



FINE LIVING
HOTEL

TO THE MANOR BORN

OFFERING AN INTIMATE STAY AND
SUPERLATIVE SERVICE, KINWANI HOUSE
IN RISHIKESH IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE
MOST STUNNING BOUTIQUE HOTEL
OPENING OF THE YEAR

By Amit Dixit

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At the art deco Kinwani House you can opt for al fresco dining, while the conservatory (above) is perfect for high tea

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pecial places have a special sense of arrival. Seeing Kinwani House emerge from a swirl of mist and setting foot on its soft lawns after the long ride from Delhi was a balm for the soul. Even though I was visiting for the very first time, there was a sense of homecoming.

Set in a cosy fold of the Shivaliks above Rishikesh in Narendra Nagar, with breath-taking views of the valley below and the mighty river that runs through it, Kinwani House is a veritable sanctuary, an escape from the hubbub of the holy town. Built in 1954, the art deco mansion belonged to Balendu Shah, son of Maharaja Narendra Shah of Tehri Garhwal, after whom Narendra Nagar is named.

The royal family home has been restored with great sensitivity to its heritage, tastefully furnished, and thrown open to guests. The interiors are maximalist, and only the most confident curator could have pulled it off with such elan. The original terrazzo flooring and art deco fireplaces have been retained, while the terrace on the first floor has been converted into a charming conservatory, perfect for cocktails and high tea.

Once ensconced in your temporary home in the hills,



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The interiors at Kinwani House are in keeping with its royal heritage

you can embark on a range of activities. They recommend the trek up to the nearby Kunjapuri Temple. The more adventurous can go ziplining or bungee jumping. The Ganga Aarti and a visit to the Vashistha Cave are perfect for the spiritually inclined. They also organise a full day of sightseeing in Rishikesh with a knowledgeable guide in tow, but I opted to visit only the Beatles Ashram to capture some of that 1960s l'esprit du temps.

Thank the lord for the spa where, after the day's exertions, the therapist pummels your weary frame into shape. For everything else, there's a personal butler to ensure your every need is attended to.

The menu at Kinwani House is extensive and the in-house chef rustles up gourmet meals at the drop of a hat. The dining room with its single large table encourages inter-

actions among guests but, of course, you're free to dine anywhere you please—even on the top terrace for that truly private dining experience and a view like no other.

Do ask for the flawless pahadi thali for at least one of your meals. Sign up for yoga at dawn. Go on long walks in the surrounding hills. Let Rishikesh and its blissful aura mend you. And return a renewed person.

WHERE: Kinwani House, Ward No. 2, Nagar Palika, 8/2, 500m from Ananda, Narendra Nagar, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand 249175

COST Six suites are on offer ranging in price from ₹37,999 to ₹70,999 plus taxes.

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