

ROAD TO MAHARAJA

(Ford Mustang Group)



A snake charmer seated on a huge armchair is playing his flute... Suddenly, the gong rang. Two doors opened, music started and dancers' appeared in a veil of smoke.

Mumbai

It started in Mumbai, more precisely at the Film City, the heart of Bollywood, where several hundreds of films are shot every year. To start such a journey needed such an opening. 10 Ford Mustangs in town, driving around the sinuous by-lanes of Mumbai city. The unreal feeling never quite leaves a 1st timer in the city. The stark dichotomy of caste, creed, economics, tradition, modernity; in other words; life is always in your face. The journey will take you through Rajasthan and discover its most exotic locations, its old traditions and unique palaces.



Mumbai – Surat (250 km)

Surat is a port city in the state of Gujarat. Famous for its diamond industry, It is at the heart of India's thriving diamond-polishing industry, which in 2005 cut 92% of the world's diamond pieces and earned India \$15 billion in exports.

It was the first day on the open road, and everyone was fascinated by potpourri of cultures on the move. American muscle cars, on Indian highways, driven around by guests from literally all over the world. Apart from the Mustangs being Left-hand drive vehicles, being driven through a Right-hand drive country, coupled the very different road rules and civic sensibilities which was quite a culture shock for most!



Overnight: Surat



Surat – Dungarpur (450 km)

Sun was bright and warm, all the guest were ready to enter yet another state of India “Rajasthan”.

Known for its exotic palaces and high kings, all were ready for absolutely new experience. After a little delay and good efforts all managed to the reach Dungarpur by the evening.

This beautiful lakeside palace has played host to many elite family guests and today is a fabulous hotel. After a rather good session of cocktails as all well deserved it, a sumptuous dinner at the trophy room was organised.



Overnight: Dungarpur

Dungarpur

The day began a bit later than usual today, given yesterday's exciting events on the road. On the itinerary today was the fascinating Juna Mahal. The guests were filming all over the palace.

All visited the Juna Mahal after the lunch. From the outside the palace looks like a crumbling ruin. The stonewalls were falling apart, and it's quite amazing to think that this unlikely ruined stone building might claim to a very unique history of over 700 years. The evening dinner was on the lovely marble table lighted up to create a fantasy environment. It was simply ecstatic. The royal family also joined the guests for the dinner which gave a fantastic opportunity to the inquisitive clients to interact.



Overnight: Dungarpur



Dungarpur - Udaipur (135 km)



Udaipur, also known as the City of lakes. Apart being the historic capital of the former kingdom of Mewar, It is known for its Rajput-era palaces. The group entered the beautiful city which seemed a classic case of contrasting social values. There was an authentic welcome at the Shiv Niwas hotel. A part of the hotel is still the current residence of the Maharana, while the rest of it has been opened to the public as a hotel and some part as the museum. The day went by shooting all over the city. Of course the personal Automobile museum of the Maharana was a hit as most of the guests were

from Mechanical background. There was an enviable collection of vintage fords, Rolls Royce's, and jeeps from as far back as 1935. Dinner was at Lake Palace.

Overnight: Shiv Niwas



Udaipur - Narlai (150 km)

Narlai is a beautiful town surrounded by Aravalli Ranges. The day started with an audience with the Princess of Udaipur, and then departure to Narlai. The drive is quite fantastic as they were driving through



mountains and hilly regions. This quaint little hamlet is dotted with beautiful old temples, step wells and marble archways. It is about 125km north of Udaipur and situated at the base of a hillock, on the top of which is a colossal statue of an elephant.

After lunch all visited and filmed Kumbalgarh. The finest examples of defensive fortification of Rajasthan. It is famous for the massive fort & the wildlife sanctuary & claims to be the second largest continuous wall after the Great Wall of China and also there are more than 360 small and big temples around.

In the evening the guests reached the hotel to a strange sight. Half a dozen bullock carts, with simple white cushions on them, were lined up outside the entrance. The guests were informed that these are their rides to the dinner venue. From





Ford Mustangs to bullock carts, this trip had covered the whole spectrum of transportation!!! Dinner was at the step well of Narlai. Once used to save water, it was today lighted up with hundreds of diyas (terracotta lamp, with an oil wick). Light live music was played by the local artisan followed by the dinner.

Overnight: Narlai

Narlai – Siana (150 km)

Siana is a small village situated in south west Rajasthan, south of Jodhpur and bordering the great Thar desert. The terrain is a unique mixture of granite hills bordered by sand dunes and agricultural lands. This part of Rajasthan offers a rare and fascinating insight into an intact traditional way of life. It is also known for leopard sightings, and boasts of other species such as caracal and blackbuck. There was a fantastic camp site exclusively set up for the guests in the middle of literally nowhere. The welcoming community was absolutely



eclectic to say the least. There were horsemen, camel men, and a 3 piece folk band (playing the local folk instruments). What a sight! Horses running with mustangs in the wilderness!!!

Overnight: Camp



Siana - Jaisalmer (350 km)



This golden city lies in the heart of the Thar Desert. The town stands on a ridge of yellowish sandstone, crowned by a fort, which contains the palace and several ornate Jain temples. The drive was fantastic with great scenic beauty. The group reached by lunch time. Those interested went to visit the city.



Overnight: Jaisalmer



Jaisalmer – Manvar (150 km)

It is a medieval city catapulted through a time warp into the 21st century. There is a quiet, unhurried grace about this desert settlement and its people and a sense of kinship that can be traced to the royal family. Dinner was a great social affair, with everyone walking around the bonfire, as the waiters come around with appetizers. “Shady” one of our guest who is also a Lebanese singer by profession rocked the night blending the local music with his own creation.



Overnight: Manvar Camps

Manvar - Gajner (175 km)



Everyone woke up late and after a lazy breakfast was a good jeep dune safari. Later they all drove to Gajner. The day was long. We had carried packed lunch which all enjoyed. The guests also visited the Deshnok temple famous for hundreds of rats who 'walk about'. The chief attraction in Gajner is the Gajner Palace.

It was built by Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh Ji of Bikaner to be used as a hunting resort for the royal family and guests. Built over an area of 6000 acres, the palace complex houses its own sanctuary. More than 100 species of the migratory birds flock the lake by the palace during the winter months. A folk music performance had been planned for the evening.

Overnight: Gajner Palace



Gajner - Khimsar (200 km)

Khimsar is a small village situated around 92 km on the highway from Jodhpur to Bikaner in the northern Rajasthan. This desert village offers an interesting insight into the rural life of the desert people. The fort looks very regal and majestic. The noble family still resides here and was great hosts.

Overnight: Khimsar Fort





Khimsar - Jodhpur (100 km)

The day started early as all wanted to reach on time for ‘The Grand Finale’ of the fabulous road trip where a grand celebratory parade had been organized. The group arrived at the Umaid Bhawan Palace Hotel. Built in the distinctive Art Deco style prevalent in the 20's to the 40's. There were camels, horses, and the trumpeting parade of musicians had all lined up on either side of the road. The fleet of Mustangs drove through them. Photographers, cameramen, and the film crew were all trying to capture this grand



sight. When the guests arrived to the lawns for the dinner they were simply ecstatic. The entire lawn was resplendent with lights; and right by the edge of the lawn, lit up to showcase all her best assets, was DHANNO Sweetlime (They named that to one of the Mustang). H. H. the King of Jodhpur walked in to meet every one.

Overnight: Jodhpur

Jodhpur – Delhi – Home

The next morning, the guest took the regular flight to Delhi and the connecting one back home.

