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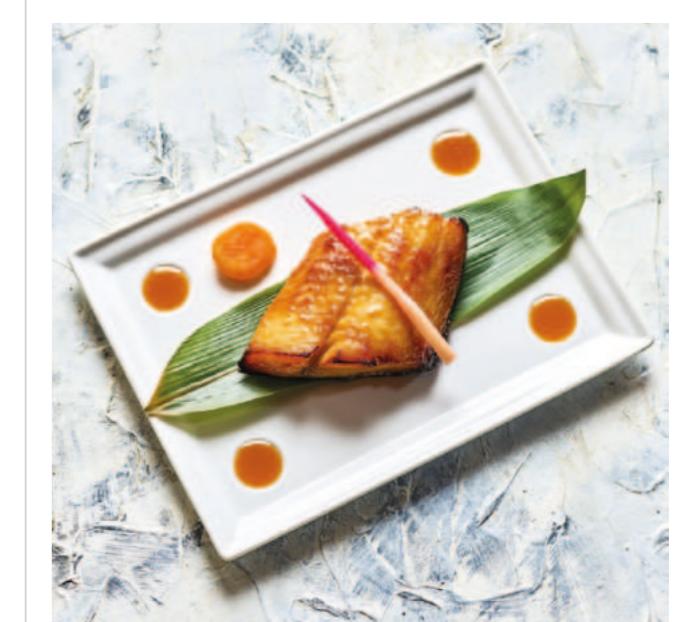


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6, RNA Classic Apartment, North Avenue Road, Santa Cruz West, Mumbai - 400054 | +91 9930735750, 022-26055580, 022-65765599

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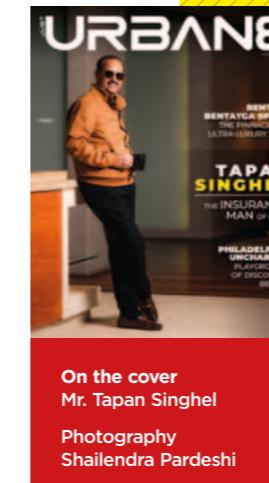
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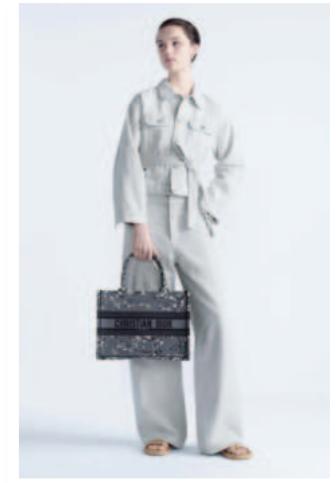


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# THE FRONT

AUGUST 2025



PRIVATE JETS,  
HELICOPTER  
CHARTERS, FLYING  
SPITFIRES, AND  
CUSTOM AVIATION  
ITINERARIES  
ARE NO LONGER  
OUTLIERS —  
THEY'RE PART  
OF THE URBANE  
LIFESTYLE  
NARRATIVE.

## Elevated Living, Evolved Tech

From soaring skies and private jets to cutting-edge innovations and flagship tech, this issue of Just Urbane is your passport to the evolving world of tech, luxury and lifestyle. Discover exclusive reviews, bold fashion, visionary voices, and wise living essentials — curated for the modern gentleman who lives fast, thinks smart, and travels in style.

In a world that is moving faster than ever — where jet engines hum more frequently and billionaires continue to rise in number — Just Urbane remains your window into the refined blend of lifestyle and innovation. This issue delves into the soaring realm of Lifestyle Aviation, offering fascinating insights into the luxury skies: over 1,700 private jets in India alone, with ownership growing at a rate of 16% annually, and elite travel experiences redefining modern status. Helicopter charters, flying Spitfires, and custom aviation itineraries are no longer outliers — they're part of the urbane lifestyle narrative.

This month's Tech-Life is equally bold. From Apple's revolutionary iOS redesign and CarPlay Ultra, to Samsung's big unveil at Galaxy Unpacked, innovation is accelerating in ways that influence not just how we work, but how we live. Our flagship product reviews showcase the versatile Haier Refrigerator, the powerhouse Dell XPS 14, and the bold Lenovo Legion Tab — each reflecting smart engineering in sleek aesthetics.

In addition, we take a deep dive into the Nothing Phones, Vivo Fold, OnePlus' latest launch, and lifestyle tech that's making everyday life smarter — from the Dreame X40 Robo Vacuum, Philips Party Speaker, Jabra PanaCast 20, and more. Also featured are the formidable Alienware 16 Aurora, audiophile-grade Sennheiser HD

550 Headphones, the performance-driven Legion Pro 7i, and the cinematic brilliance of the Samsung 8K TV flagship, setting new benchmarks in immersive tech experiences.

Our Cover Story features Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz, whose vision connects risk, resilience, and aspiration in today's evolving world. In our Future Mobility feature, Subind Kumar of Sandisk India explores Vehicle-to-Vehicle Communication and what lies ahead for innovative transport ecosystems.

This issue also brings global luxury to your doorstep — from Bentley's Bentayga Speed to the BMW X7, and the evocative Royal Enfield Bear 650. Our fashion spread showcases Fall Collections for men and women, featuring curated selections from Gucci and other renowned brands. And if you're planning a summer escape, our editorial journey takes you from Urbane Luxury and E&O Kuala Lumpur to open-air joyrides and stylish city retreats in Philadelphia.

Here's to intelligent indulgence, high living, inspired tech, and timeless style. —

Welcome to the new Urbane. □

Happy reading!

Abhishek Kulkarni

Chairman & MD

Urbane Media Network Private Limited

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**Publisher**  
Abhishek Kulkarni

**Editorial Enquiries**  
[editorial@justurbane.in](mailto:editorial@justurbane.in)

**Head of Content**  
Chahat Dalal

**Operations Head and Creative Director**  
Jatin Joshi

**Contributing Editors**  
Benjamin Gracias  
Auto & Tech  
Chris Parry  
Travel & Lifestyle

**Guest Writer**  
Subind Kumar  
Vice-President and Country Manager, Sandisk

**Contributors**  
Dr. Shashi Tharoor  
Suhel Seth  
Luke Coutinho  
Jamie Walker  
Surabhi Sehgal  
Ranvir Brar  
Areli Paz  
Andre Rodrigues  
Ajitesh Singaria  
Shailendra Pardeshi  
Himanshu Pandey

**Creative & Social**  
[creativeteam@justurbane.in](mailto:creativeteam@justurbane.in)

**Jr. Graphic Designer**  
Madhura Kulkarni

**Photographers**  
Prathmesh Patle  
Jasmeet Kohli  
Manya Sharma

**Social Media - Executive**  
Disha Choudhary

**Advertising & Promotions**  
[sales@justurbane.in](mailto:sales@justurbane.in)

**Logistics enquiries**  
[subscriptions@justurbane.in](mailto:subscriptions@justurbane.in)

**HR & Finance**  
[hr@urbaneluxury.com](mailto:hr@urbaneluxury.com)

**HR Manager**  
Priyanka Chobhe

**Jr. Accountant**  
Chaitanya Joshi

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**email:** [contact@justurbane.in](mailto:contact@justurbane.in)

## INSIDE

*Discover the latest in tech life: foldables, gaming beasts, and audio gear redefining innovation and style.*



**SAMSUNG ELEVATES FOLDABLES WITH SLEEK AI PAIR**

Ultra-thin design meets intelligent FlexWindow.

Samsung's latest foldable duo—the Galaxy Z Fold7 and Z Flip7—sets a new benchmark in smartphone innovation. The Galaxy Z Fold7 is now the company's slimmest foldable yet, measuring just 4.2 mm when unfolded and 8.9 mm folded, and tipping the scale at a mere 215g. Built with a refined Armor FlexHinge and lightweight materials, it also introduces a powerful 200 MP main camera paired with the ProVisual Engine. New AI-powered tools like Generative Edit and Circle to Search enhance both creativity and productivity.

In parallel, the Galaxy Z Flip7 refines portability with performance. It features an expanded 4.1" edge-to-edge FlexWindow and a 6.9" main display, now supported by Galaxy AI innovations like Gemini Live and real-time filters. At just 188g, the device includes a 4,300 mAh battery and adds support for Samsung DeX. Together, the Z Fold7 and Z Flip7 blend intelligent design with cutting-edge features—pushing the boundaries of the foldable experience.

---

> **HIGHLIGHTS:** Slimmest Fold yet, 200MP camera, Snapdragon 8 Elite, AMOLED display, 2,600 nits brightness, advanced AI, and Android 16.  
 > Fold 7: ₹1,86,999 > Flip 7: ₹1,21,999 > Flip FE 7: ₹95,999 | [www.samsung.com/in](http://www.samsung.com/in)




#### ULTRA COMFORT

Smarter health companion

Samsung's Galaxy Watch 8 series debuts as a refined blend of comfort and intelligence. Featuring an 11% thinner cushion design and a new dynamic lug system, the watches offer all-day wearability—even during sleep or intense workouts. Key health upgrades include Bedtime guidance, vascular Load measurement, and the first-ever antioxidant index, delivering personalized wellness insights. Powered by Gemini AI and Wear OS 6, the Watch 8 series also introduces energy score tracking and hands-free routines for today's wellness-focused lifestyle.

₹59,999 | **Galaxy Watch Ultra**  
[www.samsung.com/in](http://www.samsung.com/in)

**NOTHING PHONE (3) REDEFINES FLAGSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Nothing reinvents the flagship with creative precision.

Nothing has unveiled its most ambitious product yet—the Phone (3). Marking its entry into the flagship segment, Phone (3) brings together performance, design, and smart interaction to deliver a truly unique user experience.

Designed over two years, Phone (3) features the all-new Glyph Matrix, a micro-LED interface on the rear that reduces screen time by showing essential notifications and app indicators. Its refined design includes uniform bezels, IP68 rating, and a bold tri-column layout inspired by modern architecture.

Under the hood, it runs on the Snapdragon 8s Gen 4 chip, offering 36% faster CPU, 88% improved GPU, and advanced AI capabilities. The phone sports a 6.67" AMOLED display, 5500mAh battery, and 4K 60fps video recording across all lenses.

Running Android 15 with Nothing OS 3.5, it brings AI-powered features like Essential Space and Flip to Record. across major retailers.

---

> **HIGHLIGHTS:** Snapdragon 8s Gen 4, 6.67" AMOLED, 5500mAh battery, Glyph Matrix, 4K video, Android 15, IP68, 65W charging, AI tools.  
**Nothing Phone 3: ₹79,999** | [in.nothing.tech](http://in.nothing.tech)






### VIVO X FOLD5 DEBUTS IN INDIA WITH BIG BATTERY AND PRO CAMERAS

Ultra-slim foldable with power-packed internals

Vivo has officially introduced the X Fold5 in India, bringing its slimmest and lightest foldable yet to the market. Weighing just 217 grams and measuring 4.3mm when unfolded, the X Fold5 prioritizes both form and function.

At its core is the Snapdragon 8 Gen 4 Mobile Platform, paired with 16GB RAM and up to 512GB storage, offering top-tier performance. The foldable features a stunning 8.03-inch inner AMOLED display and a 6.53-inch outer AMOLED screen, both with 120Hz refresh rates for smooth visuals.

Photography gets a professional edge with a ZEISS-backed triple rear camera system, including a 50MP VCS True Color Main Camera. Vivo has also packed in a massive 6000mAh BlueVolt battery, supported by 80W wired and 40W wireless fast charging. Available in a sleek Titanium finish, the Vivo X Fold5 also introduces advanced heat management and multitasking features like Multi-Window and Hover mode. The Ultra-Durable Seiko Hinge ensures smooth folding over 500,000 times. With a premium build, flagship internals, and imaging prowess, Vivo's foldable sets a new benchmark in the category.



**> HIGHLIGHTS:** Snapdragon 8 Gen 2, 8.03" inner AMOLED, ZEISS 50 MP camera, 6000 mAh battery, 80W charging, IPX8/IPX4 durability, weighs only 219g. **₹1,49,999 |** [www.vivo.in](http://www.vivo.in)



### VIVO X200 FE

Capture. Create. Charge

The X200 FE is a compact yet powerful flagship designed for users who value both performance and portability. Built around a 6.31-inch AMOLED LTPO display with up to 120Hz refresh rate and 5000 nits peak brightness, the phone delivers vivid visuals in a slim 7.9mm body.

At its core is the Dimensity 9300+ chipset, enabling top-tier performance and power efficiency. The highlight, however, is its ZEISS co-engineered camera system, headlined by a 50MP telephoto lens capable of up to 100x zoom, offering advanced features like ZEISS Multifocal portrait and Magic Eraser tools. Fueling it all is a massive 6500mAh battery supported by 90W FlashCharge, ensuring long use with minimal downtime. With IP68 and IP69 ratings for water and dust resistance, the X200 FE blends premium durability, pro-level imaging, and powerful specs in a sleek, user-friendly package.

**₹54,999 |** [www.vivo.in](http://www.vivo.in)



### ALIENWARE 16 AURORA DEBUTS

Engineered for play anywhere

Dell Technologies and Alienware have launched the Alienware 16 Aurora, a powerful, portable gaming laptop. Designed for on-the-go gamers, it features Intel Core (Series 2) processors, NVIDIA GeForce RTX 50 Series GPUs, and Cryo-Chamber thermal architecture for superior cooling. With a sleek Interstellar Indigo finish, a 16" WQXGA 120Hz display, Dolby Audio, and Wi-Fi 7, the Aurora offers immersive performance anywhere. It starts at ₹1,29,990 and will be available via [dell.com](http://dell.com), and retail partners.

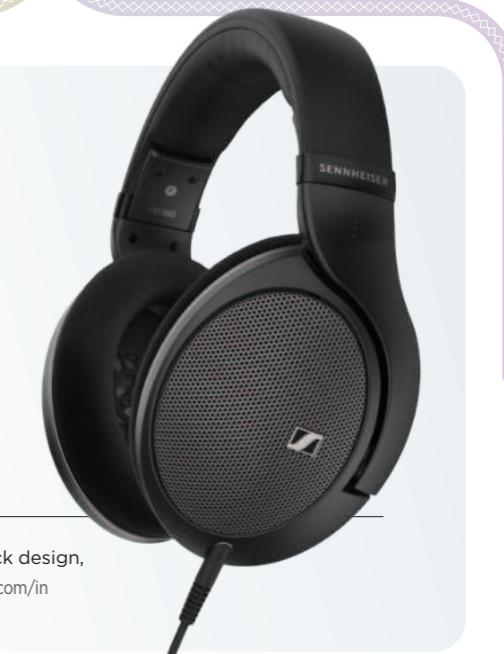
**> HIGHLIGHTS:** Intel Core 7 CPU, RTX 5060 GPU, 16" WQXGA 120Hz display, Cryo-Chamber cooling, Wi-Fi 7, DDR5 RAM. **₹1,32,789 |** [www.dell.com/en-in](http://www.dell.com/en-in)

### NORD POWER

Speed meets style

OnePlus unveils the new Nord 5, blending premium performance with iconic design. Powered by the Snapdragon 7+ Gen 3 chipset, it features a 1.5K AMOLED display, ultra-slim bezels, and a massive 5500mAh battery. With 100W SUPERVOOC charging and a sleek glass back, the Nord 5 delivers flagship-level experience at an accessible price point.

**₹31,999 |** [www.oneplus.in](http://www.oneplus.in)



### SENNHEISER HD 550 HEADPHONES

Lightweight design, audiophile-grade sound clarity

Sennheiser has introduced the HD 550, a hi-fi headphone crafted for discerning audiophiles and immersive gamers. With a featherlight build of just 237g, it offers expansive stereo imaging and superb detail via a custom 38mm transducer. The fully open-back design ensures rich spatial awareness and crystal-clear sound across 6 Hz-39.5 kHz, with under 0.2% distortion. Ideal for extended use, its modular setup supports broad device compatibility.

**> HIGHLIGHTS:** Custom 38mm transducers, 6Hz-39.5 kHz frequency range, open-back design, modular build, 237g weight, 1.8m cable with 3.5mm jack. **Price on request |** [www.karcher.com/in](http://www.karcher.com/in)

**SPEED ELEGANCE**

Racing meets refinement in mobile

Realme's new GT 7 Dream Edition, co-designed with Aston Martin Aramco F1 Team, hits India from June 13 at ₹39,999. Based on the GT 7 flagship with MediaTek Dimensity 9400e, the limited-edition phone sports a Racing Green finish, sculpted aerodynamic lines, and a silver wing emblem etched in 0.1 mm grooves. The collaboration spans three years with two new co-branded releases annually.

₹39,999 | [www.realme.com/in](http://www.realme.com/in)

**OMNI POWER**

AI-enhanced PC for hybrid living

HP has launched the OmniStudio X, a 32-inch All-in-One PC packed with next-gen AI features. Powered by Intel Core Ultra, Intel Arc graphics, and 47 TOPS NPU performance, it blends power and intelligence for modern professionals. It includes a 4K display, AI-driven Poly Camera Pro, ergonomic stand. Features like adaptive audio, screen wellness tools, and seamless device integration make it ideal for hybrid lifestyles.

> HIGHLIGHTS: 32" 4K display, Intel Core Ultra, 47 TOPS NPU, Intel Arc graphics, 32GB DDR5 RAM, Poly Camera Pro, adaptive audio, ergonomic stand, HDMI-In/Out. ₹1,79,999 | [www.hp.com/in](http://www.hp.com/in)

**LEGION UNLEASHED**

OLED visuals. RTX 5090 power.

Lenovo has launched its flagship gaming laptop, the Legion Pro 7i, in India, setting new standards in portable gaming. Designed for esports professionals and creators, it features up to an Intel® Core Ultra 9 HX processor and NVIDIA GeForce RTX 5090 GPU. With a 16" WQXGA PureSight OLED display, 275W thermal design, and AI-powered performance tuning, this machine balances speed, style, and cooling. Gamers benefit from Legion Space, an all-in-one software hub, plus enhanced audio from Nahimic by SteelSeries.

> HIGHLIGHTS: Intel Ultra 9 HX, RTX 5090 GPU, 16" OLED, 275W TDP, AI Engine+, Legion Space, RGB. ₹2,39,999 | [www.lenovo.com/in](http://www.lenovo.com/in)

**KÄRCHER INDIA UNVEils LOCAL MILESTONE**

First ride-on scrubber drier manufactured in Coimbatore

Kärcher India celebrates 90 years of innovation with a major milestone—locally manufacturing its first ride-on scrubber drier, the B 90 R Classic Bp, in Coimbatore. Engineered for Indian conditions, it promises faster delivery, lower maintenance, and smarter cleaning for malls, warehouses, and more. With this, Kärcher reinforces its Make in India commitment and aims to become a hub for cleaning innovation. This launch marks a bold step towards efficiency, sustainability, and local excellence.

> HIGHLIGHTS: 90L tanks, interchangeable brushes, low maintenance, intuitive controls, made for India. Price on request | [www.karcher.com/in](http://www.karcher.com/in)

**ULTRA-VIVID 8K FLAGSHIP**

Samsung's AI-Fueled Mini-LED Masterpiece

Samsung India has unveiled the flagship QN950F Neo QLED 8K—an 85" marvel launched April 28, 2025—leading its Vision AI-powered premium TV lineup. It combines Quantum Matrix Technology Pro's ultra-fine Mini-LED dimming with Color Booster Pro and Glare-Free coating for stunning clarity in bright environments. Driven by the NQ8 AI Gen3 processor with 768 neural networks, it delivers adaptive AI Upscaling Pro, AI Mode (optimizes picture and sound in real-time), and immersive audio via Q-Symphony and Dolby Atmos at 240 Hz refresh rate.

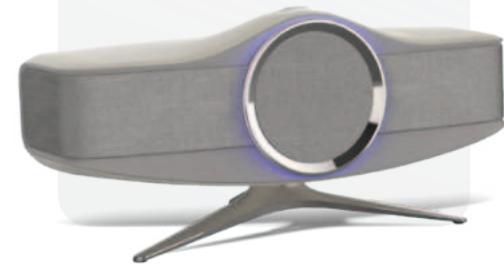
> HIGHLIGHTS: 85" Neo QLED 8K, Mini-LED local dimming, 240Hz, AI Upscaling Pro, Dolby Atmos, Glare-Free. ₹8,49,990 | [www.samsung.com/in](http://www.samsung.com/in)

**AVIATOR ARRIVES**

Smart Elegance

Honeywell elevates luxury audio with the Aviator Hi-Fi Speaker, engineered with a proprietary True-Lossless 1MBPS+ codec and 240W output for studio-grade clarity. Bluetooth 5.3 ensures seamless wireless connectivity, while Type-C and Lightning dongles offer versatile, high-fidelity playback. Multi-mode input supports AUX and dongle modes, enhancing user flexibility. With ambient lighting and a sculpted, modern design, the Aviator blends immersive sound with aesthetic appeal, setting a new benchmark in premium home audio across retail and e-commerce platforms.

₹39,999 | [www.honeywellconnection.com](http://www.honeywellconnection.com)



# LENOVO TECH WORLD'25 INDIA EDITION

Just Urbane explores Lenovo's groundbreaking AI innovations, transparent displays, and next-gen devices at Tech World India—where futuristic prototypes meet India's digital transformation.

WORDS JATIN JOSHI



**W**hen Lenovo invited Just Urbane to experience their flagship innovation event—Lenovo Tech World India 2025—we knew we were stepping into something remarkable. What we didn't anticipate was just how immersive, forward-thinking, and future-defining this event would be. Held in Mumbai under the ambitious theme "Smarter AI for All", the India edition of Lenovo Tech World was a bold declaration of how AI will shape not just global technology, but India's very own digital destiny.

