



"A blue that pierced the senses" was how Sarah Searight first experienced lapis lazuli, a sight that led her to 40 years of study and collecting. This lapis sphere, shown enlarged by approximately two-thirds, is part of her collection. Photograph by Peter Sanders.

Publisher

Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096
USA

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Graphic Engine Design

Printed in the USA

RR Donnelley/Wetmore

**Address editorial
correspondence to:**

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Saudi Aramco World
Post Office Box 2106
Houston, Texas
77252-2106 USA

ISSN

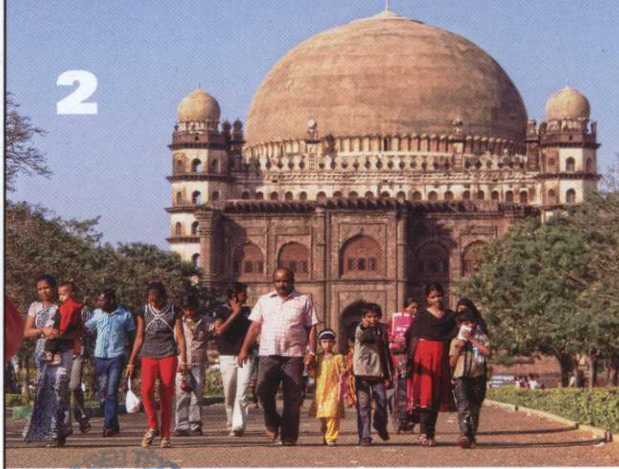
1530-5821

Back Cover



Domed false minarets called *minars* rise above eaves decorated with lotus-bud corbels—architectural features typical of Bijapur's elegant cultural synthesis during the 16th and 17th centuries. Photograph by David H. Wells.

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as an international enterprise just eighty years ago, distributes *Saudi Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the cultures, history and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their connections with the West. *Saudi Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.



Bijapur: Gem of the Deccan

Written by Louis Werner
Photographed by David H. Wells

On the great plateau of south-central India lies a city where, for centuries, styles from East and West blended. The exuberant architecture that resulted is one reflection of a broader cultural vitality now receiving wider recognition.



Reinventing the Wheel 12

Written and photographed by Brian Clark

Salim Nasser has good news for millions of users of arm-powered wheelchairs: Employing a simple mechanical device, he redesigned the hub so that wheels you once had to push forward are now wheels you can pull backward in order to go forward—and that means more efficient mobility and healthier muscles.



The Rålamb Mission

Written by Jonathan Stubbs
Photographs by Mats Landin / Nordiska Museet

In 1657 Claes Rålamb set out incognito through realms hostile to his native Sweden to propose an alliance to the Ottoman Empire. Though he was ostensibly rebuffed, his year in Istanbul set an enduring cooperative tone for Turkish-Swedish relations. He also commissioned a series of paintings of a royal procession that today comprise the most realistic known depiction of the court of Sultan Mehmed IV.





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The Celestial Stone

Written by Richard Covington
Photographed by Peter Sanders

Mined almost exclusively in a remote corner of northeast Afghanistan, the cerulean blues of lapis lazuli have enchanted and inspired men and women around the world for more than 7000 years. They range from Sumerian kings to Renaissance painters to 18th-century cabinet makers—and to a British historian who has devoted much of the past four decades to the brilliant stone.



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تربحمان المكنوز

INTERPRETER *of* TREASURES

Part 2: Encounters

Written by Tim Mackintosh-Smith

"All strangers are to one another kin," quotes the author in his second installment of six eclectic articles, each garnered from his encounters—literary ones—in the treasure-chest of his library of classical Arabic literature. There, the duplicitous, the cantankerous, the merciful and the wise—it turns out—are all both remarkably like us and strikingly different.



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Written by Julie Weiss

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