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HANDICRAFTS INDIA YEAR BOOK

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PAN INDIA

Garish Oberoi elected as President, FHRAI

The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has elected **Garish Oberoi** as its President for the term September 2017-2018. This was announced during the federation's 61st Annual General Meeting held on September 23 at Le Méridien New Delhi. A seasoned hotelier, Oberoi has been in the hospitality industry for over three decades. He previously held the post of Vice President and Treasurer, FHRAI. He holds a Masters of Business Administration from IIFT and is a graduate in economics from University of Delhi. Speaking at the occasion, Oberoi said, "I am very grateful for this opportunity. I would want to move ahead, taking together all stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality fraternity. My key focus would be on getting the GST reduced further to at least 12 per cent. I would also be emphasising on skill development and increasing the FHRAI membership base. The next FHRAI convention will be taking place in the heritage city of Lucknow."



Oberoi is the former Director of Chandigarh Industrial & Tourism Corporation. He has been a special examiner of Hotel Management & Catering Technology at Rohilkhand University and has been Assistant Governor of Rotary Bareilly. Besides being on the Advisory Board of Carnegie Mellon University's Indian subsidiary, Oberoi holds important positions in several social and educational organisations of Bareilly. As the President, Oberoi will supervise and guide the administration of the Federation that is run on a day-to-day basis by the Secretary General and the Secretariat.



SOUTH INDIA

HPMF showcases hospitality with humility

Hospitality Purchasing Managers' Forum strongly believes in extending a helping hand and being responsible. With the forum extending its wings to the city of Hyderabad, members of the chapter got a chance to visit the 140-year-old 'Little Sisters of the Poor' old age home located in Bhoiguda, Secunderabad, on October 15, 2017. The members donated bed sheets, chemicals for cleaning, rice bags, milk powder, etc. "It gives us great pleasure for being socially responsible. Helping less-fortunate parents and bringing a smile on their face gives us immense satisfaction," said **Jwala Srinivas**, who is leading the team of the Hyderabad chapter. HPMF also plans to join hands with the Hospitality IT Professionals Forum to jointly serve the society in the best possible way.



SOUTH INDIA

Lords Hotels & Resorts to soon open 27th property

Lords Hotels & Resorts has announced the launch of its 27th hotel property, Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road, the group's second hotel in the city of Bengaluru. The 53-room hotel is scheduled to commence operations soon and will offer luxurious accommodations and full service at friendly prices for tourists round-the-year. "Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road will be our third hotel in the southern region. Over the years, we have steadily broadened our product portfolio in terms of the segments in which the properties operate and also through the destinations at which they are present. Today, we cover a gamut of hospitality products and services. We are pleased to announce the launch of Lords Eco Inn Mysuru Road and are positive that tourists will appreciate the availability of budget-friendly accommodations in one of India's busiest cities," says **PR Bansal**, Managing Director, Lords Hotels & Resorts.





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NORTH INDIA

BCIHMCT organises 16th Hospitality Ensemble

The 16th Chandiwala Hospitality Ensemble held at Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology from October 11-13, 2017, saw a record crowd of hospitality students and industry experts. Chef Subroto Goswami, Executive Chef and Culinary Area Champion, North & West, InterContinental Hotels Group, the Chief Guest of the opening ceremony, was delighted to be

amongst upcoming hoteliers and budding chefs. Besides several culinary competitions, the event saw participation, for the first time, from secondary school students. The valedictory function was held on October 13, followed by a theme dinner, Agnihom - Food for Soul. The evening witnessed a plethora of events that included an award presentation and a cultural extravaganza by the students of BCIHMCT.



SOUTH INDIA

Fairfield by Marriott adds property in Visakhapatnam

Marriott International has announced the opening of Fairfield by Marriott Visakhapatnam, the latest addition to the brand's footprint in South Asia. The property offers 121 spacious rooms designed with modern comforts. The business centre and meeting rooms are equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual facilities and all public areas and guest rooms have high-speed Wi-Fi. Fairfield by Marriott Visakhapatnam is located in the heart of Visakhapatnam city, close to all the popular attractions. It is also just two kilometres away from the city's international airport. "We are excited to open our fifth Fairfield by Marriott in India and are confident in delivering a seamless hotel experience at great value," says **Neeraj Govil**, Area Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International.



NORTH & EAST INDIA

Lemon Tree Hotels expands to 26 cities with hotels in Alwar and Patna

Lemon Tree Hotels has opened its two refreshing hotels, Lemon Tree Hotel, Alwar and Lemon Tree Premier, Patna, marking its entry into these historic cities. Lemon Tree Hotel, Alwar is a midscale hotel that appeals to both business and leisure travellers. It houses 40 contemporary rooms and suites, a conference room, as well as a fitness centre. Lemon Tree Premier, Patna boasts 105 plush and spacious rooms and suites with 20,000 sqft of banquet and meeting spaces. With the opening of these new properties, Lemon Tree Hotels now owns and operates 42 hotels in 26 cities with 4434 rooms. "We are delighted to bring the Lemon Tree brand to Patna and Alwar. These hotels are a first for us and present an exciting branded alternative to the city residents as well as our existing customer base. Both cities imbibe a rich cultural heritage and attract business and leisure travellers," says **Rattan Keswani**, Deputy Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels.



NORTH INDIA

The Oberoi, New Delhi to reopen on January 1, 2018

After extensive renovations, The Oberoi, New Delhi will reopen on January 1, 2018. The hotel has commenced reservation on its website and on phone. The ₹500 crore revamp project, which was slated to reopen in April next year, will be completed ahead of schedule. Built in 1965, The Oberoi, New Delhi was closed two years ago for renovation. The revamped property will have 218 rooms and will become the first hotel in India to have air purifiers to address growing concerns over air quality in the national capital.



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NORTH INDIA

Louvre Hotels Group launches second hotel in Pink City

Louvre Hotels Group has launched Golden Tulip Essential, an upscale smart hotel in Jaipur. Designed for millennials, Golden Tulip Essential Jaipur is a full-service hotel that

houses a multi-cuisine restaurant, a fully-equipped business centre with state-of-the-art conference facilities, and rooftop banquets for social functions and gatherings. Golden Tulip Hotels and Resorts currently operates 26 hotels across 19 cities in South Asia and is in the process of opening 6-8 properties across the country in the next one year. "The launch of Golden Tulip Essential Jaipur further strengthens our brand presence in the city and affirms our rapidly growing network across the country. With our second property in the city, we will further enhance our leisure portfolio in the market and offer options to guests travelling for leisure or business," says **Vimal Singh**, Managing Director, Golden Tulip Hotels and Resorts, South Asia.



NORTH INDIA

Sakura, New Delhi, launches new menu for food lovers

Sakura, the Japanese cuisine restaurant at The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi, brings in refreshing flavours and tantalizing dishes with the launch of its new menu. For over a decade, Sakura has delighted guests with authentic Japanese food. This year again, Sakura brings for its diners a refreshed menu that is a perfect amalgamation of taste and tradition. Japanese cuisine has always been an enigma wrapped in layers of mystery; the more you uncover, the more there is waiting to be discovered. This new menu broadens the choice, variety, and value it brings to guests.



SOUTH INDIA

ibis debuts in Coimbatore with 129 rooms

The opening of ibis Coimbatore City Centre marks the debut of the hotel brand in the city of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The business hotel is strategically located in the city's central business district at Lakshmi Mills Junction, within close proximity of local tourist attractions and shopping hubs. A modern retreat for business travellers, ibis Coimbatore City Centre's 129 well-appointed rooms offer guests a unique blend of modernity and comfort. "The thriving, centuries-old city of Coimbatore is renowned as a bustling metropolis with a rich heritage. The city is fast emerging as a growing business hub for textiles, industries, commerce, education, information technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. This is our first ibis in the city, third in the state, and 16th in the country. The opening of this hotel caters to the growing needs of business as well as leisure travellers in the region," says **Pierre-Etienne de Montgrand**, Director of Operations - ibis & ibis Styles India, AccorHotels.



PAN INDIA

With OYO, Yatra expands to over 70,000 hotels in India

Yatra.com has announced its partnership with OYO. This partnership brings OYO's inventory for the first time onto a leading online travel agent platform. With this association, Yatra's total hotel inventory will further expand to over 70,000 hotels in India, well ahead of its peers, adding momentum to its rapidly growing footprint, especially in the budget hotel category. Yatra will now offer its customers an unparalleled pool of accommodation options to choose from. Travellers can book OYO hotels on Yatra's platform, make changes to their reservations, and reach out to Yatra's customer service if required. Yatra continues to expand its reach in Tier-II and III markets in India, and this partnership with OYO will further strengthen its position in these markets. "Customer needs and preferences are constantly evolving. They seek more interesting ways to make their travel bookings seamless and cost effective. We, as a company, are focused on being innovative and providing a differentiated experience to our customers. Our partnership with OYO is a firm step in that direction and enables us to deliver a unique proposition to our customers, allowing them to choose from an unmatched variety of travel and accommodation options in India," says **Dhruv Shringi**, Co-founder and CEO, Yatra.com.

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NORTH AMERICA

Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort, Arizona, reopens

Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort has announced the completion of an extensive \$8.5 million renovation. The redesign celebrates the resort's 40th anniversary along with its colourful history and iconic location

in the Valley of the Sun. Inspired by the rich surrounding landscapes of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve combined with bright accents, the transformation offers a modern and minimal design aesthetic defined by local desert elements. The 224 remastered suites reflect a warm, neutral colour palette tying in locally-inspired elements with pops of colour and contrast.



NORTH AMERICA

JW Marriott Essex House New York completes \$38 million renovation

JW Marriott Essex House New York has announced the completion of a \$38 million transformation of its 426 guest rooms, 101 suites, and corridors, dramatically redesigned to interpret a new and modern aesthetic. The hotel's structure and strong lines of its art déco heritage have been softened and expressed in a redefined way. The hotel's new design evokes a strong historical rooting but with a fresh twist. A bold but neutral colour palette plays to fashion's own rebirth of the period.

AUSTRALIA

AccorHotels to acquire Mantra Group

AccorHotels has signed an agreement with Mantra Group with a view to acquire all of the issued capital in Mantra by a scheme of arrangement to be approved by Mantra shareholders. Under the terms of the agreement, AccorHotels would offer AUD 3.96 in cash for each Mantra share, including any potential special dividend.

Sébastien Bazin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, AccorHotels, says, "We are delighted

to have come to an agreement to acquire the Mantra Group.

This operation will underpin our long-term growth in the Asia Pacific region. Mantra's portfolio would offer AccorHotels additional accommodation formats and a strong customer base to complement our successful hotel portfolio in Australia. We are confident that the transaction terms are attractive for shareholders of both groups."



WORLDWIDE

Kempinski launches redesigned loyalty programme

With enhanced benefits for loyal guests of Kempinski Hotels in its 76 destinations across more than 30 countries, the redesigned Kempinski Discovery Loyalty Programme sees recognition taken to the next level with rewards both within the hotel and beyond. Programme members will enjoy immediate benefits tailored specifically to their preferences, ranging from room upgrades and late check-out or early check-in to early access to exclusive offers, concessions at Kempinski restaurants, a dedicated butler service, and personalised chef services. The most loyal Kempinski guests, at the highest tier level, will be eligible for entry into an exclusive new Kempinski Private Concierge.



