

# HOTEL

## Business Review

An Exclusive Business Magazine for the Hotel Industry



**Business**

Knowing the Future Trends

**Feature**

Secured Measures

**F&B**

Room Service

**Management**

Unraveling Loyalty

**Operations**

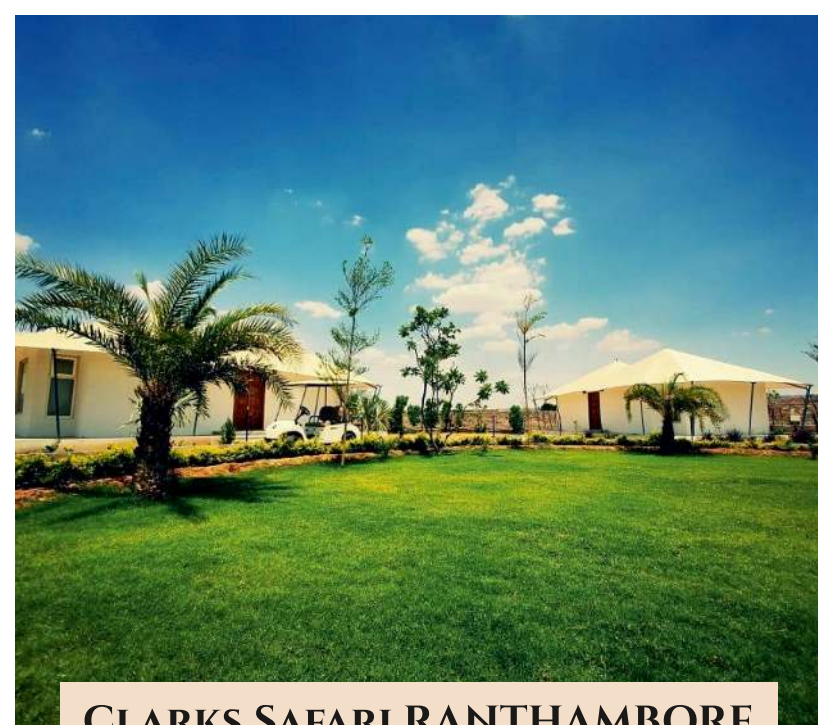
Future Kitchens

**Housekeeping**

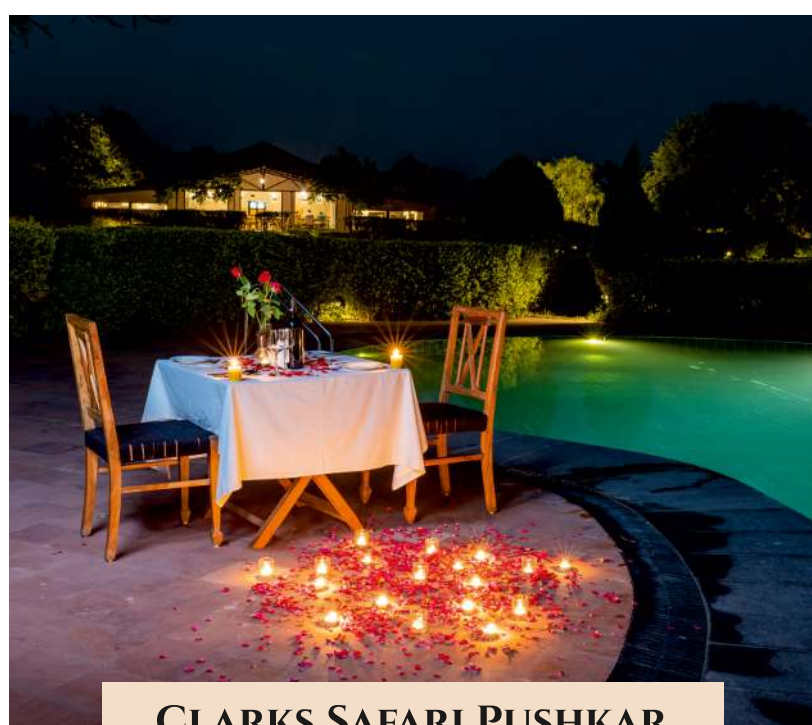
Turndown Service

**Hotel Lobby**

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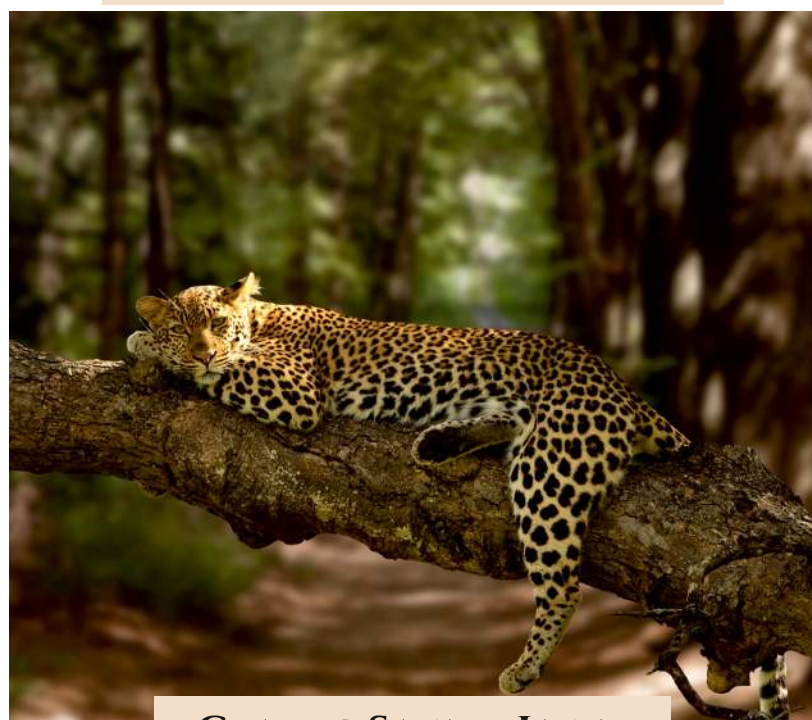


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The hotel lobbies are evolving to suit the needs of the guests. The industry has to make not only design changes but also adopt new technology in the lobbies. Implementation of smart technology is gaining importance, particularly in the check-in process and more. Cover story finds out how lobby can provide better experience, offering personal touch, which is an essential element of the hospitality industry.

The changes in the hospitality industry may seem, at times, overwhelming. However, with the right approach hospitality managers can make the requisite changes to operations in order to take full advantage of the increasing demand for hotels. Business story discusses why it is important to gauge the new and future trends among the guests and their changing preferences.

The footfalls of high profile guests and foreign tourists have made hotels attractive targets for people to grab instant media attention. In the backdrop of such a precarious scenario, Feature story discusses how the hotel security has assumed prime importance in the business of hospitality.

Loyalty is of great importance in any enduring personal and social relationship. Management section explains the importance of guest loyalty in hotel business, offering an element of personalised touch to professionalism. The Operations story finds how future kitchens will address the need of higher productivity with cost effective operations, using the advance technology. F&B section elaborates on why room service sometimes becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. Housekeeping section finds what this turndown service is and is it really important to the guest.

I hereby sign off while wishing all our readers a very happy New Year. Let us hope that the New Year will make us more informed and knowledgeable to concertedly tackle the pressing problems of the Indian hospitality industry in a more holistic manner.

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 Business Review  
 An Exclusive Business Magazine for the Hotel Industry

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Hammer Hotel Business Review is a bi-monthly magazine, printed, edited, owned and published by Rajneesh Sharma on behalf of Hammer Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 206, Samrat Bhawan, Ranjeet Nagar Commercial Complex, New Delhi. Printed at Print Creations, C-112/3, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase-1, New Delhi.

**Editorial Policy:** Editorial emphasis in Hammer Hotel Business Review magazine is on educational & informational material specifically designed to assist those responsible for managing institutional Hotel business. Articles are welcome and will be published on the sole discretion of the editor.

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Annual subscription rate within India is Rs. 600 and for overseas it is US \$110, for surface mail. Single issue is available for Rs. 100 in India and US \$25 for overseas. Cheques are payable to Hammer Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

HAMMER

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## Roseate Hotels & Resorts to Open a Hotel at Noida International Airport

Roseate Hotels and Resorts part of Bird group, who operates 7 luxury hotels across India and the UK, has been chosen to develop an airport hotel at Noida International Airport after a competitive bidding process involving some of the leading international and national hospitality groups. The hotel will offer comfort, convenience and a sustainable experience to passengers and visitors.

The hotel will be a whole new concept featuring intelligent technology like smartphone access and services especially designed to cater to the evolving demands and expectations of global leisure and business travelers. Roseate Hotels and Resorts will bring a one-of-a-kind stay experience that is unique by design, heritage, location, character, facilities, and personalized service around customer experience with sustainable luxury.

The hotel will feature online check-in and check-out, instant online room allotment and smartphone room access. The aesthetics

of the property will reflect the warmth of Indian hospitality in over 220 well-appointed rooms and a suite of banquet, dining and wellness spaces, including a state-of-the-art fitness centre. The hotel will be located in close proximity to the airport terminal and will be the first step towards building Noida



International Airport as a business and leisure centre for the region.

According to a spokesperson from Roseate Hotels & Resorts, "We are excited to be selected as the hotel partner for the hotel will be built within walking distance of the Noida International Airport

terminal, providing easy accessibility and multimodal connectivity". Christoph Schnellmann, Chief Executive Officer, Noida International Airport, said, "We are pleased to welcome Roseate Hotels to Noida International Airport. This marks the start of our journey towards developing a modern, consumer-centric infrastructure for travellers as well as the visitors at the airport. The hotel will be a catalyst for NIA to become a leading destination for travel, leisure, business, shopping, entertainment and stay, with hassle-free multimodal accessibility."

Noida International Airport will combine Indian culture and hospitality with Swiss technology and efficiency to develop a modern, user-friendly design, inspired by India with a commitment to minimal environmental impact. It will set a new benchmark as a digital airport, with the implementation of state-of-the-art technology to provide a seamless and mostly contactless flow through the airport.

## India Exposition Mart Launches Expo Inn, Suites and Convention

India Exposition Mart Limited (IEM) Greater Noida, has launched Expo Inn, Suites and Convention, a 134 rooms business hotel which is a first of its kind stay option within a trade fair venue. Spread across 58 acres of land in Greater Noida, IEM has been successfully operating for 16 years with being awarded twice as the best convention centre.

The newly opened Expo Inn, Suites and Convention have two restaurants (one multi cuisine restaurant and one deli-style cafe), a bar and in-room dining. Other facilities include a spa, swimming pool and gym. The property has multiple banquet halls along with maximum number of breakaway rooms for parallel meeting sessions in the premise that can be used for MICE events and social events. Rooms are available in four categories – Standard Twin rooms, King Bedrooms, Executive Suite Rooms and Presidential Suites.

Rakesh Kumar, Chairman India Exposition Mart Ltd. said, "Our location is our biggest advantage. The IEM facilities come powered



by in-house uninterrupted power supply of 34 MW+3 MW Solar Power facilitates seamless electricity supply; Banking and Foreign Exchange Services; and it also has three helipads; and Medical Facilities. Also, I must point out, we offer a large parking capacity



**Sudeep Sarcar**

**Rakesh Kumar**



which mostly exhibition grounds don't have."

According to Sudeep Sarcar, CEO, India Exposition Mart Ltd. "This new facility will be a perfect destination to organise large size MICE events, association conferences, award shows and product launches. The exhibition grounds are now integrated with the hotel to go even several notches higher for services."

"The Expo Inn will greatly form a distinct market sub-segment to target the tech-savvy and sustainable business travellers that are increasingly seeking out authentic, high quality yet affordable experiences. This is part of the strategy to provide a complete ecosystem to a business traveller who is essentially visiting the venue for the fair." shares Vinod Upreti, GM, Expo Inn.



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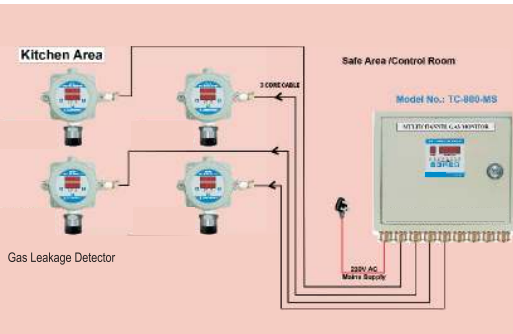
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**Woyages of a Lifetime by IHCL**

IHCL has introduced 'Woyage', curated offerings to elevate the travel experience for women travellers. These first-of-a-kind, specially designed stay packages for women, come with added benefits and surprises. This is further to the launch of 'She Remains the Taj', as IHCL's holistic framework of women-centric initiatives for all stakeholders including guests, employees, partners and the community.



Speaking on the occasion, Parveen Chander Kumar, Executive Vice President - Sales & Marketing, IHCL, said, "These offerings re-iterate our commitment to creating customised experiences for women travellers. Based on extensive research, the customer value proposition for women travellers has been developed to include heightened levels of privacy, security, bespoke amenities and stay offerings. It is an expression of our value of inclusiveness while recognising women as a growing market segment."

Women guests can live the life of royalty and bring alive the regal experience with the Queen's Woyage at Taj's living palaces. From the royal welcome, Palace heritage walk to curated local experiences, they can enjoy life Queen-size. With Wellness Woyage, guests can look forward to reconnecting with mind, body and soul with the signature healing therapies, wellness consultations and specially curated meals.

City Woyage offers a fast-paced and luxurious city life with daily epicurean experiences, sundowners and salon services at Taj's iconic city hotels while Unwind Woyage helps in disengaging from everyday bustle at idyllic getaways nestled amidst nature. Each Woyage itinerary is aimed at women guests and offers special benefits and savings across Taj, Vivanta and SeleQtions hotels on in-room dining, spa, salon, and laundry services, as well as exclusive experiences and amenities.

Known for championing the cause of women, both, within and outside the organization, 'She Remains the Taj' also focuses on increasing women in leadership positions and raising their participation in the workforce to 25% by 2025, and supporting women led businesses and partners.

**IHCL Steps into Munnar**

IHCL has signed SeleQtions hotel in Munnar, Kerala. A brownfield project, this hotel is a management contract with CRB Hotels & Resorts Pvt. Ltd. Commenting on the signing, Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President - Real Estate & Development, IHCL, said, "IHCL has always been at the forefront of identifying destinations with a strong tourism potential and putting them on the global travel map. A much sought-after hill-station for its natural beauty, Munnar is popular for leisure travel. This hotel will further elevate the hospitality landscape of Munnar. We are delighted to partner with CRB Hotels & Resorts Pvt. Ltd. for this project."



Featuring a combination of 55 rooms and suites, the SeleQtions hotel will be located at an easy driving distance from Kochi airport. It will house an all-day restaurant and bar, in addition to a fitness centre, swimming pool and spa, making it ideal for a leisure getaway. Located at a short driving distance from the Tata Tea gardens, this hotel will be the perfect location for those looking to revel in the midst of nature, while its banqueting facilities will cater to bleisure travel, events and conferences.

Cyriac Augustine, Group Chairman, CRB Group, said, "This SeleQtions hotel will allow guests to experience a slice of the rich natural beauty that Munnar is known for. We are excited to partner with IHCL, India's leading hospitality company, to create a unique hospitality experience for guests in the heart of the "Kashmir of South India."

# Getting ready for 2023



## Taj Palace Hotel

Sardar Patel Marg, Diplomatic Enclave,  
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi

### Next 17th and 18th of January,

Fagor Professional will be launching the new iKORE Oven Ranges in an event that will be taking place in Taj Hotel in New Delhi.

2022 has been an amazing year for the Fagor Experience Days: events in which clients from all over the world have had the opportunity to enjoy a great experience getting to know the manufacturer plant, the new showroom and the most important thing: the new iKORE Oven Ranges.

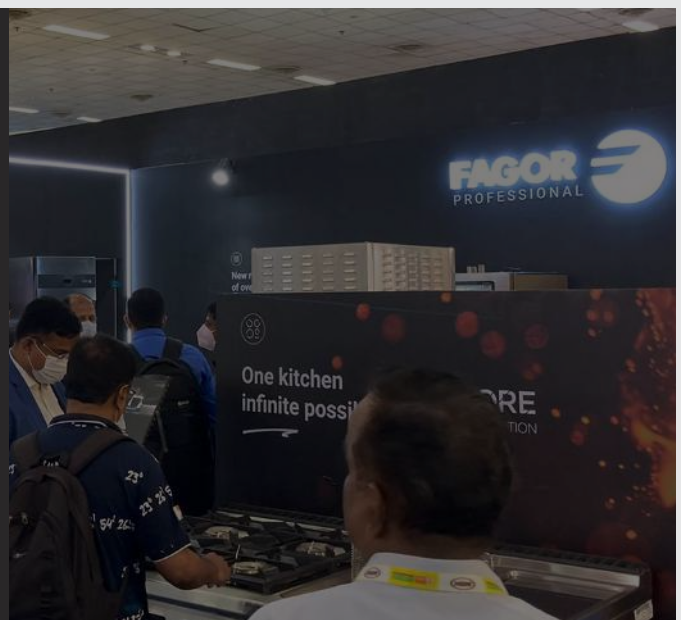
After events in the headquarters located in Oñati (Gipuzcoa, Spain), it is now time to enjoy this event in the rest of the world. That is why, after the first edition in Dubai last September, now is time to India to get the chance to live this experience.



