

Good Housekeeping

HOME ♦ HEALTH ♦ HAPPINESS

PLAN YOUR VACATION

20 tried, tested getaways for couples, family, extended family & girl-bonding

WOMEN & HEALTH

21 things you must know

(new findings to help you know your body better)

Choose the right lipstick

(and apply perfectly)

Clear that clutter!

Tackle your child's room now

EASTER COOKING

Do more with eggs!



POONAM DHILLON

Films at 16, marriage at 26, divorce at 36; now a single mother and businesswoman... it's a story of incredible reinventions. What makes her tick?

FOR THE EXTENDED FAMILY

When the extended family gathers to renew old ties and to introduce "additions" (a wedding or visitors from abroad), plan a getaway for the clan. A neutral area, where no one is the host, is ideal (choose smaller resorts for more personalised service). Make sure to pack in activities for all

From Mumbai: Anandvan Resort, Bhandardara

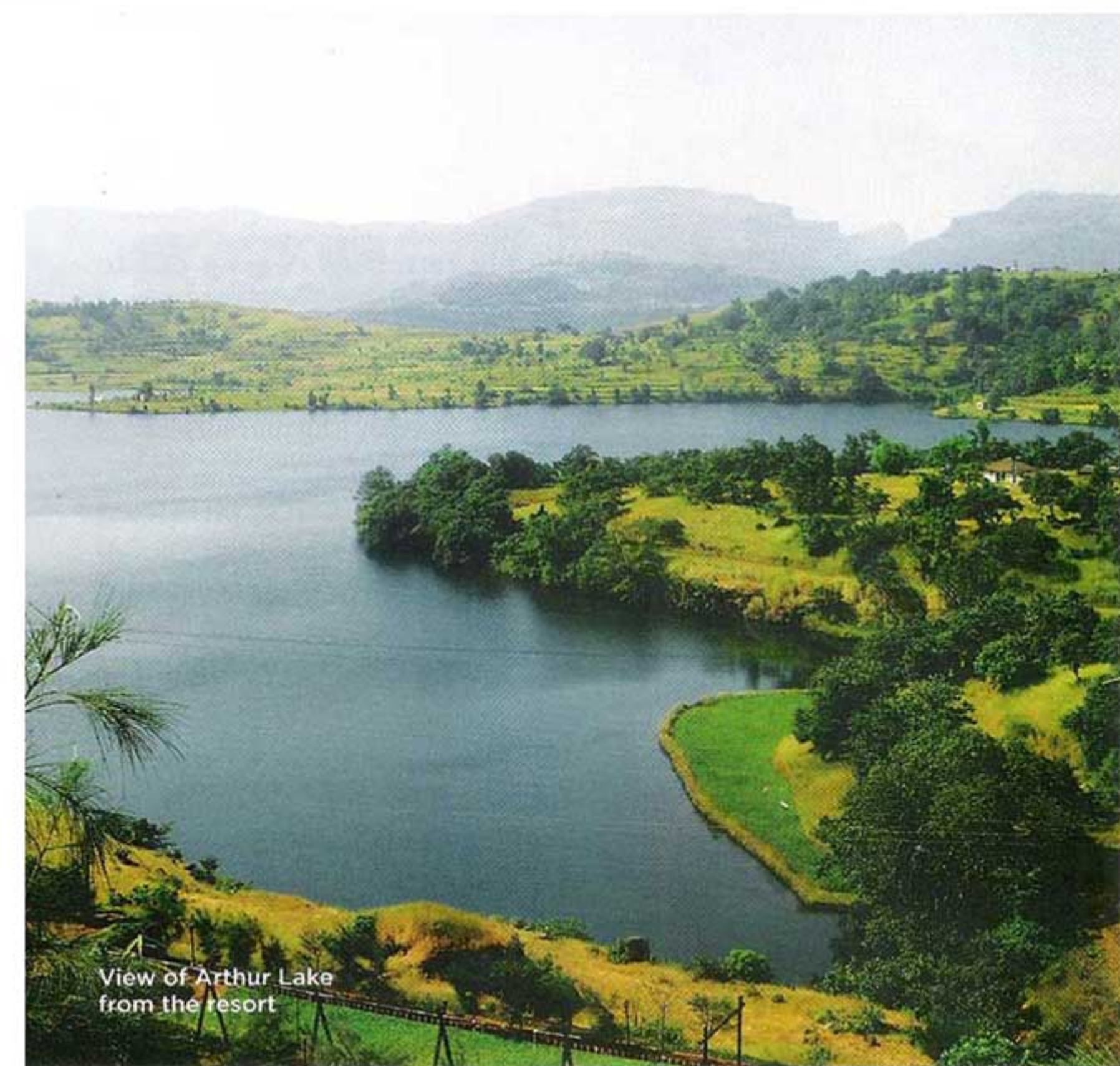
By Soity Banerjee

Unlike its better-known kin – Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani and Matheran – Bhandardara, 165km down NH3, on the Mumbai-Nasik highway, retains an air of un-touristy innocence. Quiet and clean (one person from each family in the village joins a weekly cleanliness drive), it's best visited during the monsoon, when it wears every shade of green and a million natural waterfalls. But as I discovered when I drove down to the place last month, anytime is a good time to visit, really.

