

MYSTIC EAST

...an unexplored horizon

A bi-monthly magazine by HRAEI | Vol 5 | Issue 1 | January - February 2019



flurys
fine confections since 1927
भारत

ICONIC RESTAURANTS

Some of the heritage restaurants of Kolkata—lead by the legendary destinations in Park Street—are walking along the path of rejuvenation

Expand your Reach



Reach out to a captive audience of major hotel and restaurant owners in 12 states and a union territory

Advertise in

MYSTIC EAST

HRAEI's bimonthly journal

Colour Ad Size	Rate (₹)
Inside Full Page	10,000
Inside Half Page	5,000
Back Cover	20,000
Inside Back Cover	15,000
Inside Front Cover	15,000

For advertising contact : Atikram Gupta - 8585015172

HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF EASTERN INDIA

18/A1 Everest House, 18th floor, 46C, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata - 700071

Phone: +9133 2288 1742, e-mail: info@hraei.co.in



VISION

- ✌️ Make the Eastern Region comprising 12 States and a Union Territory a flourishing destination for domestic and foreign tourists by projecting their captivating tourism assets.
- ✌️ Promoting best industry practices and setting benchmarks for industry constituents.



MISSION

- ✌️ A common voice for hotels, restaurants and associates for unhindered progress of the hospitality industry in the country's Eastern Region.
- ✌️ Create value for members by ensuring government policies remain supportive of tourism and the industry.

Specialized in All types of Authentic & Quality Foods

HINDUSTHAN RESTAURANT (Bar Cum Restaurant)

20 J. L. Nehru Road. 1st floor
Lindsay Street, Kolkata-700087.

Email : hindusthan.rangmahal@gmail.com

Contact: Mr. Sunil Kohli 9831705598

RANGMAHAL RESTAURANT
4 A, Chowringhee Place,
Roxy Building, Opp. Kolkata Corporation
Kolkata-700013.

Email : rangmahalrest.4a@gmail.com

Contact: Mr. Sunil Kohli 9831705598

BADSHA INN WITH BANQUET
BADSHA RESTAURANT CUM BAR
1 Royal Park, P.o. Sewli Telinipara,
Wireless More, 24 Pgs (N), Barrackpore,
Barrackpore Kalyani Express Way,
Kolkata-700121.

Email : hindusthan.rangmahal@gmail.com

Contact: Mr. Shivaji Das 9831076109

Directors :
Mr. Vinod Kumar Kohli

Nr. Amit Kumar Kohli
Mob : 9831425251



KOHLI CATERING SERVICES

20 J. L. Nehru Road. 1 St floor
Lindsay Street, Kolkata-700087

Email : kohlicateringservices.kolkatal@gmail.com

Web : www.kohlicateringservices.in

Contact: Mr. Raj Kumar Lohia 033-2249-3236



F

Food delivery apps are seen as a boon for small restaurants as they handle a large part of the takeaway orders of these small operators. Since the small operators benefit immensely from these delivery apps they often have to play to the tunes of these companies. They increase food prices as demanded by the app companies to accommodate the high commissions charged by the food tech companies. This certainly affects the business practice in the restaurant business as it has been found that the commissions charged by the app companies can go up to as much as 22 per cent of the order value. Even though small restaurants in our association have somewhat been affected by the growing anomaly, there hasn't been any large-scale protest as yet. Some of the restaurants have tried to negotiate the terms with the tech companies so that they bring down the commissions, while others have or-

Pranav Singh
President, HRAEI

“

Steaming hot food served on fine cutlery by a smiling staff, amid a fascinating décor of a restaurant, can never match any stuff delivered by a food tech company

”

ganised their own delivery team to fight the competition.

However, the renowned standalone restaurants have hardly been affected by the competition because they keep attracting customers as they provide the superior ambience and impeccable service. Most of these restaurants have spruced up their interiors and have trained their staff to offer the customers fine dining experience that can never be matched by food tech companies.

