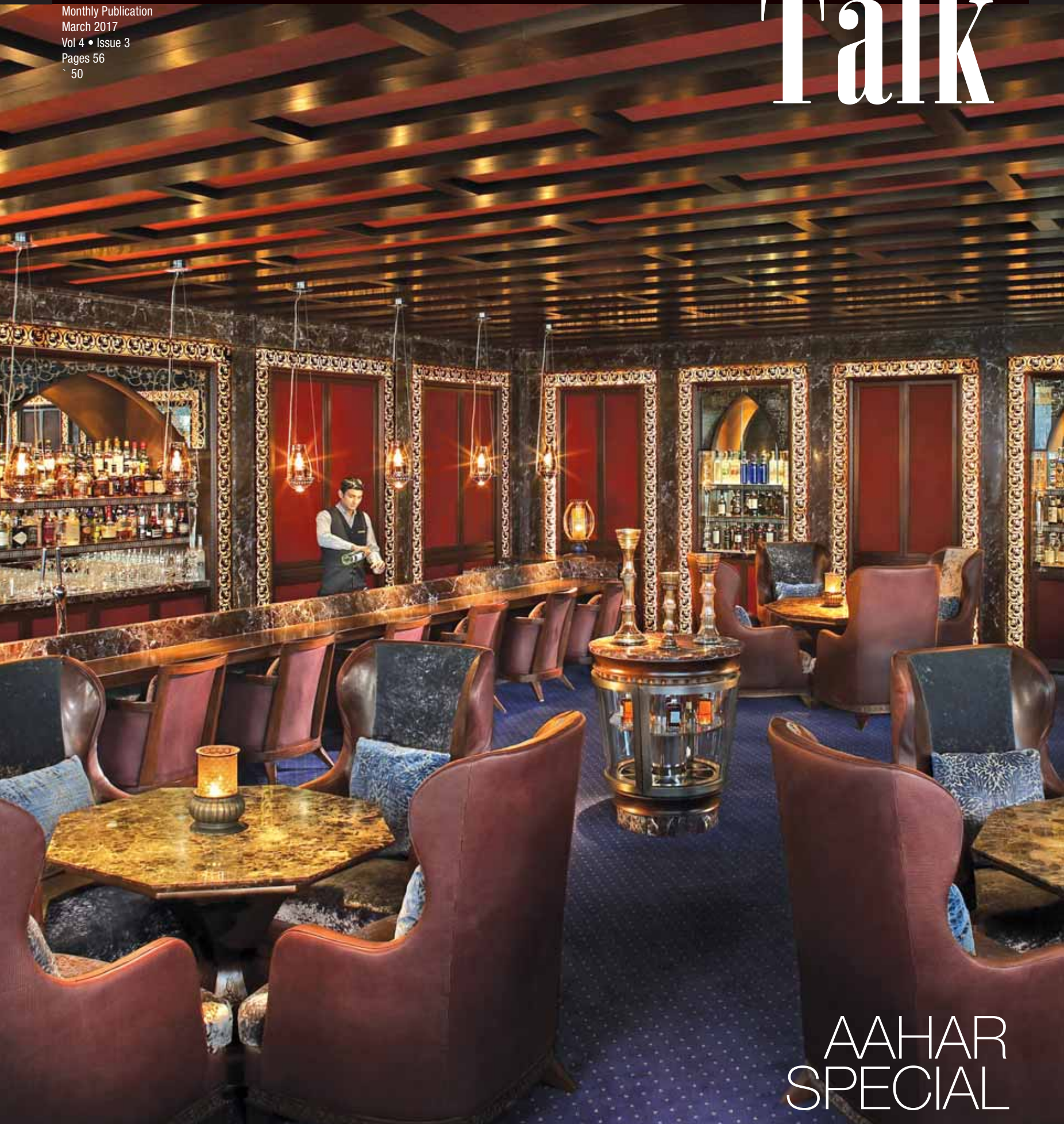


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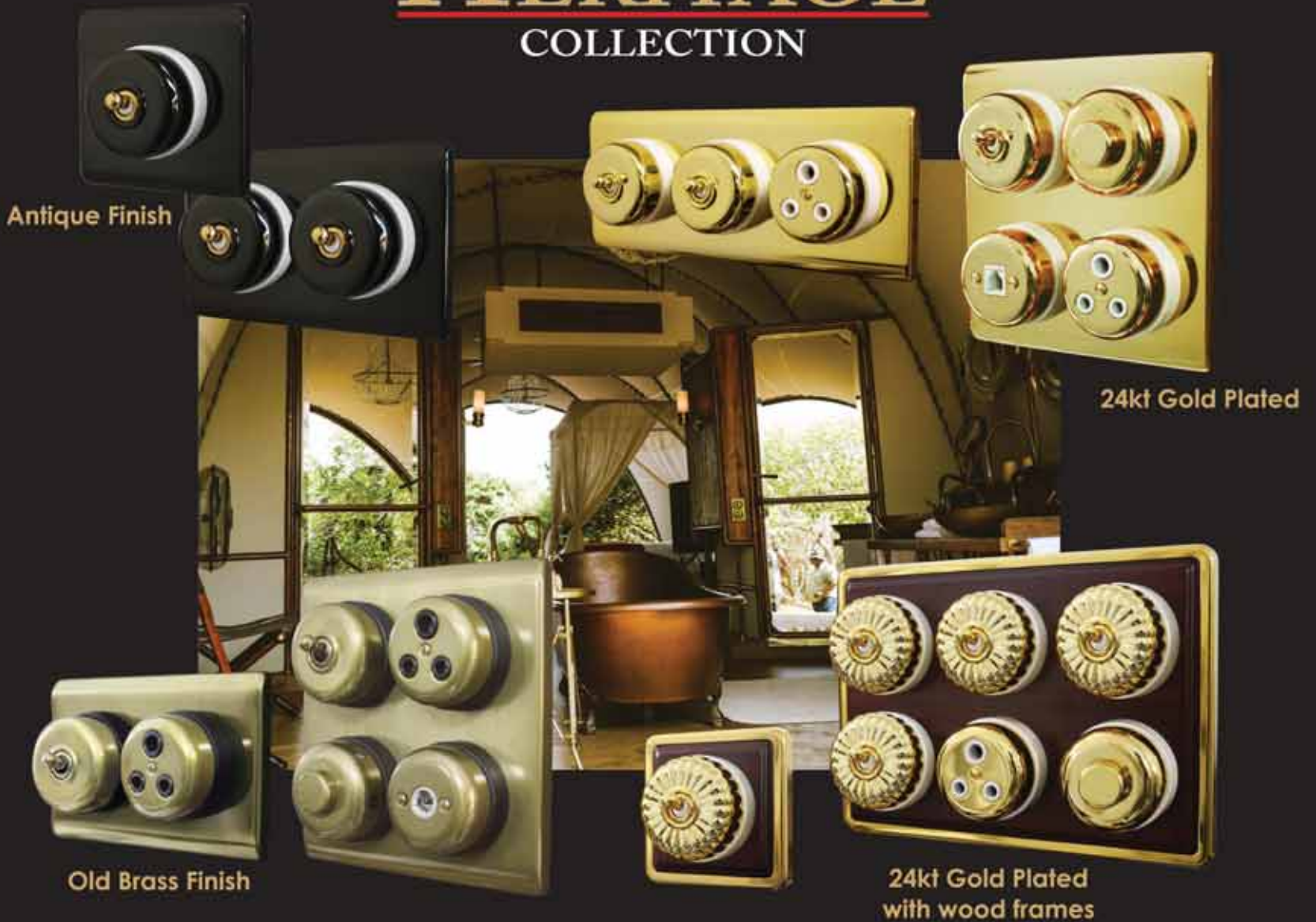


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New Delhi: 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
Phone No: +91 11 233 44179, Fax: +91-22-22070131
E-mail: hospitalitytalk@ddppl.com

Mumbai: 504 Marine Chambers, 43 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020, India
Tel: +91-22-22070129, 22070130, Fax: +91-22-22070131
E-mail: mumbai@ddppl.com

UAE: P.O. Box: 9348, Sharjah, UAE
Tel: +971 6 5528954, Fax: +971 6 5528956
E-mail: uae@ddppl.com

Editor & Publisher
SanJeet

Managing Editor
Peden Doma Bhutia

Associate Editor
kanchan.nath@ddppl.com

Assistant Editor
tripti.mehta@ddppl.com

Correspondent
anupriya.bishnoi@ddppl.com

Asst. Vice President
gunjan@ddppl.com

Advertising : Delhi
seema.joshi@hospitalitytalk.in
jaspreet.kaur@ddppl.com

Advertising : Mumbai
harshal.ashar@ddppl.com
susan.eapen@ddppl.com
priyanshu@ddppl.com

Design
Yogendra Baghel

Advertisement Designer
Vikas Mandotia
Nitin Kumar

eCommerce
Ashish Chakraborty

Production Manager
Anil Kharbanda

Circulation Manager
Tarun Jain

Business Manager
Ashok Rana

Cover Image
The Leela Palaces,
Hotels and Resorts

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Editorial enquiries:
(concerning reproduction of articles)
talk@ddppl.com

Advertising enquiries:
gunjan@ddppl.com

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124-key Radisson Blu Hotel now in Faridabad

Radisson Blu opens in Faridabad as the city's first five-star hotel. The hotel is owned by the Eros Group and will be managed by the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group. Besides spacious meeting facilities, and state-of-the-art technology, the hotel also features a pillar-less Grand Ballroom that can accommodate up to 1,000 guests.



WelcomHeritage Ramgarh, Panchkula, opens with 26 rooms

WelcomHeritage Ramgarh, an amalgamation of heritage and luxury, brings forth its world-class accommodation and an awe-inspiring heritage interwoven in historical elegance. WelcomHeritage Ramgarh has a history dating back almost 325 years with features reminiscent of the pre-independence era. The present owners are descendants of Chandail Rajputs whose original seat of power was Chanderi in Madhya Pradesh.

Clarion Inn forays into Jaipur

Choice Group of Hotels inaugurated its new property in Jaipur- Hotel Clarion Inn, with 90 rooms. The hotel is located in RICO industrial area, Jaipur, and offers 10 suites, 20 deluxe rooms, and 60 superior rooms. The hotel has two banquet halls, a multi-cuisine restaurant, and an open lawn for parties and weddings.



OYO launches new Townhouse brand

OYO has come up with another offering and has launched OYO Townhouse, positioned as a friendly neighbourhood hotel. The new category will operate under the OYO Townhouse brand and aims for a footprint of 250 properties with more than 10,000 rooms across 12 cities in India by the end of 2017.



OYO Townhouse offers a combination of hotel, home, merchandise store, and lounge, and is targeted at millennials, for whom price, convenience, and a differentiated experience play an important role.

Sarovar Hotels signs new hotel in Chhatarpur

Sarovar Hotels has signed an agreement for a new hotel, KST Sarovar Portico, a 48-key hotel located in the lush and captivating area of Chhatarpur. With beautifully designed rooms, excellent F&B, and unmatched banquet facilities, the hotel makes for an ideal choice for weddings, conferences, and events. Ideally located in the major wedding hub of the city, KST Sarovar Portico features 45 rooms and 3 suites.





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PANORAMIC PERSPECTIVES AT IIHTTRC



India International Hotel Travel and Tourism Research Conference, organised by Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology between 17-18 February, 2017, was inaugurated with lamp lighting by Chief Guest, Gulshan Sharma and Guest of Honour, Nita Baluni. The conference was also attended by Rishab Tandon, Human Resource and Training Manager, Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla; Bhupesh Kumar, President, IIHTTRC and Director, BCIMCT; Shusha Gupta, Shri Banarsidas Chandiwala Sewa Smarak Trust Society; Pradeep Gupta, Deputy Director-Administration, BCIMCT; and Alok Aswal, Convenor, IIHTTRC.

The annual Hospitality & Tourism Research Journal- Indian Journal of Applied Hospitality & Tourism Research, Vol. 8, and a book- Trends and Issues in Indian Hospitality and Tourism: Research and Innovation- were released during the inauguration ceremony.