### From 14th till 18th of March

Without any doubt Fagor Professional will be participating on the 37th AAHAR edition.

AAHAR, The international Food&Hospitality Fair will take place from 14th till 18th of March 2023 at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi) and without any doubt Fagor Professional will be having its stand to present all the novelties and give the opportunity to see the equipment in action.



## Seclude Unveils Villas in Kerala

Seclude, known for building 'Hotels Home Style', has announced the launch of its new property in Alappuzha (Alleppey), Kerala, which is known for its serene backwaters. Aptly named "Seclude – By the Lake", the three-villa complex literally on Lake Vembanad, the longest lake in India and is inspired by the traditional architecture and design of Santorini, Greece that is admired worldwide for its whitewashed, blue-domed houses and resplendent seascapes.

Seclude - By the Lake, Alleppey offers 10 uniquely designed rooms boasting a vibrant theme equipped with all the modern amenities for the discerning guest. Each villa comes equipped with its own kitchen, living, dining, and four bedrooms each, and is perfect for vacationing foreign tourists, working getaways, or short stays due to its close proximity to Cochin International Airport. A host of local and international dining options are also available for guests to enjoy as well.

With the new launch, Seclude has strengthened its position as a pioneer within the "Branded Homestays" ecosystem, an exciting and fast-growing category of Indian hospitality and tourism. It currently runs 15 boutique properties (YOY growth over 50%), in offbeat areas of popular destinations such as Palampur, Shimla, Mussoorie, Kasauli, Ramgarh, Landsdowne and Goa, with plans to further expand its footprint across India and beyond.

"Alleppey is called the 'Venice of the East', and there's a reason why its picturesque tranquil canals and lagoons draw a significant portion of Kerala's inbound tourism. We are delighted to offer a whole new hospitality experience to guests visiting Kerala packaging in Ayurveda massage, Shikara / Houseboat cruises on the Lake with picnic options. We're ecstatic to see the way this property has shaped up and look forward to establishing ourselves as the leader in Branded Homestays across India." says Ramit Sethi, Founder, Seclude.

Seclude – By The Lake is the luxury homestay brand's



second property in Kerala, taking their room inventory to 23 rooms within the state. Seclude already runs its 13-room boutique

resort, Seclude Marari Sands, which is a 25-minute-drive away from Alleppey. The proximity to the sprawling Seclude Marari Sands property opens up the opportunity for vacationers to enjoy a facilitated drive to and from the Alleppey property, followed by a Houseboat or Shikara ride on the Lake. The idea was to create a being a hassle-free one-stop solution for tourists looking for a 3-5 day itinerary in Kerala.

"Our Greek theme will have accents of blue pairs with white, providing a sharp and effective contrast and adding to the luxury homestay experience. Everything from upholstery and mosaic-tiled coffee tables to the building facade would be Greek-inspired. We're honored and excited to welcome guests to a truly unique experience." adds Rohit Sethi, Founder, Seclude.

## Paper Moon Debuts at Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa

IHCL has introduced the Italian restaurant, Paper Moon in Goa. This marks the debut of the brand in India, which will bring alive authentic Italian gastronomic tradition. Located in the historic settings of Taj Fort Aguada Resort and Spa, Goa, Paper Moon overlooks the historic 16th century coastal fort and the Arabian Sea, offering guests a culinary experience with a view.

Speaking about the launch, Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said, "IHCL has a long-standing legacy of being a pioneer in introducing unique culinary concepts and cuisines, while offering guests the best-in-class dining experiences. We are delighted to partner with Ristorante Paper Moon S.R.L to bring Paper Moon to India."

Paper Moon, which opened its first restaurant in Milan in 1977, will present its trademark traditional Italian cuisine at its new outpost, which reflects Goa's vibrant spirit. Crafted using the freshest produce, the menu at Paper Moon changes with the season.



An exquisite choice of ingredients will allow guests to experience a fresh variety of delicacies every season. Guests can choose from a wide selection of wines and cocktails made with local ingredients to complement popular dishes, and also experience a cafe offering the best Italian coffee and drinks.

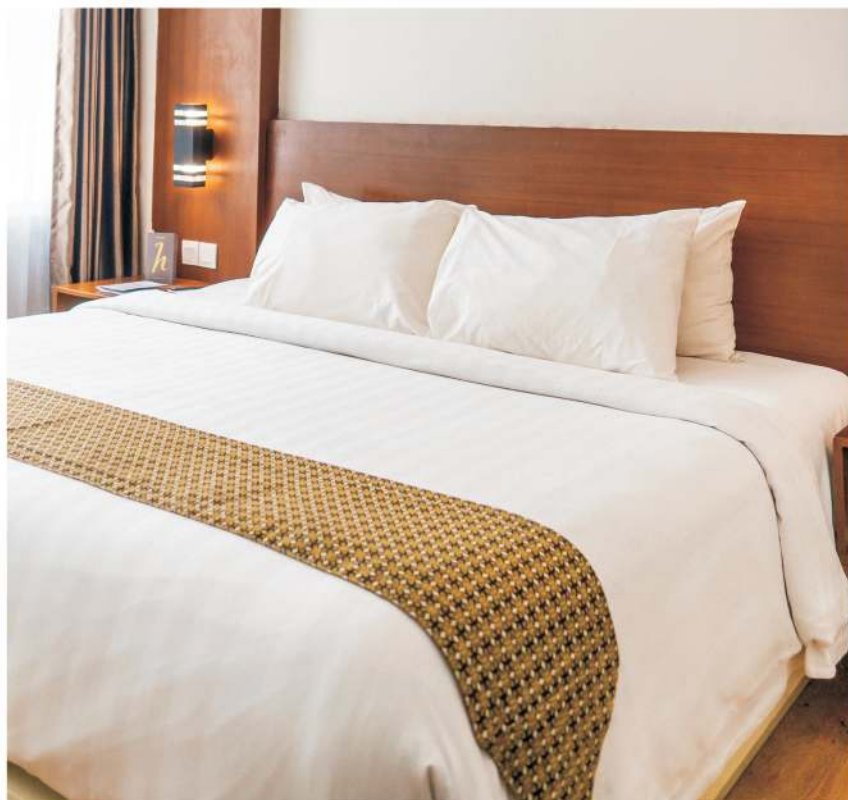
Speaking on the occasion, Claudio Bertoni and his team, Ristorante Paper Moon S.R.L said, "From the heart of Milan's fashion district to the heart of India's leading beach destination, Paper Moon has made its way across the globe for over four decades, bringing alive authentic Italian flavours. With this opening at Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa in Goa, Paper Moon is excited to introduce our legendary culinary experience in India, and we are delighted to partner with IHCL for the journey of the brand in India."

Born out of love for honest Italian cuisine, Paper Moon stands as a beacon of authenticity and epicurean delight at Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, Goa.

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## Fortune Hotels Expands its Footprint in UP

Fortune Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group announced the signing of a new property in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. Furthering the national footprint, this new property will be Fortune's fourth hotel in UP.

Fortune Park Aligarh, set to open in the winter of 2023, is strategically located on the Grand Trunk Road just off



the RTO office and well connected with the upcoming Noida International Airport via Aligarh - Palwal Road offering easy access to the university town. The hotel is also in close proximity to prominent tourist attractions like Jama Masjid, Aligarh Clock Tower, Aligarh Muslim University, and Khereshwar Mandir.

Highlighting Fortune Hotels' India expansion spree Samir MC, Managing Director, Fortune Hotels said, "Our focus on building the brand footprint in tier 2/3/4 markets continues as we forge another new partnership to enter Aligarh, the heartland of Uttar Pradesh. The state has always been a strong growth market for us and is poised to develop even more speedily in the next few years. Aligarh will be our fourth property here and we thank the owners for recognizing the Fortune Advantage and showing their trust in us."

The modern hotel offers spacious rooms, complemented by a multi-cuisine all-day diner, large multifaceted banquet spaces and a rooftop restaurant with a trendy bar making it a perfect option for city residents and the upbeat business and leisure travellers to celebrate, engage and unwind.

Aligarh is an important business centre of Uttar Pradesh, well connected to Lucknow, the state capital and at a drivable distance from Delhi and Agra.

## Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach Conferred the Excellence Award

Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach is a sought-after destination in the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh. This property promises its true exclusiveness and unparalleled celebration drenched in its charm. Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach acquired the Excellence Award for "Best Coastal Hotel in India" at the latest edition of the Haute Grandeur Global Hotel Awards.



Haute Grandeur is the world's most prestigious Global Hotel, Spa & Restaurant Awards worldwide. It recognizes remarkable achievements in delivering consistent, exceptional experiences in the global luxury hospitality industry.

Speaking of the award, Ravi Rai, Cluster General Manager, Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach, Novotel Vijayawada Varun, and The Bheemili Resort expressed his gratitude and said, "We are honored to receive this prestigious award from Haute Grandeur. We believe this will strengthen our position in the market as this recognition encourages our team to exceed our patrons' expectations. In the hospitality industry, it is all about creating the right experiences, and Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach aims to further facilitate the hotel's promise of delivering unique and unparalleled hospitality for guests."

Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach have beautifully appointed 225 rooms and suites to grand ballrooms and dining spaces; expansive wellness facilities and salon.

## Larisa Hotels & Resorts Expand in Goa

Larisa Hotels & Resorts is opening another hotel in Goa after a fantastic response to its Morjim property. Larisa Ashwem is 2.5 acres of gorgeous Goa greenery and simple elegance, and promises the perfect blend of nature and luxury. The beautiful Ashwem property in picturesque North Goa is situated in the heart of a lush-green landscape, and promises a gloriously laid-back experience in indulgently spacious surroundings.

Larisa Ashwem is targeting a mix of the young and the old, between the ages of 18 and 60, all of them discerning and well-travelled. And among the amenities, they can expect a spa, multi-cuisine restaurant, and a generously sized pool with a bar. Besides, there's plenty of room to roam—and get lost in! Still, despite its picture-postcard natural beauty, the idyllic Ashwem beach is just a 10-minute walk away—just far enough to guarantee your privacy.



Larisa Ashwem was built utilising locally sourced materials such as laterite stone, thatch for the roofs, and bamboo. Meanwhile, the focus of the property's interiors is on key design elements like colour schemes, alongside the use of marble, Goan tiles and cement flooring—the latter to give a rustic feel.

Out of the 20 rooms at the resort, 14 are luxury cottages, 4 are cottage suites, and 2 are two-bedroom cottage suites. All in-room and sharing facilities—including mini bar, open deck, outdoor hot tub and 24x7 in-room dining—are available for the guests.

Ms. Priya Thakur, Founder and Partner at Larisa Hotels and Resorts, says, "Our beach property in Morjim had been getting a lot of love, since we launched it in 2015. And we had always planned to introduce another property in Goa but in a different setting this time. And Ashwem is a setting to look out for, because it is just you surrounded by the most verdant slice of Goa, and a serene vibe you'll never forget. It will give all of us at Larisa great pleasure to greet guests to this wonderful location."

Larisa Ashwem is centrally and conveniently located. It is 67km from Madgaon railway stations. Dabolim Goa airport is 62km and Mopa airport is 30km from the property.



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TS-26C01



TS-30C01



TS-21C02A

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TS-5006



TS-3503



TS-32C01

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# Pride Hotel Signs New Hotels

## Pride Hotel Greater Noida



Pride Hotel Group has announced the signing of "Pride Hotel Greater Noida". The hotel, prominently situated 30 kilometers to the southeast of Delhi, is easily accessible to places of business, leisure, educational institutions, hospitals, and entertainment venues. It will feature 80 guest rooms, an 8000 sq ft banqueting space, a 24-hour coffee shop, a gym, and a patisserie shop. The hotel will also boast of a rooftop pool with a restaurant and bar. It is expected to welcome guests by mid-2023.

Announcing the signing, Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotel Group said, "Greater Noida is a bustling commercial destination that hosts leading technology companies, manufacturers, and corporate establishments. It has transformed itself to a major economic corridor that witnesses a steady inflow of business travelers from across the globe. However, there is an acute shortage of upscale hotel brands to cater to the demands of the customers."

Pride Hotel Group has a presence in around 51 locations with 5,075 rooms inventory.

## 'Pride Biznote' At Whitefield', Bengaluru

The group also signed 'Pride Biznote' at Whitefield in the garden city of Bengaluru, located on the main road at Whitefield, the biggest IT hub of Bengaluru, the hotel is well-connected to commercial, and leisure destinations, educational institutions, hospitals, and entertainment avenues. Pride Biznote Bengaluru will encompass 65 spacious rooms, a banquet with a capacity of approx 200 people, a board room, a multi-cuisine restaurant to serve approx 150 people, an open-to-sky restaurant with a bar, and a live kitchen. The hotel will be operational to welcome guests from January 2023.



# Suba Group Opens Comfort Hotel, Amritsar

Suba Group of Hotels, one of India's fastest-growing hotel chains in India, expands its presence in Amritsar, Punjab by opening its newly built Comfort Hotel on Batala Road. The 31 rooms hotel offers a full range of facilities and amenities to guests, including a Pavilion - a multi-cuisine restaurant, private parking for guests, a banquet for 150 guests, high-speed internet, flat-screen TV, air conditioning and an in-progress lawn that can accommodate up to 500 guests.



Situated in the city of Golden Temple, the hotel allows travellers to experience everything Amritsar has to offer, from Wagah Border, Jallianwala Bagh, Durgiana Temple, and the Partition Museum. The closest airport to the property is Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport.

Speaking about the opening Satish Gupta, Owner of Comfort Hotel, Amritsar said, "Amritsar is one of the most popular and highly visited cities in India famous for the Golden Temple, lip-smacking food, and traditional handicrafts. We at Comfort hotel are ready to welcome guests from across the globe and offer the best hospitality experience at the best pricing.

Comfort Hotel is a part of the Choice Hotels Asia Pacific group and is managed by the Suba Group of Hotels in India. Commenting on the opening Mansur Mehta, Managing Director, Suba Group of Hotels said, "We are blessed to bring our second Comfort property in Amritsar. Our aim is to create stay options that offer comfort and luxury with unmatched service standards across all our properties.

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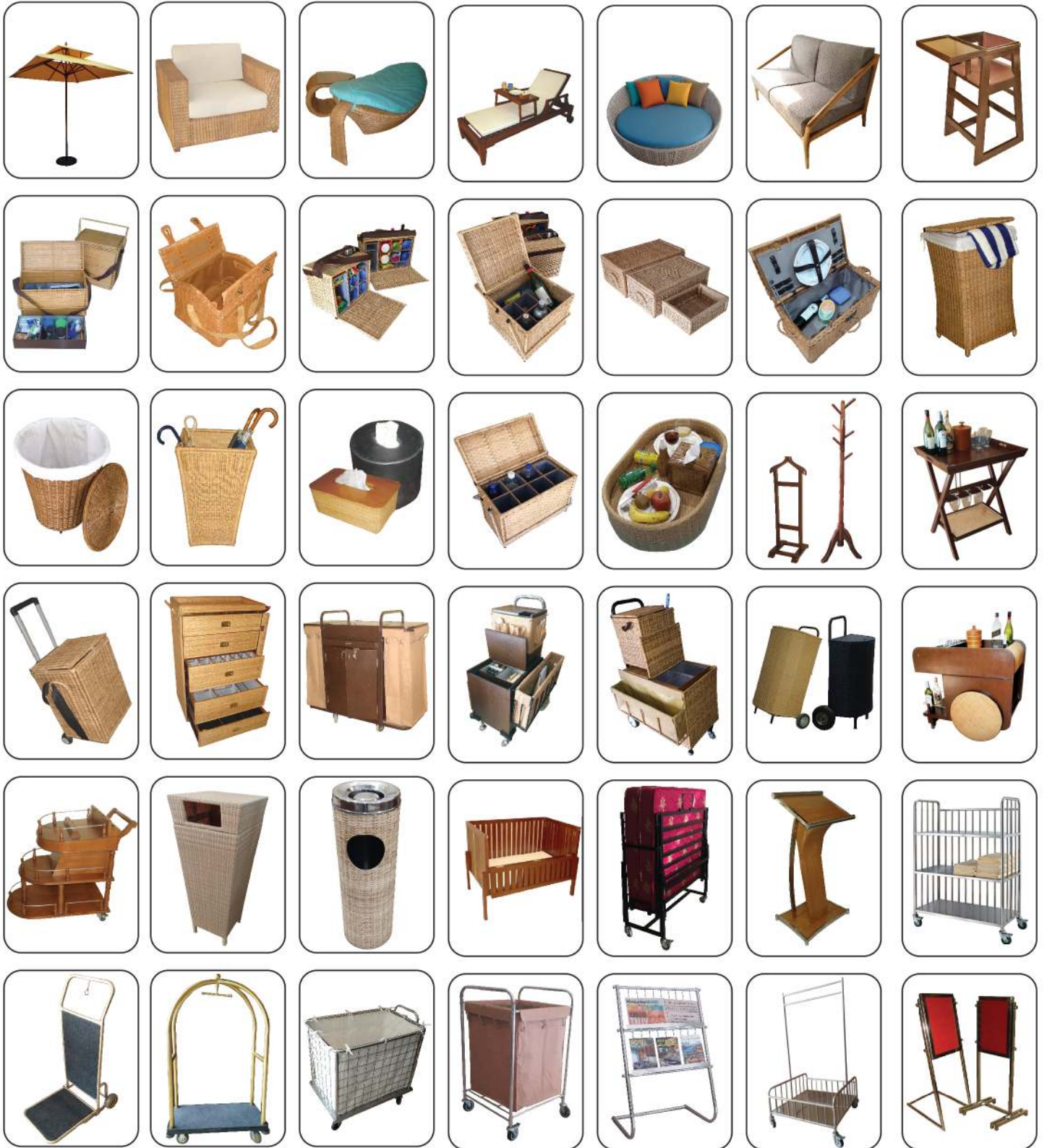
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## Hilton Debuts in Punjab

Hilton announced the signing of an agreement with Wondergrain Exports Private Limited to launch DoubleTree by Hilton Amritsar. Scheduled to open in early 2026, the hotel will mark the debut of the DoubleTree by Hilton brand in Punjab and bring its distinct brand of upscale comfort to guests and travellers in this region.

