

# EXPERIENCE



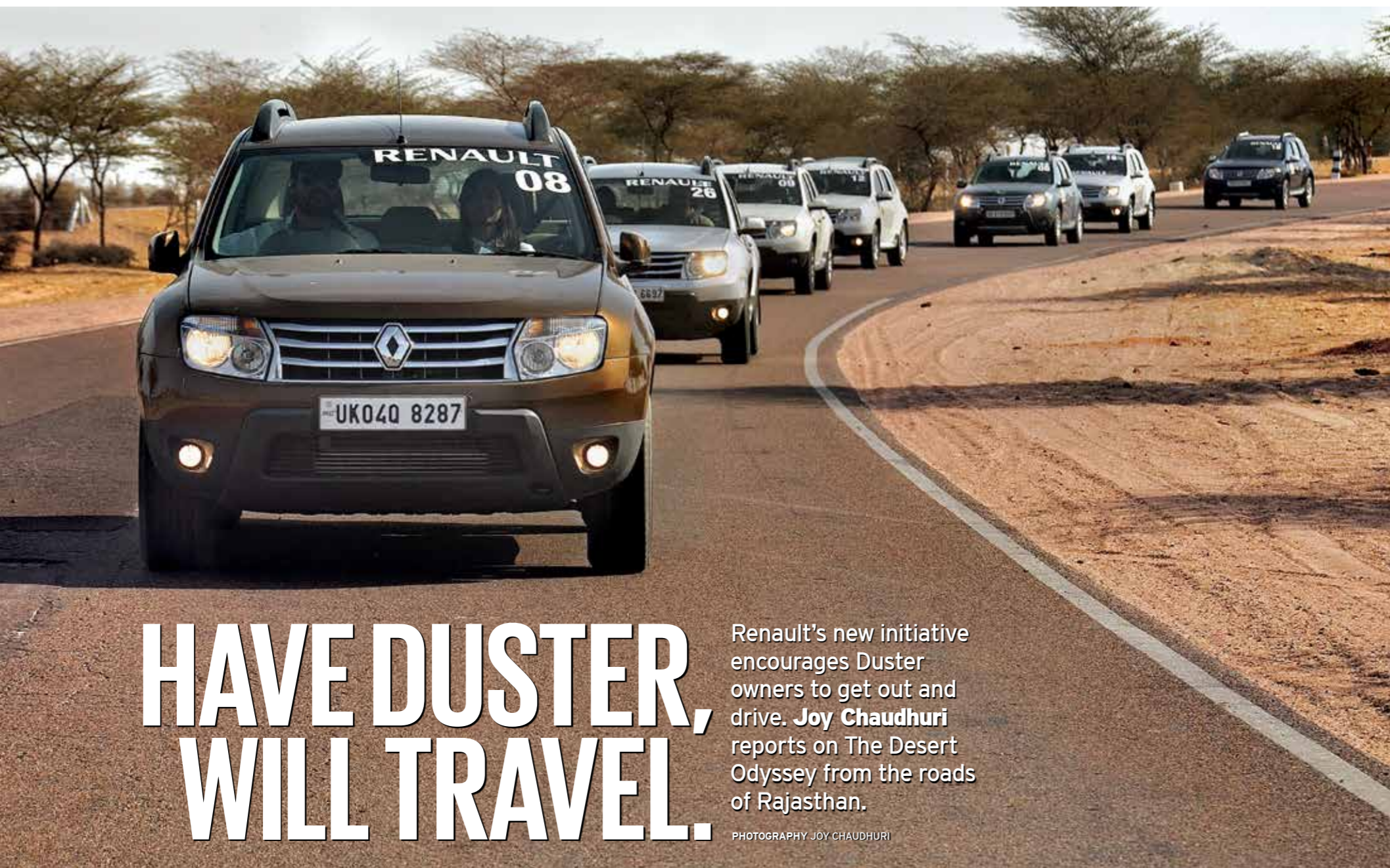
The intrepid adventurers made their way where no roads exist.



Holi with the Gang of Dusters was an exuberant affair.



Mama's Resort & Camp at Khuri offered comfortable tented accommodation.



# HAVE DUSTER, WILL TRAVEL.

Renault's new initiative encourages Duster owners to get out and drive. **Joy Chaudhuri** reports on The Desert Odyssey from the roads of Rajasthan.

PHOTOGRAPHY JOY CHAUDHURI

**H**ina Munawar and Arvind Khirwar have driven down from Delhi in their brand new Duster. This was the perfect opportunity to put their month-old car through its paces and take a short break too. Rajan Modak, Ajay Atré and Vinod Yadav are three friends from Mumbai, who decided that a long drive in the Duster was just the antidote to the stress of their hectic work schedules. Sandeep Singh Rajpal has driven his Duster up from Indore with his wife and son to be a part of this. Duster owners from across India have congregated in the Pink City of Jaipur to be a part of this adventure.

