

Soul Stay: Jehan Numa Retreat

Do you agree there are hideaways that make you take a certain vacation? That these places connect to the inner you? That luxury could be the key word there, still? And, that those can be, cathartically, addressed as "soul stays"? Well, we definitely do! That's because we just experienced one such retreat in the heart of India, that is, the exemplarily green city of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

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FASHIONOMICAL | GOLF SPECIAL



LOBBY

RECEIVED WITH AROMATHERAPY!

As we amble into the Dravadian-style lobby of **Jehan Numa Retreat**, a luxury boutique resort from the house of the award-sweeping *Jehan Numa hospitality group*, we are welcomed by a rather sophisticated aroma of lemon grass (we think it is the oil diffuser; well, what else?). Lemon grass subtly gives way to ginger, mint, coriander, and a few others (in fact, there's a therapeutic whirlwind of fragrances!) as you walk through the lush colonnaded alleys to your cottages, realizing that all the credit for this better-than-red-carpet aromatherapy goes to the plants well-set along the path. Well, we were beginning to lose track of time, our pace getting slower - after all, a stay in the herbal garden is all you need to shed the yokes of daily grind!

GREENACATION!

Tropical architecture, with its tenets like use of natural materials to ensure harmony with the environment, is at the centre of the design aesthetics of Jehan Numa Retreat. There are 28 gabled-roof cottage-cum-suites, each well kitted out with state-of-the-art creature comforts and attached to a patio overlooking a windswept organic vegetable garden, which also serves as a cozy bird-watching site. Don't forget to make a splash in the open-to-the-sky outdoor shower, neatly sectioned off in the room's spacious en suite bathroom. Although there's a lot to see in Bhopal (it is called the city of lakes, mind you!), moseying about the resort and languishing in your rooms or the poolside—perhaps with a drink and a book—will be topping your activity charts.



THE COTTAGE INSIDE

EPICURUS? PLEASED!

Whether you are dining at Under the Jamun Tree, Jehan Numa Retreat's al fresco diner, or Coriander Leaf Lounge & Bar, its indoor counterpart, food takes a scrumptious turn at every concoction. From entrées like beer battered fish and prawn curry to nibbles like pakoras and grilled sandwiches to sweetmeats like blue berry cheese cake, gulab jamuns, and fruit tarts, their kitchen dishes out world cuisine that would have satiated even Epicurus.



CORIANDER LEAF LOUNGE



SEAL THE HEAL

With focus on purity, balance and rejuvenation, retreat's spa called Chakra boasts of 4 well-appointed treatment rooms, traditional Ayurvedic as well as modern relaxation and beauty treatments, and an army of well-trained therapists. Reinvigorate your nervous system with the centuries-old Shirodhara treatment (that takes place in an exotic glass-and-wood-enclosed alcove!) or reclaim body and facial shine through a three-hour-long half day journey, which begins with a steam session, followed by sloughing off of the dead skin with a home-made organic scrub, and ends with a refreshing clay body wrap and face massage.



UNDER THE JAMUN TREE, JEHAN NUMA RETREAT'S AL FRESCO DINER

AYURVEDA THERAPY ROOM



POOL SIDE



PATHWAY TO THE COTTAGES



CORIANDER LEAF BAR AREA

P.S.

The hosts - *Zafar, Aly, and Faiz Rashid*, along with their attentive-yet-unobtrusive and affable staff - are so infectiously hospitable, it's hard to resist the temptation to forego city life for a little longer than planned. ■

Fashionomical Ratings: ★★★★★

Welcome Warmth: *Mind blowing*

Mood and Vibe: *Mind blowing*

Service: *Mind blowing*

Food: *Mind blowing*

Ratings:

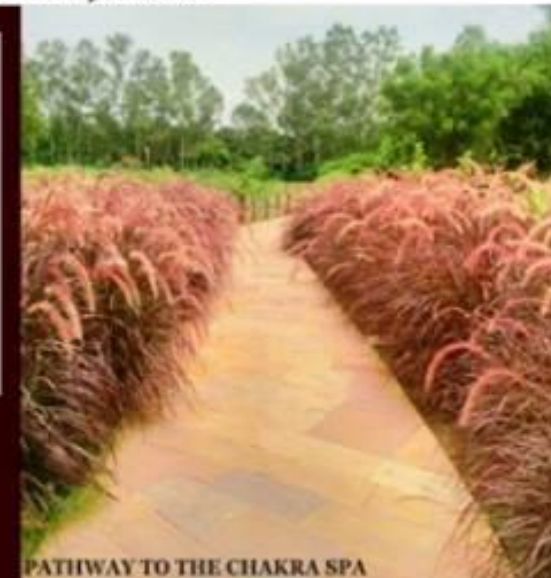
Mind-blowing / Satisfactory / Standard / Disappointing

To Book:

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PATHWAY TO THE CHAKRA SPA