

In Search of Distant Shores

American David Shore has travelled all over the world in the past 25 years. But now he is enamoured of Kerala and India

by Shevlin Sebastian

When American traveller David Shore was at the Tiger Temple in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, he was given an offer. He could enter the open-air cage of tigers and caress the animals.

"For that, I had to sign a waiver certificate which stated that the temple authorities were not responsible for my death," he says. Before entering, David had to take other precautions. He could not wear bright colours like oranges, reds, yellows, or greens. "These excite the tigers," he says. "You must not make any sudden movements or show that you are fearful. Animals, like tigers and dogs, can sense if you are afraid of them. If anything went wrong, the tigers might scratch the visitor with their paws. You could get blinded or killed."

Eventually, the interaction went off fine. There is a picture of David sitting on his haunches gently touching the furry back of a tiger, which is lying down. In other photos, he is muzzling the neck and smiling broadly for the camera. Apparently, you can also bottle-feed a cub and bathe a tiger.

Thanks to poachers, many tigers had been killed in that area. So the cubs were adopted by the Buddhist monks at the temple. Now, it has become a popular tourist destination.



David with his Chinese friend Cloud

David has been travelling around the world for more than 25 years now. But from 2005 onwards, David has become enamoured of Asia, especially China and India. "What I like best about Asia and India is the remarkable diversity, in terms of the culture, food, people, weather, colours and languages," he says, at a home-stay in Fort

Kochi. He takes out a ₹ 10 currency note from his wallet, flips it over, and shows the 15 languages that are printed there. "This explains to you the diversity," he says. "There are 22 official languages in India. Which other country has so many? Not one."

This is his third trip to India and to Kerala also. "On

most evenings, I go to the Fort Kochi beach, and buy fresh seafood like butter fish, red or white snappers, tuna and prawns," he says. "I pay local prices, and get it cooked with lemon, garlic, and salt."

For David, a lawyer, there are two types of Indians. "There are the educated Indians who speak and write in English and work with foreigners," he says. "On the other hand, the local people don't speak English. When I go into a restaurant, I just look at what people are eating, and then point at it, and

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have the same." The locals, he says, are the real Indians. "I like to deal with the ordinary people," he says. "I go to the local markets, and do all my purchases. All over the world, if you want to have an authentic feel of that country, it is best to interact with the man on the street." Meanwhile, thanks to his companion, Chinese travel

writer, Cloud, David has learnt a new way to travel. "Earlier, I would cram as much as possible, while visiting a country," he says. "But you end up becoming too busy. You see a lot, but you do not remember everything. The best way is to not do too much. Spend more time in less places. One week in each city. You need time to absorb everything. It is just like having a meal. You would like to savour the flavours, which takes time."

Not everybody will agree to this slow-motion way of travelling, because of the large amount of time that is needed. For most people, three weeks is the most they can get away from work. And some don't enjoy travelling too much.

David gives an example. In August, 2008, he landed in Beijing and realised that the Olympic Games was taking place. So, he decided to see the various events. He called up his Filipino girlfriend in San Francisco, and asked her to come. "She said, 'Why should I fly 10,000 kms, when I can watch it on television?'" David now says, "To see Olympics live is so different. There is a three-dimensional effect."

On TV you only see what the camera shows you. I never knew that at the gymnastics centre, several competitions takes place at the same time. I see the real world when I travel. All my senses come alive."

All Set to Scorch the Screen

Prachi Desai will shed her sweet girl-next-door image with 'Bol Bachchan' opposite Abhishek Bachchan

Tired of played sedate, butter-won't-melt-in-the-mouth roles Prachi Desai is all set to loosen up and let her hair down. For Rohit Shetty's 'Bol Bachchan', she teams up with Abhishek Bachchan and is going into the fun zone big time.

"I have a sober image and I am proud of it. I wouldn't want to exchange that image just to be considered sexy. Even when I got my big Bollywood break in 'Rock On' and then in 'Life Partner' I played sweet goody goody roles. But now in my forthcoming films I am all set for a makeover. I am ready to do what the script requires," says Prachi.

The 22-year-old, who started her career with Ekta Kapoor's popular television show 'Kasamh Se' where she played a small town girl, is ready for a complete makeover in Mahesh Bhatt's 'Informer' as well.

"But I've my inbuilt censor which stops me from doing certain things. I won't go beyond the limits I've set for myself. I am young and a girl of today. But so far whether on television or in films, I've played extremely inhibited conservative girls far older than I actually am. That will change now. I'm playing my own age and that too with leading men closer to my age," she says.

