

Sima Taparia MATCHMAKER



MATCHMAKER MATCHMAKER, FIND ME A MATCH

A delightful conversation with celebrity matchmaker and Netflix star from *Indian Matchmaking*, **Sima Taparia**, covering a host of topics ranging from post-pandemic wedding trends to her love for travel. **BY RIAAN JACOB GEORGE**



QUITE FRANKLY, IN THE PAST, in any of our wedding-related issues, we might have not found a matchmaker's interview to be relevant to a travel magazine. But we decided to sit up and take notice when Mumbai-based matchmaker Sima Taparia became a household name, after her Netflix show *Indian Matchmaking*, which went viral across the globe and dawned a new perspective on the big fat Indian wedding. Few people know that beyond her flourishing business as a matchmaker to elite Indians (and Indian diaspora abroad), Sima and her husband Anup are passionate travellers themselves, and regularly invest in curated vacations across the globe.

During the lockdown, was it business as usual for you? How did you have to adapt your work as a matchmaker?

I have lots of loyal customers, so during the lockdown, they continued to call me and it was business as usual. There were thousands of phone calls and inquiries, especially after *Indian Matchmaking* was released, from across the globe. The work continued; so I have to say that when it comes to me, I was not too badly affected. All my meetings were held on Zoom.

You have been in the matchmaking business for years now. Tell us about some of the prevailing trends that your clients are asking for. Any particular preferences these days?

In India, you see, parents are still giving a few criteria to me. For arranged marriages, they have to give their preferences, otherwise what is the meaning of an arranged marriage. Some people ask for education, others want exposure, while others ask for looks. Character, family values

and upbringing are what I am being asked for and then I have to fulfill them. I also send some candidates to a life coach to mould their perspectives so that they can look at the other person's preferences with an open mind-set.

How will the Indian wedding industry look like in 2021?

Everybody is fond of social gatherings. Indian marriages are an occasion to host social gatherings and people need to get married anyway. This is a chance for families and friends to come together and enjoy, dance, eat and celebrate. Next year, when everything becomes normal (hopefully), people will start enjoying once again in the same way. In our culture, people love to come together to celebrate. It's an important aspect of our lives.

You've become very active on social media, especially after the show. How are you enjoying Instagram and how are you using it for your business?

After the show, I have indeed become very social-media savvy and I have gained so many followers. My favourite part is the memes that you get to see all over. They really keep me entertained. I am so impressed by the creativity of so many people on social media who make these memes on me. Instagram is a buzzing place. I love using it now because it helps me connect with my community and followers.

When you're not travelling for business, do you like taking personal holidays?

My husband and I love travelling. We have visited many countries across the world. Funnily enough, my business even runs when I am travelling. I have matched a couple in the Swiss Alps. We travel twice or thrice a year. We love Switzerland and we go there every year. This year we went to Portugal, which is a very interesting and beautiful country. Europe is our favourite destination, though. We love going to scenic places, where there is an abundance of natural beauty and mountains. We have not

TOP: SHUTTERSTOCK



TOP: COURTESY OF NETFLIX; COURTESY OF SIMA TAPARIA



yet been to Iceland, and we'd like to go there after my daughter gets married next year.

Tell us about the most phenomenal destination wedding that you have attended.

It was in Udaipur. The wedding was held in one of the palaces there and it was such a glamorous affair. The clothes, decor, food and dancing—everything was just magical.

[At this point, Sima's husband Anup adds that she is always working. Even when she is on a vacation, she is always looking out for good matches. Whether it is at the airport, on a flight or on an European train, her mind is always alert!]

What's your message to foreigners who are enchanted by Indian wedding traditions?

Whenever I meet foreigners, I make it a point to invite them to come to India to experience our dance, our jewellery, our *mehendi* ceremony, and to truly see India through a wedding experience. I am proud of our culture and always happy to show off.

Finally, how did you react to the immense success of your Netflix show *Indian Matchmaking*?

I did not expect the show to become such a huge success. The audience loved my personality. They appreciated the Indian values that I showcased in the show. I am very happy with how Netflix has portrayed what I do. ✨