



## POKHARA LODGE

### NEWS

Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, with its small and highly dedicated team of staff, goes from strength to strength. After some very trying years because of local and international problems, the Lodge returned to near normal levels of guests in the season starting autumn 2006. Over the past few years, the Lodge has developed and many new services have been added making Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge a popular haven of pure relaxation with a growing following of many repeat guests who become old friends.

Guests visit from all over the world and it is a pleasure to see the gradual return of American visitors after a marked decline resulting from the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. The United Kingdom continues to be our main country and all of us would like to offer a vote of thanks to Saga Holidays for remaining confident in Nepal and Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge through all Nepal's vicissitudes.



Guide Hari on walk with guest

### Projects and Community Support:



Amar Jyoti School under expansion

The Lodge is not just a delightful base for international visitors but also pioneers the Tiger Mountain Group's concept of environmentally responsible and sustainable conservation tourism in the hills of Nepal. We have initiated a Community Support Partnership that has taken firm root and is a genuine partnership of various stakeholders – the local village, the government, the Lodge and our guests. We are supporting locally lead initiatives such as the expansion of Amar Jyoti School to take classes up to Secondary level. This will enable pupils to complete their secondary education within their own village – a point of particular importance for girl students to help them to complete their education.

In partnership with the International Trust for Nature Conservation, the Lodge is working to support the Community Forest User's Group. Efforts are focused on development of non-timber forest products, replanting barren sites, fencing

other sites to encourage natural regeneration and funding a Forest Ranger to monitor the community forest.

In partnership with Empowering Women of Nepal and Annapurna Conservation Area Project, the Lodge has hosted two important delegations, from WWF Cambodia and the government of Tibet to highlight Nepal's experiences in various styles of community-based and community-lead tourism initiatives. Lisa Choegy and Marcus Cotton, directors of Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge gave presentations and hosted discussion groups to exchange ideas and experiences.



Marcus Cotton has been working with the Marketing Assistance for Sustainable Tourism Project – known as MAST – on behalf of Tiger Mountain Group and TM Pokhara Lodge. This innovative programme aims to develop a core of genuinely sustainable tourism products and operators in Nepal under the aegis of the Sustainable Tourism Network of which TM Pokhara Lodge is a founder member.

The Lodge was used as an example of tourism integrating with conservation in presentations and discussions.

The Lodge guides have been monitoring raptors, recording bird sightings, taking weather readings and counting butterfly species as projects to secure baseline data for biodiversity analysis. This data is available on the website and updated regularly.

### **Staff changes over the past two years:**

We were sad to bid farewell to Bikram Khadka who joined Tiger Mountain in 1998 and worked as our Airport Representative but, with his natural charm and good humour, was soon 'a natural' to take on the role of Guest Relations Officer. In this capacity, he became 'the face of Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge'. He has gone to Holland to continue his higher education.



Our Head Guide, Jhalak Raj Chaudhary has taken on the role of Guest Relations and Operations Officer. His laid-back charm belies his busy role and constant supervision of all the movements of the guests. He continues to lead the guides team as well, ensuring that their standards remain high and that their project work – be it monitoring raptors, counting butterfly species or recording the weather data daily – is consistent and of a high standard.

Narayan Devkota joined as a Steward and rose to become Assistant Supervisor with a keen eye for detail. He ensured all the rooms were ever ship-shape and that guests' needs were met immediately. A generous guest funded his plans to build his own home and start a small business in his home town of Narayanghat. Dol Raj Shrestha, Head Barman, has added to his busy workload the duties of Supervisor of the Dining and Rooms section. Ever cheerful, Dol Raj ensures that guests' expectations are exceeded.



Dol Raj



R to L Lalu, Buddhi, Babu Lal and Nar Bdr.

