

By Dan Friesen

Check out my host at the wedding party we crashed in a tiny, mountain village in Rajasthan, India.



The groom at the Indian wedding we visited.

To say this first visit to India was memorable is like saying the coronavirus is causing a few disruptions. It was very memorable! Each day was worthy of a series of posts but the attempt to pick one ultra photogenic moment took me back in my mind to the day we crashed the wedding party (and the most prolific ear hair I have ever seen)!

Vinay, our local guide wanted to show us a nearby mountain trail. It was hot – over 100 degrees – and as we wound our way along a forest path and up over the hills, several visibly inebriated individuals tottered by us in the opposite direction, one leading a camel. Vinay suspected a wedding celebration was going on nearby.

The trail leveled out and led us into a clearing where festivities had clearly ended for the day, alcohol having taken a toll here as well. Nonetheless, we were greeted warmly, and snacks and drinks magically materialized in what seemed like seconds. Vinay told us the local brew proffered was 80% alcohol!

We met the groom (pictured), the groom's father, and conversed with the groom's brother,

who was in the Indian Air Force. Photos were taken all around just in time for the music to start. Though festivities had ended, the arrival of the first and only visitors from outside the area - let alone the USA - prompted a renaissance.

The paid musician and his wife and young son wailed out passionate tunes, accompanied by drum and harmonium (accordion-like instrument). Audience participation was unavoidable and soon all of us were flailing around like palm trees in a hurricane, much to the amusement of our hosts.

We left a gift for the groom, with wishes for a long and happy union, and were invited to the official ceremony the next day, which we, unfortunately, had to decline. Farewells were shared and we headed back down the mountain, basking in the afterglow of yet another cultural encounter, and yet another display of the hospitality of the Indian countryside.