



**NUWAKOT DURBAR
& THE FAMOUS FARM**





Welcome to

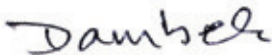
NUWAKOT DURBAR & THE FAMOUS FARM

NUWAKOT DURBAR is delightful and unusually interesting. And yet, as I write, probably the most noticeable fact about Nuwakot Durbar is how surprisingly 'undiscovered' it is. It surely is one of Nepal's best kept secrets; little visited despite its charm and its historical and cultural significance. And too despite the fact that it lies hardly more than three hours by reasonable road from Kathmandu.

In a typical cause-and-consequence syndrome, right now visitors to Nuwakot are pretty rare. . . and thus barely catered for. The bazaar and the small town that surround the citadel are without any but the most basic of accommodation and currently, in reality, The Famous Farm is the reluctant sole hostelry of any note.

Durbar in Nepali means palace and the royal palace at Nuwakot is a classic; the definitive complex of imposing and necessarily fortified buildings just like - though not at all like - medieval castles in Europe. Kot (as in Nuwakot) means fortified place. Maybe on account of the amazing and inspirational character and ambiance of the durbar The Famous Farm strives to do it justice with its own unique features and mood and, using these exceptional opportunities, we intend to make you especially welcome.

Namaste



Tilak Bhandari (Dambar)

The Famous Farm Sept. 2013



THE FAMOUS FARM has an eagle's eye view of the Nuwakot Durbar which is about a 8-10min walk down the hill. Reached from the 'blacktop' by 600m of red dirt track all the farm buildings stand on a broad grassy terrace of trees and shrubs and flowers with paddocks and a small stable and a barn at the far end. From there the other terraces of vegetables and fruit trees fall away steeply - the total effect, which includes the stunning views, really is a natural Shrangila.

While spending about a year working with us on the initial substantial renovations locals were beginning to talk about how one day this farm would be famous. We thus thought ' That'll do'. Incidentally, simply googling The Famous Farm (no location needed) and up it comes. Nice to know it's that unique!



LOCATING NUWAKOT. Between the subtropical lowlands of the Gangetic Plain and the upper extremities of the Himalayan tree-line there's what are called The Middle Hills. These are the awesomely beautiful chaotically disarranged folds of the Himalaya which climb inexorably to the snow-line and the serrated summits. At an elevation of 900m in the warm heart of these Middle Hills the Nuwakot Bazaar and Durbar retain a sense of a lofty back-of-beyond, and a sense too of little changing over the centuries; a place where the local saying '*man believes time passes, time knows man passes*' clearly resonates.

The Trisuli river in its steep-sided fertile valley meanders far below having arrived out of Tibet to continue south to find a way through the folds of the foothills to reach India and to finally merge with the Ganges. Another 50kms north up this same valley by the sealed road beyond the turning for Nuwakot Durbar is the Langtang Himal with spectacular trekking opportunities. There too is The Tamang Heritage Trail through the heartland of this distinct people and there are also adjoining stages of The Great Himalayan Trail, the mapped-out 2,500kms lateral traverse of the entire Himalaya, mountain pass to mountain pass, and, what's more, N.E. from here Shiva's lakes at Gosaikunda can be reached by a demanding two day trek.



To Langtang Himal

THE FAMOUS FARM

Trisuli Bazaar

Nuwakot Durbar

Bidur

Army Camp

Battar

Devi Ghat

For routes and directions
see inside back cover

Route (a)

Route (b)

Route (c)

Kalleri

Gulcchi

To Pokhara, Bandipur & Chitwan

Naubisi





& Bazaar

Chhap

Samundradevi

Sundar

Shivapuri National Park

Kakani

Gongabu

Kapan

Balaju

Thamel

KATHMANDU

Thankot

Patan

F091

**MAKING YOU WELCOME
AT
THE FAMOUS FARM.**

As someone said of The Famous Farm on TripAdvisor *'If it's WiFi connection and a mini bar you want then this might not be the place for you'*. The same reviewer then went on to say that instead it is the perfect place to relax and to do not all that much. . . . while being wonderfully looked after and fed and made to feel very very welcome until the moment that you have to leave.

