

MAR-APR '23 VOL.18 No.1 ₹ 100

**HAMMER**

# HOTEL

**Business Review**

An Exclusive Business Magazine for the Hotel Industry

**Business**

**Ensuring Guest Satisfaction**

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**N**ew challenge faced by the hotel industry is to move beyond brand identity and extend and deepen their relationships with travelers. In the era of artificial intelligence hotels are significantly evolving to create new market opportunities. The new age developer is thinking out of box to create modern space to satisfy the needs and demands of the future guest. They are integrating spaces within and outside the single hotel to offer a completely new level of flexibility to guests, while serving new customers.

It is more of reimagining hotels beyond rooms and lobbies. The future hotels will access new resources to bring new life to existing capabilities and merge outside potential into new opportunity areas. New strategies established by hotel emphasise not only on spaces but people, brands, services and technology. Capitalising on the user experiences to create new business opportunities in the hotel of the future. Cover story elaborates on how with advancement in technology and AI (Artificial Intelligence), hotels have been able to upgrade and offer new experiences to their guests

When it comes to the hotel experience, elevating guest satisfaction is the ultimate goal. But in reality, this is much more complex than it sounds. Guest satisfaction is measured by the service offered in hotel in comparison to the competition. One can gauge and optimize performance constantly and measure it in a precise manner by collecting feedback. Unsatisfied visitors leave bad reviews online, and, ultimately, damage the hotel's reputation. Business story finds how hotels can improve the guest satisfaction by offering best in the industry.

Spa is a major source of revenue for the hotel industry. The popularity of spas in hotels has been growing over the past few years and are now an integral part of the hotel experience. The feature on spa discusses the future trends for providing the best guest experience.

# **HAMMER** HOTEL 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.

**Disclaimer:** The editor and publisher believes that all information contained in this publication are correct at the time of publishing. Content published not necessarily are the opinion or view of the editor and publisher. Editor and publisher declines any responsibility for any action taken based on the information contained in this publication, including liability for error or omission.

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.



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## Chalet Hotels Limited Signs Definitive Agreements

Chalet Hotels Limited (CHL) marks its investment foray into leisure as it signs definitive agreements for the 'Acquisition of The Dukes Retreat', an 80-room resort, spread over 7.5 acres, surrounded by gorgeous waterfalls stunning views of the Western Ghats. A dominant player in the business hospitality space, Chalet is known for its legacy of creating asset value through creating high-end hospitality assets and offering exceptional guest experiences.

CHL has entered into definitive agreements to acquire The Dukes Retreat Pvt. Ltd. and Sonmil Industries Pvt. Ltd. for an Enterprise Value of Rs. 1,330 mn (to be adjusted for cash on



books). The resort land is owned by Sonmil Industries Pvt. Ltd., while the hotel structure and its business are owned by The Dukes Retreat Pvt. Ltd. Upon completion of the transaction, Chalet will finalize its plans of expansion and up-gradation of the property to reposition it as an upper-upscale green, lifestyle resort. With this acquisition, CHL will further enhance diversification in its portfolio by expanding its owned asset portfolio in the leisure segment.

The Dukes Retreat is strategically located at a comfortable drivable distance from both Mumbai and Pune. The 80-room resort includes 18 Deluxe Rooms, 54 Executive Rooms and 8 Cottages, and offers a gourmet experience at the in-house restaurant with panoramic views of the cliffs and valleys. Other facilities at the resort include an outdoor pool, play area for kids, spa, and a fitness center. This property has been a top destination for individual leisure travellers, weddings, and corporate events.

Sanjay Sethi, MD & CEO at Chalet Hotels Limited said, "The Dukes Retreat' is a unique resort with stunning views and a strong emotional connect with large number of families from Mumbai and Pune. We welcome the guests and the associates of the Resort to the Chalet family. Chalet Hotels Ltd is positioned in a sweet spot with several of its capex projects approaching commercial opening in the next few months. The Dukes Retreat is the new addition."

## IHG Signs Holiday Inn Amritsar Golden Temple

IHG® Hotels & Resorts has signed a management agreement with Amritsar Golden Hospitality LLP to develop the new Holiday Inn Amritsar Golden Temple in Punjab. Expected to open in Q2 2027, the newly built hotel will add 215 keys to IHG's burgeoning portfolio in the city and strengthen its presence in the prime tourist destination of Punjab. This would be IHG's third hotel in the city along with Holiday Inn Amritsar Ranjit Avenue and Holiday Inn Express Amritsar Golden Temple, which is scheduled to open in 2025.

Conveniently located in the heart of city centre and short walking distance from eminent spiritual site of Golden Temple, Holiday Inn Amritsar Golden Temple will benefit from excellent visibility and accessibility. The hotel will be situated in close proximity of 2 km from the railway station and 13 km from the airport. Once opened, the hotel will be one of the most sought after branded accommodations, catering to all segments of leisure, spiritual and business travelers.

Holiday Inn Amritsar Golden Temple will feature well-equipped modern rooms and state-of-the-art facilities including all day dining, a lobby lounge, a swimming pool and a gymnasium. It will also have a 2000 sq. ft meeting room catering to the growing demand from MICE and social events, and will offer a comfortable stay experience enhanced through brand's signature hospitality.

Commenting on the announcement, Sudeep Jain, Managing Director, South West Asia, IHG said, "We are delighted to partner with Amritsar Golden Hospitality LLP to bring our third Holiday Inn hotel in the city and strengthen our mainstream portfolio in Punjab. Amritsar is a hotspot pilgrimage centre due to the presence of Golden Temple. Rich in history, culture, food, and as a textiles' hub, the city has a strong appeal for both leisure and business travelers. The introduction of Holiday Inn Amritsar Golden Temple at a sought-after location would be an excellent addition to the IHG portfolio in the region.

Tejinder Singh, Managing Partner at Amritsar Golden Hospitality LLP added, "We are thrilled to partner with an internationally and locally trusted hospitality brand like IHG to venture into our first branded hotel project. Holiday Inn is one of the most recognized brands across the world offering a consistent and comfortable experience. With a combination of an excellent location and IHG's strength and scale of global systems, technology and loyalty programme, we are confident that the new hotel will be a popular choice when it opens its door to guests."



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## Suba Group Launches 'Comfort Inn Silver Arch'

Suba Group of Hotels, a master franchisee of Choice Hotels India has marked another milestone in Uttarakhand with the launch of 'Comfort Inn Silver Arch' in Mussoorie. Conveniently located near the entry of the Picture Palace side of Mall Road in Mussoorie, the property can be accessed easily by road, rail, and by air via Dehradun airport. Some of the prominent tourist destinations are located in close proximity to the hotel.

Announcing the opening, Mansur Mehta, Managing Director, Suba Group of Hotels, said, "We are delighted to launch Comfort Inn Silver Arch in the picturesque hills of Mussoorie. Popularly referred to as the queen of



hills, Mussoorie is a major tourist destination frequented by a huge number of visitors from across the country. With the launch of our new property, we will tap the growing potential of tourist inflow in the region. The hotel perfectly epitomizes the Suba Hotel group's core values of offering immaculate service and unparalleled hospitality".

The Comfort Inn Silver Arch features 27 rooms and 4 bamboo cottages and can accommodate around 80-100 guests. All rooms are air-conditioned and are equipped with LED TV with cable, free Wifi access, limited hours room service, tea coffee kettle in each room, hair dryer, 24X7 hot & cold running water, safe locker, mini-fridge, complimentary water, telephone etc. The facilities at the hotel include 24-hour room service, a travel desk, car parking, and laundry services.

Guests can enjoy a magnificent culinary journey at The Cafe situated on the ground floor of the hotel which also has an outdoor seating area. It is a multi-cuisine outlet serving buffet breakfast and a-la-carte lunch/dinner. To make guests feel pampered, the restaurant's team members carefully select the fresh ingredients for the food and cook it with a lot of love and attention.

## Vivanta Mangalore Opens After Renovation

IHCL's stylishly spirited brand Vivanta debuts in Mangalore with the opening of Vivanta Mangalore in Karnataka. The elegantly designed urban sanctuary is located amidst the swaying coconut palms on the confluence of the rivers Netravathi and Gurupura.

Strategically located within a short driving distance from Mangalore International Airport, Vivanta Mangalore offers 98 well-appointed rooms. Guests can indulge in an array of delicacies at Mynt, the trendy all-day diner offering a breezy al-fresco with a multifarious menu of international favourites and vivid Mangalorean flavours; or revisit region's fabled coastal legacy with a playful twist at High Tide, the iconic bar. With over 562 sq. mt. of curated space, the hotel is ideal to host corporate meetings and social celebrations. The fitness centre and outdoor pool are perfect for relaxing after an invigorating day.

Commenting on the occasion, Sarabjeet Singh, Senior Vice President - Tamil Nadu and OHL Hotels, said, "Mangalore, with its historical sites and commercial hubs, has emerged as an important economic center and boasts of tremendous tourism potential. The hotel, launched after extensive renovation will capture the growing demand from both corporate and leisure travel and lend itself to the social scape of the city."



## IHCL Wins Golden Peacock

IHCL has received top honours for Training at the Golden Peacock Awards, 2023. Hosted by the Institute of Directors (IOD), India, the award ceremony was graced by Hon'ble Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah, Former Chief Justice of India and former Chairman, National Human Rights Commission of India and National Commission for Constitution of India Reforms.

Speaking on the occasion, Gaurav Pokhariyal, Executive Vice President - Human Resources, IHCL, said, "IHCL has undertaken significant initiatives in training to enhance its standing in governance and sustainability practices, which has led to the creation of industry benchmarks. This recognition is a testament to the company's commitment towards training and its continued investment in its people and helping them grow."

The Golden Peacock Awards recognize companies for their efforts towards achieving excellence and maintaining high levels of quality across different business processes. Instituted by the Institute of Directors (IOD) in 1991, the Golden Peacock Awards are a global benchmark of Corporate Excellence, renowned for their detailed assessment processes and selection criteria.



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## The Pride Group Announces Hotel in Rishikesh

The Pride Hotels Group has announced the launch of Pride Hotel Rishikesh in Uttarakhand. Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, Pride Hotel Rishikesh offers guests breathtaking views of the entire valley. Centrally located at Tapovan, Badrinath Road this mesmerizing hotel can easily be accessed by road, rail, and air via Dehradun airport. The hotel's



grand opening was held on 19th March 2023, and was officially inaugurated by the Honourable Cabinet Minister of Uttarakhand, Subhodh Uniyal.

Announcing the launch Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotels Group said "We are delighted to announce the opening of Pride Hotel Rishikesh in

Devbhumi Uttarakhand. Popularly referred to as the world's yoga capital, the holy city is renowned for some of the most famous tourist attractions including the Ram Jhula, Laxman Jhula, and Triveni Ghat. The region attracts tourists from across India and many parts of the world. Pride Hotel Rishikesh with its luxurious accommodations and world-class amenities will present a one-of-a-kind experience for travellers to the region.

Pride Hotel Rishikesh with well-appointed deluxe, superior, premium and suite rooms is replete with all modern elements and contemporary interiors. It offers scenic valley views. Dining options includes a Sky Deck, rooftop elevated dining experience, 360 Degree, multi cuisine restaurant and Mr. Confectioner, just the warm cosy round-the-clock coffee shop needed in the vicinity. Guests can enjoy a magnificent culinary journey that spans diverse gastronomic experiences. Rooms are equipped with LED TV, mini bar, tea/ coffee maker, Wi-Fi, heater, individual air conditioning, and comfortable beddings.

## Upcoming Debut of Anantara in India



Minor Hotels, announces the upcoming debut of its luxury Anantara brand in India. The new-build Anantara Jaipur Hotel will launch in Q4 2023.

Anantara Jaipur Hotel will feature 150 luxurious guest rooms and suites, including four Terrace Suites with private plunge pools and a 160-sqm Royal Suite with a large terrace and private pool.

Dining options will include a specialty Indian fine dining restaurant and terrace, a rooftop bar and restaurant with views over the surrounding landscapes, all-day dining with a show kitchen and a hotel bar lounge and terrace.

Leisure and wellness facilities will range from a full-service Anantara Spa with five treatment rooms and a beauty salon, a gym with a semi-outdoor pool and garden area, and a kids' club.

Able to cater to weddings of up to 2,500 guests, the hotel has been designed to meet the demands of the rapidly growing demand for destination weddings.

In the hotel's lobby, a double-height ceiling and a grand staircase with access to all floors will create a memorable arrival impression, while a dedicated Kasara executive lounge with terrace area will provide a secluded space for suite guests to meet, relax and enjoy refreshments in privacy. For corporate meetings and events, Anantara Jaipur will provide a choice of three meeting rooms with an adjacent lounge and reception area.

"We are delighted to be partnering with Minor Hotels to bring the well-known luxury Anantara brand to India for the first time and we are looking forward to collaborating with the team at Minor to launch Anantara Jaipur Hotel later this year," commented Ajay Gangwal, owner of the property.

## Hilton Signs New DoubleTree by Hilton Nagpur

Hilton announced the signing of DoubleTree by Hilton Nagpur with Abhijit Realtors and Infrastructure Private Limited. The announcement marks the entry of DoubleTree in Maharashtra's third-largest city. Scheduled to open in early 2026, the upscale hotel will provide contemporary accommodations and amenities.

"This is our first Hilton property in Nagpur, and we are excited to introduce the DoubleTree by Hilton brand to the third-largest city of Maharashtra. Hilton is deeply committed to meeting the diverse guest needs in a flourishing city such as Nagpur and further expanding our footprint in India," said Navjit Ahluwalia, senior vice president and country head, India, Hilton.

The new 135-room hotel will feature the

brand's modern architecture and designs, large wedding and social event spaces featuring state-of-the-art technology and a wide array of food and beverage, and special event offerings. Guests will enjoy exceptional dining through a diverse culinary experience, from grab-and-go options to seasonal light bites and a signature rooftop specialty restaurant and bar.