Nita Baluni, Area Director-HR, North & West, SWA at IHG, spoke about the fast-growing travel and tourism industry and the various innovations of the hotel industry. Deliberating on similarities between the service and hotel industry, Baluni insisted on the need to

build relationships with brands and concluded that with customer being king, the focus should always be on guests and their needs.

Gulshan Sharma, Director General, International Chamber for Service Industry, interacted actively with the audience and asserted on the importance of grabbing opportunities and using them to the hilt. He also spoke about the fast-evolving trend of cinematic tourism and its impact around the globe. According to Sharma, a focus on building relationships helps create everlasting goodwill.



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Professor Phillip Xie, Dean, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Macau University of Science and Technology, Taipa, Macau, China, delivered a keynote on "Creativity and Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism". He discussed about the uniqueness of hospitality and tourism in Macau. He also went on to explain the challenges for the gaming industry, the opening of Studio City, transformation of the

casino industry, creative tourism, and the advent of smart hotels and smart tourism destinations. Xie also introduced new terms like "Bleisure" (Business and Leisure) and "Edutainment" (Education and Entertainment). He emphasised that everyone was looking for authentic experiences and that the future lay in mobile-ready services, more food and beverage options, and service-based luxury.

Parikshat Singh Manhas, Professor, The Business School and Director, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Jammu, gave a keynote on "Emerging Trends & Innovations in Hospitality & Tourism Industry: A Global Insight" which enlightened the gathering on when new products are brought into the market and what contributes to making them groundbreaking.



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Digital Travel, Hospitality and Innovation Summit to be held in New Delhi

FICCI is organising the second edition of Digital Travel, Hospitality and Innovation Summit on March 22-23, 2017, at FICCI Federation House, New Delhi, to address the technological advancement in the field of travel and hospitality and also to facilitate communication and exchange of

ideas and knowledge between key industry stakeholders, conglomerates, influencers, and policy-makers. The event will bring together global leaders, upstart innovators from the field of travel, hospitality, technology, and marketing to secure new business opportunities, increase brand awareness, and

network with key stakeholders of the travel and hospitality industry.

Some of the eminent speakers confirmed for the summit are Dhruv Shringi, Chairman, FICCI Travel Technology Committee and Co-Founder & CEO, Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd.; Deep Kalra, Chairman and

Group CEO, MakeMyTrip; Abhishek Rajan, Vice President and Head, Travel Marketplace, Paytm; and several others. The knowledge forum will discuss various topics related to future of travel and hospitality, including automation, revenue management, distribution, marketing, and data analytics.



Leaders in Hospitality CEE & CIS Summit in Prague

Over the years, Leaders in Hospitality Summit has established itself as the only industry platform that gathers the most prominent hospitality sector decision-makers and senior industry professionals from across 30 countries of the CEE & CIS region. The summit provides a unique opportunity for hospitality sector business leaders to set their business agendas for the upcoming year while addressing the challenges and opportunities the region faces.

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the Leaders in Hospitality Summit. Over these five years, it has supported, educated, and inspired the hospitality industry while promoting the region within the global landscape and unveiling numerous business opportunities the market has to offer. After travelling across the region for previous summits, this celebratory edition is coming back home to Prague, where it was launched.



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For further details, please contact:

Delhi
Seema Joshi: seema.joshi@hospitalitytalk.in, 9650196517

Mumbai
Harshal Ashar: harshal@ddppl.com, 09619499167
Priyanshu Wankhade: priyanshu@ddppl.com, 09619499170



Re-vamped One&Only Ocean Club in Bahamas

Guests will now get an opportunity to discover the newly re-opened One&Only Ocean Club resort that is better than ever and has a number of exciting elements, including refurbished guest rooms and suites, a new martini bar, and new menus at all of the resort's restaurants.



Radisson RED to open in Krakow, Poland, with 230 rooms

Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group has announced the signing of the first Radisson RED in Central Europe, notably in Krakow. Radisson RED is the group's new lifestyle select brand that is inspired by the growing customer need for new experiences, fashion, music, and art. RED focuses on design and detail, the guest, personal interaction, individual choice, and recognition of the increasingly important role that technology plays in facilitating the best of everyday life.

Mandarin Oriental embarks on Honolulu journey

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has announced its intention to open a new luxury hotel and branded residence in Honolulu, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. The project, which has a target opening date of early 2020, will enable Mandarin Oriental to introduce its hospitality to this important tourism and business destination. It will be the anchor of Mana'olana Place, a 36-storey mixed-use tower with gardens and public plazas, currently being developed by Los Angeles-based Salem Partners.



AVANI to debut in Europe with property in Portugal

AVANI Hotels & Resorts will debut in Europe with the opening of AVANI Avenida Liberdade Lisbon Hotel in the Portuguese capital. The 119-key hotel will launch on April 1, 2017, following the completion of a €1.5 million refurbishment. This newest addition to the AVANI portfolio will respond to the needs and aspirations of millennial-minded travellers, both in its product delivery and its design elements. The property is currently undergoing an extensive refurbishment. The scope of work includes the redesign of the façade, the guest rooms, lobby, reception, and the installation of an AVANIFIT gym.



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Century Plaza Hotel to re-open as Fairmont Century Plaza

Luxury hotel operator Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, now part of the AccorHotels Group, and Next Century Associates have announced the signing of definitive agreements for the revitalisation and management of the historic Century Plaza Hotel, located in the heart of Century City in Los Angeles. The iconic, crescent-shaped hotel has hosted generations of Hollywood celebrities, foreign dignitaries, and every United States President since its opening in 1966. The hotel is currently closed for restoration and refurbishment and is slated to re-open as Fairmont Century Plaza, Los Angeles, in 2018.



Hilton President Kansas City fully renovated

Hilton President Kansas City has announced the completion of its multi-million dollar renovation. The President Hotel was originally opened in 1927 and is included on the National Register of Historic Places. The renovation, designed by HKS of Dallas, will offer guests exceptional levels of luxury. The renovation features a completely redesigned guest room and public area experience. Guest rooms feature all new bedding, including Hilton Serta Serenity beds, while all new furniture in the rooms and suites pay tribute to the historic nature of the hotel. The renovation has been conducted in such a way that subtle details invite guests to enjoy the hotel history while enjoying the latest in technology and comfort.

Marriott redesigns its mobile app

Based on actual hands-on guest research and feedback, Marriott International will now offer Marriott Rewards members a dynamic mobile experience that is personalised for their use. The app is currently available in five languages for iOS users and will soon be developed for those using Android devices. Guests will enjoy new and expanded digital features, customised travel content, one-button navigation, and a new swipe-able discovery home screen.



Rezidor signs two new Radisson Blu hotels in Dubai

The Rezidor Hotel Group has announced the signing of two new Radisson Blu hotels in International Media Production Zone (IMPZ) and Dubai Studio City, United Arab Emirates. The new agreement is in partnership with renowned Dubai-based Bin Haider Group. This announcement comes as part of Rezidor's plan to open 14 new hotels in the UAE by 2019.





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THE NEW 'ANDAZ'

Hyatt Hotels has opened Andaz Delhi, marking the Andaz brand's first hotel in India. **Heddo Siebs**, General Manager, Andaz Delhi, shares the brand's unique characteristics and what makes Andaz stand out in the hub of Aerocity.



Heddo Siebs

Anupriya Bishnoi

Tell us about the USP of Andaz Delhi.

Andaz Delhi is Hyatt's new kid on the block. It's a lifestyle brand which we are very happy to bring to India and to vibrant Delhi. We have 401 rooms, including 45 suites, and 129 apartments that will be opening next year. We are delighted to bring an American brand to India that has an Indian name. When we mention the word Andaz, guests instantly think of a unique style with quirky characteristics and that truly is what Andaz Delhi stands for. It is a brand that is local in perspective and global in scale. Andaz hotels weave the sights, sounds, and tastes of their surroundings into each property, for an experience that truly immerses guests in the eclectic culture of each local destination. Through personalised, unscripted service, Andaz

hotels create a barrier-free environment where guests are encouraged to explore their personal sense of style and become inspired by the spirit of the culture around them.

Being one of the biggest convention hotels in Delhi NCR, tell us something about the event spaces of the hotel.

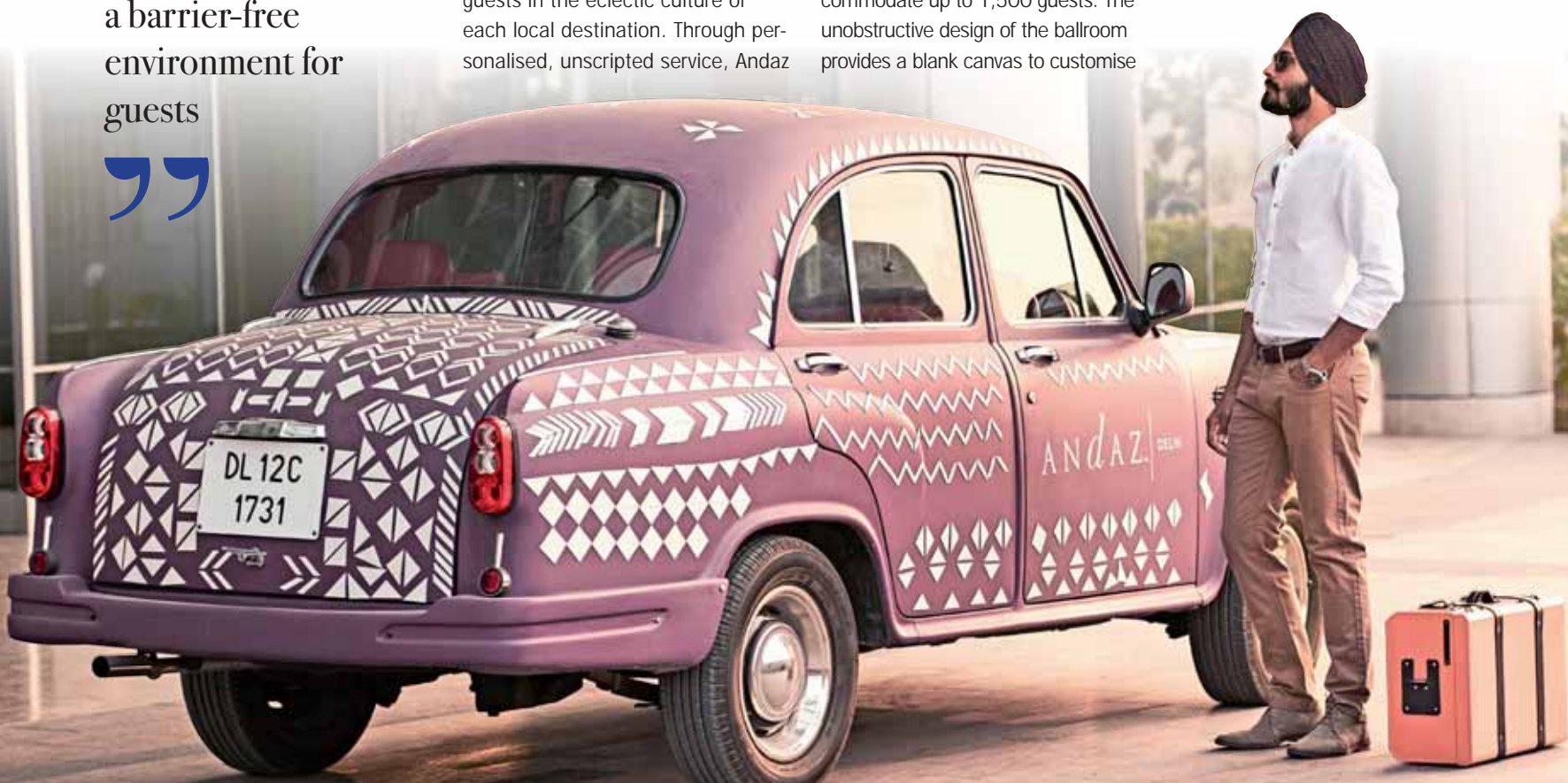
Andaz Delhi offers 37,500 sq. ft. of innovative meeting and event spaces, with fluid layouts and functional design, creating environments that dissolve barriers and encourage creative thinking, interaction, and conversation. The oval-shaped, pillar-less ballroom is one of the largest indoor luxury wedding spaces in Delhi and can accommodate up to 1,500 guests. The unobstructive design of the ballroom provides a blank canvas to customise

and decorate the space based on the individuality and style of any guest. What makes it stand out is its height of 22 ft. The unique Elephant Path adds a sense of drama to a traditional Indian wedding. Eight Andaz Studios offer residential-style meeting and event spaces with inspiring open kitchens and outdoor terrace.

