

SPACEY TOWN, ARTY B&B

[Finger Lakes, from L4] Ithaca Commons or one of the state parks, you can't help but stumble on a waterfall.

Ithaca is a laid-back, funky university town. Ithaca Commons, its downtown square, has recently had a major makeover that's created a wide pedestrian way with galleries, artisan shops, eclectic independent record and book stores, farm-to-table eateries and a farmers market.

I followed Sagan Planet Walk, a walkable scale model of the solar system winding through the city and named after Cornell astronomy professor Carl Sagan.

In homage to the late Sagan, artist Leo Villareal created "Cosmos," a spectacular public art installation on the ceiling of the sculpture court at Cornell's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art.

Using 12,000 LEDs on a gridded framework attached to the ceiling, swirling images of galaxies and creative light dance over your head and are best seen at night from the zero gravity bench below.

The art museum itself is a spectacular contemporary building designed by Chinese American architect I.M. Pei and houses wonderful exhibits. The bonus: a 360-degree view of surrounding lake country from the top floor.

I climbed the 161 steps up McGraw Tower and reached the top just in time for the Cornell Chimes concert when the tower's 21 bells are played primarily by student chimes masters several times daily.

Ithaca has dozens of excellent eateries, and I chose an institution, the vegetarian Moosewood Cafe, whose cookbooks were culinary bibles that got me through the 1970s. That's when I lived with a vegetarian, and there was precious little in the way of creative guidance.

After a day of Ithaca culture, it was a rare pleasure to return to Jupiter Hill B&B in the nearby village of Trumansburg, where I had the inn's gallery of fine American Impressionist paintings from the early 20th century all to myself.

I savored them slowly, sipping a chilled glass of Finger Lakes Riesling, of course.

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If you go

THE BEST WAY TO ROCHESTER, N.Y.

From LAX, Southwest offers direct service (stop, no change of planes) to Rochester, N.Y., and Delta, American, Southwest, United and JetBlue offer connecting service (change of planes). Restricted round-trip fares from \$429, including taxes and fees. The Finger Lakes region is about 40 minutes east of Rochester.

WHERE TO STAY

Vintage Gardens Bed & Breakfast, 310 High St., Newark, N.Y.; (877) 331-6045, www.vintagegardensbedandbreakfast.com. Elegant Tudor manor with formal gardens. Fall specials from \$115.

Belhurst Castle, 4069 W. Lake Road, Geneva, N.Y.; (315) 781-0201, www.belhurst.com. Spa, restaurant and winery on the grounds. Doubles from \$185.

Juniper Hill B&B: 16 Elm St., Trumansburg, N.Y.; (607) 387-3044 or (888) 809-3167, juniperhillbnb.com. Exquisite B&B with a collection of fine American Impressionist paintings. Doubles from \$209.

WHERE TO EAT

Upstairs Bistro at New York Wine & Culinary Center, 800 S. Main St., Canandaigua, N.Y.; (585) 394-7070, www.nywcc.com. A one-of-a-kind nonprofit with classes and tasting rooms.

Red Newt Cellars Winery & Bistro, 3675 Tichenor Road, Hector, N.Y.; (607) 546-4100, www.rednewt.com. Cozy bistro overlooking Seneca Lake.

WHAT TO DO

Harris Hill Soaring & National Soaring Museum, 51 Soaring Hill Road, Elmira, N.Y.; (607) 734-3128, www.soaringmuseum.org. To take a ride in a glider, go to www.harris-hillsoaring.org or call (607) 734-0641. \$96 per person for a 15- to 20-minute flight.

Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, 114 Central Ave., Ithaca, N.Y.; (607) 255-6464, www.museum.cornell.edu. Free; book in advance for excellent tours.

TO LEARN MORE

Finger Lakes Wine Country, www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com

Finger Lakes Tourism, www.fingerlakes.org



Photographs by KATHERINE RODEGHIER

THE HAWA MAHAL, built in 1799, gives visitors a grand view of Jaipur's Old Quarter from atop the five-story "Palace of Winds."

'PINK CITY' OF INDIA ENERGIZES

Jaipur, the nation's first planned city, is awash in color and history, with architecture that inspires.

By KATHERINE RODEGHIER

JAIPUR, India — "You, sir, get down now."

The incline proved too much for the elderly rickshaw bicyclist, so my hefty husband got out to push the rickety contraption through the old quarter of Jaipur.

Me? I sat like a maharani, passing the Hawa Mahal palace where ladies of the royal court once stood behind its small latticed windows to view the goings-on in the street below.

I had no such protection. Cars, overloaded buses and tuk-tuks roared past, horns blaring. A cow poked its nose at my elbow, its nostrils flaring.