DoubleTree by Hilton Nagpur will be situated at the junction of Airport and Wardha Roads, the city's main arterial road. Surrounded by major demand zones with the airport and metro stations conveniently located within less than 5 kilometers, the hotel will provide seamless connectivity to prime regions in the city.

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# IHCL Further Expands its Presence

## Signs a Taj Resort & Spa

IHCL announced the signing of a Taj branded resort and spa in Gandhinagar. This brownfield resort is slated to open in early 2023.



The highlight of the 118 keys sprawling resort will be the Jiva spa with an expansive spread. Jiva is rooted in the rich and ancient wellness traditions of India, offering holistic programmes including yoga and meditation. The spa facilities will include eight treatment rooms, relaxation lounge, sensory Lounge, spa café, meditation room, sauna and steam, Turkish hammam, swimming pool and a fitness centre. The resort will also have an all-day diner, a specialty restaurant, and a lobby lounge. A large banquet hall of over 400 sq m and 8,000 sq m of lush green lawns are ideal venues for conferences as well as sophisticated social events.

Dr. Kailash R. Goenka, Director, Sankalp said,

“This resort will capture the latent demand in the state for luxury wellness. After the successful launch of Taj Skyline in Ahmedabad we are happy to work together once again with IHCL.”

Speaking on the occasion, Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said, “IHCL is renowned for its pioneering efforts in developing several destinations. The resort is located at a short distance from both Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar, opening a new tourist circuit in the state of Gujarat. With the expanding wellness travel market, this resort is well-positioned to cater to the growing need around the circle of wellness through its renowned and award-winning Jiva spa.

## Signs Vivanta Hotel In Thane

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) announced the signing of a Vivanta branded hotel in Thane in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. The brownfield project is slated to open by 2025.

The 122 keys hotel is strategically situated at Shilphata which is at a comfortable driving distance from both the Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) and the upcoming new international Navi Mumbai airport. It is a part of a mixed use development spread over 14 acres that comprises multiple recreational choices. The hotel facilities will include the signature all

day diner Mynt, a bar, swimming pool and a fitness centre. It will also offer state-of-the-art banqueting space including a 400 sq m hall and meeting rooms.

Babaji Balaram Patil, Promoter, B.K. Holidays and Resorts Private Limited said, “Thane is now an important city and the stylish Vivanta brand is the perfect fit for it.”

Ms. Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President - Real Estate & Development, IHCL, said, “Thane is a leading business and industrial hub for the state of Maharashtra being a part of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. This signing is in line with IHCL’s focus on expanding its presence in key emerging markets of India.”

## Sets Foot In Chhattisgarh

IHCL also announced its debut in the state of Chhattisgarh with a Taj branded hotel. The hotel is a brownfield project.



The 152-room luxury hotel is strategically located at a short driving distance from Raipur Airport on the Atal Path Expressway which connects the city to the new Capital “Naya Raipur”. It will feature an all-day diner, a speciality restaurant, a bar and lobby lounge. The hotel will have over 1,300 sq. m of banqueting space with a large conference hall, two spacious meeting rooms, breakout rooms and a business centre. It will also offer an auditorium – a first in the city. The hotel will introduce IHCL’s signature Jiva spa brand to the city with other recreational facilities including a swimming pool, gym and a salon.

Mukesh Shrivastava, Managing Director, Krish (Raipur) Hotels Pvt Ltd said, “We are delighted to partner with IHCL, India’s leading hospitality company to launch its iconic brand Taj, which has been ranked as the World’s Strongest Hotel Brand. Taj Raipur will define the hospitality landscape in the city.”

## First Ginger Hotel in Chandigarh at Zirakpur

IHCL announced the opening of Ginger Chandigarh, Zirakpur. The hotel is designed around the brand’s lean luxe design and service philosophy of offering a vibrant, contemporary, and seamless hospitality experience to its guests.

Strategically located at a short drive from Chandigarh International Airport, Ginger Chandigarh, Zirakpur provides quick access to Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula as well as major corporate hubs in these cities. The hotel is a part of Dhillon Plaza, a mixed-use development complex with

high foot falls. Featuring 102 rooms, Qmin an all-day diner offering a mix of global and local cuisines, a state-of-the art meeting area, a banquet hall and a fitness centre, the hotel is the perfect destination for both business and leisure travellers.

The hotel is developed in partnership with the Dhillon Group, an industrial house in Northern India with its presence across multiple sectors including Retail, Real Estate, Entertainment, IT and Chemicals, among others.



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# ITC Windsor Bengaluru Inducted in ACREX Hall of Fame 2023

ITC Windsor, Bengaluru has been recognized and inducted into the most distinguished ACREX Hall of Fame 2023 for its commitment to energy efficient and sustainable infrastructure. The ACREX Hall of Fame is a joint initiative of Danfoss India and ISHRAE (Indian Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers) to recognize and foster the highest standard of energy-efficiency in commercial



buildings and encourages innovation in technology, design, and systems for mitigation of carbon emissions in the infrastructure sector. The announcement was made in a formal function organized on the sidelines of the ACREX Expo at BEC, Mumbai.

The 6th edition of the ACREX Hall of Fame took place after the gap of 3 years due to pandemic inflicted restrictions with a theme 'Engineering Towards Net Zero'. The event garnered keen interest and enthusiasm of HVAC industry professionals, technology and solutions providers, and stakeholders like building developers, architects, and designers. ACREX Hall of Fame initiative, promotes the incorporation of sustainable technologies that have set a benchmark among infrastructure projects in the country. The other top finalists for ACREX Hall of Fame 2023 were Apollo Proton Cancer Care Hospital, Chennai; Welcomhotel Coimbatore, Jio World Center Mumbai, Tata Medical Center Kolkata and ITC Grand Goa.

With over 28,170 sq. mts. space, the ITC Windsor, Bengaluru is the world's first LEED Zero Carbon Hotel with a marvellous architecture. There are practices of environmental stewardship infused into every aspect of this hotel's operations-including organic ingredients, water recycling, and 100% renewable energy requirements. The hotel is also a pioneer

in the state-of-the-art BMS (Building Management System) that enables top notch energy and resource efficiency using 2000+ data points.

Speaking on the recognition, Deepak Menezes - General Manager, ITC Windsor said, "This prestigious recognition is a testament to our commitment to sustainability, energy efficiency and innovation in the hospitality industry. It is a moment of pride for all of us at the ITC Hotels, as the team's consistent efforts get recognized and appreciated for being the first, largest and greenest hotel chain in the world. Heartfelt gratitude to all our guests, patrons and partners for investing their trust in us for over 40 years."

Each year, nominations are invited from cities across India for the ACREX Hall of Fame. An assessment of the performance of these buildings is based on several criteria, including the operational data of Energy Performance Index, the Indoor Air Quality Initiatives (IEQ), the Energy Saving Initiatives including Renewable Energy, and the Building Management System with heating, ventilation, air conditioning, & refrigeration (HVAC&R). The nominated buildings should not be older than four years at the time of nomination.

Speaking to emphasise the importance of sustainability and energy efficiency, Ravichandran Purushothaman, President, Danfoss India said, "The buildings sector is

one of the major contributors of CO2 emissions. This is an area for immediate action, investment, and policies to promote short and long-term energy security given India's commitment to Net Zero transition. We at Danfoss India believe that ACREX Hall of fame iconic buildings should serve as a source of inspiration and provide guiding principles and insights for newer projects. The adoption of efficient technologies will make India

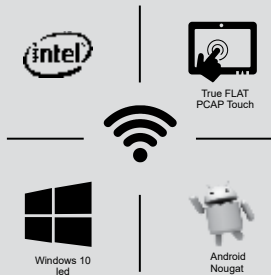
a hub for innovation, manufacturing, and capacity building in sustainable infrastructure development."

The initial scrutiny and short listing of entries was done by the ISHRAE technical committee and final selection was done by a Jury consisting of eminent personalities in the field of HVAC, Government, Architecture and the Building Industry headed by the Jury Chairman, Prof. Govindan Rangarajan, Director- IISc, Bengaluru.

Chandrasekar N S, National President ISHRAE said, "ISHRAE and Danfoss' platform ACREX has set a high benchmark in recognizing the green buildings of India. The best part of assessment is that the operational energy performance standards are considered throughout the entire life cycle cost of the Capex. This is the true index of sustainability and energy efficiency of the infrastructure. A positive transformation is being brought by the ACREX Hall of Fame in sensitizing the ecosystem about curtailment of carbon emissions in infrastructure sector in line with India's ambitious Net Zero Emission target."

The previous inductees into the ACREX Hall of Fame include Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport Terminal 2 Mumbai (2016), Infosys EC-53 Building Bengaluru (2017), Reliance Corporate IT Park Navi Mumbai (2018), ITC Grand Chola Chennai (2019) and The Indian School of Business Mohali Campus (2020).

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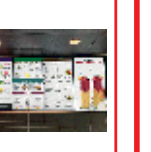
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# “The beauty of our industry is that every day is rewarding”

**Vishal Vithal Kamat**  
**CEO - Kamat Hotels India Ltd & Director, Orchid Hotels & Resorts**

Vishal Vithal Kamat is the Director at Kamat Group (BSE/ NSE listed), a leading player in the hospitality and food service industry in India. A graduate from the IHMCTAN Mumbai, he has over 15 years of experience in the hospitality sector. A seasoned hotelier with significant expertise in national and global hospitality, Vishal Kamat oversees the company's operational functions, management portfolio and overall performance at corporate and property levels.

He leads the team of industry professionals to spearhead Kamat Group of Hotels' flagship brands - 'The Orchid' Asia's First 5 Star Ecotel Hotel, 'Fort JadhavGadh' Maharashtra's only fort heritage hotel and 'Ira' by Orchid. Ira is the upcoming segment of hotels by the group.

Vishal Kamat is responsible for the company's fund management, human resources, acquisitions, structuring and strategic business planning. Armed with a vision, right approach and strong leadership he has infused dynamism to enhance the group's image in the industry. He began working at his family restaurants at a young age of 13 and continued to work till his graduation. Being actively involved at grassroots level he learnt the nuances of business from the senior staffs, which eventually ended up becoming a passion for him. After graduation he expanded his culinary horizons with his first stint at 'Vithal Kamats - Original Family Restaurant'. He spearheaded the standard designing of the kitchen, centralization, standardization and execution to re-establish it as one the most revered restaurant chain brand in the country under the guidance of his father Dr. Vithal Kamat.

Under his leadership, Kamat Group



of Hotels set up Maharashtra's only Heritage Hotel 'Fort JadhavGadh' in Pune, Maharashtra. Having overseen completion of various projects, he is known for bringing innovative approach to planning and implementation. He has also been actively liaising with various state tourism boards to set hotel properties at leisure destinations and promote tourism in the region such as Odisha. Vishal is an active member of CII (The Confederation of Indian Industry). He has been elected in various committees and councils - beyond hospitality several times.

An active and engaged hospitality industry leader, Vishal Kamat has been associated with various travel industry trade association, Hospitality Federations and has been invited for guest lecturers at premier institutes & colleges. His immense reputation and leadership quality has earned him numerous recognitions including the 'Young Achiever 2013 Award' from the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce

Industry among other accolades.

In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about his work philosophy and more....

## What is unique about your brand?

Our company stands out among Indian hospitality providers with our 5-star brand, Orchid Hotels, which has a 25-year track record of excellence. Not only does our brand have a storied legacy, but our company itself boasts over 90 years of experience in the industry. We take pride in being pioneers in environmentally-friendly luxury hospitality, offering friendly service and a homely atmosphere while also prioritizing sustainability. This unique combination sets us apart from our competitors and speaks to our ethos as a company.

Our founder, Dr Vithal Kamat, had the foresight to make eco-friendliness a central pillar of our brand back in 1997, and today, as pollution levels rise and the world becomes more environmentally conscious, our message is more relevant than ever. We have a deep emotional connection with our customers and the wider community, and we strive to meet the aspirations of modern India through our upscale and heritage properties, as well as our resort destinations.

## What distinguishes Kamat Group?

The Kamat Group owes its success to its focus on food and beverage. This has been ingrained in our family since my grandfather's time, and it continues to be a major part of our identity. Our F&B-centric approach can be seen in our properties, such as the rooftop

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restaurant, Mostly Grills and the popular South of Vindhyas restaurant at The Orchid Hotels. Our flagship restaurants, Satkar and Samrat, have been landmark establishments for over 50 years due to the quality of the food, service, and customer connection. Even our Fort Jadhavgadh property is renowned for its food and weddings.

I believe that food plays a vital role in making people feel at home in our properties. While ambiance is important, it is the food and the experience of dining that truly resonates with our guests. F&B is at the core of our growth strategy and our identity. We are passionate about serving excellent food and providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere for our guests. This has been our strength in the past, and we will continue to make it a focal point of our future success.

#### How do you define yourself?

As a young professional with a long journey ahead, I feel it is too early yet to define myself. I would rather say that I am learning and evolving every day. I aim to follow in the footsteps of my grandfather and father, taking our family legacy forward while staying true to my own aspirations.

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

There is not just one such moment. The beauty of our industry is that every day is rewarding. When you see a guest smile, when you see the face of a happy child, or when you have overcome some challenges, where you have been able to help someone, it's a daily reward. And I feel these daily rewards are the truest achievements being in our industry, rather than a one-time achievement. Every day you get doses of endorphin, every day you get doses of pride. Especially in a company like ours, where we Kamat Khandan members recognize all the good that they do and we appreciate all these aspects that is something which I would say makes me excited - the daily reward.

#### What is your working mantra and guiding philosophy?

In the past five years, our company,

family, and I have faced dynamic and challenging situations, including financial and business-related issues, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In such times, I have found it beneficial to adopt the approach of flowing water - constantly moving forward and navigating through obstacles to reach our goals. If we allow ourselves to become stagnant, we risk becoming a muddy pond, losing clarity and direction.