The ceiling at the ballroom is also equipped with a cable system that has 24 hanging points. Each of these points can be used to hang something from the ceiling, so that the entire floor space is left for guests. During the winter months, our alfresco spaces are ideal for creative gatherings and wedding celebrations.



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Why Aerocity for Andaz?

Looking at how Delhi and Gurugram are growing, it seems as though we have landed right at the centre of Delhi NCR. Aerocity, as a destination, helps us cater to both markets. Traffic in Delhi causes quite a hindrance for travellers and visitors. With us between Delhi and Gurugram, everyone is looking forward to visiting us.

How do you tackle competition?

Competition certainly exists, not just in Aerocity but in Delhi NCR as well. What gives us an edge over our neighbouring hotels is that we give an opportunity to our guests to choose what they really like. Also, I think Delhi is ready for

a lifestyle product which is more contemporary than and not as classical as the space next-door.

What, according to you, will be trending this year?

When we look at the F&B segment, it is millennials that we look forward to. These people are an excited bunch, neglected for a long time, with immense spending power. Seven out of ten people click and post pictures of their food and experiences on various social media platforms, and this is something that has brought excitement back to the F&B culture. The way the hospitality industry has evolved, in my opinion, makes it all the more exhilarating to be part of.

DESIGN

Conveniently located in Aerocity, the hotel is within easy reach of downtown Delhi and the business hub of Gurugram. Designed to capture the spirit of Delhi by renowned architectural firm Bauer Latoza Studio from Chicago, and interior designer Virgile and Partners from London, the hotel integrates traditional Indian elements, colours, and flavours into a modern design inspired by the unique craftsmanship of India.

GUEST ROOMS

Each guest room at Andaz Delhi features a unique curated piece of art that celebrates a reason to “fall

in love with Delhi”. The collection is skilfully integrated into a book displayed in each room, called “401 Reasons to Fall in Love with Delhi”, written by well-known travel writer Fiona Caulfield. While there is much to love about Delhi, navigating its myriad twists and turns can be a challenge. Therefore, the book has been designed to highlight 12 different categories for those who wish to discover areas of specific interests, including: Delhi’s Building Heritage, Taste of Delhi, Creative Delhi, Delhi Celebrates, Cultural Delhi, Sporting Delhi, Delhi Shops, New Delhi Architecture, Delhi Devotion, Delhi on the Move, Natural Delhi, and Iconic Delhi.

DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT

Taking an innovative approach to restaurants and bars, Andaz Delhi emphasises on consciously sourced ingredients and local artisanal produce in the uniquely conceived European food hall – AnnaMaya. Here, guests can eat mindfully by sampling delicious European and local cuisines inspired by the colours and flavours of India. Guests can also grab freshly baked goods and a quick bite at Andaz Deli or indulge in interesting cocktails that highlight the art of mixology at Juniper Bar. Due to open next year, the Hong Kong Club will be a multi-level Cantonese evening destination with a bar, club, and lounge.

In true Andaz fashion, all non-alcoholic minibar drinks and locally inspired snacks are complimentary, as are local telephone calls and Wi-Fi, making a stay at Andaz Delhi as seamless and barrier-free as possible. Passionate and knowledgeable, Andaz Hosts will go beyond their typical concierge role, sharing inside knowledge about the capital city and helping guests uncover Delhi’s eclectic culture that juxtaposes modernity to its rich heritage.

The recreational facilities at Andaz Delhi include a fully furnished gym, a unique apothecary blending bar, and a range of treatment rooms.

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Andrea Spalletti Trivelli

Please tell us about the villa's unrivalled attributes.

Villa Spalletti Trivelli is a restored patrician residence offering exclusivity and discrete personal service. It provides its guests with an atmosphere of luxury by combining pure functionality with rare furnishings from the private collection of the Spalletti Trivelli family. Its sophisticated and elegant interior, intimate spa and gym, secluded gardens, fully stocked honour bar, and personal chef make guests experience an aristocratic lifestyle.

Central: Being a city that is best enjoyed by walking through its beautiful streets, location is a crucial factor when it comes to providing hotels and residences to visitors. The place where we are located is a ten-minute walk from everything- the shopping centre, the night life region, and a host of other places of importance. To top that, it is also a very local district.

Exclusive: The private villa offers five-star hotel comforts while still letting you savour a private atmosphere. It is very exclusive and private. For those looking forward to going beyond a five-star cliché, this is their ideal destination.

Benign: We treat our guests as owners and not just guests. For us, you are a part of the family.

A perfect Roman holiday

In the heart of Rome lies a beautiful residence that only speaks elegance, opulence, and enchantment. **Andrea Spalletti Trivelli**, Owner of Villa Spalletti Trivelli, tells us more.

Anupriya Bishnoi



How many rooms does the villa have?

We have 14 rooms in total, of which 12 are located in the main building. We recently opened two Garden Suites that are located across the private gardens. Then, there are two fully equipped apartments that are perfect for families or long-stay customers or even those who seek a little bit more privacy while still being surrounded by hotel comforts.

Tell us about the markets you are planning to tap.

India is definitely one of our target markets because I think it's a market that is now mature to enjoy and understand these kinds of places. Indians have already been to big-chain hotels which, though great, are same all over the world. Customers now want to try something more local and well-connected to the destination they are going to visit.

Next to India is China, which is very similar to India in terms of the kind of unique and offbeat experiences that people are looking for. Its citizens have already travelled through frequently visited destinations of Rome, Florence, and Venice and their want to return to a

particular destination signifies their love for it and the fact that they want to explore its culture and day-to-day life of its citizens and not just visit the museums and tourist sites. Australia and South America, especially Brazil, are other great markets for the same reasons as are India and China.

Which countries do your guests majorly hail from?

45 per cent of our clients are from America, followed by UK and Australia. Europe is growing. The Russians are coming back. India, Japan, and Korea are slowly budding. South America is behind but has started to express its potential.

How are you attracting Indian clients?

We started with Indian people living abroad because they are a bit more westernised and it's easier to meet their taste. Indians living in India have also started travelling more and have become more open to the western world and its mixed bag of cultures. All we need to do is to keep in mind that their tastes are different so we try to meet their needs without transforming the heritage, keeping its authenticity and at the same time meeting their expectations and needs.

Do you customise your offerings for Indian clients?

Having 14 rooms means we can sort of create a personal relationship with all of our clients. We never say no to any request made and always strive to do our best.



VILLA SPALLETTI TRIVELLI: A BRIEF HISTORY

Gabriella Rasponi, widow of Count Venceslao Spalletti Trivelli, Senator of the Kingdom, niece of Gioacchino Murat and Carolina Bonaparte (Napoleon's sister), purchased the land in front of the gardens of the Quirinale, where the house of Tito Pomponio Attico, editor and friend of Cicero, was located and entrusted the task of building Villa Spalletti Trivelli to Architect Domenico Avenali. Thanks to the intelligent awareness of Countess Rasponi, Villa Spalletti Trivelli became an important political and cultural masterpiece. Every Thursday afternoon, the villa's drawing rooms were filled with important people of the time, including Romualdo Bonfaldini, Sidney Sonnino, and Rabindranath Tagore.

At the beginning of the 1930s, Cesare Spalletti Trivelli inherited a historic residence in downtown Rome from his mother, where he lived with his wife, Contessa

Guendalina Cavazzidella Somaglia. Appointed Sir and Lady of the Court of Queen Maria José of Belgium, wife of Umberto II of Savoia, the count and countess left the Villa to their son, Piero, a writer and poet.

In 2004, Giangiaco Spalletti Trivelli, son of Count Piero, and his wife, Susanna, decided to convert the family's historic residence into an exclusive luxury residence for the most refined and demanding travellers.

After years of restorations, thanks to the help of Architect Piero Alessandrini, Villa Spalletti Trivelli became a unique and exclusive hotel in the historic centre of Rome, where the Spalletti Trivelli family's passion for history, culture, and art along with the most modern technologies, put the villa on the same scale as a luxury hotel, avant-garde for its comfort and amenities.



Packing a punch of ingredients



Somasundaram Gopalakrishnan, Executive Sous Chef, Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru, gives us a peek into his work and the scrumptious food he dishes out.

HT Bureau

Tell us something about the restaurants at the two hotels.

Courtyard by Marriott has two F&B outlets- MoMo Café, the 24-hour dining area, and BG's, the poolside specialty restaurant. Fairfield, on the other hand, has Kava, the Indian specialty restaurant.

What is the F&B scene in Bengaluru, like?

Bengaluru has a mix of both stand-alone and five-star restaurant options. These eateries offer a variety of choices for millennials, from the local Karnataka cuisine to other regional options.

What are the signature offerings at the restaurants?

MoMo Café focuses on buffet and has a lavish spread of cuisines from across the world. BG's is famous for its New Zealand lamb chops, chilled tuna pizza, and tenderloin steaks.

Kava, on the other hand, offers a vast selection of Indian dishes from all over the country.

What are your favourite ingredients and why?

I source fresh, organic ingredients from countryside vendors. The key to making food palatable lies in the quality of the ingredient and this is the main reason I seek freshness in the ingredients I work with.

What is your approach to competition?

Competition is unavoidable. However, we believe that it needs to be healthy. On a monthly basis, we conduct a competition analysis and improvise on our operations whenever necessary.

How often do you do food promotions?

We do quarterly food promotions for all the outlets, every year.

Do you think more Indian diners have started accepting international cuisines?

Yes. As the world gets smaller, owing to better connectivity and more people opting to travel far and wide, the acceptance of world cuisines increases. Indian dishes are also increasingly becoming popular all over the world with more and more restaurants opening up across geographies.

What would you do if you weren't a chef?

I would have joined my family-owned textile business.



Somasundaram Gopalakrishnan



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Food

How do you binge but burn calories, walk into a café but wheel out of it? Eat, cycle, buy, and rent at Ciclo Café, a special interest outlet. With two cafés in Chennai and Hyderabad each, and more to follow in other cities, this new trendsetter is here to stay.

RE-CYCLING



Ashish R Thadani

Hazel Jain

Combining hospitality and cycling, Ciclo Café first opened in Chennai in March, 2015, to serve as a hub for cycling enthusiasts in the city. This café offers facilities for both cycling (sales and service of premium bicycles, merchandise and accessories, expert advice on cycling, special rides, etc.) and hospitality (that includes premium F&B services with international cuisines).

A second outlet followed soon in Hyderabad. This one offers comfortable long-table settings for families, open seating for large groups, and also a few solo cycle seats for singles. The attached bicycle store features top cycle brands such as Ridley, Bianchi, Cannondale, Mongoose, Schwinn, GT, and Montra. It also hosts cycle repairing services, promising international quality at affordable prices.

getting their rides fixed, facility to rent cycles at nominal rates to try your hand at cycling, and facility to purchase one of your favourite brand of bicycles. I do hope this bicycle cafe culture catches on."

Ciclo Café is a 50-50 joint venture between Tube Investments of India (whose unit, TI Cycles, is a bicycle manufacturer in India) and Chennai-based Absolute Speciality Foods Chennai.

After Chennai and Hyderabad, Ciclo Café will open outlets in Gurugram, Bengaluru, and Coimbatore. Thadani reveals, "We are looking to open around 15 cafés across India in the next three years and will be targeting Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities." They have no plans for franchising as of now.