Jaipur had burned in my imagination since colleagues raved about their visit decades earlier. Every article I read about its extraordinary architecture, every vivid picture I swooned over kept bumping it to the top of my bucket list.

When my daughter's career took her to New Delhi, I jumped at the chance to visit and make a side trip to Jaipur, about 160 miles southwest. I timed my visit for winter to avoid the dreary monsoons and unbearable heat of summer.

Photo buffs like me are drawn to the colors, patterns and exotic faces of India's "Pink City." Pink, the tourist brochures say, but more tangerine to my eye. The color is a soothing antidote to the gray grit of the streets, where the sweet fragrance of flower stalls mixes with diesel fumes from the nightmarish traffic.

Jaipur's walled city is the masterwork of Maharajah Jai Singh II, something of a child prodigy when he ascended to the throne at age 11. In 1727 he channeled his interest in architecture into the creation of this new capital for his kingdom, employing architect Vidyadhar Bhat-tacharya to design the first planned city in India.

The streets, laid out in a grid, were surrounded by high walls with nine ornate gates. In 1876 another maharajah painted the city pink, the color of hospitality, for the visit of Britain's Prince of Wales.

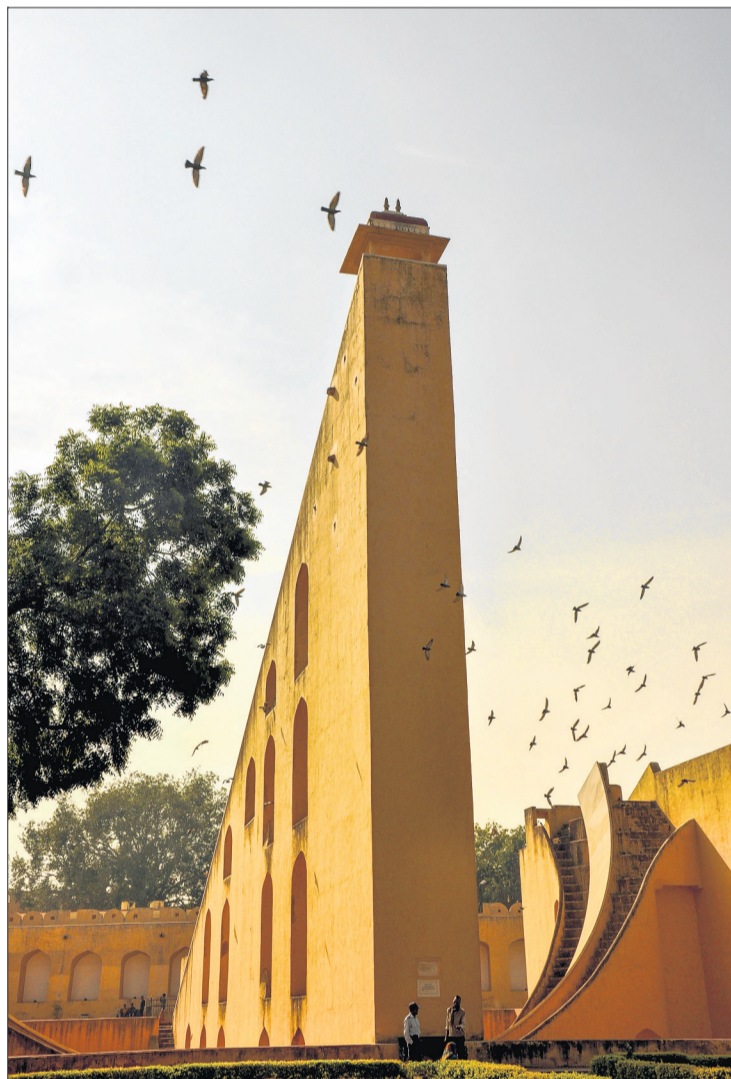
Major streets, such as the Tripolia Bazaar, are a swirl of activity with fruit and vegetable vendors as well as shops selling sweets, shoes, jewelry, handicrafts and saris silky to the touch.

Exploring history

Three of Jaipur's most important historical and architectural sites lie within the Pink City. All are within walking distance of one another and can be explored in a day — two for those, like me, who suffer from sensory overload.

Get an early start to avoid the midday heat and crowds. A combination ticket (about \$15.50 for adults, \$3.10 for students) good for two consecutive days includes admission to Jantar Mantar and Hawa Mahal, as well as the Amber Fort just outside the city.

The City Palace complex of buildings and courtyards, begun shortly after Jai Singh II moved his capital here in 1727, is a mix of



JANTAR MANTAR, built in the early 18th century, is the best preserved of five observatories built by Maharajah Jai Singh II.