By continuously assessing ourselves and our business every three months, we can avoid complacency and stay on track towards our objectives. While it's important to have long-term goals, it's also crucial to adapt to the ever-changing world by reassessing our plans and making candid evaluations of our progress.

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

I would say, my father is the one really at the helm of all affairs. My father holds the position of chairman, and he serves as our leader, advisor, and mentor. Being his son, I am responsible for carrying out various tasks, including managing operations and overseeing expansion efforts. However, I follow and gain from my father's expertise and guidance in all matters, as he has been and will continue to be at the forefront of our company's operations.

#### How do you de-stress?

I derive immense joy from returning home to my beloved wife and my three bacchas - Bubli (German Shepherd), Peda (Labrador), and Tara (Indie), who happen to be three dogs. Their warm and enthusiastic greetings upon my arrival light up my day and make me forget any tiredness or stress I may be feeling.

In fact, I don't like coming home to an empty house and often wait for them to return from their walk before entering. Spending time with them, along with my African Grey Parrot named Johnny, is a surefire way for me to unwind and relax after a busy day.

Although I also enjoy other activities such as watching a movie or reading a book, nothing compares to the happiness I feel when I am with my pets.

#### What are your future plans?

Our future plans are basically to continue growing The Orchid Hotels. We have recently opened The Orchid Manali, and The Orchid Shimla, and there are various other locations coming along.

We are also starting a brand-new product, 'Ira' by Orchid Hotels a new brand which we will let you know about shortly. It is basically an upper mid-market space. While there are many other people also in this space, we feel that there is a unique offering which we have, that will be a unique positioning.

#### What are the challenges faced by the hospitality industry today?

The hospitality industry faces significant challenges in managing rising labour costs. The availability of skilled labour is limited, and the cost of hiring and retaining quality employees has become a significant cost factor. With the increasing number of entrepreneurship opportunities, attracting and retaining upper-level talent has become a major challenge for the industry.

Additionally, the rising costs of essential resources like power, with the recent decision by the Maharashtra government to raise power rates, are also unsustainable and negatively impact the industry. Cost control and management are crucial to mitigate these challenges and sustain the tourism and hospitality industry as a whole.

#### Advice you would like to give youngsters, aspiring to excel in the hospitality industry?

In our industry, possessing the right attitude is crucial for success. While aptitude can be learned, attitude cannot. Teachable skills, such as how to perform tasks, are valuable, but what truly matters are two fundamental qualities: a willingness to learn and a willingness to serve. With these two qualities, one can achieve great success in the industry, regardless of technical qualifications or fancy degrees. Take, for example, my grandfather, who started as a dishwasher boy at the age of 10 in Mumbai. His desire to learn and serve propelled him forward, and we continue to uphold these values in our family and group. If you possess these qualities, the sky is the limit.

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### Vijay Krishnan

Vijay Krishnan is the new Vice President of Operations for South India for Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels. A 25-year veteran, has worked for The Oberoi, Le Meridien, Hyatt, Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club. He introduced Fox Browne Creative called Aramness - Luxury Lifestyle Wilderness Resort at Gir National Park. A graduate in Hotel Management from Mangalore University, he did professional training in management programs from Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration, and Ecole Hotelier De Lausanne.



### Vikas Sood

Vikas Sood has been promoted as the General Manager of The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention & Exhibition Centre managed by The Leela. With over two decades of experience he has worked with Taj, Hyatt, Accor, Marriott. He joined the property in 2019 as Director of Operations and was overlooking Operations for the hotel and convention center complex. Vikas holds a Bachelor's Degree in Commerce from Delhi University and is an alumni of IHM Ahmedabad where he pursued his Hotel schooling.



### Vishal Singh

Vishal Singh is appointed as the General Manager for the JW Marriott, Chandigarh. He has over twenty five years of diverse experience with Hyatt Regency Delhi, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, Park Hyatt Goa, Hilton Chennai, Hyatt Regency Pune, and Hyatt Regency Gurgaon. Vishal has over eight years of experience as General Manager. He is a recipient of the prestigious 'Donald N Pritzker award' at Hyatt. His last assignment was as Executive Vice President at Pidge -a last mile city logistics and SaaS company.



### Rahul Panwar

Novotel Pune has appointed Rahul Panwar as its new General Manager. Panwar brings over 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry, and his diverse background includes working with some of the most prominent hotel chains in India, USA, China & Vietnam. He served as the General Manager at Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City, where he participated in successful reopening of the hotel. He has worked with Hyatt, Marriott Hotels, and was part of Accor group for the last 8 years.



### Tushar Nagar

Tushar Nagar has been appointed as the General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Shillong, the debut property of Marriott International in the NorthEast region of India. With over 14 years of experience he has worked with The Oberoi Amarvilas Agra, JW Marriott Chandigarh, Park Hyatt Chennai, Hyatt Regency Ludhiana, The Westin Pune and Marriott. He has pursued a Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Varanasi and is a commerce graduate. He has a track record in operations, health & safety, training & development and planning.



### Lakshmi Sridhar

Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach & The Bheemili Resort has appointed Lakshmi Sridhar as the new General Manager. She has an experience spanning over 28 years and has been associated with Accor for over 11 years, serving as Operations Manager from June 2020 at the Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach. She started her career as secretary to the General Manager, and with her expertise she has climbed the ladder to a leadership role as a General Manager, contributing to the success of the properties.



### Kalyan Raj G

Angsana Oasis Spa and Resort Bengaluru announce the appointment of Kalyan Raj G as their new Food and Beverage Manager. Kalyan brings 18 years of professional experience in the hospitality industry, having worked with renowned organizations such as ITC Windsor, Sheraton Hotels, Hyatt Hotels, P&O Prices and the Future Group. He holds a Bachelor of Hotel Management from Osmania University. Kalyan will be overseeing the daily operations of the food and beverage division to maximize food and beverage profitability.



### Anirban Putatunda

Hyatt Centric Bangalore has appointed Anirban Putatunda as the new Food & Beverage Manager. With close to two decades of experience, Anirban possessed a wealth of knowledge and expertise as Assistant F&B Manager at Alila Diwa Goa. As Food & Beverage Manager with the Hyatt Centric MG Road Bangalore, Anirban will be responsible for overseeing daily operations, ensuring prompt and efficient service, and creating strategies to increase revenue. He will also be tasked with maintaining the highest standards of guest satisfaction.



### Subhajit Sadhukhan

The Crowne Plaza Pune City Centre announced the appointment of Subhajit Sadhukhan as the new Executive Chef. With an experience of over 22 years, he has worked with Hindustan International, Pride Hotel, Oakwood Worldwide, Hyatt Regency Kolkata, Quality inn Golden Park. He was the executive chef at Hotel Hindustan International. Subhajit has earned many accolades to his merit,

including the award as best team member from Times for Pre-opening for OGCC. He was awarded by HHI "Best Cost saver of the year 2015".



### Meghna Trivedy

Meghna Trivedy is the new Director of Public Relations and Communications at Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru. Meghna will be responsible for driving sustainable financial gains through leveraging corporate potential, innovative branding strategies and ideations to build a solid corporate brand. She has worked with brands and companies such as Marriott, Movenpick, The Park, and The Leela.

She brings with her over 14 years of experience in luxury hospitality sales and marketing and a history of achieving significant milestones.



### Herwig Knapen

Grand Hyatt Gurgaon has appointed Herwig Knapen as its Executive Chef. With over two decades of experience, he will be responsible for overseeing all F&B operations. Chef Herwig began his career as a pastry chef in Vietnam and has worked with JW Marriott, Ritz-Carlton and Shangri-La in the US, Europe and Asia. Prior to joining Grand Hyatt Gurgaon, he was an Executive Chef at

Hilton, Belgium. He has certificate for marzipan, chocolate pastries and candy; and a culinary degree in pastries & bread.



### Gargi Guha

The St. Regis Goa Resort has appointed Gargi Guha as its new Director of Marketing and Communications. She has an experience of over two decades in sales and marketing. Gargi has been a part of the pre-opening teams Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru and Park Hyatt Chennai. Previously, she has also worked with Marriott International under the Ritz Carlton

brand in Bangalore. She is certified WSET Level 2 and has an MBA from the University of Wales.



### Santoshi Rawat

Santoshi Rawat is the new Executive Housekeeper at the DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram Baani Square. She will be responsible for accentuating guest experience, attention to guest feedback, creating standard operating procedures for housekeeping operations to provide the best hospitality to guests for maximum guest satisfaction and organizational profitability. She passed

Bachelor of Science in Hotel & Catering Management from Hotel Management Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Guwahati.



### Nilesh Naik

DoubleTree by Hilton Goa-Panaji has appointed Nilesh Naik as their new Associate Director of Sales. Nilesh brings over 8+ years of experience in the hospitality industry, having previously worked in various hotels across India. He has exhibited great expertise as well as a passion for establishing and retaining long-term relationships with customers. His responsibilities include identifying new

business opportunities, developing strategic partnerships, and managing existing client base and ensure that guests satisfaction during their stay.



### Karan Singh Nagra

Karan Singh Nagra has been appointed as the Marketing and Communication Manager at JW Marriott Kolkata. He has an experience of 8 plus years in designing and implementing brand, marketing strategies across retail, media and the hospitality industry. He pursued Master of Business Administration with a specialization in marketing. He has served brands like Spencer's Retail as Assistant

Manager Marketing, 91.9 Friends FM as Head Marketing & Activations, JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata as Sales & Marketing Manager F&B.



### Sreelakshmi.D

JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru has appointed Sreelakshmi Dinesh as their new Training Manager. Sreelakshmi is with hospitality industry since 2015, started as an Industrial Exposure Trainee at Taj Bekal Resort & Spa. She has worked with The Oberoi Bangalore, Army Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Bangalore, and Hyatt Centric MG Road Bangalore. Sreelakshmi holds a Master's

degree in Business Administration in Hotel Management and completed certification courses such as Stress Management from IIT Kharagpur.

# Hotels *of* Future



Hospitality industry has to keep pace with the ever-changing craving and yearning for innovative experiences of tourists and there has been, thus, a continuous transformation in the services offered by the industry. There have been revolutionary changes in the working of the industry, over the years. With advancement in technology and AI (Artificial Intelligence), hotels have been able to upgrade and offer new experiences to their guests. The constant and incessant changes being incorporated in the working of the hospitality industry is going to result in various avant-garde changes being integrated in almost all departments of hotels of the future. Interactive hotel rooms with digitally enhanced services are, today, providing a new level of luxury and convenience to the travelers. **Ashok Malkani** tries to fathom the changes that are likely to take place not only in hotel operations but also in their appearance, in coming decade or so.



The hotel industry is much more than just providing accommodation. It has to be an overall innovative experience and thus the guests, in the future, would expect much more than just lodging. A decade from now the travelers would expect that places they have selected for staying are not only attractive and comfortable but also offer an array of other innovative experiences.

When the travelers step into a hotel, 10-15 years from today, it will be, according to stalwarts of the industry, an experience! It is believed that there would be interactive walls and spaces, which would react to guests' movements, in place of traditional wall-art. It is predicted that there would also be an

interactive wall space that would function as an information desk, informing the tourists about attractions, restaurants and activities in the surrounding areas. Yes, the hotels of tomorrow would offer much more than just bed and breakfast. They would offer guests ground-breaking, original experiences as compared to today's hotels.

There are constant changes taking place in the hospitality industry for making the guests' stay a memorable one. And, a decade from now, there would be changes galore!

Vipul Mohan, General Manager, Radisson Resort Goa Baga, contemplating on the future hotels, declares, "Technology has simplified many aspects of life, and when it comes to

hospitality services, its influence is moving toward greater digital expectations. All guests have various expectations from a hotel."

He elaborates, "Soon there will be screens that can welcome guests by name when they approach them in the hotel lobby by using data from your mobile phones which already exists – registered through the hotel's Wi-Fi. These screens will then complete an automatic check-in process through facial recognition and your room key will be digitally downloaded to your mobile phone. App/on-phone access to all services would be offered."

Continuing on the theme of innovative experiences in the future, he stated "Even today, the guests expect safety measures to be efficient and convenient. In the future, they would have all details on the go, with the ease of leaving instructions, special requests, scheduling IRD orders. This would be the new normal."

He felt, "Sending push notifications about breakfast hours, information about after-dinner events, or special discounts are a great way to personalize the hotel experience of guests. The other features would include checking into a hotel through a smart watch, sending voice-activated requests for car pick-up, and robots as valets."

He added, "Future hotels would Eco friendly. While many hotels already focus on sustainability and eco-friendliness, future hotels will be completely sustainable. Future hotels will be built with minimal impact on the



surrounding environment, and will utilize eco-friendly products and practices throughout the hotel. This includes sustainable building materials, a garden to grow produce, and systems in place to recycle.”

Varun Sahani - Vice President - Operations, Kamat Group of Hotels, explained, “The focus of hospitality has always been on giving guests a great experience and building relationships. This will be relevant even in the future. Building relationships, in our hotel, even today, starts from lobby, where the guests have conversations, business meetings or want to catch up with a cup of coffee. To make all this possible, we have a nice gourmet shop that serves fast food like cakes, pastries, baked fast food, and coffee. Then, if guests have any additional travel needs, we have a bell desk and concierge desk to assist them. This would be further improvised.”

He continues, “The hotel experience will change as a result of new technology, and shifting guest preferences. However, I would like to stress that outstanding hospitality will always require a considerate human touch. In about ten years, we will have a significant role to play in providing guests with a memorable hotel experience that is specifically tailored to their needs during each stay. In ten years, our guests are likely to see changes like interactive spaces, service robots, the use of more eco-friendly products and practices, rooms equipped with smart features, and gourmet food tailored to their preferences and health; but the human touch of friendliness and cordiality will always remain.”