**AN EXCLUSIVE INVITE INTO THE FUTURE**  
We got access to Lenovo's most ambitious concepts yet—prototypes and innovations that blur the line between science fiction and functional technology. From hands-on demos to deep-dive conversations with Lenovo's visionaries, the experience was as enriching as it was exhilarating. The event wasn't just a showcase—it was a bold statement about where the future is headed and Lenovo's unwavering role in shaping it. With each reveal, it became clear that innovation isn't just a goal for Lenovo—it's their blueprint for the next era of tech.





#### TRANSPARENT DISPLAYS, TALKATIVE LAPTOPS & AI IN ACTION

Among the standout moments for us was the transparent display prototype—a crystal-clear slab of glass that transformed into a dynamic display with a tap. It's the kind of tech that feels like magic until you realize it's all powered by Lenovo's ever-growing investment in AI and display technology.

We also got to interact with AI-assisted laptops equipped with voice command features that were not only responsive but deeply intuitive. Whether it was launching apps, drafting notes, or adjusting settings, these machines demonstrated what next-gen productivity could look like. Lenovo isn't just upgrading devices—they're reimaging human-computer interaction from the ground up. Their latest tablets impressed

with streamlined design and performance-focused UX, while Think servers showcased how Lenovo is not just focusing on personal computing, but also scaling enterprise infrastructure to support the country's AI transformation.

#### AI FOR THE NATION, BUILT IN INDIA

What made the event especially powerful was its alignment with India's tech growth story. Lenovo announced that it had manufactured and exported 12 million units from India in 2024 alone, reaffirming the country's position as a global manufacturing and innovation hub. With plans to double production output and scale R&D from within India, Lenovo's AI push is rooted deeply in "Make in India, for the World."



Shailendra Katyal, Managing Director of Lenovo India, summed it up best: "Lenovo's AI vision in India is reflected in its 71% year-on-year revenue growth. "We are bullish about our continued momentum in the market and are excited about collaborating with our partners and customers to unleash the true power of what AI can do."

#### MORE THAN JUST TECH: A CULTURE OF CREATIVITY

Tech World wasn't just about devices. It was about experiences. From high-energy gaming zones and collaborative creativity workshops to panels discussing the ethical use of AI, sustainability, and AI's role in education and engineering, the event was a blend of tech and culture. Lenovo Faststart showcased enterprise-ready solutions aimed at transforming Indian businesses.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS: WHERE AI MEETS ASPIRATION

For Just Urbane, Lenovo Tech World India was not just a tech showcase—it was a vision statement. A rare event where prototypes, purpose, and possibilities converge. Lenovo isn't simply betting on AI—they're building it, scaling it, and most importantly, localizing it for India. From smart classrooms to next-gen healthcare and enterprise solutions, the applications felt real, immediate, and deeply relevant. As India accelerates toward a digital-first, AI-first future, it's clear that Lenovo wants to be more than just a player—it wants to be a catalyst. And from what we witnessed firsthand, they're well on their way.

Smarter AI for All? After Tech World India 2025, we believe it's not just a tagline—it's a promise. □

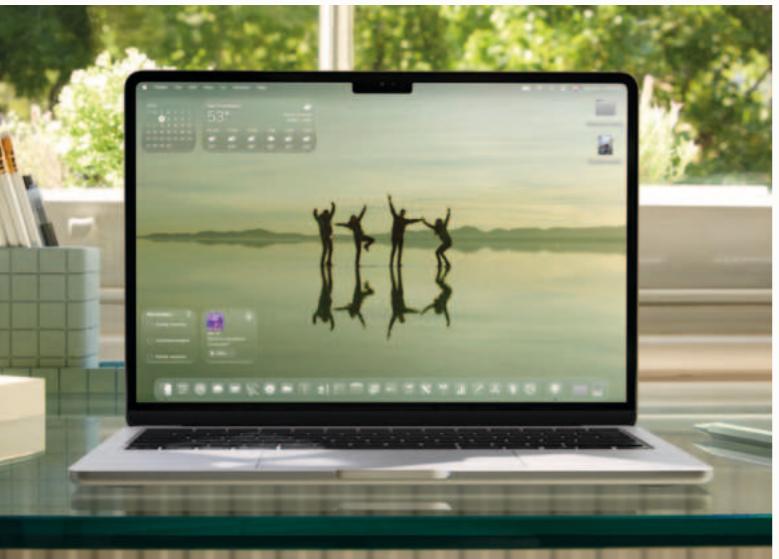




# Apple Inside Out

With a stunning new design language across iOS 19, macOS Sequoia, and the debut of CarPlay Ultra in Aston Martin vehicles, Apple is quietly but powerfully reshaping the way we interact with technology—everywhere.

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS



**A**pple has long mastered the art of marrying design with utility, and at its latest virtual showcase sets it on the right path to continued dominance in both personal and automotive tech. The tech mogul unveiled a unified vision that spans across iOS 19, iPadOS 19, macOS Sequoia, and the next-generation CarPlay Ultra. On the interface front, Apple introduced what it described as a “delightful and elegant new software design.” At first glance, it’s not about dramatic change but careful curation. The visual overhaul emphasises clarity, warmth, and human-centered design. Typography has been refined for better contrast and legibility. Rounded corners and dynamic animations brighten up the UI, while the new natural-toned color palette adds both personality and accessibility. These design cues are not merely aesthetic; they foster a more intuitive and serene digital experience.

More than a visual refresh, the updated OS suite signals seamlessness. There’s a renewed focus on coherence — whether you’re multitasking on macOS Sequoia or flipping through widgets on iOS 19, the experience is fluid, modern, and distinctly Apple.

The Apple CarPlay Ultra is a dramatically upgraded in-car experience, launching first with Aston Martin vehicles in the U.S.A. and Canada. CarPlay Ultra doesn’t just replicate your iPhone on your dashboard, it transforms the cockpit into a seamless Apple interface. From the instrument cluster to infotainment screens, everything syncs in real time with both iPhone content and essential car systems.

Drivers will be able to personalise widgets, manage car functions like climate and media, and even view tire pressure and advanced driver-assistance features — right from the CarPlay interface. It’s fluid, responsive, and thoughtfully integrated, bridging the gap between mobile and motoring with typical Apple finesse.

What makes CarPlay Ultra even more unique is its customisation for each automaker. In partnership with brands like Aston Martin, Apple has ensured that CarPlay Ultra reflects the design signature of the brand itself, blending technology with the personalisation. This isn’t one-size-fits-all; it’s bespoke digital craftsmanship.

“We are reimagining the in-car experience,” said Bob Borchers, Apple’s VP of Worldwide Product Marketing. “This next generation of CarPlay gives drivers a smarter, safer way to use their iPhone in the car.” His sentiment was echoed by Aston Martin CEO Adrian Hallmark, who emphasized that their collaboration with Apple sets a new bar in infotainment, adding new layers of personalisation and sophistication.

As Apple begins rolling out CarPlay Ultra, starting with new Aston Martin orders and followed by a software update for current models, the company doubles down on its philosophy: thoughtful, intentional design can enhance life wherever you are, from the palm of your hand to the wheel of your car. Whether through a newly refined OS or a smartly integrated dashboard, the future Apple envisions is not only more connected — it’s more humanised. □

**WHETHER THROUGH A NEWLY REFINED OS OR A SMARTLY INTEGRATED DASHBOARD, THE FUTURE APPLE ENVISIONS IS NOT ONLY MORE CONNECTED — IT'S MORE HUMANISED**





# PREMIUM MEETS PERFORMANCE

A sleek powerhouse that redefines what a 14-inch laptop can achieve, blending ai-ready performance with stunning design

WORDS JATIN JOSHI PHOTOGRAPHY MANYA SHARMA

**I**n today's hyper-connected world, where remote work dominates and content creation has become mainstream, choosing the right laptop isn't just about specs—it's about finding a machine that adapts to your lifestyle. The Dell XPS 14 doesn't merely tick boxes; it rewrites the playbook for what a premium ultrabook should deliver. After extensively using this machine, we found it compelling for professionals, creators, and power users who refuse to compromise.

## MINIMALISM WITH MAXIMUM IMPACT

Dell's design philosophy shines brightest in the XPS 14's construction. The precision-machined aluminium chassis, protected by Gorilla Glass 3, creates an understated and unmistakably premium aesthetic. The choice between Platinum and Graphite finishes ensures it fits seamlessly into any professional environment—from corporate boardrooms to creative studios. At 1.74kg, the XPS 14 strikes an impressive balance between portability and structural integrity.

This isn't a laptop that feels fragile despite its slim profile. The build quality exudes confidence, with every surface and joint engineered to withstand the rigours of daily use. It's the kind of device that makes a statement without saying a word.

## AI-READY POWERHOUSE

The heart of the XPS 14 beats with Intel's latest Core Ultra 7 155H processor—a chip specifically optimised for AI workloads. What this translates to is noticeably snappier performance in applications that leverage

machine learning, from Adobe's AI-powered tools to Windows 11's intelligent features.

The inclusion of NVIDIA's GeForce RTX 4050 graphics elevates this machine beyond typical ultrabook territory. Video editors will appreciate the hardware-accelerated rendering capabilities, while designers can push complex 3D models without experiencing the stutters typical in integrated graphics solutions. Multi-tasking feels effortless, with the system maintaining responsiveness even when juggling resource-intensive applications.

## THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

Dell's attention to tactile feedback becomes immediately apparent through the haptic touchpad. Unlike traditional trackpads that rely on physical clicks, this implementation provides precise, customisable feedback that enhances navigation accuracy. The backlit keyboard maintains the XPS series' reputation for excellent typing dynamics, with well-spaced keys that remain comfortable during extended sessions. Security integration feels natural rather than intrusive, with the fingerprint reader embedded seamlessly into the power button. Windows Hello authentication becomes second nature, eliminating the friction of password entry without compromising security.

## ALL-DAY COMPUTING REALISED

Perhaps the XPS 14's most impressive achievement lies in its power efficiency. Our real-world testing yielded approximately 18-19 hours of mixed usage on the standard display configuration, making all-day computing genuinely achievable. This isn't marketing hyperbole; it's a laptop

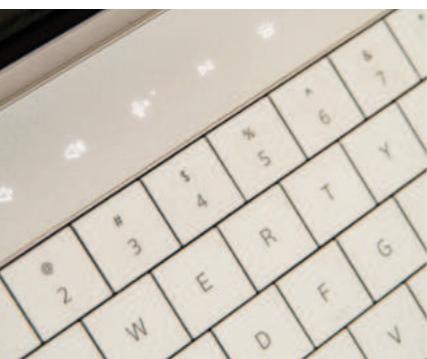
that can genuinely survive long flights, full workdays, and extended creative sessions without tethering you to power outlets. The intelligent power management adapts to usage patterns, ensuring performance scales appropriately with demand while maximising battery longevity.

## OLED BRILLIANCE

The 14.5-inch display represents a masterclass in panel technology. The 3.2K OLED option delivers the kind of colour accuracy and contrast that makes everyday computing feel cinematic. The Low Blue Light technology isn't just a checkbox feature—it genuinely reduces eye strain during extended sessions. Content creators will particularly appreciate the accuracy of the colour, which rivals dedicated professional monitors in many scenarios. □

₹2,52,290 | Dell XPS 14

[www.dell.com/en-in](http://www.dell.com/en-in)



Sleek design, innovative touch bar, and a haptic touchpad—the XPS 14 defines modern interaction.



## THE SPECS

<b>Processor:</b>	Intel Core Ultra 7 155H (16 cores)
<b>Graphics:</b>	NVIDIA GeForce RTX 4050 6GB
<b>Display:</b>	14.5", Touch 3.2K OLED, InfinityEdge
<b>Touchpad:</b>	Multi-touch gesture-enabled
<b>Memory:</b>	32 GB: LPDDR5X dual-channel
<b>Storage:</b>	1TB M.2 NVMe Solid State Drive
<b>Ports:</b>	3xThunderbolt 4, USB-C w/ power delivery & display port, 1 headset port
<b>Slots:</b>	1xmicroSDXC UHS-I/UHS-II
<b>Camera:</b>	1080p at 30 fps FHD RGB-IR
<b>Audio:</b>	Waves MaxxAudio Quad-speakers, 8W
<b>Battery:</b>	6-Cell, Up to 21 hours with FHD+
<b>Power:</b>	100W AC adapter, USB Type-C
<b>Weight:</b>	1.74 kg for OLED

## THE SCORE

<b>PROCESSOR</b>	★★★★★
<b>DESIGN</b>	★★★★★
<b>DISPLAY</b>	★★★★★
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	★★★★★
<b>BATTERY</b>	★★★★★

## PROS

- Exceptional build quality
- Outstanding battery life for real-world usage.
- AI-optimized performance is genuinely faster.
- Stunning OLED display with accurate colours.

## CONS

- Premium pricing may limit accessibility.
- OLED requires consideration for static usage.
- Limited port selection

## VERDICT

The Dell XPS 14 succeeds in areas where many premium laptops fail—it doesn't force users to choose between performance, portability, and visual quality. The combination of AI-ready processing power, genuine all-day battery life, and stunning display technology creates a genuinely future-proof package. For professionals and creators who demand uncompromising performance in a portable package, the XPS 14 represents one of the most compelling options. It's a laptop that adapts to your workflow rather than forcing you to adapt to its limitations.



## LEGION POWER, POCKET SIZE

Lenovo's 8.8-inch Legion Tab balances top-tier gaming power, display clarity, and portability for seamless play-anywhere performance.

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS PHOTOGRAPHY JASMEET KOHLI

**A**s someone who's always juggling work and gaming on the move, I found the Lenovo Legion Tab (8.8-inch Gen 2) to be an interesting take on mobile gaming. It strikes a good balance between powerful performance and a decently portable form factor, both in size and weight. The design is certainly an eye-catcher. It's large enough without feeling oversized, and the fit and finish levels are quite impressive. A distinct highlight is how well it sits in the hand — neither too slippery nor too bulky.

### STUNNING DISPLAY, SEAMLESS TOUCH RESPONSE

Power it on, and you'll be surprised by the 8.8-inch QHD+ display sharpness. Honestly, I am not used to this level of clarity and colour vibrancy from a screen this size. From late-night anime binge to getting fully immersed in gaming, the 144Hz refresh rate makes screen transitions feel incredibly fluid. The 10-point multi-touch input feels buttery smooth — pinches, taps, and gestures are precise and lag-free. It makes both work tasks and gaming way more satisfying.

### SURPRISINGLY LOUD, IMPRESSIVELY CLEAR SOUND

But the real surprise? The sound. I usually use headphones, but I ended up using the Legion Tab's speakers a lot more than I thought I would. The front-facing stereo speakers with Dolby Atmos punch above their weight. Whether I was gaming, watching movies, or playing Spotify, the clarity and bass genuinely impresses.

### SMOOTH, LAG-FREE POWER PERFORMANCE

Performance-wise, you can seamlessly transition between demanding apps, email, and browser tabs. The Snapdragon 8+ Gen 1 processor paired with 12GB RAM handles everything you throw at it. I didn't experience any lag — even during intense multitasking. App switching is instant, and performance feels snappy for its size. I especially love how well it handles heavy games like Genshin Impact or Call of Duty without overheating or lagging.



Legion's flagship power now fits in your hands—featuring a brilliant 8.8-inch display, blazing-fast performance, solid camera, and stunning build. This tablet redefines premium compact gaming and everyday multitasking.

### LIGHTWEIGHT BUILD, ALL-DAY POWER

The Legion Tab is surprisingly lightweight for its size too. I carried it around in my backpack all day and barely noticed the weight. It's perfect for travel or quick commutes, yet large enough to make movies and games feel immersive. I also appreciated the fast-charging support and battery longevity—it lasted through most of my day with mixed usage. Topping it up during lunch was usually enough to get through the rest of the evening.

**STAYS COOL  
DURING INTENSE GAMING**  
One of my favourite bits about this gaming console? It stays cool under pressure. Even with an hour of hardcore gaming, the thermal system remains unperturbed. No sweaty palms or uncomfortable hot spots — just uninterrupted gaming bliss.

**NOT JUST A GAMING TABLET**  
Even though I planned to test it mainly for gaming, it ended up becoming my go-to for reading, media, and quick work tasks. The UI is clean and efficient, with minimal bloat, and I love that Lenovo didn't overcomplicate the software experience. It's smooth, easy to navigate, and genuinely useful.

**RELIABLE CONNECTIVITY,  
DECENT CAMERA**  
I even tried to use the camera for a few quick video calls. It won't replace your phone or laptop for photography, but it gets the job done when you need to jump into a quick Zoom call. With Wi-Fi 6E, USB-C 3.1, and solid connectivity options, the overall experience feels robust and reliable. □

₹29,999 | LENOVO LEGION TAB GEN 2  
[www.lenovo.com/in](http://www.lenovo.com/in)

### THE SPECS

**Processor:** 1x Cortex-X2 @3.20GHz  
**Chipset:** Qualcomm Snapdragon 8+ Gen 1  
**Graphics:** Integrated Qualcomm Adreno GPU  
**Display:** 8.8" 2.5K (2560x1600p), LCD, Touch  
**Memory:** 12 GB LPDDR5X (soldered)  
**Storage/Slot:** 256 GB/microSD Card Slot  
**Camera:** 8.0MP/13.0MP+2.0MP, Flashlight  
**Connectivity:** WiFi 6E, 802.11ax, 2x2 + BT5.3  
**Speakers:** 2x superliner with Dolby Atmos  
**Battery/Weight:** 6550mAh/350g  
**Power:** AC Adapter/Power Supply 45W  
**Stylus:** Pen upgradable (sold separately)  
**Sensors:** Accelerometer/Gyroscope sensor, Hall, Proximity/Ambient light, e-Compass

### THE SCORE

PROCESSOR	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★
DISPLAY	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
BATTERY	★★★★★

### PROS

- Stunning 144Hz display.
- Smooth multitasking experience.
- Exceptional sound system.
- Powerful performance.

### CONS

- No SIM support.
- OLED requires consideration for static usage.
- Accessories sold separately (Pen/Stylus)

### VERDICT

The Lenovo Legion Tab Gen 2 can easily fit into your daily tech ecosystem. It's portable, lightweight, and impressively powerful for its size. The screen impresses with its depth of colours and fast 144Hz refresh rate as does the Snapdragon 8+ Gen 1 processor with its ability to multi-task without hiccups. From the vivid display and flawless multi-touch to the rich, immersive sound and fluid multitasking, it nails the fundamentals and then goes beyond. Whether you're a gamer, a content consumer, or a multitasker on the move, this tablet delivers. It's beautifully built, thoughtfully designed, and performs quite well for its price.



A family's honest take on living with a smart, gorgeous, and surprisingly practical 4-door refrigerator

WORDS JATIN JOSHI

We've always been a two-door refrigerator family. Space constraints in our kitchen meant we never seriously considered upgrading to anything larger or more elaborate. But when I first laid eyes on the Haier Lumiere 4-Door refrigerator, I was completely blown away by that mirror glass finish.

The moment we installed it, our kitchen underwent a transformation. It doesn't just sit there looking pretty – it reflects light beautifully, making our space feel bigger and more modern. Honestly, it's become the conversation starter whenever we have guests over. Haier knocked it out of the park with the design and build quality.

#### THE MAGIC OF THREE-IN-ONE FLEXIBILITY

My wife was initially sceptical about needing such a large fridge, but now she's completely sold on the convertible setup. Here's how it works: the top is your regular spacious fridge, the bottom-left is a dedicated freezer, and the bottom-right is a dedicated one. That's the magic – it can switch between being a fridge and a freezer depending on what we need.

This flexibility has been a game-changer, especially during family gatherings or when we're hosting friends. We can easily accommodate extra beverages, store bulk groceries, or keep frozen treats without everything feeling cramped. It's like having the perfect storage solution that adapts to our lifestyle rather than the other way around.

#### THAT CINEMATIC NIGHT EXPERIENCE

One of our absolute favourite features is what happens when you open the door at night. The interior lights up gradually, transitioning from complete darkness to this beautiful, evenly distributed glow. Combined with that cool breeze that escapes, it genuinely feels cinematic, especially when you're grabbing a midnight snack with just the ambient lighting around.

The lighting itself is perfectly balanced, reaching every corner of the fridge. It's bright enough to spot items tucked away in the back easily, and being IPX5 waterproof gives it a premium feel. No more squinting or using your phone's flashlight to find what you're looking for!



Magic Cooling and FreshZone keep everything ultra-fresh, crisp, and ready. Perfect cooling performance with stylish design for everyday healthy living.

#### FREEZING POWER THAT WORKS

Living in Pune, we put our appliances through some serious heat tests during summer. The Lumiere doesn't flinch. Both freezer compartments maintain consistent deep-freeze temperatures even when it's scorching outside. Our ice cream stays perfectly creamy, meat stays fresh longer, and when we need something chilled quickly, it delivers.

The convertible section shines during parties. With just a tap, we can switch it to fridge mode, suddenly creating room for all those extra drinks and fresh items that come with entertaining.

#### THE MY ZONE DRAWER: SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Haier's My Zone drawer deserves special mention. With customizable temperature settings, it's perfect for storing cheese, beverages, or fruits that need specific conditions. This drawer is used daily in our house, and it demonstrates the thought that went into making this fridge work for real families.

#### SMART FEATURES THAT MAKE SENSE

I'll be honest – I'm usually sceptical of "smart" features in appliances. But the Smart Sense AI in this fridge isn't just marketing fluff. It learns how we use the refrigerator and adjusts the cooling accordingly. During quieter periods, it saves power, and when we're constantly opening doors (hello, weekend meal prep!), it compensates.

