepts like Shaadi By Marriott Bonvoy that promise to exceed expectations, whether it is a grand gala or an intimate affair. With seasoned in-house wedding experts, every aspect of the bride, groom, and guests’ needs are met.

Abhishek Rao, Director of Sales & Marketing, JW Marriott Chandigarh, said: “Our JW wedding initiatives are tailored to diverse preferences and budgets. Customisable packages encompass venue rental, catering, decor, accommodation, and an array of additional services like photography, entertainment, beauty salon, spa, transportation, and floristry. Champagne receptions are also available upon request.”

Rohit Chhokar, Director of Sales and Marketing, The Westin Resort and Spa Himalayas added: “India’s rich cultural tapestry inspires us to embrace diversity and celebrate unity. At The Westin Resort and Spa Himalayas, we welcome cross-cultural weddings with open arms, providing a platform for couples to honour and merge their respective traditions. Whether it’s a fusion wedding or a celebration spanning multiple days, our versatile venues and experienced staff ensure a seamless and memorable experience for all.”

#### ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Hotels offer curated wedding packages that take the stress out of planning. These all-inclusive options ensure every detail is covered, from food and beverage to stunning

venue arrangements. “Our team understands the intricate rituals and customs of Indian weddings. We work closely with families to ensure every aspect is honoured and executed flawlessly, creating lasting memories. Fairmont Jaipur bridges the gap between generations. Our commitment to detail and personalised service caters to the desires of families, while our sustainable practices resonate with the environmentally conscious couple,” said Indu Khatri, Cluster Director of Sales & Marketing, Fairmont Jaipur.

She added: “Ultimately, we strive to create a wedding experience that transcends generations, leaving a legacy of cherished memories for all involved. Our dedicated wedding planners work closely with you to understand your desires, budget, and guest list. We then curate a package with the perfect combination of services, catering options, and venue spaces to bring your vision to life.”

#### DEMAND DRIVERS

Hotels are becoming a popular choice for weddings due to their convenience and comprehensive packages covering everything from venue selection to accommodations. With top-notch facilities and customisable options, hotels cater to weddings of all sizes and styles while providing exceptional hospitality.

Varun Mehrotra, Director of Sales and Marketing, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center said: “Hotel weddings are always a spectacle to behold. From the food to the decor, no detail is spared in ➔



MOKSHA HIMALAYA SPA RESORT IN PARWANOO, HIMACHAL PRADESH



RADISSON BLU PALACE RESORT & SPA, UDAIPUR

“HOTEL VENUES ARE BEING METICULOUSLY DESIGNED TO OFFER INTIMATE LUXURY THAT GUARANTEE UNPARALLELED EXCLUSIVITY FOR EACH WEDDING HOSTED. TO ENSURE THAT EVERY MOMENT OF THE CELEBRATION IS NOTHING SHORT OF EXTRAORDINARY, THERE IS A TEAM OF EXPERTS DEDICATED TO CURATING UNIQUE AND PERSONALISED EXPERIENCES.”

making sure that the big day is perfect. The sudden appeal of exotic locations is growing, with the rise in destination weddings to 21 per cent in 2024 compared to in 2023. There's also a growing trend towards smaller, more personalised weddings, with 12 per cent of couples opting for intimate celebrations.”

#### HOLISTIC EXPERIENCES

Hoteliers offer wedding-based initiatives designed to create unforgettable experiences that includes personalised wedding planning services, bespoke decor arrangements fit for any desired theme, curated culinary experiences, and access to luxurious venues.

“The Raffles Udaipur butler service is discreet, attentive, and intuitive that comes straight from the heart and creates the bespoke experience for the wedding guests. Raffles Udaipur also is known for its largest outdoor and indoor venues for every celebration, starting with the largest ballroom along with the pre-function area, five expansive lush outdoor venues that includes manicured

lakeside lawn with in-built stage known as Great Park, Parterre, English Garden, Compass Garden, Clouds along with an island temple for Hindu weddings,” said Rajesh Namby, General Manager, Raffles Udaipur.

#### CONVENIENCE CUES

Post-COVID, the wedding industry has undergone significant transformation. Whether hosting weddings within hotels or at external venues, the central focus has shifted towards curating unforgettable experiences.

