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EAR TO THE GROUND...

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AHMEDABAD Newsline

Talk

IN THE NEWS



Valery Lippens and Charlie Dupont at the House of MG, Ahmedabad, soon after their project completion

Belgian citizens' audio walking tour will take you through old Ahmedabad streets, with a voiceover guide giving detailed information and guiding you through every lane

Ear to the GROUND

ANURITA RATHORE

WHEN Belgian citizens Valery Lippens and Charlie Dupont were anonymously walking the Ahmedabad Walled City streets, the multiple traffic sounds intrigued them just as the seemingly "overlapping" crowd surprised them. They walked to feel and observe the place, such that an audio walking tour be created. This, to guide you through busy stretches and narrow lanes, complete with narrations ranging from basic information to interesting highlights, having you enjoy only yourself and the surroundings for company.

"Complete with instructions, including the footstep rhythm, market sounds, vendor calls, people chatter, temple bells, mosque chants, birds twitter, workers on their tools, auto rickshaws sounds, the audio walking tour will take you through the old

Ahmedabad streets, with a voiceover guide letting out the minutest information and virtually guiding you through every lane, instructing you to pause at places of historical interest and narrating adequate and interesting information at every point," begins 34-year-old Valery, who met Abhay Mangaldas of the House of MG during his trip to the city last year in Ahmedabad.

"I spoke to him about my work back home in Belgium, of how Charlie and me have created three audio walking tours of Brussels, which is when he proposed this Ahmedabad audio walking tour project. Considering it is a first of its kind for Ahmedabad, I am glad we both have come here to make it," says Valery, handing out a pair of earphones, making me their first listeners. "We have completed everything in less than a fortnight," pitches in Charlie, who is back after the first trial of the

finished audio tour on the busy Old City streets, post noon.

So what if Relief Road provides everything but relief in the busy hours? "It's the flavour of the place and we need to capture that for the listener. We could never imagine the people and life here until we saw it — the streets, the crowds, the flavour and numerous sounds one can feel and enjoy all around, all the time," says 35-year-old Charlie, who has seen only Ahmedabad in the 10 days he has been to city, in his first ever trip to Asia.

The 80-minute audio walking tour starts from opposite the House of MG, the Sidi Sayed Jali, and ends in Saakhdi Sheri. An interesting thing about the audio is "we don't have just historians, architects or trained guides do the talk, you can hear vendors as well as passers-by". While Valery and Charlie are Law graduates, it is creativity and the

love for sounds and music that drew them to making these audios. "The best part of walkmanology or these audio walking tours is you can set out for it all alone. We, however, had too much to do in these days, right from conceptualisation and interviews to recording background sounds and adding music. Meeting so many people along the way has been the best feature of our project," exclaims Valery, who along with Charlie, "created a mini studio with microphones and recording equipments" in one of the rooms at the House of MG where they have been house guests.

Charlie, meanwhile, is still understanding the chaotic life cycle here. "It's like a permanent miracle," says the artist who finds it amazing to find peace and quiet one end of the street and crowdly noises and people floating around on the other.

"We are launching it sometime in November and those wishing to take this audio tour of Ahmedabad's old city streets can await this," says Abhay.

The silent traveller/tourist/enthusiast thirsting for the Old City's music finally has something to look forward to.