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AFRICA

AVANI to debut in North Africa with two properties in Tunisia

AVANI Hotels & Resorts has announced that it will debut in North Africa with two properties in Tunisia. Scheduled to open in the coming months, AVANI Les Berges Du Lac Tunis Suites will be located in Les Berges Du Lac II, a prime commercial, residential, and diplomatic area in the Tunisian capital. The 41-key property will offer exclusive serviced apartment accommodation options. Currently in its design phase, AVANI Gammarth Tunis Resort & Spa is expected to open in 2021. The upscale hotel will offer 232 rooms and 18 private beach villas and meeting space including a 1000 sqm ballroom.



EUROPE

Park Inn by Radisson Kyiv Troyitska opens with 196 rooms

Park Inn by Radisson has announced the opening of its first hotel in Troyitska, Kyiv (Kiev), Ukraine. This is Carlson Rezidor's fourth hotel in Ukraine and third in Kyiv city. Situated in Kyiv centre, Park Inn by Radisson Kyiv Troyitska offers an international midscale hotel experience. Located at Troyitska Square, the hotel is built by the real estate and development business division of Smart-Holding. The hotel's 196 rooms feature stylish décor with ample work space and essential amenities for a comfortable and uncomplicated stay. The property is located close to Olimpiiska Metro Station and the international airport.



MIDDLE EAST

Tivoli Hotels & Resorts expands footprint in the Middle East

Tivoli Hotels and Resorts is now operating Souq Waqif Boutique Hotels in Doha, a collection of nine unique and historical buildings featuring intricate décor and architecture, nestled in the heart of the historic Souq Waqif. Souq Waqif Boutique Hotels, which is one of the many assets managed by Katara Hospitality, will now be known as Souq Waqif Boutique Hotels by Tivoli. The synergies of these two brands will enhance the development of the local hospitality sector and contribute towards economic diversification as envisioned in the Qatar National Vision 2030.

AFRICA

AVANI Gaborone Resort, Botswana, reopens

AVANI Gaborone Resort & Casino, the business and social hub of Botswana's capital, is celebrating the completion of an extensive renovation, representing an investment of \$7.5 million by Minor Hotels, the parent company. All 156 guest rooms and public spaces, including the main entrance, have been renovated with the aim of introducing AVANI's signature design hallmarks. AVANI Gaborone is ideally located for leisure and business travellers and those seeking great food and a variety of entertainment options.

NORTH AMERICA

The Aviary NYC now open at Mandarin Oriental, New York

The five-star Mandarin Oriental, New York and Chicago-based co-owners Chef Grant Achatz and Nick Kokonas of the widely-acclaimed Alinea Group have announced the opening of The Aviary NYC. Featuring a distinctive culinary approach to cocktails and service, The Aviary NYC also includes The Office NYC, a speakeasy-style environment, balancing the world of old and new. The concept is Chef Achatz and Kokonas' inaugural hotel partnership and first location outside of Chicago. Both spaces were designed by Tihany Design and are located on the hotel's 35th floor.





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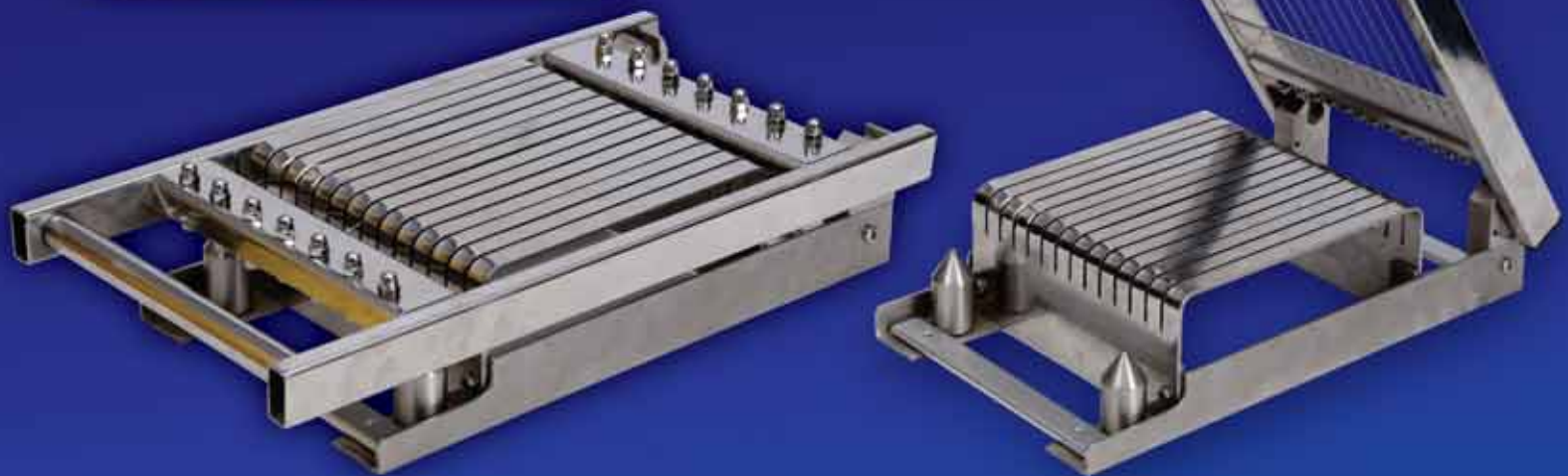
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NORTH AMERICA

The Ritz-Carlton opens 358-room resort in Bacara, California

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company has announced the newest addition to its collection of luxurious global properties, The Ritz-Carlton Bacara, Santa Barbara. The former Bacara Resort & Spa has undergone a multimillion-dollar renovation which included all 358 guest rooms and suites as well as enhancements to the resort's six culinary venues. The oceanfront resort offers direct beach access and three saltwater swimming pools, a 42,000-sqft luxury spa with 36 treatment rooms, a salon and a fitness centre, as well as abundant indoor and outdoor event space. The resort is nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Ynez Mountains, with close proximity to the region's best vineyards.



NORTH AMERICA

Hilton announces third hotel in Washington, DC

Hilton has announced that the Loews Madison Hotel will join Hilton Hotels & Resorts' portfolio as The Madison Washington DC, a Hilton Hotel. The 356-room hotel, located in the heart of downtown Washington, DC, has long offered sophisticated accommodation to some of the capital's most esteemed visitors. In partnership with affiliates of Walton Street Capital and Waterton, The Madison Washington DC is poised to set a new standard for hospitality and elevate Hilton's presence in this globally sought-after destination. In addition to Capital Hilton, The Madison Washington DC joins Washington Hilton, marking the brand's third hotel in the city.

EUROPE

Kempinski Hotels to debut in Riga, Latvia, with 141 rooms

Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga, Latvia's first five-star luxury Kempinski hotel, is set to soon open doors to guests. With the famous Latvian National Opera House by its side and the Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at its feet, the hotel presents a whole new level of comfort and elegance to both city guests and locals. Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga features 141 first-class rooms and suites, two restaurants and two bars, six spacious meeting rooms, and a world-class spa and wellness facility. Breathtaking panoramic views of the capital, refined service, and a rich cultural experience await guests from around the globe.



MIDDLE EAST

IHG opens first Holiday Inn in Qatar

InterContinental Hotels Group has announced the opening of Holiday Inn Doha - The Business Park in partnership with Trans Orient Group. The opening marks the brand's debut in the country. This will be the 24th Holiday Inn in the Middle East. The newly-built 307-room hotel is situated right in the centre of the business and financial district in Doha. Holiday Inn Doha - The Business Park features quality amenities and top service standards that reflect the Holiday Inn brand identity. The hotel has a broad range of meeting and event facilities, including a 907-sqm pillarless ballroom, seven meeting and function rooms, a private bridal room, and a multipurpose business centre.



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Sarovar awaits a positive 2018

As the year comes to a close, **Ajay K. Bakaya**, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, shares his experience post the merger of the group and how the year has been for the hotel management company.



HT Bureau

If you had to sum up 2017, how would you describe it in terms of Sarovar's business and that of the industry?

It was a turnaround year. Room rates strengthened and the number of tourists increased. Domestic travellers led demand and we hope this trend continues.

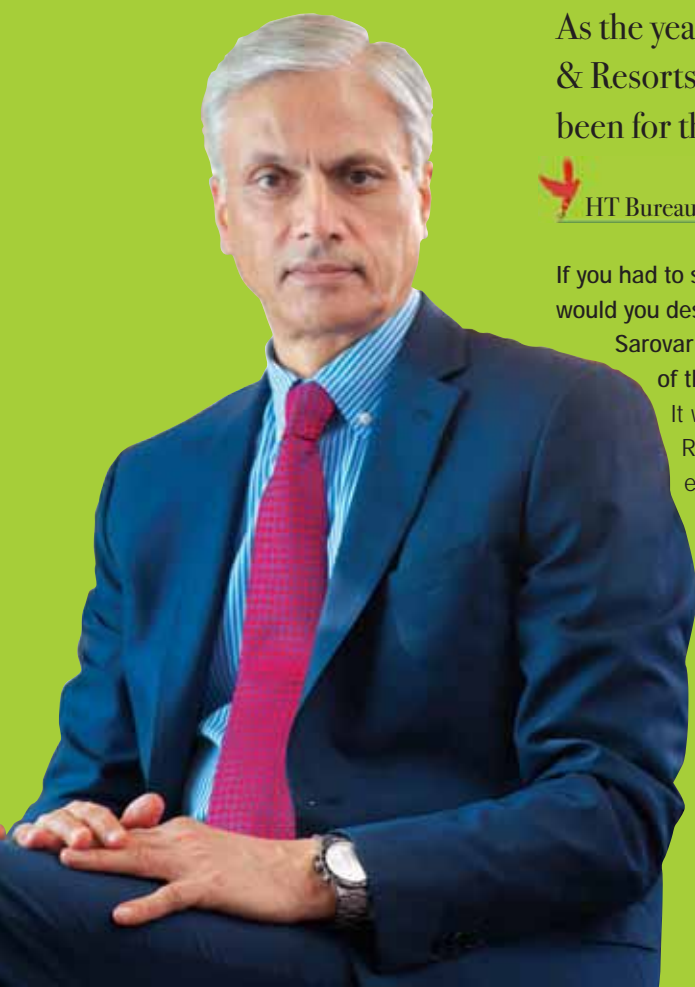
We opened our flagship hotel in Nairobi, The Lazizi Premiere, located at the Jomo

Kenyatta International Airport. This is the largest airport hotel to be opened in Kenya. Closer home, we opened hotels in Ranchi, Amritsar, and Mahipalpur (New Delhi). We aim to expand rapidly with signing of new hotels in Jhansi, Raipur, Bengaluru and Dibrugarh (Assam). Our overseas portfolio, too, has been strengthened. Our budget brand, Hometel, made its global debut with the signing of Tetezi Hometel in Nairobi, expected to open next year.

Going into 2018, what do you identify as the most disruptive force for the Indian hospitality industry? In recent years, we have seen many consolidations among hotel compa-

nies and online travel agents. Going into 2018, we'll start to see the full impact of these changes. We have been a part of similar progress and we expect a bigger and positive impact from this. To stay competitive in a mega brand and OTA-driven world, it is now a matter of personalised vs one-size-fits-all notion.

Another disruptive force that is going to have a major impact is the rise of innovative technology and digital customer service. Increasingly, travellers are turning to digital platforms to plan trips, make bookings, and share experiences. An increasing number of tasks in the hospitality business will be taking



place digitally. Additionally, the rise of sharing economies and the alternate or informal accommodation sector is bringing in new trends.

