

# HRA Today



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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION (WESTERN INDIA)

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**FSSAI HERALDS A NEW ERA**  
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**Trends**  
Ajay Bakaya on undersupply of rooms



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Rattan Keswani, Deputy Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels, talks about how they are spreading their wings to the neighbouring countries.



## My Dear Members,

Given that we are one of the major contributors to the tax, foreign exchange earnings, jobs and all that drives the economy, we were definitely expecting the interim Budget to include some favourable announcements for our industry, specially on the reduction of GST slabs and Input Tax Credit parameters. But alas once again, with no mention of our industry, we feel ignored by the government.

Nevertheless, we are committed to continue our liaison with the governments, both at the state and centre level. The only positive side was the indirect boost the industry may receive due to the extra disposable income, which will be available with the middle class now. If a low inflation rate is maintained, it may create more demand for tourism.

We have been lobbying for a tax cut, since GST is really impacting business and has resulted in making Indian hotels one of the most highly taxed across the world. Even if the GST of 28 per cent is only for hotels with a tariff above Rs. 7,500, the overall impression globally remains that the hotel are very expensive and the connectivity to these venues is not as developed. Hence, most of the MICE business has moved out of India to SE Asian countries.

Improved connectivity to different destinations in India will push business specially to existing and provisional MICE destinations and tourist destinations. Right now this business is diverted to neighbouring countries which is a shame. We want to ensure that this business which originated from our country stays here, for which we are mooting for better connectivity, infrastructure and friendly tax reforms. Tourism worldwide has grown on budget hotels and the top brass tourists also require

luxury hotels. A large disparity in taxes in these two is not favourable.

Our battle with online travel agents and aggregators continues on a national level. These OTAs are playing the age-old trick of divide and rule. HRAWI is very active and at the forefront, fighting this cause for its members and the industry at large through our parent body- FHRAI. I request our fraternity to avoid falling prey to the lure of the OTA's initial prospects and remain united. Meanwhile, our association is exploring all avenues possible to tackle this menace, including legal options. We continue to lobby with the government for recognition and are positive for a breakthrough with positive results. We are committed to ensure that the industry regains its rightful honour and glory.

You will be happy to know that on January, 29, 2019, during the award ceremony, FHRAI and its four regional associations were felicitated along with corporates organisations, laboratories, training partners and professional associations for extending their valuable support to the 'Swasth Bharat Yatra'. This endeavour was led by FSSAI in partnership with the stakeholders to spread awareness on safe and healthy eating habits. HRAWI was felicitated and recognised for its support to this endeavour.

Warm wishes,

**Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**

President, HRAWI  
president@hrawi.com

## DY Patil celebrates excellence



Ajeenkya DY Patil University recently celebrated its third convocation ceremony in the presence of various dignitaries including Ranjit Patil, Minister of State for Home, Government of Maharashtra; Rajesh Tope, Former Minister for Education & Technical Education, State of Maharashtra; and Congressman Todd Rokita from Indiana, USA.

Ajeenkya D.Y. Patil, President, Ajeenkya D Y Patil University, recollected with gratitude the contribution of late Vasant Dada Patil in laying the foundation for the spread of education in Maharashtra. He said, "The next revolution in this sacred land of ours is clearly the education revolution and this revolution in turn will engineer many other revolutions that will become living examples of existence at peak potential." He further raised some pertinent questions like, "Has education merely addressed the survival process or has it touched the very core of every individual and ensured that they conduct life at peak potential?"



Doing the honors this year for this prestigious University were Ranjit Patil, Minister of State for Home, Government of Maharashtra and Rajesh Tope, Former Minister for Education & Technical Education, State of Maharashtra. The talking point of this exclusive evening was the conferring of Doctor of Letters - Honoris Causa (D.Litt) on Congressman Todd Rokita (United States House of Representatives), Anita Garware (Social Worker of Children's causes), Yuli Tamir (President, Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, Israel), Kazuo Tanaka (President &

CEO, GK Design Group, Japan) and Niraj Shah (Executive Director, ANZ Banking Group) for their contribution in their respective fields to the development and betterment of society at large. Also present on this occasion was David Pollard, High Commissioner of Guyana to India.

Congressman Rokita from Indiana impressed the audience with his sense of humour when he stated, "If you change the emphasis of Indiana, it would simply mean India - Ana (Come to India)". He further said that

he cherished the values and principles of the Ajeenkya DY Patil University and 'Be the best always' is one such strong message that would inspire him to serve his constituency better. Ranjit Patil opined that innovation would be the key to growth in the future for India and was all praise for the University for keeping the right focus. Rajesh Tope urged all prominent educationists and industrialists present in the audience to ensure greater dynamic coordination between industry and universities for effective employment and progress.

## Glion offers new online courses

The Glion Institute of Higher Education for hospitality management with campuses in Switzerland and the UK, is launching a new set of online certificate courses, available from March 2019. This will also be available for budding hoteliers in India. In response to new training requirements and learning preferences among executives in the field of hospitality management, Glion has devised a series of online courses on spa management, revenue management and hotel valuation, delivered by leading experts in their respective fields.

Courses occur four times per year and span two weeks, with four to six hours of personal effort per week, including videos, readings, discussions, peer-reviewed assignments, quizzes and a final exam.

- Maximizing Spa Profitability and Excellence in Spa Operations are taught by Glion faculty member



Mariana Palmeiro and leading spa and wellness expert Dr Mary Tabacchi on the financial and organisational aspects of spa management, a particular growth area in the hospitality industry.

- Revenue Management: The Strategy and Tactics of Hotel Room Pricing, delivered by Breffni

Noone of Pennsylvania State University's School of Hospitality Management, explores the role of room pricing to maximize profit.

- Hotel Market Analysis and Valuation teaches market research, data analysis and financial planning and is delivered by Steve Rushmore, Founder, HVS.

"We see a change in the need of training of mid-career hospitality professionals. As the industry is consolidating in more mature markets, middle managers are looking to build their expertise in specific business topics to advance their careers", says **Cécile Rébillard**, Head of Digital Education at Glion.