About opting out of two South Indian films at the last minute Prachi says: "What can I do? It was a genuine date problem in one case. As for the other film, nothing had been finalized, no dates nothing. If filmmakers want to use my name for publicity what can I do? It hasn't been easy for me to make the transition from television to cinema. I had to

prove myself doubly hard. And now if people want to spoil it for me, what can I say? Except that I wish them well."

You wonder if Ekta Kapoor is proud of her blue-eyed girl and Prachi shoots back saying, "I hope she is!" Asked her about her relationship status with Ekta, and Prachi turns diplomatic.

"So much has been said about our soured friendship. But the fact is, we are still the same. Nothing has changed," says the actress who featured in Ekta's production venture 'Once Upon A Time In Mumbai'.

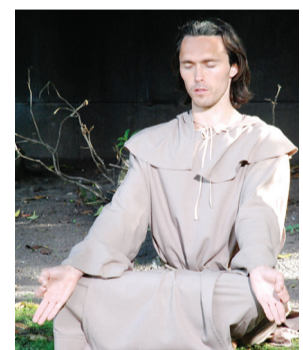
Express Features



Here Comes Noble Dracula

BizTV Network, the producer of 'DAM 999' distributed by Warner Bros. is bringing yet another movie - 'Saint Dracula'.

'Saint Dracula', a 3D horror movie is filmed in the picturesque England with its location being Wales, Manchester, and Liverpool. The movie has just concluded its filming. "Unlike Bram Stoker's 'Dracula', which sends a chill through the spine, 'Saint Dracula' portrays a different dimension of Dracula, who holds a hero figure in the nation of



Romania and is christened as a saint in the Orthodox congregation of the nation", says Sohan Roy, the executive producer and project

director of the film.

The director of the movie, Rupesh Paul, is trying to create a new image to Dracula just as the legendary antagonist Chandu was dignified in the movie 'Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha'. The script and direction is by Rupesh Paul. This real time 3D movie is shot with the help of talented technicians from around the globe. The movie which has been translated to different regional languages of India will be ready for release in December 2011.

Express Features

Hrithik's Actor Instinct



Actor Hrithik Roshan, who plays the protagonist in filmmaker Karan Johar's tribute to his father Yash Johar's 1990 cult film 'Agnepath' by the same name, said that he does not like remakes but agreed to take up this project because it has very little resemblance to the original.

This version of the film is conceived and directed by Karan Malhotra. "I was never interested in doing remakes, I am still not inter-

ested in doing remakes and I don't think I will ever do a remake. When I was narrated the script, in 10 minutes he made me forget that it was a remake and made me forget all the symbolic visuals I had in mind and I just reacted as an actor. I am very, very proud to be associated with this film," Hrithik said.

"I am just driven by my instincts. Whatever my mind says, my instincts just take over. He just made me forget about all the emotions I had

about this film and he took me to a completely different world, with a completely new character," he added.

The original 'Agnepath' directed by Mukul Anand, wasn't commercially successful but gave an iconic character Vijay Deenanath Chauhan that fetched megastar Amitabh Bachchan a National Award for Best Actor.

Asked if he had reprised any traits of the original character, Hrithik said: "I didn't have any reference point. I only had what Karan (Malhotra) had written in the script and it was absolutely a new space, which was a good thing, as I didn't want to have a reference point."

Hrithik maintains that if he had to compete with Big B, he would have definitely failed. "If the competition had been in my mind then I would have definitely failed. For me it's just another character," said Hrithik.

Releasing Jan 12, 2012, the film also features actor Sanjay Dutt, Rishi Kapoor and actress Priyanka Chopra in pivotal roles.

Express Features

Fish Phobia



Supermodel Kate Moss spilled out of a scuba diving course because she's too scared of fish. The supermodel, holidaying in the South of France with her husband Jamie Hince and a group of friends, was keen to get her formal qualification

in diving but her fear of fish put an end to that. "Kate has been snorkelling before and dived a bit. She was keen to get a formal qualification, did some of the classroom-based stuff and was really getting in to it. But then she got convinced she was going to bump into a giant, scary fish - possibly a shark - and began to get nervous," said a friend of the model.

"When a school of tropical fish swam past, Kate got a bit terrified by one of the bigger, grey ones, Pals were calling her 'Skate Moss' all afternoon, joking she'd stumbled across a giant skate," the friend added.

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