Are mergers the future of the hospitality industry?

Mergers are one of the best vehicles for growth and size is the best way to compete in an increasingly globalised hospitality sector. With a bigger scale, you get better brand recognition, expanded loyalty programmes, and bigger marketing budgets as well. An acquisition can be the fastest way for a hotel company to fill the gap.

Are there any plans of expanding into the luxury segment?

We already have select properties in the premium segment. An outstanding example is Vasundhara Sarovar Premiere, Vayalar, Kerala. We will continue to add more and look forward to intensifying this brand. That said, we aim to keep our targets focused on the mid-market space as this is where growth lies.

Is there going to be any change in your marketing strategy?

It all depends on the location we are in. In Somnath and Amritsar, my client is well-defined. In towns like Raipur, Jhansi, and Lusaka, we are looking for business travellers who pass by these regions. We have clarity in what we are targeting and who we are targeting.

Post merger, what all has changed for Sarovar?

At this point of time, we are part of a larger group, so that's a big change.



We are rubbing shoulders with other international groups. On the ground in times to come, we are looking at very specific changes in terms of loyalty bonuses for our customers, in terms of wider region distribution on GDS platforms, and in terms of using technology that would be used by Louvre Group worldwide.

With a project coming up in the vicinity of Aerocity, how do you plan to deal with the competition there?

We don't have any branded hotels in our immediate vicinity. I know Aerocity is doing very well for most of the hotels. We have had an experience of opening a property in Kapashera, the property is doing exceptionally well. So, I think Sarovar Portico in Mahipalpur should do particularly well.

What are your expectations from 2018?

I would anticipate a growth of 10 per cent next year, based largely on the fact that new supply has dried up or is trickling in now. There is no big supply in most of our cities. Demand is growing consistently and hospitality continues to contribute positively to the GDP. Other service sector players may not be that positive or as buoyant.



“

With events like these (HPMF Convention), we would like to bring in purchasing heads and suppliers on the same platform, where both understand each other's needs

”



NEXT HPMF CONVENTION IN VARANASI

After concluding the seventh anniversary celebrations with a big bang in Jodhpur, the Hospitality Purchasing Manager's Forum (HPMF) has now decided to host the next edition in Varanasi. **Nitin Nagrale**, Founder, HPMF, while talking about the Jodhpur event, promises a bigger and better show next year.



Peden Doma Bhutia

What was it like to plan an event of this scale? What was the kind of preparation that went into it?

Our conventions have always been different, be it the venue or the activities involved. After the grand success at Bhubaneswar, deciding on a venue for HPMF 7th Anniversary Celebrations, Convention and Awards 2017 was a big task. The core committee was contemplating to host it in New Delhi, but then we felt that we were not ready for New Delhi due to the political environment created by the other forum and hence, less support there. Then we thought of Colombo, but we have five members in Colombo and that was not enough to organise an event of such magnitude. We then thought of Rajasthan, a colourful state with exotic palaces, vibrant deserts and festivities, and realised that we were on the right track. After careful consideration, we decided on Jodhpur. It took almost six months to identify each location, understand the infrastructure, evaluate availability of required goods and services, and then appoint required support for the team and contactors there. It was a mammoth task to organise all in one city due to the lack of good logistics, but we got help from many corners, especially from Rajkumar Kuldeep Singh Rathore of Jodhpur and Aman Nath, Chairman and Managing Director, Neemrana Hotels.

Everyone came forward and helped. We did two rounds of reconnaissance. Identification of entertainment providers, caterers, decorators, transport providers, flowers, and safe providers was a great task. It gave me great happiness in curating this event. The identification of a Chief Guest was also a big task as we had initially invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi, then the tourism minister who also couldn't confirm due to his busy schedule. We wanted someone stronger in personality and repute who would have matched the reputation of the place; who better than His Highness Gaj Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur, to lead the convention along with Rahul Pandit, Chairman and Managing Director, Ginger Hotels.

What do you intend to achieve with an event of this order?

With events like these, we would like to bring in purchasing heads and suppliers on the same platform, where both understand each other's needs

and create a better working environment between them. Our major objective is to create synergy, align co-ordinated efforts, and develop the passion that will lead to a better environment in hospitality procurement. We want to devise a collective strategy to help the fraternity. Training and development needs will be identified and a solid three-year plan of action will be created to implement the strategies for achieving 100 per cent results.

What are your plans for next year's anniversary?

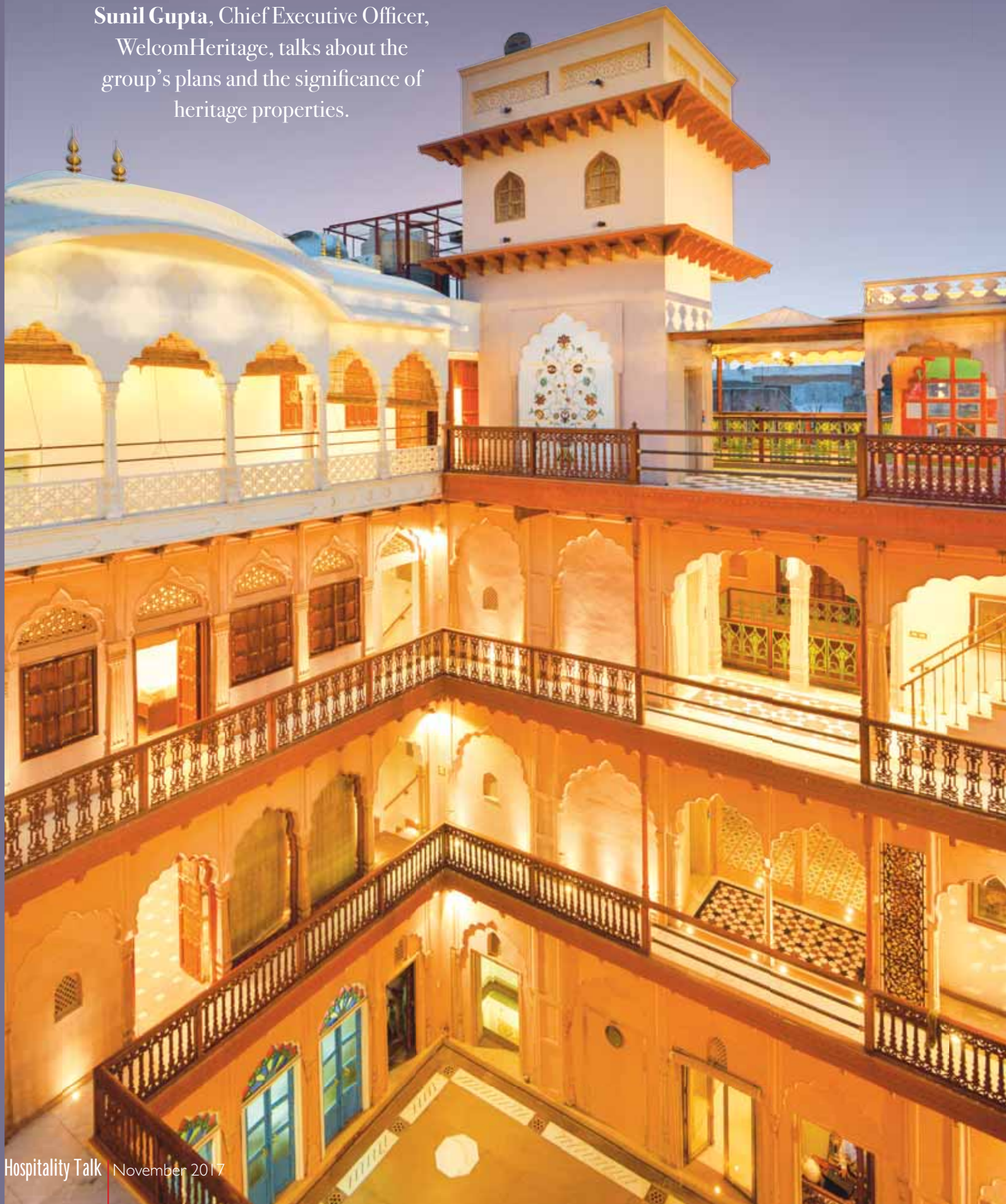
We have raised the bar every year and also the expectations of our delegates, sponsors, and participating guests. Everyone in the hospitality industry now talks about the HPMF convention due to its 'different' approach to the whole event. Next year, we intend to take our delegates, sponsors, and participating guests to the holiest city in India and to the ghats of River Ganga. We will take them to Varanasi, the historical land of temples, yoga, meditation, culture, food, and tradition. The event next year will be better and bigger due to confirmation from a few sponsors already. We also would have launched our international chapters, and that would add an international touch to the event. We intend to have knowledge sessions at Banaras Hindu University, *kushti* (a form of Indian wrestling) training sessions at the *akhadas* (arenas), meditation sessions at yoga centres amidst local colonies, unique B2B sessions and supplier showcase at an undisclosed venue, and a customised Ganga Aarti with 100 priests at Dashashwamedh Ghat. There are many other surprises that will be revealed only during the event. We will once again try and get the Prime Minister as the Chief Guest.

How was the response to the anniversary celebrations?

Prior to the event, the response from purchasing professionals was fabulous, but we had to cut down the entries from 300 to 175 due to cost constraints. They were all hosted buyers and the cost was too much to manage. As for sponsors, the response was slow in the beginning, but by the date of the event, there were many who wanted to participate. We had to deny a few of them as our collateral was already printed and there was no place in the ballroom to accommodate them. Overall, the response was very heartening. We will have to make the next event bigger and better than the one at Jodhpur.

Sustaining an exquisite heritage

Sunil Gupta, Chief Executive Officer, WelcomHeritage, talks about the group's plans and the significance of heritage properties.





Sunil Gupta



The domestic market demand is showing a good spurt. Domestic explorers improved by almost 30 per cent



Anupriya Bishnoi

Tell us about the immediate plans of the group.

We will shortly be flagging Ranjit Vilas in Amritsar. This is a complete ethnic experience of Punjab. The property is spread over 1.5 acres in Village Heir and has 22 Heritage Rooms, presenting a total heritage experience. In the second fortnight of November, we will be commissioning WelcomHeritage Ashdale at Nainital, an old manor of the British era, owned by the royal family of Sahaspur.

Do you think heritage properties have a direct correlation to luxury?

Yes, I do think so. At a heritage property, you experience the luxury of a bygone era and the lifestyle of the royals and nobles of the time.

Are these properties well taken care of in our country?

This is the very essence of our

brand. One of our core objectives is to bring alive properties that have been lying dormant in the absence of proper resources. We render advice on restoration of properties, making them viable and sustainable.

How much investment is needed for the upkeep of heritage properties?

This depends on the age of the property. The older the property is, the higher the cost, since the structures and features need to be restored. Two challenges that often come up are availability of craftsmen and the time taken in restoration, which essentially results in 3-4 times the normal maintenance cost.

How can the government support this segment of hotels?

Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) represents this segment and has been able to draw attention to it quite successfully. While substantial efforts have been made to promote

heritage properties, a dedicated amount of funds for restoration and promotion of the hotels in this segment will definitely prove beneficial.

2017 was a challenging year for the industry. How was it for the group?

While impact was felt in the inbound segment, domestic explorers improved by almost 30 per cent. The domestic market demand is showing a good spurt.

