

For all the women you are

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FEMINA

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'Life has made me strong'

Femina Style Diva Malvika Mehta on rolling with the punches

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BLACK AND BRAIDS

Hot trends for the coming year

MISSION 2013

What are your resolutions this year?



WHERE THE RIVER FLOWS

There's little that can beat relaxing by a gently gurgling—or gushing—river. **Anil** and **Jyoti Mulchandani** soak up the ambience at these tranquil destinations

GO WILD BY THE KABINI RIVER

Along the Kabini River (a tributary of the Kaveri), Kabini Orange County is an excellent eco-holiday resort where you can relax with views of the river, and, when you're in the mood for action, take a boat and jeep safaris for wildlife tours, bird watching walks or village tours.

Seen from outside, the resort looks like a tribal village with its mud-plastered enclosing wall, traditional entrance and thatched roofs. From the reception and facilities area, a stone paved pathway leads to the hut-like cottage rooms. Each cottage is an independent

bedroom with a sumptuous four-poster bed, comfortable sofas and chairs, huge windows looking out at the green surroundings, and modern amenities including an excellent attached bath. However, here too the owners have given touches like mud-plastered floors and walls, bottle-gourd lamp shades and an exposed thatched ceiling. Each room comes with either a plunge pool or a jacuzzi. There is even a spa cottage with Ayurvedic treatments.

From the cottages, a stroll to the dining area which has a panoramic view of the Kabini River with the forested hills of Nagarhole National



Clockwise from below left: See elephants at Nagarhole National Park; Kabini Orange Country Resort lies by the Kabini River; take a boat safari on the river; see spotted deer at Nagarhole; try tribal-style food here

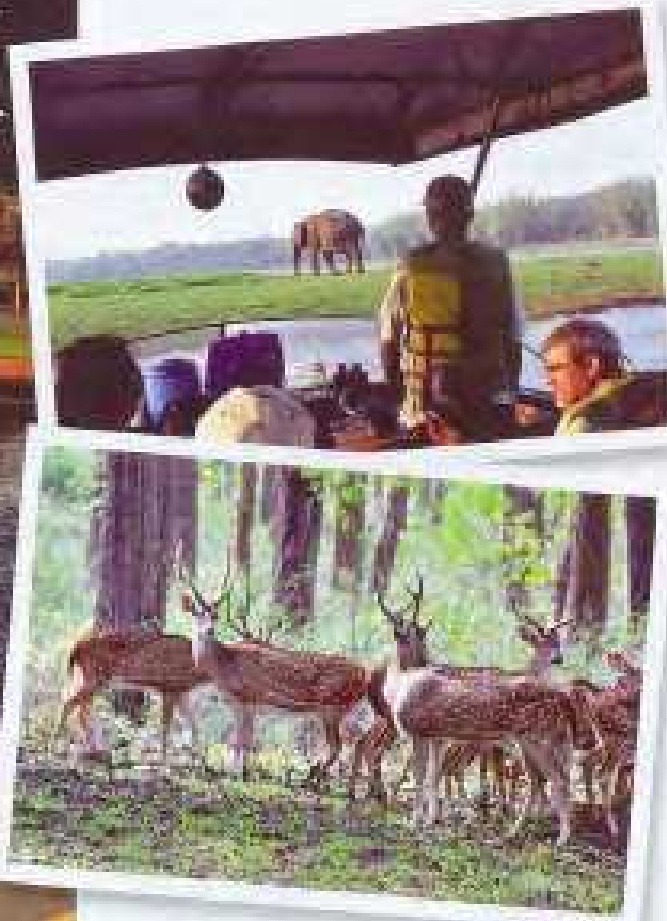
The Kabini flows through the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks, making it one of the best rivers for wildlife watching.

FACT FILE: KABINI

Getting there: Fly to Bangalore from where it is a drive of about four hours to Kabini Orange County.

Where to stay: Kabini Orange County.

Must-dos: Ask the resort's chef for regional specialties like chutnam rice, a fat sweet bread called obudu, the meat dish called kurali mamsa kurudu, kizhary (chicken curry), polye (a side dish with beans and yam) and payista. Kabini Orange County makes a good base to visit Kabini Dam and Kurumba tribal villages.



Park on the opposite bank. The resort has indigenous plants so that it looks contiguous with the aquatic grass-covered shores of the Kabini River. The swimming pool, one of the resort's highlights, has an infinity edge, while swimming you feel like you are part of the river landscape. Kabini Orange County also claims to be an environment-friendly resort—it recycles sewage water and organic solid waste for gardening, foam flow faucets have been installed to reduce water consumption, wind turbines generate a considerable share of the power requirements of the resort, and guests are encouraged to drink water pumped from a reverse osmosis plant to each room, rather than bottled water. There are also reduced noise and light levels, since the resort is located outside a wildlife reserve.

Take a wildlife-viewing tour in the resort motorboat. The Kabini flows through the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park and Nagarhole National Park, making it one of the best rivers for wildlife-watching in India. From the boat, you can get views of herons, storks, ibises, ducks, cormorants and other

water birds. Turtles and crocodiles are often seen during boat rides. Herbivores like spotted deer, sambar and gaur (Indian bison) can be seen drinking water. A big draw of Kabini is the Indian elephant—solitary trunks and large herds of cow elephants frequent the shores. Between January and June, over a hundred elephants can be seen over a two- or three-hour boat safari. They are drawn by fresh grass along the receding river and the availability of water. There are chances of seeing the tiger, sloth bear, leopard or wild dog coming for their drink too.

Another opportunity for wildlife viewing is the vehicle safari. A motorboat ferries you from the resort to the entrance of the Nagarhole National Park where you board a jeep or other open vehicle. There is a good chance of seeing the Malabar pied hornbill, imperial green pigeon, red sparrow, grey jungle fowl, many species of woodpecker, parakeet and flycatcher, and birds of prey. The open teak forests on the driving trail offer a good viewing of barking deer, spotted deer, wild boar, mongoose and giant squirrel. Elephants are often seen. Take as many trips as possible to increase your chances of spotting a tiger, leopard or sloth bear.

When you are done with safaris, the resort is a good place to laze around, watch tribal dances or relax with a book in the lounge. If you are travelling with children, the family pool with child-safe zones is a good place ▶