“Notably, the surge in hotel weddings can be attributed primarily to the factor of convenience. Guests are increasingly levitated towards the idea of a venue that has multiple venues within itself to cater to their multiple occasions. Hence, hotels have become the preferred choice for weddings, offering tailored packages which includes accommodations, banquet/lawns, food & beverage services, decor, and all the necessary elements to bring the wedding vision with the assistance of professionals under one roof,” averred Sharad K Upadhyay, General Manager, ➔



JW MARRIOTT CHANDIGARH



THE RITZ-CARLTON, PUNE

“HOTELS LIKE MARRIOTT HAVE CREATED WEDDING CONCEPTS LIKE SHAADI BY MARRIOTT BONVOY THAT PROMISE TO EXCEED EXPECTATIONS, WHETHER IT IS A GRAND GALA OR AN INTIMATE AFFAIR. WITH SEASONED IN-HOUSE WEDDING EXPERTS, EVERY ASPECT OF THE BRIDE, GROOM, AND GUESTS’ NEEDS ARE MET.”

Crowne Plaza Greater Noida. “The trend of having close friends and family stay at the venue for the duration of the festivities is also gaining prominence in the wedding scene,” he continued.

#### LOCATION MATTERS

The recent increase in destination weddings, particularly in locations like Corbett National Park, underscores the allure of its pristine natural surroundings.

“Here, couples and families find a captivating setting amidst lush forests and the tranquil Kosi River for their celebrations. Notably, Corbett’s enhanced accessibility from Delhi NCR, facilitated by improved infrastructure, combined with the availability of upscale resorts and expert wedding services, solidifies its status as a coveted wedding destination, offering an unforgettable experience at a reasonable cost and making Corbett a sought-after wedding destination,” said Shahzad Aslam, Head of Sales, Leisure Hotels Group.

Wedding guests have the option to choose different

venues for each event, allowing them to experience the freshness and unique ambiance of each setting.

“Every event boasts distinct décor and themes, providing guests with a one-of-a-kind experience at each celebration. In addition to the various ceremonies, hosts organise small city tours and spa sessions, offering guests the opportunity to unwind and relax in preparation for the upcoming festivities,” explained Dia Rajdev, Director of Catering Sales, The Westin Mumbai Garden City.

#### PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Weddings are deeply rooted in culture and family traditions, however, certain trends are evolving with the times, reflecting a shift in culture and societal values

While the regular places of wedding remain popular such as palace and city hotels, a lot of couples are moving towards non-conventional alternate venues, such as vineyards, gardens, beaches, mountains, art galleries or even private homes.

“Couples are also looking out for options to personalise ➔

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RAJESH NAMBY, GENERAL MANAGER, RAFFLES UDAIPUR

every aspect of their event to showcase their personalities and love story. This includes custom decorations, personalised vows, and bespoke experiences for guests. With emergent trends of environmental awareness, many families are seeking sustainability in their wedding planning,” said Priyanka Gupta, Director of Sales, The Ritz-Carlton, Pune.

#### TREND CHECK

While grand weddings still have many takers, there is a noticeable shift towards more intimate weddings, hosting smaller groups. There is a growing trend towards more eco-friendly and sustainable weddings.

“In line with the trend, Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort offers organic and locally sourced food, minimal plastic usage, and decorations that are either biodegradable or can be repurposed. This trend aligns with a global shift towards more environmentally responsible practices,” Nishant Taneja, Head of Marketing, Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort in Parwanoo, Himachal Pradesh, explained.

He added: “We are also noticing a growing preference for domestic locations for hosting weddings. There is a newfound demand where people are combining wellness and relaxation into the wedding experience. We offer such


guests spa packages, yoga sessions, and wellness workshops as part of the pre-wedding events.”

#### ENTERTAINMENT UNLIMITED

This is the year of planning large-scale, regal weddings with grandeur and opulence. We are officially entering the era of ‘ambitainment’ or ambience entertainment, which is expected to be a vital component of hotel weddings in 2024.

“To ensure guests are entertained throughout the wedding, hospitality players and event planners are weaving experiences like AI photo booths, live painting, and interactive games into the ceremonies. Additionally, the personalisation of experiences will take on new forms and shapes this wedding season,” said Somesh Agarwal, Chairman and MD at Radisson Blu Palace Resort & Spa Udaipur.

He added: “Right from bespoke wedding invitations, thematic expression of couples’ fairy tales, incorporating ‘sweet nothings’ from their love stories, or artistic expression of their special memories in the decor, hospitality players will do all it takes to cater to the needs of their customers.”

Ready to wed in style? 



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THE RIVERVIEW RETREAT, CORBETT RESORT BY LEISURE HOTELS GROUP