

NEWS



It seems only recently that our august newsletter was being written from our monsoon-shrouded hilltop. Already half the tourist season has flown by, showing that we have been busy. In spite of the credit crunch, guests have been enjoying the tranquillity of the Lodge and the stunning mountain views in the post-monsoon season.

October saw a happy gathering of supporters and friends for our tenth anniversary. We were very pleased to have Lady Hillary as our guest of honour. She expressed great satisfaction with the way the Lodge has matured over the decade. Head Cook, Lal Bahadur Mahato



designed an excellent five-course dinner

and Dol Raj Shrestha, Head Barman, selected a range of wines to accompany the meal. The following day a large Nepali buffet lunch was held to acknowledge the support of the many local businesses, organisations, and community representatives who have been involved with the lodge over the past ten years.



Lady Hillary with the Field Director, Gurkha Welfare Scheme – Col. Adrian Griffith and other Gurkha officers and wives.

In November, National Geographic Adventure magazine rated Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge as one of the world's top fifty eco-Lodges. Being the only operator from Nepal and one of only five in all South Asia was a particular accolade. For more information, the online edition of the magazine is available in the online edition of National Geographic Adventure: <http://adventure.nationalgeographic.com/2008/11/ecotourism/best-mountain-lodges-text>, scroll down for the entry on Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge.



Among various visitors from the tourism industry including familiarisation visits from Odessa and from old supporters Wilderness Travel in California, we were particularly pleased to welcome Nadia LeBon from Mountain Travel Sobek, USA. It is heartening to see the return of USA visitors after the declines of recent years due to international and local security concerns. We were happy to host a good contingent of Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Corps visitors over to celebrate the unit's fiftieth anniversary to a series of lunches.

Staff Profile:



We welcome Ek Raj and Sajan Ranabhat. Both are from the village and have recently joined the team as Night Guard and Laundryman respectively. Both passed a tough selection from a good batch of almost thirty aspirants. In line with our policy of transparency, an interview panel was comprised of management and other staff including an independent external assessor to ensure fairness. All the interviewers rated the two successful candidates. Ek Raj has recently retired as a Sergeant from the Nepal Army and is a keen social worker in the local community. Sajan is studying at intermediate (A Level equivalent) grade and supporting the team in the vital laundry department.

Sustainable Conservation Tourism:

Sustainable Action Group – over the past four months the group has met – the focus being largely on follow-up with earlier ideas and concepts. Good progress was reported by Gyan Paudel, Storeman, in reduction of plastic bag usage. The use of pastry boxes for picnic lunches on walks will shortly end, in favour of Tupperware boxes – saving packaging and reducing waste.

Responsible Tourism Audit – Jenefer Bobbin, a postgraduate researcher from the International Centre for Responsible Tourism at Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, made a reconnaissance visit to discuss plans for our Responsible Tourism Audit that will be started in January 2009. This will help us assess what we have achieved and guide us with milestones for future objectives. Jenefer made contact with us through the Saga Charitable Trust (who supported our Amar Jyoti School Project) and is also going to undertake similar work at Tiger Tops in Chitwan.

Journal of Wetland Ecology – guides Jhalak, Sanu and Hari were co-authors with Gandhiv Kafle of LIBIRD in an article in the new Nepal Journal of Wetland Ecology on *Status of and Threats to Waterbirds of Rupa Lake, Pokhara, Nepal* – the journal can be downloaded here <http://journal.wetlandfriends.org/vol1-issue1-no1.htm>.

The Eco-travel Handbook – recently published by Thames & Hudson, UK; Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge supported the editorial team with information and data.

Projects and Community Support:

Amar Jyoti School – with the desks now installed, the main work of the last phase of the project is complete. The school welcomed Janice Lee of the Saga Charitable Trust on a visit to see the results of their excellent support. Janice had a good “working session” with the senior staff of the school and gained an insight into the working realities of government schools in Nepal. A

further morning meeting was held with Sanu, Hari and Marcus with the full Guardians' Committee to discuss future plans and initiatives.

Bird Conservation Nepal, Pokhara Branch – Sanu, Hari, and Marcus participated in BCN Pokhara's training programme for postgraduate students at the Institute of Forestry in late August. Marcus gave a talk on the role of the amateur naturalist in conservation initiatives while Hari and Sanu both lead bird watching groups the following day along with leading birder, Hari KC from Fishtail Lodge.

Community Forestry – a meeting with the officials of the community forest committee was held at the Lodge to discuss progress with the forestry support project and to consider the future direction and needs for our support. Our affiliate charity, the International Trust for Nature Conservation, continues to provide support for a forest ranger as well as considering new initiatives proposed by the community forest committee.

New Services:

The main lodge chairs have all be re-upholstered in a colourful orange material. This has added vibrancy and warmth to the clean linear design of the bar and seating areas.

New pot plants, palms, and ferns have been added throughout the main lodge to provide colour and a softer feel to the public rooms. On the verandah there are new lighter cane chairs for relaxing.

We have re-opened the walking path from the road up to the lodge – this makes a more tranquil approach to the main lodge from the road as it winds its way around the northern edge of the property through the community forest. It is also a good area for forest birds.



The Winter Menu was launched at the start of Mangsir 2065 (mid-November 2008) featuring healthy, warming dishes for the cooler weather. Head Cook, Lalu, has introduced rich hearty soups, a delicate buff stroganoff and a new pork, pumpkin and mushroom casserole.

Already work begins on preparations for Christmas and the New Year – we are almost fully booked. Many kilos of dried fruits are macerating in rum to provide mince pies, traditional Christmas Cake and, of course, the flaming Steamed Pudding.

Rhythms of Life – are a series of landscape art installations around the world by Andrew Rogers of Australia. His two works in Nepal are in Pokhara and Jomsom. Ground arrangements in Nepal were handled by Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge's Marketing Director, Lisa Choegyial; lodge staff,



Marcus and driver Shiva Rajbhat, made initial surveys for the Pokhara site in one of the Seti Gorges. He drew inspiration from the Asta Mangala – the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism – and used these for his installations in the Himalaya. We will happily take guests to see the Seti Gorge installation.

Images of Tiger Mountain

Another view of Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge - pure relaxation at the gateway to the Himalaya....



Room 8 and forest pathway © Claire Liembach 2008

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