



WHERE TO STAY

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CNT EXCLUSIVE

AURIKA, UDAIPUR

Secret gardens and gorgeous sunrise views make this castle on the hill royally romantic, says **Andrea Pinto**. Photographs by **Rahulnath**

If there was a Rajasthani version of Ed Sheeran's "Castle on The Hill", Aurika, Udaipur would undoubtedly be its subject. This palatial hotel perched atop a hill gives you an incredible view of both Fateh Sagar Lake and Lake Pichola. Sajjan Garh, or the 'Monsoon Palace', shimmers from its vantage point nearby, and at night, it looks almost like a floating jewel in the sky.

Be it a winter wedding or a proposal, Aurika, Udaipur, is built for a romantic sojourn. About an hour from the airport, it's the first of Lemon Tree Hotels' upscale brands. With gilded arches, terraced gardens and elegant courtyards, the hotel is designed to emulate a Rajasthani palace. Traditional Shekhawati and pichwai paintings adorn the walls, and the courtyards are dotted in green. Frangipani, hibiscus, citronella and mogra in full bloom attract a host of birds and butterflies.

All 139 rooms face east, offering fabulous views of the sunrise over the lakes. The Aurika suite and the presidential suite have private plunge pools. The latter is also fitted with an open-air hot tub that's perfect for a soak at night with a glass of Champagne in hand.

For a big fat Indian wedding, this hotel is the perfect venue. The 5,500sqft pillarless ballroom, Ekaara, is great to host a sangeet or reception. Suryabagh and Chandbagh, the two courtyards, are ideal for a colourful mehendi ceremony.

You could also soak in the sun with a cocktail by the pool, enjoy Rajasthani folk performances over high tea at Amritbagh, or get those knots kneaded away at Araya, the spa. (Tip: whisk your friends away to Paheli Bagh, the 'secret' garden, for a sundowner. But you can only get here if you solve a riddle!)

As for the food, we advise leaving your diet behind. (And don't say no to that extra dollop of ghee.) From smoked salmon to laal maas, you get pretty much everything at Mirasa, the all-day restaurant. But what truly impress are the little nooks and corners at Aurika that can be transformed into private dining spaces. The chef's signature Royal Rajasthani Dinner is best enjoyed at The Baoli—an intimate space nestled in a stepwell that's perfect for a proposal. (I was told the hotel staff is fully prepared to hide a ring in a glass of Champagne, or maybe even in a kachori!) This dinner comes with lamb seekh kebabs, laal maas, gatta curry and dal panchmel, served with bajra and makki rotis. Also, spare some space for the churma ke laddu, kesar pista kheer and malai ghevar.

Finally, when the sun goes down is when Aurika really glows. With its illuminated arches, softly lit marble floors and pretty fountains, it's hard not to find a reason to fall in love here. [📍](#)

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Village Kalarohi, Sisarma, Udaipur (aurikahotels.com); doubles from ₹15,000

