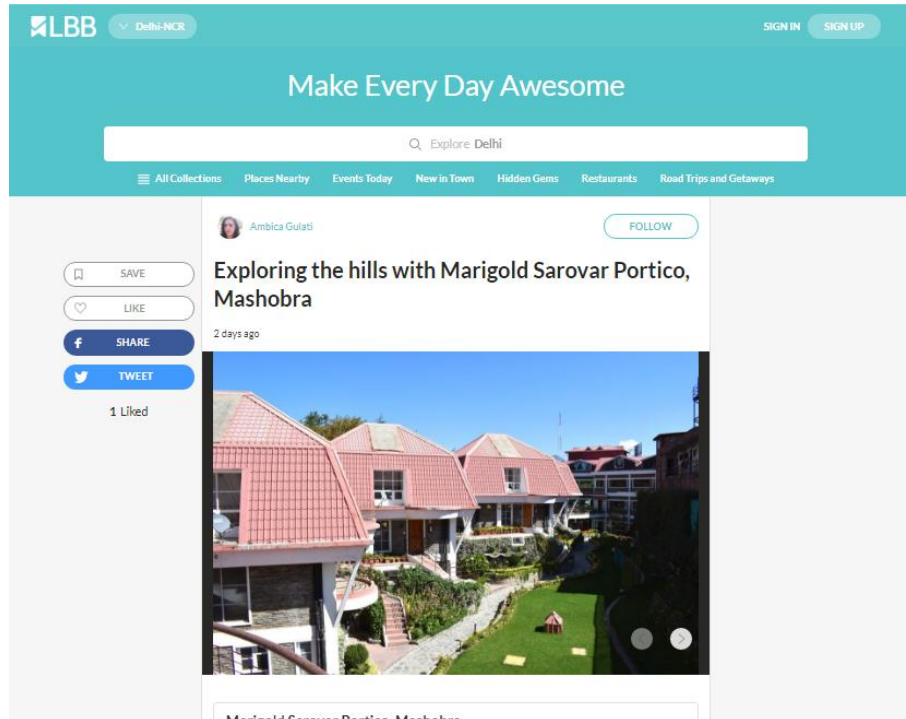


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Marigold Sarovar Portico, Mashobra



What Did I Like?

Shimla is now Delhi's crowded cousin. Yes, it truly is. Once the summer capital of the British, it is now choc-a-block with cars and noise. For those who still dream of a clean, green holiday in the hills, the nearby villages have the promise of a 'happy vacation'. And I experienced one at this modern yet quaint hotel. Sloping roofs and colourful flowers line its driveway. Nothing ostentatious, just giving the impression that I was going to enter a very homely cottage. And I wasn't disappointed. Fresh air, flowery garden, relaxing colours and warm smiles, it is a place to leave behind the city woes. Bliss reigns here for the hotel is located in a quiet village named Sidhora, just a 15km drive from Shimla. No cars and crowd here. The hills are alive for those who love birds, clouds and forest. But even if you want to stay put, the 47-room hotel is self sufficient. Hot water, special cottages for larger groups or families, family rooms, Marigold Sarovar Portico could remind you of the holidays you had with your extended family. There is a children's activity room with dedicated staff and that gives families enough free time to chill out without constant demands. There is a badminton court, basketball space, and an outdoor eating area. If you are here on business, there is a banquet and meeting space for 150 people. Chef Vipan serves some delectable dishes and VIPs can get their own menu designed. I dug into the traditional dham of the region, some Middle Eastern fare and even the wazwan from Kashmir. There is buffet and a la carte. I would recommend the soups; they are just what you need in the hills. A swimming pool is under construction, but a spa and a bar are operational. The view from both is amazing. There is a gym too, should you wish for indoor exercise.