(See TripAdvisor; – The Famous Farm.)

Busy people and those on a shoe-horned schedule may stay just one night. Frankly though it is really stating the obvious that The Famous Farm is envisaged and intended for relaxing stays of at least two nights.









ACCOMMODATION: The guest accommodation at The Farm consists of 13 bedrooms in three buildings around an open courtyard. All are en-suit except two which have dedicated facilities across a landing. No two rooms are the same. Indeed each one is quite distinct and together they have configurations as singles, twins, doubles and families. Three of the rooms are quite small while the others are not vast but large. All are steeped in the storied origins of the place while comfortable and practical to be at home in. (That is so long as you remember the traditionally low Nepalese doorways through which you have to stoop while stepping over a raised threshold!!).

The main building is a fine example of Newar domestic architecture and is additionally exceptional in that almost all other imposing Newar houses are to be found in the prosperous city centres of the Kathmandu Valley. Of further interest is that, most unusually, it was not owned or lived in by a Newar family but by a senior army officer of the Khadka caste. At one time this grand personage would have been in command of the nearby palace garrison.

This manor house has six bedrooms while on the ground floor in what were the animal quarters is now the richly timbered – though no-longer quite so bovine – dining room.

It was built adjacent to a smaller older house; quaint and of fairytale proportions with a traditional steeply pitched thatched roof. Until that is a bushfire and a head-on wind reduced it to a mere shell of itself. (Gutted! - which, you're right - described us too.) Rebuilt – no not with thatch – it is now an elegant building with many traditional features. The house has five bedrooms

The third guest building, flanked by the other two, is more recently hewn out of the sand-stone rock-face. Under pitched ceilings it has two bedrooms which can be linked for family purposes. Oh! And for the eco-miscreant there is an earlier era claw-footed enamel bath.

DINING: The Famous Farm tariff generally provides for the inclusion of three daily meals which have gained the sort of reputation well worth having. Specific dietary requests or simply personal favourite foods can be addressed, however the norms of the evening set menu include the traditional Nepal 'bhoj'- (multi-platter banquet – with delicious buff curry or all-veg-option), while a western-style roast is a popular alternative. There is also choice offered of Nepali and western dishes at breakfast and lunch time too. There is always enough variety for taste-buds not to be subjected to repetition.

During most of the year the weather is idyllically balmy, perfect for breakfast and lunch 'aux arbres' and dining in one of the lantern-lit niches. And when this is not the case during monsoon and on colder winter nights then the dining room provides a cosy atmosphere. .

When you fancy a cool beer or a good glass (or bottle!) of wine, The- Bar-@-The-Farm is there for you with a fair selection. Drinks under shady trees or accompanying dinner by candle light can be so civilized and rewarding. Not that you have had to have done much!!

N.B. See also penultimate page for 'Practicalities'.





... *to this.*

... *to this* ...



From this ...



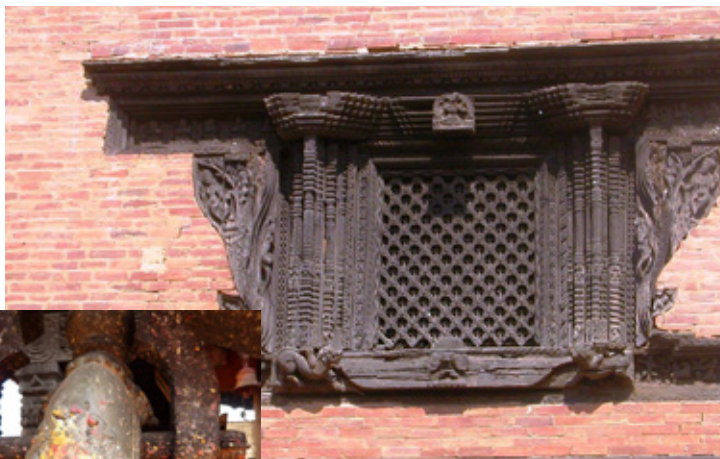
NUWAKOT DURBAR – a short account of a long history.

