

Travel

Serene and scenic... The six-hour drive from Mumbai to Phaltan in Satara district was absolutely enjoyable. We are at Hotel Jakson Inns to spend our weekend in the



...Comfy room

midst of nature, landscapes, windmills, sugarcane fields and some adventure.

A glass of fresh sugarcane juice on arrival refreshed us at once, after which we were introduced to Soraya Rebello, VP, Human Relations & Marketing, Gautam Banerjee, GM, and Sachin Jadhav, Manager, Training & Business Excellence, who welcomed us warmly. I was allotted a single lady traveller room – with a special video connectivity for safety purpose, and

location near the lift for emergency exit. After a quick freshening-up, we headed for a healthy and delicious lunch at the hotel's Green Bean restaurant, specially dished out by Chef Adarsh.

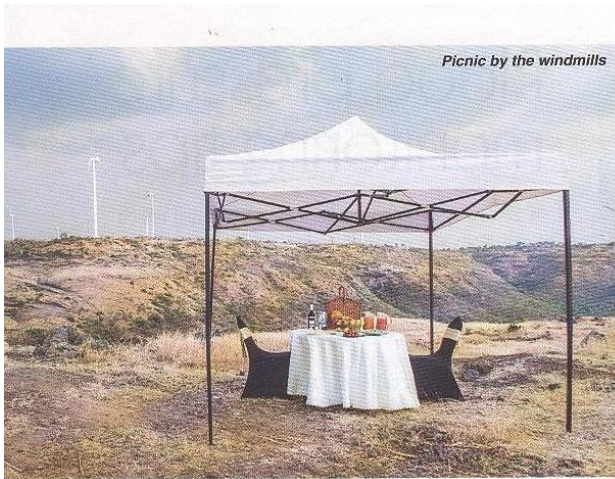
Eco-Friendly Haven

Soraya then took us on a hotel tour and explained its various eco-friendly features – solar power initiative, worm culture facility, rain water harvesting and recycling and residual exhaust.

Picturesque Phaltan

Looking for a weekend getaway that promises adventure in the midst of nature? Head to Phaltan.





Picnic by the windmills



Thoseghar waterfall

The wind was blowing heavily, as I stood under the blades of a massive windmill and admired the colourful sky at sunset – absolutely divine!

Incidentally, Jackson Inns is the first 3-star hotel with LEED India Platinum Certification and American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and has even surpassed the international fire safety norms. In terms of its décor, it offers a perfect blend of contemporary design with modern functionality. The hotel also boasts of a day care centre for employees' children, and employment opportunities for differently abled individuals and local women.

Windmill Wonder

We then left to see the Phaltan Rajwada, and I was amazed by the grandeur of this heritage palace - an architecture marvel not to be missed.

From here, we were driven to Pusegaon to see the windmills at sunset. The gigantic windmills set against the backdrop of hilly peaks and lush countryside were a treat to the eyes, and honestly the experience here was the highlight of the entire

trip! The wind was blowing heavily, as I stood under the blades of a massive windmill and admired the colourful sky at sunset – absolutely divine!

A surprise picnic was arranged at this beautiful locale with wine, sandwiches and chips, and day one ended, happy and hearty.

Farm Fare

Next morning, after an early breakfast, we set off to explore the tomato, brinjal, marigold and sugarcane farms. Phaltan is renowned for its pomegranate orchards and sugarcane farms.

With farm owner Vitthal and Pratik Nalawade's pet dogs and cattle for company, we enjoyed a delicious Maharashtrian snack: *Kothimbir wadi* and *chakli* cooked in minimal oil, along with a hot cup of tea made by the farm owner's wife Anita.

Fort Note

We were then whisked off to Thoseghar waterfall where it was raining heavily, and

from there to Ajinkyatara Fort, a very scenic fort, perched atop a 3,300 feet high mountain on the magnificent Sahyadri ranges offering us a mesmerizing view of the entire Satara city. Kas Pathar, a breathtaking valley of flowers, was our next stop.

After a rather adventurous yet refreshing day, back at the hotel, we were served typical Maharashtrian fare for dinner - *bhakri*, *pithla*, *bharli vangi*, *thecha* and *masala bhaat*.

My tired nerves found comfort at the hands of a blind masseur Satish, who gave me the most relaxing foot massage at the hotel's Kundalini Spa.

Next morning, it was time to bid adieu to picturesque Phaltan.

Completely relaxed and rejuvenated, I returned, promising myself to visit this pollution-free and delightful weekend getaway more often...

AISHWARYA P VAIDYA