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Robb Report

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FOR THE LUXURY LIFESTYLE™

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SUMMER

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the change of season

Arvind Singh Mewar

A chat with the vivacious royal on classic cars, good tailoring and the trappings of luxury.



AS THE 76TH custodian of the House of Mewar, Shriji Arvind Singh Mewar of Udaipur is one of the country's most recognised and loved royals. Known for his outgoing nature and love of gadgets (incidentally, he is never far from his iPhone and iPad), Shriji's passions for flying planes and horseriding are well known. Besides an enviable collection of classic cars, including a 1924 Rolls-Royce convertible, he is a licensed pilot and owns a Zenith Aircraft CH 701 and a Cessna 206. While he wishes he could spend more time flying, Shriji takes his responsibilities as custodian of Mewar quite seriously. Whether unveiling a treasure trove of India's earliest recorded photographs from the vaults of the royal palace or sipping Champagne with the glitterati at polo meets, Arvind Singhji is a royal picture of modesty and grace.

—GOVIND DHAR

What does luxury mean to you?

I grew up surrounded by material things, so real luxury is enjoying quality personal time management and not having to rush about. Time is undermined and not understood by most.

What are your thoughts on the Indian mindset for luxury?

We seem to be chasing trends, not creating them. We have immense talent and wherewithal to create Indian luxury brands and we should capitalise on it.

What is an absolute must when you travel?

A flashlight.

What do you feel is a colossal waste of money?

Buying something as a result of peer pressure.

What are your thoughts on passing on a legacy?

The very fact that the sovereignty of Mewar rests in a deity helps us stay humble and grounded. We are not the owners but the custodians of the state of Mewar, who are supposed to be serving, protecting and growing the kingdom in our lifetime and then passing it on to the next generation. I am merely its trustee and servant. It is not my private possession; it belongs to Shri Eklingji.

What is your favourite holiday destination?

Bhuj in Kutch, because it is the land that time forgot. Or

Kumbalgarh, because there is a comfortable place to stay and enjoy the varied magnificence of an unconquered fort in the wilderness, in the middle of nowhere. The tranquility is the prescribed tonic for recharging my jaded thought process, so I may face the world with revitalised vigour.

Tell us about your storied collection of classic cars.

I was lucky enough to inherit the family cars, which became part of a unique collection of 'single-owner cars' with registration papers. The 1924 Rolls-Royce and the 1946 MG convertibles are presently two of my favourites. Recently, I completely restored the first car I bought with my own money when just out of school; it happens to be a Standard Herald 1961.

What luxury brands are you a fan of and why?

Pakeman Catto & Carter—tailors in Cirencester, Gloucestershire, UK. They produce a variety of clothes that really fit me and are comfortable.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a committed custodian who, although born into privilege, made the best of what he was given and shared what he had.

Finally, define the good life in your own terms and how one should live it.

Rewarding myself after a working day with a whisky at sunset on my terrace overlooking Lake Pichola—a romantic view that I do not take for granted! ☺