There has been a fortification here for at least twelve hundred years. High above the confluence of the Trisuli and Tandi rivers the strategic location is dramatic evidence of ancient trans-Himalayan trade. For centuries to come heavily laden porters would, in two days, complete the journey into The Kathmandu Valley with its three or four distinct kingdoms. A shrine to Lord Shiva also dates from those very early days.

The modern history of Nepal is invariably dated from the unification of the country with the beginning of the Shah dynasty created by Prithvi Narayan Shah (1723-1775), king of Gorkha in the hills 40kms to the west of Nuwakot. In that scenario Nuwakot takes centre stage for it was from here that the first Shah king conducted his bloody and successful invasion and occupation of The Kathmandu Valley by piecemeal takeover of the squabbling Malla city-states of Kirtipur, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur and Kathmandu in various campaigns between 1765 and 1769.

First this upstart marched on Nuwakot (1744) and from here conducted several unsuccessful raids on the valley of his ambition while securing a Nuwakot base which he made impressive by modelling it on his fine fort at Gorkha. It is said that he also ensured that from his new fortress here he could still see the same snow-capped Ganesh Himal that forms the backdrop to his native place.

It is also told how here was received the very first British (indeed first ever European) emissary to Nepal. This fact speaks of the beginnings of the British presence in India and perhaps of a mutual sizing up which was to translate into little British appetite for acquisition of these mountainous belligerent regions. And, aware of a particular fighting temperament, the British created mercenary troops from Nepal as units in their Indian Army. The Gurkhas still have that role nearly 200 years later. There were to be a total of 13 Shah kings (1769-2008) and most returned to Nuwakot and its





palace complex at least once in recognition of the key place it has occupied in their destiny.



THE CITADEL. Much like its ilk in Europe, falling away from this bastion of feudal power are the humble dwellings of mere mortals and the main bazaar with all the signs and ingredients of mundane existence. Troops were of course garrisoned here and even today there is a military presence.



And the great edifices of the ‘kot’ and the ‘durbar’ tower above. Two particularly fine four-storied palaces displaying many of the wood-carvers extraordinary skills are The Ranga Mahal and The Garadghar, yet they concede true and awesome grandeur to Prithvi Narayan Shah’s Saat Taale (The Structure of Seven Storeys). It is hard to spot architectural influences owing, as it does, little to things

Indian and little to Himalayan sacred styles yet, somewhat like its mentor at Gorkha, The Saat Taale’s aura and powerful presence alludes to the wild defiant structures of the Tibetan Plateau. It is now a museum – that, if open, charges an entrance fee – though in reality it is the building itself, inside and out, that posterity should value.

To the South a second bazaar leads off from the fort and at the far end of this stands Bhairabi Mandir the ancient lion-guarded temple where Lord Shiva in his most wrathful guise as Bhairab may - or may not - accept atonement. For a bit of a chuckle and for angles in the architecture, see the pilgrim’s rest next door. Neo-oriental baroque might best describe it!

NUWAKOT DURBAR – looking ahead:

There can't be any real doubt that the Durbar at Nuwakot will soon finally find the driving force of tourism at its disposal. Public awareness and interest is growing apace in this historic and illustrious property that belongs to the nation and that has been central to major events of national consequence. How, that is to say in what manner and to what end, the new reality will be exploited is of course the crucible. Those who have visited and enjoyed Nuwakot Durbar and enjoyed the even tenor of its bazaar will no doubt wish it well, trusting its future will lie in responsible and equitable hands. For our part we at the Famous Farm are committed to that objective.