The café provides maintenance and repair services to bikers, facility to rent cycles at nominal rates, and facility to purchase one of your favourite brand of bicycles





Speaking about having special interest cafés in India, Thadani adds, "There is definitely a rise in such cafés in India. Indian consumers are very well informed and expect the best in terms of services and products."

The cafés also cater to corporate groups and have space for events. "We have come up with Ciclo Team Racing- India's only amateur elite cycling racing team. We support our riders in getting trained overseas and taking part in various cycling events nationally and internationally," he adds.



DELECTABLE MENU



Ciclo Café has interesting picks, from the chef's special of filet mignon, to carbonara bleu, to an array of pizzas, lasagnas, sandwiches, and soups. Their Sunday breakfast offers regional flavours from various parts of the country, like Punjab and Bengal. Food also includes a diabetic-friendly menu and gluten-free dishes.

A WALK IN THE 'CLOUDS'

More and more hotels in India are adopting smart technological solutions over expensive, labour-intensive man hours. Oracle Hospitality claims to offer the perfect platform.

Hazel Jain

Oracle Hospitality, along with Airpay Payment Services, recently conducted a closed-door workshop for CIOs and IT heads of top hotels in Mumbai and New Delhi. The first India Oracle Hospitality Customer Event had a compelling agenda and was designed to address questions on Oracle Hospitality and the solutions it offers for the hospitality industry. The half-day event had three speakers discussing various topics, such as technology trends in the hospitality industry in India and abroad, and maximising guest services beyond the front desk. This was followed by an overview of its products— OPERA Cloud, Hotel Mobile, and Symphony Cloud.

Making inroads

Advocating the adoption of technology, **Sagun Sawhney**, Head Sales, Oracle Hospitality, says, "The use of cloud services is new to the Indian market. The idea behind these sessions was to educate hoteliers about the technologies available to them. They would not have

to worry about whether or not they had taken a back-up in the event of a fire in the server room or if the server failed. We want hoteliers to look after their guests and not worry about back-end activities."

He added that Oracle services are meant for all types of hotels- five-star, domestic, and even smaller budget hotels. "Traditionally, deciding on the amount of an investment always proved to be a challenge. However, with cloud solutions, you can pay as you use by using the 'SaaS' (Software as a Service) software distribution model. Fifteen years ago, hotels employed night auditors who would spend three to four hours, every night, cross-tallying restaurants with rooms and rooms with finance. Since things have become more automated now, no one follows this age-old system," Sawhney adds.

Oracle plans to hold more sessions with hoteliers in cities like Pune, Goa, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Kochi, Coimbatore, Ludhiana, and Chandigarh as it sees a lot of potential for hotel development in Tier-2 cities.

Adopting new technologies

Airpay is the latest partner to join the Oracle Hospitality network to provide payment solutions for all its customers, especially as more and more transactions are now digital. **Amit Kapoor**, CEO and Co-Founder, Airpay, speaks about how hotels can re-invent consumer engagement on their portals. "What's on top of everyone's mind? Bookings and payments. Everyone wants to present an omnichannel option to consumers who are constantly searching on social media platforms via their tablets, mobile phones, and computers. This

provides an opportunity to engage the consumer there itself," he says.

Speaking about the way he expects the Indian market to change, Kapoor adds, "The number of integrations that the IT team of a hotel manages is commendable, but as technologies change, consumers adopt them faster than anyone else. Data is key and we parse it real-time so there is never a reason why you need to come back to the payment processor to know what the data is. What level of spenders were your cardholders? How effective were your campaigns? These things are important for you to know the next time you are doing a marketing campaign. You will be surprised that at a five-star hotel chain, the State Bank of India card is the most preferred card. It could just be because of the location you are in."

Kapoor feels that the Indian market is currently a completely fragmented space with a different PMS and a different CIS. "Some big brands even have different solution providers for mobile just because they believe that the big guys take too long to deliver. If you have a call centre, most of them are very disconnected from the main CIS and the main reservation system because they still believe in working in batches," he adds. Airpay claims to be India's only omnichannel SaaS payments platform. "The goal is to become device and channel agnostic. The product itself is not an app, it is only a browser. It allows you to control permissions to your staff and you can control who can see what. We require 35 days to integrate with any partner. It is also for groups that are managed by someone else. The solution offers a single point-of-sale terminal. The customer never leaves the hotel's page for payment. It also has integrated channel managers such as Expedia, Booking.com, etc.," Kapoor explains.



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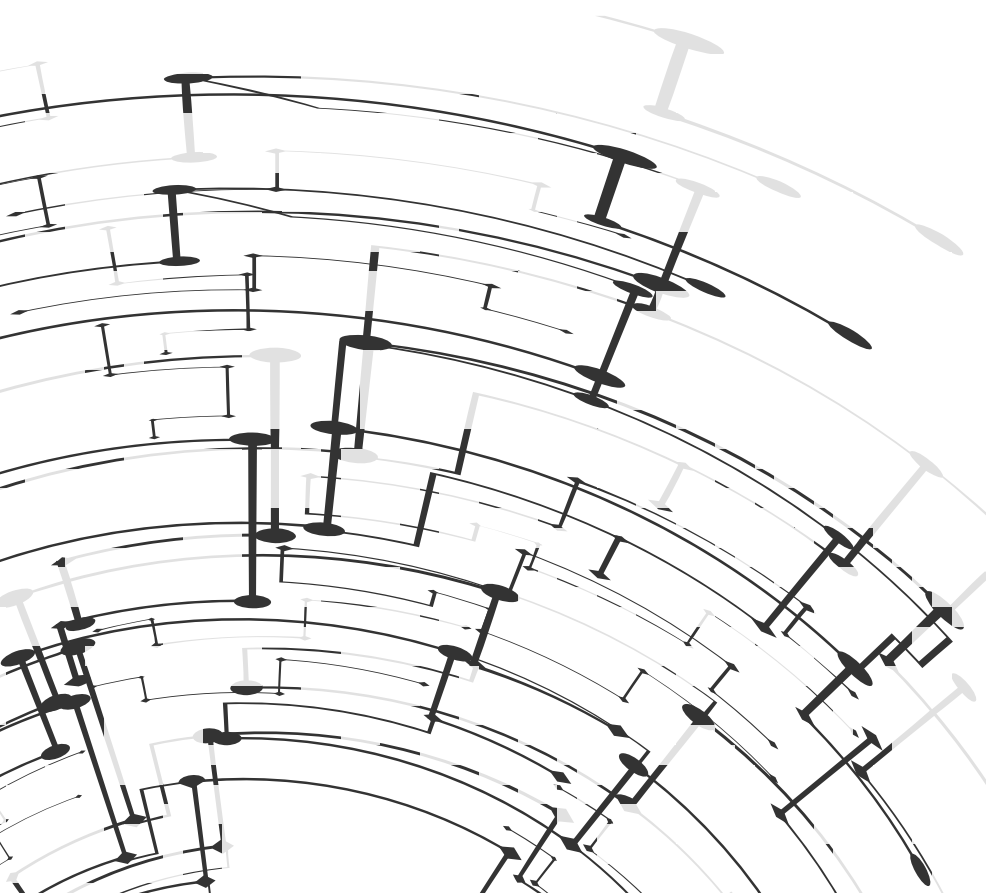
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(L to R): Jay Sherman, Amit Kapoor, Travis Macauley



Sagun Sawhney

Trends and benefits

Speaking about technology trends in the hospitality industry,

Travis Macauley, Solutions Manager – Hotels, Oracle, says, “The Indian market is looking for updated solutions. I think the customer of today expects good technology in the business. All of the chains in India – Marriott, Starwood, Hilton, Hyatt, etc., are in unique locations outside of Delhi and Mumbai. Goa is a huge resort area and all of our



The idea behind these sessions was to educate hoteliers about the technologies available to them



customers are strategically located where people want to holiday. Better experience can happen through better technology.”

He underlines some of the factors affecting the industry globally, specifically technological factors. Speaking about online behaviour among consumers, he says, “We expect internet devices to reach a count of 50 billion by 2020. There will also be an exponential increase in mobile subscribers as well as expectations in guest experience.”

Some of the industry transformations include: cloud services,

personalised loyalty programs, Internet of Things (IoT) such as in-room technology and presence on social media and the reaction time to feedback and complaints. Macauley also touched upon who ‘millennials’ are and why it is important for hotels to identify and attract them. According to him, 94 per cent of millennials prefer hotel confirmations and updates via email. They are more receptive to personalised messages and are impacted by online reviews. Almost 64 per cent of millennials have downloaded and used a hotel mobile app. For India, he says, the WhatsApp tool is gaining immense popularity.

To this, Macauley adds, "The IT department of a hotel tends to stockpile old hardware. About 25 per cent of the total expense is spent on innovation, but 75 per cent is spent on maintenance, integration, and doing routine tasks, as per Forrester Research 2016. Hotels are migrating to the cloud technology because of its security and efficient back-up."

He added that hotels should move to cloud because of the following reasons:

- No server logistics are required, so hotels save on installation and travel expenses
- It allows hotels to copy template data from one property to another
- It allows for reduced on-premise

hardware leading to fewer installation days

- Being on cloud offers scalability if hotels are looking at expanding or downsizing
- It allows access from anywhere

Oracle's Symphony

Jay Sherman, Senior Manager, Sales Consulting, Hotel POS, Oracle Hospitality (Asia Pacific & Japan), speaks about Oracle's next-gen POS solution called Symphony, which is an integrated business suite that can be customised as per the hotel. "Guests can order dinner as soon as they land in the city through a mobile application. Hoteliers can study the analytics and provide customised

offers. For instance, guests who order whiskey often can be sent offers on it. It is also a real-time operational and analytical tool that allows only that particular hotel to see the controls. So permissions can be adjusted to include only those people who need access to it," he explains.

Sherman adds that Oracle Hospitality has customers all over India, but mostly Delhi, where a lot of the larger hoteliers are headquartered. "The market itself is significant. It is merely a matter of signing up for our software as a service solution. Smaller restaurants or hotels can also benefit from this," he says.

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Dinner tonight?

Let's park @ the truck

Out-of-the-world food with an out-in-the-world ambience is what food trucks offer. Innovations and western influences have mostly been instrumental in the progression of the food truck culture. Spokespersons of some of the most popular food trucks tell us more about these four-wheeled eateries and make us want to start binging.

Anupriya Bishnoi





Keshav Suri

THE LALIT FOOD TRUCK WE ARE AT :

WTT, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi – When not on the move. Track us on www.thelalitfc.com, Facebook, and Twitter. Food festivals, carnivals, college fests, corporate and social events. At your home when you need outdoor catering.

Food truck outlets are a culinary trend that began in the West. In India, food trucks, a modern-day gourmet take on the humble thela, have taken metro cities by storm with their reasonable prices and innovative dishes. Introduced by well-travelled innovators who observed the popularity of this culture in international markets, the food truck trend has already gained ground since it began in India.

Evolution

It is now well-known that people in metro cities have hectic lifestyles and are continuously looking for quick, smart solutions to everything under the sun. These millennials don't want to miss out on what the west has to offer and seek such experiences right in their neighbourhood. This growing demand for innovative choices has led to the establishment of the food truck culture in India. **Sharad Sachdeva**, CEO, Street Foods by Punjab Grill from the house of Lite Bite Foods, says, "People look for quick, on-the-go meals and a food truck caters to their needs by providing a variety of food options at reasonable prices. This is one of the biggest triggers for the food truck culture in India."

Some food truck front runners who were already aware of what consumers may be looking for, sought to draw similarities between Indian and western cuisines and innovate

on them. Considering the lack of Mexican food trucks in Delhi, The Lalit Food Truck Company was launched after conducting a dipstick study of the market and concluding that the spice level of Indian and Mexican cuisines was quite similar. **Keshav Suri**, Executive Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, says, "The Lalit Food Truck Company became the pioneers in the luxury, five-star hotel chain category with the launch of the first Mexican food truck in 2014. One of the major factors contributing to this was the lack of time that people of metropolitan cities had and how there was an increasing need to fit-in quick food options in their hectic lifestyles."

