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From the Editor's Desk:

A Happening Time at Heritage Trust

The last two years have been unprecedented in our lives with the surge of the pandemic that had us all confined to our homes and with bad news filling our lives. Just when we thought that Covid was behind us, came a new delta variant called Omicron that again sent us back to our homes. However, after every storm, there is also some good news and February this year saw the receding of the pandemic with an optimism that the worst is finally behind us,

No sooner did we find that life is going back to normal, our Heritage Trust unfolded a host of programs to showcase different aspects of Heritage in our city. From walks to exhibitions. we had something of interest for everyone. We bring you highlights of these events.

Our Viraasat Lecture will be held on April 16th which is World Heritage Day. Do mark your calendars and the announcement will reach you shortly. We look forward to welcoming you in person.

Enjoy the read and do join us for our future events!

Avi Sabavala

Makarpura Medley: Walk in Makarpura Industrial Area

We had originally planned the Makarpura Medley Walks for three Saturdays in January 2022. But with Covid cases on a sudden spurt, the event was postponed to February 26 and March 6. For a long while, I have been planning a Walk in our industrial areas as they generally get left out from the traditionally defined heritage zones. They are often on the outskirts of the city and unless they manufacture a product traditionally associated with the city or town (such as clocks and tiles in Morbi or sanitaryware in Thangadh), they do not feature on the heritage map of the city. The Makarpura GIDC was one of the oldest industrial estates to be mapped out in Gujarat. Supported actually and ideologically by the established industrialists of the city, the estate blossomed as ancillary and fabrication units but now has developed into large, full-fledged factories manufacturing everything under the Sun.

I discovered two interesting units whose products blended the traditional (or heritage) with the contemporary and would interest a wide range of participants. One was Bodhi, a textile design and printing studio established by NID alumni Mala and Pradeep Sinha, and the other was Rachaita, a fabrication unit that specialized in contemporary swings, run by two engineer brothers – Manish and Piyush Maheshwari. Bodhi uses the centuries-old method of printing on cloth with carved wooden blocks (they even had all the participants try their hand at block-printing themselves, having kept ready and ironed large-sized mulmul pieces, hemmed at the edges. The participants took them away as a memento of their visit!) They have been buying off blocks from old textile units that are closing as they cannot match the prices and quality of machine-printed and chemically-coloured fabrics. They have been recently awarded funding by the India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore, to document and archive these wooden blocks that are now part of the textile heritage of this country as block-printing was popular across several Indian states. Rachaita is taking forward the tradition of swings – outdoor and indoor – as pieces of furniture traditionally popular across India, but especially so in Gujarat, where the hichka was a must-have in family homes and were often beautifully carved, decorated with tiles, and whose backrest could be moved either way. While Rachaita makes contemporary swings with slick designs in wood and metal, they also have old swings in their collection. Heritage Trust also sourced many traditional home swings, cradles as well as one ornate Janmashtami jhoola for baby Krishna from an antique dealer in Ahmedabad that were borrowed for the Walk. These were also displayed at Rachaita.

We had decent attendance for both Walks. Priced at Rs. 500 per person, the Walk included a lunch at Makarpura's oldest and iconic watering hole, Lucky Restaurant. This was held between the two visits, where the group first spent time at Bodhi and the second half was at Rachaita. The fee also included a one-year membership to Heritage Trust!

Sandhya Gajjar



Glimpses from Makarpura Medley

Image Source: Sameer Gaikwad

Royal Lunch at Jambughoda Darbargadh

Heritage Trust has links with the Jambughoda Royal Family for many years. When they first started offering meals at the Darbargadh and slowly converting their existing guesthouse and stables into airy, well-appointed and comfortable rooms. It made a great difference to us at Heritage Trust when we were desperately trying to get Champaner-Pavagadh to be inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage Site listing. Those were the late 1990s and early 2000s. The road between Baroda and Champaner was narrow and rough, taking us almost two hours to get there. When we had to take important government and foreign guests there who would be helping us with the listing, it was difficult to manage lunch, the only option being the Gujarat Tourism canteen at Machi plateau on Pavagadh hill that served a decent Gujarati thali but the space would be hot and noisy. Jambughoda offered a good alternative as well as a clean place to freshen up when one was already out for a good 4-5 hours and working in the outdoors. Later, post the listing, when the Royal Rajasthan train for foreign tourists was extended to Gujarat (a Thomas Cook initiative), the tourists would be taken for a Champaner visit and come to Jambughoda for lunch. The family had then dug up its traditional recipes still remembered by their cooks and served those in crockery with the family crest.

Now, in the new season of the series, Raja, Rasoi aur Anya Kahaniya, filmed and screened on Epic Channel, the fresh episodes include one on Jambughoda. When I saw it a few Sundays back, I thought it was a good time to organize a Royal Jambughoda lunch for HT members. At Rs. 1200 per head, Bhavnadevi of Jambughoda worked out an excellent menu for 20 persons. The Lunch was organized for the morning of Sunday, March 13. We were 18 persons who drove down on a not-so-hot mid-morning, to discover owlets on the vast shady trees of the Darbargadh's driveway and the numerous family pets sauntering about. After a welcome chai, the group was ushered into the living room of the original ladies' quarter where they were addressed by the Royal family members regarding the family's traditions – especially of protecting the forests around Jambughoda and living in peace with the Rathwa tribal community, natives of that area. The TV episode on the family's cuisine traditions was screened as few people had seen it in its entirety. Lunch was served and enjoyed with much delight.

We are planning a repeat of this event sometime in end-April but for dinner, given the rising summer heat! So keep tuned!