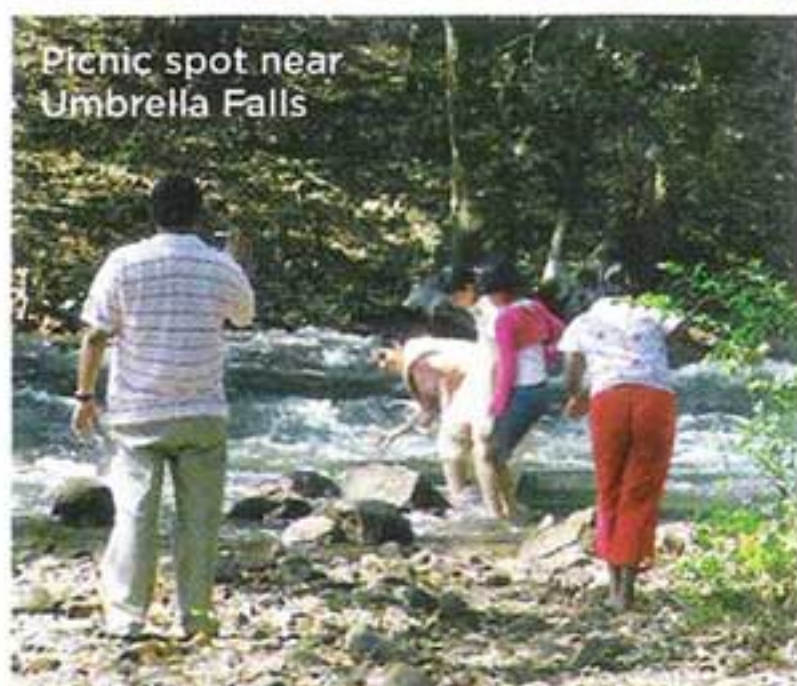


Relaxing outside the cottage

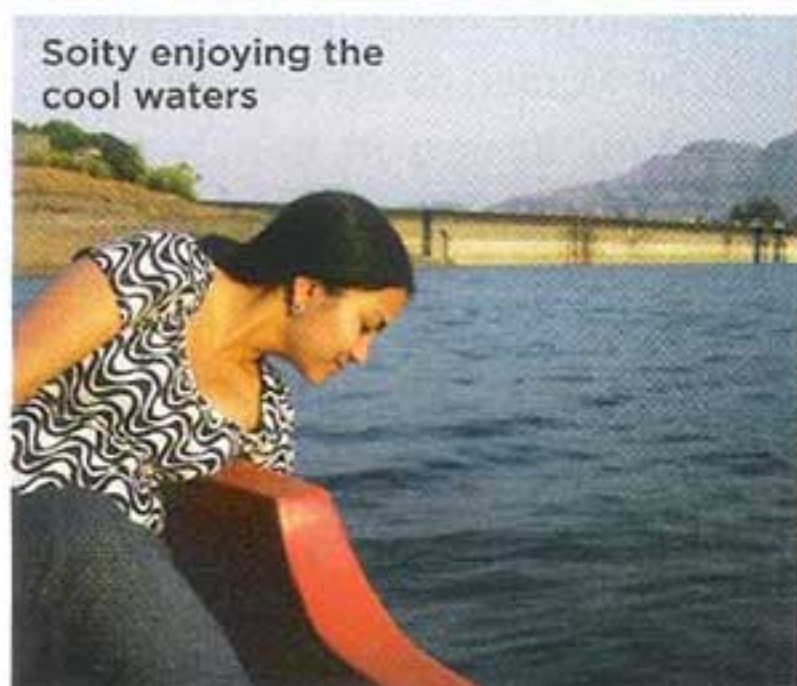
The quaint wood and stone cottages at Anandvan Resort* were a delightful (Internet!) find... The wooden beams on the sloping roof, the wicker and cane trimmings, the mahogany flooring and the generous windowpanes that brought the landscaped private lawn into my cottage, came together beautifully. I also noticed that while the resort offers a chance to mingle with the other guests, it also gives one the option to retreat in the privacy of its cottages and villas (with up to three rooms and three bathrooms to accommodate large families). In fact, I was pleasantly surprised when later I was invited to join the 30-odd guests for barbeque and dinner by a bonfire. All



View of Arthur Lake from the resort



Picnic spot near Umbrella Falls



Soity enjoying the cool waters

day I hadn't had a whiff of them! Yet at night Anandvan came alive, teeming with children, young couples and elderly from Mumbai, Nasik, Pune

and Ahmedabad, savouring malai tikkas and playing a game of housie. On special request, the hotel also organises magic shows and movie

screenings. Children can play in the recreational park (with its swings and hammocks) or ask for a carom board in the cottage itself.

As for the food, though it wasn't gourmet fare, it was quite like what a good home cook would serve her guests. The chef and the manager also took pains to ensure that no dish was repeated. (Anandvan also has a bar.)

Boating, fishing, camping and trekking (the base of Mount Kalsubai, the highest peak in the state, is barely 6km away), watching tribal dances or just idling on the sit-out, Anandvan has a little something for everyone in the family. They can even make arrangements for your driver, if you inform them beforehand. The only caveat: If there are elderly in your family who can't climb steps, you might want to give it a miss. Alternately, you could call ahead to check if the resort can help – the eager and unobtrusive staff often devise ingenious ways to get around such problems.

If you're interested in sightseeing or picnics, the handful of waterfalls in the area, Shivaji's Ratangadh Fort and the 1,100 AD Amriteshwar temple are within 20km radius of the resort. And if you, your parents or in-laws are so inclined, you can even make a trip to the holy city of Shirdi, barely 120km away.