



In the Pink in Jaipur, India

By Leslie Woit

October 10, 2017

From VIP to Outlandishly Exclusive, royal access is yet another perk of a luxury [Micato journey to India](#).

Bubbles? I've sipped my share. But in the sultry heat of a Rajasthan afternoon, sipping Champagne while perched on the solid silver throne of a Maharajah...That would take some beating.

The City Palace, still home to the last ruling royal family of [Jaipur](#), is also the setting for the fascinating [Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum](#) – making it a popular stop for any visitor. Through its airy 18th century courtyards, past intricate regal costumes of embroidered gold and silver, the displays of ornate palanquins, delicate Pashmina shawls and Benaras silk saris, we weave. Then, somewhere after a splendid display of 15th-century Rajput weaponry, things took a rather more intriguing turn.

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Deep within the hidden corridors of the City Palace in Jaipur, India, built between 1729 and 1732. The famous “blue room in the Pink City”, Sukh Nivas or the Hall of Rest is painted in arresting white and Wedgwood blue.

The wily Puneet Dan, my [Micato Travel Director](#), was up to something.

Steering deftly through a door marked “private”, into the inner sanctum we step, winding silently through a series of corridors and courtyards, past fountains and chambers, travelling through the dazzling 18th-century blend of Hindu and Mughal architecture. Our destination – one of the most exclusive imaginable in all of India – was the private sitting room of the Maharajah of Jaipur, the last reigning monarch of the richest of India’s dazzling princely states.

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The private quarters of the Maharajah of Jaipur India, a Micato-Only exclusive. The current Maharajah, His Highness Maharajah Sawai Padmanabh Singh (pictured) was born a prince in 1998, adopted as crown prince in 2002 and enthroned in 2011.

Over Champagne — swiftly proffered and gratefully received, from a silver salver no less — we peruse the bric-a-brac of countless generations of maharajahs and maharanis. Best known to us, were the last to reign before ruling rights were abolished in 1949: Man Singh and his third wife Gayatri Devi — he, the glamorous polo-playing jet-setter; she, whom Cecil Beaton called one of the 10 most beautiful women in the world. Among the many polo cups, the marble and crystal objects, a succession of portraits cover the royal gamut from King George and Queen Mary to Diana and Charles. An unfathomably long engraved Lalique dining table is framed by coloured mosaic windows, and beneath many silk sofas arranged throughout the length of the ballroom-size space, an ornate parquet floor is overlaid with luxury Indian rugs. And there, installed rather casually at the far end, a solid silver throne weighing many hundreds of pounds. One imagines it's very occasionally moved round the place, the royal equivalent of a barco-lounger in search of a suitable setting.

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The Maharajah's Silver Throne in the City Palace of Jaipur. The current monarch was adopted as heir in 2002 by his grandfather His Highness, First Amongst the Rajas of India, Lord of Princes, Great Prince over Princes, Lieutenant-General Sir Sawai Man Singhji Bahadur the Second, Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India, Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire, Maharajah of Jaipur.

Inside its thick walls, Jaipur is a fairy tale of domes, scalloped arches, verandas and lattices, rendered a pleasing oleander pink. One of the first planned cities in Asia, it was subsequently coloured by royalty for royalty in honour of the 1876 visit of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. Vibrant bazaars line its coral-coloured avenues and we sniff fresh cardamom and fragrant chilli, bargain spiritedly for silver jewelry and endless shawls, stopping occasionally to watch a cow or camel amble across a traffic-choked road – a very royal city that dances to the beat of its own snake charmers, another of Jaipur's hidden fascinations.

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