

A SLICE OF HISTORY

An overnight train journey left me drained and all I wanted was a nice comfy space to crash for a while. Through the journey from the railway station to my destination—Ranbanka Palace—I remained curious about how this place would be. Sitting right beside its almost Siamese sibling, the Ajit Bhawan—which is India's first heritage hotel, that was built for the same prince—it later separated into a different property.

Built in 1927 for Maharajadhiraj Sir Ajit Singh Ji, this hotel captures the essence of its history. Once a part of India's first heritage

hotel, it is also recognised as a classic heritage property by the Ministry of Tourism. The hotel started off with only 30 rooms and now houses 70 rooms, which include Deluxe Rooms, Club Rooms and Suites.

I breathed in the history as I walked to my room—a suite, which had a living room with a TV and a reading area. The bedroom was spacious and luxurious with minimalistic décor. I was put up in the new wing, which faces the pool and the gardens, but for a better experience of royalty, one should stay in the Jodhana wing, which has 15 exclusive suites and is sprinkled with

artefacts from the royal family's personal collection.

To recover from the long journey, I went for a neck and back massage to the resort spa, Exposé, which offers a variety of therapies and treatments. My spirit and body healed, I walked around the hotel, which has pictures of the royal family all around the property. Nights are usually pleasant at Ranbanka, where the restaurant, Panchranga, hosts a buffet dinner in the lawn, along with musical performances by local artistes in the backdrop. One should definitely try the Rajasthani *thali* on the menu. The *laal maas* topped my list of

favourites and the mutton *burrah* simply melted in the mouth. Not only the Indian fare, they also offer superb Continental and Chinese cuisine. After a hearty meal, I retreated back to the comfort of my room, which I was longing for since dawn and dozed off happy with the treatment, the food and the luxury of this place.

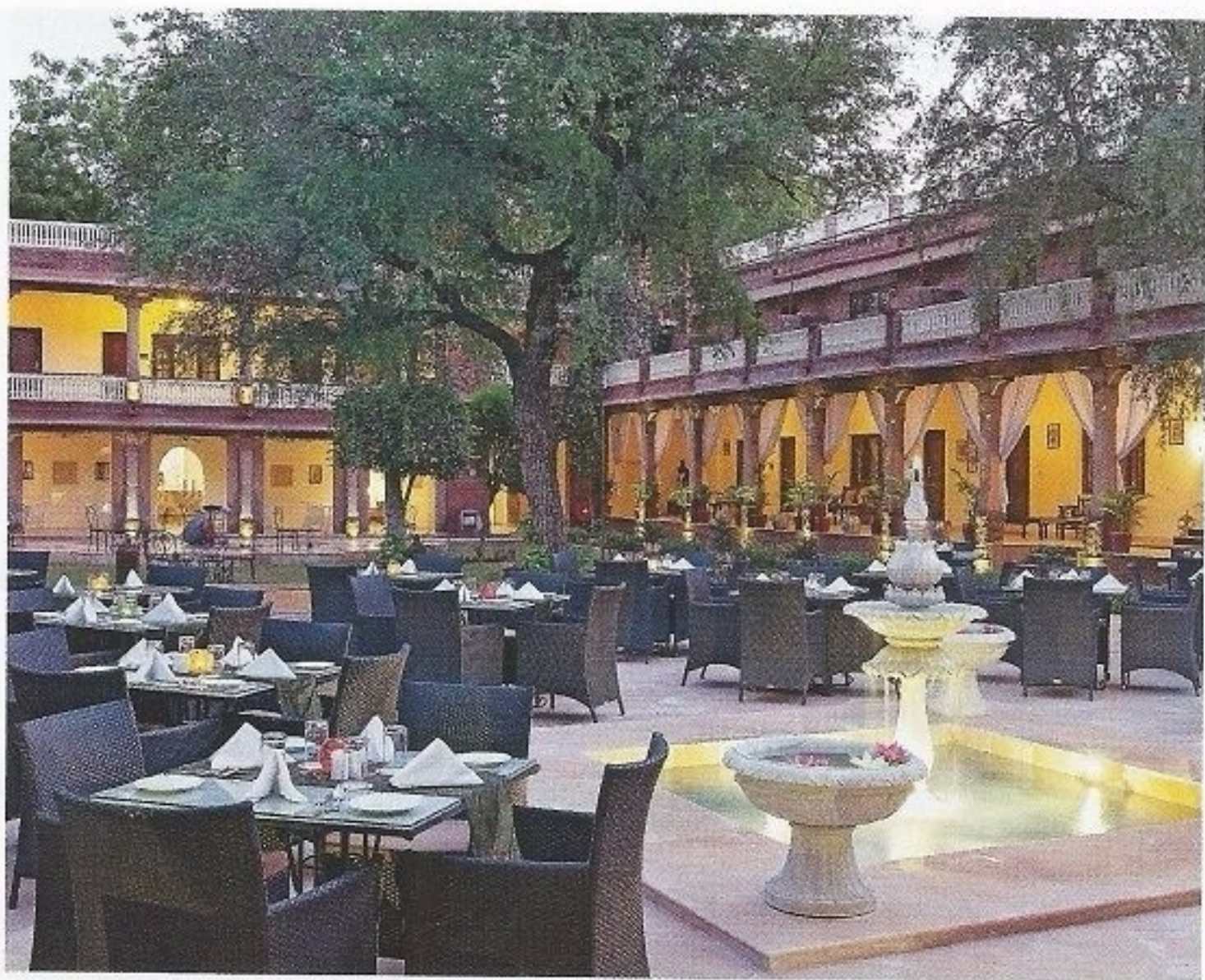
— Anuj Sarma

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The Perfect Monsoon At Jodhpur

As the monsoon arrives, Jodhpur turns into a haven. The Ranbanka Palace is offering an exquisite 2N/3D package, which includes a welcome drink on arrival, breakfast and dinner (from a fixed menu), free pick-up from the airport/railway station, one-day sightseeing and many more complimentary offers. This package is valid till September 30.

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A Getaway To Remember

When October meets a quick option for getting away to some nice place during the monsoon, Rajasthan tops the list most of the time. Jodhpur has a great option. Ranbanka Palace in Jodhpur is offering the Royal Rajpuri package which includes overnight accommodation in the Jodhana Wing for a couple with breakfast and dinner, airport transfers, complimentary spa therapy, usage of DVD player with movie selection, late check-out till 4 pm, complimentary Wi-Fi access, happy hours in the Blue Bar and a lot more.

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