## Sarovar signs a hotel in South Goa

Sarovar Hotels has announced the signing of a new hotel in South Goa, marking the group's further foray into the state. One of the fastest growing hotel chains in India with over 80 operational hotels across 50 destinations in India and Africa, this will be Sarovar's 3rd hotel in Goa.

Situated in the proximity of South Goa and popular tourist destination – Palolem is known for its beautiful crescent beach, white sand, quiet water and colourful wooden shacks. The hotel upon completion in mid-2019 will offer guests a perfect stay experience. In addition to well-appointed 48 rooms,



the hotel will offer all-day dining, bar, spa, gymnasium and swimming pool. The hotel will also feature meeting rooms for up to 300 guests to meet the rapidly growing demand of MICE segment. Commenting

on the development, **Anil Madhok**, Executive Chairman, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, says, "We are delighted to expand our presence in the market which is a very popular tourist destination. We believe the hotel's location clubbed with Sarovar's signature hospitality will deliver a notable experience to its business and leisure guest's alike."

Sarovar will also be coming up with new properties in Gorakhpur, Katra, Dehradun, Dahisar, Jammu, Dibrugarh, Morbi, Junagarh, Dalhousie, Bodhgaya, and Jalandhar.

### More hotels from Goa join HRAWI

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) added new hotel and restaurant members in the month of January 2019.

#### HOTELS

**Pinto Rosario Square Resort & Spa**  
Bardez, Goa

**Nanu Resort**  
Arambol, Goa

# Ginger undergoes repositioning

Ginger has opened its first prototype hotel with a completely new brand identity at Panjim, Goa, after an intensive repositioning exercise. The current portfolio of the other 45 plus hotels will be repositioned reflecting the new brand identity and brand promise. Ginger will introduce the lean luxe segment, the first of its kind in India. The new identity presents a co-existence of contrasts through re-imagined spaces blurring the lines of work and play, bringing about a fusion of global and local and create experiences that are vibrant, quirky, intuitive and smart. Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, The



Indian Hotels Company said, "The Ginger brand journey is aligned to Aspiration 2022

that defines a brandscape that addresses diverse customer segments and price points. It

will be an important growth vehicle for the company, and we are looking at quickly scaling up the brand to many hotels across India." Deepika Rao, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Ginger says, "The brand is slated to appeal to an on-the-go lifestyle and is anchored in the idea of seamlessness, facilitating a 'never stop' lifestyle. Ginger will now be an aspirational hotel chain that is also surprisingly affordable."

The redesigned spaces will bring together attractive public areas as well as spots designed for solitude, allowing the smooth transition from one to the other.

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# HRAWI conducts 5 FSSAI programs in January 2019

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) in association with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) conducted five Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) programmes in the month of January 2019.

191 hospitality professionals, in the Western region have been trained and certified within the first month of the calendar year. HRAWI's efforts over the last couple of years have helped over 1282 hospitality professionals in getting trained and certified under this skill enhancing programme.

Two separate programmes were conducted in Mumbai in January, including an in-house FSSAI Training Programme for students at Anjuman -I- Islam Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology in Mumbai on January 30, 2019 which was attended by 40 students. This was just one in a series of training programmes conducted by HRAWI. It also held the FSSAI Training Programme at Sinhgad Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Lonavala on January 17, 2019. The same



was carried out at the DY Patil University School of Hospitality and Tourism Studies, Navi Mumbai on January 19, 2019 which was attended by approximately 40 students. HRAWI also conducted FSSAI training programmes at hotels – one at the Radisson Mumbai Goregaon on January 29, 2019, and another one at the Usha Ascot in Matheran on January 18,

2019 where a total of 31 participants attended.

"Hotel establishments in the Western Region have been proactive in getting staff trained and certified under the FoSTaC programme. We wish to thank the trainers deputed by FSSAI for diligently imparting the requisite knowledge to hospitality professionals. HRAWI will continue to host the programmes for as many FBOs as possible to benefit from the programme," says **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, President, HRAWI. Till date, HRAWI has conducted 36 FoSTaC programmes across the Western region. "We are also pleased to inform that HRAWI was recently felicitated by the FSSAI for its invaluable contribution towards the Swasth Bharat Yatra campaign," concludes Kohli.

“ HRAWI has conducted 36 FoSTaC programmes across the western region and will continue to host such programmes ”



# FSSAI concludes its 'Swasth Bharat Yatra'

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently celebrated the culmination of its three-month long Swasth Bharat Yatra over two days in New Delhi. FSSAI celebrated the end of its Swasth Bharat Yatra that started from October 16, 2018 and ended on January 27, 2019. The event saw participation from 21,629 cyclists covering 2,156 places and 20,233 km in 104 days.

**Aspi Nallaseth**, Secretary General, HRAWI, who was representing the association at the event, said that it was an inspiring and exciting two days at the Central Park in Delhi's Connaught Place from January 28-29, 2019. The concluding ceremony of the Swasth Bharat Yatra was presided over the Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, J.P. Nadda, who was the Chief Guest at the event. Also present were, C. Vijaya Baskar, Minister for Health and Family Welfare Department, Tamil Nadu; Secretary for MoHFW; Rita Teatia, Chairperson of FSSAI and Pawan Kumar Agarwal, CEO of FSSAI. On behalf of FHRAI, Pradeep Shetty pledged to support FSSAI towards 'Save Food, Share Food, Share Joy'.







# FSSAI announces hygiene rating for catering industry

FSSAI has formally announced hygiene rating for catering industry. HRAWI shares details of the same.

### What is hygiene rating?

- Hygiene rating is a transparent matrix-based score for a place of eating.
- It is purely voluntary, and a self-assessment model followed by third party verification.
- The verification date can be fixed by the hotelier. If scores after verification are not satisfactory then a re-verification can be called after 3 months.
- Scores can be declared as authentic and official FSSAI

rating scores in any form of promotion for hotels.