The kitchen has been much improved and Lalu Mahato and his team have excelled – winning two rosettes consistently for the past four years for food quality, variety and service. Their repertoire has expanded to include fresh croissants and other bakery items for breakfast, a much-enlarged range of salads and healthy-eating alternatives for lunch and many new dishes for dinner. Other developments include homemade sausages, salami and ham. The kitchen now serves a range of evening meals

including special Nepali Thalis and much-improved menus for those with special dietary needs. Lalu is supported by the efforts of Jit Bahadur and Buddhi Bahadur in the garden, which now has expanded and provides all the Lodge's needs for salads, fresh herbs and some vegetables. Asparagus, horseradish, raspberries, blackberries and passion fruit are under development for the future.

With little chance to expand the staff due to the political situation, it has been heartening to see the development of real team spirit among the staff with various departments helping each other when the Lodge is busy. Particular praise goes to Buddhi Bahadur Thapa, handyman extraordinaire and total multi-tasking expert who seems to be in every department at once as well as doing his own work. Similarly, Ishwori Mahato has learnt plumbing, assists in the laundry, kitchen, rooms and does the swimming pool. Hari Bhandari works wonders keeping our power supply, water pumps and sundry electrics behaving reasonably and has also become an effective guide, assisting Sanu and Hari who continue to win friends from around the world with their charm and enthusiasm guiding guests on diverse walks and other activities.



Picnic lunch on Gurung Village Walk with guide.

Behind the scenes, Ishwar Basnet has had a 'baptism of fire' learning bookkeeping and accounting when we 'localised' our accounting at the Lodge. Ishwar works long hours in the bunker-like office to ensure that the financial records are impeccable and that overall administration of the company runs flawlessly. Gyan Paudel endures the heat, dust, bustle and chaos of the bazaar almost daily to ensure supplies up at the Lodge are never too much or too little. This is a tough assignment and Gyan deserves every credit for his effective handling of the stock, stores and purchasing side of the company.

### **New Services:**



Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge has launched its new brand "Essence of Tranquillity" with a range of wellbeing therapies and massage available for guests during their stay at the Lodge. These include specialist ayurvedic, shiatsu, hara and reiki treatments, yoga for beginner and more advanced alike and meditation sessions. A selection of self-spa treatments is available for guests use in their rooms.

This branding aims to develop the pure relaxation for which the Lodge is so well designed and located. To this end our itineraries, activities and in-lodge services are all themed to allow for an utterly relaxed and easy-going experience for our guests.

**Website – [www.tigermountain.com/pokhara](http://www.tigermountain.com/pokhara):**

The Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge section of [tigermountain.com](http://tigermountain.com) has pioneered innovations to the group's website with news, project reports, high-resolution picture downloads, weather and climate data and is the first part of the website to be available in French.

### **Awards:**

The Lodge has been acknowledged with several awards and featured in several books and sundry articles:

- Saga Holidays - Top Tour and Two Rosettes for Food Quality, Variety and Service 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005.
- Richard Hammond's Top 30 Green Places to Stay Worldwide, recommendation Mountain Section
- Voted one of the leading hotels in all Asia by customers of Asia-hotels.com
- World's Top "Room with a View" - Independent UK
- Top accommodation choice in Pokhara – South China Morning Post

- Special features – The Nation, Bangkok, Country Life, Tashi Delek, ECS Magazine
- Saga Holidays - Top Tour Extension 2005
- Tourism Gold Award, Business Leaders Club Madrid, Spain
- Saga Holidays Top Tour Award 2002, 2004
- Saga Holidays Good Food Award 2000, 2003 & 2004
- Global Top 5 Cool Pools, Sunday Times UK
- Conservation International Ecotourism Excellence Award
- Conde Nast Traveler EcoAwards Best Lodge
- Pacific Asia Travel Association Heritage & Culture Gold Award
- TravelAsia Best New Ecotourism Product

### **Conclusion:**

None of these great developments could have happened without two groups of people. First, the effort enthusiasm and dedication of the entire staff at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge – a truly great team that has worked with exceptional commitment, even in the darkest times, in the finest traditions of the Tiger Mountain Group. Second our guests – particularly those (who know who they are) that have returned and become such firm friends and supporters of the staff, the company and all that we strive to achieve.



We look forward to celebrating our tenth anniversary in October 2008.