Elaborating further, he said, “As far as technology is concerned, even today, at Kamath Goup of Hotels, for the convenience of our visitors, we have implemented check-in, which enables you to check in with us via a link where you can upload all of your documentation and receive confirmation even before you arrive. Even check-out can be completed via a link by making the final payments, allowing the guest to skip the check-out lines at the front desk and leave the hotel immediately.”

Mehul Sharma, Founder & CEO, Signum Hotels & Resorts declared that that facilities like Check-in & Check-out kiosks, mobile application for room & lift access, ordering



**Mehul Sharma**

food by available app would be commonplace.

He added, “Technology would play a great role in the hotels in future. Voice command, Artificial Intelligence, contactless approach, amongst other, would be used for better guest services.”

### Change in Appearance

As hotels, through technology, will provide more personalised and interactive experience their appearance too would change. This would be noticed from the time the guests enter the lobby.

Vipul stated, “We can expect hotels of the future to offer many new technologies which promise an engaging, immersive, and personalized guest experience. Changes from the present times would occur from the lobbies onwards. The Digitalization of Glass in Lobbies and rooms is the next big thing. Its minimalist allure creates a sleek concept for technology to intertwine digitalization with design. Glass walls can be attractive and can be used to offer little privacy. We will have the option to turn glass walls opaque



**Varun Sahani**

or even add or change the imagery on the glass, making it the ultimate personalized experience.”

He disclosed, “Artificial Intelligence and Voice Controlled Functions is coming soon. We may also see DNA as the ultimate personal identification which can be used to confirm travel bookings and payments online. When one checks into the hotel, all that will be required is a DNA fingerprint to confirm identity. Interactive wall space could, in the future, replace the traditional in-room entertainments systems and guests will be able to interact with the wall to watch television.”

He added, “Technology innovations, changing customer demands, and new competitive threats are pushing hotels to offer increasingly personal, uniquely tailored experiences for every guest on every visit.”

Mehul believed that, “Smart operations with robotic approach, less emotional and human approach in operations is a possibility in the lobbies as well as other areas, in the future.”

Varun emphasized that to draw guests the entire appearance of the hotel was essential. “Even at present we change the interior decor of our hotels to create a cosy and welcoming atmosphere. Presently, for the convenience of our visitors, we have implemented check-in, which enables you to check in with us via a link where you can upload all of your documentation and receive confirmation even before you arrive.”

### In-room Transformation

Modifications and alterations in the overall appearance in hotel operation would be essential for the success of a hotel in the future. Today in this world of technology guests are getting used to advanced facilities and they are expecting revolutionary changes in almost all segments of the hotels.

As far as in-room stay is concerned they would expect innovative and radical changes. It is believed that even in-room entertainment would change

Mehul, contemplating on the issue, states, “Looking into futuristic stay comfort, hotels will have to be more tech equipped with bed options like soft/hard mattresses, normal or heated up mattresses, voice controlled mechanism in lighting and curtains as well as

access to the room. As far as entertainments is concerned, I believe virtual tour/artificial intelligence and voice command mechanism would be in vogue to avail the preferred source of entertainment in rooms.”

Varun reflecting on this issue says “Things are changing continuously. Even today, in our hotel, higher tier rooms have undergone renovations. They have greater brightness and vibrancy. We’ve also added a plush mattress, which will make for a more comfortable stay and better sleep overall. This will definitely, I am sure, witness a further improvement over the next decade. There is a possibility that even the single button called Namaskar Service that can handle all of their requests would undergo some changes in the future. IRD, however, continues to be a separate entity because food orders require a specialist in the field of food and beverage to be fulfilled. As far as entertainment is concerned, even today, in our rooms we have a mini bar, free access to unlimited Wi-Fi, and a LED Television which has access to all the channels.”

Vipul is more eloquent and upfront.

Predicting about differences in in-room stays he declares, “Rooms with smart features will be the standard in hotels of the future. Room amenities and features will be voice or gesture controlled. Heating or cooling systems will adjust based on in-room heat sensors. One can adjust room lighting to your preferences with a simple touch or command. The ability to change the lighting colours in your room will help provide that personalized, immersive experience. Requests for room service or extras will be via a tablet, touch screen, or through voice commands. These rooms will be the ultimate in personalization.”

He continues, “Settings to remember guest preference and set the room based on travel history will be the new normal. In addition, interactive wall space could not only replace the traditional in-room entertainment systems by also allow guests to choose a scenery they wish to display. They could directly talk to the screen and give commands. As far as entertainment is concerned, Interactive walls and spaces will be commonplace in the hotels of the future.”

Housekeeping

An important aspect of the hotel hospitality is housekeeping. This is the backbone of a hotel. The return of the guests often depends on the housekeeping, which keeps the environment clean. The trend of using robotic technology, which is in its initial stages could, it is believed receive a big boost over the next couple of decades. Going back a couple of decades, one may mention that the history of robots in hotels can be traced back to 2000 when Aloft Hotel in Cupertino, California, USA introduced robotic concierge. In 2014 Aloft launched its robot butler service, known as Botlr.

Vipul believes that robots are the future. He asserts “Artificial Intelligence will be used to handle the daily tasks. Autonomous robots can be programmed with special talents, skills, languages and information to help make the hotel stay exceptional. They can do everything from greeting guests, to offering gourmet food delivery, room makeup, room guide, entertainment, business advice and concierge services.”

He emphasized, “The future is AI enabled

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equipments and gadgets to offer service which will not only compete but also complement each other. Ordering a bottle of water from the in-room menu will no longer require a call down to reception, but a simple “Hello” to the I-concierge built into your room can do the task. A robot will then be used for delivering the requests made.”

Speaking about importance of housekeeping, he averred, “Excellent housekeeping is important for guest satisfaction. Fully automated housekeeping robots remain at the bleeding edge of hospitality tech. A housekeeper’s cart is their de facto office. A well-organized and well-stocked housekeeping cart is the key to efficiency. It enables room attendants to avoid wasting time looking for a cleaning item or making trips back to the linen room for more supplies. Having an automated service to handle delivery of amenity requests, daily placements of toiletries can be made much easier to handle. Nowadays robots can clean toilets and collect linens, clean hotel floors at regular intervals or even detect the dirt and do the cleaning autonomously, vacuum and sweep the floors in the hotel so that the floors look pristine at all times.”

Mehul conceded that Robotics is the future. “However,” he added, “it will be difficult to be accepted by Indian hospitality that has always displayed a “personal touch” and worked with “Atithi-Devo Bhava” concept. Personal touch will be missing if housekeeping operations will be overshadowed with robot technology.”

Varun opined, “As science advances, we will soon witness the automation of some processes. In my opinion, the term “hospitality” refers to the interaction and a personal touch—things that robots cannot offer. Indian tourists in particular look for a personal touch from this sector. Robots can be used to clean public spaces where there is little interaction with visitors.”

He was uncertain about robotics in housekeeping. “However, as far as housekeeping is concerned, I feel that it is one of the most essential services,” he said. “Poor housekeeping is the number one thing that turns away guests from hotels; cleanliness creates a first impression of quality and shows visitors how much the



**Vipul Mohan**

hotel cares about their stay. Since rooms make up the majority of a hotel’s revenue, housekeeping is one of our top priorities. This would definitely improve over the years. Even at present each housekeeping employee at our hotel receives intensive training from our skilled in-house staff.”

### Spas

With new technological developments taking place in all departments of the hospitality industry, the wellness segment too is likely to witness some outstanding changes. There is expected to be a fusion of next generation wellness and health informatics which is likely to create a new era in some of the hotel spas. While some of the hotels would continue with the same treatment as at present, others are likely to meld new technology and data with traditional experience.

Mehul believes, “Personal touch will be missing if robot technology takes over Spa operations. However, Artificial Intelligence is expected to take over the human approach. The benefit to hotels, with more controlled consoles in Spa operations, will be reduction in manpower.”

Vipul avers, “Hotels of the future will have facilities that are customizable to each person’s tastes and health and fitness goals. Fitness centers will be a hub where interactive screens help you plan and complete your workout. Hotels of the future will still maintain luxury spas, with treatments tailored to encourage longevity and health. The Spa will offer massages based on preference, remember choices, and customize experiences based on history.”

He adds, “The hotel spa of the future will be based on DNA analysis and longevity.

One will receive genetic testing, personalized disease prevention treatments, predictive health enhancement programs and brain-boosting therapies.”

Varun believes that even at present the spa, at least as far as his hotel is concerned, is a luxurious one, which operates with trained masseurs.

### F&B Outlets

F&B outlets are believed to contribute to over 25% of the hotel revenue. Thus, as other arenas of the hotel change, the F&B outlets are also expected to undergo changes in the next decade which would be new guest experience

Vipul professes, “Robot servers, receptionists, and butlers are the future. The hotels of the future will have robotic staff to assist even in dining services. Autonomous robots can be programmed with special talents, skills, languages and information to help make the hotel stay exceptional. They can do everything including offering gourmet food delivery,

Mehul, however, does not believe that robotics would be introduced in F&B outlets. He asserts, “If robots are introduced in F&B outlets personal touch and human approach will be absent. With the current serving scenario, we always try to be flexible in our approach as per situation and handling issues which can’t be expected with a pre-defined set of commands to robots.”

Varun believes that stunning aesthetics and premium beverages would be served in F&B outlets in future hotels. He adds, “There would, possibly, be enhancement of ambience and lighting as well a large selection of finger foods stakes and BBQ, as we presently have in our rooftop restaurant.”

### Conclusion

Hotels are in a period of significant evolution. Even as new technology, evolving customer preferences and new competitive threat change the hotel experience over the years to come, hospitality will require a human touch. The hotels of future would incorporate several new technology trends in almost all departments, integrated with a thoughtful human touch to offer guests a memorable hotel experience uniquely tailored to an individual’s expectations. ■

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# Ensuring Guest Satisfaction

Being a successful hotelier involves tending to guests' needs and ensuring an exceptional experience at your hotel for everyone who walks through the doors of the lobby. Hotels have to make every effort to provide zero disappointment in order to rise above the competitors. One negative comment by the guest can offset the effect of hundred positive reviews and have an adverse effect on the reputation as well as revenue of the property. **Ashok Malkani** tries to fathom how hotels can leave a positive impact on the guests.



Being a hotelier can be an a rewarding, but at the same time, an exhausting job as he has to ensure that guests have an exceptional experience from the time they walk through the doors of the lobby.

Travellers who plan to stay in hotels expect that all their whims and desires would be fulfilled by employees with a smile on their faces. The employees may, at times, find it difficult to fulfill the guests' expectations. This could have an adverse effect on the popularity of the hotel.

To be successful, hotels have to make every effort to provide zero disappointment. The question arises whether a poor customer satisfaction always results in consumers shifting to competitors. Does brand loyalty prevent guests from shifting to another property?

Jaidev Dutta, General Manager, Holiday Inn Bengaluru Racecourse believes, "Every guest is unique in terms of his nature. Every

guest's reaction to dissatisfaction may not be standard at all times. Also each guest would react to a disappointment in a different manner. Some may be extraordinarily harsh while some may consider it as an excusable lapse. Having said this, one must also consider the loyalty of customer a brand. One case of dissatisfaction in one hotel is not what he would have experienced while staying at other hotels of same brand/chain and hence is likely to continue his loyalty towards the brand/chain. However he may not want to visit the same property, where he experienced disappointment, again.

Sunaina Manerker, General Manager, Grand Mercure Mysore avers, "Customer satisfaction is based on a myriad of factors. Today most costumers understand that a certain issue could be a genuine error, which of course requires training and preventive measures, but is not reflective of the service standards of the property as a whole.

Ultimately, it is important to address all service failure points and invite the guest back for a more pleasant experience to ensure brand loyalty and faith in the entire chain of hotels.

"It is important to note that each guest's requirements are different hence it is important to communicate effectively and bring back their loyalty to the brand."

Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, Pride Hotels Group affirms, "Poor customer satisfaction can result in the guest shifting to a competitor but the dissatisfaction can be addressed and improved with the right strategies and approaches. Hotels can reach out to customers to understand their issues and take corrective measures and implement processes to ensure better customer satisfaction in the future. This can help build customer loyalty and prevent them from shifting to competitors."

He adds, "Brand loyalty is an important aspect. Personalized services, guest recognition, good food and hygiene play important roles; alongside loyalty programs, special discounts, and other incentives which can be used to encourage customers to stay and ensure that they return.

"It is possible that a guest would become averse to the entire chain after experiencing dissatisfaction in one branch. However, this would depend on the nature of the dissatisfaction and how it was handled by the hotel chain. If the hotel chain takes steps to address the issue and shows that they are taking customer satisfaction seriously, guests may be less likely to become averse to the entire chain."

Sonia Banerjee, Director of Rooms, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway believes, "Poor customer satisfaction in hotels can result in consumers shifting to competitors, but it doesn't always happen. There are many factors that come into play, including brand loyalty, which can sometimes deter guests from moving to another hotel. Brand loyalty is a powerful force in the hotel industry, and many guests will choose to stay with a particular hotel chain, even if they have had a negative experience at one of

the chain's properties"

She adds, "It is important for hotels to take customer satisfaction seriously and to address any issues that guests may have in a timely and effective manner. This can help to prevent guests from becoming dissatisfied with the brand as a whole and can help to maintain brand loyalty over the long term."

Pankaj Jha, Rooms Division Manager, Four Points by Sheraton Kochi Infopark declares, "It's true that guest satisfaction is crucial to a hotel's success, but it's important to note that it doesn't always result in guests shifting to competitors. Brand loyalty is a powerful factor that can keep guests coming back to a hotel, even if they have had a less-than-perfect experience. At Four Points by Sheraton Kochi, we take guest satisfaction very seriously and strive to provide the highest level of service possible to ensure our guests are happy and satisfied throughout their stay."