Sandhya Gajjar



Top: Glimpses from Royal Lunch at Jambughoda Darbargadh
Image Source: Sameer Gaikwad

Gher Festival at Kavant

Kavant is a small town nestled in the district of Chota Udepur and is 80 kms from Baroda. Being a predominantly Tribal area with a large population of Bhils and Rathwas, it is an interesting place for anyone interested in exploring the varied tribal life in our country. The town comes alive when two days after the festival of colors – Holi, the Gher Festival takes place.

The word “Gher” refers to the Gherasyas - the Rathwa men who come out in their finery with an intent to woo a life partner. Tradition has it that a young man sees a girl of his dreams and offers her a paan and if she accepts it, it indicates that she has reciprocated her interest and is willing to accept the man as her life partner. An interesting and very simple way for young people to find their soul mates as against the common custom of arranged marriages in our country.

It is good to arrive early to see how things warm up for the day and before the hordes of city folks arrive. The young Bhils painted black and armed with bows and arrows – the weapons of a bygone era, will dance before you with an expectation of being rewarded monetarily. So, you do need to carry enough notes of Rs. 10/- On the other hand, the Rathwas will come out in a procession with traditional trumpets heralding their arrival and very clad in colourful attire.

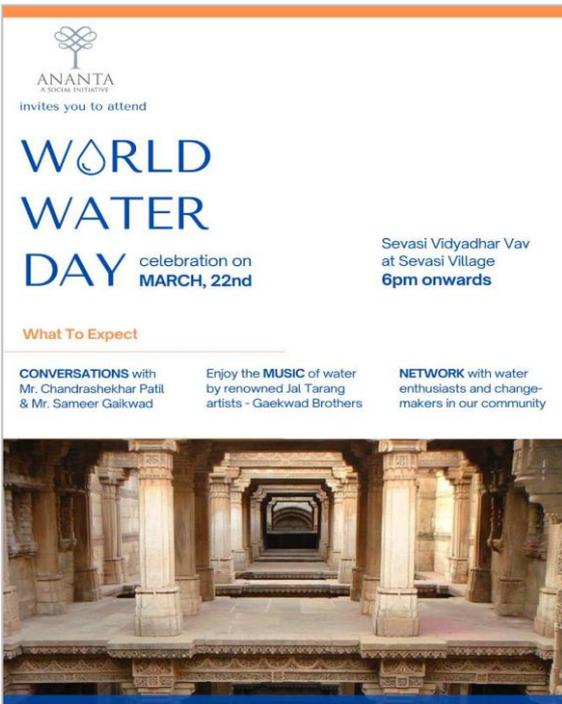
A word of caution here- avoid carrying too much cash or valuables. With the surging crowds around midday, there are pickpockets eyeing the unsuspecting tourist with an aim of making hay. However, that being the only concern, it is an exciting experience to enjoy the music, dance, clothes and above all the joie de vivre of a festival.

For photographers or anyone interested in documenting a festival or just a curious onlooker, it's a unique experience that showcases the colours, traditions and customs of our unique tribes. So do go ahead and mark your diaries for the season of Holi 2023!

Avi Sabavala



Right : Glimpses from the Gher Festival
Source : Avi Sabavala



World Water Day @ Sevasi Vaav

Ananta Foundation held an awareness event at the Sevasi Stepwell (popularly known as the Vidyadhar Vav) on 22 March, celebrated as the World Water Day.

The foundation has adopted the Stepwell for two years and will be carrying out its regular cleaning and upkeep. They intend to make that space more meaningful and useful to the public at large by holding events there from time to time.

To kick start the process they had organized beautification of the entire Stepwell premises by lighting lamps and flower garlands. Sweet Jal-Tarang music accompanied by melodious strains of the Shehnai by the Gaekwad Brothers made the occasion truly festive.

Mr. Chandrashekhar Patil spoke about the importance of conservation of ground water and how the old city planners ensured there is ample percolation avenues. Our Heritage Trust, Vice President - Mr. Sameer Gaikwad spoke about how the Stepwells were an inclusive part of life in the arid regions of Western & Central India. He also gave a brief overview about the state of dilapidated Stepwells in & around Vadodara and how efforts are being made via a citizens initiatives to document them on a web-portal (www.Stepwells.org).

Sameer Gaikwad

Left & Top : Glimpses from the World Water Day Event @ Sevasi Vaav
Source : Sameer Gaikwad

Become a member

As a non-profit, we rely on your support as our member and encourage you to send more heritage enthusiasts our way.

Patron Member

Rs. 100,000

Donor Member

Rs. 25,000

Life Member

Rs. 5,000

5 Year Member

Rs. 500

Corporate Patron

Member

Rs. 2,00,000

Corporate Donor

Member

Rs. 50,000

Corporate Member Rs.

25,000 / year

Have an idea you would like to explore?

Want to collaborate or organize an event virtually?

Get in touch with us!



Heritage Humor : In search of Roots...



cordially invites you to the

VIRAASAT LECTURE HERITAGE & US : WHAT CITIZENS CAN DO

by
Aishwarya Tipnis

Saturday, April 16th, 2022,
6:00 pm Onwards
(High-tea - Lecture - Publication release)

Venue : Star of the South,
LVP Banquets,
Vadodara

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Event Supported by :



Viraasat Lecture – Heritage and Us : What Citizens Can Do
By Aishwarya Tipnis

Publications

Looking for books as gifts? The Trust has published more than half a dozen books, four of which have been on Pavagadh. Three other books on Baroda, one of which is for children, and is still available in print. These would make great corporate gifts in the coming festive season.

Available:

Once Upon a Time...there was Baroda- Rs. 3000/- copy

Children's book on Baroda (Gujarati) - Rs. 20/copy

Future Events:

We hope to come back with physical events soon, but till then we will be planning for online lectures- look out for announcements on our social media!