In the year gone by, we had 38 operational properties and two that were added, one each in Kasauli and Ahmedabad. These are helping us bridge the gap. Overall, room nights at the brand properties are experiencing a growth of 18 per cent.

What is your vision for 2018?

In 2018, we will continue our efforts to bring in new properties and flagging them so as to complete and provide circuits at different locations.



THE MASTERCHEF SPEAKS

Chef George Calombaris, one of the most loved faces on MasterChef Australia, was in India recently for the second edition of American Express CEO Series 2017, where he mesmerised the CEOs of some of the biggest corporate houses in India with a seven-course feast, especially curated by him for the event. In conversation with **HospitalityTalk**, he revealed his love for Indian food and how chefs around the world are taking inspiration from our country.



“

Modern Indian cooking, while respecting the past, is forging towards an exciting future

”



Nisha Verma

The food scene in India has taken a turn for the better. Cooking and tasting different cuisines has been a trend for quite some time now and shows like MasterChef Australia have been instrumental in this positive shift. At American Express CEO Series 2017, Calombaris expressed his excitement at being given the opportunity of preparing a menu for the big corporates in India. He said, “The most humbling thing for us is that people come to our restaurants and we need to show respect and pride, and I know these people are taking time out of their lives to eat our food. This is the best thing for me.”

MasterChef Australia has the highest viewership in India. Agree-

ing to this, Calombaris said, “Our biggest market in the world is India and we love that people here love that show. This is a great thing; the judges on the show are bigger than any Australian cricketer.” He believes that chefs these days are experimenting and we, as a society, are embracing it. “Earlier, we used to season meat with vegetables, but now we season vegetables with meat. The menus today are getting focused,” he shared.

Talking about Indian food, he said that he found a few very interesting dishes in India, including Rabri and roasted sweet potatoes with tamarind sauce, on the streets of Old Delhi. “When you talk about countries, most people talk about monuments. However, I would prefer talking to people here than

going to see the Taj Mahal. People in India are very warm and generous. The food here is great and I have seen Indian taste buds evolve. The modern kitchen is not Frankenstein. Modern Indian cooking, while respecting the past, is forging towards an exciting future, which is more important,” he shared.

Having been to India many times, Calombaris claims that he has learnt a lot. “What I have learnt about Indian cuisines, and I call it cuisines because it is different in every region of the country, is that there is a lot of balance with everything in India and it’s not just about spices. In fact, when I see chef trends, I laugh sometimes. At the moment, every chef is fermenting; Indians have been using this process for the past 100 years.

There is no reason why Indians should go out to dine and have Indian food because the best Indian food is in their own kitchens, made by their mothers. The same goes for my culture; we have a great heritage. Being here I realised that Indian culture is so accepting of things that are not Indian and that the food here is growing in a good way," he said.

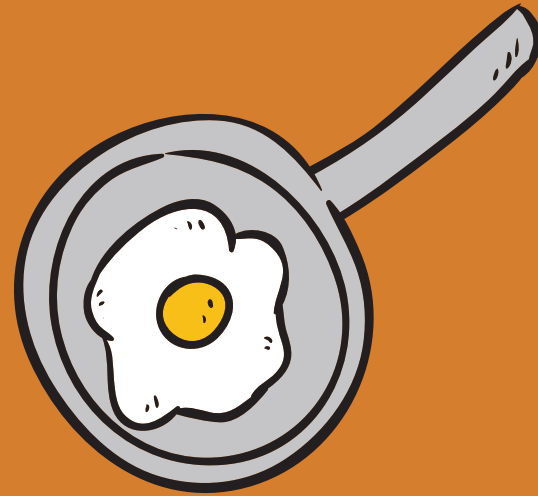
Constant evolution is the best strategy for chefs to move forward, believes Calombaris. "There is no point for a chef to create a modern dish if it doesn't taste better than the earlier version. There are restaurants that keep selling the traditional stuff, which is fine, but that also needs a lot of work. I believe that creativity is the most important thing in life. There is a need to have young avant-garde kids in the world of cooking, but I believe that they must be tied to culture and tradition

because without that, there is no point in continuing," he said.

Today, marketing plays a very important role in a restaurant or chef's success. Calombaris denies this saying, "Firstly, marketing is done through great food, great service, and great atmosphere. For me, that's the first step. Marketing needs to be done by what you do, which is paramount for me. If you can't do that, there is no point telling people how right you are. I am a true believer in marketing what you do rather than marketing what you think. If you follow that, people would come. The best thing about marketing is not advertising in paper, but is making sure that you are looked after when you step into a restaurant."

"A restaurant is not

there to just feed you; it's there to feed your soul. However, I agree that social media plays a big part in moving the word around. Thus, we have a team back at the restaurant that does all this stuff. My restaurant is my platform to create a story, tell people how I am feeling, where I am from, and why I am here. In fact, it's not just about me, but about the people who run the show. It's one team that is nurturing many dreams," he concluded.



COOK UP A STORM THIS WINTER

With winter around the corner, hotel kitchens are gearing up with their winter menu to provide patrons food that provides warmth and comfort. Spokespersons of hotels and restaurants tell **HospitalityTalk** about the scrumptious items on their menu for the cold, cold winter.



Anupriya Bishnoi

As the season shifts from summer to fall, chefs across the

country are busy churning their own signature comfort delicacies for patrons. While seasonality of some ingredients remains one of the

biggest challenges, winter is also considered a boon for chefs vis-à-vis the scope of working on fresh, nourishing winter vegetables.



SUVARANJAN BANERJEE

Executive Chef

Crowne Plaza Bengaluru Electronics City

THE WINTER WARMTH

The factor that we keep in mind first and foremost while designing a winter menu is seasonal availabilities. Although, with the advancement of preservation techniques, most of them can be procured any time of the year, the fun of having them in the menu is just unbeatable when you have a fresh harvest in your kitchen. Also, food should provide some kind of warmth to your body when you have it. Nothing like a piping hot, well-made soup during winter evenings just before your meal. In a nutshell, a menu should have fresh produce of the season and care should be taken that the cold weather be in perfect harmony with the food that is to be prepared.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- White Asparagus and Winter Truffle Crepes
- Paya Nehari
- Hearty Bouillabaisse
- Osso Bucco with Risotto Milanese

A MENU FOR ALL

In a typical hotel scenario, you tend to get a mixed clientele. We make a menu in such a way that it suits the Indian as well as the international palate. Even if it involves the use of local ingredients, it should be made in a way that it suffices all types of requirements.

FARM-TO-FORK

I prefer to use local ingredients. The concept of farm-to-fork is very close to my heart and I try to implement that in all my menus in any format. The only challenge that comes up is when you suddenly find that a particular ingredient is not available anymore.



SURESH NATRAJAN

Executive Sous Chef

Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks

ENERGY FOOD

We need to keep seasonal ingredients in mind as they are the best source of energy in our diet. We need some warmth in our food to keep us going. Hence, soups, chowders, warm tarts, quiche, etc., is what we plan our menu around. Also, if it suits individuals, spicy food is recommended during this season because it keeps up the body temperature.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Udon Noodle Soup
- Salmon Steak
- French Apple Tart with Burnt Butter Ice Cream

A STATIC MENU

Being a global brand, we have guests from all across the world staying with us. Menu customisation is what we completely believe in, but along with that, we also believe in providing a static menu, which broadly covers the global palate.

NOT FRESH, NOT INCLUDED

Winter is one of the most stunning months we have in India. There is a wide variety of quality ingredients

available in the market. However, certain ingredients, due to seasonal forces, are not freshly available. Resultantly, we have to avoid using these globally-accepted, well-appreciated ingredients in our dishes.





RAHUL BHALE

Executive Chef
ibis Styles Goa Calangute Hotel

A BALANCED MIX

Winter, being the golden season for Goa with people from across the world travelling to the state, needs a menu that fits all palates. During this season, we shift our focus on live cooking counters with fresh catch for a visual impact along with a balanced mix of Goan and European delicacies. Less spicy, fresh, and healthy options are given more emphasis during this time of the year while planning the menu.

A VAST SELECTION

Goa is a unique destination that has equal presence of both national and international guests. This makes it vital to have a choice for all. Domestic guests usually prefer buffets, hence, we predominantly offer local food with a blend of North Indian cuisine. The à la carte menu or live counters are offered to cater to the foreign client base with more international choices.

FUSING CUISINES TOGETHER

Being a chef is like being an artist and when you face challenges, the skill of an artist is refined even further. That's exactly how it works for us during winter menu planning. We make sure we consider all cuisines and try to bring them together in such a manner that it satisfies multiple palates. The most challenging aspect is to blend innovation with the varied cultural and food habits of our guests.



- SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD**
- Poi Pizza
 - Maratha Spiced Chicken
 - Ice Cream Burger



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ANSHUMAN BALI

Executive Chef
JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

HIGH PROTEIN DIET

There is a strong focus on seasonal availability, local sustainable produce, and prime quality meats and seafood because winter is a season when an individual needs his/her metabolism to have a good protein intake.

ABUNDANT INGREDIENTS

The season of winter is great for foraging. Also, there is a wide variety of vegetables, leaves, and fruits available in the local markets during this season. This helps us curate menus better with all of nature's bounty.

THE BEST BALANCE

We have to strike an almost-perfect balance between domestic and international tastes with local specialties, comfort food, international food, and modern trending food. This helps us cater to our clientele that hails from across geographies.



SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Lamb Navarin
- Hungarian Goulash
- Shepherd's Pie
- Sarson ka Saag
- Udhyu



AMIT SINHA

Executive Chef
L'Opera

CHOCOLATE ALL THE WAY

Winter is the perfect time for a heart-warming and intense taste of chocolate. We work on different textures and combinations, keeping chocolate as the main component, be it an airy and delightful mousse or a creamy and thick ganache. Hot chocolate drinks are also a hit.

A DOMESTIC APPEAL

We strongly believe that the effort, savoir faire, and passion that go into our world-class bakery and pastry products can be universally recognised, but given the nature of our undertaking as an authentic French patisserie, our main focus is on taste combinations that are palatable for the domestic appeal.

CHALLENGES IN DESIGNING

The challenge isn't in designing the menu but promoting the products in such a way that customers can appreciate the French pâtisserie-boulangerie appeal. However, this has gotten easier over the years as our brand has expanded and customers' familiarity with French culinary culture has increased.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Royal Chocolate
- Opera



PRASHANT TIKADIA

Executive Chef
Meluha The Fern An Ecotel Hotel,
Mumbai



MAINTAINING A BALANCE

For winter, the menu is designed keeping in mind the ingredients best available in the season and those that provide warmth. Use of leafy vegetables that are considered as protective food is recommended. Similarly, root vegetables with natural warming properties are also used. Legumes are made part of the diet, helping in keeping the metabolic rate high. Nuts and dry fruits with healthy fats are used as whole or in a puree form. Tender turmeric, ginger, and green garlic are also included in the menu along with seafood and red meat. The menu is a well-balanced mix of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes with Indian and international flavours.

CATERING TO ALL PALATES

Both domestic and international palates are given equal importance as we entertain clients from different geographies.