"While a 'not so great experience' at one branch of a hotel chain may impact a guest's perception of the entire chain, it's important to note that each property is unique and operates independently. Here, we take pride in providing a distinctive experience that is tailored to the needs of our guests, and we believe that our exceptional service and attention to detail will leave a lasting impression. Additionally, our loyalty program, Marriott Bonvoy, provides our guests with a range of exclusive benefits that extend across the entire brand, offering added value and flexibility in their travels."

### Areas of Dissatisfaction

A negative hotel customer experience has a potential of affecting a property's success in numerous ways. One of the the most commonly heard complaints is poor service. This can occur anywhere – from front desk manager, to pool staff, to housekeeping or restaurant staff, gym trainer et al. So what are the areas in which disappointment can occur and how does one ensure that these areas do not occur in your hotel?

Atul avers, "To avoid guest dissatisfaction, hotels must focus on cleanliness, customer service, food and beverage quality, room comfort and amenities, and overall value for money. Training and regular audit of the brand's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is essential to ensure all staff members are aware of the correct processes and

procedures. These SOPs should be regularly reviewed and updated to best suit guests' needs and expectations."

Sonia states, "The general areas in which hotels have to pay attention for avoiding guests' disappointment are: Product, Service, Cleanliness, Food Quality, and Taste. These are the primary areas in which we, at Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, invest in. As a hotel chain, we have certain brand standards and specifications that we strictly adhere to; we allow our guests to relate to the brand guidelines in order to provide the best experience and value for money."

Sunaina asserts, "The first and most important step to avoid guest dissatisfaction is to set the right guest expectations. Being a part of a brand (Mercure) gives us a clear understanding of what we promise to guests. At the hotel, we ensure that every touch point of the guest journey is thoughtfully created and the team is trained well to deliver exemplary service. A few key areas for a guest visiting on leisure are - amenities and services, dining experiences, personalized touch points etc. For guests staying while on business travel except for fast hassle-free process, a good breakfast and of course high speed internet."

"To many audits and checks are in place so that from the moment guests book to the moment they checkout senior leadership team and associates always request feedback and take steps to make each guest's stay memorable."

"With a preference check at the time of booking our reservations team highlights to the operational departments if guests are allergic to any substance or what would be their ideal requirements for a good night's sleep. These are actioned by our team and guests appreciate the extra effort made by all the departments."

Jaidev disclosed, "The entire guest journey – pre arrival, arrival, during the stay and post departure is very critical for each hotel. The key elements include defect free product, genuine and warm hospitality at each of the service touch points and ability of the staff to understand and exceed, guest expectations at all the times. The staff at our hotel, Holiday Inn Bengaluru Racecourse, undergoes rigorous classroom trainings and role plays to display their skillsets in handling guests efficiently. There is escalation matrix which helps senior resources step in, should there be a slightest



**Sonia Banerjee**



**Atul Upadhyay**



**Sunaina Manerker**



**Jaidev Dutta**



**Pankaj Jha**

hint of guest dissatisfaction. Any guest feedback is recorded in a problem tracker, which is reviewed on daily basis with hotel's leadership team and necessary actions are taken to ensure there are no loopholes in delivering, True Hospitality, at all the times."

Pankaj declares, "At Four Points by Sheraton Kochi, we recognize that guest satisfaction is a top priority and strive to ensure that every aspect of our hotel operation is optimized to meet their needs. In order to avoid guest dissatisfaction, we pay close attention to the following areas:

**Cleanliness and Hygiene:** We place a high emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene in all areas of the hotel, including guest rooms, public spaces, and dining areas. We have implemented enhanced cleaning protocols to ensure that all areas are thoroughly sanitized and disinfected to provide a safe and comfortable environment for our guests.

**Service Quality:** We believe that exceptional service is a key factor in ensuring guest satisfaction, and we train our staff to provide attentive, friendly, and professional service at all times. We also empower our staff to address any guest concerns or issues promptly to ensure that they are resolved in a timely and satisfactory manner.

**Comfortable Stay:** Our brand values are Honest, Uncomplicated & Comfort. We understand that guests expect comfortable and well-appointed rooms, and we ensure that all our rooms and suites are designed to provide a relaxing and comfortable stay. We regularly update our amenities and furnishings to ensure that they meet the latest standards of quality and comfort.

**Quality Dining Experience:** We recognize that dining is an important aspect of the guest experience, and we offer a range of dining options that cater to different tastes and preferences. We use high-quality ingredients and work with experienced chefs to ensure that our guests have a memorable dining experience.

To ensure that these areas are optimized and guest satisfaction is maximized, we have implemented a rigorous quality assurance program that monitors all aspects of our operations on an ongoing basis. We regularly conduct staff training and development programs to ensure that our staff is up-to-date with the latest standards of quality and service, and we constantly seek feedback from

our guests to identify areas for improvement and refinement."

### Role of Technology

The competitiveness in the hotel industry makes it imperative for a property to ensure that the guests have an enthralling and satisfying experience. For ensuring this, adoption of technology has shown a marked increase over the years. But, one may wonder, how it helps in ensuring customer satisfaction? It also becomes necessary to know all the techniques that can be employed in different departments.

Sunaina declares, "Technology plays a very important role in our managing of guest expectations and for creating a smooth experience. We have an excellent guest satisfaction management which also shares an alert once guest checks in and uses the Wi-Fi. The systems ask how they are enjoying their stay so far. If there is any issue guests can directly chat with team and it gets resolved then and there. This has helped the team correctly understand the problems being faced by guests and work on resolving it so that the rest of the stay is pleasant. We also have automated post stay feedback surveys shared with the guest to get the detailed feedback of the guests.

"Our hotel also has an online digital payment system which enhances the hassle-free billing experience for guests. Besides this the paperless hotel information and Menu's in room makes the guest experience more convenient."

Atul reveals, "At the Pride Hotels Group, Pride Safety Assurance initiative has been rolled out to provide guests with an enhanced safe and hygienic environment. This includes contactless check-in & check-out services, a contactless billing facility, a touchless dispensing center for sanitizers, and a mobile-friendly digital dining menu. Other measures include biodegradable trays for in-room dining, marking floors in the lobby area, and sanitizing key touch-points areas regularly. Technology helps in achieving all this."

Sonia states, "Technology can play a significant role in ensuring customer satisfaction across all departments of a hotel. The different areas are:

**Reservation and Booking:** Online booking platforms and mobile apps allow guests to book their stay quickly and easily and real-

time availability and pricing information helps guests to make informed decisions about their stay.

**Front Desk and Check-in:** Technology helps in improving the check-in process and provides a more personalized experience for guests.

**Housekeeping:** Management software allows staff to track room cleaning schedules and prioritize tasks.

**Food and Beverage:** Personalized recommendations and promotions can be done based on guest preferences and past dining history and Mobile ordering systems allow guests to place orders for room service or on-site dining from their mobile devices.

Jaidev declares, "With evolving technology and advances made in Artificial Intelligence (AI), the hotels now have the benefit to use these in ensuring customer satisfaction. While the AI or technology may not be the problem solvers, however, these would be of help in maintaining a track record or history of instances by individual guests that will alert the team and get them into action mode in ensuring out of the box product and service delivery to ensure satisfaction. For example, when looking at the Arrivals for the Day, the Front Office will be able to proactively identify guest issues from their last stay and they can put other departments on alert, when the guest is around. Likewise, Housekeeping team members will be able to proactively identify guest preferences in terms of bedding, pillows, in room amenities, etc. F&B team members will be able to identify guest food preferences (gluten free, vegan, halal, etc), allergies, table preferences, favourite dishes and drinks, etc."

Pankaj states, "At Four Points by Sheraton Kochi, we use a variety of technology-driven techniques to enhance customer satisfaction. We have implemented an internal mobile app called "Medallia" that allows us to capture and analyze guest feedback in real-time, enabling us to identify areas for improvement and take corrective action quickly. In addition, we offer online booking options and use video conferencing technology to conduct virtual meetings and events. Finally, we review guest feedback and satisfaction scores daily in our hotel and departmental meetings are held to ensure that we are constantly monitoring and improving the guest experience. By utilizing technology across our various departments, we provide a seamless and personalized

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guest experience that enhances satisfaction and loyalty.”

### Negative Reviews

Today, people want to know what your clients are thinking about you before they consider patronizing your property. Online reviews have become critical and, at times, game changers. These reviews can have an impact on your would-be guests. Hotels cannot afford to have even a single negative review. One negative comment could tarnish the property's reputation. What steps do hotels take to rectify the effect of these reviews?

Jaidev states, “A negative comment on the internet would generally trigger a series of actions – starting from locating the guest booking, to referring to problem trackers, to feedback (if it was shared during the stay) and various actions need to be taken as a follow up. If the guest is still in-house, or is a regular at a hotel, the hotel finds an opportunity to do some service recovery during current stay or upcoming stay. If the guest has checked out, hotel's senior leadership makes a genuine attempt to reach out to the guest, to express empathy, understand the concern and inform actions that would be taken to avoid repetition of the problem in future.”

Atul disclosed, “As soon as a negative comment is seen about any of the Pride Hotel Group properties, the Senior hotel operations desk of the hotel makes sure to call the guests and address the issue, it's crucial to make an effort to remedy the problem that caused the negative comment after acknowledging it and expressing regret for any inconvenience it may have caused. After the problem has been addressed, we check in with the customer to make sure it has been fixed.”

Sonia averred, “Hotels take critical online reviews seriously and may publicly respond, look into the situation, get in touch with the customer, and use feedback to enhance operations and services. Hotels do this in an effort to uphold their reputation, show that they are attentive to visitor concerns, and deliver a satisfying visitor experience.”

Sunaina says, “When any negative comment is made public the first course of action is reaching out to the guest and apologizing for the inconvenience caused and also replying on the guest feedback online. The detailed feedback is internally discussed

within the management team and accordingly either the processes are revised or training and sensitizing programme is devised for all employees. The guest is made aware of the measures taken and promised that they will have a better experience in their next visit.”

Pankaj states “When a negative review is presented online we take the following steps:

Investigate the feedback: We take all constructive feedback seriously and thoroughly investigate the issue to identify the root cause and take corrective action as necessary.

Respond as soon as possible: We understand the importance of timely communication, and we make it a priority to respond to these comments as soon as possible. This allows us to address any concerns or issues and offer our apologies to the guest.

Get in touch with the guest: We believe that open communication is key to resolving any issues and we strive to get in touch with the guest to understand their concerns and offer solutions that meet their needs. Our goal is to turn every experience into a positive one and leave our guests feeling satisfied with the outcome.

At Four Points by Sheraton Kochi, we take pride in providing exceptional service to our guests and we value their feedback. We use constructive feedback as an opportunity to improve and enhance our services to ensure that every guest has a memorable and enjoyable stay with us.”

Sonia sums up on this problem thus: “Hotels take critical online reviews seriously and may publicly respond, look into the situation, get in touch with the customer, and use feedback to enhance operations and services. Hotels do this in an effort to uphold their reputation, show that they are attentive to visitor concerns, and deliver a satisfying visitor experience.”

### Zero Disappointment

The aim of most successful hotels today is to ensure that guests have a pleasant time at the property. Occurrence of any bad experience for the guests is taboo. Not only is it necessary to have zero disappointment but, with the rise in competition and guest expectations, hotels have to rise above the guests' expectations.

Is it possible to ensure not only zero disappointment but rise above the guests'

expectations?

Jaidev asserts “Guest satisfaction can be achieved when his entire journey has been pleasant – from pre-arrival to departure. Pre-arrival, as mentioned earlier, would include flawless communication explaining the available products and services to assist guest in making quick decision for the booking. Preferences are noted and recorded. Special requests are communicated internally to avoid missing on any of the deliverables that are promised at the time of booking. Hassle-free arrival experience, quick check-in and defect free product (no problems in room like AC, Cleanliness, Bed Linen, In Room Amenities, working Television, etc.) followed with True Hospitality displayed at each of the service touchpoints will ensure guest satisfaction during the stay. Error-free billing, quick settlement at the time of checkout and Fond Farewell goes a long way in making a lasting impression and helps in bringing the guest back to the hotel for his future visits.

“As far as zero disappointment is concerned, I believe ensuring this at all times is an aspirational thought but not impossible. If each of the team members take ownership to deliver exceptional service at all the times, then it would certainly yield a zero-disappointment experience for all guests, every single time.”

Atul opines, “A hotel can exceed guest satisfaction by ensuring that all staff members are well-trained and follow SOPs. This is essential for exceeding guest satisfaction. Pride Hotels Group has a well defined training cell on corporate and unit levels. Further, offering personalized services such as, providing special requests, and using details from their previous stay eg: allergies and dislikes, etc can make a huge difference. Offer discounts and promotions to make guests feel valued and appreciated. Providing excellent customer service to ensure cleanliness and comfort helps a great deal in guest satisfaction.”

He continues, “A 90% score in guest satisfaction is considered successful in hospitality terms. However, it's not possible for any hotel to achieve zero disappointment for guests at all times. The best way to minimize guest disappointment is to create a set of SOPs that the staff follows and to ensure regular audits of these SOPs. Additionally, staff should be trained regularly on all SOPs to ensure they

are following them correctly.”

Sunaina avers, “Hotel can exceed guest’s satisfaction by anticipating their needs before they arise. For this the property must keep updating their preferences in order to consistently keep their experience personalized in every aspect of their stay. Feedback is key in different interactions with guests to ascertain whether there is anything more that can be done to improve upon their stay. This has to be done subtly so as not to bother them, but still learn if there is anything which is not meeting their standards.”

She adds, “For achieving zero disappointment a property must not only have a right set of guidelines but also the right team. A good thumb rule to follow here is making sure guidelines, trainings and infrastructure is updated to keep track with changing trends and customer preferences.”

Sonia claims, “Every guest is unique, and the best hotels recognize this by creating experiences and providing personalized service. This can include anything from remembering a guest’s name to anticipating

their needs and preferences. Paying attention to the small details and giving prompt and efficient service can make a big difference in a guest’s experience.”

