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INDIAN LUXURY EXPERIENCES THE WORLD IS TALKING ABOUT

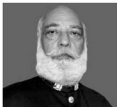
In a *Robb Report* exclusive, Louis Vuitton presents its first India-inspired collection for men, shot at the iconic Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai. Interspersing LV's designs are signature pieces by curators of fine taste, who find themselves on the cusp of India's affair with the world of fine living. Here's a celebration of an India even Indians are just discovering.

Photography Riddhibrata Burman | Styling Igor Garanin | Location The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai (www.tajhotels.com)

Royalty of Experience

INDIA'S OLDEST CONNOISSEURS OF FINE LIVING NOW DEFY HARD SELL, TREASURE THE SUBLIME.

BY ARVIND SINGH MEWAR



THE INTANGIBLES

Luxury is multifariously experiential, beyond the boundary of words. It is excellence—from architecture and engineering, to aesthetics and hospitality—which gives it a distinctive character. There can never be a price tag to historically rich creations which are today widely lauded for their timeless appeal. Like Udaipur's globally renowned palaces—Shiv Niwas Palace, Fateh Prakash Palace, Jagmandir Island Palace and Jagniwas Palace (now Lake Palace Hotel)—are a celebration of an Indian aesthetic which evolved over the centuries and which is impossible to adequately

capture in words. Or, the vast crystal collection housed at the Crystal Gallery at Fateh Prakash Palace, Udaipur. Comprising one of the largest and most complete collections of UK-based F. & C. Osler's cut glass, it was commissioned to the company by my ancestors, the erstwhile rulers of Mewar. The collection includes a wide range of *objet de luxe* in sparkling crystal—four-poster bed, a large crystal table on which rests a miniature crystal throne with a crystal Ganesha inside, crystal chandeliers, armchairs and vases, to mention just a few. These are priceless and their appeal transcends generations. In fact, it is these aspects that lend the city of Udaipur, and our country, a distinct charm and a sense of intrigue. Indeed, when you celebrate luxury, you are essentially paying tribute to excellence.

THE LUXURY OF TIME

To a generation that is doing business at the speed of thought, I wish to celebrate the luxury of time, probably the greatest luxury for the modern man or woman. It's the paucity

of time that robs people of fully enjoying the luxuries they possess. As a young, 30-something man, I remember the hours spent breeding and training our polo ponies at the Shikarjadi polo fields. I was totally engrossed in how the pony was galloping and reacting to the trainer's commands. It's like maintaining luxury cars; if we don't take care of the vintage and classic Rolls-Royces and Cadillacs in our collection, the decay will be swift.

In a world where luxury is a mouse click away, its very concept is undergoing a big transformation. Some luxuries defy change, they pertain to sublime experiences. Heritage, tradition and culture pack a much grander punch than a handbag, a chandelier or even a race horse. These intangibles are, for me, the essence of real luxury. If you want to truly relish luxury, you must create the time to enjoy it, preserve it.

Arvind Singh Mewar, Chairman, HRH Group of Hotels, Udaipur, is the 76th custodian of the House of Mewar. A multifaceted personality, he is a keen sportsman and an aviator.

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