Parikshan which is the national knowledge partner for food safety to FHRAI is a recognised agency as third party. Pasupathy is the Lead National Resource Person for training auditors for this. The verification requires one man-day.

### Advantages of hygiene rating

- It is official, so credibility is high.
- Guests are moving towards hygiene reviews.
- Rating apps have been signed with the Government, so it will be a feature of online

business for the industry.

- A good score gives an indication to enforcement and creates positive opinion.
- Increases staff confidence and nudges them to maintain hygiene.

Since, it is a self-assessment followed by verification, it's not a deterrent to operations. For any further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Christine Mannas from HRAWI office. Your early response would be highly appreciated.

Particulars	Basic Fee	Conveyance Charge (Each Visit)	GST 18%	Total Amount
Restaurant	3,000	750	540	4,290
3 Star Hotels	5,000	750	900	6,650
4 Star Hotels and above	7,500	750	1,350	9,600



# Express Food & Hospitality concludes tradeshow in Mumbai

The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of Express Food & Hospitality Expo, witnessed the who's who of the food and hospitality industry visiting the tradeshow. The three-day exhibition was inaugurated by chief guests, Gurbaxish Kohli, President, Hotels & Restaurant Association Western India (HRAWI); Mohan Deshpande, Chairman, Hospitality Purchase Manager Forum (HPMF); Prabodh Halde, Chairman, All India Food Processors Association (AIFPA) and head regulatory, Marico; Jurgen Pannagger, head of global sales, Citrocasa and Kim Jong Boo, director, Kuvings.





# Going green with Pride

It is imperative for hotels to start making a conscious choice to go green, even if it is in some small way, to ensure minimal damage to the environment and for profitable ROI. We look at what Pride Hotels is doing in this direction.

Hazel Jain

Pride Hotels took the first step in going green almost 15 years ago, when it decided to install solar panels at its Pune property. That journey continues till date with various additions and tweaks to its systems. The property now uses a combination of heat pump and solar panels for electricity and heating water. However, this comes with its own set of challenges.

**Satyen Jain**, Director, Pride Hotels, who is leading this initiative, says, "We do have boilers installed but they rarely function. We use the solar panels for heating water. The problem is that it is difficult to match the load because the sun comes up in the morning and sets by six. The consump-

tion of hot water normally happens during the night and early morning. So, water is stored in an insulated tank."

In hotels, it is difficult to control the temperature of the stored water where the temperature in the bathroom should be 55 degrees. So, the hotel uses the heat pump. However, the use of heat pump is minimised, which shows eco-friendliness which eventually saves money on electricity.

Today, three of Pride Hotels have solar panels. "We have now started using heat pumps. While our hotels have them installed, three of them have a combination of both. For new hotels, it is mandatory to use solar panel at a certain percentage," Jain adds.

In terms of capex, Jain claims that the ROI is super quick. "The cost of the heat pump at our Kolkata property was ₹6 lakh. Savings in diesel in the first year was ₹24 lakh. Even if I add my electricity charges which is ₹14 lakh, I still see saving worth ₹9.7 lakh. So, we recovered the cost of installing the heater in the first year itself," he explains.

Pride Hotels now uses Desuperheaters to heat water at its Pune, Nagpur, Ahmedabad and New Delhi properties.

Jain says, "We have saved ₹99 lakh at our Delhi hotel by putting the solar panel system and the heat pump. While the solar panel was at ₹55 lakh, a big sized heat pump was installed at ₹25 lakh. We



Satyen Jain

continue to see these savings every year. So, we are not just going green but also saving money while doing so.”

Pride Group is also slowly switching to green options—using glass bottles to cut down on plastic bottles and using recyclable products such as bamboo over plastic.

**HRAWI Sub-Committee**

Jain also heads the association’s sub-committee that looks after the R&D and environment issues, and he’s been busy. “The idea is to identify different projects that people have undertaken with successful results and create case studies to share with our members. New technology keeps popping up and people get confused. So, it’s easier to follow the learning curve of others. They don’t necessarily have to opt for new solutions,” he says.

Jain is also looking at buying units from solar and wind farms. Unfortunately, there are high restrictions for this. “For instance, a hotel needs to use 1,000 kilowatts for it to qualify to buy this. So, what happens is that typically only big hotels that



are more than 400 rooms can buy green energy. So as committee members, we will be making a presentation to the government and approaching the CM to explain why these restrictions need to come down if they want hotels to buy green power. City hotels don’t have enough space to put up solar panels so they shouldn’t ask for more

than eight to 10 per cent of the total requirement to qualify the hotel to buy green energy,” he explains. Some states like Karnataka don’t even charge for transportation of power from farms to the hotel as they want to encourage green power. In Maharashtra, the transport cost itself is between ₹4-5 per unit.

“Pride Group is slowly switching to green options—using glass bottles to cut down on plastic bottles and using recyclable products”





# Return on SUSTAINABILITY

The initial capital investment required in building a sustainable project is more, but one starts reaping profits eventually. **Sunita Reddy**, Proprietor and Chief Architect, Acme Designers, talks about how sustainability is the need of the hour, especially in hotels. She says that rainwater harvesting, recycling and reusing water are good and essential practices that should be taken up by the hospitality sector.



**Sunita Reddy**

## **Tell us something about the hospitality projects you've worked on.**

Lately, Acme has done a lot of hospitality projects and every time we take up a new hospitality project, it is always different from the previous one in many aspects. One of the biggest and most challenging hospitality projects for us was Ibiza Resort in Kolkata. The project is spread over 20 acres and creates a Mediterranean holiday experience. It redefines the city's well-known heritage and architecture, fusing the colonial character with

the tropical charm of the landscape. This challenging project needed careful planning and interior selections. Some of my other favourites include Topsy Bull and Brooks & Bonds, both theme-based and interestingly conceptualised.