She concedes, “It’s not realistic for a hotel to achieve zero disappointment for guests at all times, as there will always be factors beyond the hotel’s control that can impact a guest’s experience, such as weather, flight delays, or personal circumstances. Sincere efforts, robust processes for customer experience can help minimize guest disappointment. Connecting with the guest while they are away from home and making them comfortable with personalized services is of utmost importance.”

Pankaj asserts, “Here at Four Points by Sheraton Kochi, we believe that exceeding guest satisfaction is key to building long-lasting relationships with our guests. We take a personalized approach to room amenities and make sure that they are tailored to the guest’s preferences. We also offer a variety of services such as in-room dining, spa treatments, and local experiences that are customized to meet the guest’s specific

needs. Additionally, we ensure that our staff is well-trained in anticipating guest needs and exceeding their expectations.

He adds, “Our hotel is committed to providing the best possible experience for our guests and we aim for zero disappointment. However, we also recognize that despite our best efforts, there may be occasions where we fall short of our guests’ expectations. To achieve our goal of zero disappointment, we adhere to a set of rules and guidelines that are designed to ensure that our guests’ needs and expectations are met at every touchpoint.”

Conclusion

For the success of a hotel it is essential to ensure satisfaction of every need of the guest. In short, try to see that guest has a zero disappointment during his stay. This is not possible at all time, concedes property stalwarts but attempt is made to ensure satisfaction is provided by following all SOPs and employing technology to help properties enable guests in making their stay a memorable one.



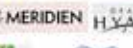
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# Chefs for Profitable Outlets

The role of a chef has toddled much ahead of stirring and blending out palatable cuisine. Chef is now assuming a new significance, and is no longer restricted to cooking. At present, chef carries more responsibility than ever before, being a key player in making the food outlets profitable. In the present context chef is offering more innovative solutions in the form of new products & concepts to conscious clients.

In today's highly competitive and complex hospitality industry, often a chef needs to be able to shoulder many responsibilities. The most important of these is to ensure that good quality culinary offerings are served on schedule and to see that any hiccups or impediments which may arise in the flow of kitchen operations are promptly addressed.

Apart from fostering teamwork in the kitchen, the role of a chef has been utterly revised. Today the convolution of the chef's rank has amplified to include the responsibility towards management, customer relations, menu planning, and most prominently, the training and motivation of the production/service team. The conventional role of the chef has changed dramatically over the years, and now a chef's duties are consistently being "refocused. The role of chef has become a cook, manager and finance executive, all rolled into one.

## Changing Times

The widening of the scope of the chef's duties has ensued owing to the brisk changes in food and beverage industry, avant-garde approach and techniques making route into the kitchen, gripping progressive chefs and their workforce to declassify strategies, acknowledge and get a feel for shifting times.

No longer locked in the stereotypical roles of high-strung, pot-stirring pariahs, chefs are finding their numbers mounting and roles intensifying as food company deal with

mounting competitive pressure to accelerate and improve new product offerings.

In restaurants, the traditional bastion of chef-centred culinary activity, the role of the chef is expanding to embrace new tools and technologies to improve consistency, product quality, productivity and hygiene, specifically in today's context.

He has to develop a fresh menu, scheduling expertise and has to cultivate a slick flow of merchandise and supplies in the kitchen. He has to also try to improve cost consciousness and profit orientation in the company.

The bottom line is – the today's chef is technologically sound, and performs the role of a purchase manager, cost controller and of course a team leader with élan. He is, so to say, a 'jack of all trades'.

### A Team Leader

Incentives and inspiration are what every staff member is looking for and to rise higher in the performance rating in the working team, a chef has to put on the mantle of an inspiring leader. The chefs are supposed to illustrate a fitting incentive programme outlining explicit objectives and pre-requisites to come up to a level to receive accolades and awards.

A well-motivated team is the fundamental forte of an organisation and keeping the hold of worthy staff members is vital for sustaining the excellence the property has acquired after a long time of quality service, as inferior quality service will not only lead to a major exodus of customers but also will damage the name of the property.

Hence, chefs are supposed to have inspiring skills, tolerance and brazenness to hold together the performing team. In order to enhance staff performance importance should be on well-defined training and quality upgrading programmes.

### Chef cum Manager

Besides the day-to-day operations, chef is often entrusted with planning a new menu, maintaining a decent supply of products needed in the kitchen, and delegating many kitchen tasks simultaneously. Chef is also often responsible for maximising the productivity of the kitchen staff, and maintaining impeccable personal hygiene

as well as high work and safety standards in the kitchen.

It is true that chefs do get into the business of cooking because they are supposed to be artists at cooking. But if cooking is all that they do, they are not likely to get ahead in their career. A Head Chef in today's hospitality industry must be endowed with the skills of a businessman, a diplomat, and a manager.

With the emergence of business manager cum chefs the two roles are getting fused into one. In the process, in hotels the Food and Beverage Manager's role is getting minimised and of course the Executive Chef's responsibilities are going up, since chef is the one who is now ultimately responsible for the

also undergone a noticeable revolution.

If we look at the new advents in the culinary world, we will find that chefs are preparing and presenting down to earth menus with very authentic flavours and are revolutionising the way they work. They are watching the bottom lines very carefully. These chefs are using a high degree of automation and creating a homogenization of skills and presentation.

Today's chefs are the rulers of the kitchens. They are the deciding factors as to how to set up and design a kitchen for a broad-spectrum of activities. Long-established designs and current favourites are workstation-oriented designs which are found to be very efficient and are within



profitability of the F&B operations. Today a chef needs to constantly make a balance of culinary skills with managerial expertise to get the maximum output from the team.

The new role is definitely challenging, and is the future for most chefs interested to be an entrepreneur. Nowadays, the Chefs are well polished with business sense and managerial acumen and are no more dependent on the F&B Manager who used to do all the financial and managerial work for the Chef.

### Rulers of the Kitchen

Kitchens are striving to reduce manpower and maintain a very high level of sophistication today. The appearance of the kitchen has

many hotels of repute. Since hotels have the infrastructure already in place unlike standalones who have to spend much monetary investment on high rentals for amalgamating the required infrastructure.

Every kitchen needs a different layout. It is necessary to identify the kind of establishment or theme the kitchen has to be designed for. The working hours of the kitchen, in terms of its operational time, the kind of machinery required and the manpower also need to be determined.

Chefs have to advise the architects and consultants as to what they are looking for and which way they feel comfortable while operating in the kitchens. Chefs have to inform about the dimensions and magnitude



of every kitchen. They decide as to what equipment has to be installed in the kitchen. They advise about the necessity of the proper drainage system and proper material suited for the interiors as per requirements envisaged by them.

### Equipment Controller

Chefs are the important link in the supply management chain. Keeping utility maximisation and cost advantage in mind, the chefs are ordering for optimum quality equipment.

The intelligent chef has redefined the kitchen equipment needs too. Under their able management, quality kitchens are being developed with proper planning and equipment.

The chefs are now the decision makers in buying equipment as they and their team are the actual users who know best what they need. Managements have realized this and the power has been bestowed on them.

Although conditions and performance are vital indicators, price is an imperative factor to any chef when buying a new range. However, the essential aspect for consideration is not the purchase price, but the lifetime price because that gives a far greater insight into the true value of a purchase.

Service costs, breakdown costs, energy costs, loss of profit through downtime, spare parts replacement and duration of equipment till it is clearly worn out are what make up the lifetime cost of any catering equipment. Chefs must think not only of cost-saving when buying, but also what pays

more in the end.

### Cost Controller

With the growing competition in the hotel industry, today everyone wants to control the operational cost to the fullest extent. For ensuring cost savings, a very good knowledge of the ingredients available in the market is necessary. Chefs have to be up to date on the market situations for food produce, which include meat, poultry, fish, seafood, various crucial ingredients, etc. Daily checks and good communication with suppliers is an essential tool in this.

Ensuring cost savings without compromising on the service standards is a big challenge for the chefs. In fact, calculated pricing has been an important yardstick for cost savings in F&B operations across various hotels. Right portion size with calculated pricing is the mantra to ensure cost savings without compromising on quality.



Today's chefs are trained to produce the best quality results with the smallest cost. They are trying their best to understand the prevailing environment, market trends, financial aspects, operational control and how costs and sales impact profitability in the hotel industry.

These chefs are performing their best in cost control, which is influencing the establishment growth as well as making their career best as the cost controller too.

### Coping up with Growing Technologies

Technology plays a central role in smooth working of kitchens as well as of the general operation of the industry. With the mounting speed of the technology, the chefs are modernizing and keep themselves updated in the terms of technologies in foodservice industry.

The technologically sound chefs are today receiving the information on their fingertips to reach a higher-level of customer satisfaction, which leads to a superior business.

Working on the specialised application software packages and Internet-based technologies, the chefs are today optimizing their kitchen management.

### High Quality Service

It is essential for chefs to understand the basic science of food, have knowledge of metals, seasons and an insight into the health conditions of men as per their age. If he does not know the reactions of metals with food, effects of different ingredients and is not vigilant about hygiene and cleanliness, how will he serve good food?

With the advent of the interactive kitchens, quality control and kitchen hygiene have become more important. Twenty years ago, everyone wanted the kitchen to be behind the scenes and invisible, but the scene is different now, thanks to guests who want to see the preparation process in real time. Such operations are highly demanding.

Today the chefs are moving out from the long-established roles confined to the kitchen area. A modern chef has to be a judicious communicator and very social in his approach as he has to supervise an excellent team in the kitchen. ■



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Pot Rack



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Reach-in Refrigeration - 4 Door



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Make Line Pizza Unit W/ Canopy



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Image courtesy - Fort Jadhavgadh



# Spa Trends

By Sharmila Chand

Spa is an indispensable department of the hospitality industry today. Be it the business segment or the leisure brand, its impact on the revenue optimization is the serious concern of the hospitality majors. The popularity of spas in hotels has been growing over the past few years and are now an integral part of the hotel experience. As experts point out, they are the real leverage points for attracting new clientele, improving occupancy rates as well as guest satisfaction, and hence their loyalty.

Let us look at some latest trends in the spa industry designed to promote holistic well being.

## Latest Trends

### Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

Wellness, which was once considered a luxury, is now a necessity in the life of urban travelers. The paradigm shift is more evident in the post pandemic era. Few of the key spa trends for this year include:

**Revival of Ayurveda:** The millennials are curious to go back to the roots and explore the magic of Ayurvedic science as a preventive health measure while the

older generations pick these therapies for healing benefits. Keeping this in mind, we have launched five Ayurvedic therapies namely Abhyangam, Spine Basti, Shirodhara, Kashaya Dhara and Udvartana at our wellness sanctuary Spazzo.

**Sound Bath:** It is a meditative experience during which a group of people lie down and listen to resonant sounds. It involves echoing sounds by singing bowls which gives a sensation of sound filling the entire room.

**Immersive Spas:** Immersive Spas use virtual reality technology to make guests feel as if they're surrounded by the natural world while experiencing the healing therapies.

**Crystal Healing Therapies:** Crystal and Gemstone healing sessions help balance the chakras and enhance well-being.

### Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort

This year we are seeing more treatments for stress management with a focus on 'Communion With Nature.'

Some of the treatments in demand are as follows:

- Wellness Programs in connection with nature

- Specific Therapies to manage stress
- Holistic Therapies for Mental Well-being

### Vinayak Rao Karri, Spa Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru

Guests are opting to go for the full-service spa experience rather than just getting a massage done. This reflects the growing importance of self-care and wellness among the younger generation. We are seeing more frequent requests for add-on services such as a facial mask or waxing, on top of a 50-minute massage.

## Popular Spa Treatments and Alternative Therapies

### Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort

At Angsana Oasis Spa and Resort we are seeing a demand for Thai massages, Abhyanga, besides the typical steam and rejuvenation package we offer from our Ayurveda menu.

### Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla

Call it the post pandemic fatigue or after effects of sedentary lifestyle, people

are looking for healing therapies to unwind them and offer rejuvenation against specific problem areas. While our European and Asian therapies such as Thai Massage, Rejuvenating Bali & Swedish Massage have always been the best-sellers, our Ayurvedic therapies are gradually gaining popularity amongst the clientele:

**Abhyangam Therapy:** A head-to-toe therapy, Abhyangam is performed using oil to provide relief from pain, exhaustion and stiffness.

**Spine Basti:** A magical potion of warm herbal oil is poured over the spinal cord to provide relief from stiffness and intervertebral disc prolapses.

**Shirodhara Therapy:** A classic Ayurvedic Therapy that involves the slow dropping of medicated oil on the forehead for a heightened sense of mindfulness.

**Kashaya Dhara:** The treatment involves pouring herbal decoction in a rhythmic manner to solve skin and hair related woes.

**Udvartana Therapy:** In this therapy, entire body is rubbed by using herbal powders which provides relief against hormonal diseases, psychological disorders and obesity.

#### **Vinayak Rao Karri, Spa Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru**

Holistic treatments for complete well being are the popular choices these days. That's why our 3 hour rejuvenation package has been on the top in the booking list.

#### **Abbas Painattu, Spa & Recreation Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway**

Popular spa treatments and alternative therapies that people are looking for include:

Massages such as Swedish, deep tissue, hot stone, and Thai. Body wraps and scrubs

Aromatherapy and essential oil treatments

Acupuncture and cupping

#### **Executive Treatments for Business Travelers**

#### **Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

If we talk about the trends, modern day business travelers believe in making the most of their downtime even during the business trip. These business travelers book appointments for rejuvenating Spa experiences to feel relaxed after long tiring day at work.

From quick fix jet leg therapy to elaborate Thai Massages, wellness is an integral part their business travel. Our 'Night Spa' concept works extremely well with a lot of corporate groups. At times, these travelers also extend their stay, converting it into spa-cations.

#### **Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort**

Yes, we are seeing men staying with us on their working trips also enquire and book slots for basic massages. These are massages designed to help one relax and focus. This is more of a post covid phenomenon with people becoming more mindful of their general well-being.