According to **Gaurav Gianchandani**, Owner, What the Truck, the food truck culture has been evolving since 2014, but a large number of people are still not aware of its presence. "There is a long way to go when it comes to spreading awareness of this newborn culture. Another factor hampering growth is the opening of a number of food trucks with-



out the knowledge or expertise to operate one," says Gianchandani. A multitude of aspects need to be taken into account before launching a food truck, such as location, clientele, ease of access, etc., and players need to consider them carefully to be successful in the market.

Offerings

Street Foods by Punjab Grill features street food specialities from around the country. With its lip-smacking offerings from various regions and other well-known North and South Indian regional delicacies, the goal



Sharad Sachdeva

STREET FOODS WE ARE AT :

Sector 29, Gurugram – Daily.
Udyog Vihar, Gurugram – Daily.
Our social handles.

“
Introduced by
well-travelled
innovators, the
food truck trend
has already gained
ground since it
began in India

”

WHAT THE TRUCK WE ARE AT :

Sector 29, Gurugram – When not
on the move. Events and private
parties.

of this food truck is to make available all delicacies under one truck roof. “We ventured into the food trucking business in 2016 and operate two trucks across Delhi NCR. We have now ventured to foreign shores, too,” explains Sachdeva.

Having established The Lalit brand pan India, with several specialty restaurants such as Baluchi (Pan Indian), OKO (Pan Asian), 24/7 (Multi-cuisine), and the super luxe night club- Kitty Su, the Executive Director wanted to do something different and cater to a wider audience. “The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group always wanted its food truck to be unique. Hence, we launched the first-of-its-kind Mexican food truck in India and recently the first Pizza Truck in the country. The four trucks in Delhi, Mumbai, Jaipur, and Bengaluru also act as mobile hoarding for The Lalit’s outdoor catering vertical,” says Suri.

Gianchandani lets us know that What The Truck was a product of his passion for food and his will to bring a new concept to India. “I have this memory of food trucks from USA when I used to stay there, and I just thought of bringing that concept to India with a hope that it would work and, guess what, it did!” he exclaims.

Reaching out

Being a recently introduced concept, effective marketing is imperative to its success. Each food truck owner or operator exploits different strategies to promote what their brand has to offer.

DELHI FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

Imagine going down for a walk and wanting to catch a quick bite. You could go to a fast-food restaurant but you would be compromising on quality for service. This is where food trucks come in. They’re parked around the corner, close to you, serving freshly cooked grub.

The food truck culture in India is gaining traction. We, as a people, love our street food and *chaat*. This provides a ready market for food trucks. With the liberty of mixing and matching foods and being mobile, food trucks can cater to wider audiences. You can make the food you love for the people that really want to eat it. When serving out of a food truck, overhead costs are low and owners often cut down on prices to make everything more affordable. Food trucks have a steady stream of customers and you cannot turn them away unless you run out of food.

Pranav Padiyar
Head, Marketing and Operations
Delhi Food Truck Festival

Visit the Delhi Food Truck Festival between 14-15 April, 2017, at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi, and experience a world of mind-blowing dishes.

Sachdeva says, “Street Foods by Punjab Grill is a well-known name in the food sector and has already won over customers. Word-of-mouth marketing has helped us grow our brand, all thanks to our devoted consumers. We are also active on all social media channels to ensure our followers stay updated with the latest news about us.”

For The Lalit Food Truck Company, tie-ups with corporates and schools, big events, and Kitty Su nights are what they look at for churning the required visibility for this vertical. “We are constantly looking for relevant brand tie-ups and associations. Digital media and social media also play a vital role in promoting our brand. Customers can track the location of the food or pizza truck on our website or follow our interesting social media posts about the truck that we continuously update,” adds Suri.

Gianchandani exploits platforms like Zomato, Facebook, and Instagram, among others, to market his brand.

Government regulations

Government regulations are such that can both hamper or promote a business. According to Sachdeva, “For running a food truck in India, one requires various NOCs and licences from governmental bodies, depending on the cuisine, theme, and concept of the food truck. Regulations and guidelines are stated for each segment, such as food, fire safety, music, liquor, municipal corporation limits, etc., which need to be adhered to.”

According to Suri, “The government has become more flexible now when it comes to food trucks. As a five-star hotel chain, we are very particular about safety standards and ensure adherence to them for all our verticals. All safety measures are taken into consideration while installing operational equipment.”

For Gianchandani, there is no support or regulation for food trucks, as of now.

Challenges

Operating a business is not easy and a food truck business is no exception to this fact. Some players strike winning strategies while some others lose out quickly.

According to Sachdeva, “Running a food truck is very different from other businesses, including that of a conventional, brick-and-mortar restaurant. The biggest challenge with a food truck is that you have to find a winning site.”

Suri believes that being constantly on the move and away from an elaborate kitchen setup, maintaining the quality of food and carrying all ingredients can be challenging at times. “One also needs to clearly define areas of operation and do meticulous planning for the entire year, month by month, to ensure you get what you want from the food truck,” he adds.

Gianchandani says, “One of the biggest challenges we face is that there is no support from the government to make this legal and run it in a proper way.”



Above: Gaurav Gianchandani



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A top-down illustration of a business meeting. Several hands in black suits are visible, interacting with various items: pointing at a large chart on a document, typing on a laptop, holding a smartphone displaying charts, and writing in a spiral notebook. There are also coffee cups, a CD/DVD, and scattered papers. The background is a solid light blue.

As expectations continue to linger until the next Budget, hospitality spokespersons enumerate their disappointments and the little ray of hope that the Union Budget 2017-18 has shown to them.

BUDGET 2017-18: Still yearning for MORE

Illustration of stacks of Indian Rupee banknotes and several gold coins, symbolizing wealth or financial goals.

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- Peter Kerkar, Group Chief Executive Officer, Cox and Kings
- Rakesh Sarma, Managing Director and CEO, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces
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- Devendra Bharna, Executive Vice President, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts Mumbai
- Jean-Michel Cassé, Sr. Vice President Operations - India, AccorHotels
- Kurt Straub, Vice President Operations, Hyatt Hotels Corporation
- Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer - South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group
- Rajeev Menon, Chief Operating Officer - APAC (ex. Greater China), Marriott International
- Rakesh Sarma, Managing Director and CEO, Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces
- Shantha De Silva, Head - South West Asia, InterContinental Hotels Group
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Anshu Sarin

HT Bureau

The Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, presented the Union Budget 2017-18 in the Parliament on February 1, 2017, and once again, the hospitality industry stood neglected. Though the Budget did focus on wide infrastructural development, a sector that hospitality increasingly depends on, nothing substantial was allocated to the hospitality sector itself.



Recommendations on tax benefits for MSME and start-ups will indirectly have a positive impact on mid-market business hotels



Anshu Sarin, CEO, Berggruen Hotels, felt that the Budget 2017-18 induced positive sentiments at a macro level. She says, "We welcome the Budget presented by the honourable finance minister. The intention of setting up special tourism zones in partnership with states is a good move. Focus on building national highways is a welcome

move for the deprived infrastructure, which is a major hindrance to the development of the hospitality and travel sector. The waiving of service charge on e-tickets will have a positive impact on the travel industry. Recommendations on tax benefits for MSME and start-ups will indirectly have a positive impact on mid-market business hotels."



Jean-Michel Cassé

Chief Operating Officer – India and South Asia, AccorHotels, **Jean-Michel Cassé**, believes that while there are no direct provisions in the Union Budget for the hospitality industry, the sector is a significant beneficiary in the government's measures aimed at bolstering connectivity through an enhanced focus on aviation and railways. "The introduction of more trains and launch of dedicated lines for pilgrimage and tourism purposes will further promote domestic travel, presenting growth opportunities for the



Introduction of Incredible India's second campaign, reaffirm the government's commitment to strengthen India's position



economy and mid-market hotels, a segment we are strongly focused on," he adds.

There is also a renewed focus on urban decongestion with impetus on developing road infrastructure, focus on manufacturing growth, and more

affordable housing. "Plans to establish five special tourism zones in the next financial year and introduction of Incredible India's second global campaign, reaffirm the government's commitment to strengthen India's position as an attractive tourist destination," adds Cassé.



Rishi Puri

Hospitality bigwigs are continuously seeking out areas of interest in the Union Budget that can indirectly be utilised for the benefit of the sector.

"Many renowned international hos-

pitality groups are investing in India because they see a growth potential here. However, the government has not doled out anything of much consequence to the sector. Except for the five per cent reduction in tax for MSMEs, which will alleviate the tax burden on us, there is nothing more that we will benefit from," says **Rishi Puri**, Vice President, Lords Hotels & Resorts. He was hoping that the finance minister would announce some incentives for investing in new projects in the Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities that draw tourists but lack good hospitality infrastructure.



JB Singh

President and CEO, InterGlobe Hotels, **JB Singh**, is of the view that this budget has taken several measures to boost the travel and tourism industry. "Rural India holds immense potential from a tourism

point of view, and the newly announced initiatives to further develop our rural markets with 100 per cent village electrification will further add to the overall development of our economy," he elaborates.

Though mostly optimistic, he does list a few disappointments from the Budget. "The industry was keenly looking forward to a stronger government focus on incentives for the commercial real estate sector, such as listing of REITS, creation of single-window clearances, and granting of an infrastructural status to the sector," says Singh.



Ritesh Agarwal

will also provide excellent fillip to domestic tourism. It is encouraging to note the government's focus on infrastructure development, as it forms the backbone of tourism and hospitality sectors. Furthermore, reduction in tax rate for SMEs and the push towards a digital economy by de-incentivising cash transactions will support new-age businesses and start-ups," he says.

Industry players have greatly supported the government's decision to launch the second Incredible India campaign; the first successfully living up to its calibre, proving both enriching and advantageous for tourism and other sectors dependent on it.

According to **Ritesh Agarwal**, Founder & CEO, OYO, the launch of this campaign will result in greater tourist interest and inflow from overseas, creating a huge demand and opportunity for the Indian hospitality industry. "The proposed creation of five special tourism zones in partnership with state governments,



Gaurav Singh

The year ahead isn't bleak for the industry. **Gaurav Singh**, General Manager, Courtyard by

Marriott and Fairfield by Marriott, says, "We believe that the Union Budget for 2017 is a step in the right direction for the hospitality industry across the country. The cash transaction limit of upto ₹ 3 lakh will normalise cash flow after the effect of demonetisation. No change in GST, across platforms, will benefit the hospitality sector. Reduced direct tax rates will give entry-level customers a fair share of disposable income. These developments will immensely benefit premium hospitality chains."



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Krishna Kumar

One needs to wait and watch how peripheral allocations deployed by the government aid the development of the hospitality sector.

According to **Krishna Kumar**, General Manager, Radisson Hyderabad HITEC City, the finance minister has outlined a very balanced Budget. "Hospitality sector is expected to stay on



course as certain elements of the Budget will spur growth and increase spend, marginally. The decrease in tax structure for the ₹2.5 lakh to the ₹5 lakh segment is likely to increase their spending power, which will benefit the mid-scale brand of hospitality."

He further says, "The emphasis on and allocations made for infrastructure as well as highways, will benefit the sector. The minister's emphasis on controlling inflation will also benefit the industry, which is prone to high risk due to increased inflation."



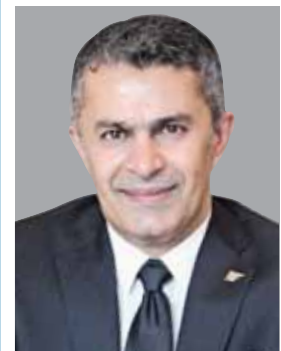
Dhaval Jani

Vice President - Sales & Marketing, V Resorts, **Dhaval Jani**, feels that implementation of policies and financial allocations is of utmost importance. "The good news is the emphasis on improving the infrastructure with 3,500 railway lines across India, setting up of airports in Tier-2 cities, and dedicated trains for religious



tourism, ultimately encouraging people to travel more. However, it all depends on the implementation and time taken for the projects to materialise. The announcement of 'no service charge' on IRCTC bookings is

a move that will benefit a company like ours. This move will encourage travellers to plan their travel online, spelling good news for us, as 80 per cent of our transactions happen online," elaborates Jani.