## **How has the design of hotels evolved over the years?**

Earlier, hotel designs were elaborate and intricate, with delicate and unique interior selections that required high maintenance and more manpower. For

instance, instead of a veneer wood finish that is widely used today, pure teak wood was earlier used for making beds, chairs, and other furniture. This wood was very heavy, expensive, and would require high maintenance. Today's market demands light-weight, modular, easy-to-assemble-and-maintain furniture. Also, the hospitality business used to primarily focus on aesthetics and ambience, but in today's time, two key elements that drive designs are clean and hygienic restrooms as well as good quality mattresses and pillows.

### In your opinion, how important is sustainability in design?

Sustainability is not only essential but also the need of the hour, especially in the hospitality sector. Any capital investment done by a hotel cannot be returned in a couple of years. A hotel has to and should sustain itself for a minimum period of 15-20 years. A simple demand for profit makes sustainability important for all the different aspects of the project, starting with construction materials and construction techniques to operational costs and manpower, as well as electrical and HVAC loads.

### India is far behind when it comes to being sustainable. Why are we taking time catching up?

In my opinion, the main setback is lack of research and innovation in our country. We mostly adopt technological advances and techniques that have already been researched and developed by other countries. In a way, we are copying those innovations irrespective of our requirements. Instead, we should research and develop materials and methods in accordance to our country's requirements and in line

with our weather, geography, climate, topography, etc.

### What makes a hotel green? Why is that the need of the hour?

Not only hotels but any type of commercial building should strive to be green because of the number of resources that it consumes and requires. Hotels run for 24 hours and 365 days, consuming electricity, water, HVAC, and other such amenities. In hotels, where thousands of watts of light is consumed, it is essential that we stick to only eco-friendly LED fixtures that reduce the consumption of power dramatically. Solar power plants can contribute remarkably to making a project green. rain-water harvesting and recycling and reusing water are good and essential practices that should be taken up by the hospitality sector. Not only is it very important to convert hotels to green entities, but it's also a smarter and more profitable move in the long run. Green certification also leads to government subsidies and lesser operational costs, even though the initial capital investment may be more.

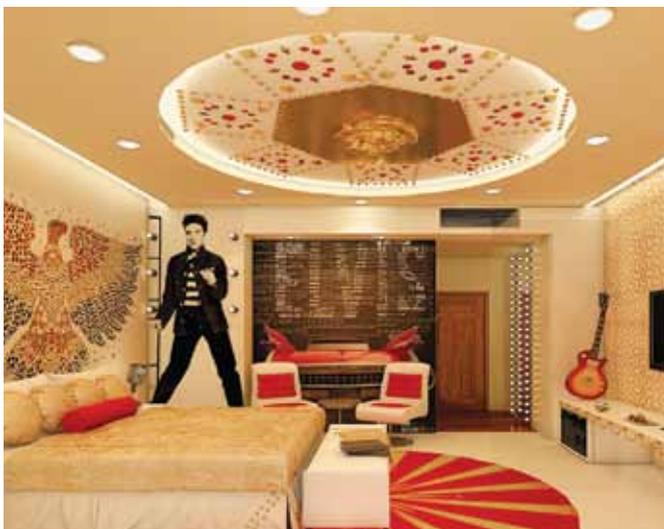
### How expensive and challenging is it being sustainable?



Expenditure-wise, the initial capital investment required is more, but in the years to follow, there is good return on investment. It proves to be more economical with reduced operational costs and that's exactly what makes it a smart choice, though not an easy one. It is challenging to adopt the sustainable approach of designing, as various norms (especially by LEAD and GRIHA) come into play, along with a innumerable calculations that the execution requires, including type and size of bricks being used, the carbon footprint of the building, etc.

That said, it's not always about certification and everyone can contribute in their own small way. Architects should promote the green design concept by way of general practices such as providing ample amount of ventilation and daylight, constructing rainwater harvesting pits, designing smart and functional landscaping, and other measures that can be implemented easily. Sustainability is an essential and smart choice for each one of us, and should be promoted and practised.

“It is challenging to adopt the sustainable approach of designing, as various norms (especially by LEAD and GRIHA) come into play”



# SAROVAR

## and its growth story!

**Ajay K Bakaya**, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, talks about undersupply of rooms and why Africa was a chosen spot for international expansion. Talking about top performers, he ranks Bengaluru on top followed by Hyderabad and Mumbai.

Anupriya Bishnoi

### What helps you single-out an international location?

Sarovar has been international for almost 20 years now.

We started in a small way in Tanzania and then got rather serious about Africa, more precisely, English-speaking East Africa, about 10 years ago.

We have had our hits and misses; it's a more challenging environment than India, where people know who we are. We developed some hotels but lost them after two to three years for different reasons. Sarovar is now

operating in Nairobi (Kenya), Lusaka (Zambia), and have projects coming up in Axum (Ethiopia) and Somaliland.

Now, how do we choose where to go? Honestly, we don't. Opportunities come to us, we deliberate, and wherever we feel we can add strong value, we go ahead.

### Why Africa for Sarovar?

I think it's because we understand the continent more than our competition does. The potential is colossal. We choose youngsters for design, develop-

### With an influx of hospitality brands in India in the recent past, do you think there is enough business for everyone?

India is still undersupplied and that has not changed. We have seen the number of hotel rooms go from 45,000 to 150,000, but for a country like India, this is extremely poor. That number is bound to grow! The economy is growing, the country is growing, the middle-class is growing, and tourists coming into the country have grown double-digit. It's fascinating seeing that guests



“

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ment, and areas of operation, to go to Africa. We would love to go to the Middle East; we've had very little success there but now we are working harder than before.

finally have the choice of good hotels and good rates. Everyone needs to operate smarter and provide better experiences. We, too, have grown between six and



seven per cent in terms of total revenue.

#### Where can we see new Sarovar properties?

We will be coming up with properties in Gorakhpur, Katra, Dehradun, Dahisar, Jammu, Goa, Dibrugarh, Morbi, Junagarh, Dalhousie, Bodhgaya, and Jalandhar. Also, the places we would really like to be in are Varanasi, Bhopal, and Patna.

