

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

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KOREA
SEASON OF
COLORS

AUSTRALIA'S
GREAT BARRIER
REEF

*Cruises to the
heart of Asia*

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BOTTOMS UP
Craft cocktails around Asia

FROM LEFT: A Delhi taxi driver poses with his newly decorated cab; inside a taxi designed by visual artist Namrata Gosavi.



TRANSPORT

Tell-Tale Taxis

Stories of Indian cultural icons and human kindness are sewn into Mumbai's cabs through the Taxi Fabric social design project. BY GRACE MA

UNTIL RECENTLY, NO ONE GAVE A second glance at the ubiquitous *kaali peelis* (taxis) plying Mumbai's streets, but these days keen-eyed commuters are on the lookout for cabs with colorfully outfitted interiors depicting everyday stories of the city. Sanket Avlani, who now runs his own design consultancy, launched **Taxi Fabric** in April 2015, stitching together a platform to showcase local artists with £11,000 in Kickstarter funds. "I would take a taxi to work every day and wonder if the seat covers could be used as a

relevant, contemporary form that speaks to people," Avlani says.

From a black-and-white rendition of common household tessellations to playful sign language gestures that elicit peals of delighted laughter from deaf-mute children, the taxis loop passengers together with the heartbeat of the city. Artists submit their Mumbai-inspired concepts for review by the Taxi Fabric team before they are printed, cut, stitched and fitted into a vehicle, each of which bears a label with the story behind the print and the designer's

contact information. During the fabric installation, the taxi owner and driver are compensated for the loss of income during the two to four days the vehicle is off the road.

The project has spread to Delhi, where you'll find an homage to India's street food hawkers, and an auto rickshaw depicting the city's rich Mughal heritage in Van Gogh-like brush strokes. It takes a bit of luck to catch one of the three dozen designs, but soon 75 commissioned cabs in collaboration with Google India will roll out, each with six hand-painted posters of iconic Bollywood scenes. The fabrics are available for sale online too: stitches in time that bring vibrant India into your home. taxifabric.org. +



HOTEL

Breathe Deep

Inspired by monastic traditions, a new Burmese resort offers guests an idyllic sanctuary on Inle Lake. BY VERONICA INVEEN

Buddhist monks have retreated to the serene shores of Inle Lake for centuries to meditate and reconnect. With its quiet cloistered corridors and emphasis on simplicity, **Sanctum Inle Lake**, a new boutique near the stilted village of Maing Thauk, draws stylistic cues from such monastic life, but the designers have swapped asceticism for bright and lofty rooms with teak furnishings handcrafted by local artisans and suites with lake vistas. The resort commemorates contemplation, so when you're not taking walks by the water or exploring the ancient temples in Kakku, swing by the Sanctuary Spa for a Tamarind Scrub using pods harvested on the property, or go for a Burmese-brewed beer at The Cloister Bar. Even monks need to indulge once in awhile. sanctum-inle-resort.com; doubles from US\$284.