



BLUE HEAVEN
Durbar Hall, in the
Suján Rajmahal
Palace. *Below:* The
entrance gate.



In Living COLOR

VIBRANTLY ADDICTIVE
JAIPUR GETS ITS
MODERN LUXURY
GROOVE ON.

By Sarah Khan

Now the capital of the state of Rajasthan, **Jaipur** was for centuries the seat of various royal and noble families. With time, many of their *havelis* (mansions) were turned into hotels. While splendid to look at and undoubtedly luxurious, these over-the-top palaces can suffer from a formality that, along with cloying service, can become oppressive. As the Pink City increasingly becomes a destination for the world's style elite—people in love with India's opulence but allergic to antiquated fussiness—satisfying alternatives can be hard to find.

The most splendid option, the **Suján Rajmahal Palace**, is situated just outside the city's tourist-clogged historic center. The stately former palace, built in 1729, allows guests to live like maharajas (right

down to a private dinner at the City Palace) but in the more relaxed elegance of top European hotels. Thanks to a playfully irreverent renovation, completed in February, the hotel now pops with local colors—fuchsia, teal, cobalt—and contemporary spirit. “I wanted to create spaces that didn't look like sets from *Octopussy*, which is what foreigners expect. I didn't want a pastiche,” says designer Adil Ahmad of the hotel's 14 suites, which have hosted a queen of England—and Camelot. We think Jackie Kennedy would approve of the new look.

FROM \$767, SUJANLUXURY.COM

For a more intimate, boutique experience, the 12-room **47 Jobner Bagh** is an oasis in the center of the city. It was once part of the maharaja of Jobner's gardens, and a 2014 renovation has produced a tranquil marriage of Jaipur aesthetics and Tuscan hospitality. Even if you don't stay here, eat at the rooftop restaurant. It offers one of the best views of the legendary Tiger Fort—a must at sunset. Just be sure to book in advance. FROM \$129, JOBNERBAGH.COM ◀

SHOP

*Traditional chic,
with a dash of Italy.*

If you go to Jaipur, chances are you're planning to shop. The city has a long history of enticing textile and gem lovers, and savvy boutique owners are luring a new wave of shopaholics by rebooting centuries-old traditions.

At the minimalist **Teatro Dhora** you'll find ethnic *kurtas* (tunics), Kolhapuri sandals, and handcrafted handbags alongside furniture from the owners of the label Dhora. Italy meets India at **Jaipur Modern** (above), where Yash Agarwal and Maximiliano Modesti showcase local craftsmen. (Take a break from Indian cuisine at their café, the Kitchen at Jaipur Modern, which offers caprese salads and pastas in a high-design dining room.)

Some of the buzziest shops are at the Narain Niwas Palace Hotel, just south of the old city. Hidden within the jasmine- and lotus-scented gardens you'll find the decade-old **Hot Pink**, host to top designers from Mumbai and New Delhi (Manish Arora, Abraham & Thakore, Neeru Kumar), and **Idli**, where French expat Thierry Journo adds fun prints to ethnicwear and dresses. ◀



DRINK

A bar for 2015 maharajas.

Dutch designer Marie-Anne Oudejans's **Bar Palladio** at the Narain Niwas Palace is a collection of jewel box rooms, with tented ceilings and fanciful murals. It has one of the most extensive cocktail menus in Jaipur, as well as the locally made liqueur Royal Chandrahas, a staple of royalty that has only recently become available to commoners. Come January, the Palladio should be the watering hole of choice for the Jaipur Literary Festival. ◀