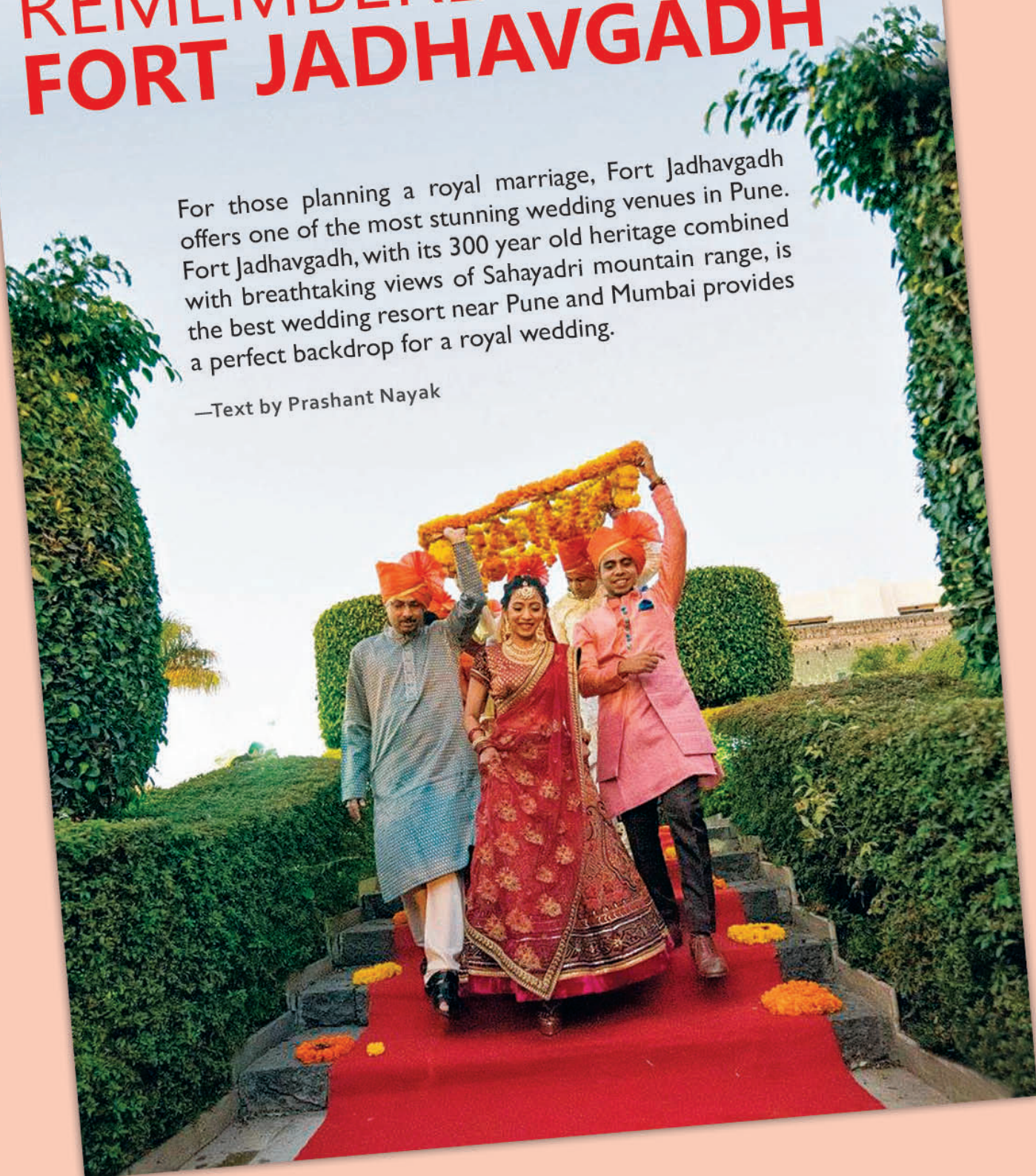


# MARRIAGES ARE MADE IN HEAVEN BUT ARE REMEMBERED IN FORT JADHAVGADH

For those planning a royal marriage, Fort Jadhavgad offers one of the most stunning wedding venues in Pune. Fort Jadhavgad, with its 300 year old heritage combined with breathtaking views of Sahayadri mountain range, is the best wedding resort near Pune and Mumbai provides a perfect backdrop for a royal wedding.

—Text by Prashant Nayak





**M**aharashtra's first and only heritage hotel Fort Jadhavgad is a grand hotel and a retreat located on the outskirts of Pune (Maharashtra, India) which has been restored and opened for guests. Weddings are a big attraction here and for the special day they offer you personalised wedding planning services which include themed decoration, menu selection and catering options, and even wrapping of the wedding gifts. They can arrange for everything - including an elephant, camel or an entourage of royal turturi players for your baraat to get that royal feel.