EVERYDAY CHANGES

It is important to balance flavours while retaining nutritional value. Every day, fresh vegetables and fresh seafood need to be hand-picked. Ingredients are also required to be changed on a daily basis and recipes are to be developed as per their availability. Line cooks are required to be trained and briefed to follow set recipes daily. Another challenge is to develop a flavour that best suits the domestic palate. For some guests, a dish must be light on spice while for some others, it must be the complete opposite.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Sarson ka Saag with Makka Roti
- Bajra Rotia
- Jowar Bhakri

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KAILASH GUNDUPALLI

Executive Chef

Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach Hotel

TAKING IN THE WEATHER

Winter in Mumbai is ideal for an open-air, sit-down dinner. During such a pleasant time of the year, we focus more on barbeque and grills while planning the menu for our guests, especially at our garden-style restaurant, Bageecha.

FOOD FOR ALL GUESTS

Both international and domestic

palates are kept in mind since Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach Hotel is host to a lot of national and international guests, especially between November and February.

TOO MANY OPTIONS

While curating the winter menu, we often find ourselves in a fix as there are too many ingredients available in the market.

For instance, if we want to have a special farmer's menu that requires having a healthy and balanced palate, with the abundance of produce it is difficult to feature a single ingredient as the hero of the menu. Winter brings with it new blossoms of vegetables like baby carrot, baby beetroot, Brussels sprouts, and snap peas that are included in the menu for the season.



SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Tandoori Chipotle Chicken Wings
- Caramel Popcorn



SURESH THAMPY

Executive Chef

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

FOOD SO RICH

With winter setting in, we get a chance to explore more green vegetables and fresh seasonal produce in our menu. With an onslaught of both Indian and western festivals, we get a chance to explore ingredients like turkey, carrots, and celery. We also try and make food richer with lots of butter and dry fruits coming

into play as the primary highlight of many winter dishes.

BALANCING IT WELL

We cater to both international and domestic palates with an average 40:60 mix.

A SEASON FOR INNOVATION

A winter menu is exciting and fun to

design. The festive season allows us to really explore varieties of exotic menus, which are carefully chosen to showcase the culture of festival, along with providing a wholesome meal to our guests. As winter months allow people to indulge more in food, it is a pleasure designing menus to satisfy those guilty pleasures.



SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Barbequed Chicken Drumsticks
- Honey Glazed Hams



PIYUSH JAIN

Executive Chef
Molecule, Gurugram

TWO IMPORTANT ASPECTS

While creating a menu, I always keep few things in mind. Firstly, seasonal vegetables must be used in the menu. Secondly, due to the cold winter weather, food has to be served hot and must be velvety in texture.

MIXING IT WELL

We offer progressive world cuisine, so I keep the international palate with domestic food in mind. We prepare comfort food with an international twist.



THAYANITHY

Sous Chef
Signature Club Resort, Bengaluru

KEEPING WARM

A menu should suit the palate of every guest and be designed around temperateness- anything that will keep and maintain body heat. It should also be easily digestible.

NOTHING BEATS SPICY INDIAN FOOD

We prefer Indian cuisine, as it is considered to be one of the spiciest cuisines in the world.

EXOTIC INGREDIENTS, A PROBLEM

There aren't many challenges while deciding on the winter menu. However, unavailability of certain exotic ingredients in Bengaluru causes difficulty.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Crab Pepper Pot
- Double Kalimirchi Murgh Kebab
- Booth Mirch ka Gosht Masala
- Kara Melagu Saru

UNAVAILABILITY, A HINDRANCE

There are a lot of challenges I face while creating the winter menu, like unavailability of ingredients. There are times when you create a menu with a particular ingredient in mind and then it is not available,

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Sarson ka Saag with Makke ki Roti
- Barbeque Chicken
- Steak Platter

causing a problem for the chef. The second challenge is creating a dish that needs to have a modern twist but should taste simple.



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PRAKASH LOPES

Executive Sous Chef
Sofitel Mumbai BKC Hotel

A MENU WITH WARMTH

While planning a menu, it is important to see the products available in the market, especially those that are locally grown as per the local climate. It is also important to consider weather conditions, which also highly influence our menu. During the Mumbai winter, guests prefer dishes such as chowder, the use of spices such as cinnamon and ginger in teas, coffees and beverages,

and berry-based products that are locally available.

A PERFECT MIX

Sofitel Mumbai BKC Hotel welcomes guests from across the globe and sees a healthy mix of both international and domestic guests at its restaurants. The important factor of consideration for us is not just the mix of guests, but more importantly, what ingredients are available

locally to fulfil the demands and satisfy the taste buds of our clientele.

NOT MUCH OF A CHALLENGE

Each menu is planned on the basis of locally available ingredients and what best we can create from those for a hot meal for our guests on a winter's day. As long as these factors are met, there are hardly any challenges we face.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Undhiyu
- Sarson da Saag with Makai di Roti



PREM K POGAKULA

Executive Chef
The Imperial, New Delhi

SPICY AND HOT DISHES

Coming up with a menu for a winter meal is a boon and it can't be complicated to work on. As winter in India is always friendly to vegetables and fruits, mostly all the vegetables are easily available and flexible to fit in a variety of menus. There are many things to consider from availability of ingredients in the region to a starting point for your menu creation. Especially for winter, it is always better to consider local

flavours and preferences. In India, people always look for spicy and hot dishes for winters.

A FINE MIX FOR ALL

We do consider different palates because it is very important to know and understand the preference of guests. We have a substantial ratio of international guests at The Imperial who simply love to indulge in local food while domestic guests prefer international offerings. So, we keep

a fine mix of cuisines catering to all kinds of profiles.

TRANSPORTATION, A CHALLENGE

Winter is a boon for chefs in India to work on fresh, nourishing winter vegetables. Eating vegetables in the right season ensures that we get optimum nutrients and health benefits. The only major challenge lies in transporting from different regions to a required region.

SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Sarson da Saag
- Caramelized Root Vegetables
- Gajar ka Halwa





ANIL CHABUKSWAR

Executive Chef
Grand Mercure Mysuru

LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCE
Winter is the most pleasant season in Mysuru and a peak time for travellers as well. We take special care when it comes to deciding the winter menu. We shift our focus on products that are locally grown, like fruits and vegetables grown organically and leafy greens that are easy to digest. The weather in Mysuru is cold, hence use of spices

and herbs that contain antimicrobial properties, in our basic food preparations, helps our guests brave the cold.

A COMBINATION MENU
Mysuru holds a powerful historical background and people across the globe visit the city to witness it. At our hotel, we serve both international and domestic cuisines,

but most importantly, we give high preference to local and fresh products to fulfil the demands of guests.

NOT A TOUGH TASK AT HAND
Since we use local produce, planning a winter menu is not as challenging as it is in other seasons where the availability of local food differs.



SIGNATURE COMFORT FOOD

- Red Meat, Seafood, and Poultry
- Idli and Dosa
- Bisi Bele Bhaat
- Payasam

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Golden Triangle: A gilded opportunity

India's rising middle class and increasing disposable incomes have continued to support the growth of domestic and outbound tourism. Business for the Golden Triangle that includes Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, seems to be moving forward. Spokespersons of some hotels in the region talk about business in the upcoming months and how the Golden Triangle remains a prominent circuit among travellers.



Vivek Mahajan



Anupriya Bishnoi

VIVEK MAHAJAN
General Manager
Crystal Sarovar Premiere, Agra

A POSITIVE PICTURE

Golden Triangle and Taj Mahal are a must-visit on the list of most outbound travellers. Data available with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) suggests that compared to 2016 (from January to August), 20.4 per cent more foreigners visited the monument this year during the same months. While 4.26 lakh foreign nationals came here in the first eight months of 2016, that number rose to 5.13 lakh for the same period this year. Out of these 5.13 lakh tourists, 2.97 lakh stayed back in Agra for one or more days. Last year, 52 per cent travellers had stayed back in the city after visiting the monument.

Business, no doubt, will increase in the coming years. Tourism Guild of Agra is also taking new initia-

tives to increase the length of stay of tourists in Agra. Occupancy in hotels will improve, but the ARR will remain constant as compared to last year. All major markets have seen an increase in RevPAR in 2016-17, except Agra. We hope to have increased ARR's along with occupancies in the coming years.

MORE WEDDING BUSINESS

Agra receives the maximum number of tourists from Western Europe and North America. The silver lining here is that all these regions, except Eastern Europe, have been sending more tourists to India than before and the government is also cognizant of the fact that a lot more needs to be done on the home front. It has started with liberalizing the visa regime, which is expected to improve

numbers quickly. With the coming up of Yamuna Expressway and Lucknow Express Highway, we have been getting good business for weddings, a massive F&B revenue generator.

INCREASED TAXES

The cost of running hotels and other such establishments has gone up due to GST. The issue with hotels is that a certain amount of money has to be spent on staff and in paying utility bills besides maintaining the premises, irrespective of whether the establishment is getting customers or not. All new hotels that have been exempted from luxury tax for five years also majorly got hit as taxes on room increased after GST; we are one of them as our taxes have doubled.

“Occupancy in hotels will improve, but ARR will remain constant as compared to last year”

”





GAURAV MUDGAL

Director - Revenue Management
Fairmont Jaipur

RAPID TRANSFORMATION

Jaipur's hotel market witnessed a 9.4 per cent rise in RevPAR over last year and the city's hotels clocked a weighted average occupancy of 65 per cent, reaching this threshold for the first time in a decade. Golden Triangle will continue to be one of the country's leading leisure markets and a popular MICE destination. The city will also continue to be one of the primary locations for local and international markets attracting destination weddings due to the

city's rich history, tradition, and culture. Jaipur has witnessed rapid transformation in the last decade. The last few years have seen mushrooming of hotels, both domestic and international, to cater to all budgets. With more hotels now being available in the city at a budget to mid-market positioning, the domestic leisure segment has witnessed healthy growth.

BUSINESS FROM METROS

Jaipur has witnessed spectacular changes in the hospitality sector in

the last few years and enjoys business from new market segments throughout the globe.

Delhi-NCR and Mumbai are prime markets that drive MICE and social business to the city. Fairmont, as a brand, has a strong penetration in the Canadian and US markets, which enables us to enjoy a good share from both, especially to cater to destination weddings and FIT business. Both segments play an important role to drive ADR levels for the hotel.



Gaurav Mudgal

KUSH KAPOOR

Area General Manager
Roseate Hotels & Resorts

HIGH OCCUPANCY

Golden Triangle has been a popular tourist destination for more than a decade and with the season kicking in, business looks great. Since September, our ARR and occupancy rates for both hotels- The Roseate and Roseate House, have also increased. For now, we are looking at nothing less than a 90 per cent occupancy and maximum sold-out dates until December.

PRIME MARKETS

Roseate House is a business hotel that attracts mostly corporates from metro cities of Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai. The Roseate targets leisure travellers from international and domestic markets, including Delhi-NCR. For Roseate House, business packages with free internet, airport transfers, and

breakfast bodes well for the target audience. We also offer them a competitive rate for use of meeting rooms. The Roseate, on the other hand, offers plush luxurious weekend and weekday staycation packages designed inclusive of lifestyle services and meals.

FOCUS ON INBOUND

Our focus is mainly inbound as Delhi, being a tourist and commercial destination, attracts both leisure and business travellers and both our

hotels being close to the airport serve their requirements.

