

CHHOTA HAAZRI BY THE RAJBARI BAWALI IS A PEACEFUL, TRANQUIL, AND ROMANTIC GETAWAY IN THE HILLS. t2 SOAKED IN THE VIBES

Last week, we took a scenic detour from Ghoom Railway Station and after driving for 30 minutes, reached a heavenly spot hiding in the gardens of the Mim Tea Estate — Chhota Haazri by The Rajbari Bawali. For someone whose first hill station was Darjeeling at nine years of age, Chhota Haazri situated in Sukhiapokhari

swapt me off my feet. While the luxurious property is located an hour away from Darjeeling where the key attractions like Tiger Hills, Peace Pagoda and Rock Garden await you, what is more impressive is the peace, the privacy and homeliness the resort offers its guests. Away from the bustling noises of tourists, Chhota Haazri is the perfect getaway for couples,

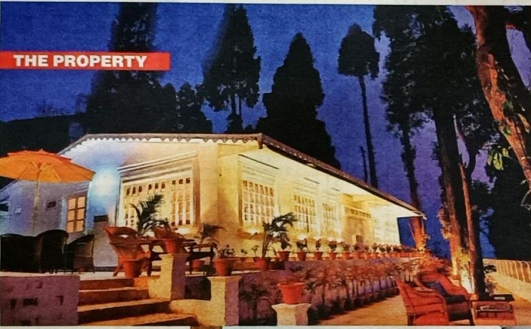
families and friends.

We boarded the Darjeeling Mail from Sealdah Railway Station and reached New Jalpaiguri Station within 10 hours. After a refreshing cup of chai and almost four hours on the road, we needed in the comfort of Chhota Haazri. With four distinctive suites in two bungalows, the property is far from a commercial hotel and is

more of a picturesque escape. The best part is undoubtedly the view of the Kancheenjuga that is visible from every room and almost all corners of the resort. Additionally, the romantic gardens and the building made in British architecture has a chic yet warm charm to it.

Today what we know as bed tea, was known to hostellers in the 90s as *chhota haazri*,

which literally converts to small attendants but meant a small breakfast right before heading for daily chores. The owners being hostellers themselves, reminisce their childhood in hostels and the cosy fulfillment that *chhota haazri* gave them. After staying at the property for three wondrous days, we believe it is an experience that must be cherished by all.



THE PROPERTY
Surrounded by pine trees, seated at the top of Mim Tea Estate and engulfed in a revitalising chilly weather, Chhota Haazri by The Rajbari Bawali is a sight to behold both during sunrise and sunset.

Several seating options available across the property gives you space to breathe, relax and recuperate. When you do all that with a stunning view of the Kancheenjuga, it is a memory for a lifetime and a place you want to revisit. We noticed that all the tables around the bungalows have unique centrepieces which are decked up with the prettiest mountain flowers.



INTERIORS



Known as the Glass Room, this is the living area that awaits you right after you step inside the Macgregor Suite. While the interiors have a soothing colour palette, candles, artistic lamps and bewitching chandeliers keep the ambience comfy and classic.



Both bungalows are well equipped with dining tables and study tables which have books of multiple genres. If you are there just to chill, choose a book off the racks and curl up with one in your room or the snug living area.



On entering the second bungalow, the Mackenzie Suite, a pastel mood board greets you with hints of history. The walls are adorned with a number of framed pictures from the archives. From Lipton Tea Company to the feats achieved by Tenzing Norgay, history is kept alive in the property which has furniture that is older than a century.



Stepping into the rooms feels like stepping into a secluded paradise of your own. With room heaters in every room and living area, you will want to give in to the dire urge of hopping inside the soft covers and snuggling up to your loved one.



All the rooms have a different palette but the comfort remains the same. Chandeliers and lamps that are aesthetic and mellow add to the old-English charm of the rooms. Quick and efficient room service is also available throughout the day. The maximum occupancy of the entire property is about 10 people.



All the rooms are equipped with a queen-sized bed and offers complimentary essentials. We loved the availability of Darjeeling, Assam, oolong and white tea bags in our rooms.



An old typewriter enhancing the quiet vintage vibe of the place. Interestingly, the lamp in the picture is actually made out of an old cooker found by the owner who is an antiquarian.

We admire the little details in the space like this collector's item bookshelf with some books, antique pieces and a chair.



THE VIEW

The gorgeous view of the Kancheenjuga outside Chhota Haazri is a rioting and magical sight to wake up to in the morning. I would have definitely worked more daily if that is the view I woke up to every day!