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“The spa industry is constantly evolving and adapting to new trends and technologies, as well as the changing needs and preferences of clients. Spas that can offer personalized, innovative, and holistic treatments and experiences are likely to remain popular in the coming years”

**Abbas Painattu, Spa & Recreation Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway**



“Immunity booster treatments and bespoke wellness packages are the key trends that will stay for a long time”

**Ashley James, General Manager, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort, Bengaluru**



**Abbas Painattu, Spa & Recreation Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway**

Yes, there has been an increase in men seeking spa treatments, especially during business trips as a way to relax and unwind. This trend is being driven by the growing awareness of the importance of self-care and stress management.

### Change in Footfalls in Spa

**Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort**

In the last few years people have started focusing on wellness both physical and mental. No more are we looking just for beauty treatments (which have become part of the routine now) but looking to address fatigue, pain, restlessness which many of us didn't pay much heed to earlier. There are therapies that can be really beneficial even if they are of as short a duration as 30 minutes.

**Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

Wellness culture is witnessing a significant rise and footfalls have positively increased. Initially, our clientele mostly constituted of business travelers who were also our in-house guests. Now, we are witnessing lot of non-resident millennials making wellness a part of their lifestyle. They are exploring the secrets of Ayurvedic therapies as a preventative health measure while older generations are seeking curative therapies to get relief against the pain points.

**Vinayak Rao Karri, Spa Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru**

Post the pandemic, people have become

much more conscious of self-care. It is no longer just a beauty regime that people look for. We get guests looking for holistic treatments that offer them a feeling of rejuvenation at the end of the session. Both men and women of age 25 years and above visit the spa looking for intense therapies.

### Spas Enquiries

**Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort**

What we have witnessed is that the Thai massages have become quite popular with men, both as walk in enquiries and with guests who come for leisure stays. The Ayurveda therapies on the other hand, see interest from both men and women room guests as well as walk in customers.

**Abbas Painattu, Spa & Recreation Manager, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway**

There is a shift in the kind of enquiries spas are receiving, with people looking for more personalized and holistic treatments and experiences, as well as treatments that focus on mental wellness and stress management.

### Doctors at Spas

**Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort**

Yes, we have a doctor on demand because many of the Ayurvedic massages can be used to treat specific regional pains. The medicated herbal oils used in the massages have various health benefits. However, we want people to have the option to consult a trained person before they opt for any massages which is why we have an in-house doctor.

Corporates visiting the property often complain of back issues, lower back pain which sometimes stem from sitting in awkward positions for long hours in a desk job. In these cases, we need to help our guests identify the right treatment that will be beneficial which is best done by a trained doctor.

**Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

Yes, Ayurvedic practitioners play a very important part in mental, physical and spiritual well-being. From understanding the medical history to analyzing mind body constitution, from tackling the imbalances of 'Agni, Doshas and Strotas' to suggesting food and lifestyle based on body constitution (Prakriti), their role is integral.

### Demand for Gift Vouchers

**Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort**

This is a more recent phenomenon. We feel with a shift in the mindset of people, gifting has also changed and evolved. From health drinks, health food, to subscriptions for fitness centres people are focused on improving their lifestyles. This is where the spa vouchers come in as well.

People see their colleagues and loved ones appreciating these kind of gifts where they can indulge in some 'me-time'. We have a good number of people asking for gift vouchers for advance booking to gift their loved ones.

**Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

Yes, wellness experiences have become a favourite gifting choice for the millennials. A lot of corporates also secure gift vouchers to pamper their team members.

### 'Out of the Box' Treatments

**Ashley James, GM, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort**

The spa has been designed to offer guests a feeling of oneness with nature, surrounded by water bodies, Koi ponds, mature trees and patches of garden carefully landscaped to evoke a feeling of calm and serenity.

The therapy rooms are individual cottages where guests are welcomed with a health drink and ushered in for their session.

Additionally, our special training from Banyan Tree Spa Academy gives us an edge with the overall experience. We do not have an out of the box treatment as such, but we do customize some to address specific concerns.

**Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**

Our Aromatic Mood Mur Wrap involves holistic black magma dates which have scientifically-proven healing capacity. In this therapy, warm aromatic moor mud, rich in natural vitamins, minerals and enzymes is generously applied to your entire body. This therapy provides relief against sore muscles, aches and pains by stimulating blood circulation. It is extremely ideal for those prone to chronic pain, fatigue, rheumatism, arthritis pain and post sports injuries.

Two best-seller spa packages at Spazzo include:

Taste of relaxation - A couple massage therapy that involves reflexology on hot water bed

Luminous Renewal - Dead Sea salt scrub, followed by aromatherapy massage and vitamin C facial combined with latest high-tech formulation of freeze-dried seaweeds.

**Vinayak Rao Karri, Spa Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru**

We believe the products used in a spa are as important as the treatment itself and so we have launched a line of in-house hand crafted beauty & wellness products such as body scrubs, body polish, organic post workout elixirs etc with natural ingredients which is one of our USPs.

Made with locally sourced, natural ingredients, lotions and oils ensure the guests get real nutritional benefits from ingredients that work in harmony with the body, allowing skin to better balance and mend itself. For example, natural organic ingredients such as coconut oil, Coorg coffee seeds, fennel seeds, honey, rice and shea butter, are known to soothe, nourish, moisturize and promote smooth and soft skin. The natural and organic skin care products are gentle on skin and won't damage skin and health in the long run.



"Wellness culture is witnessing a significant rise and footfalls have positively increased. Initially, our clientele mostly constituted of business travelers who were also our in-house guests. Now, we are witnessing lot of non-resident millennials making wellness a part of their lifestyle."

**Payal Mehta, Operations Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla**



"Post the pandemic, people have become much more conscious of self-care. It is no longer just a beauty regime that people look for. We get guests looking for holistic treatments that offer them a feeling of rejuvenation at the end of the session. Both men and women of age 25 years and above visit the spa looking for intense therapies."

**Vinayak Rao Karri, Spa Manager, JW Marriott Bengaluru**

# Achieving Results by Keeping People Motivated

**Rajneesh Kumar, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort**

Rajneesh Kumar, General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Aravali Resort, who had successfully spearheaded the resort's opening, is now handling its complete operations. He earlier held the position of General Manager at the Courtyard by Marriott Raipur. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Raipur, Rajneesh was the Director of Operations at Jaipur Marriott Hotel. He started his career with Taj group of hotels in F&B operations after graduating from IHM Hyderabad in 2004. At Marriott International he held various positions like Restaurant Operations Manager, F&B Manager, Director F&B, and Director of Operations before scaling up the ladder to become a General Manager.

He has been a part of 6 pre-opening properties for Marriott during his long association with the organization. He believes in achieving results through people by keeping them highly motivated and engaged, which helps them reach their best potential. He believes that leadership is an act of inspiring others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more.

In his current capacity as the General Manager he will be performing an all-encompassing role, responsible for maintaining a close pulse on the industry and positioning the hotel as a defining benchmark in hospitality, within the Delhi - NCR landscape.

He is an avid learner and currently pursuing his Post Graduation certification in Advanced General Management from IIM Shillong. At leisure, Rajneesh enjoys his time reading and connecting with people through social platforms. In an informal tête-à-tête with HBR he talks about his views on various aspects of the hospitality industry.

## **What changes you have witnessed in the hospitality industry over the past 15 years?**

Hospitality sector has evolved rapidly over the last decade and a half. The growth has been exponential across all segments and Marriott has enjoyed the largest share amongst all players. From 5 odd hotels to more than 140 properties across India with the largest portfolio of brands it is definitely a successful growth story. This has not only led to employment generation but has also paved a path for competitive compensations



in order to get the best talent resulting in a promising career in hospitality.

## **What difficulties you encountered during the pandemic and how you handled them?**

I firmly believe that strong tides make the strongest of the sailors and the travel and hospitality industry is a true example of that saying. While the entire world had come to a standstill, the hospitality and travel industry brainstormed and held their ground together to make sure that we pass through this difficult time together.

Whether it was making a 360 degree shift in how we operate a hotel with safety and security measures, to hotels starting with their own home delivery campaigns, it was encouraging to see everyone putting in everything to make it work.

More than that, during the pandemic one of the most challenging tasks that I believe, was to manage and maneuver between different stakeholders who were involved. The expectation setting had to be a strong one and communication plays a key role when it comes to your employees, investors and suppliers.

## **What was the Courtyard by Marriott Aravali's greatest accomplishment under your direction?**

Courtyard by Marriott Aravali has positioned itself strongly in the resort space within the region and has been profitable from the very first month of operations which is one of the greatest accomplishments.

The secret to this was formulating the right strategies across all departments and to bring in the best team players to take up challenging roles. The other key ingredient in the success of this one of a kind resort is the implementation and adhering to strict guidelines and timelines.

## **What new initiatives Marriott is taking to meet the changing demands of the guests?**

Marriott has been leader in taking several initiatives ensuring that the brand enhance and improve the guest journey. With the world changing rapidly, Marriott has taken several steps to make sure that the brand goes digital. From mobile check-in to having a dedicated mobile application for food delivery with Marriott Bonvoy on Wheels, for us the priority is always our patrons and their experiences.

Another segment that we are highly focusing on is weddings. 'Shaadi by Marriott' continues to be one of the most successful campaign which showcases how our pool of hotels gives our guests a wedding friendly property at every destination.

## **What sustainability initiatives you have been taken to reduce the carbon footprint?**

From hotel design to guest experiences, sustainability is embedded into Marriott's business strategy. Courtyard by Marriott Aravali has been a sustainability focused resort from day one and implemented numerous initiatives that help in reducing our carbon footprint.

The newest urban resort in Delhi NCR has solar panels for renewable energy, residential bath amenities in rooms to get rid of single use plastic tubes, an in house water bottling plant with glass bottles replacing plastic and an EV charging station.

Every area of the resort is naturally lit, the lighting strategically has been chosen to be that of LED, we have a compost machine to convert waste in to manure, and electric vehicles. We also have hydroponic farming in pipeline for the resort to create more organic and local experiences for all our guests.

## **How technology plays an integral role to ensure high standard of guest experience?**

Technology in today's day and age plays a very important role in enhancing guest

experiences starting from the website experience. Marriott has introduced a special enhanced reservation solution, in which all our guests have the liberty to choose the attributes that they would like in their rooms and accordingly pay for it too. From pool facing to higher level rooms there are countless number of attributes that a guest can choose from.

**What initiatives taken by you for the growth and development of the employees?**

“Putting people first” is a core value that is embedded into Marriott’s DNA and this is what drives growth and development of its associates. We have numerous learning programs customized to the needs of the associates at all levels across various disciplines and they are available digitally through DLZ (digital learning zone) which makes it more convenient for associates to learn at any given point of time.

Development creates personalised experiences designed to help associates thrive in their Marriott career journey. We provide one-stop-shop for associate development and forward-thinking experiences, using creative,

developmental and operational expertise, to grow the capabilities of our talent. Our philosophy is simple: Lead with quality, build with credibility.

**What CSR initiatives you have taken around the local surroundings?**

“Serving our world” is one of the 5 core values that serves as a guideline on how to conduct business and we bring it to life every single day. While there are many initiatives taken cumulatively in a region through Business Councils, Courtyard by Marriott Aravali resort is doing every bit to support the local community that we operate in. We have helped generate countless employment opportunities for the locals in the vicinity.

We also have adopted two government schools, wherein we support them regularly to elevate the learning experience of the local kids. A dispensary has been set up for locals to avail free of cost medicines. A water cooler is installed in resort for the locals to get clean and cold water. Two dedicated cleaners have been deployed to keep the local village clean. These are the few initiatives amongst many others to support the local community.

**What do say to youngsters aspiring to be hospitality professionals?**

The hospitality industry is a very rewarding profession that would help shape a promising career and like any other profession, it requires passion and commitment. There will be days that are hard and you might feel like quitting but it is definitely a career that you can flourish and learn in. The industry gives you back in some many beautiful ways through the experiences and people that you earn through the journey.

**What are your future goals to further enhance the success of the property?**

Our vision is “To be the most favorite urban resort for holiday, celebration and bleisure guests. We want to be able to create unique experiences for all our guests and want them to have a memorable experience every time they come visit us. We are very much on track of achieving our vision. Courtyard by Marriott is all about experiences and this is across all areas of the resort and we continue to enhance this along with taking more tangible measures towards a sustainable business environment.

**IMPROVE  
INSPIRE  
INNOVATE**



Our key services are for the hospitality industry and the idea is to provide them with efficient back-of-the-house plans, food service, and laundry design. “We have an immense focus on the optimization of energy, cost, and space. We are not just service providers' we own our project as a business partner.

Our services include conceptualization, facility planning, food service planning, operational planning and laundry planning for hotels, healthcare facilities, institutional dining spaces, Industrial kitchen, malls, restaurants, food courts and all other facilities into hospitality segment.



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# Hotel Clarks Khajuraho

## An Abode of Happiness & Luxurious Comforts!

By Sharmila Chand

Known as one of the finest luxury 5 star hotels in Khajuraho, a harmonious blend of nature and luxury, The Clarks Khajuraho epitomizes five-star elegance, luxury, and comfort. Ideally located near the Khajuraho famous temples and heritage sites, the hotel is a convenient 10 minutes drive from the Khajuraho Airport and a 15 minutes drive from the Khajuraho Railway Station.

### Design

Situated in the lush green grasslands on the banks of river Khuddar, step in the beautiful, well lit spacious lobby, marked with pretty floral decorations and traditional lamp as the centerpiece, and be truly impressed as it goes well beyond the norm of boring reception desks. There is an air of royal elegance and camaraderie marked with warm hospitality

of the front desk team. With multiple seating arrangements, cheery tapestries and colourful textures, it is indeed a comfortable place to hang around.

