

# FUTURE PERFECT CITY

This vibrant metropolis has it all — culture, history, entertainment options and more — and it is also a fast growing hub for academics, IT and manufacturing.

WORDS BY NIRMAL KOLTE



A beautiful bridge at Bawel spans the Pavana Pune River.

Pune will always mean home to me. No matter how far I travel, my heart will always long to be in Pune. Frankly speaking, I don't see why I need to go anywhere else. Pune is truly a city which has everything. Once you have lived here, you won't be happy elsewhere. The high quality of life — a good work life balance — is achievable only in this city. So close to Mumbai, yet poles apart, Pune continues to claim its position as a favourite city for students and professionals too.

Today, Pune is a fast growing centre for academics, innovation and manufacturing. Home to innumerable colleges and universities, Pune has earned the reputation of being the 'Oxford of the East'. What I admire most about Pune is that the city has been the epicentre of remarkable development stories. It is home to the R&D and product development teams of several industries. Whether it is the IT sector with more than 2,00,000 professionals or manufacturing giants like Telco, Bajaj, Kinetic,



The Savitribai Phule Pune University

Bharat Forge, Alfa Laval, Atlas Copco, Sandvik and Thermax, Pune never ceases to amaze with its success stories. Even the pharmaceutical industry's interdisciplinary research centre specialising in polymer science, organic chemistry, catalysis, materials chemistry, chemical

engineering and biochemical sciences is located in Pune. And how can I not mention the cars in my city? After all, several automotive giants have set up their manufacturing units here, like Tata Motors, Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, Piaggio, Force One, Fiat and Bajaj. Centrally located,

## 'PEACE, SPACE AND SERENITY'

Peace, space and serenity — that's what Pune is for me. It is also about the great weather and amazing evenings. The best part about the city is that no matter how hot it gets during the day, the weather takes a pleasant turn in the evening, with a light breeze making its presence felt.

It is absolutely normal to find people chilling on the streets till midnight. The various street cafés and open-air restaurants make the most of the awesome Pune weather. I believe the best time to visit Pune is during the monsoon months. That's when everything turns from dusty brown to varying shades of green. The sudden transformation of the city, after the first showers are a sight to behold. The strategic location of the city ensures that many holiday destinations of Maharashtra — like Lonavala, Mahabaleshwar, Lavassa, Ganpatipule and Alibaug — are not too far away.

Pune allows for easy migration of skilled personnel from both North and South India, thus becoming a major powerhouse of talent. This also ensures that the city's infrastructure is growing along with the city. These industries and the presence of several luxury brands — be it a Harley, a Royal Enfield, a Lamborghini or a Porsche — make Pune a true metropolis. You will find them all on the city's roads and people won't even blink an eyelid. Pune is also the perfect destination to invest in real estate and with a high rental yield, its property prices are still escalating at a steady rate.

Another wow factor is the cultural diversity present in Pune. It is home to not only people from all over the country but people from other countries too, giving the city an international flavour. You have to simply stroll down the North Main Road at Koregaon Park and at the local pani puri stalls you will overhear people talking in German, Persian, French or Arabic! Only a city like Pune can play host to both the Sawai Gandharva Music Festival and a NH7 Weekender. Amazingly enough, audiences for both these events happily coexist in the same city.

This free-spirited city offers a great variety of restaurants and cafés, with a new eatery opening up every month. If Paasha at JW Marriott tops my list for fine dining, Cafe Good Luck on FC Road is my personal favourite for street food. Established in 1935, this is a prime spot for college kids to relish their famous *bun maska* (a buttered bun) and *kheema pao* (minced meat with a bun). The typical Pune kid will vouch for the SPDP (*Sev Puri-Dahi Puri*, a popular snack) at Hotel Vaishali and the chocolate sandwich at FC Road. While there are places that have existed for decades, there are also new places which deserve to be tried out.

Pune has a lot on offer for the history buffs too — monuments like the Aga Khan Palace, Lal Mahal, Shaniwar Wada; temples like the Ganpati Temple, Parvati Temple, Pataleshwar Cave Temple, and more, and a theatre that dates to the pre-independence era.



The Gandhi Memorial Aga Khan Palace



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I find it quite fascinating that Pune manages to juggle between the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries so successfully.

The pace at which this city is expanding and the rate at which people are migrating here, Pune promises to grow both spatially and financially for decades to come. If you are thinking of moving to a city that has everything you need — from a strong educational base and a wholesome, healthy lifestyle, to plenty of job opportunities in various sectors and a career growth at a rapid pace — then Pune is the place to be. ☺

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The Dagadusheth Halwai Ganapati Temple



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