THINGS TO DO



The barbeque was lit but the décor that accompanied it was a picture for the album. Alongside old wooden boxes dated to 1906, the candlesticks had a royal feel about them. With almost all kinds of alcohol available, we tried the Campari with gin and the easy winner choice, rum and Coke but this time with warm water.



You can also avail a tea-tasting session at the estate. We tried green tea, oolong tea, white tea, black orthodox tea and Moondrop tea. The Moondrop tea is sold at a wholesale rate of a whopping Rs 32,000 per kg!



You can also enjoy this gorgeous spread by opting for the English brunch with an enchanting view of the Kancheenjuga. We went non-veg on sausages, creamy corn, big beans, fruits, bacon strips, freshly squeezed juice with cappuccino.



The Mim Tea Estate is spread over hundreds of hectares and hugs Chhota Haazri. On a morning where the sun peeps out, a walk through the gardens while wearing the right shoes is a delightful experience.



You can also follow the trail to Rangeer River and the industrious staff from Chhota Haazri will arrange a picnic or bonfire on the rocky banks with the spread of your choice. They will also accompany you for safety measures.

FOOD & BEVERAGE



The Chicken in Mixed Vegetables was a spicy appetiser that was delicious. The scrumptious freshness of mountain veggies enhanced the flavour.



This simple combination of Veg Noodles and Chilli Chicken was fulfilling and tasted like home in a bite.



The Eggs Kejriwal was an easy favourite for us. It is a simple dish that comes with a toast topped with a runny sunny-side-up along with chillies, coriander and tomatoes. This dish has origins in Mumbai where Devi Prasad Kejriwal asked the chef at Willingdon Sports Club to make a dish of his preference and reordered it several times.



On one of the evenings, the lovely staff at Chhota Haazri whipped up a barbeque night. We enjoyed the Chicken Tandoori with the mandatory green chutney and also roasted chicken strips and mushrooms on our own.



After a walk outside, the Chicken Sweet Corn Soup in a warm room was a savour in the chilly weather.



The banana custard was a dessert we relished.

For reservations: Call +91 33-41800305

Sanjali Brahma
Pictures: B Haider and Chhota Haazri

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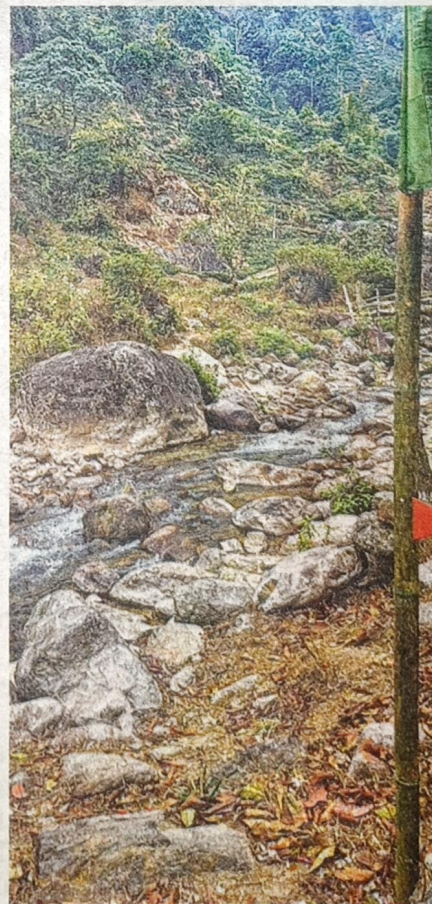
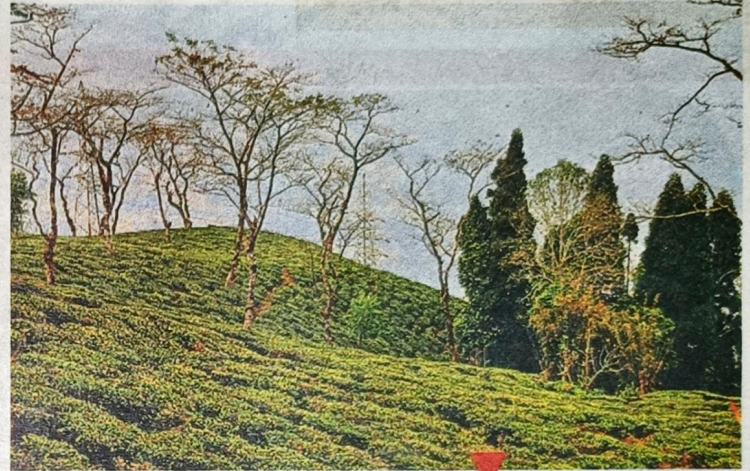
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