These are amongst the 40-odd people gathered in Jaipur to be a part of The Desert Odyssey. This is the second of a series of drives under the banner of Renault's Gang of Dusters, aiming to build a community of Duster owners through a series of road trips. The first such initiative was a drive from Mumbai to Goa.

Flagged off from Jaipur on the morning of March 15, 2014, the convoy of Dusters set course for Bikaner. Roads in Rajasthan are generally good and the 340km drive was a relaxed affair. The convoy rolled into Hotel Vesta Bikaner Palace by late afternoon. The evening was spent with the drivers pitting their driving skills against each other on a small course marked out with cones.

The next day, the cavalcade headed for Jaisalmer. But there were things to do before the Dusters reached their stop for the night, 470km away. At Mohangarh Lake, the cars made their way to the dried river bed for a bit of fun and play. From here they drove on to the Sam sand dunes for a bit of dune bashing, the sunset adding to the charm of the desert. It was dark by the time the cars pulled in at Mama's Resort & Camp at Khuri, near Jaisalmer.

March 17 – Holi. After two days of spending time together, people who were strangers two days ago were friends by now. So the Holi

celebration at the camp was a predictably exuberant affair with lots of colour, music and dance. The evening provided a different kind of high for the participants as Renault had organised parasailing in the desert. But as the sun set on Holi, Jaisalmer's number one attraction – Queen Harish, The Dancing Queen of the Desert – got the groove going and set the floor on fire.

March 18 – day four. A 670km drive back to Jaipur meant a long day on the road. But the cavalcade of Dusters made good time thanks to the excellent roads and the strong engines. This was the last day of the drive for this Gang of Dusters. But

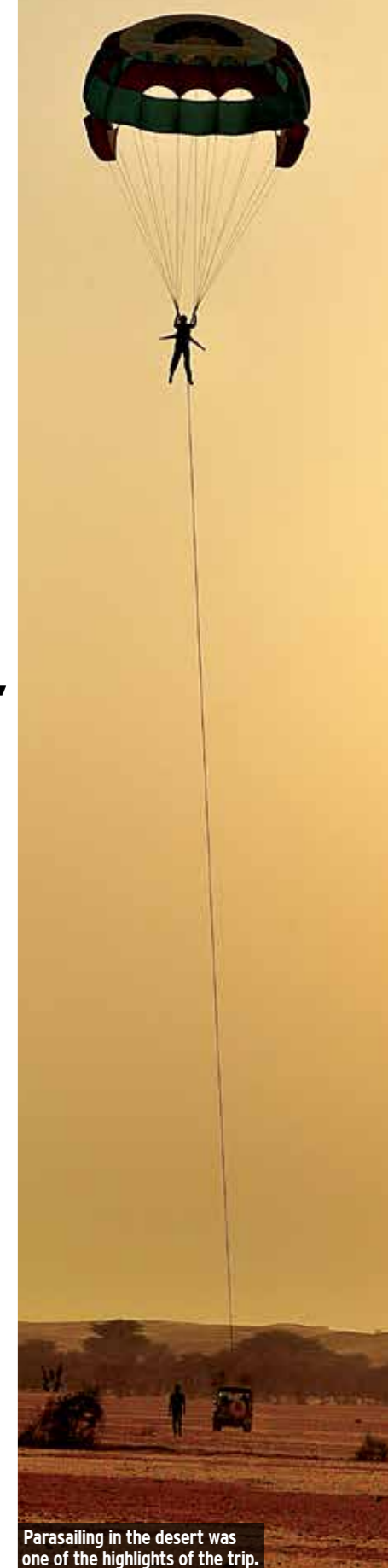
**'This Gang of Dusters was all gung-ho to go where no gang has gone before.'**

this was certainly not the last time they were going to meet. Phone numbers had been exchanged. The feedback was unanimous – that Renault organise more such drives for the Gang of Dusters. Suggestions and ideas for other drives came thick and fast, with the most popular suggestion being Leh. Some wanted to go to the North East. Everyone promised to sign up for the next drive too.

Renault, who set out to establish a community of Duster lovers, has set the ball rolling with this initiative. The company promises many more exciting and longer drives in the calendar year. Unfortunately, as of yet, it is only open to Duster owners. If you are one, keep an eye out for announcements on their website. If this drive was any indication, this Gang of Dusters is ready to go where no gang has gone before. **AI**



The camel is an important component of this fragile desert ecosystem.



Parasailing in the desert was one of the highlights of the trip.