

Official description of this show:

Viola Tami and editor Jan Fitze go in search of unusual houses. In this episode, they end up in the Hare Krishna temple in Zurich, a gourmet palace on the French border, an inhabited church in the Engadin and a magic pilgrimage site in eastern Switzerland.

It is a stately patrician villa that is inhabited by around 20 followers of the Hindu Hare Krishna movement on the Zürichberg. It was built in 1909 by the banker family Julius Baer. Since 1980 the house has served as a temple. Viola and Jan not only get an insight into the 25 rooms of the house. They will also be part of a traditional fire ceremony.

SRF TV-Show Ding Dong - Transcription English

J = Jan Fitze

V = Viola Tani

K = Krishna Premarupa Dasa

D = Damodar Prasad Dasa

A = Ajaya

L = Bhakta Lukas

VA = Varadesvari Devi Dasi

AN = Bhaktin Ana

English Transcription starts from minute 2:25 of the Video:

Arrival at the Temple:

J: Those who will receive us now are called Premarupa and Damdar.

V: Is it this one, look. Hare Krishna Temple...I don't believe it!

J: A huge place! Since 1908 the live in here.

J: I always get nervous when I see such religious houses..!

V: No, stop it! Just relax!

J: How do you say hello?

Greeting:

K: Hey, hello everyone!

V&J: Hey hello

V: We were just wondering how they say hello around here.. like us.. hey hello!

V: May we come in, should we take off our shoes? Hey wow, nice color!

J: Prema, Damodar! I've been practicing for a long time!

Entrance hall:

V: Your clothes are in line with the color of the wall, does that color have a special meaning?

K: Yes, the color organs stands for fire, the flame, fire. Stands for renunciation, if you voluntarily renounce something, then there is an inner fire, or inner strength, spiritual strength that develops.

V: You are living in this temple?

K: That's right, it's a temple, or a church in that sense, but it's also an ashrama, or a monastery, a residential community where people also live.

V: I heard 20 people.

K: Yes exactly. 20 people live here at the moment.

V: And you can also buy things here? do you make them yourself?

K: Most of the items come from India, once a year we make a big purchase and then it's sold here.

V: Ah, imported. We were just wondering how you generate money. It's a small shop, but I mean you can't pay rent for a house like this in a prime location.

K: We are organized as an association, we have our members who pay membership fees, then we have our festivals, there is always a big banquet where we receive donations for the food and donation boxes that we have in the temple and in front of the altar.

Reception & Dining room:

K: It's just a reception room

V: For the people who come to the festival?

K: For guests like you.

K: We are here in the dining room.

D: There is also the terrace in summer..

V: A life of luxury! It's in a higher segment in which you live here... so because of renunciation..?!

K: Yes, we live in a great house, a villa on the Bergstrasse (Name of the street, meaning mountain road) but we are actually the servants of the one who really owns the house (Krishna), that's the meditation of us who live here.

J: and is that demanding to be a servant?

D: If someone has a job they can eventually go home and switch off a bit, but we, especially those who live in the ashrama, are actually here 7 days a week. And from the morning... we start early, around 4 a.m. until the evening at 8 p.m., 9 p.m. there is always something going on.

V: and you eat there?

K: Yes, exactly, on the one hand we have this table here, but we also have this cushion, because traditionally in India you just sit on the floor

J: Cross-legged on the ground? I'd fail there, I can't sit Cross-legged.

R: No! Really?

J: Am very immobile!

V: You can't do the cross-legged? Oh my God!

J: I can get that far, but I can't get to the plate that way...

V: What do you do with cases like this?

K: We have the table for them.

Office:

D: This is our office. From where we manage the temple.

D: This is our commercial apprentice

V: Hello commercial apprentice! What's your name?

A: Ajaya!

V: Nice, I'm glad! Do you live in the same house?

A: Exactly, yes, I'll be up there then.

V: How old are you?

A: 18

V: and how did you get here?

A: Well, I grew up in there. Then there was an opportunity to do an apprenticeship here as well, and then of course I took it.

V: and your parents weren't sad that you don't live at home anymore?

A: laughs - fifty-fifty!

D: They also come here regularly.

A: yes exactly.

Srila Prabhupada Museum:

K: Let's go have a look here

V: a music room?

J: Shit, now I meant there's someone...!

V: oh yes. Who is he?

K: Our teacher, Srila Prabhupada. The room is dedicated to him, you could say it's like a museum. All his books in different languages have been written. His former students are today our teachers or gurus.

V: Ah, ok. and what is he signing there?

K: a letter (laughs)

J: He has a long signature!

V: and an expensive watch!

K: that was a time before internet..