INITIAL RELUCTANCE

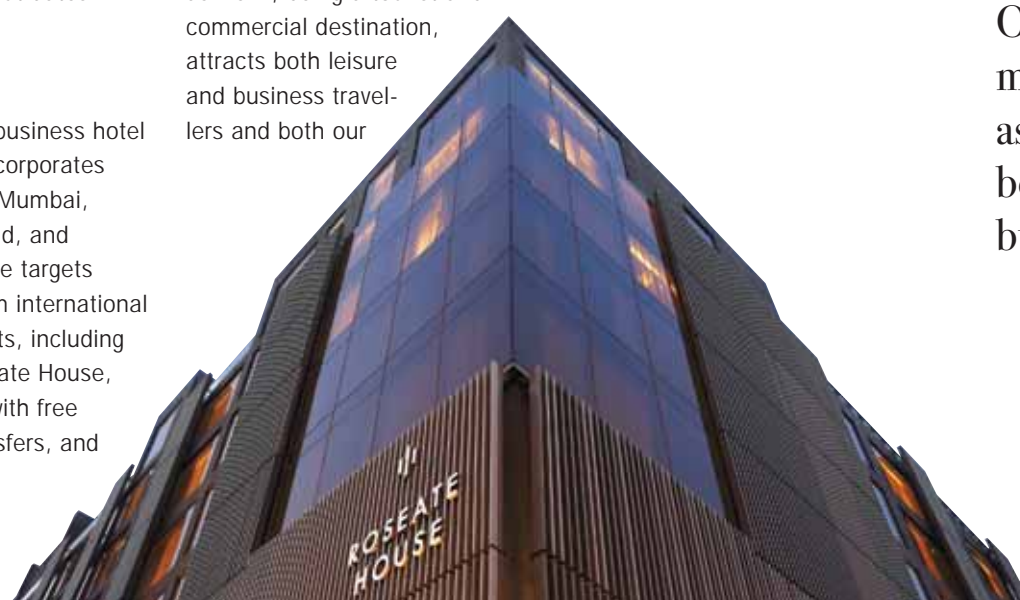
We did initially see inhibitions among diners at our restaurants post the GST launch. However, the new regime has been gradually accepted by our guests at both hotels and I don't see any major impact in our revenue due to this.



Kush Kapoor

“Our focus is mainly inbound as Delhi attracts both leisure and business travellers”

”





Vijay Krishnan

“We are expecting high growth and demand from the domestic market this season”

VIJAY KRISHNAN

General Manager
Alila Fort Bishangarh, Jaipur

GUESTS DEMAND MORE

For most international travellers, Golden Triangle remains the most attractive tourist destination in India as it gives them a peek into India's culture. The Taj Mahal in Agra, the heritage palaces and forts of Jaipur, and the food and nightlife of Delhi are an integral part of an itinerary in India. We have witnessed a strong interest from the Indian market to explore this region. With the growing trend of staycations and bleisure travel, guests are seeking a lot more than just a stay with meals; they are looking for an opportunity to partake in unique activities, personalised services, memorable experiences with family and friends or a visit to an annual event. At Alila Fort Bishangarh, we offer guests experiences unique to the culture and traditions of Rajasthan.

AN ENCOURAGING GROWTH

With 59 spacious rooms and suites, unique dining concepts specially curated by Chef Ranveer Brar, and traditional Rajasthani Alila journeys, we offer guests an array of experiences unique to Alila Hotels & Resorts and the destination. In terms of occupancy, we are looking at a double-digit number with an ADR of ₹18,500 plus applicable taxes.

EXPECTING MORE DOMESTIC DEMAND

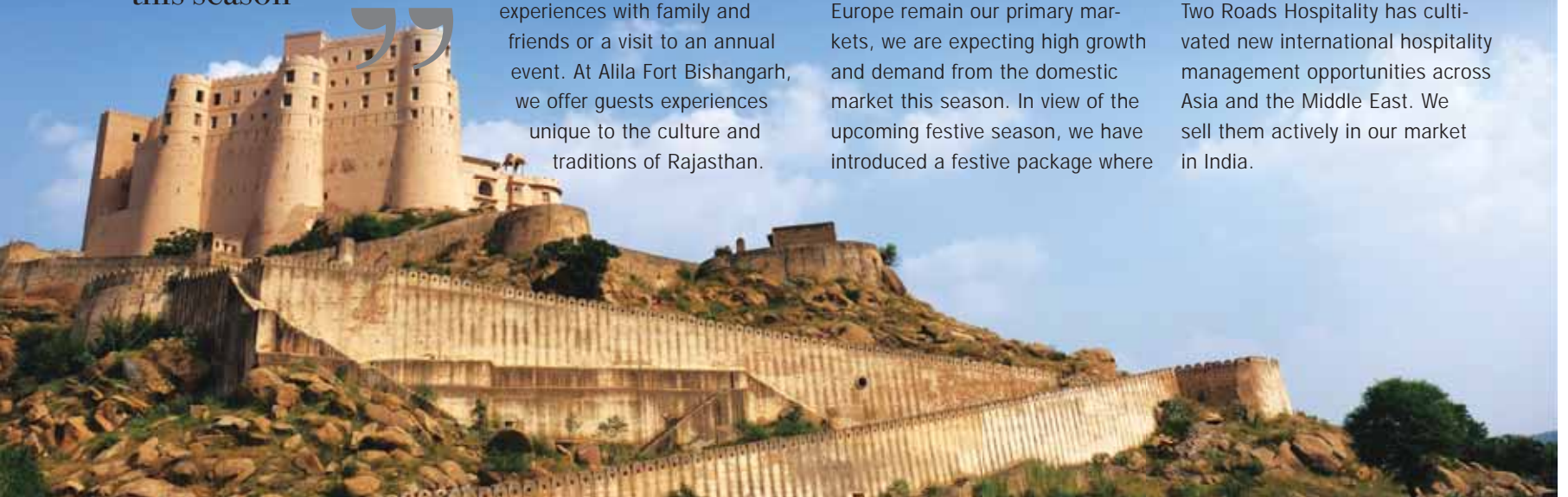
At Alila Hotels and Resorts, we cater to the high-end discerning travellers who are seeking experiential holidays. While US, UK, and Europe remain our primary markets, we are expecting high growth and demand from the domestic market this season. In view of the upcoming festive season, we have introduced a festive package where

guests can avail a 25 per cent discount on rack rates until October 31, 2017, when booking a stay at Alila Fort Bishangarh.

MATCHING AN IMPRESSIVE GROWTH

Travellers prefer to take short breaks during long weekends or special occasions and not limit themselves to one or two big holidays, increasing demand for the travel and tourism industry. To match this growth, Alila Hotels and Resorts promises guests a sense of place and a chance to get familiar with the local traditions and culture through Alila Journeys.

Two Roads Hospitality has cultivated new international hospitality management opportunities across Asia and the Middle East. We sell them actively in our market in India.



Amit Singh

“We are expecting a 30-35 per cent contribution of inbound share from all regions”

AMIT SINGH

General Manager
The Muse Sarovar Portico, Kapashera, New Delhi

A SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH IN THE FUTURE

Golden Triangle covers the three most famous and historical cities of India- Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra. With their rich heritage and plenty of sights to discover, Golden Triangle is one of the most desired destinations for inbound tourists. The volume of tourists increases in large numbers every year and the government's initiative towards visa-on-arrival has given a boost to this sector. As per the Department of Tourism, this sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 6.8 per cent to ₹28.49 lakh crore (\$440 billion) by 2027. We, being a mid-market hotel, are expecting 30-35 per cent contribution of

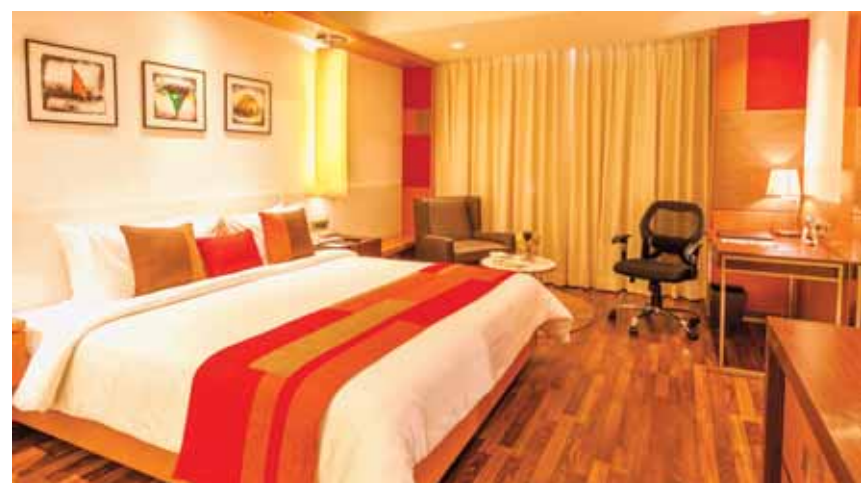
inbound share from all regions with expected ADR of \$60 and expected occupancy of 85-90 per cent in the winter.

FOREIGN MARKETS SERVE BUSINESS

The Muse Sarovar Portico contributes to the overall hospitality experience of guests through the

high standards of its facilities and services. Our prime markets are France, Spain, Germany, China, Korea, USA, UK, and Mexico.

We ensure strategic alliances are made with key inbound operators. We are also participating in trade shows and tourism fairs to be more vigilant of current trends.





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Shantha de Silva

“
This year we saw an increase in demand for leisure packages and group bookings at our hotels

”

SHANTHA DE SILVA

Head - South West Asia
InterContinental Hotels Group

INCREASE IN DEMAND

We have 10 hotels across Delhi-NCR and Jaipur, and we have witnessed a strong performance at these hotels in 2017, with a significant increase in RevPAR from occupancy-led growth and marginal growth in ADRs as compared to last year. Golden Triangle has been identified as an important tourist circuit in the country for both domestic and international visitors. Additionally, there is a significant surge in domestic leisure travel, destination weddings, and also MICE travel. This has led to a strong demand for quality hotels in the region. Consequently, this year we saw an increase in demand for leisure packages and group bookings at our hotels.

INCREASE IN ARRIVALS

In the golden triangle, IHG has a presence in two markets- Delhi-NCR and Jaipur. These markets have been experiencing an increase in tourist arrivals over the last few years, and our hotels have been recording great performance with an increase in volume and ADRs across the region.

DIFFERENT MARKETS, DIFFERENT FOCUS

Our focus for Jaipur remains inbound due to the high leisure

and MICE-driven demand in the domestic market; the focus for Delhi-NCR is balanced between both inbound and outbound.

POSSIBLE IMPACT ON ADR

With implementation of GST, we foresee a possible impact on ADR premiums due to the increased tax component. However, we expect this impact to be minimal when looking at performance against that of the market, as this is a countrywide phenomenon.



SHWETANK SINGH

Vice President – Development & Asset Management
InterGlobe Hotels

HEALTHY ARR'S AND OCCUPANCIES

In the Golden Triangle, we have hotels in Jaipur and Delhi. This circuit is seasonal in nature with maximum visitation during the months of October-March. In Jaipur, during the off-season months of April-September, occupancies tend to hover around the 50 per cent mark with ARR's being in the ₹2800-3000 range. During the high season, occupancies reach approximately 85 per cent with ARR's hovering around the ₹4500 mark.

For ibis New Delhi Aerocity, the hotel does not get affected by seasonality so much as it caters to a large quantum of business demand, which is perennial in nature. Having said that, being in the Golden Triangle, leisure demand



peaks during the winter yielding occupancy levels of 85 per cent at ARR's above ₹6,000.

