

## LIFE

Healing after trauma p.19⇒

Surfer dude doctor p.20⇒

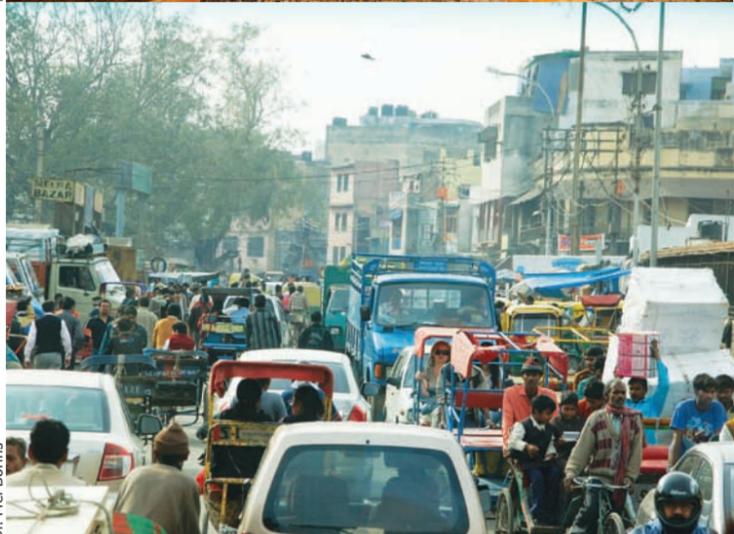
Why I'm not settling down (and it's OK) p.23 ⇒



Dr. Mel Borins



iStockphoto



Dr. Mel Borins

# Awash in colour in India

BY MEL BORINS

*Get caught up bustling, bright cities and retreat  
to historic architectural gems in this vibrant country*

**T**ravel to India can be a bit daunting. The fear of getting sick scares most people, and on top of this are concerns about facing the extreme poverty there. It is hard enough to see the homeless on the streets of Toronto or Vancouver, but to see thousands of undernourished people living in tin huts or sleeping on the sidewalk is difficult to face. Yet if success in life is how we deal with hardship, then from my perspective India is amazingly successful. The resourcefulness and the goodwill of the Indian people never cease to amaze me. The sights, the sounds, the smells, the tastes leave a lasting mark on the soul.

My wife Bonnie and I went with Doctors-on-Tours, a travel company that specializes in offering ecological, cultural and adventure travel to exotic destinations for doctors and others who want to combine learning and travel. There is a certain safety in numbers and it was nice to be able to share the experience with other like-minded people.

Delhi is a huge, multi-faceted metropolis, a historical gold mine and a good place to be initiated. The highlight for many of us was the ride in the back of a three-wheeler tuk tuk through the narrow laneways of Old Delhi—it felt like a video game. My fight or flight

## IF YOU GO

- [www.rajasthantourism.gov.in](http://www.rajasthantourism.gov.in)
- [www.mehrangarh.org](http://www.mehrangarh.org)
- <http://deogarhmahal.com>
- Taj Mahal: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/252>

India blends centuries-old architectural wonders such as the Taj Mahal (top) and the Amber Fort (middle) with the modern-day hum of activity in large cities.

**continued on • page 17**

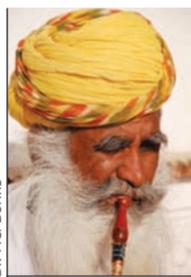
**from • page 15**

sympathetic nervous system went into overdrive and I wondered again and again why I chose to trust my life to a rickety old motorcycle and a wild driver. The number of near misses really got my adrenaline going!

**Rajasthan**

On another drive in a Jeep through the backstreets of Rajasthan—the large state west of Delhi that borders with Pakistan—a pig, a cow, a camel, a pedestrian, a bus, a car, a motorcycle, a bike, and a truck were all competing for the same space and everyone and everything somehow managed to squeeze through, narrowly avoiding an accident by inches.

Jodhpur, Rajasthan's second largest city, is known as the "Blue City" for the sea of azure-coloured houses clustered beneath the impressive Mehrangarh Fort that overlooks the city and dominates the landscape. The fort, known as the "Citadel of the Sun," has seven gates built by various maharajas. The palace complex and the museum house the collection of the royals who once ruled the area.



Dr. Mel Borins

**India is spectacular in its variety and complexity.**

—Dr. Mel Borins



One of the five holiest places of the Jain faith is Ranakpur, a magnificent four-temple complex of glittering white marble located about 170 kilometres south of Jodhpur. The Jain faith strictly adheres to preserving life. The Jains are committed to eating in a way that does not kill a living organism. You are permitted to eat only vegetables and fruit that do not harm the plant from which it grows.

Just outside Jaipur, the state capital known as the "Pink City" for its bright sandstone and similarly painted buildings, is the ancient city of Amber and the fabulous Amber Fort. Construction of this impressive fort began in 1592, and today it is regarded as one of the best preserved forts in India. The highlight of my visit was riding a huge elephant for the slow but steady climb up to the main gate.

**Uttar Pradesh**

Travelling east to the state of Uttar Pradesh, in the small city of Deogarh we stayed in the incredible palace hotel, Deogarh Mahal. We enjoyed great food, an inspiring sing-a-long and a rugged Jeep ride to an unforgettable sunset over a large lake. Deogarh had many intricate, winding streets through which to wander. There were several wedding processions snaking through the narrow roads while we were there, and we were invited to join the festivities. It was wonderful to feel so included as foreigners.

Our final destination and the favourite of many on our trip was an early morning visit to the Taj Mahal, in the city of Agra. This was my third time seeing the Taj and I am still convinced it is the most beautiful man-made structure in the world. Built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan between 1631 and 1648, the

Taj is a white marble memorial to his adored wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Apart from its stunning design, balance and perfect symmetry, the Taj is also noted for its elegant domes, intricately carved screens and some of the best inlay work ever seen. We left our hotel at 5:30 a.m. and were first in line, waiting patiently for the gates to open. Seeing the Taj as the sun rose in the distance and without throngs of people everywhere was a special memory never to be forgotten.

Travelling on Etihad Airways, the airline of the United Arab Emirates, was a treat. The food was delicious and the service friendly, and in first class the seats transform into comfortable beds.

It also made a difference to have great hotels in which to stay. The Lalit Hotel in Delhi, the Gateway Hotel in Jodhpur and the Ashok Country Resort in Agra were wonderful refuges after long days.

India is a land of extreme contrasts and functional chaos. It is spectacular in its variety and complexity. No matter where you look, every image has an impact on your heart.

*Mel Borins is a family physician in Toronto.*



**Cross Canada Coverage\***  
(except PEI)



**50 & 75 mg diclofenac sodium and misoprostol tablets**  
**ARTHROTEC®**

An NSAID with a mucosal protective agent, **ARTHROTEC®** (50 & 75 mg diclofenac sodium and misoprostol tablets) has contraindications as well as warnings and precautions of use.

Please consult the Prescribing Information, which is available on the ARTHROTECMD.ca website, or the Product Monograph, which is available upon request.

\*See respective Formularies for details.



Working together for a healthier world™

©2012  
Pfizer Canada Inc.  
Kirkland, Quebec  
H9J 2M5

TM Pfizer Inc., used under license  
ARTHROTEC® G. D. Searle LLC, owner/  
Pfizer Canada Inc., licensee



**Visit the ARTHROTECMD.ca website today for product and sampling information.**