#### Which cities are performing the best for Sarovar?

For us, Bengaluru is number one, Hyderabad is number two,

and Mumbai is number three. In all these cities, we have the domination of business clients.

#### What works better for you - Greenfield or Brownfield projects?

We do Greenfield, we do Brownfield, and we do conversion of existing hotels. In an ideal situation, however, we would prefer a Greenfield project because we can then build a more efficient hotel, one that benefits us, our owners, and the customer.

#### Are you a believer of standardisation of hotel properties across cities?

Honestly, I don't think they are very different barring public areas, of course, because they are going to be conceptualised by different designers. When it comes to hotel rooms, the larger the hotel chain, the larger the standardisation. It can't operate any other way. It's alright if you are a 20-hotel group, but anything above that needs a high level of standardisation. In my opinion, the design needs to bring in the local elements while being imaginative.



### About Sarovar

Sarovar Hotels is part of Louvre Hotels Group, a major player in the global hospitality industry, with a portfolio that now includes 2,500 hotels in 52 countries. It has a full hotel offering, spanning 1 star to 5 stars, with the Louvre Hotels Group's historic brands (Première Classe, Kyriad, Campanile, Tulip Inn, Golden Tulip, Royal Tulip), the 5 brands of the Sarovar network in India, and 4 Chinese brands (Metropolo, Jin Jian Inn, Bestay, Goldmet Inn).



Fairfield by Marriott Coimbatore

# Do locations define hotel room rates?



JLL has announced the appointment of **Jaideep Dang** as Managing Director of its Hotels & Hospitality business. He gives an overview of how the industry has progressed over the last few years, where demand and investment lie and why price discrepancy exists at all.

Anupriya Bishnoi

## Tell us about your new role at JLL.

I have worked with JLL previously between 2004 and 2011 in different functions. So in a way, I know the preamble of this business.

In my earlier stint, we had built a robust consulting practice and provided best advice to the country's leading hotel owners and operators. Clients

trusted JLL's

value proposition and our offerings. Over the years, the industry size has grown significantly. There are many more hotels, segments and stakeholders in the business now as compared to the times when I used to work here before. I now have a wider audience to serve to. There is more business to do than ever before even as hotels continue to remain a specialised asset class in real estate. So you still need a specialised skill set. Having gained valuable experience by working with The Oberoi Group over eight years, I come back to JLL with technical on ground experi-

ence. I aim to apply all that I have learnt and build our hotels practice further. I am committed to focus on hotel transactions, hotel operator searches and other advisory services. I want to create quality and value both for the practice as well as the clients.

## Where is JLL looking to grow its business in the hotel space?

What used to happen during my previous stint with JLL is very different from what is happening now. Apart from top metropolitan cities, a lot of investment is now happening in Tier-II cities.

The data also shows that most international brands like Marriott, Hyatt, Hilton, Radisson, etc., have penetrated in cities such as Lucknow, Kanpur, Ludhiana, Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Surat, and many others. Improved air-connectivity has fuelled growth in domestic travel and as a result, new resort destinations are opening up. We look forward to working in these new markets. Data suggests that tier II markets will witness more new hotel openings. However from number of rooms perspective, Tier I markets will continue to rule. This means bigger hotels will be built in Tier I markets but more hotels will be built in Tier II cities. So we will focus equally in both these set of markets. We will also focus on new growth areas in the sub-continent and are equally focussed on enhancing our business in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

#### **What's with the room rate discrepancy in different cities?**

The room rate a hotel achieves is directly proportional to the market it is operating in. For example, a certain branded hotel with similar specifications and service offering in Delhi could fetch a higher room rate as opposed to a similar hotel in Chandigarh. This is simple demand –supply economics. If the city has more visitors and hotels are well occupied, the rates will be higher. On the other hand, resorts operate differently. In resorts, product design, room sizes, personalised service also play a key role in rate positioning.

#### **What about the price discrepancy that exists within the city, like you just mentioned?**

Again it depends on the

product and the offering. Two different five-star hotels in a city could differ in age, size, scale and built form. They are bound to have different rates despite being in the same segment. It also depends who is the guest you are serving to? Hotels should always be designed and developed keeping in mind the guest. If you are successful in your assessment, you will certainly command a rate premium despite being in the same location.

#### **Is standardisation of hotels and hotel brands important? Why should all hotels have a standard design across cities?**

Standardisation is important as it brings efficiency in operating systems and parameters. That is why multinational hotel brands put immense thought and intellectual capital in positioning and development of hotels across segments. At the same time, each site and market is different from the other. Therefore, local aspects also play a role in design and development. There is no harm if a similar branded hotel looks and feels a bit different but serves the same purpose.

On the other hand, in leisure markets standardisation in design takes a back seat. For example, a particular brand's resort in Goa will look and feel different from its resort in Rajasthan. That's where local architecture, building materials and design take the lead even as service, food quality and IT could be fully standardised.

#### **The Indian hospitality industry remains challenging. How does JLL ease the burden?**

These are exciting times for the industry. Fast paced innovations and market disruptions are keeping the stakeholders on their toes. It is a continuous learning process. Owners, investors, brands – all require continuous advice.

At JLL, we have always believed in providing the right advice to a client, which empowers him to plan rightly, finance rightly, develop rightly and operate rightly. We aim to be the most trusted consultant and transaction advisor to the real estate developers, funds, banks and hoteliers. Challenges will help us all to excel.

“These are exciting times for the industry. Fast paced innovations and market disruptions are keeping the stakeholders on their toes”



The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai



# Tipping the chef's hat

The World on a Plate offers a unique opportunity to chefs from all over India to showcase their food and win recognition. **Kiran Soans**, CEO, Gold Rush Entertainment and the man behind World on a Plate, talks about how he is making this possible.

Hazel Jain

## What was the idea behind creating World on a Plate (WOAP)?

The idea is to give Indian chefs an opportunity to showcase their food in front of a global chef. This gives our chefs a real award and recognition. There are many brilliant chefs in India, and they need to be given a chance to showcase their talent before credit-worthy panel.

