

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

# Mandarin Oriental hosts charity gala in London

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*Proceeds from a special event staged at London's Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park last month benefitted Salaam Bombay Foundation. Image credit: Mandarin Oriental*

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By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Hospitality brand Mandarin Oriental is promoting its philanthropic endeavors with the help of a global talent.

The company's leaders are looking back on last month's Hope Gala, held in partnership with British actress Alia Bhatt. Proceeds from the special event staged at London's Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park benefitted Salaam Bombay Foundation, an Indian charity supporting the country's youth.

"We are so proud that Alia Bhatt is a genuine fan of Mandarin Oriental, and we are delighted to partner with her this evening to raise funds for such a worthy cause," said Laurent Kleitman, group chief executive of [Mandarin Oriental](#), in a statement.

"Alia is the first of the Mandarin Oriental Fans to have hosted a charity gala on this scale and we are thrilled to be part of this event," Mr. Kleitman said. "Of all the causes we are engaged with around the world, this one is certainly close to our hearts: at Mandarin Oriental we take great pride in supporting young people by creating growth, learning and ultimately career opportunities in hospitality.

"Every year we recruit, train and provide working experiences for up to 600 young people."

## **With cause**

Becoming patrons of Ms. Bhatt's chosen nonprofit, guests gathered inside the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park ballroom on March 28, 2024.

The Salaam Bombay Foundation provides educational and employment opportunities to marginalized teens in India. Funds were raised for the mission via a silent auction that put goods and experiences up for grabs.

Bidders could snag the range, from suite stays at various Mandarin Oriental properties, to jewelry worn by Ms. Bhatt at previous Met Galas and custom sarees made by Indian designer Manish Malhotra.



Guests enjoyed a silent auction, a fireside, entertainment and food made by Michelin-starred chefs. Image credit: Mandarin Oriental

"We are grateful to Alia Bhatt and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group for partnering with us at the Hope Gala," said Padmini Sekhsaria, founder and director of Salaam Bombay Foundation, in a statement.

"Our programs equip students with vocational and life skills, paving the way for meaningful careers after they complete their schooling," said Ms. Sekhsaria. "Alia's advocacy amplifies our message of hope, reaching so many youths at risk of leaving school.

"The funds raised will help transform lives and improve the economic trajectory of their families, forever."

Outside of the auction, Michelin-star cooks Vineet Bhatia and Jason Atherton concocted Indian and British dishes for the guests. Francisco Hernandez, executive chef at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, also crafted bites.

Indian singer Harshdeep Kaur, and French-Tamilian dancer and internet personality Usha Jey performed. Indian YouTuber Rohan Joshi and Ms. Bhatt engaged in a fireside conversation.

In more than 20 years since its initial rollout, Ms. Bhatt leads the most recent chapter of Mandarin Oriental's "I'm a Fan" advertising campaign. She is the first Indian movie star to do so.

More than 50 celebrities have been cast in the marketing effort since its original debut, from American actor Morgan Freeman to British tennis player Andy Murray.

The hotel name has made donations to each of their charities of choice. In total, contributions have surpassed \$1 million.

#### *Mandarin Oriental and global celebrity Fan Alia Bhatt hosted the Hope Gala*

"Hosting my inaugural charity gala in collaboration with the Salaam Bombay Foundation and Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has been an incredible experience," said Ms. Bhatt, in a statement.

"I've long admired Padmini Sekhsaria's unwavering dedication to uplifting at-risk youth in India's slums, offering them hope and opportunity," she said. "I'm happy to have played a small part in helping these children reshape their narratives.

"Furthermore, holding the Hope Gala at such a prestigious venue is a genuine privilege, as I've always been a fan of Mandarin Oriental's exceptional hospitality."

Luxury audiences should be familiar with Ms. Bhatt at this point. The beauty is often tapped by some of the biggest labels in the business, including Italian fashion brand Gucci ([see story](#)).