

list

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Why Jaipur is



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the Place to be Now

Has the city quietly become the world's buzziest travel destination?



— TEXT
Sarah Khan

Jaipur may be known for the distinctive honeycomb facade of the rosy Hawa Mahal and the bustling lanes of its lively walled city, but the city’s singular approach to hospitality is its defining feature. From sumptuous palace hotels steeped in royal history to intimate home stays in atmospheric heritage villas, perhaps no city in India has mastered the art of places to stay the way Jaipur has. But where it truly shines is in the realm of intimate properties, where legacy meets luxury with authentically Rajasthani flair. These five hotels blending history and modernity with panache are some of the most alluring places to book on your next visit to the Pink City.

HERITAGE CHARMER: ALSISAR HAVELI

Stepping through the gates of Alsisar Haveli is like crossing the threshold of a time portal – it was originally built as a private residence in 1892, and even as Jaipur traffic heaves and swirls around it today, the haveli (mansion) remains resolutely rooted in a bygone era with classic Rajputana architecture. The swimming pool is flanked by daybeds tucked away beneath ornate cupolas, wood-carved jharokas (overhanging enclosed balconies) frame the windows, rooms have colourful frescoes and stained-glass trimmings, and mirror-work bejewels the walls of Sheesh Mahal, the inviting lounge. While its central location in Jaipur sets Alsisar Haveli within striking distance of all the Pink City’s key landmarks – Hawa Mahal, the City Palace and Amber Fort among them – be sure to dedicate a few quiet hours to getting lost in its maze of courtyards and corridors.

FLAMBOYANT GLAMOUR: RAJMAHAL PALACE RAAS JAIPUR

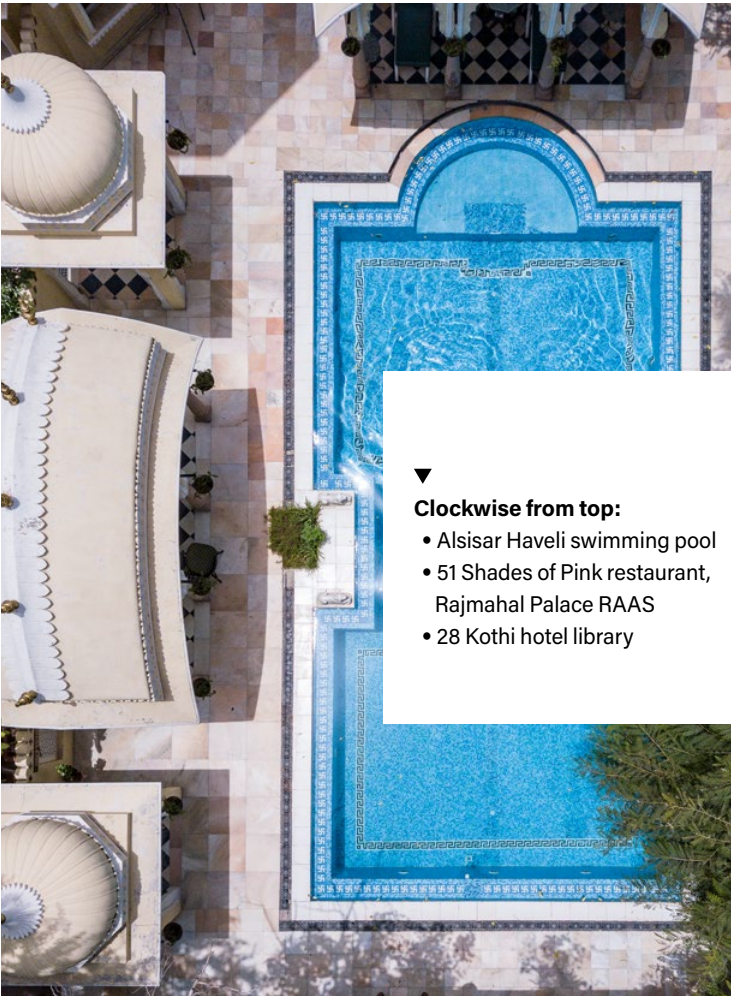
Originally erected in 1729, Rajmahal Palace was given an Art Deco-inspired revamp in the 20th century, making it a modern abode for the glamorous royal “it couple” Maharaja Sawai Man Singh and Maharani Gayatri Devi. In 2015, the regal residence was revamped yet again with a vibrant new look, which makes a dramatic statement with a series of daring wallpaper choices: there’s a fuchsia dining room, a pattern of peonies snaking up the walls of the Maharani suite, and a punchy bird motif in the Chinoiserie corridor, to name a few. While the inside is a dazzling ode to contemporary Indian aesthetics, the outdoor spaces, encompassing lush gardens and a rose-coloured Art Deco style pool, are a serene idyll. And if you needed more assurance that this is a home fit for a modern royal: the dashing Maharaja Padmanabh Singh, the 25-year-old scion of Jaipur’s reigning family, maintains a stylish bachelor pad here.