## How has food and dining in India gained importance over the last few years?

Earlier, the star of the food and dining industry used to be behind the scenes. They did not have a face. But honestly, the chefs are the ones who prepare and present the food in the right light. But now, not just he gets the

limelight but is the king of the kitchen too.

## What are your views on the chefs in India?

Chefs in India are very talented. Everybody is doing new things and trying to get more innovative with food. Unfortunately, the Michelin star has not yet come to India and that's why we have World on A Plate here.

## Your message to hotels and hotel chains in India.

Hotels in India need to get more adventurous. They are already doing great work with their big dining experiences. But they need to be more adventurous in terms of dishes and creating fine-dining spaces. Chefs should be given more freedom to create great restaurants. Besides that, hotels here should also pay attention to managing food waste.



Kiran Soans



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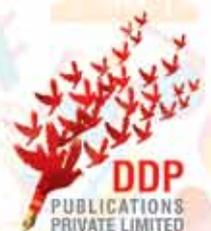


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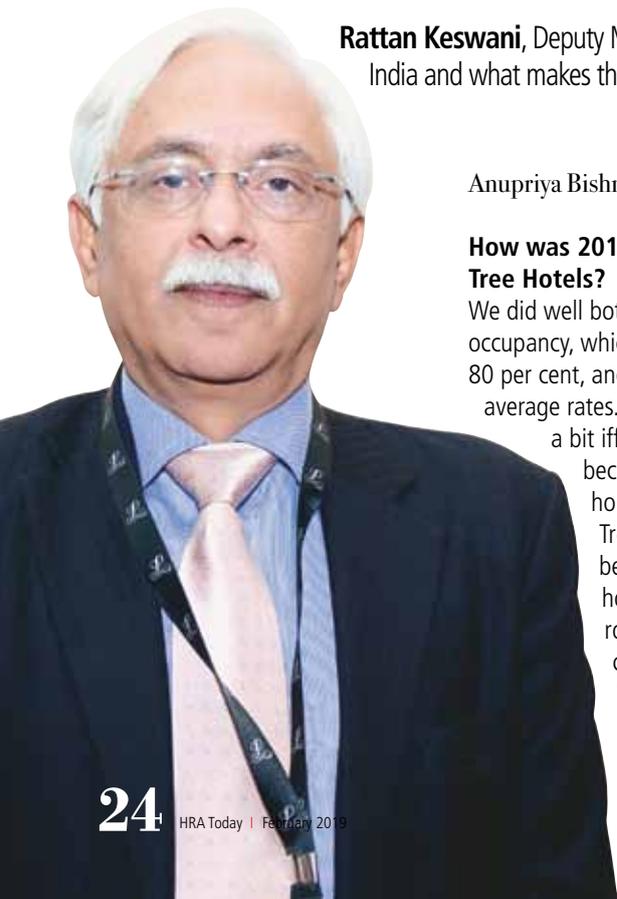




# Lemon Tree

## spreads its branches

**Rattan Keswani**, Deputy Managing Director, Lemon Tree Hotels, talks about how his brand has made it big in India and what makes them spread their wings beyond their native land!



Anupriya Bishnoi

### How was 2018 for Lemon Tree Hotels?

We did well both in terms of occupancy, which was close to 80 per cent, and in terms of average rates. November was a bit iffy, but that was because of a lot of holidays. Lemon Tree Hotels will be operating 87 hotels with 8793 rooms across 58 cities by FY2021. We opened a few properties

as well, including the ones in Dehradun (Uttarakhand), Pune (Maharashtra), Siliguri (West Bengal), and Morjim (Goa). We should soon be able to open an 'owned hotel' in Mumbai, followed by Kolkata. Then, we should be able to open a managed property in Kalina, Mumbai.

The market situation in Kolkata remained at the typical 60-65 per cent tipping point. We were also involved in the resort/leisure world with a smaller set of institutions like hotels in Goa, Katra, Jaipur,

Sikkim, and Corbett. That's started to strengthen. Udaipur will be another upscale resort substantiating our direction towards attracting high-value leisure customers.

Talking about international properties, we have signed management contracts in Dubai, Bhutan, and Kathmandu.

### What are your parameters when you think of opening a hotel internationally?

You have to visualise your strengths and where they can benefit both the owner



and the geography. GCC, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, have the largest tourist arrivals from India. The city is dominated by upscale luxury. There is no true midscale player in the city. Our strengths range from the distribution with Indian customers to our large loyalty programme and our understanding of 20,000 Indians walking around the city of Dubai every day. Also, now that we have bolstered our leisure portfolio, travel agents are also our strength. In each country, the larger wholesalers and retailers are represented by a domestic set of agents, but since we are strong with the domestic as well as international agents in India, we should be able to translate that benefit to Dubai as well because it's the same cluster. The key agents remain the same even though DMCs may change.

Close to 32 per cent of our customers are people who have visited us before. We are looking at other parts of



GCC as well to grow. Once we are able to showcase the performance that we have exhibited in India, we will see some more international signings this year.