The Wi-Fi connectivity and app integration have grown on us as well. Being able to monitor temperatures remotely and

track what's inside has genuinely reduced our grocery waste. My wife, in particular, loves the inventory tracking and shopping list features – no more "Did we already have milk?" moments at the store.

#### LIVING WITH IT DAILY

The anti-bacterial technology, adjustable shelves, and anti-tipping bottle racks make daily use smooth and hygienic. But what we appreciate is how quiet it is. Coming from an older fridge that hummed and buzzed constantly, the whisper-silent operation is a blessing, especially in our open-plan living space.

#### A KID'S PERSPECTIVE

Our daughter Jiyanshi has her own relationship with this fridge, and honestly, her observations are pretty telling:

She's turned the mirror finish into her getting-ready station – checking her hair and outfit before heading out. The fingerprint-resistant surface has become her testing ground (she's constantly checking if her prints show up).

Since the bottom freezer is at her level, she has become our unofficial ice manager, constantly refilling the ice trays and organising the freezer. Her favourite snacks – cheese and ice cream – are now easily within reach, which has increased her independence in the kitchen.

The side of our fridge has become Jiyanshi's art gallery, covered in her collection of magnets and creative displays. It has become a sort of family memory board. □

₹1,03,990 | HAIER HRB-600MGU1  
shop.haierindia.com

#### THE SPECS

Type:	French door refrigerator (4-door)
Capacity:	520L net
Colour:	Mirror glass finish
Compressor:	Triple inverter with R600a
Display:	Colourful touchscreen display
Shelf Type:	Toughened glass
Lighting:	2x2 ft LED Sunlit interior (IPX5)
Connectivity:	Wi-Fi enabled (2.4ghz)
Energy Rating:	3-Star (480 units/year)
Product Warranty:	2 year comprehensive
Compressor Warranty:	10 years
Net Weight:	110kg

#### THE SCORE

EFFICIENCY	★★★★★
DESIGN	★★★★★
FIT & FINISH	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
STORAGE	★★★★★

#### PROS

- Flexible 3-in-1 storage
- Smart AI & App control
- Elegant mirror glass finish
- Energy efficient

#### CONS

- Bulky for small kitchens
- Heavy to move around
- Only supports Wifi 2.4 GHz

#### VERDICT

The Haier Lumiere 4-Door Refrigerator (HRB-600MGU1) has genuinely improved our family's food storage management. It's elegant enough to enhance your kitchen's aesthetic, bright enough to suit your lifestyle, and practical enough for everyday family life. If you're looking for a fridge that combines stunning design with intelligent features and genuine flexibility, this one is worth serious consideration. It's not just an appliance – it's become an integral part of how our family lives and entertains.

# THE FUTURE OF AUTONOMOUS HOME CLEANING

Living with the dreame x40 ultra – a cleaning companion that truly delivers

WORDS CHAHAT DALAL PHOTOGRAPHY JASMEET KOHLI

**I** put the Dreame X40 Ultra to the test in a busy home with pets, carpets, and chaos. Here's how it performed. As someone who's been through my fair share of robot vacuums—some great, others frustrating—I had high expectations for the Dreame X40 Ultra. Billed as a powerhouse of smart cleaning, this sleek machine promised powerful suction, intelligent features, and minimal maintenance. After using it for several weeks, I can confidently say: it doesn't just meet expectations—it surpasses them.

## UNBOXING A HOME CLEANING POWERHOUSE

Right out of the box, the X40 Ultra feels premium. It's equipped with what Dreame calls 12,000Pa Vormax suction—and yes, suction is every bit as powerful as advertised. From fine dust to pet hair and scattered food crumbs, it lifted everything from my hardwood floors and carpets with minimal effort. I particularly appreciated the rubber floating brush, and for homes like mine with long-haired pets, the optional TriCut anti-tangle brush was a lifesaver.



I love how I can set no-go zones, virtual walls, and curtain zones—X40 Ultra cleans thoroughly without getting stuck.



## LETTING GO OF DAILY MAINTENANCE

Where this robot vacuum really changed the game for me was its 7-in-1 auto base station. I haven't had to think about emptying dustbins or cleaning mop pads since setup. The auto-emptying feature handles debris for up to 75 days, while the 70°C mop washing and hot-air drying keep things sanitary. It's truly a hands-off experience that fits right into a busy household.

## THOROUGH WHERE OTHERS STRUGGLE

The X40 Ultra's ability to get into corners and around furniture edges is exceptional, thanks to SideReach and MopExtend RoboSwing. Watching it swing out to clean under my couch and along skirting boards was oddly satisfying—and something I'd never seen done this well in other vacuums.

The five-channel RGB camera is brilliant—it detects stains, slows mopping, and lifts brushes for a deep, accurate clean every time.

## SMART ENOUGH TO THINK FOR ITSELF

Equipped with OmniDirt detection, the vacuum identifies sticky spots and adjusts its cleaning mode automatically. It even rewashes and remops if needed. The AI-powered 3D obstacle avoidance was impressively accurate, dodging toys, shoes, and cables without getting stuck or sucking them up. It's the first robot I've trusted to run while I'm not home.

## VERSATILE FOR EVERY SURFACE

My house has a mix of floors: tiles, hardwood, and a few area rugs. The X40 Ultra adjusts seamlessly. It lifts its mops up to 10.5mm for low-pile carpets, removes them entirely for deep carpet care, and increases suction automatically. The multi-level mapping and room-by-room cleaning make managing everything through the app effortless.

## A CLEANING SOLUTION THAT FITS SEAMLESSLY INTO DAILY LIFE

While a few extras like voice control aren't universally available (depending on region), the overall package is remarkable. The Dreame X40 Ultra has earned a permanent spot in my home. It's powerful, smart, and genuinely reduces the mental load of keeping a house clean—especially with pets and kids around. ■

₹87,999 | Dreame X40 Ultra  
in.dreametech.com

## THE SPECS

**Power:** Up to 12,000Pa vormax suction  
**Main brush:** Rubber brush (floating)  
**Side brush:** Extendable & liftable up to 10mm  
**Mopping system:** Dual rotary mops; auto-detachable; lifts up to 10.5mm  
**Dust bag capacity:** 3.2L  
**Tank capacity:** 4.5L/4L (clean/used water)  
**Weight:** 4 kg, (vacuum); 9 kg (base station)  
**Battery:** 6,400mAh, 30% Fast charging  
**Battery runtime:** 198 mins  
**Smart features:** Dirt detection, voice assist, obstacle avoidance, automatic mop drying, auto refilling and draining,

## THE SCORE

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
EFFICIENCY	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
BATTERY	★★★★★

## PROS

- Fully automated cleaning base.
- Powerful suction tackles all floor types.
- Smart obstacle detection
- Edge-to-edge cleaning reach.

## CONS

- Voice control limited by region.
- Large base station footprint.
- App features need setup.

## VERDICT

The Dreame X40 Ultra is more than just a robot vacuum—it's an intelligent cleaning companion. With unmatched suction, a robust 7-in-1 base station, and smart features like MopExtend and AI-driven object avoidance, it delivers a seamless and thorough cleaning experience.

Whether tackling pet hair, carpets, or tough stains, the X40 Ultra adapts intuitively. For users seeking convenience, hygiene, and performance in one powerful package, this vacuum is a top-tier choice. It's a true testament to how far smart home cleaning has come.

# PARTY POWERHOUSE

TECH-LIFE REVIEW PHILLIPS PARTY SPEAKER



Massive sound, DJ features, and remote control elevate party experiences.

WORDS CHAHAT DALAL

PHOTOGRAPHY JASMEET KOHLI

When it comes to party speakers, the Philips TAX5509/94 is a bold statement in both design and performance. Boasting a robust 130 W RMS (260 W max) power output delivered through two massive 12" woofers, a 3" midrange driver, and a 4" tweeter, this floor-standing system truly "shakes the room" with heart-thumping bass and crisp highs.

#### SOUND, EFFECTS AND ATMOSPHERE

The speaker generates a deep and immersive soundstage, thanks to its Dynamic Bass Boost, plus user-adjustable treble and bass controls built right into the top rotary knobs. Add to that the full-speaker rainbow LED light show—nine modes that pulse to the beat across woofers, midrange and tweeter; it transforms any room into a vibrant party arena.

For extra fun, the TAX5509 includes six onboard DJ sound effects—such as record scratch, air horn and beat breaks—which can be assigned to three preset buttons (short or long press for variation). Setup and remapping of these presets is accessible via the Philips Entertainment app.



Precision rotary knobs let you fine-tune bass and treble, while tactile buttons switch inputs effortlessly—from Bluetooth and USB to FM radio. Assign up to six sound effects, like air horns or beat breaks, across three preset buttons using the Philips Entertainment app. From dial to remote, every detail is designed to elevate the energy and keep the party going.

#### CONNECTIVITY & PLAYBACK

Bluetooth streaming (SBC codec with Bluetooth 5.3, about 10 m range), plus USB-A, TF card, 3.5 mm audio-in and even FM radio. Selection via the main unit's knobs is intuitive—yet you rarely need to make the trek to the speaker itself thanks to its remote control capabilities.

#### MICROPHONE, GUITAR & RECORDING

Karaoke lovers and live performers will appreciate the dual 6.3 mm mic inputs and a guitar input, each with independent volume controls and echo effects. Want to capture the moment? You can record performances directly to USB or TF card while singing or playing live—ideal for impromptu jam sessions or karaoke battles.

#### CONVENIENCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

One of the most compelling features is the dedicated remote control, which ensures you never have to leave your position. The remote offers full control over play/pause, track skip, volume, bass, treble, DJ presets, light modes, echo, vocal fader, DBB (Dynamic Bass Boost) modes and more. Want to drop a beat break while mingling near the buffet? It's effortless. Adjust lighting

mood mid-song without interruption. Control karaoke mic echo or mute from across the room. This remote truly puts the power of the speaker at your fingertips and complements the in-apparatus knobs and app control seamlessly.

#### PORTABILITY & DESIGN

Despite its size (about 110 cm tall and weighing around 19 kg), the speaker is surprisingly transport-friendly. It features built-in wheels and a telescoping handle, so you can wheel it into place, plug into AC power, and instantly transform any space into a party zone—indoors or out.

#### ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

That said, as an AC-powered speaker only (no battery), you're tethered to a power outlet, which may limit outdoor use unless power is available. The Bluetooth range is typical (about 10 m), and only SBC is supported—there's no support for higher-quality codecs such as AAC or aptX. Also, while the light modes are striking, they may not be bright enough to dominate brightly lit outdoor areas. □

₹27,990 | PHILLIPS BLUETOOTH PARTY SPEAKER (TAX5509) [www.philips.co.in](http://www.philips.co.in)

#### THE SPECS

**Output power:** 130W(RMS) 260W(MAX)

**Speakers:** Stereo, multi-color light effect, Dynamic bass boost, treble and bass control, 1x tweeter, 2x woofers

**Connectivity:** Bluetooth 5.3v, 10M range, USB Type A, FM band, App control

**Inputs:** 1x 3.5mm audio jack, TF Card, Guitar 1 & 2 Mic x (6.3mm w/ vol control)

**Controls & Features:** Karaoke, Guitar control, Rotary volume control, Remote control

**Display:** LED screen; Multi-color light effect

**Power & Weight:** 100-240VAC, 19 kg,

**Dimensions:** 110x40x34.5 (hxwd) cms

#### THE SCORE

<b>SPEAKERS</b>	★★★★★
<b>WOOFERS</b>	★★★★★
<b>TWEETERS</b>	★★★★★
<b>DESIGN</b>	★★★★★
<b>FEATURES</b>	★★★★★

#### PROS

- Dynamic lighting effects
- Comprehensive remote control
- Karaoke & guitar support
- Built-in DJ effects

#### CONS

- No built-in battery
- Limited portability despite wheels
- Bulky and heavy

#### VERDICT

Overall, the Philips TAX5509/94 stands out as an exhilarating package: room-shaking bass, dazzling RGB lights, immersive karaoke and DJ features—and perhaps most importantly, its comprehensive remote control lets you orchestrate the entire vibe from across the room. Whether DJing, performing live, or hosting a social setting, this speaker gives you the flexibility and power to keep the energy high without ever having to stand up. If you're looking for a stationary powerhouse built for entertainment, this speaker deserves serious consideration.

# FLAGSHIP FEELS

A flagship smartphone experience without the flagship smartphone price

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS PHOTOGRAPHY PRATHMESH PATEL

If there's one thing the iQOO Z10 instantly impresses with, it's the way it looks and feels. The black metallic finish is sleek while the overall design feels far more premium than its price tag suggests. It's light yet fits well into your palm. The form factor strikes a perfect balance between comfort and visual appeal. The aesthetic is clean, with minimal distractions — just the kind of design language you'd expect from a premium device.

## VIBRANT AMOLED DISPLAY

The 6.67-inch AMOLED display is an absolute treat — it features excellent brightness and a crisp resolution. Whether I was scrolling through socials, watching videos, or just browsing, the display

impresses in every condition. Colors are vivid, blacks are deep, and the 120Hz refresh rate makes everyday interactions feel smooth and satisfying.

## FLAGSHIP-LEVEL PERFORMANCE

The iQOO Z10 packs flagship muscle. Powered by the Snapdragon 7 Gen 3 processor and running on Funtouch OS 14 (based on Android 14), performance is exceptionally fluid. Switching between apps, multitasking, or even running heavier games showed no signs of lag or slowdown. It's an experience that mirrors flagship-level performance. The new ultra game mode is a cool touch and lets you switch between panels to adjust settings with ease while gaming.

## MASSIVE BATTERY, FAST CHARGING

Another highlight is the massive 7300mAh battery. It easily offers a day and a half of use and can even double up as a power bank. With 90W fast charging, claimed charging time from 1% to 50% is 33 minutes which is quite good for a battery of this size. Despite the large battery pack, it does not heat up even with intense gaming sessions.

## SURPRISINGLY CAPABLE CAMERA

The camera system, too, delivers more than I expected. The 50MP AI camera captures detailed shots with great dynamic range and clarity, while the portrait and night modes do a commendable job. Whether indoors or out, it handled most lighting conditions with confidence.

## A PHONE THAT DELIVERS

Overall, the iQOO Z10 isn't just another budget phone, it's a thoughtfully engineered device that punches well above its weight. □



₹21,999 | IQOO Z10 (Stellar Black)

[www.shop.iqoo.com/in](http://www.shop.iqoo.com/in)

## THE SPECS

**Processor:** Unisoc T7250, Octa-core processor  
**Display:** 6.68" 120Hz HD+ @ 720x1640p  
**Memory:** 6GB LPDDR4X, turbo up to 6GB  
**Storage:** 128GB (upto 1TB dedicated slot)  
**Camera:** 32MP AI dual, video:1080P@30fps  
**Battery:** 5200mAh, 15W type-c charger

## THE SCORE

PROCESSOR	★★★★★
CAMERA	★★★★★
DISPLAY	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
BATTERY	★★★★★

## PROS

- Sleek black metallic premium design.
- Smooth 120Hz AMOLED display.
- Excellent battery life and fast charging
- Impressive 50MP AI camera quality.

## CONS

- Plastic frame, not full metal.
- No telephoto or ultra-wide lens.
- No wireless charging support.

## VERDICT

The iQOO Z10 is a brilliantly executed all-rounder. From its sleek metallic design and immersive display to snappy performance and solid cameras, it checks all the boxes for a daily driver. The highlight has to be the large battery that offers extended screen time. A flagship-like experience without the flagship price — it is great value for money in every sense.





## JABRA PANACAST 20 PUTS AI IN YOUR POCKET

A tiny 4K webcam, massive on AI smarts and usability.

WORDS JATIN JOSHI PHOTOGRAPHY JASMEET KOHLI

In today's hybrid work environment, where video calls have become the de facto meeting room, the Jabra PanaCast 20 emerges as a powerful and portable 4K webcam tailored for professionals. Compact, innovative, and designed for plug-and-play simplicity, it strikes a balance between premium video quality and AI-driven functionality in a sleek form factor.

### DESIGN AND BUILD

Weighing just 136 grams and housed in a durable all-metal body, the PanaCast 20 feels robust yet refined. Its compact design allows it to mount discreetly on most monitors and laptops with minimal intrusion. Despite its small footprint, there's no compromise on quality. It's solid, professional-looking, and travel-friendly—everything you'd hope for in a camera designed for mobile professionals and modern video-first workflows.

### VIDEO QUALITY & AI FEATURES

At the heart of the PanaCast 20 lies a 13MP camera capable of delivering real-time 4K video (up to 3840×2160 at 30 fps) with vivid HDR support. Whether you're sitting in a well-lit office or working late in dim surroundings, the camera excels in handling lighting variations gracefully.

#### AI-Powered Intelligent Zoom:

Automatically frames you in the centre, tracking subtle movement, so you don't have to stay glued in one position.

#### Intelligent Lighting Optimisation:

Adjusts brightness and contrast in real-time, delivering a polished image regardless of lighting conditions.

**Picture-in-Picture:** One of its standout features, PiP inserts a secondary close-up window into your stream—ideal for tutorials, product demos, or any content that benefits from dual video views.

#### PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The PanaCast 20 brings serious attention to user privacy:

#### On-Device Background Effects:

Background blur and replacement are handled directly on the device, ensuring that no video is sent to the cloud—this keeps sensitive content local.

**Privacy Shutter:** A manual sliding cover physically blocks the lens when not in use, providing a simple and effective solution. □

**₹29,990 | JABRA PANACAST 20**

[www.jabra.com/en-in](http://www.jabra.com/en-in)

### THE SPECS

**Camera:** 13MP; F/2.25/2.26mm  
**Resolution:** 4k Ultra-HD, 3840x2160p@30 fps  
**Video:** Vivid HDR, PIP, Intelligent Zoom, Manual Pan-Tilt-Zoom, w/background effects  
**Zoom:** Up to 3x lossless zoom at 720p  
**Audio:** 3 x Microphones, type MEMS, 100Hz - 8000Hz range

### THE SCORE

CAMERA	★★★★★
RESOLUTION	★★★★★½
DESIGN	★★★★★½
FEATURES	★★★★★½
BUILD	★★★★★

### PROS

- Excellent 4K video with HDR support
- Smart framing with Intelligent Zoom
- On-device privacy and background control
- Picture-in-picture mode ideal for presentations

### CONS

- No built-in speaker or audio out
- Runs noticeably warm during extended calls
- Higher price tag compared to budget webcams

### VERDICT

The PanaCast 20 is built for business. It's designed for users who demand top-tier video and audio performance, whether working from home, a co-working space, or on the road. While its premium price and heat output may give some users pause, the level of performance, security, and presentation polish it offers makes it a worthwhile investment for serious professionals.



# POCKET POWERHOUSE

POCO C71 surprises with premium design, smooth display, and strong battery.

WORDS HIMANSHU PANDEY

PHOTOGRAPHY PRATHMESH PATLE

The budget smartphone segment has become increasingly competitive, with manufacturers pushing the boundaries of what's possible under ₹10,000. POCO's latest entry, the C71, attempts to carve out its niche in this crowded space, and after two weeks of comprehensive testing, it's clear this device punches well above its sub-₹7,500 weight class.

## DESIGN AND BUILD QUALITY

The Cool Blue variant we tested immediately dispels any preconceptions about budget phones that feel cheap. At 193g, the C71 strikes an impressive balance between substantial feel and comfortable handling. The refined aesthetics wouldn't look out of place on devices costing twice as much, with clean lines and a premium-like finish that masks its budget origins.

## CAMERA PERFORMANCE: COMPETENT BUT CONSTRAINED

Photography capabilities centre around a 32MP primary sensor paired with an 8MP front-facing camera. Video recording tops out at 1080p without stabilisation, making this better suited for casual documentation rather than content creation.

## PERFORMANCE: BALANCED FOR THE SEGMENT

The Unisoc T7250 processor, paired with 6GB of RAM (expandable via virtual memory), provides consistent performance for typical smartphone tasks. Casual gaming titles like Subway Surfers and Clash of Clans run smoothly, though demanding applications occasionally reveal the processor's limitations. HyperOS, built on Android 14, offers a clean, responsive interface with minimal bloatware—a refreshing approach that maximises available hardware resources.



## DISPLAY: STAR OF THE SHOW

The 6.88-inch HD+ LCD panel with a 120Hz refresh rate represents exceptional value engineering. Smooth scrolling through social media feeds, responsive touch interactions, and fluid animations create a user experience typically reserved for significantly more expensive devices. While resolution purists might notice the HD+ limitation during close inspection, the practical impact is minimal for everyday use.

## BATTERY LIFE: A GENUINE STRENGTH

The 5,200mAh battery consistently delivers day-plus endurance under typical usage patterns. The included 15W charger requires approximately two hours for a complete charge cycle, which is reasonable given its substantial capacity, although fast-charging enthusiasts may find this conservative. □

₹5,999 | POCO C71 (COOL BLUE)

[www.poco.in](http://www.poco.in)

## THE SPECS

**Processor:** Unisoc T7250, Octa-core processor

**Display:** 6.88" 120Hz HD+ @ 720x1640p

**Memory:** 6GB LPDDR4X, turbo up to 6GB

**Storage:** 128GB (upto 1TB dedicated slot)

**Camera:** 32MP AI dual, video:1080P@30fps

**Battery:** 5200mAh, 15W type-c charger

## THE SCORE

PROCESSOR	★★★★★
CAMERA	★★★★★
DISPLAY	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
BATTERY	★★★★★

## PROS

- Premium build quality defies price point.
- Exceptional 120Hz display smoothness.
- Outstanding battery longevity.
- Clean software experience.