Mughal and Rajput architecture. Members of the royal family live on the upper floors of the seven-story Chandra Mahal, but most of the City Palace is a museum exhibiting carpets, paintings, weaponry and royal costumes. Among the unusual objects are a pair of huge silver urns used to transport Ganges River water for the maharajah's use during his visit to London for the coronation of Edward VII in 1902.

Jantar Mantar, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is an early 18th century astronomical observatory. Its 20 main instruments were used to track the planets and stars, predict an eclipse, tell time and forecast monsoons.

It's the largest and best preserved of five observatories built by Jai Singh II; the objects spread across the outdoor site resemble monumental sculptures and works of architecture in masonry, marble and brass. The largest, the Samrat Yantra sundial, is 88 feet tall.

The pyramid-shaped facade of the pink sandstone Hawa Mahal, built in 1799, rises like the head-dress of a maharani. Its hundreds of carved lattice windows permitted women in purdah, the practice of shielding women from strangers, to observe street life without being seen and allowed cool breezes to flow into the courtyard behind it, giving it the nickname "Palace of Winds." Inside, stairs lead to the top of the narrow structure, where you can look out over Jaipur's Old Quarter. It now exhibits elements of Islamic and Hindu architecture.

The Amber Fort

Our driver rounded a bend in the hilly road and the Amber Fort appeared, its golden walls and tur-



Sources: Mapzen, OpenStreetMap
Los Angeles Times

rets stretching along a ridge. We shared the wow moment with others who pulled over to drink in the view reflected in Maota Lake. The fort is a popular day trip from Jaipur, less than seven miles away.

Even a snake charmer and his cobra couldn't distract us.

The fort, begun in 1592 by Man Singh I and enlarged by successive rulers for more than a century, was the royal family's home until overpopulation and water shortages forced it to move to Jaipur.

Getting inside requires decision-making. Climb the steep steps to the fort's Sun Gate, Suraj Pol, or make a grand entrance riding an elephant, a practice People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has sought to ban.

A third option, easy and politically correct, is by car through the town of Amer to the fort's Moon Gate, Chand Pol.

Each route ends at the entrance courtyard where the elephants parade, red cloths draping their backs.

Stairs lead through a succes-

If you go

THE BEST WAY TO JAIPUR, INDIA

From LAX, Jet Airways, Etihad, KLM, Qatar, British, China Southern, Virgin Atlantic, Cathay Pacific, Air Canada and Turkish offer connecting service (change of planes) to Jaipur. Restricted round-trip fares from \$1,059.

Hire a driver or book a taxi through your hotel. Take an auto rickshaw (tuk-tuk) for short trips, but carry small bills because drivers may claim they can't make change.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Arya Niwas, Sansar Chandra Road, behind Amber Tower, Jaipur; www.aryaniwas.com. Family-run hotel in a renovated haveli, or mansion, about three miles from City Palace. Doubles from \$38, including breakfast.

Hotel Diggi Palace, Diggi House, Shivaji Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur; www.hoteldiggi.com. Doubles from \$92.

Rambagh Palace, Bhawani Singh Road, Jaipur; lat.ms/rambaghpalace. Former palace of Maharajah Sawai Man Singh II. Doubles from \$663.

WHERE TO EAT

Baradari Mahal at Diggi Palace, Diggi House, Shivaji Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur; www.hoteldiggi.com. Rajasthan and continental fare served in a pillared pavilion; terrace seating overlooks lawn and courtyard. Mains about \$15.

LMB, LMB Hotel, Johari Bazar; Jaipur; www.hotellmb.com/restaurant.aspx. Vegetarian restaurant and sweet shop inside the Pink City offering a variety of ethnic cuisines. Mains \$3 to \$9.

Copper Chimney, Hotel Mayaa Mansion, M.I. Road, Jaipur; lat.ms/copperchimney. Continental and Indian dishes; mains \$7.50 to \$9.

TO LEARN MORE

Rajasthan Tourism, tourism.rajasthan.gov.in/jaipur

Government of India Tourist Office, 3550 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 204, Los Angeles; (213) 380-8855, la.indiatourism@gmail.com

sion of courtyards surrounded by red sandstone and marble structures built in a fusion of Rajput and Mughal styles.

Inside the Sheesh Mahal, or Mirror Palace, a single candle once illuminated the room covered with a mosaic of mirrors and glass. Attendants reclined on the carved pillars of the Sattais Katcheri colonnade while keeping tabs on the maharajah's fortune in record books.

The three-story Ganesh Pol, a gate leading to royal pleasure palaces, takes its name from the Hindu elephant god. From its top floors, the veiled queen would peer from its lattice windows awaiting her king.

No word whether he arrived by elephant.

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