THE FARM AT THE FAMOUS FARM

The Famous Farm itself consists of eight quite sizable levels of steep terracing which are given over to vegetables and fruits, all-in-all a considerable variety. Claims of being organic are easily made in Nepal but we can certainly say that The Farm is free of pesticides, herbicides etc and that simple, eco-friendly, effective newer practices are combined with traditional tried and tested Nepali farming methods. It really is very noticeable how everything here becomes recyclable ‘waste’ or has a resale value.

Our vegetables are all consumed in-house as too are most fruits – as harvests from the young trees are still small. None-the-less we also buy produce from the local market. We also get about 10kgs of honey from our feral bees.

The farm-yard is quite a menagerie; dogs, goats, a donkey, a pony, geese, hens, ducks, peacocks, turkeys, rabbits – though as yet no buffalo or cows. The donkey and pony have been ‘rescued’ from pretty wretched conditions in brick kilns. Most children visiting enjoy the presence of the animals, however care is required and it is best not seen as something of a ‘*petting zoo*’.





CHILDREN AS GUESTS

If you're a kid, what isn't there to love about The Farm!? And so it does perhaps need a bit of a general health warning. We find parents are invariably very good at getting this right – though getting it right varies from child to child of course. I suppose if there were one word of advice it would be that initial wariness of the unfamiliar can quickly become something like excited overconfidence. . . thus, sensible care usually ensures it doesn't come to tears – well not for long anyway! Staff have a nice way with kids, however it is best stated that throughout the stay children remain the responsibility of their guardians.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT FAMOUS FARM STAFF.

Imagine a place where the concepts of tourism and professional hospitality were totally unheard of. In which case neither were they understood. Neither could they really be visualised. One such place was, and for the most part still is, Nuwakot. Further to this, imagine guesthouse staff none of whom have ever been into an hotel in their lives. And too staff who, at school had no motive at all to bother to learn even a smattering of English. And yet we are not saying don't expect too much – what I think we are saying is expect something a bit different! Perhaps this difference is part of the difference that is The Famous Farm – friendly and unassuming and yet competent and taking great pride and pleasure in the duty of your comfort and enjoyment.

Tipping. Deserving of recognition (?) Here at the Famous Farm there is no formal 'tip box' nor the impersonal nature of one. Guests however do often like to express appreciation when service is personal and special and sincere. In this case we would suggest that you might like to offer any gratuity to any member of staff but probably while others are present (which will certainly be the case when goodbyes are said) The recognition conveyed is also appreciated as too is the chance to thank you for being our guest.. Tips are then divided equally.



LOCAL CONDITIONS & ISSUES

'Tourism in the community and the community in tourism'

is the simple maxim that so naturally applies here. The Famous Farm is a new but natural fit which at present is the sole local dynamic for additional prosperity. However we no doubt bring some additional burdens – for example our water requirements – and on such matters we work closely with the community so that issues that we could aggravate instead become catalysts for improvements. The issue of soil erosion and water retention is also being addressed by experimenting with certain special deep-root grasses.

At The Famous Farm, together with an enterprising group of Scouts from the UK, we have been responsible for building and maintaining the school hostel for children who have special educational needs due to deafness. These kids (up to 20 of them), are gathered from all parts of the extensive district of Nuwakot and attend the nearby secondary school.





Incidentally!

THE OLD INN BANDIPUR. . . .

. . . . is a sister guest house which is located 8kms off the Kathmandu--Pokhara highway. The turn-off for Bandipur is just beyond Dumre 130Kms from Kathmandu. The Old Inn is in the centre of Bandipur's traffic-free bazaar and both are pretty special with a very mellow mood – especially in the evenings. Different in that it stands cheek-by-jowl with other old trading establishments in the Bandipur bazaar, The Old Inn has in common with The Farm fantastic character, real charm and hospitality and lots and lots of unique features. What else it's got is stunning views when The Annapurnas reveal themselves.

