

Tiger Mountain

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF TIGER MOUNTAIN NEPAL

September 2009

A New Tiger Mountain Nepal

2009 marks a watershed for Tiger Mountain Nepal – obviously, Jim's death was a blow for the family and for us all. However, Jim would be the last person to want us moping about! Watersheds are useful in many ways; they mark a time for review of the past and a positive look forward to the future. Kristjan has taken over as Chairman, Tim Edwards is developing his knowledge and



experience as Director of Operations, and I have taken on the role of Chief Executive. I am also pleased to welcome back an old friend and supporter in Robin Marston, who has returned to lead Mountain Travel Nepal on the departure of Anil Gurung. Tiger Mountain Nepal has also established a special Advisory Board to bring together the breadth of skills

among senior staff and key supporters to provide an effective forum for strategic direction. It is a pleasure to have the skills and experience of Chuck McDougal, Lisa Choegygal, Aimee Junker and others on the board to guide us.

Tiger Mountain Nepal is evolving from Jim's unique and, at times, esoteric

management style! However, the core values that Jim established remain – service quality, and a real focus to delivering exceptional holiday experiences continue at the heart of Tiger Mountain Nepal. To these we are adding improved responsiveness to all our enquiries, be they from direct guests or our strong team of supportive agents and tour operators. We aim

to reply more fully, with more options or innovative ideas, and to be responsive on pricing too – mindful of the difficulties faced as the world sinks into a recession. To help this work effectively, we have made corporate changes to separate each Tiger Mountain operating company and give them distinct identity under the overall Tiger Mountain Nepal flag.

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Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge's Outreach to 3 Community Schools

By funding teachers' salaries in 3 Community Schools, Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge is able to reach out to many more children than its own free pre-school for underprivileged children (Tiger Tops Swissair Pre-School) can accommodate. This has been made possible thanks to Lodge guests and friends. These 3 Community Schools, located in villages close to the Lodge, were built by the villagers from simple local materials (sand, rocks and hand-made sun-dried bricks). The modest desks and benches were also made by the villagers with wood donated by the National Park.

These schools are providing education for children who are from marginalized tribes and are, for the most part, unable to afford even the modest fees of Government schooling. If not for these schools, most of the students probably would never have seen the inside of a classroom. Since the villagers are involved directly in running the schools, they are on track to respond to real,

immediate and basic needs (and accountability is everyone's business!).



Karnali Lodge Lends a Helping Hand

Gauri Malakar, Manager at Karnali Lodge & Camp in west Nepal is engaged in lending support to Ajarar, an NGO registered under the Nepal Government Act and founded by Tharu women of Thakurdwara in Bardia. West Nepal (Rukum, Jajarkot, Surkhet, Kailali) is facing serious health problems caused by an epidemic of diarrhoea. Hence there is high risk of fatality among local people. To raise awareness that can bring effective changes in the community, Ajarar is organizing a Sanitation and Hygienic Alertness and Awareness Campaign within the com-

munity. Ajarar has already organized mass meetings in the Chitkaiya Chok among elder people, different political party members, housewives, people from all walks of life, youth and health post doctors to highlight the role and activities of the community in preventing such a disaster. Gauri has been in the forefront when it comes to bringing people together for Ajarar's various programs and is

regularly involved in many of their community related activities.



Jim Edwards Memorial Volleyball Tournament 2009

It was a large gathering of Tiger Mountain employees from all the properties that met in Bardia. A volleyball tournament was organized by Tiger Mountain in memory of Jim Edwards and played at Karnali Lodge. The teams had amusing names like Chitwan Tiger, King Bull and Boka Gang. The championship was held over four days in the heat of late May. Much merry making accompanied the games. The AVJE Challenge Cup

was won by Pokhara Lodge's TMPL Thunder Claps. Best Player award went to

Bhagirath Chaudhary & Som Lal Mahato; most Unlucky Player award went to Tiger Tops' Durga Limbu.



Chairman Kristjan Edwards giving away the prizes

Most Influential Player was won by Pokhara Lodge's Ishwor Basnet. Best coordinator of the tournament was given to TM Kathmandu Office's Manamaya Karki. Best Supporters were Karnali Lodge's Shakali Gurung and Tiger Tops' supporters Dhan Bahadur Tamang/Nir Bahadur (Purna) Pariyar.