## CONS

- Camera struggles in challenging conditions
- Limited processing power for demanding apps
- Conservative charging speeds

## VERDICT

The POCO C71 successfully challenges expectations for budget smartphones, delivering a premium-feeling design, smooth display technology, and reliable performance at an aggressive price point. While camera capabilities and processing power have inherent limitations, the overall package represents compelling value for students, first-time smartphone buyers, or users seeking a dependable secondary device.





# BASS BRILLIANCE

Striking design meets powerful sound in Honeywell's U500 — a speaker built to impress every beat.

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS PHOTOGRAPHY PRATHMESH PATEL

The Honeywell Trueno U500 isn't your average Bluetooth speaker. Shaped like a drum with smooth, curved edges, it looks quite stylish. The black honeycomb grill at the front adds an industrial yet refined touch — a design that works on any table or even a rugged travel kit.

Lights That Move with the Music What immediately caught my eye were the RGB light rings on the sides. These aren't just decorative; they pulse with the music, adding energy to any gathering. Whether you're chilling solo or hosting a rooftop hangout, the lighting gives the experience a nice visual edge.

## SOUND THAT PACKS A PUNCH

Sound-wise, the U500 packs a serious punch. With 60 watts of output powered by dual 93mm drivers, it fills a room effortlessly. Highs and mids are clear while the bass is the star here. It's deep and dominant, maybe even a little too

punchy for purists, but great for modern genres and party tracks. The two bass radiators really work!

## CONNECTIVITY FOR EVERY OCCASION

On the practical side, connectivity is superb. Bluetooth 5.3 offers a stable 15m range, and options like USB, SD card, AUX, and TWS pairing mean you're always covered. The 7200mAh battery offers a solid 20 hours of runtime, and with Type-C fast charging, it's back to full in no time. And yes, it's IPX6 waterproof — so it's ready for the outdoors too.

## SOLID BUILD, SMART VALUE

At around two kilos, the portable speaker feels hefty but not burdensome. For the price, this speaker impresses in both the design and performance department. □

**₹5,999 | HONEYWELL TRUENO U500**  
[www.honeywellconnection.com/in](http://www.honeywellconnection.com/in)

## THE SPECS

**Output power (max):** 60 W  
**Speakers:** Premium stereo sound  
**Connectivity:** Bluetooth V5.3 and 15M range  
**Inputs:** Micro SD card, USB & AUX  
**Features:** RGB lights surrounding the bass  
**Weight/Rating:** 1.9kg/IPX6 waterproof  
**Battery:** 7200 mAh, 20 hrs of playback

## THE SCORE

<b>SPEAKERS</b>	★★★★★
<b>DESIGN</b>	★★★★★
<b>FEATURES</b>	★★★★★
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	★★★★★
<b>BATTERY</b>	★★★★★

## PROS

- Bold, drum-style design.
- Eye-catching RGB side lights.
- Powerful 60W sound output.
- Long 20-hour battery life.

## CONS

- Bass may overpower mids.
- RGB lights not customizable.
- No app-based EQ controls.

## VERDICT

The Honeywell Trueno U500 stands out with its rounded drum design, punchy bass, and eye-catching RGB lights. It's well-built, sounds big, and comes loaded with connectivity. A bit bass-heavy for some tastes, but overall, it delivers serious value. Perfect for those who want style, stamina, and sound in a single package.





## PRECISION MEETS POWER

From racetrack-inspired chronographs to deep-sea-ready divers, these standout timepieces by Tissot, and Jacob & Co. push the boundaries of design, performance, and adrenaline-fueled luxury.

WORDS TEAM JUST URBANE

### JACOB & CO. EPIC X CHRONO

A striking fusion of innovation, luxury, and mechanical sophistication.

Exemplifying avant-garde horology, this bold 44MM chronograph blends cutting-edge design with robust functionality. Housed in satin-finished titanium and accented by a ceramic bezel, it reveals a skeletonized dial powered by the JCAA05 automatic movement with a 48-hour power reserve. The signature X-shaped architecture, luminous hands, and tri-compax chronograph layout heighten its sporty elegance. Water-resistant up to 200 meters, this masterpiece delivers a seamless fusion of performance, innovation, and unmistakable Jacob & Co. identity.



## TISSOT'S T-RACE MOTOGP 2025

Tissot's latest chronograph captures MotoGP's adrenaline-fueled essence.

Celebrating over two decades as MotoGP's official timekeeper, Tissot introduces the T-Race MotoGP 2025 Limited Edition Quartz Chronograph. Limited to 8,000 pieces, this 45mm timepiece features a brake disc-inspired bezel, crankcase screw-style indexes, and a tachymeter scale marking the 2023 MotoGP speed record of 366.1 km/h. Powered by a high-precision quartz movement, it ensures split-second accuracy. Presented in a helmet-shaped box, this watch embodies the relentless drive of racing enthusiasts. □



# MANSPEAK

CREATORS | ENTREPRENUERS | THINKERS | TALKING HEADS

## INSIDE

*Insurance with  
purpose, innovation,  
and inclusivity*



# LEADERSHIP & VISION

*Driven by purpose and innovation, BAGIC's CEO envisions insurance as an enabler—building trust, embracing technology, and ensuring every Indian household is protected by 2047.*

WORDS ABHISHEK KULKARNI

PHOTOGRAPHY SHAILENDRA PARDESHI



**W**hat has been your core vision for Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company (BAGIC) since you took the helm?

We aim to be the preferred insurer for our customers, the preferred workplace for our employees, and the organisation with which our partners want to work closely and grow their businesses. We also aim to continue improving, encourage sustainable growth, create value for all stakeholders, stay ahead of the curve, and make a positive difference to society.

As the CEO, I believe this vision is not just aspirational, it's actionable. Being the insurer of choice means building trust, delivering consistent value, and supporting our customers when it matters most. We aim to reach every household in India and make a genuine contribution to the vision of Insurance for all by 2047. For our people, it means cultivating a culture where growth, inclusivity, and purpose are more than just words; they're daily experiences. With our partners, we want to be true collaborators, helping them thrive as we evolve together in a changing landscape. Across all these areas, we remain committed to innovation, operational excellence, and sustainability, ensuring that we not only keep pace with the future but also help shape it. This vision keeps us aligned, inspired, and relentlessly focused on progress.

**How has the insurance industry evolved over the past decade, and how have you stayed ahead of the curve?**

Over the past three decades, I've seen the insurance industry evolve dramatically, especially in the last ten years. More players have entered the market, and people are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of insurance. Insurance has advanced rapidly, especially with technology leading the charge, including Cloud platforms, AI, ML, and now Gen AI, which are transforming how we operate. What's striking is how the pace of change keeps accelerating, with technological life cycles becoming shorter and more intense. Additionally, from a largely isolated industry that operated in silos, I see greater collaboration among all stakeholders and a much more concerted effort to take the sector forward. I see regulations facilitating ease of doing business, and now with the opening up of FDI norms, we should have more insurers as well, all of which augurs well for the citizens of our country. This is thanks to a progressive regulator, the Government, and, of course, an effective industry council and other stakeholders.

**How have we stayed ahead?**

I think the key has been anticipation. We don't wait for trends to become mainstream. We study human behaviour, listen to what customers & partners are saying, and sometimes what they're not saying, and translate that into action. Whether it's launching the first chatbot in the industry, or self-assessment of claims or introducing industry-first products, we try to act on insights before they become headlines. Additionally, we view technology as an integral part of our strategy, not just a tool. And more importantly, we've kept empathy at the heart of everything. Because at the end of the day, insurance is not about policies. It's about people. And if you lose sight of that, no amount of innovation can save you.

**How do you see the role of technology shaping the future of general insurance in India?**

I believe that insurance will always be about conversations, empathy, and trust, but technology is what will bring that empathy to every household in this country. And that's exactly where we're heading. Technology in insurance is no longer just about digitising processes. It's about reimagining experiences. Claims that once took days can now be settled in minutes. Policies can be issued at the tap of a finger. Customer support is now available 24/7 through AI-enabled chatbots. What used to feel like a black box is now becoming more transparent, more accessible. Data-driven decision-making, backed by AI and ML, is the immediate future. Gen AI is here to stay, evolving, learning, and taking us in the right direction as a force for good.

Technology is driving efficiency and effectiveness & will further drive automation. It enables us to reach rural areas where a traditional office might not be feasible through a phygital approach. It helps us educate customers, detect fraud, improve underwriting, and personalise offerings like never before. It allows us to meet people where they are, whether that's in a tier-1 city or a remote village. Take mobile penetration in India, it's massive. If we can harness that for awareness, onboarding, mass enrolments and even mass claims settlement, we're not just transforming a business, we're transforming lives. So, while insurance will always require the human touch, technology ensures that touch can scale. It's the bridge between intent and impact. And that, to me, is the future we're building.

**What are some of the boldest decisions you've made as a leader, and what did you learn from them?**

Bold decisions don't always come wrapped in big headlines. Sometimes, the boldest thing you can do as a leader is to bet on people. Or to say no to something that seems profitable but doesn't align with your values. Or to admit that something didn't work and course-correct. I've had all these moments, many times over.

One bold decision was choosing to expand into regions where we had little to no presence. These were underinsured and underserved areas. We invested in the VSO (Virtual Sales Office) model at a time when people questioned if it would scale. Today, that model has helped us reach deeper into India than ever before. It showed me that boldness doesn't always require a big budget; it needs belief and a strong instinct. Another was pushing a culture of innovation. This was linked to how we treated failure internally. I made it a point to create a culture where people are not afraid to take risks and fail. Because I've failed many times, but every single time, I've learnt something that success could never have taught me. So, I tell my team, fail fast, fail forward, but never stop trying.

**I SEE GREATER COLLABORATION AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND A MUCH MORE CONCERTED EFFORT TO TAKE THE SECTOR FORWARD**

People who are not afraid to fail will often bring innovation to the organisation. Leadership isn't about playing safe. It's about being brave when it counts. Being able to take tough calls, stand by them, and most importantly, own the consequences. Bold decisions are part of the job. But what defines you is how you respond when things don't go your way. That's where authentic leadership begins.

#### STRATEGY & INNOVATION

**BAGIC is known for being innovative. What is your process for nurturing innovation within the company?**

Innovation is not a department. It's a mindset. Everyone, from the sales frontline in a remote district to the tech architect in our head office, can innovate. The moment you make innovation exclusive; you kill its potential. At BAGIC, we've tried to democratise it.

Everybody innovates daily. Everybody must figure out the best way to do their job most efficiently, but more than that, in the most customer-centric way. We encourage it through formal and informal programmes of innovation. For example, we have product innovation programmes, and we also have something called the gig economy. This project management initiative enables individuals to participate in cross-departmental projects and make a meaningful contribution to the company's success. I think this helps nurture innovation because you're not stuck in silos, and people from outside the department give a fresh perspective. I believe that not being siloed is one of the most significant aspects that nurtures innovation. In our product innovation program, shortlisted ideas.

We listen to our customers and partners. Some of the best ideas come from there. We ensure that we can identify gaps in our processes, products, or the insurance value chain in general and effectively plug them. One should not shy away from criticism; instead, look at it dispassionately as a means to innovate and grow. Some of the worst negative customer reviews can lead to introspection on processes and inspire innovative ideas. I regularly visit our offices across the country and conduct town halls, encouraging people to ask difficult questions and share their thoughts on how, as an organisation, we can improve.

**What's a recent product or service you're particularly proud of—and why?**

I am proud of all our products, but a couple we launched within the last few months stand out to me. We have just launched ClimateSafe, a product that is highly relevant to our current offerings. In today's environment, where the weather can disrupt your plans, I believe this product adds significant value. Since it is a parametric insurance product, if the rain exceeds a specific limit, or if the temperature rises too high, or if the cold becomes too severe, you receive payment automatically, without the need for lengthy paperwork. All of it is backed by state-of-the-art satellite technology. The second product that I am proud of is HERizon. As a husband and as a father of two wonderful daughters, I always felt that there is a need to take care of the women in our lives who take care of us so much. This comprehensive policy addresses critical illnesses, maternal and reproductive health, wellness,

and other key areas, empowering women with financial security throughout their life stages.

**With the rise of insurtech and digital disruption, how do you maintain a balance between agility and stability?**

For me, the answer lies in running two tracks simultaneously. One is your core business, which demands stability, consistency, and discipline. The other is your innovation engine, which needs speed, boldness, and a willingness to take risks.

Agility is vital because the world is moving fast. Customer expectations are shifting, technology is evolving, and new players are entering the space with fresh ideas. You can't afford to stay still. But if you chase every shiny new thing, you risk losing the foundation that makes your business sustainable.

So, here's what we do: we keep our base strong and our thinking flexible. We invest in robust processes, governance, and risk management to ensure the business runs smoothly. At the same time, we empower teams to experiment, prototype, and build outside the traditional framework. We give them space to test, fail, learn, and try again. And most importantly, we disrupt ourselves. I always tell my team, if we don't challenge our own model, someone else will. So, we look at how we can reinvent from within, whether it's digital claims, embedded insurance, or AI-based underwriting. Stability gives you the strength to grow. Agility gives you the speed to evolve. You need both to thrive. And the secret is knowing when to shift gears, when to speed up, when to hold steady, and when to let go.

#### PEOPLE & CULTURE

**You're known for being a people-centric leader. How do you cultivate a culture of empathy and empowerment?**

I genuinely believe that any organisation is only as strong as its people. Culture is not built by policies. It's built on how people feel when they come to work every day. And for me, that starts with trust. Once you hire good people, you must trust them. Give them ownership, give them space, and most importantly, provide them with the freedom to fail and learn. Micromanagement is the enemy of empowerment. I don't believe in controlling every move. I believe in setting the direction and then letting my people chart the course. Empathy is the other pillar. It's about listening with intent, understanding what people are saying, and doing something about it. Leaders need to create an environment where voices are heard, even if they challenge the status quo. That's where fundamental transformation comes from.

At BAGIC, we've tried to embed this in our DNA. Whether it's through open forums, employee town halls, or mentorship circles, we've created multiple touchpoints where people can speak up, share ideas, and feel seen. Also, I try to lead by example. If I can be vulnerable, share my experiences and show up with honesty, it creates psychological safety for others to do the same. That's when true empowerment happens, not just when people are allowed to lead, but when they feel safe to do so. People don't remember your achievements and landmarks. They remember how you made them feel. And that's the real legacy a leader can leave behind.





**FAILURE DOESN'T  
DEFINE YOU; HOW  
YOU RESPOND  
TO IT DOES. I  
ALWAYS SAY, FAIL  
FAST, BUT LEARN  
FASTER**

**What qualities do you look for in the next generation of leaders?**

For me, leadership is not about titles or designations. It's about mindset. When I look at the next generation of leaders, I'm not just looking at how well someone performs on paper; I'm looking at how they think, how they act, and most importantly, how they make others feel. First, I look for curiosity. The world is changing fast, and anyone who's content with the status quo will be left behind. Great leaders ask questions. They challenge norms. They're not afraid to say, "I don't know", because that's often the first step to learning something new.

Second, resilience. I admire those who've faced setbacks and come back stronger. Failure doesn't define you; how you respond to it does. I always say, fail fast, but learn faster. Leaders who've been through the grind tend to develop better perspective and empathy. Third, empathy. I can't stress this enough. Technical skills can be taught. Empathy cannot. And in a world that's becoming more digital, human connection is becoming more valuable. If you can understand your people, your customers, your partners, you'll always have the edge.

Lastly, but most importantly, I look for integrity. Do you do the right thing even when no one's watching? This is a zero-compromise area. That's the test of real character. And in leadership, character matters more than charisma. So yes, I look at attitude over aptitude. Passion over perfection. And people who don't just want to lead from the front, but are willing to lift others with them. That's the kind of leadership that builds lasting impact.

**Can you share a story that exemplifies your leadership style or philosophy in action?**

One story that stands out is how we created our internal Leadership Clubs at BAGIC. These weren't just symbolic initiatives. They were designed to identify, nurture, and accelerate the journeys of young professionals we saw as having potential, people we believed could become future CXOs.

Now, here's the thing: we didn't keep them in their comfort zones. We gave them challenging assignments, put them in geographies far from home, exposed them to functions they weren't familiar with, and sometimes, we intentionally placed them in roles where success wasn't guaranteed. It wasn't to test them; it was to grow them. And as expected, not all of them succeeded immediately. Some stumbled. Some questioned whether they were ready. But that's where the real learning happened. We ensured they had mentors, resources, and most importantly, the psychological safety to fail, reflect, and try again.

And when they came out the other side, they were sharper, stronger, and more self-aware. That's my leadership style in action. I don't believe in just assigning KPIs and reviewing dashboards. I believe in creating conditions where people can stretch, fall, and rise higher than they ever imagined. I step in when they need me, I step back when they don't, and I'm always in the background, cheering for them. Leadership is not about control. It's about creating possibilities. And if I can do that for even one person every year, then I believe I'm doing my job right.

**PERSONAL JOURNEY & PHILOSOPHY**

**Your journey to becoming the CEO of the organisation is truly inspiring. What were the pivotal moments along the way?**

It's one thing to have ambition, and another to chase it every single day. Very early on in my career, I made it clear to myself and others that I wanted to become the MD and CEO of this organisation. It wasn't about arrogance; it was about clarity. Once I said it out loud, it became my mission. And everything I did after that was aligned with that goal. I took up roles that challenged me, often far from my comfort zone. I worked across various offices and locations, meeting customers from diverse backgrounds, including large corporations and farmers in rural India. There were days with no weekends, nights without sleep, and moments when the target felt too far.

But I never let go of the bigger picture. But every time I hit that low, I reminded myself why I started. And each setback made me stronger, sharper, more grounded. What truly made this journey possible, though, was my family and especially my wife. While I was building a career, she held everything else steady and took care of my lovely daughters. Their belief in me, even during the most challenging phases, kept me going. And yes, failures played a considerable role. They taught me lessons that no success ever could. I learned how to listen more effectively, adapt more quickly, and maintain a humble attitude. So, when I finally did become CEO, it wasn't a surprise. It was a culmination. A journey of intention, grit, and resilience, and one I'm incredibly grateful for.

**Who or what has had the biggest influence on your leadership style?**

I truly believe that leadership is not something you're born with; it's something you evolve into, shaped by people, experiences, and even the tough days when nothing seems to go your way. For me, the earliest influence was my father. Our conversations while growing up weren't lectures; they were stories, questions, and reflections. He taught me the value of integrity, simplicity, and above all, humility.

Those values have stayed with me throughout my journey. They remind me every day that no matter how high you rise, you're never above learning or curiosity. My mother was my first and most fantastic teacher of empathy. During my formative years, she embodied compassion in every action, leaving a lasting impression on how I understand and practice empathy today. But beyond that, I've always made it a point to learn from everyone I meet. Colleagues, customers, frontline staff, and even people outside the industry. Everyone has a story, a lesson, a perspective. Sometimes, the biggest leadership lessons don't come from books or boardrooms. They come from a customer who challenges your thinking, or a junior team member who asks a question you hadn't considered.

Over the years, I've had the privilege of working with many inspiring leaders. Some taught me how to lead with vision, others showed me how to stay calm in chaos. And some, through their mistakes, showed me what not to do. However, the one consistent

influence has been my habit of reflecting deeply after every conversation, every challenge, and every success and failure. At the end of every day, I pause, reflect, and ask myself, "What did I learn today?" That inner dialogue shapes how I lead and how I grow. So, my leadership style? It's a mosaic, built over time, shaped by people, polished by experience, and always a work in progress.

#### **What keeps you grounded amidst the pressures of corporate leadership?**

In leadership, it's very easy to get carried away, either by success or by stress. However, I've learned that staying grounded is not just beneficial for your mental health, but it's also essential for effective decision-making, strong relationships, and lasting impact.

One principle that helps me is simple: treat success and failure with the same lens. I try not to over-celebrate the wins or over-analyse the losses. Of course, both are important, but you can't let either define you. If you start thinking of success as proof that you've "arrived," you stop learning. And if you treat every setback as a personal failure, you lose the ability to move forward with clarity. I've had plenty of both. Some of my ideas worked wonders. Others didn't go anywhere. But I try to look at everything as data, as inputs for how to improve, rather than judgments on who I am. What also keeps me grounded is the constant reminder that I'm just a part of something much bigger. I'm here to serve our citizens, our people, our partners. That sense of purpose helps keep the ego in check. And of course, my family plays a big role. They don't treat me like a CEO. At home, I'm just Tapan or Papa. That reality check, those moments of normalcy, are incredibly grounding. Also, I turn to mindfulness and reflection. A few quiet moments in the morning, or reading something that shifts perspective, all help me stay centred. Because at the end of the day, titles fade. What lasts is how you treated people, how you made decisions, and how true you stayed to yourself.

#### **You hold many positions across the industry and more. Do you get any time for yourself? What is your passion outside of work?**

People often ask me, How do you manage it all? The CEO role, industry committees, and external engagements can sound overwhelming. But for me, it never feels like a burden. I don't look at these responsibilities as "extra work." I see them as opportunities to contribute to something larger than myself. Being part of the GI Council and other forums enables me to shape policy, champion industry transformation, and advocate for greater inclusivity. It energises me. Because at the end of the day, everything we do, impacts someone's life and society at large. That's a powerful motivator.

That said, I'm also deeply aware of the need for balance. And my biggest source of balance, peace, and happiness is my family. I travel a lot, often 25 out of 30 days in a month. So, when I'm home, I try to be fully present. No calls, no distractions, just time with the people who remind me of who I am, beyond the designation. Outside of that, I'm passionate about reading, especially books that make me reflect. I find great joy in spiritual practice and moments of solitude. Over the years, I've also taken to mindfulness and yoga, which help me reset mentally and emotionally.