PRACTICALITIES

All ‘mod-cons’. . . or more correctly their alternative at The Farm. There are quite a few somewhat idiosyncratic features, not least in the rooms. How doors fasten, how windows open and close, where light-switches are and what technique best persuades your shower to deliver perfection. When showing you to your room these will have been explained, but more insight is sometimes welcome.

Security - It might come across as a bit old fashioned but here at The Farm TRUST is the main ingredient of security. (Trust me, it works!) However any security concerns you may have please bring them to the attention of management.

Parking – Parked vehicles are safe. When there are more than three or four vehicles then this may need to be factored in to parking space utilization.

Guests’ staff (e.g. drivers) – can generally be provided with simple facilities. Alternatively, if guests wish their staff to be provided with guest standard services then a commensurate tariff applies.

WiFi and Mobile Phones – The Famous Farm is not in denial about their existence nor value. However. Guests at The Farm are invited to note that we consider The Farm to be a haven from the ‘electric spaghetti’ of modern life. We further believe that, in deference to fellow guests and as not to detract from the ambiance of the place, the employment of ethereal gadgets should generally be a private matter in private conditions. Judgement and discrimination is all that’s needed. **Recharging** of the above can be handled with the help of our staff.

Load Shedding (*The delightful Nepali euphemism for less delightful chronic electrical power cuts*) – is a fact of life. The Farm addresses this with some solar back-up and too with the use of farm-made candles. I’ve heard load-shedding cited by visitors to Nepal as

an example of culture-shock, but actually what's perhaps more alien still is the total aplomb with which it's tolerated.

Credit/Debit Cards. At the farm itself at present we have no facility for accepting these. (and this may not change in the near future). However we'll always help you find ways to pay us (!) and arrangements thru our Kathmandu office work well as does cash (Nepali or other) on departure.

Suggestions really welcome. *Please, please* tell us when something – anything – is not right or could be better. Without this personal and immediate feed-back from guests we would be a lot less able to maintain standards - let alone improve them.



GETTING THERE. . . . Tip – when asking directions, ALWAYS state **Nuwakot BAZAAR**. (the entire region is Nuwakot!.)

Directions: From Kathmandu there are three different routes for getting to Nuwakot Bazaar. By private transport the journey - with no delays – by any of the three routes should take between 3 - 3½hrs. The distance in each case is also about the same – namely +/- 79kms. All routes are hilly.

- a) West out of the Kathmandu Valley on the main Privthi Highway then, after approx 45 kms, right at Gulcchi and up the valley of the Trisuli.
- b) North out of the Kathmandu Valley from Balaju on the Langtang road via Kakani and descend to the Trisuli.(best skyline views on a clear morning)
- c) A different route North out of the Kathmandu valley from Gongabu via Shivapuri National Park and thus down to the Trisuli Valley.(likewise good views)

Route b) outbound and route a) inbound is generally a practical decision. If after your farm stay your itinerary is Pokhara, Bandipur or Chitwan (or generally westward) then route a) is the clear onward choice.

THEN, having used any of these three routes, which will have converged before the Nuwakot Bazaar turn off, there is a not very conspicuous turn-off in Battar ***exactly 1 km on the right beyond the very conspicuous Army Camp gates***, with sentries, on either side of the road. (NB. If you miss this turn-off you will reach Trisuli Bazaar- which means you need to back-track approx 3kms.)

The road from the turn off then climbs and winds approx six kms to Nuwakot Bazaar and Durbar. To reach The Famous Farm you then continue through the bazaar further uphill approx 250m. Here there is an FM broadcasting mast on the left with a track beside it. This dirt track leads to the farm (300m). ***Also see map***



THE FAMOUS FARM & THE OLD INN

are part of

RURAL HERITAGE

----- travel with tradition

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