TM Pokhara Lodge celebrates 10th Anniversary

In October 2008, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge celebrated its Tenth Anniversary, with Lady Hillary as Guest of Honour. A mixture of local agents, supporters and friends gathered on 2nd October for a special five course dinner conjured up by Head Cook

Lalu Mahato and his team. All was deftly served by Dol Raj and the stewards including some „new faces%as staff have been transferred from other posts within the lodge. A special Nepali Buffet Lunch was served the following day for all our local community representatives and suppliers to thank them for their support.

the natural and social environment with a view to quantifying and reducing adverse impacts and bolstering the positive ones. Only two tourism organisations in Nepal are using RT Audit schemes and Pokhara Lodge is one of them. This befits Tiger Mountain's traditional role of pioneering the development of tourism policy in Nepal. We aim to have the full scheme in place by autumn 2009.



Lady Hillary and guests at the 10th Anniversary Party

Responsible tourism (RT)

Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge is piloting a responsible tourism audit scheme being developed in conjunction with the International Centre for Responsible Tourism at Leeds Metropolitan University, UK. This will enable us to measure our activities that impinge on

RT Audit systems will be established in all Tiger Mountain lodges and camps over 2010 and then in Mountain Travel Nepal and Adventure Travel Nepal. DB Chaudhary, Manager at Tharu Lodge and Gauri Malakar at Karnali Lodge and Camp are already working to develop their RT best practices.

Better Value on Mountain Travel Tea House Treks

What Mountain Travel does best, is to operate fully supported tented treks, generally to 'off the beaten track areas' in Nepal. These for families or groups of friends, to the villages, foothills and river valleys of Nepal, to high alpine meadows and through rhododendron forests in full bloom, to cross high remote passes, or to climb the trekking and alpine peaks available in the Himalayas. Pricing for these tented treks has always been 'all-inclusive'. The amount charged is based on a per day sum that includes provision of a Sherpa sirdar, support sherpa team, and cook staff. All meals are provided, as are sleeping, dining and toilet tents. Also mattresses, sleeping bags, folding chairs and tables. Local porters are employed to carry all the heavy gear, the trekker just his 'day-pack'. This makes sense, gives clients satisfaction, and provides good employment to many people.

More recently individual backpackers started using the tea houses that sprang up along the popular routes. Standards improved and some overseas agents saw that there was a new product on the market. A product they could market that would be less expensive. Also few would argue the benefits of a warm friendly sherpa lodge high in the Khumbu on a cold November or December night!

The backpackers, staying in tea houses, trekked on their own. They negotiated the price of a bunk in a dormitory, or a double room. Often surprisingly reasonable, provided the trekker also agreed to eat in the



lodge. This they did, and paid the bill for what they ate and drank in the morning, before departure. So, trekkers paid for what they got!

But overseas agents need to make some money from all their labours. Thus instead of any direct payment to the lodge by the individual they realized they had to 'bundle' the tea house trek price into an 'all inclusive' price per day. Thus the client themselves never really know what is costing, how much. Not always a good way to guarantee client satisfaction.

Back to basics. Mountain Travel, prefer to run good, tented, full support treks for families, friends, climbers and individuals. To get away from the often over-crowded popular trails, and off the beaten track, into the 'real' Nepal. But, we also operate tea house treks for clients. However we like to be more transparent; we want our clients to know just what they are paying for and how much it is costing them. Solution-our clients on tea house treks,

with help from their sherpa guide, select a tea house in a village of their choice. They (or their guide) negotiate their room rates and then pay direct to the owner for what they eat and drink-just like every backpacker.

From our side we advise before the client arrives in Nepal, on route selection, weather conditions, element of difficulty of the trek etc. Once agreed, we arrange, and charge clients 'at cost', for transportation to/from trek, ACAP, National park and trek permit fees and any other 'extra' costs. We provide a guide(s) at a daily agreed rate and organize the number of porters the clients need and request.

In return for these services, we charge every client going on a tea house trek with Mountain Travel, a flat 'service' or 'agency' fee for all the arrangements, expertise, and support we give. The rate: \$50 per trekker in the group for any trek of less than six days, and \$100 for every trek of six days or over. End of story.

So, if you do wish to 'tea-house' trek, we suggest you do it the 'transparent' Mountain Travel Nepal way. - Robin Marston

Nepal Tourism Industry News

Yeti Airlines' Social Responsibility Policy

In their drive towards social responsibility, Yeti Airlines, Tiger Mountain's partner airline, handed a cheque of Rs. 284,442 each to four social organizations. 'Helpless Children Welfare Mission' based in Itahari, which rehabilitates helpless and orphaned children of Nepal, 'Sewa Kendra Leprosy Relief', Kathmandu which gives free treatment to Leprosy affected people, 'Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre', Sangha which provides care and training to spinal injury patients and 'Women for Human Rights, Kathmandu which works exclusively with and for single women (widows) in Nepal. The total amount donated was Rs. 1,137,768. In addition, Yeti Airlines has presented financial assistance worth Rs. 3,732,784 to TEWA, OCCED, Maiti Nepal, Nepal Leprosy Relief, Nepal Glaucoma Eye Clinic and Sewa Kendra Leprosy Centre.