Designed with the charm of the destination, one gets to see a complementary colour palette of vibrant whites with coordinated furnishings to exude a calming and relaxing vibe. Tasteful touches like the patterned cushions, natural woven lamps and selective art work, all add to the elegant, bright and cheery décor. A stunning external façade and sprawling well maintained gardens all around the property make it further exclusive and distinguished, earning authentic accolades from the guests.

### Accommodation

Suiting the taste of leisure as well as business guests, The Clarks offers unparalleled comfort and luxury for a memorable stay. The hotel is home to 104 centrally air-conditioned rooms and suites that are equipped with a multi channel television, telephone, WiFi and all modern amenities with round the clock room service.



Elegantly furnished with modern decor and plush furnishings, Deluxe Rooms offer a lavish yet comfortable ambience to relax after a hectic day. The rooms come with the finest details and a comfortable area of over 458 square feet that offers a choice of city view.

The Suite is a perfect blend of contemporary & classic style with beautifully decorated interiors that exemplify urban luxury.

Gastronomical Experiences

There are several dining options in the hotel.

‘Darpan’ is a beautiful, well airy restaurant with a seating capacity of 150. Here guests enjoy breakfast and all cuisines, be it Indian, Chinese, or Continental. Guests who like to relish local food are offered Royal Thalís, both veg and non-veg option.

‘Kamini’ is a lobby bar and coffee lounge with a vibrant traditional décor. Here you are pampered by the F&B team as you get to sip your style of signature coffee. Do not forget to have those tasty nibbles with your drink. Chill and relax with good music and food.

Poolside Barbecue & Bar, is a perfect place to unwind over exotic food, soft music amidst stunning ambience and tasteful decoration.

Conferences & Events

Clarks Khajuraho offers numerous venues for meetings and events. Banquet halls are well equipped with state-of-the-art facilities such as audio-visual equipment, fax, email, internet, photocopy services and personalized staff to make sure smooth functioning and



operations for the guests.

Nandi Hall

Built over 4145 square feet of space this banquet hall offers a charming carpeted flooring and elegant illumination. It can accommodate 80 pax in U shaped seating and 500 in Theater seating style.

Mandap Hall

The 2,964 square feet of space of the Hall is ideal for corporate meetings and is fully equipped with modern amenities.

Lawns

Looking for palatial elegance and a visual delight then the lush lawns of the property are a perfect choice. Ideal for big weddings and

events, here the food and service is absolutely delightful.

Weddings

Organising celebrations and weddings is the USP of Hotel Clarks. The team goes the extra mile to make each occasion a joyful memory. Choose from a wide array of settings, creative menus, professional wedding services and beautifully designed wedding locations to ensure every celebration is a perfect amalgamation of elegance, fun and décor.

Sundaram Spa

An epitome of tranquility and refinement right in the heart of the city, Sundaram Spa at the hotel offers a holistic and personalized experience. The treatments are inspired by European, Eastern and Ayurvedic philosophies. It gives you the luxury of personal space to treat your senses, soothe your body and revitalize your spirit.

Choose from the Spa Treatments like Signature Massage, Abhiyanga, Sirodhara, Kaya-sek, Marma, Chakra, Hamam, Rasul. Guests can also enjoy beauty treatments like Clarks Facial, Anti Ageing Treatment, and Hair Treatment amongst many others. The dedicated team will advise you on every aspect of health and well-being and the therapies are customized according to your needs.

Facilities

Swimming Pool

Possibly the best retreat in the hotel



premises, the stunning outdoor swimming pool, is a welcoming area for guests to enjoy a dip, socialize and relax.

#### Gym

For all fitness freaks, there is the well equipped fitness center with all modern

equipments and a trainer.

#### Recreational Activities

Enjoy a game of Billiards or step out in the well maintained Tennis and Badminton Court. There is a walking and Jogging Track too for the walker enthusiasts.

#### To Conclude

Seal your happy moments, bond with family and loved ones, enjoy the festivals in the traditional style, Hotel Clarks will make every occasion a special one for lifetime memories!

## Focused and Result Oriented!

### Niraj Kr Mishra, General Manager, Hotel Clarks Khajuraho

A competent dedicated hotelier having a deep experience & understanding of the hospitality industry, Niraj Kr Mishra, General Manager, Hotel Clarks Khajuraho covers close to two decades in the said sector with a proven track record.

A 'go to' person in any kind of issues, Niraj sets great standards of strong leadership and commitment to his guests' satisfaction. Ensuring team performance and forming solid personal bond with his team, to garner their growth and achieve all targets, is his forte.

In a quick chat with **Sharmila Chand**, he outlines some of the key issues and more ....



view luxurious tents along with the spa package soon.

#### What is the most crucial issue to tackle in the Hospitality industry today?

Staff attrition rate needs special attention.

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

Encouraging my team members to give the best service to the guest, make them happy and let them know how much we are concerned about their utmost comfort during their stay.

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

Awarded as the best General Manager by Madhya Pradesh Chatarpur Police Department in 2019. Also I organized the entire BRICS Congress on Tourism in Khajuraho.

#### How do you de-stress?

Outing with my team is my best stress buster.

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

My mantra has always been:

To provide a great hotel experience to every single guest.

Provide a great workplace for our team.

Keep myself updated for new trends and technology in hospitality and share knowledge with my team.

#### Advice you would like to give youngsters aspiring to excel in Hospitality?

Respect your colleagues/coworkers and work with 100 percent commitment, you will never falter.

#### What is the USP of your property?

Our property is the biggest inventory of 104 rooms in town and we are known for our Banquet Spaces which can accommodate 8000 pax. Also our strategic location near the airport and railway station, is our USP. Our well manicured open spaces and our organic farm with in-house plant nursery is another major factor.

#### Tell us about the green initiatives taken by hotel?

We have stopped the usage of plastic bottles by introducing glass bottles for rooms. We use biodegradable boxes and cutlery for takeaway parcels. As part of our green initiative drive, we plant new saplings every week and are also having our own kitchen and herbal garden which is being developed as part of the farm to fork concept.

#### What is the marketing strategy you have adopted to promote your property?

Now a day we are very actively working on our social media platform. Also our regular

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

We have several sprawling outdoor venues for Events and Weddings and our team leaves no stone unturned in making every event a truly memorable one.

Our big size spacious Spa with Hamam bath is also our distinguishing factor. We offer a complete holistic experience encompassing aroma, Ayurvedic, herbal and natural therapies.

Our BBQ Poolside Bar is a perfect venue for enjoying a selection of liquors, beer and handcrafted cocktails. Paired with chef's signature finger food and other dishes, served with flair and panache, here guests love chilling to their heart's content.

For a one-of-a-kind dining experience, we provide perfect setting for a private exclusive culinary affair in our selected pretty venues showcasing a splendid range of Indian and World cuisine.

#### Any future plans you wish to undertake in your property?

We are planning to introduce rivers

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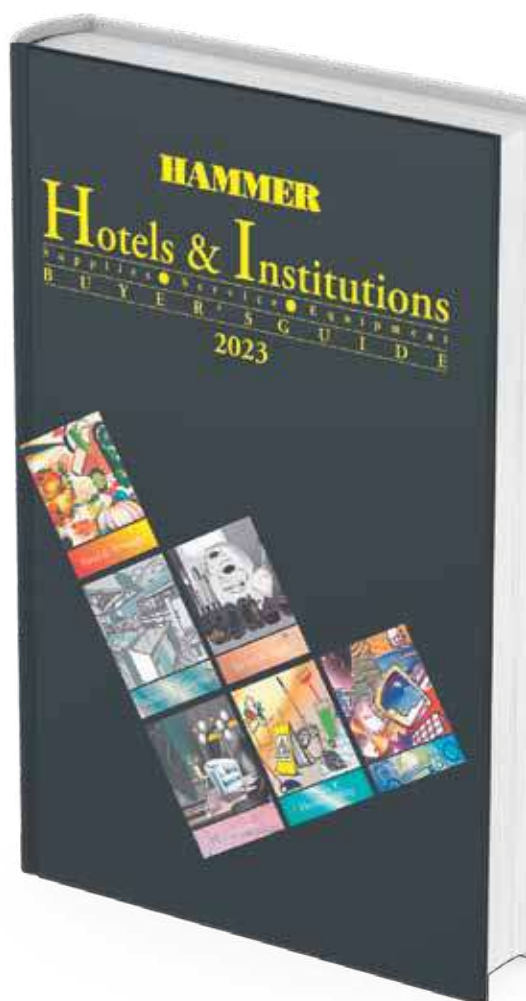


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a leader in solution services such as mobile & tablet display security, electronic article surveillance systems (EAS), electronic shelf labels, digital signage solutions, store footfall analytics. It has association with top global brands such as LHT, Langhong Technology, Xanguard, Blozi has given us edge over others. They offer wide range of Anti-Theft Gates, suitable for large entrances, in metallic body with sturdy metal base. With pan

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company is constantly driven to enhance the quality and efficiency of their manufacturing process. The state of the art production facility follows best practices to provide high quality products for maximum customer satisfaction.

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RMX Industries brought rubber hoses back in the game and back ahead of the hybrid and plastic hoses which posed challenge to rubber. The same product line, including the hose reels, is sold in India under the brand name Zephyr - fast becoming a favourite amongst its target. Innovating constantly but not for the sake of it but for truly helping the end-users by listening to them, RMX continues to develop cutting-edge products that matter.



**RMX Rubber Pvt. Ltd.**

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them to deliver high-performance luminaires that are both



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# “Customer Satisfaction and Happiness is Our Motto”

Ashley James, General Manager, Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort Bengaluru

After finishing his education in Bangalore, Ashley James started his career at The Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. Subsequently he worked with Ista Hotels (Now Hyatt) & Marriott Hotel. At present he is the General Manager of Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort Bengaluru by the Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts Singapore. With over 2 decades in the hospitality industry, his belief in Quality & Service Excellence has been his driving factor and Motto. He likes to relate the working of an organization to that of a team on the playing field. He says just like how on the field you need discipline, teamwork, and especially the heart and spirit to reach the goal besides the skills, in hotels too you need the same in different teams. In an exclusive interview with **Sharmila Chand**, he talks about his work philosophy and more...

## What is the USP of your property?

Angsana Oasis Spa & Resort is a distinguished resort destination offering enriching experiences through awe-inspiring greenery, crafted culinary presentations and warm yet intuitive service. It is an ideal place for a global or a local traveler looking for peace within the bustling city of Bengaluru. Also, it is the perfect venue for parents seeking to create a memorable wedding for their children and for a corporate leader who wants to create an enriching experience for their team.

We have 79 well-appointed rooms and suites, 2 large Banquet Halls and 6 small meeting rooms and a swimming pool. Our USP is also in the fact that we offer Indoor & Outdoor activities & sports facilities for children & adults, such as Tennis, Squash, Table Tennis, Basketball, Net Cricket, Beach Volleyball, Football, Golf Driving Range, Archery & Croquet, to name a few.

## Tell us about the green initiatives the hotel has taken?

We have reduced the usage of plastic bottles by introducing RO water for Banqueting, conferencing and In-room consumption. By doing so, we have managed to save around 100,000 Plastic bottles last year. As part of our green initiative drive, we have planted around 100 new plant saplings and are also in the process of growing our own Herbal garden which is being developed as part of the wellness program and where our Ayurveda and wellness centre is located.

## What about the sustainable processes in your property?

We have taken multiple initiatives to reduce energy and electricity by avoiding ambient lighting to the resort, controlling the air-conditioning unit when not utilized, HLP cost has been brought down by effective management. We also recently introduced – electric charged carts for moving luggage inside the property.

We source our supplies from the local market for supporting the co-existence of local businesses in and around and reducing the carbon footprint.



## What is your marketing strategy to promote the property?

This year we have focused more on influencers than directly spending the marketing dollars through our digital handles. This strategy has paid off in terms of reaching out to a segment of new consumers, we have introduced digital tracking of all inbound calls and managing conversions and tracking mechanism has resulted in exponential business growth. We have also used the radio effectively in reaching out to the local audience. Besides this, we are using Social Media marketing and Google advt. as part of our regular marketing initiative this year.

We have introduced various packages during the festival and prime dates throughout the year. We have kept the brand value for our product by not heavily discounting but instead offering the best price value proposition to our customers.

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

40 % of our rooms are above 700 Sq.ft. All our rooms have large French windows and balconies that connect guests with the nature around. We have the best maintained garden and lawns, outdoor space with shade grown greenery. We offer a lot of outdoor sports like Archery, Volleyball, Net Cricket and Football.

Our Spa is one of the best and internationally acclaimed. Our restaurants and Halls are well connected with the nature and lawns due to which we are mostly preferred by the corporate clients to conduct their leadership meeting at our place.

## Any future plans you wish to undertake in your property?

We are upgrading and renovating some of the rooms to meet the ever changing expectation of the discerning travelers. We are also coming up with a herbal garden for guest experience and for wellness, a sky watch telescope and will be coming with a racquetball court soon. Introduction of a CRM tool and ERP is in the pipeline as well.

## What is the most crucial issue to tackle in the Hospitality industry today?

Retention of Skilled staff and finding new staff is by far the most pressing concern. It has been very challenging to find good people with Communication skills.

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

Customer satisfaction and happiness is our motto; being around guests, interacting and ensuring a high standard of service is something I enjoy immensely, Business development and profit engineering is my key result area. I enjoy the challenges thrown at me while handling and pleasing people.

## How do you de-stress?

I enjoy spending time with my family. Once I leave the property, I ensure I give my family time, I try to learn about their day, bond with them over their interests without carrying work home. I also play and follow a few sports which helps me de stress.

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

Work Hard but Smart. Make learning and development a part of your journey without forgetting to find your own work life balance.

## Advice you would like to give youngsters aspiring to excel in Hospitality?

Be patient, learn the basics and get your foundation right first. Then you can experiment, fuel your ambition by learning other skills to reach your final goal.



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