My belief is simple: if you don't take care of your inner world,

the outer world will eventually catch up with you. So yes, I make time for what fuels me, and that's what keeps me going, with heart and clarity.

#### **SOCIAL IMPACT & RESPONSIBILITY**

##### **How is BAGIC contributing towards the aim of insurance for all by 2047?**

This vision, 'Insurance for All by 2047' is not just a policy goal. For me, it's a personal mission. It means every Indian, regardless of where they live or what they earn, has access to the safety net that insurance offers. That's a big dream, but one we are determined to make real.

At BAGIC, we've always believed that protection should not be a privilege, but a right. To enable this, we've made significant strides in building a deep and wide physical and digital presence. One of our proudest innovations has been the Virtual Sales Office (VSO), a single-person phygital office that brings insurance to the remotest parts of the country. We were among the first to introduce this idea. We then expanded this with our GEO initiative by setting up physical offices in tier 2 and tier towns. Our goal is simple: BAGIC in every home, and for that, we need to be present in every district. We want to be not just visible, but accessible. True inclusion occurs only when people in the most remote corners of India can walk into an office or pull up their phone and get insured in minutes.

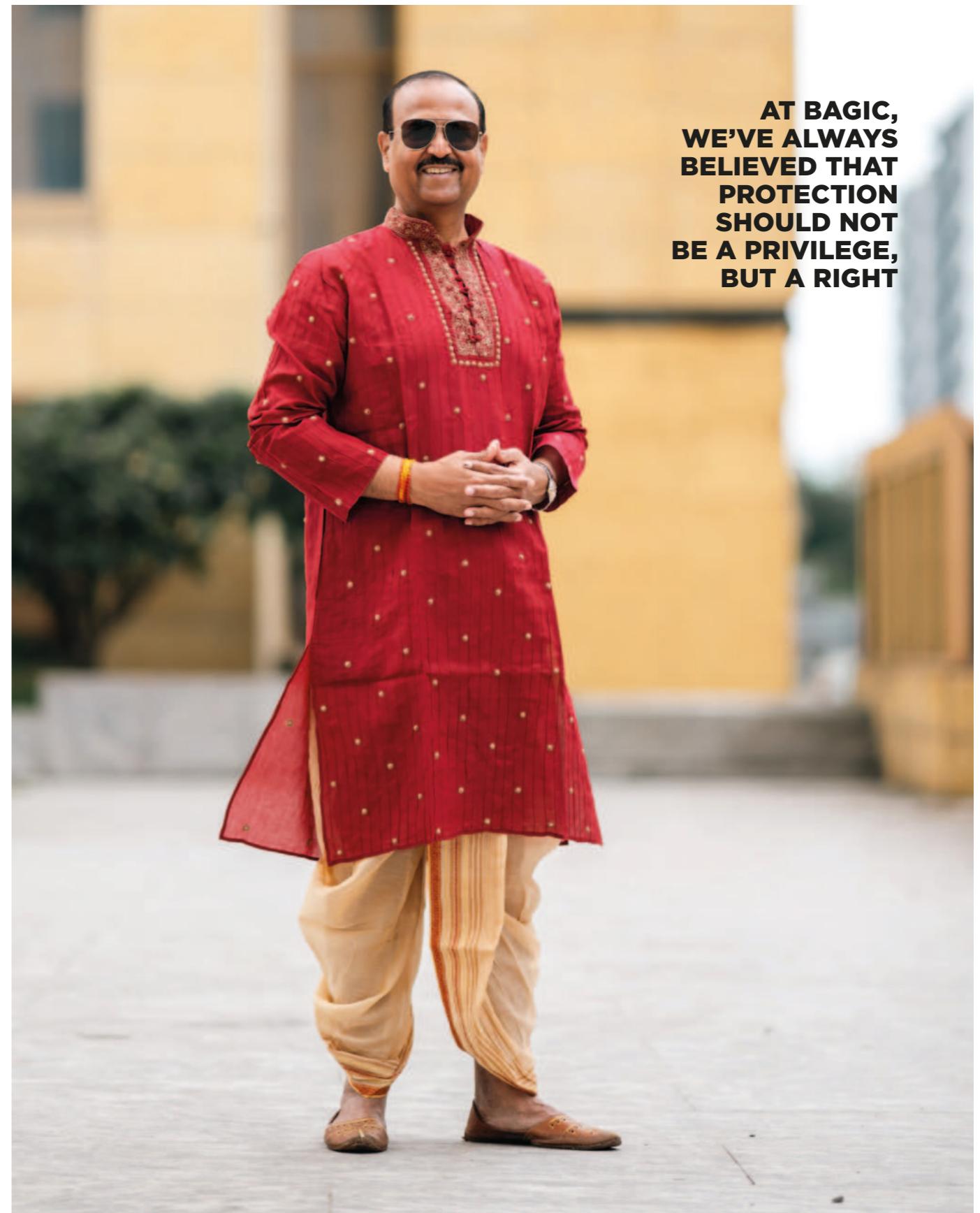
We also actively participate in government schemes, like crop and rural health insurance, because we believe that's where the impact is the deepest. These programmes don't just offer cover, they restore dignity, rebuild lives, and reinforce trust in the system. This journey is not about selling more policies. It's about building resilience. It's about ensuring that no Indian slips into poverty because of a hospital bill, a cyclone, or a crop failure. That's what Insurance for All truly means. And we're all in.

#### **What's your take on the role of insurance in building resilience against climate change and disasters?**

Climate change is no longer some distant possibility; it's here, and it's disruptive. Whether it's sudden cloudbursts, unseasonal rains, prolonged droughts or heatwaves, these events are impacting lives and livelihoods every single day. And what worries me the most is this: those who are hit hardest are often the least protected. This is where insurance becomes more than just a product. It becomes a tool for resilience. A bridge between disaster and recovery. It empowers individuals, families, and businesses to recover with dignity and respect. But for that to happen, we must move beyond traditional models.

One solution we're incredibly proud of at BAGIC is ClimateSafe, our parametric insurance offering. It's built for a world where the weather no longer plays by the rules. Here's how it works: if the temperature goes beyond a set level or rainfall exceeds a threshold, the policy pays out automatically. Minimal to zero claims paperwork, fully digital. No waiting. No ambiguity. It's fast, fair, and future-ready.

This type of product is particularly beneficial for salaried persons, gig workers, event organisers, and small businesses whose



**AT BAGIC,  
WE'VE ALWAYS  
BELIEVED THAT  
PROTECTION  
SHOULD NOT  
BE A PRIVILEGE,  
BUT A RIGHT**



income is heavily dependent on climate conditions. It gives them confidence to keep going.

But we need more awareness. Today, 95% of SMEs remain uninsured, and that's a massive risk to our economy. Because every time a natural disaster hits, we not only lose assets, but we also lose momentum. Studies show that uninsured disaster losses pull India's GDP down by up to 2% annually. Insurance should be at the heart of India's climate resilience strategy. I have proposed a parametric scheme for SME that should be made mandatory so that they remain resilient in the face of calamities. We need a collective will, across industry, government, and civil society, to make protection the norm, not the exception.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

##### **What does success look like for you over the next five years?**

As I mentioned earlier, this indicates that we should continue serving the citizens of our country in the best way possible, reach out to as many Indians as we can, and extend our coverage to the last mile, staying ahead of the curve. Our vision to reach every Indian household remains unwavering. Over the next five years, we are committed to accelerating this journey by constantly reinventing ourselves and strengthening our position as a technology-driven organisation. We also aim to continue our industry-first initiatives and build an even stronger bond of trust with our customers. We strive to be present in every district of India, and this is how we will make the right strides towards Insurance for All by 2047.

##### **If you could rewrite one rule of the insurance industry, what would it be—and why?**

If I could change one thing in the insurance industry, it would be to make affordable, inclusive, and transparent health insurance a fundamental right, not a privilege. Because health isn't a luxury, and neither should protection be. We need to stop thinking of insurance as a product and start treating it as a public good that requires deeper collaboration across insurers, healthcare providers, regulators, and the government. Right now, too many people are slipping through the cracks, either because insurance is too complex, too costly, or not designed with their realities in mind.

One rule I would push for is zero GST on senior citizen health insurance, and a reduced rate for others. Ironically, we tax something so essential at a rate of 18%. We should be incentivising protection, not discouraging it. Another change I'd champion is greater transparency in healthcare pricing. Customers today are often caught between unclear hospital bills and disputes over claims. We need to create a system where the customer isn't left confused or anxious at the same time; they need reassurance the most.

**I SEE GREATER COLLABORATION AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND A MUCH MORE CONCERTED EFFORT TO TAKE THE SECTOR FORWARD**

And finally, I encourage a shift in how the industry views innovation, not just as tech upgrades, but as tools to make insurance more straightforward, empathetic, and accessible. So, if I could rewrite a rule, it wouldn't be buried in fine print. It would be printed boldly across our approach, put the customer at the centre of everything and build the system around them.

##### **What's one thing you wish more people understood about insurance?**

I wish people realised that insurance is not an expense, it's an enabler. It's not about fear, it's about freedom. The freedom to live your life, pursue your dreams, and face the future with confidence, because you know that if something goes wrong, you're not alone. That's what insurance truly is. Most people tend to buy insurance only because it's mandated, like third-party motor cover, or they buy it after they've had a personal scare. But that's like buckling your seatbelt after the accident. Insurance should be a proactive, conscious decision to protect yourself and your loved ones. And the truth is, it's often much more affordable than people think. For less than the cost of a cup of tea a day, you can secure yourself and your loved ones against unforeseen circumstances.

I also wish more people understood that insurance isn't just for the wealthy. It's meant to protect the vulnerable. So, my message is this: don't wait for a rainy day to buy an umbrella. The time to insure is before the need arises. Because when the storm hits and life is what it is, it often does, insurance can be the most powerful form of care, compassion, and continuity. Insurance gives you the freedom to live with dignity and peace of mind.

##### **What legacy do you hope to leave behind, not just in business, but as a leader?**

For me, legacy has never been about building a name. It's about building people, building trust, and building impact. If, long after I'm gone, someone says, "He made a difference to my life", that's the legacy I want to leave behind. As a leader, I've always believed that your most significant responsibility is to create more leaders. Not followers. Not fans. Leaders. People who believe in themselves, who act with empathy, and who carry forward the spirit of purpose-driven work. I'm incredibly proud that many individuals from BAGIC have gone on to become CEOs, CXOs, and change-makers across the industry. That's the kind of legacy that matters, not personal titles, but the lives you've helped shape.

I also hope I'm remembered as someone who never lost sight of the human side of business. Someone who took every chance to simplify complexity, to bring comfort where there was confusion, and to make people smile, even on the tough days.

And yes, if someone walks away from a conversation with me feeling a little lighter, a little more hopeful, I consider that a win. Because in the end, leadership is not just about strategy and results, it's about energy. What matters is how you make people feel, how you show up, & how you lift others, quietly and consistently. So, my legacy? I hope it's one of purpose, people, and positivity. Of doing well by doing good. And of building something bigger than myself, something that will continue to protect, empower, and inspire, long after I've moved on. □

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# INTELLIGENT CARS

Unexpected Ways  
Your Car Is Learning  
from Its Environment

WORDS

**SUBIND KUMAR**

VICE-PRESIDENT AND  
COUNTRY MANAGER, SANDISK

The cars of today are starting to look drastically different from their predecessors. Yes, we may still start the ignition, push the pedal, turn the steering wheel, and get going, but that is where the similarity ends. With the advent of driverless cars, the difference is even starker.

Today's cars rely on a host of new world applications around safety, connectivity, and entertainment. From high-definition 3D maps and advanced driver-assist systems (ADAS) to data recorders, enhanced infotainment, and over-the-air updates, these applications require massive computing power in the backend and onboard data storage for real-

time edge computing. Real-time, in-vehicle storage is crucial to mitigate latency and connectivity issues, especially for safety-critical applications such as rearview camera systems.

To function seamlessly, vehicles must observe and adapt to the world around them in real time. From traffic signals to weather changes, modern cars are constantly gathering and responding to information. They are designed to anticipate, assist, and communicate with other vehicles and the environment, often without us noticing.

Here are five surprising ways your car is already connected to the environment around it:

## WHEN ROADS SPEAK, YOUR CAR LISTENS (V2I)

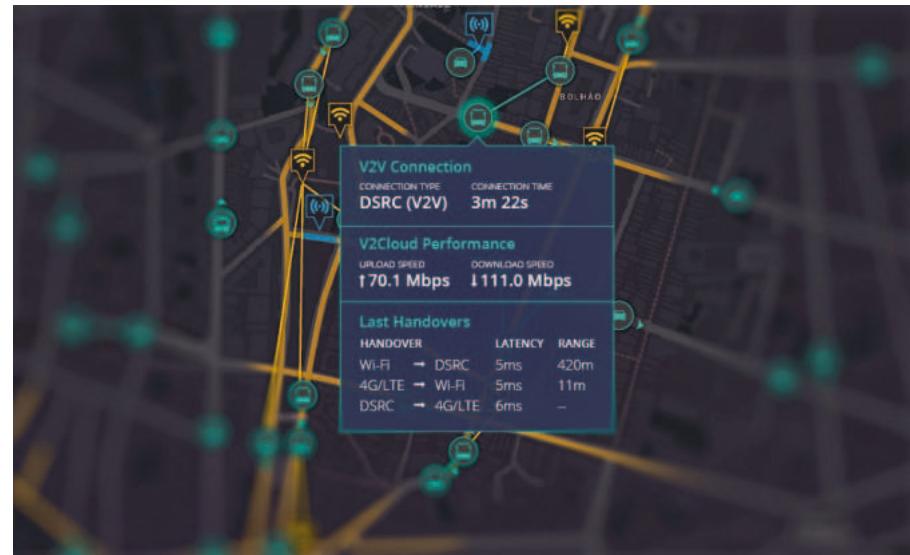
When you drive on a road, your car may interact with road infrastructure, including lane markings, traffic signals, or road signs. The wireless exchange of data between vehicles and road infrastructure is enabled by a Vehicle-to-Infrastructure (V2I) communication system that allows for real-time decision-making.

Has the signal changed? Are you straying too close to the divider? Knowing such insights can help the driver make safe and efficient driving decisions. For example, if the light is about to turn green the car may slow down rather than come to a complete halt at a stop light, which will help save fuel, and ensure smoother traffic flow.

## TALKING TO OTHER VEHICLES (V2V)

Since there are typically several vehicles on the road at a given time, the ability to interact with other vehicles is crucial. Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V) communication systems allows vehicles to constantly monitor and respond to other vehicles in the vicinity. For instance, if one car applies a brake suddenly to avoid a pothole, other cars approaching the spot can be warned to change lanes if needed. V2V technology enables cars to wirelessly transmit data up to ten times per second for speed, direction, and braking.

This live, on-the-go, communication may help prevent accidents and lay the groundwork for a future where cars drive themselves.



## YOUR CARS CAN SEE TOO (POWERED BY SENSORS AND DATA)

Today's cars come packed with smart sensors, cameras, and radar that act as smart eyes and ears, quietly scanning around them, and not just what's ahead. From spotting a pedestrian who is still in the direct line of sight to identifying potholes to spotting a car in driver's blind spot, this technology acts like an invisible co-pilot. It helps making lane shifts smoother, parking easier, and driving safer. Moreover, by sharing this data (anonymously) with manufacturers and city planners, it is possible to improve road systems for everyone.

## IT CAN ANTICIPATE CHANGES IN WEATHER

From an intense mist to blurry patches of black ice, built-in sensors in your car can potentially detect these subtle shifts long before they catch your attention. Your car can track rain, fog, falling temperatures, and rising humidity - quietly fine tuning how your vehicle responds to keep you safe.

That could mean activating wipers automatically, preheating the battery on cold days, or even adjusting traction control on slick surfaces. Peer to peer networks also allow your car to send a quick warning to other vehicles in the vicinity about trouble on the road ahead.

## IT LEARNS AND TEACHES (CROWD-SOURCED NAVIGATION DATA)

When your GPS app suggests a faster route or avoids a traffic jam, it's the result of thousands (or millions) of cars sharing real-time movement data.

While keeping your personal information secure, the navigation system in your car quietly shares real-time updates about traffic slowdowns, accidents, and usual road speeds. It's like your vehicle is silently teaming up with others online to create smarter, smoother drives for everyone on the road.

## WELCOME TO THE ERA OF THE INTELLIGENT CAR

Today's vehicles aren't just electric, they're evolving, always adapting, and becoming more connected with every mile. They are

absorbing insights from the traffic around them, the shifting weather, the city's rhythm, and from every vehicle nearby. Technology, particularly storage, is a key enabler for these significant advancements. Companies such as Sandisk, are constantly innovating to provide storage solutions to meet this intelligent vehicle evolution.

The next time you're waiting at a red light or cruising along a quiet road, know this: your car isn't just driving—It's analysing, predicting, and working behind the scenes to make your journey smarter and safer. □



## INSIDE

*Dior's Fall elegance  
meets desert-chic  
flair as fashion  
blends classic  
tailoring, bold  
femininity, and  
sporty nostalgia.*



2025

FALL

COLLECTION

BY

DIOR

The DIOR 2025 Fall Collection for Men presents a refined blend of classic tailoring and modern minimalism, capturing elegance through structured silhouettes and luxury.



A sleek, minimalist black overcoat paired with relaxed black trousers and clean white sneakers creates a look that's both timeless and modern. The sharp silhouette and understated tones evoke quiet confidence, making this ensemble perfect for those who appreciate refined style with a contemporary, effortless twist.

:::::::::::  
Soft textures meet structured design in this cozy, neutral-toned look. A plush beige zip-up jacket pairs effortlessly with tailored brown corduroy trousers and clean sneakers, offering warmth and understated sophistication. Perfect for fall, this ensemble balances comfort with modern elegance in a palette that's both calming and contemporary.





Classic cool meets modern sophistication in a sleek black bomber jacket layered over a cream cable-knit turtleneck. The textured knit adds warmth and contrast, while tailored grey trousers provide a clean, structured silhouette. Finished with neutral sneakers, the ensemble is effortlessly stylish—perfect for transitional weather and refined everyday wear.

Tailoring is reimagined with a modern sensibility in this camel double-breasted suit. Clean lines and refined structure meet understated luxury, complemented by a crisp shirt and minimalist white sneakers. The ensemble strikes a balance between sophistication and ease, offering a fresh, contemporary approach to timeless menswear.



|||||||||||

This sophisticated outfit showcases a black vest over a crisp white shirt, complemented by tailored black trousers and smart black shoes. A dark tie adds a refined touch, creating a timeless and polished aesthetic perfect for formal occasions or elegant everyday wear. □



2025

FALL

COLLECTION

BY

DIOR

For Dior Women's Fall 2025, anticipation mounts for a collection poised to redefine the contours of modern femininity



.....  
A tailored utility jumpsuit in a serene linen speaks volumes. It's perfectly accented by the iconic Dior Book Tote, its botanical artistry a testament to refined taste. Paired with chic espadrille sandals, this ensemble embodies effortless sophistication, blending comfort with an undeniable touch of polished, modern allure.



Channeling resort elegance, this look pairs a crisp white tied top with a voluminous midi skirt featuring a captivating blue and white tropical print. The exquisite Dior bag, echoing the skirt's motif, adds a touch of signature luxury. Grounded by woven espadrille sandals, it's a sophisticated ensemble perfect for sun-drenched escapes.

Embrace garden party chic with this ethereal dress, blooming with delicate floral artistry. Its flattering A-line silhouette is elegantly cinched by a slender, tasseled belt, accentuating the waist. Paired with charming espadrille flats, this look embodies a sophisticated lightness and timeless allure, perfect for sun-drenched occasions.