DoubleTree by Hilton Amritsar will be situated in Ranjeet Avenue, a stroll away from the world-renowned Golden Temple. The location will provide travellers with convenient access to not only the city's cultural and religious sites but also to prime commercial and business zones.

Navjit Ahluwalia, senior vice president and country head of Hilton in India, said, "We are excited to partner with Wondergrain Exports Private Limited to debut the DoubleTree by Hilton brand in Amritsar. With its strategic location in the heart of the one of renowned pilgrimage centers in India, DoubleTree by Hilton Amritsar will be well positioned to serve business and leisure travellers in Punjab. With this latest signing, we are on track to double our presence in the country in the next five years, as we remain focused on working with the right partners to introduce the right brand to the right location."

The 116-room hotel will feature expansive lush green lawns, modern architecture and design. Along with large banquet and



meeting spaces, the hotel will offer excellent options for guests to host corporate events, meetings, social events and weddings. DoubleTree by Hilton Amritsar will be equipped with a fitness center and a spa, as well as multiple specialised dining options that would appeal to food connoisseurs.

Gurinder Bhatti, managing director, Wondergrain Exports Private Limited said, "We are thrilled to partner with Hilton to bring the first-ever DoubleTree by Hilton-branded hotel in Punjab. Amritsar is known for its rich culture, tradition and history, attracting travellers from India and across the world. We look forward to working with Hilton and together deliver value and excellent customer experience synonymous with DoubleTree by Hilton brand."

## Sterling Holidays Unveils New Wildlife Resort

Sterling Holiday Resorts has announced the opening of its new wildlife resort in Pench National Park, Sterling Padam Pench, spread out across 5 acres, strategically located near the Turiya Gate which is at the entrance of the tiger reserve of Pench National Park. The resort boasts of a variety of stay experiences with 22 premier rooms, cottages, mud houses, wooden chalets and tree houses, all inspired by the local art and architecture, coupled with chic and contemporary amenities.

As a part of this inspired living feature, experiences that are symbolic to the native Bhil and Gond tribes such as the rooms with thatched roofs, exclusive areas with chaupal setting in the center, earthen chulas, tribal art on the walls, and true jungle living with high rise machans adorn the resort. The resort also boasts of a swank 4-Bedroom, 2 storey Pool Villa with an exclusive swimming pool, private courtyard and personalised butler service.

While staying at this resort, guests can explore the jungle and go on Safari or guided nature walks inside the forest. The resort team includes a resident naturalist who enhances the safari and jungle walk experience by providing in-depth insights of local flora, fauna and wildlife.

Guests can relish the local specialties of Gondwana such as Jhunka Bhakar, Patyod or a full-fledged Gondwana Thali at 'Alikatta' the restaurant at Padam Pench. Sterling LOCAL is the signature restobar of Sterling present in 10 resorts around the country and the same is also being brought to Pench. Sterling LOCAL celebrates desi (local) flavors, combining them with internationally favorite beverages and snacks and will



**Vikram Lalvani**



feature Mahua based cocktails and snacks like Garadu.

Sterling's Subuthi Spa – their brand present across 21 resorts, will be at Padam Pench and will feature its signature spa therapies for guests to relax and experience serenity on their holiday. The resort is also fully equipped to handle incentives, meetings, and destination weddings for up to 500 pax, with an indoor banquet space for 200 and open lawns for another 300 people. The resort also has a swimming pool, many indoor and outdoor games, and activities that can engage guests of all age groups especially children.

Commenting on the property launch, Vikram Lalvani, Managing Director and CEO of Sterling Holiday Resorts said "We are thrilled to unveil Sterling Padam Pench in Madhya Pradesh. This is in line with our expansion plans into new destinations where Discoveries and Experiences are the core of our product and service offerings. With Padam Pench we will also be increasing the inventory in the wildlife segment to 300 plus rooms and will be bringing in many new facilities and specialists to enhance the whole holiday experience for the discerning leisure travelers. We assure our guests that at Sterling Padam Pench the discovery will be as exciting as the find."

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## IHCL Signs its 250th Hotel in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), announced the signing of its milestone 250th hotel in Saudi Arabia. The Taj-branded hotel is in partnership with the Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA), who are responsible for the transformation of the historic city of Diriyah, The City of Earth, into a world-class mixed-use development. The hotel will be part of the Diriyah project, located in close proximity from downtown Riyadh, which envisions the location's development as an international cultural and lifestyle destination inspired by the birth place of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Commenting on the signing, Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL said, "Announcing our 250th hotel today is a moment of great pride as it marks IHCL's consistent and rapid portfolio expansion, with 100+ hotels signed over the past five years alone. The signing of this hotel is in line with IHCL's strategy of being present in key markets across the globe, which includes the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is a popular travel route, especially among the Indian diaspora, and we believe that our presence in historic Diriyah will tap into the immense tourism



potential of the destination. We are delighted to partner with Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA) and be part of the vision to develop Diriyah into a leading international cultural destination."

Featuring a combination of 205 rooms and suites, the Taj hotel will overlook the picturesque valley and palm groves of Wadi Hanifah, whilst being in close proximity to other key entertainment and cultural attractions. The luxury hotel will include an all-day dining restaurant, in addition to two speciality restaurants. Banqueting and conferencing facilities will make this hotel the perfect destination for business travellers, while a swimming pool, gym, wellness centre and spa will cater to both, leisure and bleisure travellers.

The 300-year-old site of Diriyah is located within Riyadh province, in close proximity to the north-west of downtown Riyadh. It is recognised as the symbolic centre of inspiration for the generations of leaders that have led the Kingdom since the foundation of the First Saudi State in 1727.

With the addition of this hotel, IHCL has five hotels in the Middle East including two under development.

## Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited partners with Tata Power



Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited is gearing up to roll out a nationwide sustainability initiative by catalysing electric vehicle (EV) adoption across cities. All the brands under ASPHL (THE Park Hotels, THE Park Collection, Zone by The Park, and Zone Connect) are installing public charging infrastructure at the premises - As part of the Company's planet positive initiatives,

ASPHL is working with Tata Power to incorporate these fleet-charging facilities for four wheelers, which makes the Group, one among the top Hotel chains to adopt EV across the country.

Tata Power has developed a user-friendly mobile App, enabling EV consumers to locate charging stations, which can be booked in advance, or as required, including payment of the same. ASPHL's hotels present in each city will also feature as part of this application across the country.

Speaking about EV implementation, Vijay Dewan, Managing Director, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited says "We have always worked towards sustainability through our five core areas for strategic action. By implementing EV infrastructure, we are taking this a step ahead in the direction of reducing carbon footprint and being sustainable. With feasible, consistent accessibility of electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE), it will play a key role in making it easy for our guests to use the service and act as an added service benefit."

## Orissa's Eco Retreat Returns Back

The Eco Retreats, Konark, one of the flagship properties of the Odisha Tourism is back, yet again, inaugurated by the Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. Various



locations and are now open for tourists for a period of three months while promising traveller's ample opportunities to create memories. It is an initiative by the Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha.

There will be seven properties that will be operated this season. Konark, Satkosia, Bhitarkanika, Daringbadi, Sonapur, Putsil & Hirakud with a total inventory of about 220 luxury tents, offering an unparalleled experience. The visitors here will be treated to cultural performances, guided tours to nearby destinations of nature, culture, historic and architectural importance, and other recreational activities including adrenaline-inducing water sports, ATV rides, beach volleyball, archery, and much more.

"Eco Retreat, a luxury tourism product, will set new benchmark in the arena of eco-tourism that will offer tourist best of experience at seven exotic locations blessed with treasure trove of picturesque natural destination. It will act as a gateway for tourist to explore the best of tourism and hospitality landscape. Odisha is now on the spotlight as a leading responsible tourism destination of India." said Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister, Odisha.



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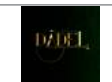


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## Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort Tree Lighting Ceremony

The Courtyard by Marriott Aravali resort is ushering in this festive season with utmost merriment to offer its guests the ultimate holiday experience by hosting a Tree Lighting ceremony.

Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort is a breathtaking property in the heart of Aravalli, Haryana, where nature meets modern-day comfort and splendor. A nucleus of tranquility, the newly opened property is the ideal urban retreat. In-house guests, media friends, and other luminaries from the lifestyle industry, came together to enjoy the Tree Lighting Ceremony, hosted by the resort on 16th December 2022.

The event commenced with an address



by the General Manager, Rajneesh Kumar. He said, "It has been an absolute pleasure to kickstart the festive season with our resort's first Tree Lighting Ceremony. To celebrate the first year, our team made the entire Christmas tree with a beautiful winter plant; Poinsettias to embark on a sustainable year ahead."

The tree lighting was succeeded by the address, thus, brightening up the ambience. The lobby was decorated with mistletoe and wreath that were made out of reused tin cans. The entire tree was eco-friendly as it was made up of 101 Poinsettia plants and other biodegradable friendly paraphernalia with no traces of plastic. The event was followed by caroling by a melodious singer. The attendees were treated to delectable

offerings, ranging from hot toddies, hot chocolate, mulled wine, canapés, plum cake, candies, gingerbread cookies and rotisserie chicken, to name a few, as they immersed themselves in the holiday spirit.

A scrumptious barbecue followed the tree lighting by the pool at the resort's revered outdoor restaurant, The Olive Grove. The Executive Chef, Shibendu Ray Chaudhury, curated a special spread sprinkled with his culinary genius in every bite.

The tree lighting ceremony was a marvelous success with palpable merriment all around. This proud moment has emboldened the Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort to kick off the holiday season and welcome prospective guests with great cheer.



## Taj Amer Opens in Jaipur

Indian Hotels Company has announced the opening of Taj Amer, a new oasis of modern luxury in Jaipur. The hotel's design seamlessly blends contemporary elegance while paying homage to Rajasthan's traditional architecture and offers stunning views of the ancient Aravalli Range.

Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL said, "IHCL has been in the Pink City for over 50 years. The culturally rich and historically significant city has evolved into a global tourist destination and important commercial hub. This opening is in line with IHCL's vision of strengthening our presence in key markets across India. With the launch of Taj Amer, IHCL has grown to nine hotels across brands in Jaipur."

Strategically located in Kukas, Taj Amer is a short drive from the majestic Amber Fort and other popular tourist spots. Stunning

marble arches at the entrance lead into the lobby with its high domed ceilings, lotus filigree work and carefully curated artworks.

The luxurious 245 rooms and suites reflect the hotel's grandeur with peacock motifs, intricate lattice work and rich



textures, offering picture postcard views. Hotel offers myriad dining experiences - from the legendary all-day diner, Shamiana; a selection of international cocktails with

trademark local flavours at House of Nomad to small bites at Emperor's Court and the soon to launch Chinese cuisine at the signature House of Ming. The roof top infinity pool is the perfect place for a bird's eye view of the Pink City. Inspired by ancient Indian healing wisdom Jiva Spa will be a sanctuary that provides a soothing blend of ayurvedic massages and aromatherapy for holistic rejuvenation.

Jaigarh, the lavishly appointed 16,000 sq. ft pillar-less ballroom, the adjoining 8,000 sq. ft lawns and spacious banqueting areas are ideal for weddings, business conferences as well as elegant soirees.

"Taj Amer's exquisite design is blended with our highly personalised service. We look forward to welcoming our guests to this new address in Jaipur." said Devraj Singh, General Manager, Taj Amer.

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# St. Regis Hotels & Resorts Opens St. Regis Goa Resort



St. Regis Hotels and Resorts, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 extraordinary hotel brands, announced the opening of The St. Regis Goa Resort. The resort is a curated sanctuary between the Sal River and Arabian Sea near India's south-western coastal city of Goa, famous for its palm-fringed tropical beaches, historic Portuguese-era architecture, enticing seafood and distinctive culture. The St. Regis Goa Resort will feature the renowned hallmarks and vanguard spirit of the iconic luxury brand, such as its celebrated rituals, innovative cuisine and the bespoke St. Regis Butler service for guests.

"We are delighted to celebrate the opening of our second St. Regis property in this enchanted haven in India. St. Regis provides exquisite resort experiences for our global luminaries, and Goa is a special destination where guests will find themselves surrounded by unspoiled nature and infinite sandy beaches," said George Fleck, Vice President and Global Brand Leader, St. Regis Hotels & Resorts. "Through the exemplary hospitality and cherished traditions of the original St. Regis hotel in New York, we embrace the Goan spirit of slowing down to enjoy life's moments to their fullest. The St. Regis Goa Resort offers a welcome respite, a place where our guests can renew, reconnect and appreciate what is truly important."

## The Property Location

Located approximately 60 minutes' drive from Goa International Airport, The St. Regis Goa Resort is nestled in 49 acres of lush greenery fringing the pristine Mobor Beach on the shores of the Arabian Sea. The area between the Sal River and the ocean is a paradise for nature lovers, a sanctuary of freshwater lagoons and over 30,000 trees, where the intimate resort blends seamlessly into its surroundings with its confluence of



Portuguese and traditional Indian architecture.

## Rooms

The resort features 206 guestrooms including 46 suites offering private terraces overlooking the tranquil lagoons or the golf course. For bespoke luxury of an exclusive kind, there are 20 luxuriously appointed suites and villas with plunge pools, private access to the beach, and all-day indulgent dining at The Manor.

## Facilities

The St. Regis Goa Resort features a swimming pool surrounded by foliage, along with a well-equipped gym for fitness enthusiasts. Younger guests will enjoy the St. Regis Family Traditions programs and experiences, including a mobile library, as well as the fun and enriching activities of the Children's Club with its kids-only pool, play park and gaming zone.

The St. Regis Spa, with its eight private rooms for bespoke treatments, includes age-old Indian ayurvedic rituals and therapies derived from 5,000 years of tradition that nourish and enliven the mind, body and spirit. At the resort, the legacy of New York's distinguished Astor family, founders of the brand's flagship hotel, The St. Regis New York, is kept alive with activities that reflect the family's love of sport and the outdoors, with a scenic 12-hole executive golf course and relaxed beachside amenities.

With a total of more than 32,000 square feet of dedicated event space, the resort offers

venues and facilities for iconic celebrations and meetings. The Astor Ballroom, covering an area of more than 6,585 square feet including a beautiful lawn space is the perfect setting for events, galas and weddings. The resort can also curate personalized private events on the beach as well as across its picturesque expanses of green lawn. The St. Regis Goa Resort also offers bespoke venues for unforgettable business meetings and functions.

## Food Offers

The resort offers four exquisite dining venues and two bars, The Restaurant is an all-day dining venue that invites guests to discover the delights of local cuisine and international favorites.

At the eastern end of the resort is Riverside, an Italian fine dining restaurant with exceptional views of the Sal River serving innovative cuisine inspired by the traditions of Italy.

Susegado is a pan-Asian and seafood grill restaurant in a casual beach shack overlooking the ocean, and tempts diners with wonderful aromas of seafood grilled to perfection over charcoal as well as light bites and refreshing cocktails.

The Drawing Room offers crafted afternoon tea and the resort's delightful twist on the brand's signature Bloody Mary cocktail, The Goan Mary, inspired by the vibrant colours and the popular spicy red mix, Recheado masala of Goa with Kashmiri chilli, vinegar, garlic, cinnamon and local spices.

Pool Bar is the perfect venue for pre-dinner cocktails with its sunset views overlooking the pool. Aqua, is the ideal place to relax and experience the art of drinking, while engaging in fun indoor games and activities.

"Goa has something for everyone, whether they are interested in historic architecture, uninterrupted expanses of golden beaches, unique fusion cuisines or exhilarating outdoor activities," said Satish Kumar, General Manager, The St. Regis Goa Resort. "The Goan people are warm, welcoming and generous, and the notion of 'susegad' is quintessential to their way of life, encouraging one to slow down and find clarity amidst the exotic spirit of the landscapes. Whether indulging, celebrating, or exploring, The St. Regis Goa Resort is a soulful sanctuary where senses are delighted, moments are treasured, and memories are made."

