

# Nature's Nest

Are you tired of the madding crowds? Do you want to escape from the concrete jungle? Check into the Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa, a tranquil retreat nestled in the spectacular Western Ghats



Time and again, you get that feeling that you need to slow down, unwind and rejuvenate yourself. The Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa is that perfect getaway for such times, tucked away in the stretch between Lonavala and Shillim, a three-hour drive from Mumbai. For the really adventurous, Hilton also offers a 25-minute helicopter transfer from Mumbai International Airport, which flies over some of Maharashtra's most scenic topography.

The place sprawls over 320 acres of wilderness, within the 3,500-acre property of the Shillim Estate. There were no plastic, forced smiles from the hotel staff as I was handed a welcome drink, a non-alcoholic watermelon and lemongrass shooter—one was just not enough!

I took the buggy ride to my villa... it took a while for the spacious interiors, the breathtaking green views, and the incessant chirping of the birds to sink in. If you don't feel like stepping out, the Hilton Shillim offers exclusive butler services and private therapy, so can you lounge around in your villa if

#### MUST DO

The place just goes on and on forever. I took in the Tea Room (with its Japanese ambience), Meditation Cave, Yoga Pavilion, Terrazzo restaurant, herb gardens, The Shillim Bar, The Reserve (said to possess one of the largest wine cellars in the country) and, not to forget, the astounding green flora around, including khus, lemongrass and aloe vera plantations.



#### TREAT YOURSELF TO

For vegetarians (like yours truly), my recommendations are the Lebanese cold mezze and the luscious New York-style cheesecake at The Green Table. Do save some space for the cheese platter here. Also, never say no to any non-alcoholic shooters offered to you anywhere in the retreat.

you so want. I decided that my first port-of-call would be the Green Room.

You guessed it, the Green Room is for the environmentally-conscious, and the food is prepared from organic ingredients. The welcome menu here was papaya along with a shot of coconut & rose water. This was supposed to cleanse my system—and I felt cleansed—and famished! I had started my tryst with wellness with an absolute bang.

You cannot miss the feeling that Mother Nature has you firmly in her embrace—you get spectacular glimpses of the mighty Sahyadris from all around the Hilton Shillim. I felt wanderlust (the place does that to you) and wander I did, before it was time for my mind to be rejuvenated. My insomnia always follows me, but a consultation with the Associate Director-Spa, Dr Rajneesh Kumar, made me drift away to never-never land as soon as I hit the sack.

Now what could have improved the experience? A good cloudburst (or two) could have helped, but that's Hilton Shillim during the monsoon—I just might come back for more. ■

#### THE HIGHLIGHT

I was treated to a Swedish massage, which was extremely soothing... to say the least. A special mention goes to the consultation with Dr Rajneesh Kumar before the massage, where, besides identifying the best treatment for me, I also found out what I could do on a daily basis for my general health and well-being.



#### HILTON SHILLIM ESTATE RETREAT & SPA

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