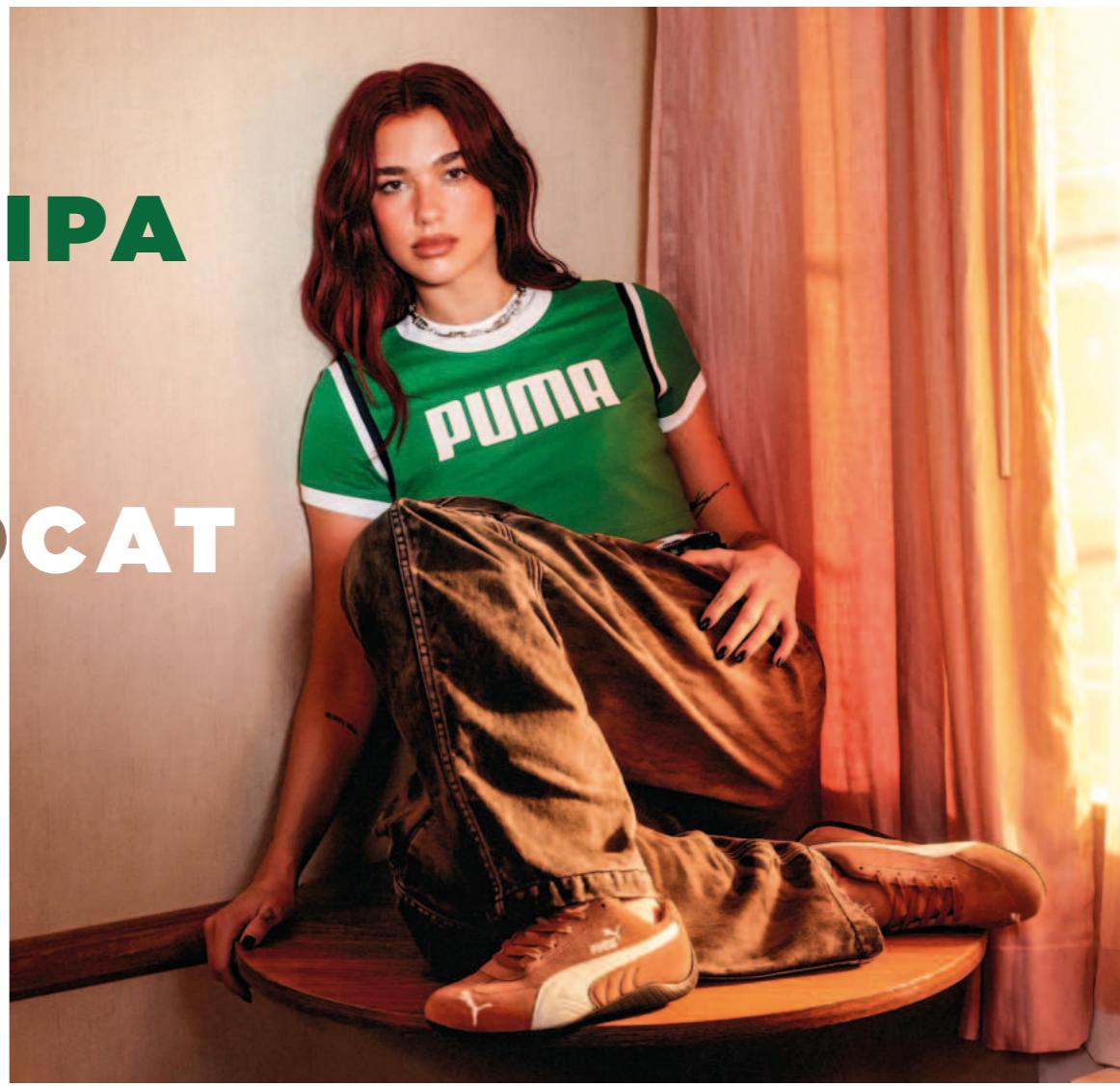
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Embracing dark romance with this striking look. An exquisitely embroidered coat, adorned with intricate floral motifs, drapes over a sheer, layered ensemble, hinting at intriguing depth. Paired with bold platform sandals, it's a confident fusion of bohemian artistry and modern edge, perfectly encapsulating a captivating, enigmatic style. □



# DUA LIPA X PUMA SPEEDCAT

Dua Lipa revs up her desert adventure, showcasing the iconic PUMA Speedcat. This journey celebrates the sneaker's 25th anniversary, blending racing heritage with spontaneous exploration on the open road.



**T**here's a certain allure to the open road, a call to adventure that few can resist. And who better to answer it than Dua Lipa, effortlessly cool as she pilots a classic car through sun-drenched desert landscapes, her PUMA Speedcats dictating the rhythm of her journey. This isn't just a campaign; it's an ode to spontaneous discovery, a reminder that the most memorable moments often lie between destinations.

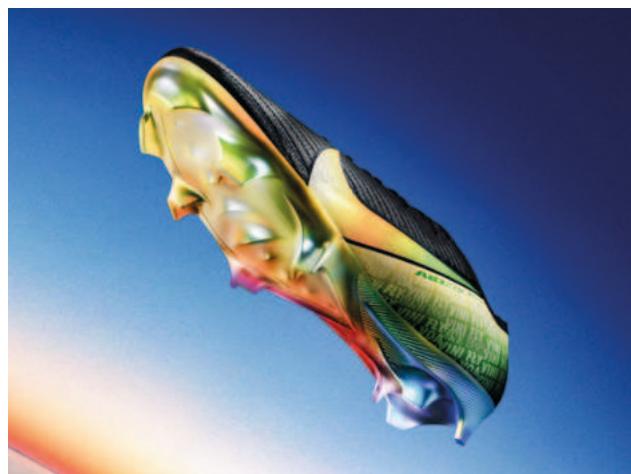
As she navigates dusty diners and iconic pit stops, Lipa not only highlights the latest Speedcat in rich brown but also embodies the very essence of the shoe's legacy. Reintroduced for its 25th anniversary, the Speedcat is more than just a sneaker; it's a symbol of bold exploration, deeply rooted in racing heritage yet seamlessly adapted for modern wanderlust. With new "Haute Coffee" and "Royal Blue" editions, plus a Ballerina style, arriving April 10, 2025, it's clear this iconic silhouette continues to accelerate into new horizons. □



# VINI JR. AND NIKE UNVEIL BOLD NEW PLAYER EDITION

Nike celebrates Vini Jr.'s rise to stardom with a dazzling, high-performance Player Edition Mercurial boot rooted in Brazilian flair.

**V**ini Jr. has officially entered the elite circle of footballers with his first Nike Player Edition boot — the Mercurial Vapor Vini Jr. This striking release celebrates his meteoric rise from Rio's streets to global stardom with a design that's as bold and fast as his game. The boot's iridescent Color of Speed reflects his explosive pace, while the color gradient — red and yellow for Flamengo, blue, green, and yellow for Brazil — pays homage to his journey. "Vini Fly, Vini Voa" is emblazoned across the upper, nodding to his signature speed and style. Performance-wise, it's top-tier: a Zoom Air unit, cascading stud plate, Gripknit toe for control, and Flyknit collar for secure comfort. "I've played in Mercurials for years — even in two Champions League finals. There was no need to change what already made me fly," Vini said. The Nike Mercurial Vapor Vini Jr. Player Edition is available globally from May 26 via [nike.com](http://nike.com) and select retailers. □



# INDULGE

AUTOMOBILES | WATCHES | GAMING | AVIATION | LUXURY

## INSIDE

*Indulge in pure luxury—from powerful drives and timeless watches to private jets and sky-high escapes.*



INDULGE FIRST IMPRESSIONS BENTLEY BENTAYGA SPEED

# GRACE IN MOTION

The new Bentley Bentayga Speed is a blend of luxury, power, and heritage

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS





**B**entleys are known for making bespoke vehicles which doesn't just take you from point A to B but transforms every journey into an event. That's exactly what the new Bentley Bentayga Speed promises as well. It is an exquisite blend of craftsmanship, raw power, and SUV appeal. Revamped for 2025, Bentley's flagship SUV isn't just fast — it's the carmaker's fastest SUV to date. But speed is only part of the story. With design cues inspired by Bentley's rich motorsport history and a cabin that rivals luxury yacht lounges, the new Bentayga Speed is where opulence meets performance.

#### BENTLEY'S FASTEST SUV JUST GOT EVEN BETTER

With a top speed of 190 mph and a 0-60 mph sprint time of just 3.9 seconds, this is officially the most powerful Bentayga ever created. At its heart lies a fettled version of Bentley's 6.0-litre W12 twin-turbocharged engine, pushing out a healthy 635 PS (626 bhp) and 900 Nm. That's sportscar performance with five seats and a leather-trimmed picnic hamper in the back. Numbers only tell half the story. Where the new Bentayga Speed truly excels is in how it delivers that performance. The SUV's dynamic ride system, active all-wheel drive, and recalibrated Sport mode ensure that all that power is delivered in typical Bentley Speed style.





## THE HANDCRAFTED INTERIOR FEATURES A UNIQUE SPEED COLOR SPLIT, COMBINING RICH ALCANTARA WITH SUPPLE LEATHER ACROSS SEATS, DOORS, AND STEERING WHEEL

### DESIGN INSPIRED BY RACING ROYALTY

Drawing on Bentley's racing heritage, the new Bentayga Speed features design elements that tips its hat to past glories while looking decisively futuristic. The styling is bold yet elegant — everything you'd expect from a marque that's been handcrafting luxury vehicles for over a century.

A dramatic new front bumper, dark-tinted grille, body-colored side skirts, and sexy-looking 22-inch wheels make an unmistakable statement. The tail section looks equally athletic, with an elongated tailgate spoiler and oval-shaped exhaust pipes delivering a brutal soundtrack.

New to the 2025 model is the optional Blackline Specification, which ditches chrome in favor of sleek black accents for an even more aggressive look. Think of it as the automotive equivalent of a tailored tuxedo—subtle, stylish, and classy.

### A LUXURIOUS SANCTUARY INSIDE

Step inside the Bentayga Speed and you're enveloped in luxury and technology. The handcrafted interior features a unique Speed color split, combining rich Alcantara with supple leather across seats, doors, and steering wheel. Diamond-quilted stitching, Speed embroidery on the seat backs, and a



new optional Dark Chrome Package further elevate the opulence. Every detail feels bespoke, from the knurled metal accents to the ambient lighting options that set the tone for every drive. Bentley's acclaimed rotating display—offering the choice between a digital touchscreen, classic analog dials, or a veneer panel—ensures the cabin feels like a tailored suit rather than just another tech-laden car interior. There's even a new Mulliner Colour Specification, allowing for personalisation in the form of an expanded palette of interior tones, including the striking Mandarin and Beluga duo-tone trim. It's less "driver's seat" and more "private jet on wheels."

### PERFORMANCE MEETS POISE

Despite its commanding performance, the Bentayga Speed never feels all over the place. Bentley's Dynamic Ride system features the world's first 48-volt electric active roll control system and keeps the SUV flat and composed through corners, while still delivering a cosseting ride in Comfort mode. Drivers can toggle between multiple drive modes, tailoring everything from suspension

to throttle response. And it's not just about speed in a straight line. The recalibrated Sport mode sharpens steering, boosts engine response, and enhances exhaust character, making it feel nimble enough to dance through mountain roads despite its substantial size.

### TAILORED TO YOU

Perhaps the most compelling feature of the new Bentayga Speed is its personalisation potential. Bentley customers are known for their discerning tastes, and this SUV looks ready to meet them. Whether it's the choice of over 80 exterior paint colors, the ability to match the cabin trim to your yacht, or getting your family crest embroidered into the headrests, the level of customisation available through Bentley's Mulliner division is unmatched.

### THE PINNACLE OF SUV LUXURY

The new Bentayga Speed doesn't just raise the bar for what an ultra-luxury SUV can be, it resets the whole scale. It offers a fantastic blend of performance, refinement, and

personalisation. Whether it's chauffeuring VIPs to a black-tie gala or carving up an alpine pass with the windows down and the V12 roaring, the Bentayga Speed should make every moment feel extraordinary. In a world increasingly obsessed with minimalism and function, Bentley reminds us of the beauty in opulence and the thrill of traveling in style.

### A VEHICLE WITH A BROADER MISSION

Bentley isn't just concerned with brute performance and luxury these days. The carmaker is committed to becoming end-to-end carbon neutral by 2030, and the Bentayga Speed is part of that transitional journey. While it still uses a traditional petrol powertrain, it showcases Bentley's meticulous engineering and aerodynamic enhancements that help it achieve its performance goals without wasteful excess.

As Bentley pushes toward its Beyond100 strategy, expect more hybrid and all-electric Bentleys that maintain the same level of craftsmanship and capability the Speed represents. ▀



# BOLD MOVES IN QUIET LUXURY

Comfort to controversy: the BMW X7 pushes the envelope in all directions

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS PHOTOGRAPHY JASMEET KOHLI

FROM CONTROVERSY TO CONVERSATION, BMW's design language has been at the centre of it all. From Chris Bangle's controversial flame surfacing design to the newest design language called Forwardism, BMW sets its trends, especially in the case of its elite models like the i7, XM and this - the BMW X7. In the era of opulence and excess, the BMW X7 makes a bold statement.

The X7 has been around for a while, but it still manages to turn heads. That's an advantage of having a radical design. Standing apart from the crowd makes you unique as well. A big discerning factor is the large Kidney grilles - a staple among modern BMWs. It gels well with the SUV's imposing dimensions and contributes to its massive road presence. The M Sport trim adds a dash of sportiness with its striking 21-inch wheels, and the black trim on the bodywork contrasts well with our test car's Mineral White Metallic paint job. That said, we feel black surrounds on the kidney grille instead of brushed silver would have blended well with the rest of the car.





The magic is inside the cabin. You are greeted with plush luxury that feels modern, unlike the Art Deco interiors inside the more opulent BMW XM. The Piano Black and Merino Tartufo upholstery adds a touch of class (you can opt for Merino Ivory White or Merino Black interiors as well) with brushed aluminium trim running across the cabin. Also, Merino here refers to super soft Merino leather, which makes the seats supremely comfortable. In terms of visual and tactile feel, BMW has nailed it with the X7's cabin.

Another highlight inside the cabin is the curved floating display consisting of a 14.9-inch touchscreen-infotainment screen and a 12.3-inch driver's instrument cluster. Both impress with their high-resolution display, touch response, and intuitive user interface. There is no dearth of features with powered everything, a Sky lounge panoramic glass sunroof, 5-zone climate control, 16-speaker Harman Kardon surround sound and a split powered tailgate. The only missing link, in our opinion, is massage seats for the middle row passengers. That would make the interior package unbeatable.

The BMW X7 is available with a 3.0-litre petrol and diesel engine options. While the diesel impresses with its endless supply of torque, the petrol motor impresses with its fine balance between performance and refinement and makes the X7 a proper 'Gentleman's Express.' The motor delivers 381PS and 520Nm to all four wheels via BMW's proprietary xDrive all-wheel-drive system.



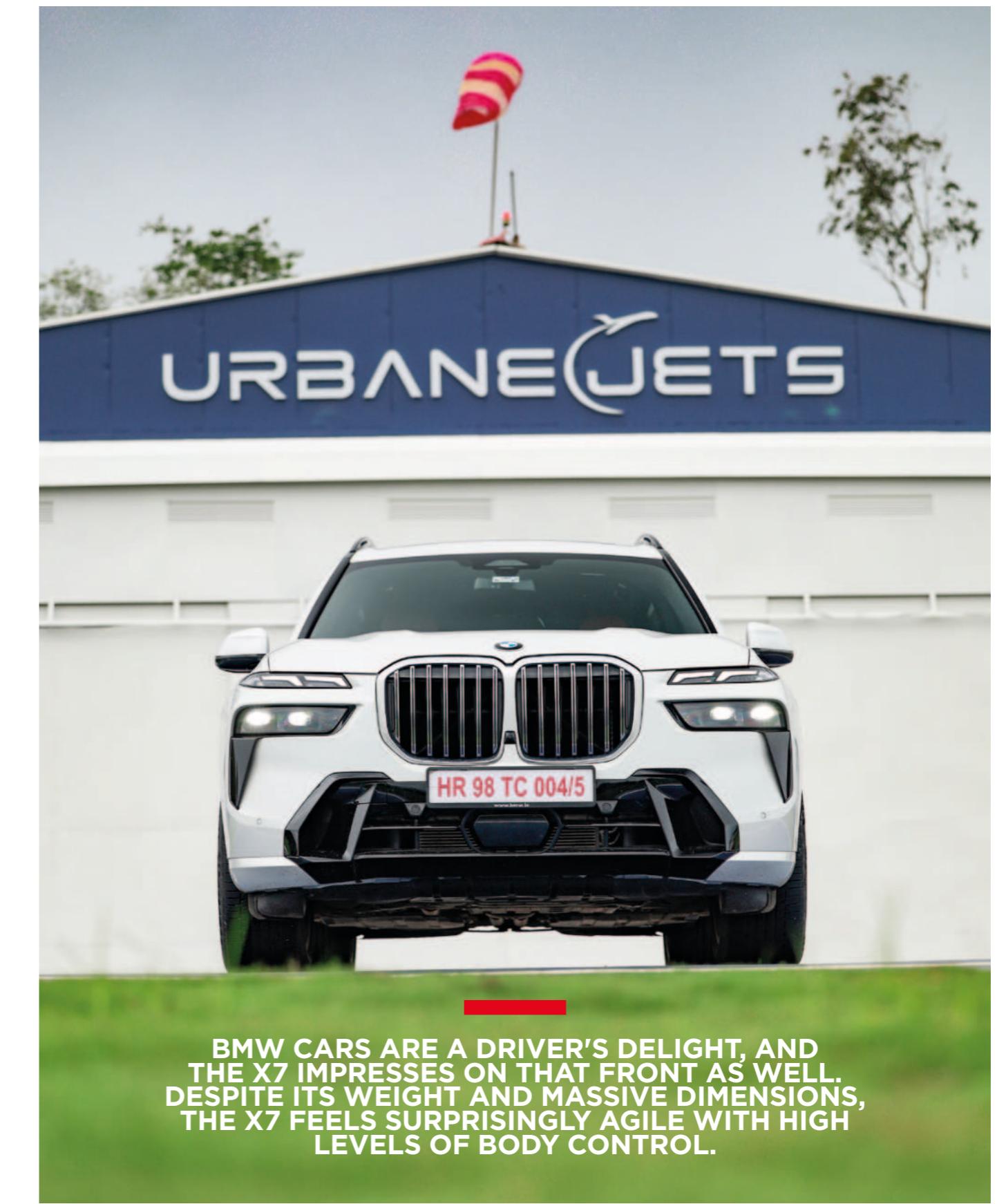
**The BMW X7's driver-focused cockpit features a seamless curved display, plush upholstery, and cutting-edge technology. Luxurious seating in Merino leather and ambient lighting create a serene and spacious rear cabin experience. The BMW Curved Display combines a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster and 14.9-inch control display for a high-tech cockpit. The X7's bold stance, sleek taillights, and dual exhausts highlight its luxury SUV dominance.**



This is enough to propel the 2.5-ton SUV to 100kmph from standstill in 5.8 seconds and achieve a limited top speed of 250kmph. It feels quick too, with the 8-speed Steptronic transmission offering snappy shifts in Sport mode and seamless in Comfort, without sacrificing any sense of urgency. The cabin is well insulated, and the only time you hear the motor is when you floor it, and even that's a nice raspy growl from the inline 6-cylinder motor. It is quite fuel efficient for its size. BMW claims 11.29kmpl for the X7 thanks to better aerodynamics, brake energy regeneration and a smart start-stop system.

BMW cars are a driver's delight, and the X7 impresses on that front as well. Despite its weight and massive dimensions, the X7 feels surprisingly agile with high levels of body control. There is a hint of body roll - there is a limit to how much you can bend the laws of physics. The adaptive air suspension on both axles plays a big role here. It provides a fine balance between dynamics and comfort. It can also adjust the SUV's ride height, besides being able to handle our cratered roads with aplomb, that too with low-profile tyres.

In the era of excessive flamboyance, the BMW X7 stands out with its understated elegance. Prices for the SUV start at Rs 1.31 lakh ex-showroom. It's the SUV to go for if you have an extended family and a furbaby, are mostly chauffeured along, and love to drive. The BMW X7 rewrites the concept of the luxury SUV in its unique language. And it works! □

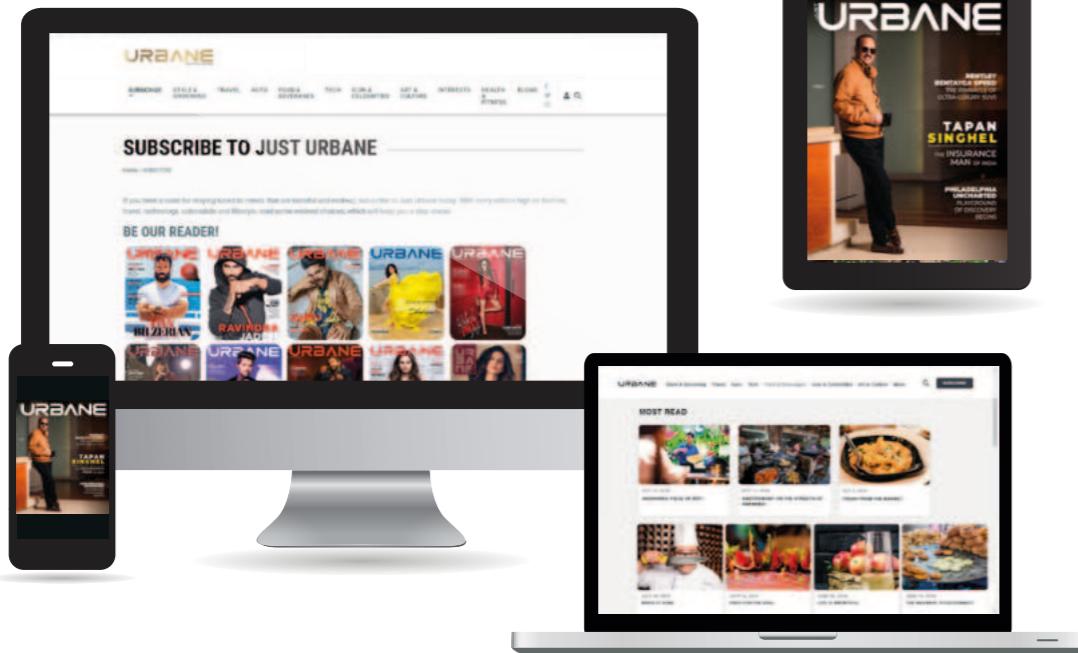


**BMW CARS ARE A DRIVER'S DELIGHT, AND THE X7 IMPRESSES ON THAT FRONT AS WELL. DESPITE ITS WEIGHT AND MASSIVE DIMENSIONS, THE X7 FEELS SURPRISINGLY AGILE WITH HIGH LEVELS OF BODY CONTROL.**

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# BEAR ESSENTIALS

Decoding Royal Enfield's grizzly take on the Scrambler genre

WORDS BENJAMIN GRACIAS

Why not just name it the Scram 650? Or even the Trials 650? After all, these are names from its lineage, like the Scram 410/440 or the Bullet Trials 500. The Bear in Bear 650 name comes from a legendary moment in motorcycling. It symbolises Fast Eddie Mulder's win in the 1960 Big Bear run in California, aboard a factory-built Royal Enfield scrambler. The Californian soul can be seen in the Bear 650, with its rugged styling, exposed frame, and high stance that looks tailor-made to tackle dusty trails and sandy beaches.