Saeid Heidari

It will be interesting to understand the plausible impact of these initiatives in the upcoming financial year

”

General Manager, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, **Saeid Heidari**, says, "Whilst the framework for this year's Budget may not elicit direct implications on hospitality and tourism, it will be interesting to understand the plausible impact of these initiatives in the upcoming financial year."





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POWER-PUFFED GIRLS OF hospitality

Photo Courtesy: The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts



Although there has not been a paradigm shift in equal opportunities for women, the current scenario is definitely more buoyant than it was a decade ago. **HospitalityTalk** gets in conversation with women across various sectors of the industry to showcase their will to survive, in turn inspiring more women across geographies.

HT Bureau

The hospitality industry was seen primarily as a male bastion with only smaller roles for women, mainly in F&B services and housekeeping. However, over the years, more and more women have come to assume leadership roles and have led by example.

Evolving through the years

The role women now play in the hospitality industry has undergone colossal reforms and they alone need to be thanked for bringing about this change. Talking about the evolution of the role of women over the last few years, **Meena Bhatia**, Vice-President- Marketing & Operations, Le Meridien New Delhi, says, "There has been a tectonic shift in the way women have been absorbed, not only in junior positions but also in the top management of well-known hotel brands in the country, thereby opening doors for several others to join the workforce. Women have competed with men to deliver services in all key operational areas of a hotel and have excelled in this service-intensive industry."



Meena Bhatia

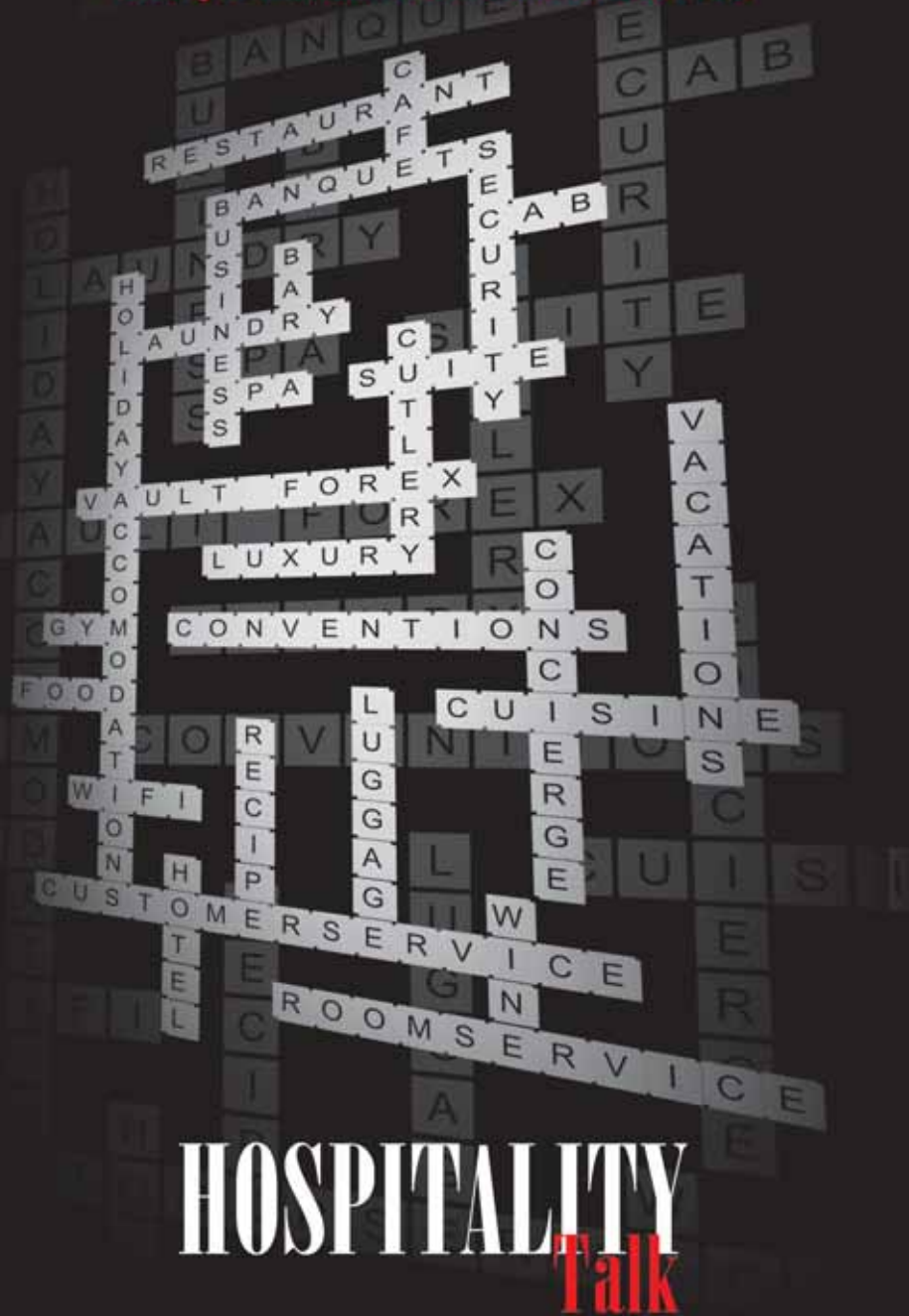


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Harleen Mehta



Senior management roles are today being headed by capable women



Le Meridien New Delhi has several women holding positions as heads of various departments and they always encourage women to work in tandem with men. "We have trained 25 underprivileged girls in key hotel operations as part of a skill development training programme and also helped them find jobs in other hotels in Delhi. We will continue to train the next batch, thereby ensuring that more women find an assured means of livelihood," adds Bhatia.

Women across the globe are breaking the glass ceiling and it is no different in the hospitality industry. **Harleen Mehta**, Vice President, Sales Operations - South Asia, Hyatt Hotels, says, "A shift in perception and roles is visible as senior management and leadership roles are today being headed by capable, talented

women. This stems from both, a larger talent pool among professional women, and the availability of more interesting opportunities across different skill-set requirements and levels. Companies are slowly shifting their focus to enhancing their efforts in acquiring and retaining women."

According to **Monica Suri**, General Manager, Le Meridien Kochi, the number of women entering the hospitality industry is still meagre. She believes that though the initial levels of the corporate ladder remain open to all, further encouragement and growth of women requires effective guidance strategies and extensive commitment. "A proper work-personal life balance is a key factor for all but an unachievable feat for many. Women have the ability to inspire a sense of purpose in others and this facilitates ease



Monica Suri



Women have the ability to inspire a sense of purpose in others and this facilitates ease of implementation of dramatic changes



of implementation of dramatic changes in the organisation.

In the hospitality industry, interpersonal relationships play a major role in the overall success of the organisation. As women are more democratic in their approach and treat both task accomplishment





Feruzan Bilimoria



Women are now bolder than ever and have begun to voice their opinions



and interpersonal relationships with equal importance, it is the need of the hour to welcome women to the industry," she explains.

Women are now entering sectors of their choice. Hospitality offers a wide array of opportunities and women are not shy of taking up jobs of their liking and interest.

Feruzan Bilimoria, Mixologist, Romano's - JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, says, "Opportunities have definitely grown for women. People have become more accepting of women doing jobs that were previously meant only for men. Bartending is one such example."

"The stature of women in the hospitality industry has changed completely. We now see women in each and every department of the hotel, be it engineering,

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Nidhi Verma



Late working hours are a major hindrance to work-life balance



finance, or kitchen," says **Nidhi Verma**, Head, PR & Marketing Communications, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences, who joined the industry more than a decade ago.

Roles and responsibilities that were earlier undertaken by men are now increasingly being shouldered by women. "The hotel industry has realised that inclusion of women in each and every department has become essential, as women tend to bring an element of benevolence, care, and compassion, each being synonymous with the hospitality industry," explains Verma.

According to **Veena Arora**, Chef de Cuisine- The Spice Route, The Imperial, New Delhi, till a few years ago, women faced innumerable challenges while working in this male dominated industry, being considered as a symbol of ornamentation rather than an idol of inspiration. "The scenario has drastically evolved over the years. Women are gaining acceptance as organised, strategic partners, apt for senior level positions. They have been able to carve a niche for themselves and are being hired at all levels of hotel operations," she says.

Overcoming roadblocks

Running hotel operations is an intense task and no two situations are similar, ever. "Guest complaints need to be closed at the earliest to avoid a spill over on social media that could damage a brand's image. As a result, one has to be on top of every complaint. Long hours require an agile mind and a fit body. As competition grows in the market with new hotels and restaurants opening up, it is important to innovate and deliver services in a way that loyal clients don't walk away," explains Bhatia.

For Mehta, challenges always foster opportunities to innovate and grow. She says, "The journey for women employees at Hyatt is very positive. We have always believed in supporting and contributing to the successful career progression of women employees, who are an integral part of the Hyatt family."

According to Suri, hospitality is one of the most popular industries for budding entrepreneurs to tackle and she feels the industry doesn't pose any challenge, especially for women. "A hurdle any working woman faces is at that juncture of



Veena Arora



Women are gaining acceptance as strategic partners



her career where the career growth trajectory intersects with her personal choice of having a child. I took a six-year break after my daughter was born. Honestly, I did not leave with an intention of returning. I kept myself abreast with the industry through friends and old colleagues. However, destiny brought me back to the industry and the rest is history," adds Suri.

Billimoria says, "While I may personally not face any particular challenge in the industry, I do see women who unnecessarily face being objectified. However, women are coming out to be bolder than ever and have begun to voice their opinions and concerns without fear. There is a long way to go, but we are definitely getting there."

For Verma, every job has its own set of challenges. "With the help of team members and taking correct decisions, we try to overcome whatever challenge



we face. Our industry operates round-the-clock and every second we need a team to be guest-focused and functional. Late working hours are a major hindrance to work-personal life balance," she explains.

Women do face umpteen challenges in every sector. However, with sheer determination and the will to survive, they have managed to turn things around for themselves. For Arora, as the only woman in the kitchen, facing verbal and physical embarrassments were considered very common at the beginning of her career. "When I first started more than two decades ago, it was tough getting used to the bustling kitchen environment. I also faced a language barrier as my Hindi wasn't very good. I realised I was very soft-spoken for the business and had to toughen up, become stubborn, and speak loudly to assert myself," she explains.

A word of advice

According to Bhatia, nothing can beat training and commitment to one's work. "I would advise women wanting to join the industry to undergo thorough training, not look for shortcuts, and make themselves indispensable for a company," she opines.

Mehta says, "We are in a business where the professional commitment and dedication required on a daily basis is often high. As a woman professional in the hospitality industry, or any industry for that matter, it is pertinent to maintain a work-life balance. This will stem from developing a healthy relationship with colleagues through direct and continuous engagement, which will in turn foster a healthy work environment."

If a woman is unwavering of her decision to pursue a career in this particular industry, no one can shake her determination. "Get inspired and grant inspiration. Make your role visible to others. Be an expert in whatever you are doing and let no one else's attitude and negativity affect your decisions. Add your signature to whatever you are doing," says Suri.

There is no denying that the life of a budding hospitality entrepreneur can

be an incredibly demanding one, but by entering the industry with dedication, passion, and resilience, the rewards you reap will far outweigh the challenges you face. "You need to be memorable—a solid entity that customers will instantly recognise in the competitive landscape. It is essential that every element of your business is consistent and works together to make you stand out from the crowd," she adds.

For Bilimoria, the requisites for anyone to survive in any industry would be patience and dedication.

