

Waghoba: Unique wildlife retreat

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Greenery-covered hills on one side and unbroken view of the horizon on the others. Crisp clean air carrying with it fragrance from a thousand plants and trees that make one want to stop ever so often and take a whiff of. The vast expanse of blue skies peppered with puffs of passing clouds. The promise of a wildlife holiday unlike any other.

Coming with all of this with the tantalizing prospects of sighting a tiger or two, or even more, on a safari, amidst the ever-so-often excited buzz of people that someone from the village next door saw one of these big cats saunter by not more than a kilometre of so away. It's all happening at the Waghoba Eco Lodge. For wildlife and nature enthusiasts looking for an experience unlike those they may have had, the Waghoba Eco Lodge by Pugdunde Safari, right next to the popular Tadoba tiger reserve in Maharashtra, is all this and

WAGHOBIA ECO LODGE

**WILDLIFE SAFARIS,
DAY AND NIGHT**

- Library and lounge
- Hide for bird photography
- Presentation room, interactions with naturalists
- Multi-cuisine dining hall

14

cottages with private sit-outs



more. The demand for wildlife tourism has resulted in hotels and resorts jostling for attention. The experience of solitude, coupled with a very comfortable stay in such settings, is not easy to find. "Maki-

ng this possible is what we set out to do," says Manav Khanduja, co-founder of Pugdunde Safari.

"Our lodges are set mostly in remote locations away from regular tourism hubs," says Khanduja, ex-

plaining the philosophy that benefits of eco-tourism must be distributed far and beyond the established hubs. "Local people hold the future of the forests in their hands. They are the front-runners in wildlife conservation. If we wish to conserve our forests, we must look after the needs of local people by helping to improve their ability to earn livelihoods, in the remotest areas," Khanduja says.

With October setting in – when ecotourism at Tadoba as well as other tiger reserves reopens after the monsoon break – Waghoba Eco Lodge could just be the place to be.

Each of its 14 cottages dripping luxury, are set in a landscape that makes it impossible not to step out, feel the crunch of the soil underfoot, soak in the expanse, the sights, the smell of earth and plants, and enjoy time in the swimming pool, or spend some time in a custom-built hide overlooking a small pond and photograph birds or small animals coming for a drink.

