

For the sweet tooth

A special menu, curated exclusively for The Cheese & Nuts 10-day fest, features cake favourites and classic pastries with a diverse spread of sandwiches and salads
UPTO APRIL 22, 9 AM TO 11 PM
@ Bengaluru Baking Company, JW Marriott
☎ 8884494058

Movement and poise

Nrityanidhi, a Kathak institution will organise a month-long Kathak workshop for all age groups five days a week with focus on basics to complete pieces of Kathak
FROM APRIL 16 ONWARDS
@ www.nrityanidhi.com
☎ 9986761667

Modern tribe

Geometric shapes and ancestral figures depicted in the Warli style of art and tribal ornaments lend inspiration to AM:PM's new S/S '18 collection. Titled 'Warli', it is inspired by tribal art and designed by Ankur and Priyanka Modi.
Available exclusively at AM:PM stores

Future designers

Design Your Dream, by Spread, helps children in the age group of 10 - 15 years become not just dreamers, but creators, in a workshop-learning camp
APRIL 18 ONWARDS
@ www.spreadlearning.com
☎ 7411000807

Style statement

Reinvigorate your wardrobe with on-trend airy handloom weaves for the summer like Khadi cottons, linens and silk cottons as well as Maheshwaris, Chanderis and more
APRIL 20 TO 22, 10 AM TO 7 PM
@ Diva Store, N R Colony
☎ 9945687277

Cups and saucers

United Coffee Association of India and Coffee Board of India will host The National Barista Championship 2018 with participants from across the country preparing and presenting various beverages
APRIL 18 TO 20
@ Orion East Mall

The moo factor

Author Shoba Narayan found the cow was a prism through which to view and explain many things about India

■ HARSHINI VAKKALANKA

Book lovers would by now have begun to associate the words 'cow' and 'Bangalore' with Shoba Narayan, author of the riveting and humorous *Cows of Bangalore: And how I came to own one* (Simon & Schuster India, ₹350), which was recently launched in the city.

Just as word associations and connections are not often conscious choices, the cow serendipitously entered Shoba's life in 2007, when she first moved to the city, through Sarala the neighbouring cowherd.

"The great fun of living in India is that we are all interacting with people from different walks of life. We are lucky that we inhabit and are able to connect to multiple worlds. For me, even though I have help coming in and their lives are different, their stories are interesting to stumble upon, a storyteller like Sarala was a great gift," says the award-winning author and journalist, a graduate of the Columbia Journalism School, in a chat at her home in Halasooru.

"Ostensibly, we can write about all these people. They all have interesting lives but all of them don't have the ability to share their stories until you seek them out."

Sarala and her herd of over 10 cows and how Sarala got Shoba to own one of them (named Anan-



Four-legged wisdom The cow is a great metaphor to explain life, says Shoba ■ S R RAGHUNATHAN

HOOVES AND TAILS

Shoba says one of the biggest challenges that she faced while writing the book is one that is 'staring at our faces'.

"The cow is a political animal in India, it has become so and how does one address it? I chose not to," she says, adding that she was clear that this is not a political book.

"The challenge was to try and follow the story and then say I am not including this. The other challenge was that some friends said I didn't talk about cattle breeding or cattle slaughter in the book. My answer is that as an animal lover and as a vegetarian, I don't have the stomach to go to an abattoir and witness it, in order to write about it."

dalakshmi because all Sarala's cows have to be named with the suffix -Lakshmi) form the crux of the book.

"I used to buy milk from her and she once approached me for a loan to buy a cow. What I say is, I didn't seek them out, they walked up to me," she explains.

"The heroine of the book, Sarala, is a great character. Over the course of time that I got to know her, I found the subject of the cow fascinating.

It is linked to so much of the India that we experience as journalists; it is a prism through which

you can explain many things."

Shoba says that the cow is a great metaphor to explain what we eat and drink, the ecosystem that we inhabit, the mythologies that we all hear.

"It is about culture, history and the nature of all that. It is a great way to explain India."

Admittedly, it was hard to resist looking for the cows on the way into her apartment.

"The story that I wrote about has vanished. It's true what these old timers say that Bangalore is changing before our eyes. I am witnessing that in a specific way because Sarala's herd has dwindled, she now owns only two cows and runs a condiments shop. She doesn't stand and talk like she used to."

Yet Shoba's relationship with Sarala and her passion for cows, especially the (now rare) indigenous breeds (or the desi cows) have remained intact.

"The big takeaway for me was, I don't think I realised how important the cow was, before, to Indian culture. If you go back to most ancient cultures, there was this idea of cattle rearing – the Romans, the Greeks, the Irish, they all did it. The cow is important in many ancient cultures," she says.

"What is different is that in India that link has been preserved. What the horse is to Islam, what the sheep is to Christianity, the cow is to Hinduism. I was trying

COOL COWS

Cows can walk up a flight of stairs, but once there, they can't walk back down. Their knees just don't bend the right way. Holstein cows also have their own unique 'fingerprint'. No two cows have the same set of spots!

to figure out why, I discovered the answer and I talk about it in the book."

The other thing that, she says, she found fascinating, was the whole *Bos Indicus* species that was domesticated in India.

"This is the humped species that we call the desi cow. We have given up on them, which is a sad thing from the point of view of animal husbandry," she points out.

"One of the experts I interviewed said (this is one of the great quotes from the book) that we should market Indian cows and their milk, their milk products just like how the French market cheese.

They talk about regional variations and provenance and how the terroir affects the wine and cheese. Our Indian desi cows were bred for each specific region.

The Kangayam breeds, for instance, were draught breeds and Tipu Sultan used the Hallikars for his battles. Each of these cows is different, the milk they give is region-specific and we should preserve that."