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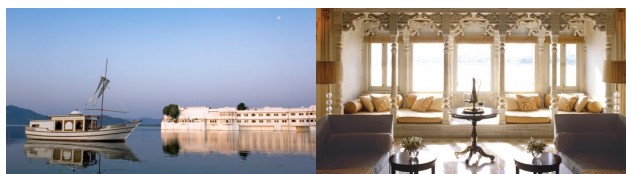
[Taj Lake Palace Udaipur: The White Swan](#)

Lead

Who could forget the floating Indian palace where Octopussy, guarded by an army of Amazons, fell in love with James Bond? Even without an attractive circus owner in sight, a visit to the Taj Lake Palace is a unique experience...

Located in the centre of Udaipur's Lake Pichola, the palace was built in 1746 as a secondary residence for the Maharaja Jagat Singh II. Due to its appearance when looked at from the mainland coastline, that architectural marvel was soon dubbed 'The White Swan' by locals.

From summer palace to luxury hotel



After a near 100-year slumber – which almost saw the marble-floored castle crumble into the water midway through the 20th century – the family opted to turn it into a luxury hotel, opening its landing platforms to mere mortals. Today, the Lake Hotel still operates as part of the Taj Hotel chain (owned by the Tata Group), which assumed control upon its opening in the early 1970s.

Once you reach the 'marble island' after a short hop across the water in the hotel's private boat, a magnificent journey through the colourful history of Rajasthan begins. Secret gardens, long marble-floored corridors and the hand-sculpted ceilings urge you to complete an exploratory stroll. It's little wonder that this dream-like palace was recently voted the most romantic castle hotel in the world.

Photos: Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces

Gallery

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