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### Maulina Gupta

Hyatt Centric Chandigarh Sector 17 has appointed Maulina Gupta as new General Manager. She brings 23 years of experience, delivering end-to-end business solutions, revenue expansion and market positioning to lead teams and businesses across service industries. She started her career with IHCL (Taj Hotels) and later joined Hyatt Regency Delhi, Hyatt Regency Gurgaon. She did her Post Graduate Diploma in Hotel Administration & Development with the Taj Group of Hotels after completing her graduation in Science.



### Raees Ahmad

Clarks Safari Pushkar has appointed Raees Ahmad as General Manager Sales. He has 20 years of experience in hospitality management at Jal Mahal, Jaipur, Regenta Resort, Gateway Resort and Aura Ajmer. He is MBA graduate from, Sikkim Manipal University with specialization in hospitality. In his new role he will be responsible for managing the property, taking care of general administrations, increasing revenues, implementing new policies, hiring & training of sales manpower, representing the brand on different platforms, etc.



### Aagman Bauri

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts have announced the promotion of Aagman Bauri as the General Manager of The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi. With a career spanning to two decades, Aagman has worked with IHG in UK (Holiday Inn, Crown Plaza), Park Hyatt Hyderabad, Trident-BKC Mumbai and Marriott Marquis City Centre-Doha. Aagman joined The Leela Ambience Gurugram as Rooms Division Manager and was subsequently promoted to Hotel Manager in 2021. He holds a Master's Degree in International Studies and Diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies.



### Sumita C Majumdar

Fortune Hotels has appointed Sumita C Majumdar as Head - Human Resources and Learning & Development. In her new role, Sumita will be responsible for managing the extensive human resource portfolio. Her corporate experience spans over 30 years in HR significantly influenced by long tenure at ITC Hotels. She has been with the organization for over 16 years now. She is an alumna of Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune. Sumita holds a certified six sigma green belt, MBTI (Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator) & PAPI (Personality and Performance inventory) facilitator.



### R. Srijith

The St. Regis Goa Resort has appointed R. Srijith as Director of Sales and Marketing. With MBA in Marketing and Hospitality Management from the Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, Mangalore University, Srijith began his journey, in the year 2008. He brings with him over a decade of experience and prior to The St. Regis Goa Resort, Srijith worked with The Leela Group, IHHR Hospitality Private Ltd, and Ginger Hotels. He also worked with the Mahindra Group as a pioneer and Centre Head for their project Mahindra Namaste.



### Gaurav Chandna

Hyatt Regency Delhi has appointed Gaurav Chandna as the Director of Operations. Having 17 years of experience, he was heading the post of Director of Food and Beverages at Hyatt Regency Delhi. He did degree in hotel management from Banarsidas Chandiwalla Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology (B.C.I.H.M), Delhi. Gaurav will be responsible for overseeing all-round hotel operations, identifying, and strategising new revenue streams for the hotel, branding and asset management,



### Sharad Puri

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed Sharad Puri as Senior Vice President - Sales & Distribution for the group. With over 27 years of experience, Sharad has worked as Cluster General Manager with Marriott in Bengaluru. His work experience spans Marriott and Oberoi Hotels with assignments across The Oberoi Mumbai, The Oberoi Grand Kolkata, Trident Hyderabad and JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu. An alumna of the IHM - Ahmedabad, he graduated from the OCLD Management Training Program.



### Apoorva Chandram

DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Bani Square has elevated Apoorva Chandram as Rooms Division Manager. With over 13 years in Hilton hotels across Middle East, Africa and India, he has been part of a pre-opening and task force during brand conversion. He pursued Executive Development Program in Data Science from Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur. He did Hospitality & Tourism Management from Florida Atlantic University in 2020 and Hotel Revenue Management from Cornell University in 2018.



**Amit Kapoor**

Hyatt Centric Chandigarh Sector 17 has appointed Amit Kapoor as F&B Manager. With an experience of over two decades, he has worked with Jaypee Palace Hotel Agra, ITC Grand Maratha Sheraton Mumbai, Grand Hyatt Dubai, Sofitel Jumeirah Beach, Dubai, Courtyard by Marriott, Gurugram Downtown and Hyatt Pune. He did his Bachelors in Hotel Management from Mangalore University.

His mission is to build Hyatt Centric Chandigarh’s reputation for offering first-class guest experiences and services.



**Narasinh Kamath**

DoubleTree by Hilton Goa - Panaji has announced the appointment of Narasinh Kamath as their new Executive Chef. With over a decade of enriching culinary experience that encompassed handling of star rated kitchens, he worked at Hyatt and Radisson. He has also worked with Michelin Chef Raymond Blanc. Chef Kamath joins the entourage of creative minds at the resort. As a consummate

hotelier, Chef Kamath has a penchant for perfection and credits his innate ability of team involvement as the recipe for success.



**Kanika Mathur**

Courtyard and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru ORR have appointed Kanika Mathur as the new front office manager. She has 10 years of experience in Taj Mahal Palace in Jaipur and worked with Blue Ocean Travels Delhi, Fairfield By Marriott Bengaluru, Fairmont Jaipur, Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, Westin Kolkata Rajarhat, Leela Bhartiya City and Ritz Carlton.

During her tenure, she trained her associates as Desk Managers, and performed night audit operations and working with Executive Directors.



**Kapil Dubey**

Kapil Dubey has been appointed as the new Executive Chef of The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Exhibition and Convention Centre. With more than 15 years of experience he has worked with Four Seasons, Ritz Carlton, Hyatt, Marriott, and Sheraton in India as well as Dubai, Maldives, and Europe. Prior to joining The Leela Gandhinagar, he was Executive Chef at Las Iguanas

Restaurant in Chelmsford, UK. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Hotel Management from the Moti Mahal College of HM in Mangalore.



**Rashi Sharma**

Marriott International has appointed Rashi Sharma as the Cluster Marketing and Communication Manager of Sheraton Grand Pune and Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa. Rashi brings with her over seven years of experience in public relations & marketing. Backed with an MBA from SIMC, Pune and BBA from NMIMS, Rashi will spearhead the marketing activities

for both the properties. She had worked at Taj Santacruz, Mumbai and PR industry, with agencies including Edelman India, Fleishman Hillard.



**Nihal Kurian**

Nihal Kurian has been appointed as the Director of Sales & Marketing at Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel. He has over 13 years experience at the Hilton Garden Inn Pune, JW Marriott Hotel Pune, Bengaluru Marriott Hotel Whitefield and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Whitefield. Nihal did his MBA in Marketing from James Cook University in Singapore. Both his Bachelor’s degree

in Hotel Management and his MBA in Global Marketing have allowed Nihal to gain valuable knowledge about the hospitality industry.



**Gaurav Paul**

Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks has appointed Gaurav Paul as the new Executive Chef. With an experience of over 19 years he has won several accolades. Gaurav had earlier worked with Hyatt Regency Kolkata, Vivanta ByTaj MG Road Bangalore, Radisson Chandigarh, The Chancery Pavilion, Bangalore Carnival Cruise Line. He did his Diploma in Hotel and Tourism

Management from NIPS School of Hotel Management – Kolkata. He will oversee the operations of various outlets & banquets.



**Rahul Sanap**

Marriott Suites Pune has appointed Rahul Sanap as Human Resource Manager. He has extensive experience of over 10 years, having worked at Marriott International and Accor Hotels. He holds a degree from Amro Institute of Hotel Management Nashik along with a post graduate diploma in Human Resources Management from Welingkar Institute for Management & Human Resource

Development, Mumbai. In his current role, Rahul will be responsible for management of all areas in Human Resources .



# Hotel Lobby

The ideal spot for lobbying property's exclusiveness

Creating an enchanting, imaginative and satisfying first impression for the guests is an essential element for the success of a hotel. This is inclusive of everything – from their experience with the staff members to the exterior and interior property aesthetics. And the first impression of the guest, as far as both – the staff members' actions and the interiors of the property are concerned is around the lobby of the hotel. The design to hotel entry and lobby is vital for creating a positive initial impact. It helps in satiating guests expectations for quality, comfort, interest and functionality for the rest of the property.

The hotel lobbies are, thus, evolving in a world changed by the COVID-19 pandemic to suit the needs and quell the anxiety and trepidation in the guests' minds. The hospitality industry is reimagining properties to suit the travelers.

The hotel industry has to make not only design changes but also adopt new technology in the lobbies. Implementation of smart technology is gaining importance, particularly in the check-in process and more. However, one must remember that technology does not overtake experience and detract from personal feel, which is an essential element of the hospitality industry.

The hotel lobbies, one can say are the most essential elements for promoting the property's worth in terms of guests' satisfaction.

Ketan Kerkar, Executive Housekeeper, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach, succinctly puts it thus: "It is rightly said, there is only one chance you get to make a first impression" and this makes it so crucial. It is certain that you do not wish to lose out on your one chance to cast your true impression on the guests upon

Hospitality industry has to continuously adopt new ideas to attract the guests. Though a welcoming smile goes a long way, it is not enough to inject the "wow" factor in the welcome, which will make your hotel stand out from the other properties. With people's changing tastes it is imperative that hotels constantly keep up-to-date with their craving for something new and desirous. The first thing that a guest notices on entering the hotel is the lobby – its décor, facilities, et al. Thus lobby plays an essential role in the success of a property. **Ashok Malkani** tries to find out what brings exclusivity to the hotel lobby.

their arrival. Hotel lobby is the place where the guest's foot falls first making it essential to transfer the exact sensations that the guest is looking for."

He adds, "Imagine yourself entering the hotel for the first time while you look around with no certain expectations. This is the time when you consider soaking in the visuals around you, the ambience that you resonate with and set your expectations accordingly. The lobby creates that initial atmosphere, creating an overall picture of your anticipations from the hotel. An appealing lobby setting makes the guest comfortable and aids to radiate the very first impression of the place."

Deepak Sampath, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bengaluru OMR, states, "The hotel lobby is one of the most important aspects in our hotel. The lobby is the first place that our guests experience when they arrive at the hotel and we all know, first impressions count for a lot. A well-designed lobby opens the door to a world of possibilities, from thrilling adventure to pure relaxation."

Sonia Banerjee, Director of Rooms, Sheraton Grand Hotel Bangalore at Brigade Gateway, avers, "First impressions form a lasting impression and the lobby of the hotel being the entry point, plays a very important role in this regard. A well-lit, easy to navigate lobby instantly comforts the traveler and gives a positive impression to the guest."

Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotels Group, disclosed, "There is a lot of emphasis on the lobby layout because it must not only make the guest feel welcome and assured that they have chosen the proper lodging but also instantly transmit the brand's essence and describe the kind of experience they may anticipate. Pride Hotels Group lobby is the perfect place to attend to guests' requirements and make sure that their expectations are satisfied because it serves as the spotlight for everything that occurs in a hotel. Pride Hotels Group is aware of the value of first impressions. The first few seconds of any interaction—whether it's meeting a new coworker or arriving in a strange city—have an enormous influence and determine how the connection will develop over time."

John Rogers, General Manager, LUX\* South Ari Atoll, Maldives, declared, "A good-looking and welcoming lobby helps the guests relax and step into the vacation mode easily. In



the Maldives, it's especially important, as all our guests have to travel for a while before reaching the resort."

### Design Concept

For creating a lobby that leaves a lasting favourable image in the minds of the guests one has to have an impressive design concept. It is, according to general belief, a collaborative effort with the clients, brands and project teams. What are the design concepts that are adopted, by and large, by the hotels?

Atul avers, "The distinctive fruity floral aroma that permeates each of our properties fills the lobby areas of our hotels. In our common spaces, local and regional music is performed. All of the artwork in the rooms and public areas was inspired by the local architecture, culture, and colours. The Pride Hotels Group exhibits genuine Indian hospitality. Since we are a truly Indian brand, people are proud to associate with us. We incorporate the five traditional Indian senses of welcome—fragrance, music, atmosphere, regional Indian paintings and frescoes, and delectable Indian cuisines. Like we do at our own homes, we greet visitors at Pride with the traditional Namaskar before giving them a garland, tika, and aarti. Our all-day dining features an international and Indian menu in addition to many well-known delicacies from local cuisines."

John states, "The lobby's design concept has to reflect the brand's mood and values, and at the same time be convenient and on-trend. It's a common project of a big team at the stage of resort planning. Many brands nowadays move towards more casual and relaxing lobby styles, skipping formal reception desks and usual check-in procedures.

Accessible coffee and beverages are the must, as well as convenient work stations, which today look more relaxed compared to old-fashioned business centers."

Ketan stated, "We, at Novotel, believe that the lobby setting represents the brand and this can be done not only through brand mentions pasted everywhere but also through an alluring colour palette, décor display, diffused fragrance, soothing music and most importantly the warm welcome around. Additionally at Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach, we display the unique blend of our brand and vibrant city – Mumbai. This leaves both international and national guests in awe at our property by making them welcomed in a local atmosphere."

Sonia declared, "The size, brand and TGA of the hotel are some of the criteria we keep in mind while designing the concept of the lobby. The lobby of a leisure category hotel is different from that of a business hotel; for a Marriott we have brands that are super luxe, luxe, premium and the lobby concept changes based on that."

Deepak emphasized that "furnishings, colour palette and overall lobby design should all work together in harmony."

### Integrating Property Design

Though hotels' guest rooms need the same basic features lobbies vary dramatically from property to property. The hotelier, however, has to integrate the design of the property. How does he do it?

Sonia declares, "When we, at the Sheraton Grand, design the property, one of the things we ensure is that there is a flow in the design from the lobby to the rooms. We use colour



Atul Upadhyay



Deepak Sampath



Ketan Kerkar



John Rogers

schemes, elements to make sure the same style is continued throughout. What a guest sees when they first walk into the lobby is carried through in the design of the room as well. For example, our paintings in the lobby are framed in gold, silver and brown and the same palette is used while designing the interior of the room so there is a correlation between what the guests see when they walk into the hotel and what they see when they finally go to their room."

Deepak adds, "The hotel lobby is the nerve center of the hotel. The mood of our lobby reflects the mood, the vision and the brand ethos of the brand. At Holiday Inn Express & Suites OMR Bengaluru, the lobby gives a complete glance of our hotel."

Ketan states, "The first impression of a hotel is the lobby. Many hotels choose to stun their guests with massive atriums and eye-catching decor. While these visual factors are great, the new necessity in hotel lobby design is for the lobby to be a multi-use space available for use at any time."

### Design Trends of Hotel Lobby

The design trends of the lobby have to change with times. So what are the design trends at the moment?

Deepak avers, "India is known for limitless hospitality and the design language in the sector has been changing over the time. Millennials prefer hotel spaces that are designed, catering to the concept of functionality and comfort, integrating different design languages which connect with their likes. There are few more trends that we notice such as, modular design space, different patterns and textures for visual appeal and smart materials for holistic experience."

Sonia discloses, "Off late, the design trends are veering towards open spaces, natural lights, natural foliage, water bodies. These elements evoke a sense of calm to tired guests. Lights have always been a big part of the lobby design as they have the potential to convey a sense of luxury and so the lights have become smart in some cases, eco-friendly with shades made of natural fiber, in others, chandeliers have become designer with custom designs."

Atul says, "A hotel's lobby is the first impression that hotel guests receive when they visit to stay at your Hotel. Making a great first impression involves attention to

detail, furniture, design, art, colour, and texture. A homely atmosphere, interactive design, multi-functionality, use of smart technology, and sustainability are some of the trends in Hotel Lobby.

John asserts, "A hotel's lobby is the first impression that hotel guests receive when they visit to stay at your Hotel. Making a great first impression involves attention to detail of furniture, design, etc. A homely atmosphere, multi-functionality and usage of smart technology are only a few of the present trends in Hotel Lobby."

Ketan extrapolates, "When it comes to designing lobbies, it has now transformed from the patterns of yesterday, and focuses more on textures that compel the guests to feel while captivating attention through its poppy colour schemes and brightening up the space. Modern hotel lobby needs to be less boring and more interesting, and hotels are gradually accomplishing this by shifting from old tired patterns and bringing in the modern trends of colour and texture. Moreover, such preferences often include unique design or patterns, which carve a mark in the guests' minds of the hotel they once stayed at."

### Home Comforts

Lobbies are now being redesigned, both in form and function resemble modern living rooms, meant for interacting and socialising. They are made to resemble your home. But one wonders why they should provide comforts of home.

Ketan states, "Traveler count does not only include leisure travelers. In fact majority of them constitutes of FIT and Business travelers. These guests are often away from their families for several days making it our responsibility as hoteliers to provide them the comfort that they seek at our property. Our intent is to make them feel a sense of Home away from Home. This comfort of home makes the guest patronise your property. This is a win win situation for all."

He adds, "Even though many guests may not have sufficient time to spend in the lobby now-a-days, it is important to design lobby with the modern traveler in mind. Guests want to be able to utilize technology for gathering knowledge and increasing comfort, just like at home. A television and electrical outputs do not impress the guest anymore. Digitally

controlled lighting and temperature, advanced modes to charge devices, faster and efficient internet supplies and more, are the demands of a current day visitor. All of these requirements by the guests are looked for at the lobby itself and hence needs to seamlessly integrate into the planned design.”