For your destination wedding or for out of town guests, the fort which has witnessed many royal weddings can accommodate 102 guests in their 58 luxurious rooms and royal tents. However, their sprawling lawns can accommodate around 4,000 people and are the preferred choice for evening functions. The Prangan, the banquet hall can be used as an indoor venue for functions. The rooftop poolside dining facility can also be provided upon request. What's more, the 300 year old Ganesha temple within the Fort can be used for conducting the rituals of the wedding.

As a heritage structure it is also important to know the history and the restoration of the Fort. Jadhavgad, a

relic of Maratha history has long and glorious past from Shivaji Maharaj era. It played host to Bajirao, Peshwas and many royalties. Pilaji Jadhavrao, a prominent commander in Shahu Maharaj's (the first Maharaja of Kolhapur) army, built four strategic monuments in four locations around Pune to protect the Peshwas' capital - small forts at Vagholi near Nagar, Nanded and Sangamwadi, and this one called Jadhavgad at Saaswad. While the other three fell into ruin, Jadhavgad was turned into Maharashtra's first heritage fort hotel - Fort Jadhavgad Hotel.

It was restored to its former glory in the year 2008 under the guidance of Dr. Vithal Kamat and Vishal Kamat from the Kamat Group of Hotels. Jadhavgad is actually a seven-storied Gadh (small fort), of which two storeys are below ground level. The basic structure of the Gadh is kept intact and the old fort is now a plush, has modern look and it does not clash with the original appearance of the structure.

At the base or Paythaa of the Gadh is a parking lot. The visitor climbs a series of stone steps to reach the tall and heavy entrance door. The hotel staffs are all dressed traditionally; the women in nine-yard saris and the men in angarkhas and dhotis with Maratha turban and guests are greeted with a Namaskaar.





At Fort Jadhavgad, you can engage in bird & animal watching almost year round. More than 30 varieties of birds migrate to its farmlands throughout the year. You can also trek to adjoining mountains for wild animals and deer spotting. The Kamats have made an effort to preserve the flora and fauna around Jadhavgad. There are many species of birds and butterflies and wild deer around and the hotel and the Kamats want to provide a favourable environment for them. Owls of different species find perches on the fort walls, which have not been affected by the revamp. It is an impressive sight when the owls leave their perches at dusk, against the backdrop of the huge stone walls of the Gadh.

Jadhavgad also has a small museum, Aai (mother) Museum which holds a collection of antique items that belonged to the royal family over a span of four or five centuries. This museum will take you back to the bygone era with its collection of the most exquisite artefacts only seen at this amazing weekend destination.

While restoring the Gadh, the original rainwater harvesting system was also discovered. It has been converted to feed a swimming pool. The 'Kund' is a beautifully enclosed swimming pool at the pinnacle of the fort. Surrounded by 100 years old 'Champã', 'Neem' and 'Bael' trees, the pool has been built using the fort's 300 year old rain water harvesting system. The ambience is superb for pool parties of up to 150 guests. They have a specially designed poolside menu for in-house guests

that include chilled cocktails and sumptuous hot snacks. The royal kitchens, on the other hand, have been turned into a spa for hotel guests and visitors.

A total of 58 rooms comprising of three suites, 39 rooms of various types, 12 royal tents and four neem cottages are spread across the fort's three wings - making it an ideal Holiday Resort near Mumbai. The interiors are a mix of old world charm and contemporary luxuries making it an ideal holiday resort.

Occasionally, Fort Jadhavgad's roof top restaurant Payatha, comes alive with 'Ghazal Nights' filling the air with a nostalgic ambience. Commensurate with the theme, they provide Indian traditional 'Mostly Grills' cuisine and Gadda and bolsters seating for the event. Payatha, as the name suggests in Marathi is located at the 'foothill'- the great foot wall. It is the fine dining fresco restaurant serving traditional Maharashtraian cuisine. Splendid evenings include watching the gracious barn owls and other night birds right from your dining table. The sound of soothing Ghazals help you enjoy your single malt while the nippy cold is kept away by the rum in winters.

Who said business meetings cannot be lavish? Fort Jadhavgad, has adequate MICE facilities that can make your corporate events and meetings a royal treat that your deserving team will not forget. Fort Jadhavgarh is an ideal point for stay for guests doing an Ashtavinayak Itinerary as three of the eight temples are located on the Satara Road.