CHIC BOUTIQUES: 28 KOTHI

Where should you stay if your tastes skew a bit, well, understated? When it debuted in 2016, 28 Kothi arrived on the scene as a minimalist antidote to Jaipur’s maximalist energy. A chic, five-room villa tucked away in a residential neighbourhood, 28 Kothi speaks to a modern Rajasthani identity: colourful, quirky and contemporary. Think of it as a stay at the home of your most stylish friend. Here, that role has been taken on by Lebanese designer Nur Kaoukji – known for her label Ecrú – who transformed the private home with pastel-toned interiors, featuring locally inspired touches in the form of block-printed headboards and hand-painted wall murals. Be sure to spend some time in the tranquil gardens with a book, and don’t miss a meal at the property’s charming Café Kothi, a tiny eatery specialising in vegetarian fare (order the beetroot tikki chaat and the quinoa biryani bowl).



"Each room is inspired by a precious stone or metal"



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Clockwise from top:
• Alsisar Haveli swimming pool
• 51 Shades of Pink restaurant, Rajmahal Palace RAAS
• 28 Kothi hotel library





▲ Making an entrance
the main porch (indoor view)
at Rajmahal Palace
RAAS, Jaipur



THE JOHRI

How do you open a new hotel in a city that has everything? By bringing something completely fresh to the table – an ambitious brief, but exactly what The Johri managed to pull off when it opened its doors in 2020. Most visitors to the Pink City don’t actually stay in the historic walled district; that’s all changed as travellers covet the chance to book this five-room haveli in a 19th-century merchant’s home set in Jaipur’s Johri Bazaar, or jewellery market. Each room is named and inspired by a different precious stone or metal: Manek, or ruby, is tinted pink, for instance, while Sona (gold) has gilded accents. With history woven in the foundation of the haveli and its surrounding lanes, The Johri’s interiors are a blend of old-world details – mirrors with camel-bone inlay; traditional pichwai paintings – and 21st-century touches such as chevron-patterned pillars. For anyone eyeing a stylish hideaway amid all the action, The Johri is the perfect Jaipur address.

VILLA PALLADIO

Villa Palladio’s rural setting, in a pastoral village on the outskirts of Jaipur, is alluringly bucolic at first glance – but the design of this new nine-room oasis is anything but quiet. Owner Barbara Miolini, a Swiss-Italian restaurateur who masterminded Jaipur’s beloved turquoise-tinted Bar Palladio and pastel-toned Caff  Palladio, opted for a bold scarlet tone for her inaugural hotel. And the result is a vision in crimson: red walls with hand-painted details; red four-poster canopy beds; red-and-white-tiled marble floors; red tented daybeds with white trim; and a pool edged by candy-cane-striped loungers. It may sound like a lot, but it all comes together beautifully – and the result has the Pink City seeing red. ▶

"The Kasliwal family has run this shop for nine generations, maintaining and preserving a storied history"

WHERE TO GO IN PURSUIT OF:

ART: Old meets new in the most dazzling way in what might be one of the world’s most atmospheric art venues: the timeworn shell of Madhavendra Palace at the 19th-century Nahargarh Fort has been transformed with contemporary works into the Sculpture Park, an open-air gallery. Throughout the palace’s sepia-tinted courtyard and beneath intricately painted arches, visitors will find an assortment of installations by the likes of India’s Martand Khosla, Rui Chafes from Portugal and Brazilian Daisy Xavier.

BLING: A region as regal as Rajasthan – the name of the state translates to Land of Kings – has understandably become known for its jewellery tradition, but few brands can compete with the legacy of Gem Palace. The Kasliwal family has run this shop for nine generations, maintaining and preserving a storied history that began when they arrived in Jaipur to serve as court jewellers to the maharajas in the 18th century. The dashing cousins who manage Gem Palace today have brought it forward to the 21st century with modern baubles infused with tradition and heritage, which they show clients during consultations in their dazzling hot pink Jaipur flagship. Stop by to browse and try on shimmering necklaces, earrings and headpieces – and perhaps bring home a sparkly souvenir or two.

TEXTILES: Jaipur is synonymous with block-printing, a centuries-old method by which artisans apply patterns to fabric painstakingly by hand with blocks carved from sheesham wood. Swing by the flagship shop of Anokhi, a Jaipur staple with outposts throughout the country, to pick up linens, kaftans, bags and more. If this shopping spree sparks your curiosity about the craft, pay a visit to the Anokhi Museum of Handprinting, a beautiful tribute to this beloved tradition set in an immaculately restored 16th-century Rajput haveli.

TEA: A tea break is easy to come by anywhere in Jaipur, of course, but for a fresh spin on a classic pastime, head to Tapri caf , which is frequented by young locals. Here, you’ll certainly find staples such as masala chai and cutting chai on the extensive tea menu, but you’ll also be able to sample Kashmiri kahwa, herbal tea laced with ashwagandha, lemongrass and mint, and an iced tea made with Red Bull for the ultimate caffeine kick. The vegetarian food menu is equally eclectic, courtesy of dishes such as tofu bhurji, Maggi noodles upgraded with parmesan cheese and pesto, and an eight-piece samosa platter. ☺



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Clockwise from top:
All in the details:
Pukhraj Lounge at
The Johri Hotel
Mughal architectural
details at Nahargarh Fort,
a Golden royal palace room
at Mehrangarh Fort,
Jodhpur

