

Is a coffee table book written by our very own Bob Rupani

TEXT: PARTH CHARAN

# INDIA'S 100 BEST DESTINATIONS



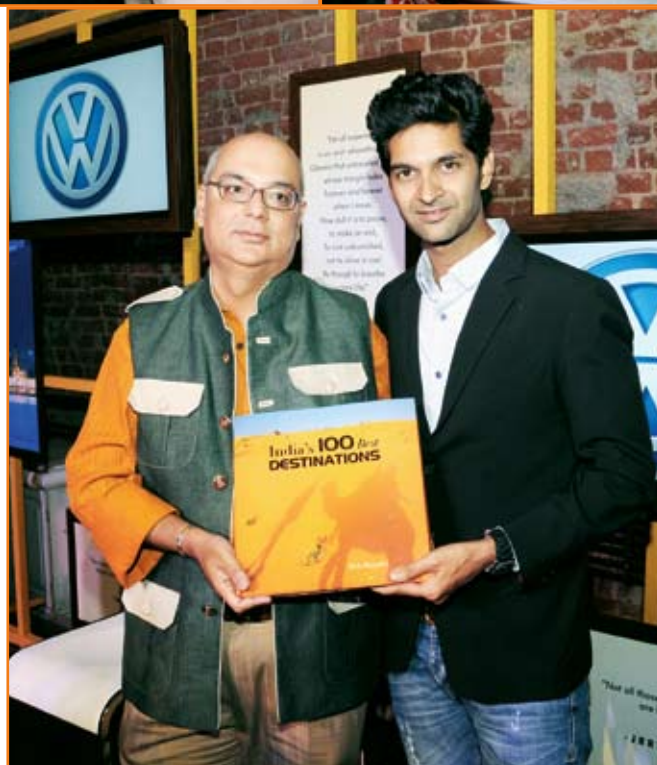
is based on the first-hand experiences of its author Bob, who has driven over a million kilometres in India in the last 25 years.

**Book Review:** Bob Rupani's book has you traverse around a hundred spots that have been



BOB RUPANI'S BOOK "INDIA'S 100 Best Destinations" was released recently at a glittering function hosted in Mumbai by Volkswagen India. The book was unveiled by actor Niel Nitin Mukesh and the MC for the evening was actor Purab Kohli. Also present on stage were Lutz Kothe, Head of Marketing & PR and Arvind Saxena, Managing Director, Volkswagen Passenger cars. Amongst the other fashionable guests were actor Rahul Singh, renowned photographer Vikram Bawa, India's original rock star Gary Lawyer and Shailendra Singh of Percept Media House – to name a few.

This book has been done in association with Volkswagen and



amongst the several visitations that he has made in his wanderings as a motoring journalist. Not given to pamphleteering for even a moment the book is flourished with a nuanced cross section of the country's truly enchanting topography, uncovering a fringe culture alongside the more prominent geological flashpoints in the cultural conglomerate that is India. Like every travel guide there is an element of escapism in it which is helped by the text being carpet-bombed with pixel-heavy imagery that has you transfixed at the turn of every page. Ironically enough, the book's coffee table guise becomes almost self-defeating, for the masterful camera work and personal detail added here make it impossible to do it justice with a quick off-the-shelf viewing that most books of its ilk might be subject to. Each destination has an author's note in the form of a tip almost as a surreptitious afterthought allowing the gift of revelation to a more diligent readership.

There is enough detail here to transform the book into a starter kit for the backpacker,

the gap year student or the vacationer basking in the exoticism of the hinterland before heading back to all the trappings of European self-indulgence. The text is loaded with asides and minutiae that only a native would be privy to, and that's exactly where the book surpasses itself. In its welcome unconventionality it captures the eccentricities, the hilarity and the fascinating approach to existence that has come to define local ways after being put on a collision course with colonial influences. Though the text is entrenched with a marrow-deep love for travel, it's courteous enough not to have done all the travelling for you, the tantalizing photography teasing you just enough to fill even the most dedicated armchair traveller with an urge to replace his compressed cushions with the tan leather seats of his car and set off. Bob's own personal automotive inclinations notwithstanding it becomes clear as he goes meandering deeper into the fissures of the landscape why, for very tangible reasons

cars are the best way to travel. At no point does a need for deeper pockets appear encoded in the text, the book doesn't liaise itself with the notion that one needs monetary cushioning or imperial origins to satisfactorily absorb the atmospheric graft – the book is an unbiased adjudicator of India's finest touristic offerings – whether they be heritage hotels or home stays – a carousel having captured under its moniker, the best view of the country. There's a symphonic co-existence between words and imagery, each giving the other enough leeway to work its particular brand of magic.

The foreword of the book is written by H H Maharaja Gajsinghji of Jodhpur-Marwar and he says: "Bob has travelled all over India and few people know our country as well as him. Every time I meet him he tells me about some new destinations, many that I have never heard of – even in my own state Rajasthan. The style of writing is friendly and succinct and what I particularly like is that the book is illuminated with outstanding photographs".

India's 100 Best Destinations is distributed by Media Star and available in leading book stores. One can also purchase it online on [www.flipkart.com](http://www.flipkart.com).

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