In contrast, Verma feels that there are no special requisites for women. "Those who aspire to be a part of the hospitality industry can join a hotel management school, and that's where all bias ceases to exist. A number of government and private institutes provide good courses for the hotel industry," explains Verma.

Arora shares five mantras for those who aspire to be in this industry:

- Follow your heart
- Learn to enjoy your job
- Take ownership of what you're doing
- Be confident
- Be honest

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Food

AS We know it



The F&B industry has gone through a massive evolution in recent times. **HospitalityTalk** gets in a tête-à-tête with some of the industry product suppliers to know their viewpoint on where this sector of the industry stands.



Dolly Kumar
Founder and Director
GAIA

Brand's portfolio

The current portfolio of GAIA ranges from nutritional supplements such as Spirulina, Neem, Aloe Vera, Glucosamine, Flax Oil, and Amla to health foods such as Crunchy Mueslis (Fruit & Nut, Real fruit, Nutty Delight, Strawberry, Diet, Soya, and Amaranth), Oats (Masala & Vegetable), Green Tea (flavours include Plain Green Tea, Lemon, Tulsi, Ginger, Cardamom, Lemon & Honey, Mint, Jasmine), Camomile Infusion, Cookies (Multigrain, Oatmeal, and Digestive), Leaf Green Tea (flavours include Plain Green Tea, Lemon & Tulsi), Multifloral Honey, and Olive oils. We also have two specialised health food lines - GAIA LITE and GAIA SPORT. Roasted Green Gram, Roasted Gram Flakes, Roasted Grain, Legumes & Seeds, Stevia and Sugar Free Cookies are under the GAIA LITE banner, while GAIA SPORT has Trail Mix and Granola bars in four different variants.



We were among the first few brands which assured the promise of good health to the consumers



Evolution of the F&B industry

When GAIA was launched in the year 2009, there was hardly any Indian F&B brand which dedicated itself to health and wellness. In fact, we were among the first few brands which assured the promise of good health to the consumers. But, over the years, the industry has evolved significantly.

I believe, food consumption patterns and preferences are undergoing substantial changes all over the world. Consumers today are getting more conscious about their health. With increasing incidence of food and heart-related diseases like diabetes and obesity, consumers worldwide are showing an interest in a preventive lifestyle rather than a curative approach. With an ever-evolving lifestyle, the health and wellness industry is also evolving simultaneously.

Importance of innovation in F&B products

Innovation is very important in any industry. We not only work in improvising the quality of our products, but also come up with new products to cater to the growing need of the health conscious population. When we started GAIA, there were only few products, but today we have as many as 50 products. We have also been successful in launching two specialised lines - GAIA LITE and GAIA SPORT. While GAIA LITE caters to the needs of diabetics and weight-watchers, GAIA SPORT is for those who require health products to match their energy levels.





Vikram Agarwal
Director
Greendot Health Foods Limited

Brand's portfolio

The brand portfolio of Cornitos includes Nacho Crisps, Taco Shells, specialty sauces, Roasted Nuts - Cashews & Almonds, Coated Green Peas, and pickles - jalapeno peppers and gherkins. Cornitos Nacho Crisps is a Mexican, gluten-free, zero trans-fat snack in ten exotic flavours- Peri Peri, Sizzlin Jalapeno, Extra Cheesy - Cheese and Herbs, Tomato Mexicana, Tikka Masala, Sea Salt, Lime and Mint, Thai Sweet Chili, BBQ, and Wasabi, available in 30g, 60g, 150g, 200g pouches, and 50g cans. Our salsa dips are made from farm fresh ingredients and authentic Mexican delights which are fresh, crispy, and firm. Our "Do It Yourself" range complements today's lifestyle. This range includes bite-sized, four-inch Crunchy Taco Shells made of non-GMO corn and cooked in corn oil. Our Pop N Crunch range includes Premium Cashew, California Almond, and Exotic Coated Green Peas, processed in an imported roasting line. Its six variants are Smoky Barbeque and Lightly Salted

Changing demographics, urbanisation, and growth in organised retail is driving India's F&B sector

California Almonds, Crack Pepper and Lightly Salted Roasted Cashews, Hot and Spicy and Wasabi Flavoured Coated Green Peas.

Evolution of the F&B industry

The Indian snacks market continues to be dominated by chips, traditional sweets, and salted savoury snacks. Snacks, a key emerging category in gourmet foods, is fast gaining acceptance with more and more Indians travelling overseas and getting exposed to new prod-

ucts and flavours. International gourmet snacks are now widely available at supermarkets and modern trade outlets. The F&B service market is dominated by an unorganised segment that is likely to decline significantly over the next few years. Changing demographics, increase in income, urbanisation, and growth in organised retail is driving India's F&B sector. With the advent of foreign and Indian restaurant chains, the organised market is likely to expand quite rapidly.

Importance of innovation in F&B products

In the snacks segment, new launches and investments have followed a set pattern- following leader brands. This has led to the growth of me-too brands. I believe in following the blue ocean strategy, which involves putting a differentiator brand or idea in place and creating more value for consumers. We are big on product innovation. Our offerings have less oil and have a shelf-life of six months as against the industry average of four.



Akshay Bector
Chairman & Managing Director
Cremica Food Industries Limited

Brand's portfolio

Cremica Food Industries is an acknowledged frontrunner in both food retailing and food services industry, and serves as a one-stop solutions provider to all the leading food service chains, food retail chains, hotels groups, and airlines in the country. The company is one of the largest manufacturers and suppliers of liquid condiments and specialty snacks. Some of our key products are Mayonnaise, Flavoured Mayo, and Opera, apart from a range of traditional sauces, hot sauces, speciality sauces, bakery condiments, and French fries.

Evolution of the F&B industry

Increasing consumption of high value food products is the result of a rapid expansion of the Indian economy and that is resulting in changing lifestyles and aspirations. We expect this trend to continue in a major way, leading to exponential growth in the market. The food service side of the business

Innovations that ensure convenience and consistency of flavour are required in FMCG products

has been growing at the rate of 35 per cent, annually. Today, Cremica is one of the most visible brands in the condiment business. Our penetration into and increase in retail and food service sales is expected to be phenomenal in the coming years.

Importance of innovation in F&B products

Across the world, eating habits of people are changing, bringing about a need to innovate products. Cremica is known to bring

that sort of innovation to the industry. Our Desi Express brand has been built on a similar idea. Nowadays, people prefer take-away fast food options or food that is quick to make. Desi Express helps meet this requirement. Such innovations, that ensure convenience and consistency of flavour, while maintaining authenticity, are required in FMCG products as well.



TREADING TOWARDS LEAN

How often do we think about changing our eating habits?
How often are we able to refrain ourselves from bingeing?
Charu Khanna, Clinical nutritionist and Consultant at Max, Panchsheel and Holy Angels Hospital, New Delhi, guides us on differentiating the right from wrong for a healthier lifestyle.



Eating healthy is not just about items of food but also about beverages



Charu Khanna

Eating healthy is the key to healthy-living. A balanced diet that comprises of all nutrients can really do wonders. The main challenge lies in having the ability to identify which nutrient needs to be included and which excluded from one's diet to suit our dynamic physiological state and alternating lifestyle.

Altering habits

With increasing awareness towards keeping healthy, most of us aim to follow a healthy regime but are unable to keep up. As a result, we resort to eating meals at restaurants and hotels or consume convenience foods.

Studies reveal that current trends show confusion amongst masses where selection of food and nutrients is concerned. In contrast to western cultures like American and European, where people choose tastier options over healthier ones, consumers in Asia Pacific consume organic foods as they are healthier, not genetically modified, pesticide-free, and environment-friendly.

Clean eating is the new buzzword for healthy eating. A growing trend-towards eating everything "clean" is leading the way to healthier eating habits. Clean eating lays stress on foods free from toxins

and toxic materials. This literally translates into consumption of fresh fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, and lentils; reduction in consumption of meat and meat products; avoiding alcohol; avoiding intake of too much sodium; and altogether avoiding processed foods. Moreover, with introduction and acceptance of food items like oats, quinoa, kañiwa, and other whole grains, one can move towards choosing healthier eating options.

Some of us, however, have a sweet-tooth and are not shy of indulging in options like chocolates, muffins, brownies, etc. Though consuming these does no harm, it is essential to strike a balance between the ingestion of macro nutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats. Tossing in a few chocolate chips in a bowl of oatmeal will help you eat healthy while still satiating your craving for something sweet.

Drinking healthy

Eating healthy is not just about items of food but beverages, too. One often misses out on this element of a healthy diet. Choosing beverages that are derived from plant water, such as cucumber and cactus, are more nutritious and refreshing than several others. They are natural hydrators and a

better alternative to sports drinks and other beverages that contain artificial sweeteners.

Yoghurt seems to be another trendsetter this season and you can prepare it simply by replacing your current choices with healthier alternatives. Being a rich source of protein and calcium, yoghurt is low on calories, especially when made out of skimmed milk.

It can even be used to replace sour cream dips, providing healthier alternatives to weight-watchers. Yoghurt is also appropriate for maintaining health of intestines as it is a fermented milk product. Other probiotic food supplements have also gained recognition and are increasingly being included in diets.

Trending bits and drinks

Purple-coloured food items are gaining traction all over the world. This colour is a flavonoid called anthocyanin that lowers the risk of certain cancers and heart diseases. Research studies have concluded that the current year will witness a trend of non-alcoholic drinks. There may also be a rise in veggie and vegan cooking. Moreover, with increased emphasis on gut health, fermented foods will rule the charts this year.

Chilling with CHILEAN WINES

Hazel Jain



Nicolas Kowalski

VIÑA VENTISQUERO IN INDIA

Cabernet Sauvignon 2014:

Deep ruby in colour, fresh fruit nose with raspberries, strawberries, blueberries and blackcurrants intermingled with notes of vanilla and chocolate.

Carménère 2014- A deep cherry colour with aromas of black and red fruit, such as blueberries, blackberries, blackcurrants, strawberries and cherries, as well as spicy notes that blend harmoniously with hints of chocolate and vanilla. A great combination with Indian food.

Sauvignon Blanc 2015- A pale green wine in colour with a blend of citrus and tropical fruit aromas, such as lime, grapefruit, pineapple and pear, complemented by gentle herbal notes.

Are you meeting hotels to promote your wine?

The agenda is on the on-trade visits, training sessions and tasting events. On this visit, we are only focusing on Mumbai but our wines are available at premium On Trade and Off Trade outlets. We are in talks with new upcoming outlets across India. The Indian market is one of the youngest in the world for wines and quite tough to get into due to regulations. However, it is also one of the largest addressable markets with almost 20 million new drinkers every year, which makes it a very exciting market.

What are the other mediums through which you are planning to expand your presence here?

Firstly, both the trade and direct channels are important to us. We are also very keenly looking into duty-free outlets for some of our

rare wines. In terms of marketing, we are in the process of putting together ideas and strategy for social media platforms to improve our visibility.

What challenges have you faced so far?

Heavy taxation in India means that entry level wines are the norm here. This is where we are looking to build and then explore other channels to introduce our premium offering. We entered the market and it took a while because of registration. Also, deadlines for registrations have not allowed us to enter New Delhi yet. However, this will be solved in the near future and the outlook is bright.

With many international spirits available in Indian market, what sets your brand apart?

Working at Ventisquero and visiting

Chile has been an eye-opener for me in terms of new terroirs.

Chile is a rather small category within the Indian wine market. Australia is the king and we are the only winery in Chile to work with an icon of the Australian wine world. His name is John Duval and he was Chief winemaker at Penfold's for 29 years.

He joined us in making our wines back in early 2000's. Our style of wine is fruit forward, fresh and exciting. Also, we have the unique grape variety called Carmeneré available for our house wine proposition. This is pretty unique against other Chilean wine producers. Ventisquero owns its own vineyards in Chile's principal wine producing areas: Coastal Maipo, Casablanca, Colchagua, Leyda and Huasco.