Atul disclosed, “Nowadays, lobbies are being updated in order to make them appear more inviting. They are being designed to resemble modern living rooms, meant for interacting and socializing. Customers are more inclined to return and suggest hotels when they offer a home experience away from home. Additionally, it makes their stay more memorable and enjoyable, which is true hospitality.”

Stressing on making the lobbies more comfortable, he adds, “Lifestyle lobbies are not only comfortable but also interactive. Often, a lobby is now set up with a common space, which may be additional space on an open floor plan. Setting up video game stations or board games such as Jenga or Scrabble can make a lobby area more enjoyable.”

John states, “Lobby is the first engagement step for the resort’s guests. If it’s comfortable and welcoming, it really helps to start the whole experience off on the right foot. A warm welcome at the beginning also relieves the stress of cautious first-time travellers.

“Being a heart of our island, our lobby is not only the space for check-in and check-out, but also a meeting point for excursions, workshops, and more. That’s why it’s a perfect spot to inform our guests about current activities and leisure options. The lobby area of LUX\* South Ari Atoll, Maldives, also includes the Celebration Desk – a place to make private bookings, plan special occasions, and learn more about the happenings at the resort.”

Sonia declares, “In hotels such as ours, we have guests from across the globe and in a new country everybody tries to seek some sort of familiarity. That is why we, at Sheraton Grand Hotel Bangalore at Brigade Gateway, try to incorporate certain universal design standards while drawing up the plan for all our properties. Comfort of home in this case

is more a figure of speech to convey that hotels should, at the end of the day, be places that feel safe, secure with the ability to help travelers relax, just like their home.”

She feels, “an interactive design is an important part of a hotel lobby; it basically means all basic information; amenities should be visible to guests at first glance. Guests should not feel lost, intimidated, unsure when they enter the lobby and that’s why lobbies should be built with the purpose of being interactive.”

Deepak says, “Lobbies need to be sociable and inspire the guests to hang out there instead of being in their rooms, always. However, it’s not necessary for the guest to feel at home being at the majestic lobby.”

He adds, “The lobbies should not only be comfy but also interactive. For me interactive designed lobby is when guest feels welcomed by the space and reassured that they have chosen the right accommodation, the lobby should also convey an immediate sense of the brand and outline the kind of experience the guest should expect.”

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## Technology

The hotel lobbies are now witnessing not only stress being laid on comfort but also introduction of smart technology in check-in process and more.

Atul avers, "The hospitality industry is leading the charge in the adoption of smart business technology. mobile-friendly, WiFi 6, use augmented reality, virtual reality, and 3D tours, ai chat & voice service, helps planners create immersive virtual experiences (hybrid events), go contactless, and implement smart technologies within guest rooms are some of the smart technology available."

Sonia, says "When one speaks about smart technology in the lobbies it generally means the availability of tech that offers guests a quick check in, maybe with a face scan that retains information in terms of the guest preferences, special notes and offers a seamless check in. A NFC card is the next thing we will see happening here."

Deepak declares, "From operations to guest experience to marketing, smart hotel technology offers a variety of cost savings and revenue opportunities, and it is enabling hotel owners to reach new levels of profitability."

Ketan states, "Considering technology upgrade, Lobby should have self-check-in or online check in this will allow guest to complete the formalities as per their convenience prior to their arrival."

John disclosed, "Today's technology allows reducing paperwork and registration processes to a minimum. As our guests have to pass by our seaplane lounge, before they get on a seaplane to the resort, we take advantage of that step to complete the check-in process while the travellers are waiting for their boarding in the terminal. In this case, there is almost no waiting time in the lobby, and the guests can relax in their villa shortly after their arrival to the island. We also have LUX\* app, which provides all necessary information about the resort, dining options, activities, and more."

## Maintaining Human Element

Maintaining a personal touch is one of the most important elements of the hospitality industry so would introduction of technology affect the human element of the industry. What are the elements that need to be implemented in the new lobby design?

Ketan states, "Both people's inclinations



**Sonia Banerjee**

and technology are altering day by day and hence management should keep a budget every year to enhance some elements in the lobby, which will be at PAR with new upgrades, and trends in technology.

He adds, "To make your guests feel that they have just entered the best hotel in your locale you should, according to me, incorporate the following elements in the hotel lobby:

- Add more functionality
- Provide space for socialization
- Make it comfortable and relaxing
- Provide easy access to hotel amenities
- Add sustainable features"

Deepak disclosed, "The use of technology has positive influence on hotel service, but only as a way of making better service provided by employees and that technology cannot replace human factor in hotel industry. Since it is service-oriented industry it must include technology through the expertise of human being.

"The use of technology has positive influence on hotel service, but only as a way of making better service provided by employees and that technology cannot replace human factor in hotel industry. Since it is service-oriented industry it must include technology through the expertise of human being."

Sonia stressed, "The human element will always be an intrinsic part of hotel lobbies. Just like how we have people to assist customers even when information is available on large touch screens for guest, the hotel lobby will always have guest staff to welcome guests, direct them and help them in navigating their way around.

"Lobbies should offer a sense of calm and

energy at the same time, as you walk in. The furniture should be comfortable because a lot of guests conduct meetings there rather than going into restaurants. They should be easy to access rather than have a strange design where guests feel hassled and intimidated. These basic tips should always be kept in mind to make lobbies a warm and welcoming place."

Atul avers, "While introducing new technologies is intriguing and has a practical benefit, it's also crucial to preserve the human aspect of the lobby experience. By positioning several areas in the hotel lobby's central position, many hotels strike a balance between the two. Employees are the heart and soul of any business, no matter how big or little; people make all the difference in the world.

"The design tips I would advise for the lobby are:

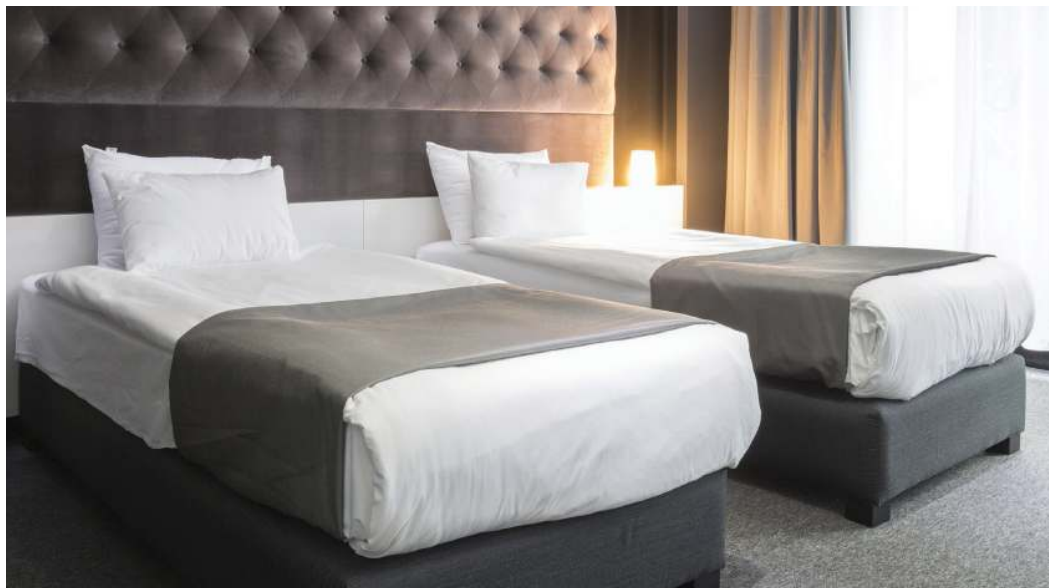
- Choosing the proper lighting is the most important decoration. Trending chandeliers can give a glamorous interior decor to hotel lobbies.
- Choosing a center table to create a focus of attention.
- Decoration is the center of your interior design, so you need to choose them wisely.
- Paintings help the hotel lobby to look more attractive.
- Interior plants can use mainly for decorative purposes to create a better atmosphere."

John affirms, "All our guests have a guest relation officer assigned, who coordinates their stay via chat communication. So, while we rely on technology, guest experience at LUX\* South Ari Atoll is personalised and well curated."

He adds, "As far as design tips for the lobbies are concerned, I think, that since lobby gives the first impression of the resort, it should represent the hotel and the brand in the best way. Common spaces are also important today, as it's typical for travellers to make friends along the way."

## Conclusion

Hotel lobbies which form the first and lasting impression of the property are being redesigned in a manner which not only equipped with smart technology but also has a perfect blend of colour and décor besides maintaining the perfect human element of politeness and courteousness. ■



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# Knowing the Future Trends

The hotel industry can be rough and tumble, but not if you have the right formula for success. The world is undergoing a major shift in decision-making and buying power, and it's changing the hospitality industry. The only way to see continued success is to prepare for these inevitable changes. The varying and shifting mind set of the guests has to be gauged accurately to ensure the continuous popularity, recognition and reputation of the hotel. [Ashok Malkani](#) discusses about the need for the industry to gauge the new and future trends among the guests and their changing preferences for the success of the property.

The key to success of a hotel depends on the continuous efforts of the property in exceeding the guests' expectations.

This can be achieved by knowing the new preferences of the guests and incorporating the same in the property. The world is undergoing a major change in decision making and buying power. This is changing the hospitality industry. By learning about the upcoming trends the hotelier and the industry will be able to understand the new adjustments to be adopted in their marketing to make the business grow.

It is a well known fact that hospitality marketing has always played an essential role in the success of the industry. In the current landscape of competitive industry, any business has to keep up with the latest trends of the consumers. The situation is no different in the hospitality industry. Here too, for the success of the property, the hotel must keep ahead of its competitors by keeping up with the latest trends among the guests.

Roshan Radhey, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, LUX\* South Ari Atoll, Maldives avers "To make a success of the hotel business one must be aware of the future trends in the hospitality industry."

He adds, "Hospitality is a dynamic business and has to be aligned with the modern traveller's needs. Now, hospitality is going through interesting times. The game has changed – the traditional rules don't apply, and one gets to be creative and innovative like never before."

There is a major shift taking place in decision making and buying power, globally, which is changing the hospitality industry. To ensure continued success one has to prepare for the inevitable changes.

### Demand for Sustainable Practices

Today, millennials form about 23 per cent of the global population. They play an essential part in evolving the demography of the hotel industry. Professional advancement, international exposure and higher income can be deemed to be the major contributors to their high spending power. The current events too can be said to have contributed to their role in influencing the need for changing trends in the hospitality industry.

The pandemic, which created the work-from-home opportunities led them to travel extensively taking advantage of flexible remote working. This led to increase in travel demand and gave a boost for new life to the hospitality industry. According to reports the reign of the millennials is expected to last well into 2034, at which point Gen Z will be fully employable.

According to Diana Verde Nieto, co-founder and CEO of Positive Luxury, a London based organisation, which issues certification to their clients, millennials are twice as likely to support brands with strong management of environmental and social issues. She disclosed that 55% of global travellers are more determined than ever to choose sustainable accommodation than they were before the COVID-19.

Some of the sustainability trends and initiatives for hotels relate to following areas:

- Energy conservation
- Amenities
- Waste reduction and efficiency

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Millennials think of the negative impact of environment and thus would like to visit properties that are environmentally friendly. Green hotels are becoming the preferred way of operating. To conserve the planet, management in a green hotel aims to reduce water and energy consumption whilst saving on costs.

It may be mentioned that not just the millennials but the travellers, in general, are increasingly looking for more sustainable and ethical options where they can stay at hotels who focus on initiatives for a clean carbon footprint and minimal environmental impact like food waste reduction and reducing high impact guest experience touch points like daily room cleanings.

The hospitality management professionals and owners are recognizing that hotels that rate highly on the ESG scale are not only attractive investments, but they also provide the services and benefits that both guests and employees are looking for.

According to Booking Sustainability Report 2021, 73% of the travelers are more likely to choose accommodation that implements sustainability practices. A lot of RFPs for corporate rates also want to know what sustainable practices are being followed by the hotel.

### Achieving Future Success

Hotel revenue management is as important for success of a hotel as are the collection of rooms, beds, keycards, et al. And one of the most essential elements for the popularity of the property would be knowing the pulse of the public. Knowing future demands of the guests incorporating their future needs in the property would definitely keep them satisfied and loyal to the brand.



**Roshan Radhey**

Roshan declares, “The world is so fast today, we always have to be ready to revise current business practices and go through any necessary changes without regrets. Traditional revenue models don’t exist anymore, sales have been moving from physical events to more of online webinars and virtual participation. Technology has evolved and reshaped guests’ experience, too. To remain successful, property teams have to learn constantly and be ready to adapt to new trends and travel patterns.”

Today, hotel is not just meant for providing accommodation. It has to provide an overall innovative experience to the guests by identifying their needs and expectations.

Guests in the post pandemic days are placing much greater focus on their health. According to Deloitte’s State of the Consumer Tracker all hospitality organizations will want to adopt rigorous, frequent cleaning and sanitation protocols. It’s not enough to implement physical distancing measures and adopt stringent new cleaning protocols. Companies will need to connect actively with customers, new and old, to communicate how they’re protecting their customers’ health.

One has to not only maintain high standards of hygiene but also focus on physical and psychological well being. Thus, besides the gym the properties could also consider offering classes on meditation and yoga.

### Location

There are several other aspects that have also to be taken into consideration for the promotion of a property. Location is an important facet. The property, besides the location, has to be well connected with the

various activities in the area. It must be remembered that nearly all activities of the travellers are linked to the hotel’s location, and almost their entire journey planning is made based on the location and accessibility of the Hotel.

Studies have shown that travellers make an extensive research of the places they would like to visit during the trip and find a hotel which is close to these attractions. However, often, the research is not tenable and reliant. The hotelier should, therefore, do the following:

Create a special section within the official website of the hotel, giving information regarding the connection of the property with the main attractions of the area.

Develop a special concierge section, through which useful tips and advice about the destination will be provided

Register the Hotel in popular Map Optimized Apps & Websites through which the travellers will be able to easily understand the way the property is linked with the destinations of their desire.

Roshan reveals “Location and travel convenience is important, but we should also have the full picture in mind. As far as LUX South Ari Atoll, Maldives is concerned, we need to give a good reason to travellers to select our island over another one in the same locale. For example, in the Maldives most of the resorts can be reached by a seaplane trip, so exact location plays a little role in the final decision. That’s why the whole concept is important, and in LUX\* South Ari Atoll we pay special attention to creating a great customer journey rather than just promoting white sandy beaches and ocean. It’s the way you feel on the island, the experiences you get to discover, and little surprises along the way. Hospitality is no more about rooms and facilities, it’s a memorable travel experience people look for.”

### Technology

Today, a majority of the guests are tech-savvy who are comfortable using apps or mobile websites. The hotels have, thus to make sure that their offerings are up-to-date and user-friendly. For meetings and conferences it is essential for them to provide not only high quality tech equipment but also knowledge support staff at the Meeting venues.





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According to an April 2022 survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics though only 3.7% are still working remotely they have not forgotten the benefits of virtual meetings and nearly 90% believe that video calls increase productivity. Though employees are back to traveling they would like to be able to check in with their teams at regular intervals.

It may be noted that Apps are becoming increasingly important in the way hoteliers manage the services that they provide to their guests. Those who have not adopted the new technologies may note that with the new Apps they can now control many aspects of the guest cycle and experience. The trend towards digital and contactless services has gained new momentum since 2020. The traditional customer-facing services are being given an overhaul due to the widespread use of technology-assisted options like mobile check-in, contactless payments, voice control and biometrics.

Hoteliers have also to note that several new consumers who have become accustomed to unlocking their smartphones and laptops using facial and fingerprint recognition would expect the hoteliers to provide the same convenience in accessing their hotel rooms. These upgrades are believed to be costly but hoteliers, to stay ahead, have to invest in them.

Roshan disclosed, "Many hotels started tapping into the digital dimensions that were not well explored before. Detailed 360 media content helps any traveller to have a better understanding of a resort before making a booking. Crypto currency is another trend, with many brands today looking into the ways to accommodate such requests. Strong digital

marketing is becoming an essential tool for every hotel, and we have a great team that works together to ensure we are up to date. This year we launched a great NFT campaign to mark Christmas celebration, and gradually upgrade the content, having 3D floor plans, room videos, and many more helpful features aimed to help any traveller to book an ideal vacation without any disappointments."

He adds, "Primarily known for its 'personal touch', the hospitality industry is now evolving into a preferred contactless experience. The technological amplification, strongly favouring the need to adapt, has paved way for newer developments and solutions that are being adopted universally – making concepts like digital check-in/check-out, online menus, cashless payments, in-room dining, somewhat of a norm already."

### Communication

Communicate, communicate, communicate is the most crucial skill for a hotel team. One cannot depend only on digital communication as hotels are considered to be symbols



of hospitality relying on the personal communication between the guests and the hospitality team. Good communication means that you're listening to your guests, understanding their problems and valuing their feedback.

Guests, today, expect to be recognized and treated as individuals. This is likely to continue in the future. Even technologists have recognized this truth and through various tools made personalized e-mail marketing accessible to the masses, ensuring highly target audience-specific communications. Far beyond simply adding the customer's name to email greetings, data provides insight into past buying habits, enabling hotels to tailor their offers and promotions, and automatically provide similar services to previous stays.