**Which city in India do you think is performing well?**

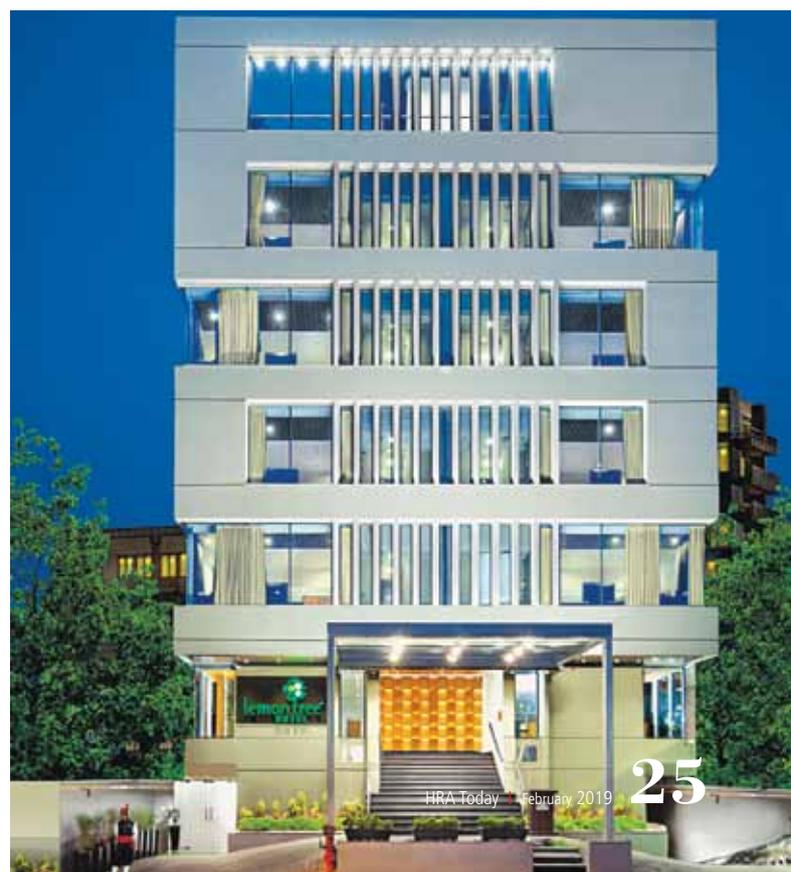
We are not disappointed by any city. We are close to an 80 per cent occupancy across the brand and the country, in our owned and leased space. That said, it's not a matter of occupancy anymore. The question now is of the change in rate. Rates are getting hampered and we believe that others are not increasing the rates as they should.

**Which are those government policies that keep bothering you?**

I don't think the government really looks at this industry beyond some great announcements. The industry, by and large, has been trying to do whatever it can by itself. There isn't much that one can say. Some changes are visible, such as the announcement of GST, but the rates are not helpful both for the industry and for the customer. Also, the government did work a bit on infrastructure, and in certain regions you can see

the benefits, but that's not a wholesome initiative. The government does acknowledge that the hospitality industry provides employment and contributes in other ways as well, but I don't think much gets done to facilitate that bit. Security, too, needs a dramatic change. Thankfully, the lack of it hasn't impacted the hotel industry much, but the notion that a few cities are unsafe, remains and creates scepticism among travellers.

“ Talking about our international expansion plans, we have signed management contracts in Dubai, Bhutan and Kathmandu ”



## Transformable tables!

The latest collection of coffee tables by IOTA is transformable and expandable, and necessary for the space-challenged urban dweller. The panels are hidden inside the table allowing you to serve six to eight guests very comfortably. It can change in shape and function according to its use. When closed, it is an elegant coffee table to be placed in front of the sofa or, when opened, it turns into a stunning, convenient, and practical table to cater to more guests at a time. One of the coffee tables, MyFlower, embodies rare attributes that are inspired by nature. It showcases three synchronically swivelling tops where the top one is round and the bottom two are in a shape of a four-petal flower. HIVE is an extendable table with ceramic and glass tops, and a painted or galvanised steel base. This piece of furniture is equipped

with an innovative mechanism that allows the three floors below to open. BONNE VIE is an extendable table which allows all three floors to open.



## Going outdoors!

World Bazaar's latest collection offers the most fascinating pieces from the high-end luxury brands HOUE, Fermob, and Fatboy. The range is absolutely comfortable with a palette of bright colours available in single chairs or in a three-seating bench style. The outdoor tables, rocking chairs, sun-loungers, beanbags, hammocks, and planters are equally stunning. The range not only creates a space that is aesthetically pleasing, but also has a beautiful look to enhance an outdoor space while withstanding all weather conditions. From weave chairs to steel or aluminium chairs and tables, World Bazaar offers a range that is carefully curated and meets international standards. The range emulates luxury resort living for all kinds of spaces.



## Beautiful walls

Ventura International presents the metallic and handmade designer laminates from the German brand 'Wallenstein'. The range has rust, stone, and metal surfaces. It features natural, UV-resistant surfaces. The laminates can be processed with regular commercial wood working machines. All the products are ecologically harmless and easy to recycle. This surface design replicates aged metal surfaces in a way that makes them look convincingly real and gives viewers a new experience of a room. Its sumptuous appearance and grace will charm anyone who sees it. Aesthetics and design go hand in hand with architecture and space. The iridescence of the metal and its antique patina in soft tones are mesmerising. The Wallenstein collection has several applications and can be used for designing interiors, as wall coverings, for furniture, as well as to deck up commercial spaces.

## The soul of consoles!

Displaying an aesthetic that refashions the natural in unique and versatile ways, Ficus unveils a series of beautiful rustic and contemporary consoles. These chic consoles come in unique silhouettes and designs that make them the perfect statement pieces. The versatile cabinets have many a use and are useful for storing photo albums, linen, or even crockery. Ficus furniture is usually crafted in fine teak wood, however, if designers or customers prefer pine wood, oak wood or Indian rosewood, the consoles can be rendered as per their preference. The in-house design team and master craftsmen at Ficus are at hand to give veneer, painted surfaces, solid wood polish, and other exclusive artistic touches.





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# APPOINTMENTS



★ **Rohit Joshi**  
Hotel Manager  
InterContinental Marine Drive

Rohit Joshi has recently been appointed Hotel Manager at the InterContinental Hotel Mumbai. Joshi has functioned earlier as Director F&B at InterContinental and has always been one of the hotels greatest strengths. During his tenure, he revamped the Long & Short Gastro

Bar. At the Dome, he introduced innovative cocktails and special guest experiential packages that were a huge success. Joshi drew guests into the hotel with innovative ideas, exceptional food and a fine stable of wines and liquor.