It looks the part. This is easily Royal Enfield's best take on its 650cc platform. It gets a lot of things right. Especially with styling. I especially like this colourway (codename Two Four Nine), which has a Sage Green exposed frame that contrasts nicely with the white fuel tank and lends a Californian

retro vibe. Sadly, it is the only Bear colourway with a contrasting frame. That said, the Bear 650 does have some interesting retro colourways that go well with the bike's retro rugged appeal. Another cool bit is the competition number plate on the sides, a great way to personalise the motorcycle with your favourite digits.

The styling is functional as well. A minimalistic approach means it's two kilos lighter than the Interceptor 650 platform it is based on. This despite Royal Enfield strengthening the frame at key areas to endure off-road use. The minimalistic styling and two-into-one exhaust setup help it shed weight, besides keeping the Bear narrower than its other dual exhaust-tipped siblings. That said, it is a heavy motorcycle, at 216 kilos. But it does manage its weight well. And the ergonomics are spot on. The footpeg positioning is lower and forward set, and goes well with the wide handlebars. This

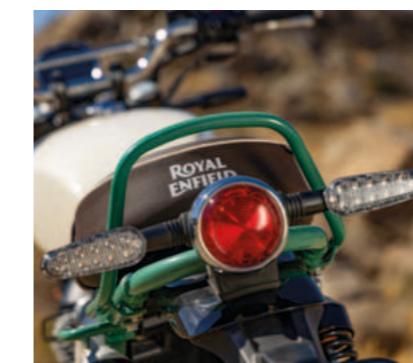


leads to a slightly forward-leaning position which remains comfortable thanks to the wide and well-padded seat. It isn't very tall either. Despite the 830mm seat height, the Bear 650 should be manageable for average-height riders. The only grouse I had was the limited steering angle, which is surprising. After all, scramblers should have a tighter turning radius for navigating tricky trails.

It feels premium. The paint finish is top notch while the welds on the exposed frame are neatly finished. The rotary switchgear is easy to operate, but some switches like the turn indicator lack tactility. On that note, I wish the turn indicators on the dash were bigger, as it's easy to miss them. It's the only chink in the colour TFT instrument console's armour. This is the first 650 to get a full-digital TFT unit after the Himalayan 450. The screen brings in features like Bluetooth connectivity as well as Google Maps integration. Other premium features include a USB charging port and all LED lighting, again a first for the 650cc platform. Of course, Royal Enfield has a sizable accessories list both for touring and off-road riding. You can also turn off rear ABS on the Bear 650 for some off-road fun.



**THE BEAR 650 IS QUITE AGILE FOR ITS SIZE AND EAGER TO DIP INTO CORNERS. HOWEVER, YOU DO FEEL ITS WEIGHT WHILE FLICKING THE MOTORCYCLE IN CORNERS**



The new exhaust not just helps drop weight but also liberates more torque. It now delivers 56.5Nm, up from 52Nm (it continues to offer 47PS). The tradeoff is the lack of deep rumbling exhaust note you get from other 650cc Enfields. It does sound like a proper twin, just not the way I like. That's fine given the improvement in performance. The engine is more responsive and has a stronger mid-range that makes the Bear 650 more exciting to ride than the other 650s.

It's got the dynamics to match the spirited performance. The Bear 650 gets long-travel Showa upside-down forks and twin shock absorbers with dual-purpose MRF Nylorex 19-inch front and 17-inch rear wheels. However, despite the off-road hardware, the Bear 650 is a soft roader at best, unlike its scrambler styling would suggest. The tyres work fine off the tarmac, but the Showa suspension feels too stiff for off-road use. Also, the high kerb weight and ergonomics more suited for street riding mean you'd be uncomfortable flicking it around in the dirt. That said, some fun can be had, given the easily accessible oodles of torque and the high ground clearance to back it up.

What the Bear 650 is is the best-handling 650cc Royal Enfield. The stiff suspension offers a more sophisticated suspension feel and surefootedness on tarmac. High speed stability is quite good, and it feels stable in corners too. The Bear 650 is quite agile for its size and eager to dip into corners. However, you do feel its weight while flicking the motorcycle in corners. It breaks well too, with a sharp bite. While the Bear 650 is an agile motorcycle, you do feel its weight while hustling it. Also, while the suspension takes care of most road imperfections, you are always aware of its underlying firmness.

Prices for the Royal Enfield Bear 650 start at Rs 3.46 lakh ex-showroom. This particular model goes for Rs 3.59 lakh ex-showroom. That's Rs 40,000 more than the Interceptor 650, but you get a lot more in terms of hardware, styling, and features. The Bear 650 is Royal Enfield's finest take on the 650cc platform, but I reckon there is still room for improvement. What the Bear 650 can be is a fantastic roadster. Putting in some sticky tyres and maybe lightweight alloys could make the Bear 650 a sweet handling ride. That sounds like a recipe for the Guerrilla 650, no? ▀





# ROTOR RENAISSANCE

The Soaring Growth of Private Helicopter Charters in India

WORDS ABHISHEK KULKARNI

**I**n recent years, India's private helicopter charter industry has experienced remarkable growth, driven by a confluence of factors including economic expansion, infrastructural developments, and evolving consumer preferences. This surge reflects a broader transformation in the nation's approach to air mobility, positioning helicopters as vital tools for business, tourism, and emergency services. Economic Growth and Rising Demand

India's burgeoning economy has led to an increase in high-net-worth individuals and corporate entities seeking efficient and flexible travel solutions. Helicopter charters offer unparalleled convenience, allowing for direct point-to-point travel, bypassing congested roads and limited airport infrastructure. This mode of transport is particularly advantageous for reaching remote areas, conducting site visits, or attending multiple meetings across different cities in a single day.

## DIVERSE APPLICATIONS ACROSS SECTORS THE VERSATILITY OF HELICOPTER SERVICES HAS FOUND APPLICATIONS ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS

### POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING

During election seasons, the demand for charter helicopters surges as political leaders utilize them to reach remote constituencies swiftly. Reports indicate a significant increase in helicopter rentals during such periods, underscoring their strategic importance in political mobilization.

### PILGRIMAGE AND TOURISM

Helicopter services have revolutionized access to pilgrimage sites like Kedarnath and Amarnath, offering devotees a quicker and safer alternative to arduous treks. Similarly, luxury tourism has embraced helicopter charters for scenic tours and exclusive experiences.

### CRUCIAL LIFELINES FOR INDUSTRY

Helicopters play an indispensable role in sectors like oil and gas, mining, and infrastructure by transporting personnel and equipment to remote, challenging locations. These aerial assets ensure efficient logistics, timely deliveries, and sustained productivity in areas often inaccessible by traditional means.

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

In critical situations, helicopters serve as air ambulances, providing rapid medical evacuation and transport, especially in areas with challenging terrains or inadequate healthcare facilities.

### FLEET EXPANSION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Leading operators are expanding their fleets to meet growing demand. The introduction of advanced helicopters equipped with modern avionics, enhanced safety features, and improved passenger comfort reflects the industry's commitment to quality service. Notably, models like the Sikorsky S-76D have gained popularity among charter companies for their reliability and performance.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLICY SUPPORT

Recognizing the potential of helicopter services, the Indian government has initiated policies to bolster this sector. Investments in heliports and helipads, along with regulatory reforms, aim to streamline operations and encourage private participation. Programs like the Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN) have further facilitated the integration of helicopter services into the broader transportation network.

### CONCLUSION

The rise of private helicopter charters marks a major shift in India's transportation landscape. With growing economic activity and expanding infrastructure, helicopters are becoming essential for connecting remote areas and enabling faster travel. Their increasing use highlights not just the sector's vast potential, but also its critical role in advancing mobility and nationwide connectivity. □



# WINGS OF LUXURY



India's private jet charter industry is soaring, fueled by rising wealth, time-sensitive travel needs, and luxury demand—reshaping air mobility with tailored experiences, booming ownership, and growing aviation infrastructure.

WORDS ABHISHEK KULKARNI



In a country known for its diversity, scale, and rapid economic ascent, another symbol of affluence and agility is now taking flight — quite literally. The Indian private jet charter industry is experiencing an unprecedented boom. From high-powered CEOs and startup founders to destination wedding planners and political campaigners, the skies over India are busier than ever with private jets cutting through clouds of opportunity, luxury, and ambition.

Once seen as the preserve of billionaires and Bollywood stars, private aviation in India is now transforming into a viable and sought-after mode of transport for a wider set of high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and corporate houses. As of mid-2025, India is home to approximately 140–160 private jets, and that number is poised to grow significantly in the next five years.

**DEMAND IN THE FAST LANE**  
The growth in demand is being driven by multiple factors: rising disposable income, the rise of ultra-HNIs, regional economic hubs demanding faster connectivity, and the post-pandemic appetite for privacy, hygiene, and convenience. Add to this the relentless pace of business travel and the logistical needs of events like multi-city weddings or political campaigns, and it's easy to see why charter flight bookings have soared. Private jet charter operators across India have reported double-digit year-on-year

growth, particularly in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. According to industry estimates, the Indian private aviation market is growing at over 10–12% annually — outpacing many global markets. Interestingly, the surge is not just limited to chartering. An increasing number of wealthy individuals and corporate entities are now exploring ownership. Jet dealerships and pre-owned aircraft sales firms have seen a sharp increase in inquiries. Aircraft such as the Embraer Legacy 650, Dassault Falcon 2000, and Bombardier Global 6000 are among the top preferences for those entering the private jet space with a long-term vision.

**GLOBAL SKIES, LOCAL CHALLENGES**  
Globally, private jet traffic has rebounded strongly since the pandemic, with the U.S. and Europe leading the market in absolute numbers. However, India stands out as one of the fastest-growing regions in terms of percentage growth. According to data from WingX and JetNet, flight activity in India has increased by over 40% in the last two years, far surpassing the global average. This surge is not without its complexities. Parking and slot management at major airports is becoming a logistical headache. India's busiest airports — Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru — often operate at peak capacity, leaving limited space for non-scheduled operators. As a result, some private jet owners and operators are now exploring smaller regional airports like Pune, Indore,



## PRIVATE JET CHARTERS ARE NO LONGER A VANITY SECTOR; THEY ARE A ROBUST, SCALABLE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY.

and Surat to base their aircraft, which is also aiding in regional airport development and infrastructure planning.

Moreover, with the DGCA tightening regulatory norms around maintenance, flight crew management, and aircraft usage, many charter operators are investing heavily in backend systems, fleet maintenance technology, and digital booking platforms to remain compliant and competitive.

### ABOARD THE CLOUD: LUXURY, CUSTOMIZATION, AND SPEED

Step inside a private jet, and you'll immediately sense that it's more than just transportation — it's a curated experience. Depending on the size and configuration, private jets offer seating for 4 to 20 passengers, with layouts that rival five-star hotel suites. From plush leather recliners and in-flight Wi-Fi to fully flat beds, gourmet meals, and personalized staff — every detail is a nod to indulgence.

Charter clients today are spoilt for

choice. Whether it's a light jet like the Cessna Citation XLS for quick domestic hops or a long-range jet like the Gulfstream G650ER for transcontinental journeys, every requirement — be it privacy, luxury, or business-readiness — is well-catered for.

Interestingly, private aviation is also intersecting with lifestyle sectors. Luxury travel agencies, event management firms, and destination wedding planners are now integrating private jet services into their offerings. This has given rise to 'air concierge' services — personalized flight planning, custom décor, onboard celebrations, and curated itineraries.

### THE BUSINESS OF JET CHARTER: A HOT INVESTMENT SEGMENT

Private jet charters are no longer a vanity sector; they are a robust, scalable business opportunity. Venture capital firms are showing interest in tech-enabled aviation platforms, and traditional aviation players are expanding their fleets to meet demand.



## LUXURY TRAVEL AGENCIES, EVENT MANAGEMENT FIRMS, AND DESTINATION WEDDING PLANNERS ARE NOW INTEGRATING PRIVATE JET SERVICES INTO THEIR OFFERINGS

New-age aviation startups and charter operators are leveraging digital innovation, personalized services, and flexible fleet access models to make private flying more accessible and efficient than ever before.

Furthermore, helicopter services are becoming increasingly complementary to private jet travel, particularly for last-mile connectivity to remote resorts, industrial sites, or luxury estates. Aircraft like the Airbus H145 — known for its twin-engine performance, VIP cabin, and suitability for both urban and rugged terrains — are finding increased demand in India. Several companies are now offering bundled services: jet to helicopter, making intercity and regional travel seamless and swift.

### LOOKING AHEAD

The horizon is clear: private aviation in India is not a passing trend, but a lasting evolution in the way people travel. As infrastructure improves, regulatory frameworks evolve, and new airports get commissioned under regional connectivity schemes, the future of private air travel looks promising. More importantly, as aspirations grow and time becomes the ultimate currency, flying private will no longer be just about luxury — it will be about lifestyle, speed, and strategic advantage.

For India, the sky is not the limit. It's the new beginning. □



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which is exclusive, fresh, fun and Urbane this month



## BMW'S SPEEDTOP CONCEPT UNVEILED

ELEGANCE MEETS POWER IN A SHOOTING BRAKE REVIVAL

At the 2025 Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este on Lake Como, BMW stunned the automotive world with the unveiling of the Concept Speedtop—a luxurious reinterpretation of the classic Touring silhouette. Blending the aesthetic grace of a shooting brake with BMW's most powerful V8 engine, the handcrafted, limited-edition model promises exclusivity, innovation, and artisanal excellence in a run of just 70 vehicles worldwide.



## CLAUDIO BELLINI STUDIO

### FLEUR AND OVERLAP COLLECTION

Fleur and Overlap unite elegance and bold form through organic curves, luxurious materials, and sculptural design. Fleur draws inspiration from nature with mohair, walnut, and fluid lines, while Overlap contrasts raw stone with soft fabrics and gold details. Both collections embody modern luxury, emotional depth, and refined craftsmanship.



## ASTON MARTIN

### F1 EDITION

The Laureato Absolute Aston Martin F1 Edition embodies performance and luxury. Crafted from Grade 5 titanium, it features a green dial inspired by Aston Martin Racing. With superior movement and bold design, it's engineered for everyday sophistication.



## PORSCHE DESIGN

### WIRELESS SPEAKER

The PDS50 delivers premium sound in a sleek aluminum build with wireless Qi charging, IPX4 water resistance, and up to 20 hours of playtime. Bold design meets high-performance audio for an elevated listening experience. Pair two for True Wireless Stereo sound. Features USB-C, touch controls, RGB LED indicators, and a stylish, layered finish.

INDULGE URBANE LUXURY



## BMW MOTORRAD PRESENTS CONCEPT RR

BMW UNVEILS FUTURE SUPERBIKE ICON

BMW Motorrad unveiled the Concept RR—an ultra-high-performance superbike blending racetrack DNA with future-forward design. Inspired by the M 1000 RR and boasting over 230 hp, it redefines lightweight engineering, aerodynamics, and street-legal power. Paired with a limited-run leather jacket, it embodies precision and exclusivity.



## LOUIS VUITTON'S

AVENUE SLINGBAG

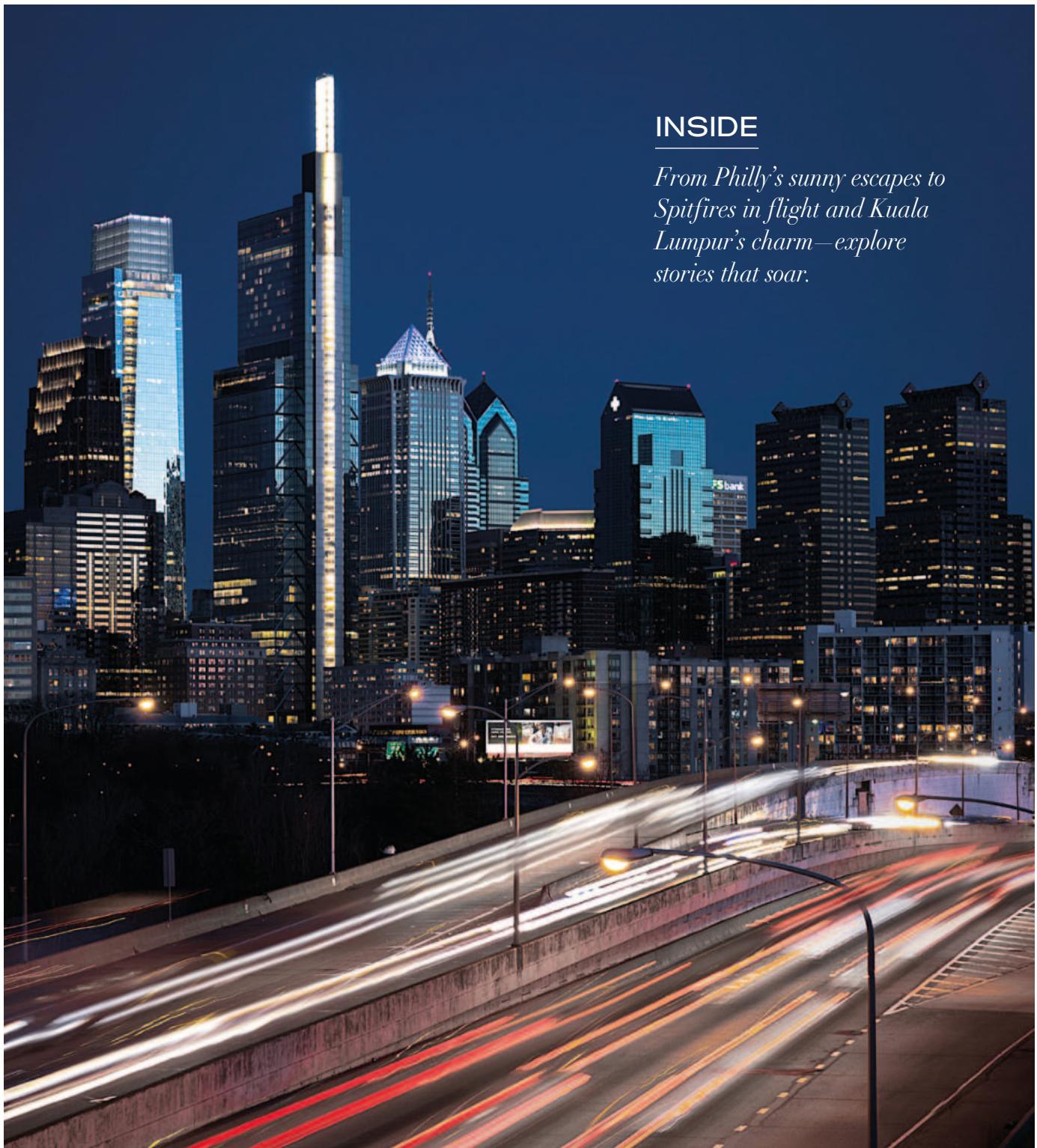
Louis Vuitton's Avenue Slingbag PM blends sleek design with everyday functionality. Made from Monogram Eclipse coated canvas with cowhide-leather trim, it features a main compartment, interior and exterior zipped pockets, and an adjustable strap. Compact yet practical, this cross-body bag is perfect for modern living—crafted with precision in France, Spain, Italy, or the US.

# EXPLORE

TRAVEL | NATURE | CULTURE | OUTDOORS | TOURISM

## INSIDE

*From Philly's sunny escapes to Spifires in flight and Kuala Lumpur's charm—explore stories that soar.*





# ENDLESS SUMMER IN PHILADELPHIA

From riverside adventures and lush beer gardens to open-air movies and epic festivals, Philadelphia transforms into a vibrant playground all summer long.

WORDS AJITESH SINGARIA

Cultural celebrations, unforgettable festivals and vibrant pop-ups are just a few ways to experience the summer season in Philadelphia. Here are the top activities that make Philadelphia the ultimate summer destination with endless opportunities for outdoor exploration.

## THE VIBRANT OUTDOORS

When the sun is up in Philadelphia, it is time to explore the outdoors. Enjoy fountain shows, mini golf, dance lessons, and other family-friendly fun at Franklin

Square. Be sure to stop by in the evening during the annual Chinese Lantern Festival starting in June where thousands of lanterns illuminated by LED lights transform the Square into a technicolour oasis.

Nature lovers have plenty of opportunities to seek solace outside during the summer. Explore the trails and historic homes found throughout the 2,000+ acre Fairmount Park. Night owls will enjoy the Park After Dark: Moonwalk series, a hiking tour through the park that includes lessons about nocturnal wildlife and lunar cycles.

If you prefer to spend your summer on the water, explore Philadelphia with



activities on the Delaware River. Charter a custom-restored Chris-Craft with Sea Philly for a stunning river cruise. For more on-the-water fun, visit the Independence Seaport Museum. The Museum offers family-friendly, on-the-water experiences, such as paddle boats and kayak excursions.

At night, join fellow film fanatics at one of Philadelphia's many outdoor movie screenings under the stars. Every year from June through October, the Betsy Ross House screens classic science fiction movies in its courtyard. In West Philadelphia, Sunset Social hosts outdoor movie nights each Wednesday on the lawn of Cira Green.

Also in West Philadelphia, the University City District has partnered with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and Friends of Clark Park to offer Movies in Clark Park every Friday night in August. And for a truly lively experience, pack a picnic and join your friends for Movies at the Mann where a live orchestra plays along to blockbuster films.