METRO CITIES FOR CLIENTS

Our main source markets within the country are primarily the 6-7 key metro cities. Our hotels are mostly located in CBDs of all major cities and therefore, the companies within these cities are targets for us. If one were to look at the global spectrum, there are over 18 million ibis customers globally, all of whom are accessible through our robust and growing loyalty programme. Furthermore,

AccorHotels' distribution network is amongst the largest in the world, giving us access to all key source countries.

IMPACT OF GST

There has certainly been some short-term performance dip since the GST regime was introduced and in the lead up to it as well. SME business and the manufacturing segment in particular witnessed a slow-down. Also, we have had the double whammy of increased development costs, despite input credit being available to the tune of 8-9 per cent.



Shwetank Singh

MOHINDER PAL SINGH

Deputy General Manager - Operations
Lemon Tree Hotels

A BIG NETWORK

With Golden Triangle connecting three key regional hubs, the potential of business opportunities for sectors such as hospitality is certainly immense. We have two hotels in Jaipur and 10 hotels in Delhi-NCR at present, where we foresee a very positive sentiment. We expect more than 70 per cent occupancy and a growth of 7-8 per cent with respect to ARR's in both of these markets.

MID-PRICED ADVANTAGES

Lemon Tree is a mid-priced hotel chain with a pan India presence. With a speedily growing customer base, we cater to business and leisure domestic travellers. This drives us to explore newer areas of establishing presence as well as expanding our existing facilities wherever feasible.

OUR SALES MIX

Close to 85 per cent of our travellers are domestic. This



Mohinder Pal Singh

includes inbound and outbound categories. Our strategic approach is to set up facilities at locations in close proximity to most of the prominent locations across the city for business and leisure both. Our constant endeavour has been to focus on both inbound and outbound sales.

CERTAIN BENEFITS OF GST

Lemon Tree Hotels is supportive of the move to bring all of India under a uniform tax structure. In terms of change, initial observations and estimates show that the impact of GST will be mixed, that is certain hotels are expected to benefit from GST with the luxury tax being replaced.



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SEASONAL INFLUENCES

Striking the right chord between health and nutrition is the key to a balanced diet. As our apprehension to gorge on food gives way during the winter, chefs ensure that we still stay active through a balance of nutrients in the heavenly dishes they prepare.



Chef Gautam Chaudhry

A nutritious and wholesome diet plays a critical role in maintaining good health. A well-balanced diet includes the right intake of various nutrients under the five main food groups. None of the foods give you all the nutrients that your body requires, hence, one has to consume a wide variety of foods. The right variety and quantity of ingredients ensures that the body is in shape, heart is healthy, and one remains active. An important factor that helps ensure this is seasonal planning of the menu.

RIGHT FOOD, BETTER METABOLISM

Winters are difficult months and we have to change our eating habits in this weather. We need more energy to maintain our body temperature. This phenomenon works on the principle that when you eat more and consume healthy fats at the right intervals, your body increases its metabolism, generates more energy, and burns extra fat. It is also important to eat seasonal ingredients. It is a chef's responsibility to prepare menus based on local, sus-

tainable, and seasonal ingredients. Nature has its strange way of telling us what to eat, when to eat.

A DISH FOR ALL PALATES

Every season has its own charm; winter, especially, is the time when people are able to try out more dishes and a chef can experiment with different ingredients and produce a variety of dishes. The client may be domestic or international or a mix of both. What needs to be considered here is the target market, geographic location, and latest market trends.

KEY INGREDIENTS

In winter, a bowl of hot soup is the most comforting food, but Indian food is such that it goes well with any weather. Deseez, a pan Indian cloud-kitchen based out of Gurugram, has a lot of seasonality-driven dishes that are perfect for the weather. They range from Beetroot Galouti to Broccoli aur Bhutte ki Seekh and traditional Sarson ka Saag with the addition of lamb to it. Hot spices like cloves, black carda-

mom, and peppercorns, which are supposed to increase your appetite and hence, stimulate your metabolism, can also be used in food preparation during this season.

LIMITED PRODUCE, A CHALLENGE

The challenge in designing a winter menu arises in regions that run extremely low temperatures. Produce is limited here, making it difficult to design a menu. Regions that do not have such low temperatures get their share of seasonal produce on time without many hassles. That said, the summer season can be a challenge for the chefs here.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chef Gautam Chaudhry represents the exclusive group of creative chefs who pioneered the trend of Progressive Indian Cuisine. He is also Director, Demiurgic Hospitality, Delhi and Giant Foods, Dubai, providing hospitality solutions to restaurateurs. He also represents Customized Kitchen India (CKI) as its Brand Ambassador.

“
The challenge in designing a winter menu arises in regions that run low temperatures
”



BENGALURU



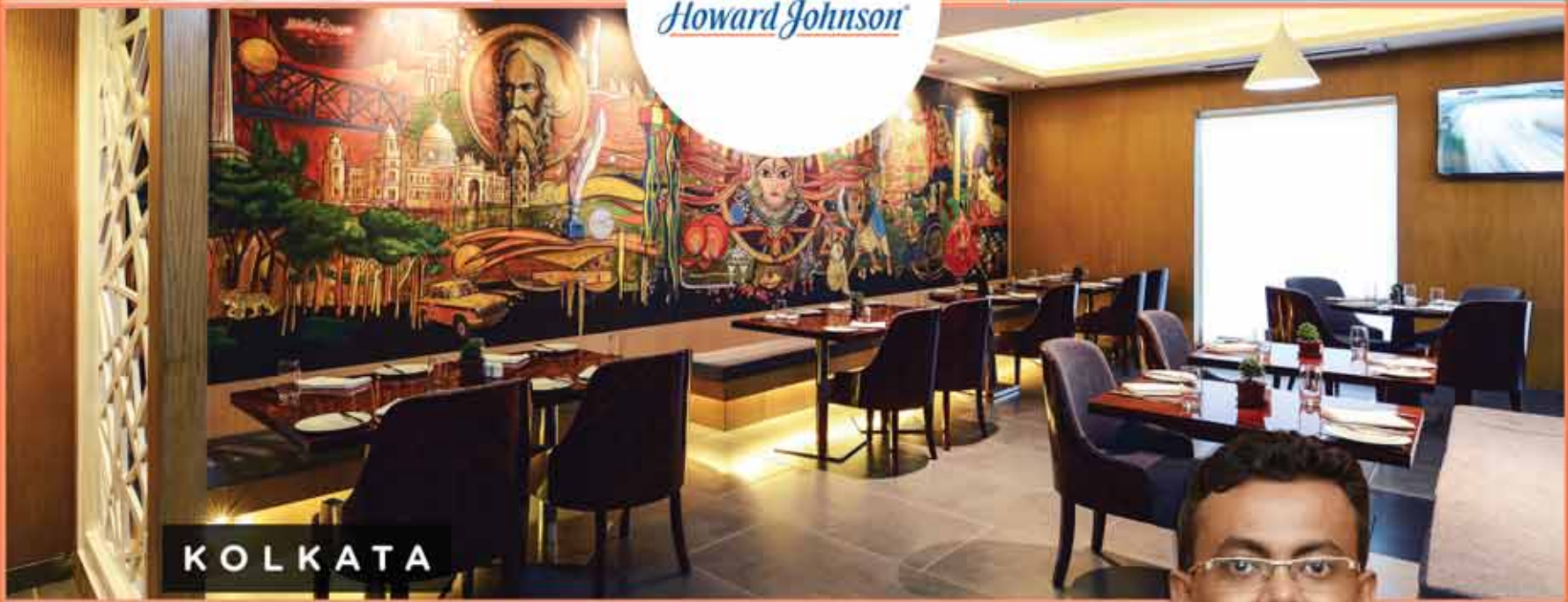
"The idea is to always evolve with the challenges in terms of changing preferences of audience from time to time & present a unique combination of global and Indian local flavours to the discerned taste buds dining at NEST-All Day Dining."

Executive Chef Chakradhar



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for more." - **Executive Chef**

Soumendra Nath Mondal



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ICF ANNOUNCES 14th ANNUAL CHEF AWARDS

To celebrate and recognise the talent in the kitchen, Indian Culinary Forum has announced its 14th Annual Chef Awards, to be organised at The Ashok, New Delhi, on November 1.

Chefs are one of the most important reasons for the success of any restaurant. They work behind the scenes, preparing delicious food for guests with discerning tastes. The extravaganza to laud the Indian culinary excellence is all set to be held at The Ashok, New Delhi, on November 1, 2017. The awards are also an attempt to promote the Indian cuisine to the top

position internationally. The event will begin with a charity lunch on October 20, followed by three other segments including Trade Test (culinary competition), Chef Summit, and Chef Awards 2017. The Trade Test will be held from October 26-30, where nominated professional chefs from all over India will showcase their culinary prowess in 11 categories. The Chef Summit on November 1 will be

held in the morning at The Ashok hotel. Renowned chefs will discuss current trends and changes in the hospitality industry.

At the Chef Awards function the same evening, over 15 categories of awards will be presented to talented chefs selected by a jury comprising industry professionals, food critics, and connoisseurs. The Chairperson of the jury would



ICF has tied up with Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council as the Skill Partner to promote and contribute to the government's Skill India Mission



be Sri Lankan chef Alan Palmer, Global Culinary Competition Co-ordinator.

Anil Bhandari, Chairman, Organising Committee, says, "We instituted Chef Awards in the year 2004 to recognise and honour chefs for their contribution to the hospitality industry and society at large. There are five special award categories which include Lifetime Achievement Award, Best Food Writer Award, Golden Hat Award, and Silver Hat Award. The Trade Test category includes Chef of the Year Award, Master Chef International Cuisine Award, Master Chef North India Cuisine Award, Master Chef Rest of India Cuisine Award, Master Chef Kebabs Award, Master Chef Indian Sweets Award, Master Chef International Confectionary Award, Master Chef Oriental Cuisine Award, Kitchen Artist Award, and Student Chef of the Year Award."

Chef Davinder Kumar, President, Indian Culinary Forum, says, "The

objective of Chef Awards is to offer fellow chefs a professional platform to showcase, exhibit, hone their culinary skills, and raise the overall Indian culinary art at par with international standards. We assure that it will be a valuable experience for all the chefs and will maximise their potential and growth in the sector." Elaborating on the concept, **Chef Vivek Saggur**, General Secretary, Indian Culinary Forum, says, "The platform is not merely a competition as chefs will be able to keep themselves updated with modern techniques and mechanisms that are used in kitchens across the world. This year, ICF has tied up with Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council as the Skill Partner to promote and contribute to the government's Skill India Mission by providing the right platform."

Indian Culinary Forum is an association of professional chefs of northern India. It was formed in New Delhi in 1987 as an exclusive, non-profit-making organisation,

dedicated solely to the advancement of the culinary art of India. The forum's objective is to act as a link, a platform, and an instrument for the enhancement and overall development of the national community of chefs.



ACTIVE WASTE WATER TREATMENT: AN URGENT NEED

Effective treatment of waste water for reuse is increasingly being propagated by Alterenergyz, a Goa-based firm that deals in waste management and renewable energy products. **Samruddh Hegde Desai**, Managing Partner, Alterenergyz, elaborates on this urgent need.