Tech platforms like CRM and CEM use data to create one-to-one interactions between the guest and host. Several other tools also help in maintaining personal contact between the guests and the hotel management team.

Digitalisation does not mean no human interaction. Hotels have to be epitomes of hospitality. Hence human interaction is important. Incorporating advanced technology does not mean lack of cordiality and sociableness.

The hotel management team has to learn how to communicate effectively and avoid miscommunication. Hoteliers have to ensure proper interaction between the guests and themselves.

Roshan claims, "We are always on top of things, with talented management teams coordinating operations between departments. Guest services pass important information to respective departments after every interaction with the guest. We also make sure to have enough touch points throughout the day and host regular team buildings and trainings to ensure smooth running of the resort. "

### Conclusion

The changes in the hospitality industry may seem, at times, overwhelming. However, with the right approach hospitality managers can make the requisite changes to operations in order to take full advantage of the increasing demand for hotels due to an increase in travel encouraged by the return to normal life as per the pre-pandemic days. ■



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# Secured Measures

We often forget few incidences in life that were even sometimes life threatening and become complacent over the period of time. Few incidences which have devastated the hotel industry in the past should never be forgotten, as a reminder for us to remain cautious. Security is of utmost importance for the hotel not only for the safety of the guest but also the reputation of the hotel.

In a world increasingly sundered by fanaticism, criminals seem to have made hotels their prime targets in the recent years. The footfalls of high profile guests and foreign tourists have made hotels attractive targets for these people to grab instant media attention. In the backdrop of such a precarious scenario, the question of hotel security has assumed prime importance in the business of hospitality.

Hotel security is now no longer viewed only as an issue of protecting the property and lives of some individuals. It is also of great relevance in protecting and projecting

a nation's image as a business and leisure destination among the international tourists. The failure of the security agencies compounded the woes of the hotel owners, made the lives of the guests at India's hotels more prone to danger, and has also contributed to giving a severe setback to India's tourism image.

However, amidst the mayhem created by the fanatics, many often tend to forget that the scope of hotel security is much wider. While some guests may recount the horrifying experience of an armed attack at a glitzy bar, credit card frauds are also not that uncommon.

Right from preventing a pickpocket to averting a possible terrorist strike, the exhaustive list of hotel security is too elongated to discuss in detail. Nevertheless, must try to touch base with some of the aspects regarded crucial in the hotel security management.

Three important aspects that deserve highest attention in hotel security management

are preventive measures, training facilities and crisis management policies.

## The Challenges of Prevention

As it is said, prevention is always better than cure. But for a hotel, putting in place a comprehensive preventive measure is a rather complex task. On the one hand, by virtue of being in the hospitality industry, ensuring a warm and welcoming environment is a basic service that every hotel is expected to provide. And on the other, security is a right that no guest in right senses would be willing to compromise.

Often security concerns may affect the convenience of the guests, and there arises the dichotomy, which presents itself as an uphill challenge for the hotel personnel. Such delicate situations test imagination, efficiency and skill of the management and the security personnel of the hotel.

While the security profile needs to be visible in the car park areas, in corridors and reception areas a softer and latent approach

is needed by the hotels. A higher visibility of security personnel is however unavoidable when a celebrity, diplomat or other high profile persons are around. Security personnel have to be adequately trained to take the right approach while dealing with staff, guests, trespassers and other visitors.

High vigilance is the key to prevent thefts, molestation of women in discotheques of the hotel, credit card frauds, personal attacks at physical level, or any hooliganism in the hotel. As heated invectives, which are often exchanged in the bar because of too much consumption of liquor, have the potential to snowball into a fistfight or a gunfight, bar tenders should be able to distinguish between the residents and non residents of the hotel, and keep a close watch on the activities of the guests.

Anyone indulging in unruly behaviour must be immediately stopped and escorted away when needed. The role of trained bouncers in discotheques is also very crucial. Instructions to stop serving liquor after a certain point should be strictly adhered to for lowering the



possibility of scuffles.

Hotel staff should handle all such undesirable situations very dexterously as the element of coercion should better be invisible in the hospitality industry. An effective central alarm system is also crucial to stop any untoward incident. These are necessary so as to significantly reduce the number of unfortunate incidents from our society.

Of course, the macro dimension of hotel

security needs to be addressed too on a war footing. In the aftermath of the gruesome 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, the Hotel Association of India (HAI) has also come up with some very important guidelines following which one may go a long way in preventing the repetition of such horrendous history.

One of such recommendations include the limiting of access points to two to three and equipping all entry points with close circuit

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television cameras to monitor the entry of people. Checking the cars thoroughly with mirrors under the chassis, with the objective of detecting any hidden explosives, should also be religiously followed.

Access control and perimeter security, bespoke CCTV systems, adequate monitors and electronic keys for bedrooms and storage areas are some of the basic security requirements that every hotel needs to fulfill. Security cameras that work wonders in preventing theft should ideally cover all strategic entry and exit points, which include goods receiving areas, opposite lifts, lobby areas, corridors, bars and conference rooms. Improving hotel security is a holistic affair that also includes innovations in architectural designs of the fire exits and entrances.

We need windows and doors that can effectively resist any unlawful entry. Keeping the master key in safe hands, replacing locks at regular intervals, making uniforms mandatory for the staff, installing door viewer, regular review and upgradation of security measures, and deployment of security dogs before the arrival of high profile guests are some of the other simple but effective steps to thwart a possible terrorist threat.

### The Recommendations

As a security measure, the management should also be empowered to disallow the cars to reach the gates. HAI also recommends installing of hydraulically operated road barriers or retractable bollards for stopping speeding vehicles, in the case of premier hotels.

Stepping up patrolling and regularly trimming shrubs and vines in the hotel compound can also deter the criminals. A computer linked guest profiling system to prevent any suspicious person from entering the hotel can also help reduce a lot of anxiety on the part of the hotel staff.

Besides these there is a need for metal detectors that check the visitors, as well as the baggage scanners, to be regularly monitored for their effectiveness. As it is not improbable that a criminal may also work in the hotel in the guise of an employee, management should exercise considerable caution while hiring the workforce.

HAI stresses on employee verification and states that employee verification should be

mandatory for hotels. It also rightly asserts that a check on the suppliers is also no less important. Apart from physically checking certain packages randomly, all supplies should be scanned before finding their way to the store room. As a precautionary measure, all supplies should be sourced only from approved and established vendors.

Certain sensitive areas of the hotel such as boiler rooms, mail rooms, computer rooms, switch board and control rooms should be accessible only to the designated persons. To restrict the movement of any suspicious person, lift usage can be limited by programming the lifts to the room cards and allowing residents to visit only the floors where they have rented the rooms.

Trash bins have also proved their worth as a secure hideout for explosives. Trash



management is therefore a very significant aspect of hotel security management that needs to be carried out only by trusted employees. Some other measures suggested include installation of devices such as room key scanners, and snifex that can detect explosives in rooms and other areas of the hotels.

### Training & Cooperation

Training of the hotel staff is crucial in maintaining the overall security of the hotel. It is especially important for prevention of credit card frauds. A trained hotel staff should immediately call the authorisation centre for any seemingly stolen card and appoint someone to engage the customer in a light conversation.

Cooperation of the guests in maintaining the security of the hotel can also not be overstated. It is very important for the management to brief them about the surroundings of the hotel and security arrangements in place, and request them to draw attention to any suspicious objects or persons.

Certain small tricks like the ability to identify the hotel staff, not responding to unknown callers, not leaving the room unlocked, keeping the valuables in the room safe or in the hotel safe deposit boxes, can prevent them from inviting troubles. Guests should also be trained about the dos and don'ts in case they are faced with a crisis situation.

### Managing Crisis

Accidents do happen. And it is very essential for the hotel to keep oneself prepared to face any emergency situation. Making prompt contact with external security forces, training the staff in evacuating the guests or redesigning the roof for commandos to land can help reduce casualties to a great extent. The crisis management team should also be very careful in disseminating sensitive information to the media and must deploy experts in handling the job. The hotels should also be well equipped to provide immediate medical assistance to the injured, whenever needed.

We must remember that hotel security is important not only for protecting the lives, limbs and possessions of the

guests, and for maintaining the hospitality image of the nation concerned, but it is also equally important for the safety of the concerned hotel's own staff. Ensuring even something as basic as sound sleep to the guests requires meticulous planning, continual vigilance, and the highest degree of commitment.

Thwarting any disturbance that threatens the complex rhythm of normal and hectic schedules of hotels, require the cooperation of all concerned persons, ranging from the housekeeping staff to the security personnel, and from the management to the guests themselves. For our case, we can easily say that nothing short of a concerted effort will do to safeguard India's hotel industry in the future days, months and years to come. ■

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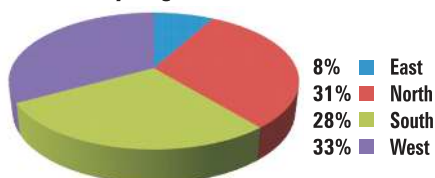
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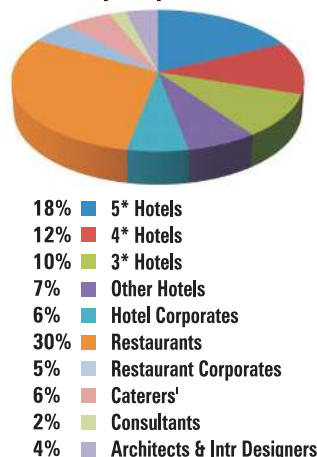
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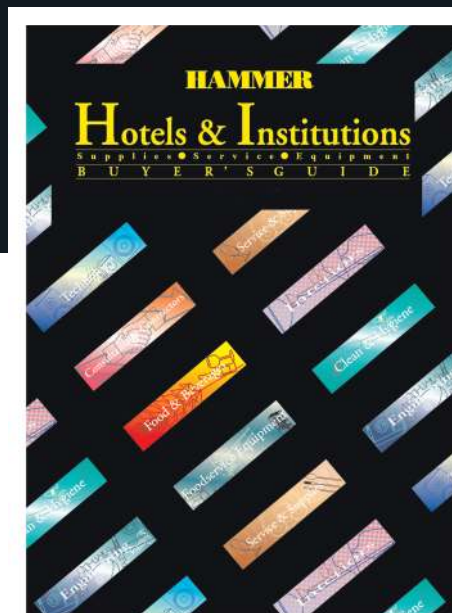
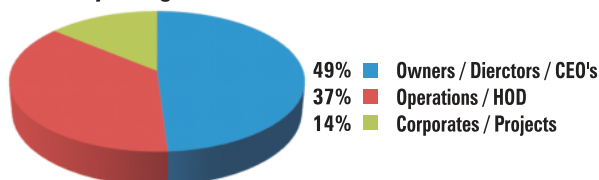
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# Room Service

To be served a meal on a tray in your bedroom is always a luxury.

For most individuals at home this treatment is reserved for times when being pampered, while recuperating or as a special indulgence. In a hotel where you are a guest, away from home, often working hard to meet deadlines, room service sometimes becomes a necessity rather than a luxury. That is when it becomes important that you are able to select from a wide choice, expect and receive the right temperature food with a professional attitude and the leftovers as also the empty tray is collected well within time without disturbing you too much.

While working in the room sometime we lost track of time and recognise our hunger pangs only as stomach grumbles and the

work was near completion. We realised that all the restaurants of the hotel would be nearing closing time. A quick look at the vast selection of the late night room service options, the professional manner in which it was delivered and the way the room furniture was reorganised to adjust the table near the window for a good view, round table's side flaps pulled to make it a decent size, a little candle lit and the ambience had changed. Suddenly it was no longer a compromise of ordering food from the only available option; it was a wise choice and classily done arrangement.

It is important to understand how room service is managed in a hotel and what the future for this segment is for the guest of the hotel.

## Food Selection

As be needed according to the season, room classification, and guest preferences room service menu has to be periodically checked and updated. It might be done every three to four months. Most hotels have a selection of food from the various restaurants, including the speciality outlets and then there is the selection of international favourites (often found in the coffee shop that is expected to be available around the clock). Also, breakfast menus are defined and often ordered by people not on a room plus breakfast tariff and they want to not face crowds of breakfast room early in the morning.

The menu maybe aligned with what is in offering at the major hotel restaurants. It

is necessary to balance out, and especially when the restaurant is under renovation and the service has moved, it is but natural that some dishes from the restaurants should be included in the room service.

**Equipment Quality**

The food ordered might arrive on a tray or on a fully laid out trolley table with a hot case beneath. The property must have sufficient trolleys and proper laying out plan to provide good room service at a go in multiple rooms.

The design of trolleys should be as per the requirements of the room. Mostly the big hotels usually buy imported trolleys but instead few now prefer fabricated trolleys as per their requirement in India itself. Properties are demanding them from vendors in India as per their specifications, which also work out to be more economical, strong and functional.

The choice of tray v/s trolley is driven by the nature of the item ordered. If the temperature of the food that is being served

needs to be hot, even if it is one item, it goes in a hot case in a trolley. Most hotels would follow similar guidelines in terms of choice of equipment to be used, though some of the older properties relied on done covers to keep the food hot.

**Speed of Service**

Room Service might be need driven, in the day; hardly anybody is there in the room, since most guests depart after breakfast. During the vacation period, holiday makers might resort to room breakfast luxury. Lunch they usually have out (either in the hotel or outside) and dinner they might resort to dining in the room. It essentially gives them restaurant options right in the room.

Normally the person taking the order would indicate as to how long it will be before the guest room door is knocked with food. An exclusive lift is there in most luxury hotels to take the stuff to the floor. Room service staff is very rarely seen or heard in good hotels.

However, the same guest who might be

patient in a restaurant often gets impatient in his/her room. Waiting for the food to arrive while you are just waiting for it seems like a long wait. When situation demands any restaurant would offer service staff when speciality restaurants are closed. In evenings, room service gets more demanding and then if a particular restaurant is not busy the staff is borrowed to ensure timely service.

To ensure good service a functional mix of staff is important. In a big hotel of 350+ rooms, the room service team normally comprise of 15 service staff, four order takers, and three team leaders to supervise each shift plus there are two managers. They do 24 hours coverage through 10-hour shifts.

**The Clearance**

Most hotels take their in-room dining experience of the guest rather seriously, and pay proper attention to the clearance service. Proper and timely clearance after the service proves job has been handled to satisfaction.

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Clearance is one of the biggest problems, and a large hotel need effective management system to clear the rooms. In the section where the food is leaving, hotels have adopted coding system for time management. When the stuff goes up a timer is set and the switched on button reminds after certain maximum time.

A guest might call earlier. You need to have it checked, in case the guest has left it outside the room. There might be hiccups and attempt for the best. The evening duty manager on the floor must check to ensure the swift clearances to keep the corridors free.

### Attention to Detail

A guest might order a cold starter, a hot main dish, a cold dessert and maybe other items too. They have to be collected and arranged well before being brought up to the room. The dessert might need to be placed in your mini bar refrigerator and the hot pasta goes in the hot case while the salad or starter is on the table when it reaches you.

All this might seem like magic or automatically expected standard to the guest, but it takes a lot of planning and right degree of execution for which the room service team works in tandem with each other. Each step is equally important and nothing can be left to chance.

### When a Mistake Occurs

Mostly the team tries hard, but if sometimes order taking is wrong, it becomes a huge problem for the entire team. It is a nightmare, once the service has gone to the room and if a wrong dish has been served, apology is not sufficient. Next whole chain gets upset, supervisor, manager, everybody, they need to look into it. It is thus important to trace the problem to the origin, so that the same mistake is not repeated again.

The worst nightmare for the whole



team is when the person taking the order has got all the other details right but not got the room number of the guest! It can happen... the standard is to address the guest by name and room number but if the procedure is not followed, you cannot track the call back, there might be three phones following each other or coming together. You can manage all other issues except this one.

This doesn't happen often but it is something you cannot do anything about. Yes, if something as terrible as this happens, the guest is met by somebody else and the manager has to apology, writing the bill off even. The department does not experience it often but dread it all the time!

Consider a case of a bad encounter that could be nobody's fault. A particular room guest ordered a beer (say room 603) and the adjacent room (say 604) had ordered food and beer but this guest wants beer first to be followed by food.

The steward who was carrying the beer to room 604 and at the same time face the guest from room 603, who came out and told the staff guy 'get it after 20 minutes... or leave it I will call you when I want it. The steward thought the guest is from 604 and returns. After a few minutes the room service get a call from an angry guest of room 604 asking not so politely "where is my beer?".... It had to be explained in detail and it is not easy.

### In Conclusion

Room service is an important segment of any hotel. As a hotel guest, all aspects of room service or in room dining are important. Not just the selection of the food offered, or even the courtesy and speed with which it is served; it is equally important as to the mechanism that is in place to clear the room and corridors of the traces of that service.

Managers of hotels can be frustrated at the unsightly evidence of uncleared room service equipment and accordingly punish or reward the concerned persons of the department but from the guest's point of view the damage is done when evidence of tawdry service is witnessed and when things are perfect – well that is job well done and hardly ever worthy of a mention. But that is service sector for you. ■

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# Creating a Mark in the Global Wellness Industry!