“ Heavy taxation in India means that entry level wines are the norm here. This is where we are looking to build and then explore... ”

In-sink with cleanliness

Following extensive testing and development, Franke has launched a new range of sinks that combine steel and fragranite. The new Fragranite tackles the humble problem associated with cleaning of composite sinks. The revolutionary new Fragranite+ technology is now available on all Franke Fragranite and Silk Sheen Fragranite sinks, which now enjoy ultra-smooth surfaces that are exceptionally easy to keep clean.



Dip into flavour

Cornitos' lip-smacking Chunky Salsa has been launched in three versions—Hot, Mild, and Pineapple. Cornitos Hot Chunky Salsa has chillies, chunks of fresh tomatoes, onions, and jalapeno peppers that go well with a filling of Cornitos Tacos and Burritos. It is the perfect dip for your evening snack.

Raising the energy bar

GAIA has launched Granola Bars in four different variants under its specialised health food line—GAIA SPORT. The four variants are Apple & Cinnamon, Banana & Cardamom, Chocolate & Muesli, and Almond & Raisin. These delicious wholesome bars can be enjoyed anytime, anywhere. Packed with a variety of nutrients, this is the perfect snack for young and old alike. These uniquely flavoured bars are also the perfect pre-workout snack to energise you to go that extra mile.



Floored by Vista

Junckers, established in 1930, has launched an exotic Vista Grey collection of flooring, which is perfect for your living space. The gently-textured oak planks are a subtle combination of light grey and white tones. The fusion of the two colours beautifully enhances the natural grain structure of the oak. Made exclusively from solid hardwood, each plank exhibits rich colour and structural graining variation, characteristic of specific wood species.

Love your 'Honey'

APIS India, the largest producer, distributor, and exporter of quality honey, has introduced two healthy variants of honey brands in the Indian market— APIS Himalaya and APIS Himalaya Gold. For health-conscious customers, APIS Himalaya is a nutritious replacement of sugar and has a diverse mix of health benefits. It has the ability to enhance your endurance and boost immunity.



Detoxify as you get pampered

uPamper2 from OSIM is an excellent combination of power-packed tapping massage, soothing warmth, and Gua sha massage, all in one compact handheld massager. The Gua sha massage session stimulates circulation with downward strokes to promote the body's detoxification process.



Nesting trendy with Vitra

Vitra introduces a new range of modular bathroom furniture— Nest Trendy. The Nest Trendy series by Vitra offers family-sized comfort with a wealth of features such as child step, laundry cabinet night light, and easy-to-reach storage areas. It also offers a heat gauge for the digital bathroom mixer that displays accurate water temperature.



A well-dressed salad

With just the right amount of herbs, spices, and seasoning, Cremica's latest range of salad dressings offers a quick and flavoursome solution for the kitchen. Opt for Russian salad dressing, Italian salad dressing, Caesar salad dressing, Vinaigrette salad dressing, or Thousand Island salad dressing, to break away from monotony and add a zing to your salad.

Towering above the rest

With the aim of helping bar and restaurant owners quickly fill pitchers of best-selling brews on busy nights, Elanpro has introduced Ice Fall Tower, an illuminated draft beer tower to dispense cold beer from the pre-chiller. The energy efficient product provides an eye-catching LED display along with freeze tower solution. A financially responsible and customer centric product, Ice Fall Tower by Elanpro is easy to maintain and use.

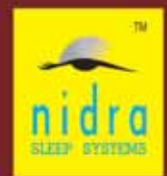


Sliding the doors

With emergence of spacious and luxurious commercial spaces, need for wider door opening is on the rise. Ozone Telescopic Automatic Sliding Door System aims to provide the perfect solution to this. These systems can handle high traffic movement, simultaneously ensuring smoother door performance with each opening and closing.



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MOVEMENTS

JEAN-MICHEL CASSÉ

Chief Operating Officer, India and South Asia
AccorHotels

AccorHotels has promoted **Jean-Michel Cassé** as its Chief Operating Officer - India and South Asia. In his most recent role as Senior Vice-President for AccorHotels, India, Jean-Michel has played a pivotal role in the group's success in India. A seasoned hotelier, Jean-Michel brings over three decades of industry experience and deep understanding of varied cultures, having worked across multiple international markets in Europe, Asia, Middle East, and Africa.



PAUL STEVENS

Chief Executive Officer
Accor Plus

Paul Stevens has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of Accor Plus, AccorHotels' travel, dining, and lifestyle programme. Stevens joined AccorHotels, Australia, in 1997, holding several General Manager positions before leaving the group in 2004 and rejoining in 2005. From 2014, he assumed his most recent role of Vice President (Operations) for the mid-scale and economy brands, Upper Southeast Asia.



SUDEEP JAIN

Vice President, Development,
South West Asia
IHG

InterContinental Hotels Group has appointed **Sudeep Jain** as Vice President, Development, South West Asia. His immediate remit will be to further strengthen IHG's presence in the region encompassing India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Jain brings more than 15 years' experience in the hospitality sector from roles based in the US and India. His most recent role was with Starwood Hotels & Resorts as Vice President, Acquisitions and Development for South Asia.



VINITA KHAR

Director of Sales and Marketing
Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa

Park Hyatt Goa Resort and Spa has appointed **Vinita Khar** as Director of Sales and Marketing. Khar has been associated with the hospitality industry for more than a decade and brings with her insightful learning and experience gained across international brands. She is returning to the Hyatt family after 18 months, during which she was part of the pre-opening and launch team of Conrad Pune as Director of Sales and Marketing.





VINEET CHOPRA

General Manager
Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru

Vineet Chopra has been appointed as General Manager of Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru. With more than 15 years' experience in the hospitality sector, he brings to the table a strong understanding of rooms and F&B with an excellent track record for staff retention. In his new role, Chopra will be responsible for the overall functioning of the hotel, creating visibility for the brand in the city, and establishing the property as a business hotel to drive the corporate crowds for both short and long stay visits.



KESHWAR BHAGAT

Director of Sales & Marketing - India
The Chedi Mumbai

Keshwar Bhagat joins Akaryn Hotel Group (AHG), part of the small luxury hotels of the world, as Director of Sales and Marketing – India. She is a familiar face on the tourism scene, having been an intermediary for the travel trade fraternity and various regions of France during her role as Promotions Manager for Atout France. Prior to this, Bhagat worked with the French Government in various capacities with the Consulate General of France and Promosalons. She will be based in Mumbai to promote Akaryn's ever-growing portfolio.



HIMANSHU TANEJA

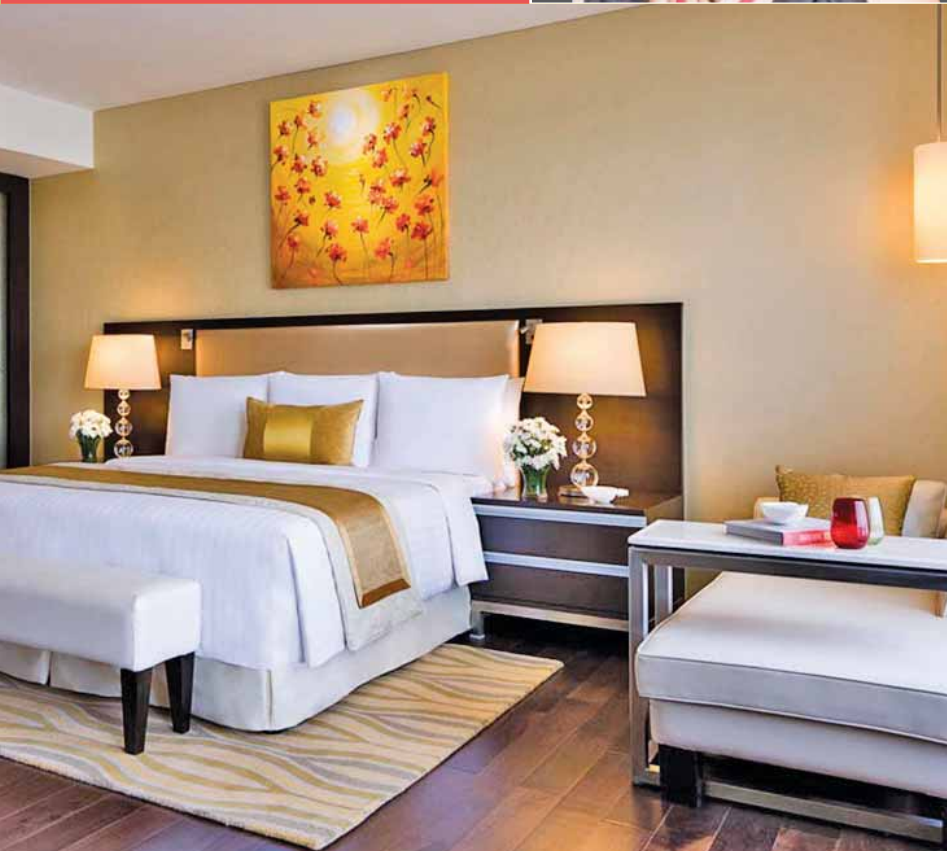
Director of Culinary
The St. Regis Mumbai

Himanshu Taneja has been appointed as Director of Culinary at The St. Regis Mumbai. He brings with him 17 years of experience, working with some of the leading Indian and international hotel chains in the country. He moves to this role from that of Executive Chef at JW Marriott Juhu, where he was overseeing all operations of the culinary team and helping successful venue launches of the hotel.

AVIJIT DEB SHARMA

Executive Chef
Courtyard by Marriott Mumbai
International Airport

Avijit Deb Sharma joins the Marriott family as Executive Chef of Courtyard by Marriott Mumbai International Airport. With an illustrious career of over 14 years in the hospitality industry, Sharma brings with him an extensive experience in handling operations, staffing and training, and developing and implementing concepts and new trends. His passion, experience, sensibility, and dedication to food in all its forms, have seen him evolve and develop into a dynamic personality, adapting to various roles.



MOVEMENTS

ASHRAFI MATCHESWALA

General Manager

Vivanta by Taj –
President, Mumbai

“An avid explorer, I like to dine in new places and visit new destinations”

A true believer in fitness, I follow a strict regime of running and participating in marathons with an aim to outdo my own records. I am passionate about a healthy work-life balance. An avid explorer, I like to dine in new places and visit new destinations that help me connect with different cultures. I am also an ardent philatelist. My favourite holiday destination is Maui, Hawaii and my favourite cuisine is Chinese. If I were a spice, I would be a tamarind – familiar, yet unexpected.

GIULIO D’ALBERTO

General Manager

The Chedi Mumbai



“I draw inspiration from my wife who has always been a pillar of strength”

I usually unwind over a glass of Zacapa XO, an aged rum from Guatemala, while puffing a Cohiba Robusto, and melting those flavours with an Italian Gobino dark chocolate. I draw inspiration from my wife who has always been a pillar of strength for me. I met her in Cuba 17 years ago, while on holiday. Cuba offers a musical, warm culture, and a wonderfully preserved history that inspires the soul. Bali has also had a special place in my heart ever since I visited it in 2014. I am in love with it and it feels just like home.

FAISAL NAFEEES

Area General Manager

Narendra Bhawan and
Laxmi Niwas Palace,
Bikaner

“I look up to people from different walks of life”

If you can dream it, you can do it. I have always thought that it is better to achieve something substantial rather than trying to win. I take inspiration from everyone who helps me learn and grow as a person. I look up to people from different walks of life. My favourite destination abroad is Koh Samui, and in India it is Kashmir and Ladakh. I would also like to visit Rome, Israel, and Kerala.

AJIT JOSE

General Manager

ibis Kochi City Centre



“Travelling serves as a stress buster for me”

Travelling has been a lifelong passion, one that intrigued me from a very young age. When I was a kid, I got the opportunity to travel to Egypt and Israel, which ignited the wanderlust in me. I believe the biggest perk of being a hotelier is that I get to travel a lot. I aspire to one day visit Africa, but first I'd like to explore all that India has to offer. Besides being a hobby, travelling also serves as a stress buster for me.





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