The hospitality industry, one of the largest consumers of water, has now adopted water-saving measures. Saving water is not only environmentally friendly, but is also a cost-cutting measure. It would be surprising to note that nearly 90 per cent of the water used results in sewage water. Nearly 50 per cent of water supplied is used for flushing and arboriculture purposes. Since long, industries have been recovering useful material from waste to reuse it. It makes immense commercial sense to recover than to throw it out as waste. The need of the hour is to adopt a similar approach in case of water.

A well-designed and well-operated sewage treatment plant can treat

sewage even to drinking-water standards. We are not proposing to use treated water for potable purposes, but certainly use it for toilet flushing, arboriculture, and vehicle washing. This will reduce the demand for water by approximately 50 per cent. It would be a worthwhile investment even if the establishment is connected to the municipality's sewage network. A sewage treatment plant has to be designed well by a professional, based on the quantity and characteristics of sewage and degree of treatment required. It is a very compact system that takes minimal space. The operation of the plant can be designed to be microprocessor-based and automatic. Very little supervision is required for the operation. There will be no

odour in a well-run plant. Since it would be a biological process, no chemicals would be required for treatment.

Sequential Batch Reactor (SBR) technology is one of the best technologies to treat water effectively for recycling. It can cater to variation of load, which is a basic requirement for the hospitality industry. A large number of plants based on SBR are already in operation. The plant can be designed for a wide range of capacities. It can be used in very small establishments to very large hotels. We, at Alterenergyz, take pride in the commissioning and operation of these plants, doing our bit to help save the environment and helping the industry in cutting their cost.



Samruddh Hegde Desai



CONVENING OVER FOOD

The QSR and café industry in India is all set for what will be the first-ever conference specifically organised for this industry. The Fast Food & Café Convention will be held on November 29, 2017, at The Lalit New Delhi.

There is a changing dynamic in the fast-food industry in India as it responds to the discerning consumer and his tastes. In the two decades since the first QSR entered India, the industry has seen continuous growth and a momentum that has given operators the confidence of a promising future.

The Fast Food & Café Convention, to be held towards the end of November, presents an exciting

opportunity for those in the fast-food and café industry to converge and share ideas, thoughts, and inspirations. The conference will map the landscape of consumer trends from what's new and hot to what's on the way out. It will explore what needs to be on the radar of operators to best prepare for future success. Here, attendees will get access to unique leader-speak and round table sessions aimed at addressing the concerns,

opportunities, and best practices of this growing industry.

Oddbox, a creative events and marketing firm founded in 2012, is organising this event. The company has conceptualised, executed, and marketed multiple high-quality, innovative, and dynamic events. In addition to this, they specialise in creating cutting-edge marketing collaterals and executing successful brand strategies and product launches.



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CAPTURING THE BEST OF A HOTEL

Navneet Kumar, Director, Fotobubbles, talks about the company's projects and how they depict hotels in a true and beautiful form.



Navneet Kumar



All our pictures convey how the property would look at a certain part of the day and we choose to photograph the property at the time that it looks best



Tell us about your hospitality projects. How different are they from the rest?

Typically, our clients are hoteliers who want to give importance to showcasing their property in its true form, which is similar to the amount of detailing and effort they have put into creating it. Unfortunately, very few hoteliers can differentiate between an average photograph of their property and what a good photographer can click. We have been fortunate to have clients who understand that pictures play a major role in ensuring they project the right image of their property in the potential client's mind.

What are the key factors that a photographer keeps in mind while shooting for hotels?

We want to keep the pictures as real as possible. We do not want

customers to feel cheated when they land at the property. All our pictures convey how the property would look at a certain part of the day and we choose to photograph the property at the time that it looks best. During most photo shoots, we have to imagine a potential traveler's mindset while selecting which kind of picture to take. The same hotel can be photographed very differently based on who the target audience is.

Earlier, photography was only done for brochures, hoardings or print media. Now, with marketing moving to social media and online OTAs, photographers have to evolve keeping in mind the usage of the picture in a variety of mediums. Earlier, where just 30 pictures of the property were good enough, now, for every property, we are doing

more than 100 pictures at a time. In order to appear fresh and competitive, hotels have to revive their look every 1-2 years on all channels and mediums. Given our strength in video production as well, we have worked on hotel videos in a variety of formats, helping hotels stand apart from their competition.

What specifications do hoteliers give while requesting a photo shoot for the hotel?

Our hoteliers simply ask us to take good pictures that help them market the hotel well. We then inquire about their marketing strategy, target audience, mediums of marketing, etc., and based on that, build our overall visual strategy. This helps us create a story that is coherent across all pictures and videos, and helps hotels immensely in their marketing efforts.

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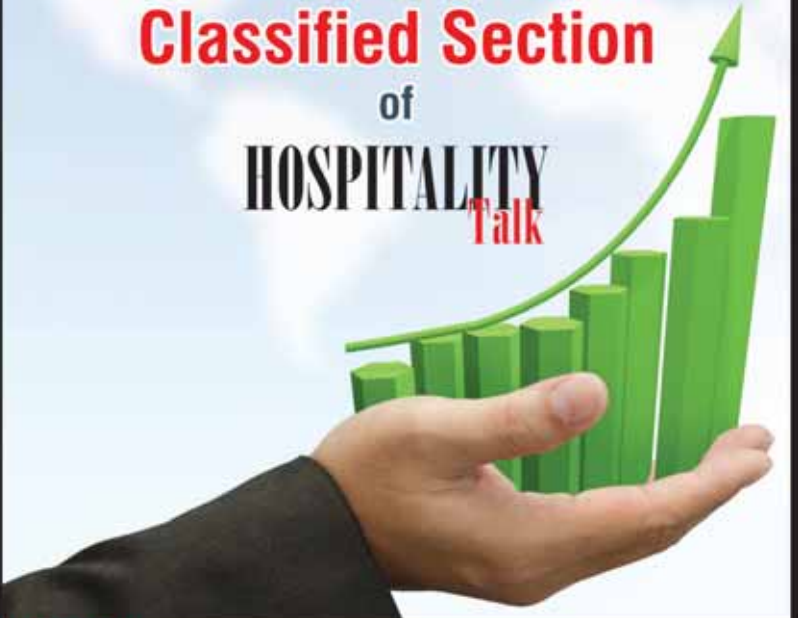
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For Housekeeping

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MOVEMENTS

ROHIT DAR

General Manager

The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace

Rohit Dar joins The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace as General Manager. Here, his key responsibilities include overseeing hotel operations and development and implementation of marketing and operational plans to ensure optimum guest satisfaction. Prior to joining The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, he was the General Manager at Jaipur Marriott Hotel. Dar brings with him over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry. His expertise include improving service quality standards and driving performance.



VISHAL KHOSLA

General Manager

Park Regis Goa

Park Regis Goa has appointed **Vishal Khosla** as the General Manager of the hotel. Khosla will be responsible for the overall operation of the hotel in par with international standards, while meeting employee, guest, and owner expectations. He will be actively involved in short and long-term planning and preparation of marketing strategies, hotel policies, procedures, relevant legislations, and the annual budget.



SHANTA KAMATH

Director of Sales

JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu

JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu has brought on board **Shanta Kamath** as Director of Sales. Kamath brings forth her expertise and knowledge in the hospitality industry with over 11 years of experience in sales, marketing, and business development. She previously worked with Grand Hyatt Mumbai, where she was responsible for developing pricing strategies, maximising business, and analysing sales statistics along with creating awareness about the brand.

AJAY MARKAN

Corporate Chef

Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

Ajay Markan has been appointed as Corporate Chef at Cygnett Hotels & Resorts. With an enriching experience spanning 32 years, Markan is a seasoned hospitality veteran, who brings quality and consistency to the company. Prior to joining Cygnett Hotels, he was associated with ITC Hotels, Fortune Hotels (in a corporate role), and Le Méridien, Middle East and Central Asia.





AMIT KULKARNI

Director of Sales
Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel

Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel is all set to strengthen its sales team with the recent appointment of **Amit Kulkarni** as Director of Sales for the hotel. Under this designation, his responsibilities will include active participation in forecasting and sales strategy meetings, mentoring department heads at the property, and driving the sales force while creating a productive environment. He was previously associated with Novotel Mumbai as the Acting Front Manager.



ALLWYN RODRIGUES

Director of Engineering
Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel and Novotel Goa Resort & Spa Hotel

AccorHotels has appointed **Allwyn Rodrigues** as the Director of Engineering to manage Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel and the Novotel Goa Resort & Spa Hotel as a complex. He brings with him more than 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry and has been with AccorHotels for over three years. Prior to taking up this responsibility, Rodrigues was associated with IHG (Goa) and Marriott (Goa).



PRATHAMESH KUMTA

Head Chef
Hyatt Place Gurgaon/Udyog Vihar

Hyatt Place Gurgaon/Udyog Vihar has appointed **Prathamesh Kumta** as Head Chef. In this role, he will be in charge of overseeing all the culinary aspects of the kitchen, menus and training modules, and for securing the standards of excellence expected by patrons. His last assignment was with The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences where he was overseeing Spectra.



DEBABRATA BANERJEE

Food and Beverage Manager
Alila Diwa Goa

Alila Diwa Goa has appointed **Debabrata Banerjee** as the new Food and Beverage Manager. In this role, he will oversee the food and beverage operations of the restaurant, bar, and banquet for Alila Diwa Goa. Banerjee comes with more than nine years of experience in the luxury hotel and restaurant space. He has worked at The Oberoi Hotel, Bengaluru, as Senior Assistant Manager - F&B.



MOVEMENTS

PRAKASH JAYADEVAN

General Manager

Fairfield by
Marriott Kathmandu

“

I am passionate about teaching the next generation of hoteliers”

I love to spend time with a book. Other than books, I also love Calvin & Hobbes and Dilbert cartoons. I am passionate about teaching the next generation of hoteliers and grooming them. My most memorable holiday moment was on a recent trip to Pokhara in Nepal. It is a pristine destination, just 30 minutes by flight from Kathmandu. It offers great sights of the majestic Himalayan range. My favourite holiday destination is Munnar in India and Bangkok outside it.

**VARUN SAHANI**

General Manager

The Orchid, Mumbai

“

Venice is one place I really enjoyed and was mesmerized with”

I have been a sports lover since childhood and love to play and watch cricket, badminton, and tennis. One thing about me not many people know is that I love to sing *ghazals* and old songs. I have travelled extensively with my family and we try to go on road trips whenever possible. Venice is one place I really enjoyed and was mesmerized with. If I have to pick a favourite, it will have to be Kashmir.

**AJOY BALKRISHNA**

General Manager

Grand Sarovar
Premiere, Mumbai

“

My biggest stress buster and something that keeps me fit is my pet”

My biggest stress buster and something that keeps me fit is my pet. I have a Husky dog who needs to be taken for his run in the morning and evening. I love to read books and watch movies during my free time. My favourite holiday destination is Europe, especially the countries of Italy, Spain, France, Holland, and Switzerland. I also love to explore different parts of India and its neighbouring countries. I drove to Bhutan from the North East during my last holiday.

**ANAND GANESAN**

General Manager

Kochi Marriott Hotel

“

I want to explore regions of North East India and Lapland, Finland”

I like to read and if my free time extends to a weekend, then I prefer spending it on a short trip with close friends. Being in an industry where we create memories, we ourselves should experience it. Among international destinations for a holiday, Prague is my favourite and in India, it has to be Goa. Some places that I want to explore are regions of North East India and Lapland, Finland.





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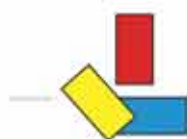
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