**Asif Fazlani, Managing Director, Fazlani Natures Nest, Vadgaon**



Asif Fazlani is a young Entrepreneur with a dynamic personality. He is a far-sighted individual with excellent and strong business acumen and development skills with hands-on knowledge of directing the activities of all projects. His strong acumen has helped to support the company's strategic alliances and devise marketing strategies. A mark of his leadership skills, Fazlani has won numerous accolades for the companies he manages.

With the judicious application of his powerful sense of market creation and business growth, he has taken on his shoulder the responsibility of Fazlani Natures Nest - the pet project of his beloved father Dr. Abdul Kader Fazlani, whose vision is to bring awareness about the importance of health in this fast-moving life with his wisdom and knowledge. Under his father's commanding guidance, Fazlani with his charismatic leadership and energetic pace aims to make Fazlani

Natures Nest as one of the leading wellness centres globally.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he reflects on his future plans and work philosophy.

## Tell us the USP of your brand?

'Fazlani Natures Nest' is a holistic wellness retreat, near Mumbai/Pune that offers integrated healing treatments from recognized alternative healthcare principles. Every guest is provided with genuine and authentic therapies to align their lifestyle towards a balanced state of wellness.

An extremely important aspect of Fazlani Natures Nest's wellness approach is its closeness to mother nature which transcribes into a calm environment – detrimental to various wellness treatments.

We pay equal importance to both physical and mental wellbeing of our guests. So, in terms of physical wellbeing we utilize traditional approaches like Ayurveda, Naturopathy and Yoga practices along with an active life to address various health conditions. On the other hand, some of the therapies offered at Fazlani Natures Nest are also one-of-its-kind available in the country for example "Equine therapy" - Which is an experiential treatment method that uses

the connection between people and horses to enhance physical or emotional healing.

Our wellness resort offers a wide range of nature-based activities has a therapeutic effect on the mental health of our guests. Therapeutic experiences can include walking, brushing, petting and caring for a horse. Animals are accepting, non-threatening and non-judgmental, making it easier for people to open up and heal from within.

Similar stress-busting activities involving birds and other livestock are also available. You can feed birds, pet a pony or even milk a goat and experience how each of these activities has a tension-relieving effect on the body and mind.

Then there is a multitude of healing methodologies offered at our Amarine Medi spa like Heliotherapy or light therapy which is a treatment that uses exposure to sunlight or artificial wavelengths of light to cure numerous diseases and disorders. It mainly focusses on using the healing properties of natural light from the sun. Guests

suffering from conditions like arthritis and related rheumatic complaints can opt for Hydrotherapy. In this therapy water is used for facilitating movement, promote joint healing and relieve pain.

Chromotherapy is the science of using colours to adjust the body vibrations to frequencies that result in health and harmony. Each colour possesses frequencies of a specific vibration, and each vibration is related to different physical symptoms.

## Could you reflect on your future?

The future looks extremely positive for Fazlani Natures Nest. Even during the onset of the pandemic, we were able to attract a good share of weekend travellers as well as corporate clients. With the much-improved pandemic situation now, the demand is back on track.

The future belongs to holistic wellness resorts like ours. Travellers have become health conscious like never seen before. We expect a strong demand of tourists who

will be visiting us specifically for wellness therapies in the future both from domestic and international markets.

Our aim is to provide our guests with an amalgamation of pure nature and customized wellness therapies wherein we can reach the expectation of our valued customers without compromising on the authenticity of a therapy.

**What do you enjoy most about being at the helm of affairs?**

I strongly believe that loving your profession is very important. If you love your work then challenges can be overcome effectively. Problems can be absolutely resolved with a peaceful mind while taking on a challenge. I like the opportunities and challenges on offer while being at the helm of affairs. It is a learning curve where one has to take risks hoping that your judgment is right.

**What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?**

The most rewarding moment is when

you read or hear positive reviews from your guests. I highly appreciate the fact that someone is trusting us with their time and money. So, if we are able to meet the expectations of our clients, no other reward matches that feeling.

**How do you de-stress?**

Being a part of the wellness sector, I can say that nothing calms you more than a relaxing spa treatment. I also meditate and do yoga exercises to rejuvenate my mind and body. Reading books is also something that helps me to rejuvenate.

**What is your working Mantra, your guiding philosophy in work?**

“You Get What You Focus On.” By waking up every morning and repeating this mantra, I remind myself of all the successes that I have had in my life and that I am ready to tackle the day.

**Advice you would like to give to youngsters aspiring to excel in**

**Hospitality.**

Hospitality is all about serving others. And if you are not someone ready to ‘serve’, the hospitality profession is not for you. It is about the passion that you have for the profession where you are ready to work tirelessly. The wish of a customer is your command. Remember it is not about what you can provide to your guest, it is about what they want!

**How do you define yourself?**

It is difficult to define someone in a few sentences. However, I can say that I am persistent, open-minded, and ready to accept challenges. My approach and dedication allow me to set my own achievements.

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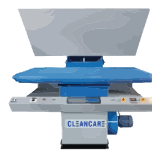
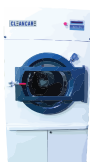
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# Unraveling Loyalty



Loyalty is of great importance in any enduring personal and social relationship. It is also equally important in businesses, and that includes hotel business too, though loyalty in business differs in nature and practice than the loyalty exercised in personal and social relationships. But for some special types of service sectors like the hotel industry, an element of personalised touch to professionalism always gives an edge. Therefore the issue of loyalty should be viewed holistically for the hotel industry at large, if it wants to thrive despite its numerous bottlenecks and impediments.

Can we define loyalty? Or can we describe

loyalty? The views become quite scattered, as we move from conventional to modern thinking. As individuals, family, society or nation, are we loyalists? Can we put that on a metric and say "thou is more loyal than thee?" Is there a plastic card or something else that implies loyalty exists? Nobody is comfortable seeking answers to such questions, though collectively we believe there is something abstract that binds most of us together. Probably, we can pass that off as loyalty.

However, that is about loyalty in personal or social relationship. Loyalty in business has a vastly different connotation than loyalty in personal and social relationships. "What's in

it for me" is the basis on which the business relationships are anchored and therefore both, the brand and the customer, exhibit tendencies to extract most out of each other. The brand wants more spend (wallet share), while the customer wants more conveniences in the form of discounts, redemptions, etc.

In business lexicon, loyalty means doing more business with your customers. It means to induce customers to buy more, as often as you feel they need to. The more the customer purchases, the more loyalty the customer reflects towards your brand or service is the universal understanding in the corporate world. The question is how mutual loyalty can be established in any business transaction, which not only benefits the individual parties, but also the business in general.

## Some Relevant Examples

Take the example of a housekeeper at home who gets her quota of milk daily at her doorstep. There are three distinct parts to the activity – time of delivery, cost of the product, and quality of the product. As a buyer, she may habitually comment on the quality of the product to the delivery boy, but that is only an indication of her being in control of the relationship.

The more sensitive point is the time of delivery. If milk is delivered late, she is upset, and would even admonish the delivery boy. However, if the price is raised without prior intimation, she is most furious and may even refuse to buy her daily quota. But when she needs an unusually higher quantum of milk and the boy obliges by delivering the extra litres immediately, her mood becomes just right, and a sense of loyalty breeds.

Loyalty in business can be arrived also through problem solving or by extricating the customer from a difficult or embarrassing situation. Therefore it is believed that if you want to have customer's loyalty towards your brand, go solve a problem faced by the customer. Let us consider some first person anecdotes in this regard.

(a) I was at the restaurant and my service was awfully delayed. However, the GM personally apologised for the tardy service and to my delight gave a 10 percent rebate on my entire bill. I now go to the restaurant regularly.

(b) The airhostess dropped the ketchup on my white shirt. I was most annoyed.

The shirt was not only my wife’s gift to me, but also acted as my lucky charm. When I disembarked, the duty manager walked up to me, apologised, and took me to their closet to help me select a shirt very similar to the one I was wearing. I was wowed! I was back on my spotless white shirt. I choose the airline whenever I travel.

(c) I was at the billing counter, at the nearby mall. My credit card was not getting accepted. I was tense and furious as this had never happened before. I called my relationship manager. She informed me that I was already presented with an upgraded card and therefore the existing card was defunct. And I realised to my dismay that I had goofed up – my platinum card was left behind in my office cabin. But my relationship manager was very helpful. She connected me with her back office team who made an exception and acknowledged the transaction swiped by the cashier, using my old credit card. I used to have moderate banking relations with them, but after that incident, they became my primary banker!

**A Bond by Desire**

Are problem situations the basic steps towards conversion to loyalty programmes? Is loyalty a conversion process? Is loyalty a programme—a point of inflexion that is monitored by some milestone, accruals or through induced redemptions? Does loyalty flows only from the customer to the brand or from brand to the customer? Do only clients deserve loyalty? Is loyalty about faith, trust and feeling good everytime?

We can’t have easy answer to these questions, but in the commercial world, loyalty is fast becoming a performance metrics that is put to a quarterly test. ‘How have we ensured that our customers have been more loyal to us in this quarter?’ is often a focal point of discussion in a management review meeting.

Can ‘loyalty’ cohabit revenues, market share, profits, etc. where the business thinks the end justifies the means? Yes, it can. First of all, we must understand that loyalty is not about binding; it is about bonding. It is not about force; it is about choice. It is not an inducement; it is a preferred habit. It is not a transaction; it is

an emotion that stems from a free will because the entities (the brand and the customer in the case of a business environment, which we are presently considering) choose each other to interact with, more often than not in a habitual environment.

Let us understand this further. Loyalty starts with a desire. Desires can seldom be clearly expressed, but they can be easily experienced and then articulated through actions. It is almost always about the ‘goodness’ in the experience that relates to the desire. If over multiple interactions the experience creates a sense of ‘goodness’, the proclivity towards the agency providing that ‘goodness’ increases.

**Excellence and Consistence**

This is the basic human behaviour. We tend to go back to those points in our lives that comfort us in our thoughts. Therein starts a relationship. This relationship manifests as williness to share, participate, and even explore, to create or build something more or new – that perhaps can be a description of loyalty.

It transcends time, revenues and problems

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encountered in the journey of building the relationship. Loyalty is not about absence of problems, but the 'confidence' to resolve any problematic issue without making it spiral out of control. Loyalty is not about thwarting competition, but the feeling that in the presence of competition, the 'preference' is happily expressed.

Desires are not easy to measure even if they are obvious. For instance, a traveller flying business class in an airline has an 'obvious' expectation for top-of-the-line service. If the differentiated service involving personalisation, wider choice of in-flight entertainment and better comfort on ground and in the air, etc., helps the traveller to feel that his desire is satiated, then he is likely to come in for another experience.

If over a few experiences the traveller sees consistency, he is quite likely to articulate it in some form. This could be through a feedback or a comment to the airhostess or through the travel agent to book his travel every time through the specified airline. These signals, when captured and harnessed by the airline, bring in a bonding between the airline and the passenger, which leads to understanding of each other's needs better. This relationship builds into 'trust of service' and thereby brings in a sense of belonging, which flows from the airline to the passenger and viceversa. This in essence is loyalty.

### Much More Than a Campaign

Often, loyalty starts as a campaign, initiated by a brand, with multi-tier loyalty cards, points and rules for earning, rewarding, etc. It uses technology to grab transactional information to understand frequency and value of purchase. It has policies and timelines and some stated conditions. It resides within the 'marketing' side of the brand, which could be completely cut-off from other operations of the organisation.

Loyalty is often associated with large degree of analytics – who, what, where, when and how much and uses a predictive model to forecast, churn, increase, etc. It also involves sending out personalised messages and gifts on anniversaries and other important days in the life of a valued customer. These are tools and techniques only to ensure basic hygiene in the ensuing relationship.

Once these done, the perspectives have to change quickly to convert data into a focused

relationship that has a 'life' of its own. From here on "What is in it for us," replaces "What is in it for me," and the brand has to set aside time and resources for this function.

It is likely that the path to incremental revenue is divergent to the loyalty path. But this at best can only be a transient phenomenon. Customer acquisition and customer retention are both integral parts of loyalty management and organisations may see the apparent divergence in the short term.

Loyalty is a long term and enduring phenomenon, whose utility transcends much beyond the immediate business gains. A company like Apple, which isn't a market leader, had the entire world in frenzy for its iPhone product. The support and participation it garners from customers across the world has been its strength even when it had a single digit market share. In fact, it overcame its financial crisis because of the solidarity its loyal customers showed during the nineties – a time when the company could have folded-up.

### An Enduring Phenomenon

Loyalty is not a fad, campaign or a slogan. It is a way of being, a way of staying in touch with customers even when they are not transacting business with you. It is about engagement, endearment and empowerment. Your customers encourage you to build newer products and services.

Loyalty seldom comes into limelight in a business during its growth phase. It is however the fulcrum when the markets shrink or become too competitive. Unfortunately, you are too late to embark upon loyalty bandwagon when the markets are shrinking. Loyalty is therefore a concept that is woven within the basic operating framework of a business, when the going is good.

It is a part of sales, marketing, product management, production, delivery and finance, and every function of the business irrespective of its extent to direct interaction with the customer. An organisation exudes loyalty through its various interactions with customers – be it customer complaint or compliment, loyalty is in the fore. Loyalty is about execution in as much it is about conceptualisation.

Remember, desires have no end and no rules! They evolve and organisations must provide the needed space for the evolution. Desire, expectations and delivery are highly

subjective and loyalty lies at the core of such subjective matters.

All aspects of rationalising, compartmentalising and using analytical technology to predict are only appropriate to kick-start loyalty based interactions. They are not the best methods for sustenance. To sustain loyalty, you must have the ability (with technology) to understand the customers' needs, interact with the customers even when they are buying from your competitor and yet extend help to them when required.

Loyalty is not a one time activity. Solving a problem quickly may bring in the customer, but retaining strategy should be well thought through!

In today's context, employees transfer into competition in a seamless manner. Companies change strategies on account of mergers and acquisitions so rapidly that the cultures of the organisations get morphed. In such situations, technology provides a basis for restoring continuity. In today's world, technology is the means to loyalty.

Loyalty is about understanding the customer even when the customer is interacting on your brand's website. Remember, few companies like Apple and Harley Davidson exhibit better customer loyalty than other brands, but they may not be market leaders by revenue, themselves! But their customers give them a confidence that makes these companies and their respective brands unique.

It is said that loyalty is seen as glint in the eyes of the customer, heard in the softness of her voice when she is speaking and felt in the desire to protect the brand when she is communicating.

Loyalty is self-expressive. It seldom can be contained. Loyal customers find their ways to reach out, bond and support the brand they are loyal to. The brand equally reaches out to understand the customer as an individual and extend itself as much as possible to provide everything that customer desires.

Loyalty is filled with challenges – that is why there aren't too many successful companies that are able to charm their customers. Sometimes ensuring loyalty can be too taxing, and sometimes loyalty may appear to present itself as a necessary evil that will make you think of the almighty – Oh My God! But without it, business cannot sustain itself in troubled waters. ■



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**F**uture Kitchens are addressing higher productivity with cost effective operations where introduction of new technology has revolutionised the food industry. There is an opportunity to bring a “new approach towards technology based food service systems using the latest but tried technology”.

Equipment such as water wash exhaust systems, induction cooking, integrated braising counters, fabricated custom built entire kitchens with the best of finishes are a few newer trends in tomorrow’s kitchens in India. Many of these practices are already in use in the developed countries worldwide after many trials.

There is much work to be done in India in the food service industry in terms of understanding, upgrading the consultancy / consultants’ image and a healthy appreciation. India is very rich in culture and traditions. Many still love to eat home-food-that-is-not-a-fusion-oriented-process.

Many young Indians are in transit or are settling back in India after spending considerable time outside of it. These people may have had a great food and beverage

experience abroad so there is also a new trend of bringing these experiences back into India.

The food service business in this large continent has a very mixed trend. It is only in the last two decades that a lot of good independent eating and drinking places with an international flavour have been making an impact.

The future kitchens are highly productive and cost effective. They are market oriented with new concepts. These kitchens are very modular in nature and work on much lower energy costs as well as address the needs of the fraternity.

In today’s context all operations in any industry are governed by the low-cost-high-productivity mantra. The need to keep development, equipment, manpower and operations costs at optimal levels is making everyone in the arena sit up and take notice.

### Area or Size

Where can we start?

The most important criteria is the size of the facility, as size does matter. All spaces are governed by area; the first step is to provide

the right sizes for the kitchen and support areas. This very important fact is often and purposely kept as the last consideration.

Many a operator who has used consultants who are either mere draughtsmen without a working knowledge of actual kitchens and bars or those who are one stop shops providing equipment along with services (which is a case of vested interests) has repented later. He then is running the show with high operating costs or an operation with hygiene standards not up to the mark.

Why is the right area important?

Because it creates the optimal work and production ambience, it prevents accidents and risks and also maintains hygiene and sanitation parameters as required.

Once the area is defined, the next step is to get an appropriate design in place using the menu as the base as far as possible. Proper area planning eliminates heartburns later on when equipment installation happens. The clearer the concept the more correct the design will be!