J: and an amazing view he has!

V: wow, on the lake! and he doesn't even look..!! (laughs)

Krishna Prema's room:

K: Let's go up one floor to my room.

V: Incense..!

V: ...and you are here alone, marry a woman or a man.. relationship is that (possible)?

K: (points to clothes) I'm a monk. In our tradition we have two types of monks. The younger monk and the elder. I haven't taken my lifetime vows yet. Sex has a specific function, doesn't it? In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna describes sex as something divine, he says I am sexuality.. but those who live as monks in a monastery or ashrama consciously renounce it, mostly so that they have a little more time for the essentials in life.

J: Is it easy with men and women in the same house?

K: No, that's not easy! (laughs)

J: It's like school camp...(laughs)

V: yes, oh, there's something going on!

D: That's why most of them always leave after a short time..

Y: laughs

K: Yes, it's not that easy. Is demanding. But for me, when I look at the bigger picture, I know I'm on the right path for me!

J: My life in weeks

V: Oh man, do you scrape that off..?!

K: On believes that a person lives about 88 years, that's about 4000 weeks. So on Sunday evening I'll take the pen and fill out the next one...then I know another week has passed, another week closer to death!

V: So you're happy?!

K: I am happy that I am aware that I use my time in a meaningful way.

Damodar Prasad's room:

D: So that's my room here.

V: Do you knock when you go into your room?

D: Yes

V: Is there a reason?

D: I'm not alone?

V: Ah

J: Is that a WG (shared apartment)?

D: My room, as you can see, is much smaller, this is my bed

J: That?

D: yes

J: Why did you knock?

D: That's behind you, that's Krishna in the form of the protector, that's why I'm knocking

D: This is ours...actually the most important item..this is the beads that we get from our teacher. We pray on this at least two hours a day. Sometimes you get a gift (beadbag) and then I need a fresh one again, I don't need many, they just hang there.

V: Like me, I also have so many handbags! (laugh)

Attic:

K: If we want, we can still go up to the attic. This is the dormitory of the younger monks, you could tell

L: Hello, welcome!

V: Thank you! What are you doing right now?

L: I'm reading right now. It's kind of our ashrama, where most of us live. During the day a study room and lounge.

V: And is there any night rest, time to turn off the lights..?

L: Yes, there is such a thing. We actually say around 9 o'clock in the evening. It is simply important that you are up the next morning, at your own discretion.

V: and then an alarm clock rings for everyone?

L: Maybe you saw the bell outside? That's one of my jobs.

V: You ring people out of bed? Ding dong!

L: That's the one there. Not the most popular job as you can imagine.

J: But you wanted it!

V: and how do you wake up?

L: I have an alarm clock, the others also have an alarm clock, many are already awake.. but sometimes there are later evenings and then you are glad you still have some help.

Kitchen:

V: Where are we going now?

K: We can go into the kitchen

V: Mhhh, very good. The kitchen is in the basement?

K: That's not the basement, the house is on a slope, so that's just one floor below.

V: Hello nice to meet you!

V: May I open it?

K: Yes, just make sure you don't burn yourself

J: oh that looks good!

K: Is there a soup..

V: and he cooks all the time, or is he on kitchen duty today?

Yes, he cooks regularly, he is also a priest and cook, both.

J: look back there!

R: Hello

K: Yes, we'll go there too.

V: Why do I have to go down the stairs to get to the women?

K: That's why I emphasized before: We're not going into the basement! (laughs)

V: ah, right.

Ladies Ashrama:

V: No food no drink!

J: yes when you are so close to the kitchen..

V: Can we come in

VA: yes, welcome!

V: Nice to meet you, hey!

VA: nice to meet you!

V: my name is Viola. O you look gorgeous!

VA: You can also look like that!

V: I can also look like this? really?

AN: yes, we will help you!

V: to dress like this?

VA: Yes, we have something for you!

V: yes I love to.

V: How many women share this place?

VA: five, six..

V: Six ok, and no girl fights?

VA: laugh

V: so neat and tidy..

V: they adorned me with everything they had

V: I'm ready for the temple

K: I think we're ready for the temple

Temple room:

K: Well, now as a conclusion.. we were also very happy that you visited us in the temple

V: Thank you for letting us come.

K: Nice if we do a ceremony like this. This is a mangala homa, a ceremony to create auspicious circumstances.

V: And even though we're not part of this community now, we're allowed to participate and wear this dress

K: Definitely

K: It's a way of giving back and expressing our gratitude, it's something universal, everyone can participate.

K: since you are our guests of honour, you could take the plate there, if I say svaha you can put the contents of the plate into the fire...svaha, svaha!

(End)