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Orange County, Hampi Kamalapura, Karnataka, India



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8/10

Telegraph expert rating

"Six hours from Bangalore, this modern-day palace attempts to recreate the grandeur of the Vijayanagara Empire that ruled South India and Sri Lanka in the 14th century. Its pink façade and Indo-Islamic architecture take design cues from the Unesco world heritage sites down the road."

Telegraph Review



By **Shoba Narayan**, TRAVEL WRITER

6/10 Location

International visitors fly into Bangalore, then take a six-hour, mostly smooth drive to Hampi. The resort arranges pick up on request. The more adventurous can take an overnight bus or train to Hospete, the nearest town, and hitch a ride with a local taxi. Bargaining necessary. The resort can pick up from Hospete too.



9/10 Style & character

The entrance driveway to the 28-acre resort is rather grand. Guests are welcomed with flowers, a cold towel, and vermilion powder on the forehead. The lotus motif, so prominent in the ruins of the royal enclave that gave the town its World Heritage Site status, permeates the resort: white corridors with floral arches, eardrop shaped balustrades, tiny carved lotuses on the wooden façade of the bar, and bathrooms with vine-like inlays. The effect is minimalistic and soothing. Original stucco paintings of village and market scenes enliven the spaces.

8/10 Service & facilities

The young service staff from all over India seems to have been empowered to take charge and offer guidance: a refreshing change from the obsequiousness in some Indian hotels. Most go the extra step, offering handwritten welcome notes and helpful suggestions instead of the usual "as you wish, Madam." Five resident historians customize archeological walks, occasionally going off-script depending on guest interest. The ayurvedic spa is delightful: try the four-hand oil massage that begins with the two therapists reciting Sanskrit chants in a harmonic acapella fashion.

- ✔ Bar
- ✔ Kids' club
- ✔ Parking
- ✔ Restaurant
- ✔ Spa
- ✔ Fitness centre
- ✔ Laundry
- ✔ Pool
- ✔ Room service
- ✔ Wi-Fi

8/10 Rooms

The 46 rooms are rather sumptuously kitted out with purple drapes, local art, and burgundy furnishings. The nine pool villas are about the size of a Manhattan two-bedroom apartment. The bathroom has twin showers, an outdoor shower, bathtub, and a private pool with whirlpool tub and sun loungers. There is a living room, dining area, lobby, and bedroom. Wi-Fi is spotty within the rooms, but can be accessed in the lobby.



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8/10 Food & drink

There are two restaurants: Tuluva and Bahmani, named after the two dynasties that ruled this land. The breakfast buffet has the usual eggs, breads, and Indian fare. Lunch includes chicken fry, mutton rogan josh, a nice spinach soup, grilled paneer-cheese, and a variety of dals and naans. Candle light dinner at the Bahmani has tender yakhni lamb, delicious marinated prawns, spiced lamb shanks, meat kebabs and Indian desserts, following which diners can adjourn—in princely fashion—for coffee and cigars next door. Chefs go around talking to the guests and suggesting off-menu regional specialties based on palate.

7/10 Value for money

Double rooms begin at INR 37,000 (£426) per night for the MAP package that includes breakfast, dinner and room. A three-night package offers better value with INR 27,000 (£311) per night. All-inclusive and full-board rates are also available.

Access for guests with disabilities?

Yes.

Family-friendly?

There are kids' activities on offer. The friendly staff and historians can customise tours for families. Baby cots are free. Children's beds are provided upon request for a small charge.

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