From using firewood to induction cooking the culinary world is going great guns. If we look at the new advents in the culinary world,

Chefs are preparing and presenting down to earth menus with very authentic flavours, Chefs are revolutionising the way they work, Chefs are watching the bottom lines very carefully, Chefs are using a high degree of automation to create the homogenization of skills and presentation.

What this means is that Chefs want the entire support structure to be on a very high-automated mode since such an ambience and environment is very conducive to what is required for their output.

What does the new technology do? Some of the environments and technology available is reviewed here.

## Storage

- Shelving solutions that have an antimicrobial protection: This is achieved by combining inorganic antimicrobial silver ions.
- Temperature control in various areas: microprocessors are embedded into small modular units mimicking actual food products. These provide infrared readouts to monitoring systems and also warn when danger levels are reached.
- Just in time solutions storing using super market style functioning with networking capabilities to understand reordering levels.
- Creating a systematic process of storing which gel with management processes to attain better food costing and profitability.

## Flooring, Walls and False Ceilings

Today special kitchen and services area have flooring which are special antiskid, anti wear and tear with a life up to 15 years combining resins and quartz to create a carpeted floor which is easily washable are available. Walls tiles, which are sheets, are made of high density food grade plastic.

The false ceilings are of metal mostly stainless steel, which sit on a checkerboard suspension and are easily openable to access services above the false ceiling.

## Pre-preparation Area

Vegetable washing systems are very critical in today's context where vegetable are grown by farmers using high levels of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, use of bulk cooking techniques like cook chill for volume production, blast chilling and freezing techniques where food produced can be re-thermalised without loss

of flavour.

The use of multifunction equipment: mixers with attachments, combination or combi steamers with climate control are now becoming more common. The use of new grinders that have special blades developed for Indian conditions. The use of vacuum while blending at high speed eliminates the flavour loss due to air mixing. The use of stick blenders to enhance product homogenization.

And easy to use equipment that eliminates user fatigue like mixers with swing out bowl, single point bowl installation, power bowl lift, quick release mixing arms, shift on the fly (changing speeds without stopping) as well as motors delivering higher efficiencies are considered for use depending on requirement.

Microprocessor controlled tilting kettles and braising (bratt pans) help in reducing fatigue of the operators.

Steam heated griddles using steam as the heating medium rather than dry heat is a new technology.



## Preparation

Tomorrows Kitchens, while striving to reduce manpower and maintain a very high level of Hygiene and Sanitation, are moving towards modular cooking batteries with jointless execution. These help in preventing food particles from falling in between.

The equipment is mounted on castors (wheels) with restraining flexible connections for gas pipes, electrical cables and steam pipes. The Exhaust systems are available in wide variety ranging from conventional to compensating to waterwash to ultraviolet and infrared and hoodless systems.

There are odour neutralising systems both for kitchens and restaurants and bars.

## Planning of Kitchens: Newer Trends

### Work station oriented designs:

The current favourites are workstation-

oriented designs. These are mostly found in many great restaurants which are placed within hotels of repute. This is due to the fact that hotels have the infrastructure already in place unlike standalone restaurants which have to spend a large amount of money on high rentals for amalgamating the required infrastructure.

### The Cooking Centre Concept:

This has a kitchen in a kitchen concept where the manpower required is low and where all equipment arranged in a reverse "C" arrangement, the result is that small and efficient units are produced with lower space requirements. This concept has a simplified organisation of processes where fatigue is cut down. There is tremendous capacity flexibility, the energy costs are reduced and the chef is responsible and can monitor quality. This concept is gaining great grounds in many kitchens and will perhaps become the kitchen to work in tomorrow.

While there are many trends it is still very important to understand that all things are subject to availability of support services, clean electricity, good quality water, good training processes, employee retention and importantly the support of owners or clients who must understand that technology though costly initially pays back over a short period of time.

## The Final Word

The Chef's theatre is the kitchen. There are many elements that go into creating this. Ranging from the client to the correct consultant to the desired concept, the right space with efficient and effective equipment all goes in to create the right Kitchen. In the meantime, the industry must continue to evolve and shed its supposedly slow, stodgy and sometimes "uncool" image.

In the world of technology, scalability is architecture-based, allowing room for expansion and upgrades. It has a great knack of scaling up technology while scaling down prices. In the words of M.Ram Vittal Rao, the leading foodservice consultant, "I would call this a 'see-saw' ability. In hotels as in other food service-oriented establishments, the product has to sustain itself to the opening team, the customers, the new joiners, the new management and eventualities that are trends. I call this future proofing or better still, 'sustainability'."



When doing a due diligence on any hotel property, assessment of its turndown service and its appreciation by guest inevitably becomes a point worth checking. However what is this turndown service and is it really important to the guest? If Housekeeping department in-charge of a leading hotel is to be believed, and there is no reason to not believe them, the service is as important and appreciated as any other star hotel service provided to make the guest feel special.

### Defining the Service

Making luxuries of life seem the norm is the basic style statement of an up market hotel. While they are all expected to provide clean bed linen, it is the style of making that bed which sets a five star property apart from the three star hotels in the same city.

When a guest returns to his room at the

end of the day, after an indulgent dinner or a harrowing hard day's work, to magically find that the curtains have been drawn, water has been placed on bedside table, the bed spread has been removed and bed cushions have enchantingly been stored away, the corner of the top sheet has been enticingly turned down – tempting you to get into bed and sleep, after enjoying the chocolate or mint that might be placed within easy reach: all of this is part of your turndown service in a hotel.

### Who is Responsible?

It is the housekeeping department with its army of little invisible foot soldiers who are hardly ever seen but whose presence and hard work is always the backbone of the services the hotel provides.

A Executive Housekeeper, whilst her main parameters to define room standard

might be dictated by the international standards of the chain, how she manages her little army and gets the desired result while being time and effort savvy is totally up to her.

Making the beds in the morning, or conducting the equally important turndown service in the evening, it is the floor boys who have to put their best foot forward. Of course there are practical problems like when a guest does not wish to be disturbed with the turndown exercise and wants it conducted a while later, if the floor boy is not good with his level of communication, the housekeeping desk has to coordinate it later.

### The Ideal Guest

It is easy to speak of ideal hotel standards, or expected luxuries at a five star but what about the standards of the hotel guest? Is there an entity like the perfect guest?

Does nationality play a part in their mental makeup and consideration level? Does gender make a difference?

By and large people do take care. At the worst they might have a crushed piece of runner if the guest has tossed it about, but housekeeping would segregate what needs ironing and which items need dry cleaning anyways so there is nothing worth mentioning there. The turndown service is available round the clock and a guest can ask for it at their convenience.

Guests could be so good that his room is done in 10 to 15 minutes. If a guest is present in the room, then there is a different approach, especially if he is sitting in the room watching television or working at the computer. The whole exercise needs to be followed but with least disturbance to the guest: glasses and used ashtrays need to be replaced, everything needs to be checked. Room should be neat and tidy. Sometimes the Indians leave rooms in great condition and sometimes the foreigners would trash a room.

## The Drill

It is well defined. Curtains are to be drawn, lights have to be dimmed, water needs to be placed within easy reach, any used items have to be replenished in the mini bar, the runner has to be put away, the bed has to be turned down and the room must look perfect – these regulations are standard in most hotels.

Most hotels with multiple floors have one team that does the entire floor. One boy would be on rotation as well and which rooms are done at what time would largely depend on how many people have checked out. During the evening time there are lot of requests for mineral water, baby cot, ironing board etc., the floor boys are not disturbed for these demands.

The boy who is on the floor and coordinates; and if there is a departure at the floor the person helps out in clearing that particular room.' Mostly at all hotels the exercise begins at 4 pm. They do the vacant rooms first. If a room is pre blocked they might know what time the next guest is expected to check in and it might need a morning service so there would be no 'turndown' exercise even though the room is



being prepared in the evening. It is all about time management with the information available to the housekeeping department

## Guest Security

While most guests are careful about putting away their currency, jewellery and important papers in the room safe, there might be a situation where things are strewn in a room that the staff enters for turndown service. 'If there is jewellery, currency etc in the room, the floor boy is supposed to call the security and everything is listed by the management. The guest is met personally when they return and told about it. The system is in place and works well. Housekeepers do urge the guests to keep their stuff in the locker but an oversight might happen every once in a while.

## Well Appreciated

TIPS – To Insure Prompt Service - is best enjoyed by those who serve you in restaurants, the smiling waitress or the concerned room service boy. Even the public area assistants like the parking attendants or doormen get smiles every once in a while. There are definite articles and advice available in tourist books about what the expected percentage of bill as tip for services in different countries is. Yet, how does one appreciate the housekeeping?

The little seen or heard angel of cleanliness who ensure that your linen is spotless, your floor and basin is wiped clean, the bed is

perfectly done and the evening turndown service provided are often forgotten. Why do we not ever spare them a thought?

Yes, the right way is to put a bit of money in the free stationery envelope provided by the hotel and leave it at the Housekeeping desk. It does get spread about... Some individuals might want to leave a token amount under the pillow which would then be claimed by the morning service staff. If they brought a smile to your expression with their thoughtful and well processed exercise, bring some cheer for them by a thank you!

## Humour of it All

While going through some individual experiences of people about their understanding of the turndown service, the ones that made me smile are shared. One woman says for the turndown facility, 'when the maid comes in at a set hour and 'opens' the bed, turns down the blankets and usually puts a chocolate or a mint on your pillow...it is actually very lovely.'

A man who does not much care for the service says, 'housekeepers come into your room, turn down the bed (flip the filthy bedspread off the pillows), stick a chocolate on the pillow, tune the radio to an easy-listening station (can I pay them to not do that?), empty the trash, replace any used towels, and restock the amenities. Hotels like to add signature touches on top of the above, but those seem like the essentials to this layman.' ■

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Quality and sophistication are the hallmarks of Home Zone's bed & bath linen range, which is used in the star category hotels in India.



The company makes exquisite bed linen for hotel rooms with different infill materials like down & feather, soft microfibre & hollow fibre. The company provides a comprehensive range of pillows, cushions, duvets, comforters, mattress toppers and mattress protectors.

In the bath linen category, the company provides an awesome range of towels & robes.

Succinctly, Home Zone's superb quality linen can enhance the guests' comfort while adding a fashionable touch to the hotel's bedroom too.

Home Zone India, based in Panipat, Haryana, has marketing offices in New Delhi (Central Office), Punjab, Srinagar, Hyderabad, Kathmandu & Kolkata.

**Home Zone India**  
marketing@homezoneindia.com

## Adjustable Salamander

Machines for reheating pizzas, grilling continental dishes, sausage rolls & others and defrosting readymade dishes is preferred series and highly desired in the industry. So AKASA has come up with the Adjustable Stainless Steel Electric Salamander, With a choice of cooking heights (adjustable travel distance of 200mm), chefs have precise control over heat intensity and heat distribution. This also brings the added benefits of significant energy saving and a cooler kitchen



ambience as heat is far more focused than with a static salamander. The unique features and flexibility of the Akasa's New Adjustable Salamander make it easy to operate, energy efficient and highly functional in any kitchen. Self balancing grill height and temperature control functionality allows for precise cooking of every item, with specially designed ergonomic operator control knobs designed to minimize liquid infiltration. With the capability to cook, grill, hold and reheat its ideal for your banquet, hotel, restaurant, food court or any food outlets

**Akasa International**  
info@akasainternational.in

## Redefine Your Outdoor Seating Area

Gita Traders have developed exterior Blinds, specifically for the summer and monsoon seasons, offering many benefits at outdoor sitting area. The blinds have aesthetical design and are of extreme comfort and provide open privacy for the guests. The blinds provide absolute sun protection, allowing no heat, glare or UV rays to enter the premises. It provides prevention and ultimate protection from rain, dust, smoke, smog, insects and birds, ensuring fresh airflow and partial visibility.

The balcony blinds are a perfect fit for outdoor areas like pergola, patios, balcony, cabana, veranda, etc, giving the best look and feel to outdoors or façade, besides the areas like living room, conference halls or the office room. The blinds can be remote operated and provide see through benefit from inside the premises.

The tailor-made solutions for exteriors as well as interiors come in aesthetically pleasing 78 shades. The blinds have colour staying power, fire retardant, washable, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal. Have a great save on electricity bill with all-weather friendly blinds, as heat does not easily dissipate & escape.

Since 2013 the company provides clients with the best possible solution for shading, energy savings, security, comfort and

convenience! The contemporary collection boasts of innovative designs that increase the likeability factor. The products are specially tested for Indian weather conditions and are duly certified for long-lasting performance, setting novel standards in weather resistance, UV stability, weld strength, wind load, air filtration, water penetration and stylized finish.

The company also offers dynamic shade solution for your outdoor shade structures. You can control how much you want to open and close the panels. It also provide pergola sliding roof shades with attractive and fancy appearance, great for having lunch, parties. It protects furniture from harmful UV rays. High quality breathable fabric with 90% UV protecting - allow air to pass through and light filtering - cooling down outdoor shade space or even indoor rooms.

Wave drop retractable shade- is suitable for most outdoor applications. It is ideal for providing shade for pergola, patio, deck, backyard, and the retractable design allow to retract the canopy.

**Gita Traders**  
**exoticablindsdelhi@gmail.com**



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# Leading From the Front!

**Madhav Sehgal, General Manager, The Leela Palace, Bengaluru**



With more than two decades experience, Madhav Sehgal is a senior hospitality professional with expertise in leadership, entrepreneurial and networking skills coupled with astute business acumen and a proven track record of consistent delivery of core strategy and objectives. He is presently GM of Leela Palace Bangalore. With experience in multiple cities across India and a strong understanding of all micro-markets, holds equitable relationships in all segments while always ensuring the highest level of transparency and earning trust from all sources. Currently has led Leela Palace Bangalore to a rank of 1 of 6 in both ARI and RGI. He has always been leveraging segments and identifying opportunities in the highly dynamic and evolving market scenarios. Sharmila Chand in talk with him finds he is known for empowering and mentoring individuals on an ongoing basis and believing in leading by example.

## What is the USP of your property?

The Leela Palace Bengaluru has been ranked 10 among the top 10 city hotels in Asia for 2019 by Travel + Leisure. The Garden City's only Palatial Hotel travels back into the rich heritage of India, the 7-acre property combines an exterior inspired by the splendor of the Mysore Palace with lavish interiors.

Ride in luxury with BMW transfers that reassure safety under Suraksha by The Leela Hotel is ideal for long stays: suites have a kitchenette, living room, spacious closet space, ISO 22000 certification for food handling. It offers experience of unique and signature service, curated personally by the Butlers assigned.

## Green initiatives the hotel has taken?

In our aim to create luxurious experiences for our guests, we consciously believe that it is of utmost importance to act responsibly and respectfully towards the environment. We do this through green, building management systems, our focus on improving indoor air quality and our commitment towards global net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. We are working towards creating renewable energy solutions and use LED lighting and conserve water using low flow equipment.

## Sustainable processes in your property?

We prioritize waste management and have implemented zero waste initiatives. Many of our properties have their own organic kitchen gardens and herbarium on premises, to grow and use organic fresh produce. The Leela Palace Bangalore was conferred by President Pranab Mukherjee with the National Energy

Conservation Award 2012 for its notable contribution towards energy savings and now has set benchmarks for sustainable water conservation operations.

We recycle wastewater for gardening, reuse paper for scrap use and send waste food to piggery farms/NGOs. We use organic waste composter for conversion of organic waste to manure. This in turn also reduces carbon emission in the environment. We recognize the importance of alternative power source, and we peruse energy generated by our windmills which assist us with 85% of electrical power and have placed EV charging stations in our parking.

## What distinguishes your property from others in the same bracket?

The Leela Palace Bengaluru offers unique location, art, culture and cuisine with thoughtful services, celebratory rituals, and immersive experiences.

## What is the 'Differentiating Factor' of your F&B outlets?

The Leela Palace Bengaluru houses the worlds' foremost fine-dining establishments such as Le Cirque Signature and Jamavar. 'Jamavar' is amongst the top North Indian dining destinations, a class apart. 'Library Bar' offers a quintessential bar experience and has a plethora of awards for showcase.

## What do you enjoy most about being at the helm of affairs at the hotel?

The most is to bring about brand growth as a custodian and understand the core of the brand, chart a strategic leadership development method in the long run.

## What has been the most rewarding moment in your career?

I have been blessed to work with great brands, and I've found rewarding moments in each place that I have worked in. Currently, it is to be working at the iconic Leela Palace Bengaluru and driving it to be the best hotel in the world.

## How do you de-stress?

Golf, Meditation and Motorcycling

## What is your working Mantra, your guiding philosophy in work?

The application of design thinking and innovation is the most effective way to find creative solutions. In any industry, diverse set of problems co-exist; using the steps of design thinking in every aspect of decision making supported by knowledge and confidence is the mantra to succeed.

## One advice you would like to give youngsters aspiring to excel in Hospitality.

Hoteliers are genuinely passionate people who are committed to their cause, not for a job but a purpose and belief in being welcoming, always caring and hospitable, even in the middle of a global pandemic. Thus, my advice is to build resilience, add skill sets and values that will support you, and most importantly identify a good coach who can guide you along the initial days of your journey.

## How do you define yourself in one sentence?

A passionate hotelier who would like to drive Indian Hospitality toward its well-deserved glory, while developing leaders of the future.

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