★ **Jaspreet Singh**  
General Manager  
Azaya Beach Resort, Goa

Azaya Beach Resort, Goa has announced the appointment of Jaspreet Singh as the General Manager. Singh brings with him a deep understanding of the hospitality industry after having worked at different hotels across India. Singh

also served as the Director of Sales & Marketing (South West Asia), for InterContinental Hotels Group, for 2 years. Also, Singh developed his expertise with several regional marketing and sales positions, with the Oberoi group, where he spent 14 years of his career.



★ **Shobhit Sawhney**  
General Manager  
Hyatt Regency Pune

Hyatt Regency Pune has appointed Shobhit Sawhney as the new General Manager. He brings with him a deep understanding of the hospitality industry. During his tenure, he has worked with brands like The Oberoi Hotels, Hilton, and InterContinental Hotels.

His stint with the Hyatt brand began with Grand Hyatt Mumbai followed by Park Hyatt Goa, which was also his last assignment in the same capacity. He has a well-defined vision for the hotel and is committed to taking it forward by adding more energising experiences at the property.



★ **Sriram Ramaswamy**  
Director of Sales and Marketing  
Indore Marriott Hotel

Indore Marriott Hotel has announced the appointment of Sriram Ramaswamy as the Director of Sales and Marketing who was associated with the hotel since its pre-opening. Sriram brings with him a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the field

of sales and marketing in the hospitality industry. A highly result driven professional, Sriram has been responsible for leading the teams across departments to achieve set objectives and target and develop e-marketing and sales strategies to build the brand as well as increase the revenue for the property.





★ **Ritu Rana**  
**Director of Sales**  
**Renaissance Mumbai and Lakeside**  
**Chalet - Marriott Executive Apartments**

Ritu Rana has been recently appointed as the Director of Sales for Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel and Lakeside Chalet - Marriott Executive Apartments. She will be spearheading the sales functions for both hotels. She was heading the corporate segment at The Westin Mumbai Garden City before taking up the current role at Renaissance Mumbai. Ritu has over 8 years of experience in the hospitality industry. She was actively involved in strategy. Rana has the experience of working in close conjunction with various functions such as revenue generation, marketing and front office management.



★ **Bhagyashree Kamat**  
**New Learning & Development**  
**Manager Novotel Hotels &**  
**Resorts Goa**

Bhagyashree Kamat has been appointed as the Learning & Development Manager for Novotel Goa Resorts & Spa and Novotel Goa Shrem Hotel. With over eight years of hospitality experience, Kamat, has worked with Grand Hyatt Goa, prior to joining AccorHotels. Her last assignment was at Novotel Pune Nagar Road. Kamat will focus to discreetly align the L&D activities with strategic organisational direction at both the Novotel properties in Goa. Novotel Hotels, Suites & Resorts provide a multi-service offer for both business and leisure guests, with spacious, modular rooms etc.

★ **Ranjan Rajani**  
**Executive Chef**  
**Hotel Sahara Star**

Hotel Sahara Star, Mumbai, has appointed Ranjan Rajani as the Executive Chef who will provide the hotel with his comprehension and proficiency to maintain the legacy of the hotel. A diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Bhopal, he started his career with Oberoi Group of Hotels, moving onto JW Marriot, Juhu and the most recent one being Hotel Sahara Star. With over 17 years of experience, Ranjan is known for his strong leadership quality and the importance of innovation in the ever-evolving hospitality industry. His desire to continuously learn and explore his proficiency as a chef has resulted in an impressive career, the most recent being Executive Sous Chef with Grand Hyatt, Mumbai.



★ **Rajat Sachdev**  
**Pastry Chef**  
**Sofitel Mumbai BKC**

Sofitel Mumbai BKC has appointed Rajat Sachdev as their new Pastry Chef. Rajat, who comes with over eight years of culinary experience, enjoys crafting new and innovative creations as much as he likes preparing them. In his new role, Rajat will ensure that the pastry team provides consistent quality of food and beverage, in accordance with international standards, enhancing their own ability to create with a purpose of achieving complete guest satisfaction and organisational profitability, and ensuring an atmosphere of high team morale. Rajat brings with him an extensive array of proficiency and a deep understanding of the exceptional and modern aspects of the F&B industry.





**AMIT KUMAR SHARMA**

**General Manager | Amanora The Fern Hotels & Club**

Sipping a glass of Beaujolais and listening to Bob Marley, a good game of badminton, spending time with family and going on cruising expeditions, keep me going. People call me workaholic, but I am just pursuing my passion. Moreover, I enjoy travelling and exploring new places and meet people from

different walks of life. My first ever trip to Thailand with my friends and the white-water rafting trip in Rishikesh in the lap of Himalayas are two of my most memorable holidays. However, I do enjoy visiting Udaipur and Krabi. I enjoy modern Indian cuisine with a twist and my craving for Mediterranean food is well known.

“People call me workaholic, but I am just pursuing my passion”

**RAJEEV KUMAR**

**General Manager | The Fern Kadamba Hotel & Spa, Goa**

During my free time, I prefer to go through the news, read about trends of the hospitality industry, and spend quality time with family and friends. A morning work-out is also a must for me to begin the day. Listening to bollywood music, watching movies, and following cricket

are my favourite hobbies. When it comes to travelling, being in Goa, there is so much to explore within the state. I prefer to travel to Thekkady and Munnar in Kerala and enjoy the Dubai Safari quite a bit. Visiting Bali is also on my list.

“Morning work-out is a must for me to begin the day”



**VIVEK CHANDRAMOHAN**

**Chief Executive Officer | Grover Zampa Vineyards**

I de-stress by golfing regularly. One thing I am passionate about is achieving perfection. One thing about me that not too many people know is that I can cook well. One of my most memorable holiday moments was

with my wife in Rome. My favourite holiday destination in India is Rajasthan but otherwise it's Italy. When I'm on a flight, I try and get a power nap that gets me recharged for the rest of the day. My favourite cuisine is Continental.

“One of my most unforgettable holiday moments was with my wife in Rome”

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