#### PHILADELPHIA'S SEASONAL PARKS AND BEER GARDENS

The Delaware River waterfront is one of Philadelphia's top summer destinations, all thanks to an abundance of seasonal activities, dining experiences, and memorable attractions. Skate riverside in a 12,000-square-foot roller rink, putt your way through a miniature golf course and

play arcade games at BlueCross RiverRink Summerfest. Lounge in a hammock at the nearby Spruce Street Harbor Park, then enjoy local food and beverages on the park's floating barges.

Check out seasonal events and art installations at Cherry Street Pier or, dine riverside at The Garden, the pier's pop-up dining space serving Mexican-inspired snacks and frozen cocktails. For a simple summer evening, relax on the lawn at neighbouring Race Street Pier, one of Philadelphia's top spots for photos. Two Pop-Up Gardens, one on South Street and another in Manayunk, transform previously vacant lots into lush landscapes. The Gardens offer speciality cocktails, craft beer, and seasonal menus from local restaurants.

Philadelphia's summer travelling beer garden, Parks on Tap, sets up shop in a different park each week. Those visiting Center City can enjoy seasonal drinks and food at Uptown Beer Garden which sits just across from LOVE Park.

#### SUMMER FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

Celebrate love in all its forms during Philadelphia Pride March and Festival, a day-long festival in downtown Philadelphia that starts with a parade from Independence Mall to the vibrant Gayborhood. Afterward, the neighbourhood hosts a Pride festival where city blocks overflow with mouth-



watering food, festive entertainment, and LGBTQ+ resources.

In July, there is no better place to celebrate the USA's independence than the city where it happened. Wawa Welcome America is an annual festival that celebrates the 4th of July across Philadelphia. The festivities conclude with a massive concert on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Philadelphia is also home to the largest annual Juneteenth celebration in the nation, the Juneteenth Parade & Festival. The festival starts with a parade in West Philadelphia and concludes with an afternoon of music in Malcolm X Park.

For a taste of the city's culture, head to one of Philadelphia's vibrant neighbourhoods and visit a local street festival. The 2nd Street Festival in Northern Liberties has grown into one of the largest annual street festivals in Philadelphia. Dozens of Old City restaurants and bars participate in Old City Eats, which takes place every Thursday throughout the summer. The Old City Eats block party kicks off with live music, dancers, and of course, great food. The summer season begins and closes with two of the most star-studded, cannot-miss music festivals. During the first weekend of June, The Roots Picnic hosts a lineup of artists, comics, and podcasters curated by the local legends, The Roots.

#### SPORTS FEVER

Catch the Philadelphia Phillies in action at Citizens Bank Park, the team's home in South Philadelphia or Major

League Soccer's Philadelphia Union at their waterfront home venue, Subaru Park. Alternately, heading to one of Philadelphia's local sports bars can be just as exciting as sitting in the bleachers at the ballpark.

Head to Xfinity Live!, the ultimate entertainment centre just steps away from the Phillies' home diamond. Chickie's & Pete's Crab House and Sports Bar is known for their signature crinkle-cut fries sprinkled with crabby spices. Garage Passyunk in South Philadelphia and Garage Fishtown are iconic spots for watching a game with lifelong fans of every generation.

Philadelphia's sporting ties run deep, including a 200-year rowing tradition along the Schuylkill River. On the weekends, Kelly Drive comes alive with spectators cheering on teams along the riverbank.

The river hosts some of the most storied events in the sport including the Stotesbury Cup Regatta, the largest high school sprint race in the country. Visitors can catch a glimpse of the excitement while biking or strolling along the Kelly Drive riverfront path.

#### BEYOND CITY LIMITS

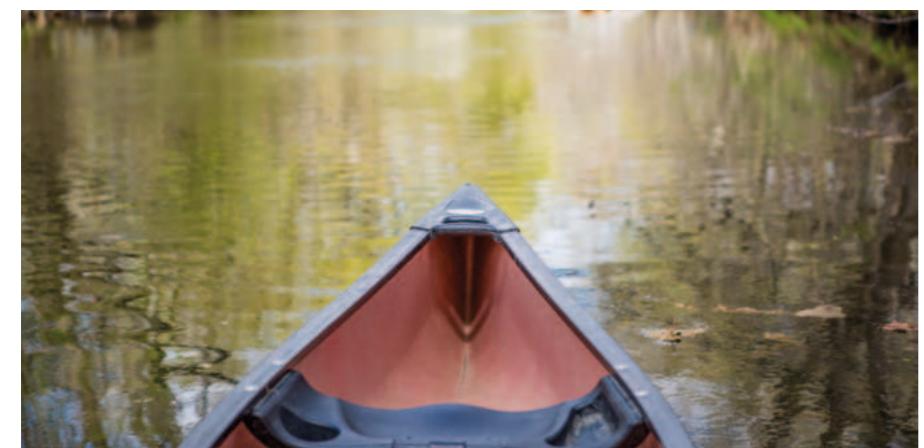
Located just a short drive from downtown Philadelphia in Bucks County, Peddler's Village, the shopping and dining destination presents special events and experiences all summer long. In August, celebrate Peach Month with peach-themed food and drink specials at local restaurants and sidewalk sales from area shops. □



# SEASONAL BLISS AWAITS

Festivals, fountains, polo, and paddles — summer shines brightest in the Countryside of Philadelphia.

WORDS AJITESH SINGARIA



**S**ummer is one of the best times to visit the Countryside of Philadelphia with cultural events, festivals, and celebrations embracing the spirit of the season. Located just a short distance from the city of Philadelphia, a weekend in the charming countryside is the perfect summer getaway.

## LONGWOOD GARDEN'S SUMMER FESTIVITIES

It is the Festival of Fountains season at world-renowned Longwood Gardens. Over 1,700 jets in the Main Fountain Gardens soar as high as 175 feet and dance to illuminated performances Fridays – Sundays through late October. Swifties will have a chance to see three Taylor Swift-themed fountain shows: Memorial Day Weekend, May 23 - May 25, 2025. Other themes include Shake It Off: Taylor Swift, featuring tracks for Swifties everywhere. Tickets are timed and sell out quickly. Book an overnight stay with exclusive untimed tickets to Longwood Gardens, and pair your visit with more du Pont family estates and gardens to tour.



## FESTIVALS

Summer is the season of festivals in the Countryside of Philadelphia. Surround yourself with fragrant blooms at the Festival of the Peony, May 17– May 26, 2025. Roam the lush peony farm and bring some countryside charm with a fresh-cut bouquet. Plan ahead for the Chester County Balloon Festival, this year coinciding with Father's Day weekend from June 13–15, 2025. Enjoy festival fun under soaring hot air balloons.

## EQUESTRIAN EVENTS

The celebrated Devon Horse Show & Country Fair returns May 21 – June 1, 2025 for its 129th year! Embrace fascinating Equestrian traditions in a vibrant village atmosphere with unique shops and dining. For equestrian excitement all summer long, Brandywine Polo Club hosts Starlight Polo matches every Saturday throughout the season, beginning May 25, 2025.

## CANOE & DINE

Plan an enchanting summer evening outdoors with a Twilight Dinner Trip at Northbrook Canoe Co., select dates through September. Enjoy a 1.5-hour canoe ride down the beautiful Brandywine River before arriving at a campsite for dinner and live music by the fire. Unwind with s'mores and enjoy the tranquil sounds of the countryside. □

# DON'T JUST STAND THERE, GET ONE UP!

Strap in for a once-in-a-lifetime experience as the legendary Spitfire takes you soaring through history, emotion, and the skies above England.

WORDS CHRIS PARRY





**T**hat's a line from the 1969 British movie, 'Battle of Britain'. The Squadron Leader is running to his plane and shouts at a young pilot, standing transfixed by the drama around him, to do the same and get a Spitfire into the air.

When I walk into the lounge area of Fly A Spitfire, this quote is rather conspicuously written above the doorway. Also on the wall are the photos of pilots who flew Hurricanes and Spitfires out of Biggin Hill during the Battle of Britain.

I'm here and I'm ready to get one up! Where I am is the end of a journey that started six months earlier, researching

opportunities to fly a Spitfire but perhaps my journey began long ago.

I'm of a generation whose parents heroes weren't characters from the Marvel Universe, they were the servicemen who fought and died in two world wars. My father came back from a trip to London in the 1970's with a poster which had on it all the different variations of Spitfire throughout World War II with brief characteristics underneath each picture.

If the poster wasn't enough to begin my love of Spitfires and the sound of the Rolls Royce liquid cooled V-12 piston Merlin engine then watching movies like the Battle of Britain and more recently Dunkirk certainly pushed me along this journey to Biggin Hill. Another

## THERE'S A ROAR THAT CARRIES WITH IT MORE THAN NOISE; IT'S A TANGIBLE, VISCERAL, IMMERSIVE WAVE THAT SWEEPS THROUGH YOU AND WITH IT COMES THE SMELL OF THE MERLIN ENGINE



influence was driving around town with Dad and listening to his cassette of aircraft engine recordings. Like a favourite song on cassette, I only remember listening to the mighty Merlin engine and then rewinding the tape to listen to it again, and again.

Biggin Hill is south east of London and is where green fields and little villages begin. Biggin Hill was an air base during the Battle of Britain and was bombed by the Luftwaffe but these days the only invading forces are celebrities who use the field to land private jets. Sharing the field with Gulfstreams and Bombardiers (and other jets that feature in Just Urbane) is Fly A Spitfire. Their hanger is filled with aircraft that can take to the air or are dreaming of flying again. There's a Hurricane, Kittyhawk, Messerschmitt 109 and jeeps used in the movie Fury, paratrooper scooters and more than I know I'll have time to look at. There's a smell too. It's the smell of engine oil and hot engine parts as they're fired up for testing. It's not a museum smell. This is the smell of aircraft that are alive and just waiting their turn to fly.

To go up in a Spitfire you don't need the courage of flying aces that flew out of Biggin Hill, but you do need to pass a test with a level of self-confidence that only you can judge is right for you. The bail out procedure is an online familiarisation instruction, and it's a preflight video, then you demonstrate it to the flight crew when you're in the cockpit. It's an understanding of how to lower your seat, slide back the canopy, bang open the cockpit side door and jump out with a static

line parachute and if that fails, how to pull a D-ring to open the parachute.

Sitting in the cockpit was my first understanding that this is a fighter aircraft that is over 80 years old. I'm surrounded by rivets and cables that have a function and purpose and represent what makes this machine fly fast with great manoeuvrability.

Then there's a roar that carries with it more than noise; it's a tangible, visceral, immersive wave that sweeps through you and with it comes the smell of the Merlin engine. With the roar of this engine starting up, the aircraft comes alive and embraces me with a firmness greater than my harness. I'm soaked in the smell, I'm shaking with the aircraft's impatience to get into the sky and in the words of 'High Flight', the wonderful poem by Spitfire pilot, John Gillespie, I just want to 'join the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds'. We're ready to go!

And when I say 'we're', there's something else about this experience. I've brought my son Tom with me to have his own adventure. He's going up in the chase plane to enjoy looking at the fields of Kent before being shot down by me in fast flybys.

Tom's description of the Spitfire taxiing on the runway is interesting. The Spitfire is constantly turning to the left and right. Visibility on the ground when taxiing isn't a strong point for fighter aircraft of this era and this is the only way to see what's in front.

Taking off is thrilling. It feels like a lifetime achievement. The absolute core of my bucket list that in reality I never thought I'd achieve.



I'm in the air, gaining height, the wheels are up and I'm bursting every muscle on my face with a smile from ear to ear.

I look down at the remarkable elliptical wing of this aircraft that make it so famous and identifiable. Down below are green fields and small patches of woodland forest and I even get to look at Charles Darwin's house and estate. Just as quickly as I look down I realise that this isn't a scenic flight to see the surrounding English countryside. This experience is the aircraft itself. Another of my Spitfire influences is a book called, 'Sigh For A Merlin', by Spitfire test pilot Alex Henshaw who says throughout his experiences the Spitfire was easy to fly. Now

it's time to see if he's right.

Watching the go-pro footage after my flight, I expected to see how happy I was but watching me take the controls was different. My face looks like I'm doing an Algebra test. I'm focused on the horizon to keep level flight and then slowly banking to search for my son in the chase plane. I wish I'd relaxed for these moments and looked around me but maybe that's what learning to fly an aircraft designed for flying to fight is all about, learning to trust that this perfect design will perfectly respond when called upon to do so.

There's extra time for my flight because of some private jet traffic so there's more

victory rolls and banking the aircraft on its wingtip. Victory rolls by exuberant pilots after combat were frowned upon during wartime because of the stress on battle weary airframes but gosh they're fun! The delirious blue sky rolls its way from the top of your vision to the bottom and then back in its rightful place at the top, along with my stomach.

The sensation of speed is truly achieved as I fly past the chase plane and it looks like it's standing still in mid air. Tom captures some amazing moments of my flight, including the Spitfire close alongside and then banking and diving away, becoming camouflaged with the fields below.



## THE SENSATION OF SPEED IS TRULY ACHIEVED AS I FLY PAST THE CHASE PLANE AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S STANDING STILL IN MID AIR



I've told friends, and now you, that I cried in the air because I wish my dad was here to see this. Then I cried because I'm sharing the skies above England with my son. I couldn't be happier! On the ground and with the engine still, I slide the canopy back and as the flight crew disconnect the cameras they capture a final moment of my face and audio as they ask, "Your dad would have proud of that I bet?", to which I just reply, "Yes".

He would have loved it, but reflecting on Dad can wait. I rush to where Tom is waiting and he is so happy with his experience. He's talking, I'm talking and together we have a

complete story that has made the perfect day.

Double cockpit Spitfires are rare to find and you have to go a long way to do it. While there are a few groups in England that offer the experience of a flight in a Spitfire, for me the passionate flight crew, a historic setting with a hanger full of epic and iconic aviation heritage and the opportunity to make it a shared experience with a better man than I am make this quite literally the experience of my lifetime. □

Find out more about flying a Spitfire at:  
[www.flyaspitfire.com](http://www.flyaspitfire.com)

# HERE WE GO AT THE E&O

A journey through heritage, luxury, and history begins at E&O Residences KL and unfolds magically at the iconic E&O Penang.

WORDS CHRIS PARRY



*'This is a brief life, but in its brevity it offers us some splendid moments, some meaningful adventures.'*

- Rudyard Kipling'

**W**hat a wonderful quote by an author whose books were often influenced by the time he spent in India. He also spent time at the E&O Penang, a hotel on the island of Penang, as famed for its guests as it is for its heritage and luxury.

Rudyard Kipling, Noel Coward, Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, Joseph Conrad and many others have stayed at the E&O and most of them accepted the invitation by guests to stand under the dome in the lobby and recite a poem or story. I stood under the dome and told the story of why I love the E&O experience. There was no one listening so I'm writing the story for you.

This story actually begins at the E&O Residences in Kuala Lumpur. So close to Bukit Bintang that you can smell the satays sizzling at the nearby Jalan Alor markets. I've actually stayed at E&O before and second time round is just as good as the first. E&O Residences in KL is part of a group of apartment towers that has good security to access the grounds which include a large pool area. The apartments are often leased to workers who will be in Kuala Lumpur for

several months and they can bring their family. Everything about the apartments is big and luxurious. There is a big fridge, big television, big sofas, big balcony, big bedrooms, really big bathrooms and even rooms you can use as a study.

Being a few minutes walk to a host of restaurants and cafes is good to know but if you're looking for the shopping and food of Bukit Bintang it's about ten minutes walk away or about five minutes by monorail which is close by.

E&O Residences was a great away to kick off my adventure to E&O Penang. Arriving in KL there was definitely a need to shop and eat before catching the train to Penang and E&O Residences ticks all the boxes on my list for quick check-in, luxury accommodation and close to the heart of KL.

It's a different reason that you stay at E&O Residences compared to E&O Penang. E&O Residences is beautifully appointed and perfectly located in one of the best cities in the world for exploring shops and food.

E&O Penang is one of those hotel experiences where it's with of regret that you leave the lobby to experience Penang. You just want to stay in the hotel and indulge in all the great things in life worth indulging in; sip drinks in bars with model wooden ships, wander corridors with black and white tiles and potted palms, look at the photos of famous guests that are hung on the walls, listen to pianists and watch from your balcony as all sorts of watercraft come and go in the Straits of Malacca.

So, Rudyard Kipling's quote to begin this story mentions splendid moments and meaningful adventures. This is what E&O Penang gives you. This is an immersive level of luxury. Immersive because of the heritage and history. Interestingly, the hotel is known in Penang as the grand old dame and it does remind me of visiting my grandmother. I feel so wonderfully cared for and at the same time I'm learning without the effort of learning at school or university. I'm absorbing the history of Penang and of course the history of the Sarki brothers who built the E&O Penang and then went down to Singapore and built the Raffles.

The Sarki brothers were of Armenian ethnicity and just loved building hotels in South East Asia.

From the late 1700's until the early 1800's, Penang was the most important trading and administrative port in the Malacca Strait until Singapore was founded by Stamford Raffles. It was in George Town, Penang's capital that the Sarki Brothers chose to build a hotel in a style better than most accommodation available across Asia at that time.

Jumping forward to the twentieth century, Penang's capital George Town was already renown for being one of Malaysia's oldest settlements and then in 2008 was awarded the status of World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The E&O Penang shares this achievement and having been restored at the turn of the twentieth century and again at around the time that the Covid-19 struck the world, this is a hotel that immerses you in culture and history from a time that the Penang community are proud of and embrace you with from your room in the Heritage Wing of the E&O Penang to walking the streets of



George Town which is one of the greatest you activities you undertake when you stay at the E&O Penang.

Just as E&O Residences in KL is close to the beating heart of KL, the E&O Penang is similarly close to streets that are full not only of culture and history but also late night live music, quirky antique shops and cafes and of course the famous mural trail that leads you through bustling streets and quiet laneways.

Back at the E&O Penang after a short or long walk it's time to enjoy the recently relaunched Heritage Wing and some of that timeless hospitality that this hotel is renowned for.

You can enjoy the luxury of travelling back through time with round-the-clock butler service and modern comforts in historical and heritage settings in keeping with the style of this Penang icon.

The Hotel's food and beverage outlets – Palm Court, Java Tree, Sarkies and Planters Lounge have a celebrated reputation with guests and Penang locals for serving an extensive menu ranging from Penang's heritage dishes to a traditional English afternoon tea and Sunday roast, whilst Farquhar's Bar is the place to be for time-honoured bar staples. I also had the opportunity during my visit to walk through E&O's stately Grand Ballroom which is booked out all year for Penang's finest events, including black-tie dinner dances.

Take the time to explore the many stories of guests in the E&O Gallery, within the Victory Annexe. This specially



curated museum relates the story of Penang's social and cultural milestones as seen through the eyes of the E&O Penang and its patrons. Maybe the experience of your stay will one day feature in the museum!

Today, the E&O stands as the grande dame of heritage hotels, its arches and facades form natural frames for the longest and most splendid seafront sweep of lawn ever to greet the Andaman Sea. With cannons from the original Fort Cornwallis, Penang's historical icon has stayed picture perfect since 1885.

If you're staying at the E&O, take the time to spend time at the hotel. Create the splendid moments that Rudyard Kipling suggests you do in the quote that began this story. Also take the advice of the many travellers, not just the famous, for whom the E&O Hotel has become a sanctuary and, "A place where there is always enough time for the things that really matter". □

To learn more or book your stay go to:  
[www.eoresidenceskl.com](http://www.eoresidenceskl.com) and [www.eohotels.com](http://www.eohotels.com)

For the best coffee and cake in George Town go to:  
China House Penang, 153 Beach Street



# WHY A MAN SHOULD KNOW HIS TECH

**Whether planning to book a flight or managing a portfolio, tech knowledge turns everyday men into modern leaders with confidence and clarity.**

WORDS ABHISHEK KULKARNI

**I**n today's world, being tech-savvy is no longer a bonus — it's a baseline. Whether you're climbing the corporate ladder, building your own venture, or managing day-to-day logistics — even planning a private charter flight — understanding technology is a non-negotiable part of modern masculinity. It's not just about using the latest smartphone or toggling between apps — it's about fluency in a digital language that drives every industry, household, and conversation.

The modern man navigates a world powered by algorithms, AI, and cloud ecosystems. From smart investing via fintech platforms to using aviation apps for real-time flight tracking or booking general aviation services, tech has become the new toolkit for leadership and self-reliance. The expectation today isn't that you can adapt to tech — it's that you already have. Professional growth is deeply tied to digital literacy. Whether you're in finance, design, logistics, or creative fields like film or music, tech fluency gives you an edge. Automation,

analytics, and AI are changing how decisions are made. Even traditional sectors like aviation are being redefined by smart cockpit systems, digital flight logs, and drone tech. To remain relevant, you need to know how these tools work — and how to work with them.

Beyond the office, being tech-savvy signals confidence and competence. It helps protect your privacy, streamline routines, and engage meaningfully in conversations that matter. In relationships, friendships, and parenting, tech empowers — from fixing Wi-Fi to teaching your kids digital discipline or tracking their flight arrivals.

We often say that being a man is about showing up with strength and intent. In today's world, strength also means staying sharp in the digital sphere. Because in a world that's constantly upgrading — on the ground or in the skies — so should you.

To thrive in this era, every man must embrace tech not as a trend, but as a lifestyle. It's no longer about keeping up — it's about staying ahead. ■

LET YOUR DREAMS TAKE A FLIGHT..



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#### CORPORATE OFFICE

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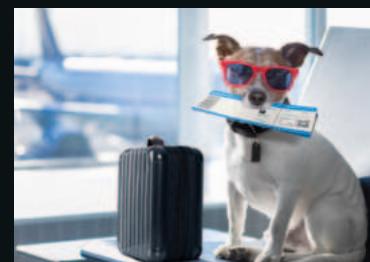
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