Awards

Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge, the Tented Camp and Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge have earned 2 Rosettes each (from SAGA Holidays) for food quality and service. On the basis of SAGA's guest feedback, the Royal Bengal Tiger Tour has been judged the Top Tour for the fourth year in a row.

Staff News



Sarina Chitrakar

Sarina Chitrakar is a graduate in Business Studies and is doing her Masters at present. She joined Tiger Mountain in the Sales and Correspondence Department of Adventure Travel.

Sarina is constantly in touch with both agents and clients to ensure smooth services.

Yangla Lama has been with Tiger Mountain since June 2008 in the Sales and Correspondence Department of Adventure Travel.

After completing her studies in India, she attended a Secretarial Course at New Era. Yangla has been handling files, corresponding with agents and individuals alike.



Yangla Lama

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Ticketing Section

Our new ticketing section, in operation since 1st of January 2009, has greatly added to the efficiency of our services. No longer dependant on other agencies, flights for our guests are booked directly by us, which does away with the uncertainty of flight bookings. Manning our ticketing wing are two experienced staff, Sujit Thapa and Rajendra Kumar Karki who are trained in the Amadeus & Abacus Reservation System. Both Thapa and Karki have eleven years of experience working as ticketing officers.



Sujit Thapa



Rajendra Karki

A New Tiger Mountain...

We are working to raise our responsible conservation tourism (RT) ethos to new heights with the rollout of the RT Audit Scheme at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. This will be a first for Nepal and the support of the International Centre for Responsible Tourism, at Leeds Metropolitan University, as our technical partner in this venture has been unparalleled

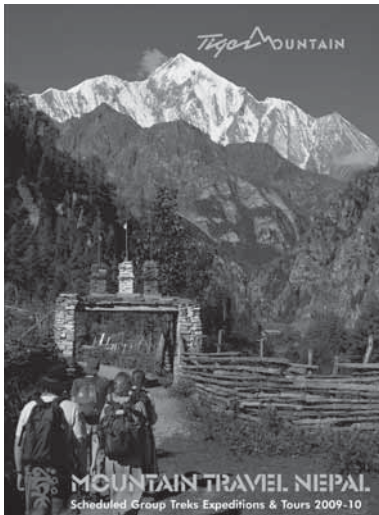
Mountain Travel Nepal has faced the loss of some major agents with determination and confidence of the whole team. We will miss those friends who made the leap-of-faith with Anil Gurung. It is a pleasure to see Sherap Jangbu, a key figure of the powerful Sherpa community of Namche Bazaar, in Mountain Travel Nepal as Field Manager Operations. With Robin, Sherap, Gyanesh – and all the team – we will all ensure that Mountain Travel continues to deliver superb treks, impeccable service,

and a very special insight into the Nepal Himalaya.

In Adventure Travel Nepal, three figures deserve particular mention: Chandra Thapa, who has taken on the task of General Manager. Chandra is a worthy person for the role with long experience of both field operations and the intricacies of Kathmandu. Alongside him, Asta Kshetri as Chief Accountant, and Rajendra Man Shrestha, Sales Director, jointly form a powerful triumvirate to guide Adventure Travel Nepal.

In conclusion, as we remember Jim fondly, we look forward to a New Tiger Mountain, focused and poised to develop Jim's legacy in new ways under the next generation of leadership.

Marcus Cotton
Chief Executive



You can download our new Tiger Mountain brochures from the home page on our website:

www.tigermountain.com



A tiger may be seen during elephant rides, jeep drives, nature walks and boat rides or occasionally even from the lodge itself. Between October 2008 to May 2009, guests staying at Tiger Tops enjoyed 72 tiger sightings. The record number of times a tiger was seen was in October 2008 when there were 14 sightings during elephant rides. On one occasion, a tiger was seen even from the Gol Ghar. A total of 638 guests had the pleasure of seeing a tiger or a leopard in the wild during this period.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Sales & Reservations, Tiger Mountain, PO Box 242, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Tel: +977 (0)1 436 1500, Fax: +977 (0)1 436 1600

Email: info@tigermountain.com Web: www.tigermountain.com

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