After all steaming hot food delivered on fine cutlery by a smiling staff in the backdrop of a fascinating décor can never match stuff packed in a hot box. We have been encouraging standalone restaurants to improve the service to compete with food tech companies. Also we advise them not to agree to any terms and conditions of the food delivery apps that damage the fair business practices.



“

We've chosen only those restaurants that have been serving people for 50 years or more

”

Old is gold, goes the age-old adage. The cover story of this issue talks about iconic eateries of Kolkata. Park Street, once the epitome of fine dining in South Asia, has lost some lustre, but many of the fine dining restaurants are still going strong. It's true that Mocambo was independent India's first nightclub, where a 17-year-old chanteuse named Pam Crain belted out numbers with a six-piece band led by Anton Menezes. Down the corner at Moulin Rouge, Carlton Kitto, one of the most popular jazz guitarists of the city, would enthral diners for hours. Louis Banks, Usha Uthup and Braz Gonsalves were regular performers at Trinca's, Blue Fox and other restaurants on Park Street.

Let's not shed tears on the loss of Sky Room or Waldorf, but celebrate the continuity of Peter Cat, Mocambo or Flurys. These classic places are not only alive but have reinvented themselves.

Outside Park Street Songhai and Aminia have been featured. We've chosen only those restaurants which have celebrated 50 years or more. Flurys and our restaurant Aminia have reinvented themselves through spreading out into multiple branches across the city, its outskirts and even outside the state. We are proud to have all of them in our member's list!

Mr Mohammed Azhar
Honorary Secretary, HRAEI

MYSTIC EAST

A BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE BY HRAEI
Vol 5 | Issue 1 | January - February 2019

EDITORIAL BOARD

SUDESH PODDAR
CHAIRMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE, HRAEI

PRANAV SINGH
PRESIDENT, HRAEI

MOHAMMED AZHAR
HONORARY SECRETARY, HRAEI

GOPAL DAS AGARWAL
VICE PRESIDENT

S. H. RAHMAN
MANAGING COMMITTEE MEMBER

BIRGIT ELLY HOLM
GENERAL MANAGER
HYATT REGENCY KOLKATA

EDITOR
ATIKRAM GUPTA

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
SUSMIT BARMAN

CHIEF DESIGNER
SOMU DUTTA

'Mystic East' magazine is printed and published by Atikram Gupta on behalf of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India.

Printed at CDC Printers Private Limited, No.45, Radha Nath Chowdhury Road, Tangra Industrial Estate-II, Kolkata, West Bengal 700 015

Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India, 18A/1, Everest, 18th Floor, 46C, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata- 700 071; Telephone- +91 33 2288-1742/43, 40035993. E-mail: info@hraei.co.in Website: www.hraei.co.in

THIS ISSUE OF MYSTIC EAST CONTAINS 56 PAGES INCLUDING COVER AND BACK COVER

All information in Mystic East magazine is derived from sources we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. The publisher regrets that he cannot accept liability for error and omissions contained in this publication that might have crept in inadvertently. Similarly, opinions/views expressed by third parties are not necessarily shared by the magazine. However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognised authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Readers are advised to seek specific advice before acting on information contained in this publication which is provided for general use, and may not be appropriate for the readers' particular circumstances..

No part of the magazine may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the permission of the publication in writing. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. An exemption is hereby granted for the extract used for the purpose of fair review, provided two copies of the same publication are sent to us for our records. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action. The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material, solicited or unsolicited, nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged.



That the importance of Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence is immense in the hospitality industry has rightly been pointed out by Dr Stuart Jauncey, Managing Director of Les Roches Global Hospitality Education, Switzerland in this issue of *Mystic East*.

He says that as automation increasingly replaces routine work, creativity and social intelligence will be essential skills for most new jobs created between now and 2030. However, only 36% of global Millennials and 29% of Gen Z feel they have the skills — including confidence and interpersonal skills — needed to thrive in this changing workplace.

Prof. Jauncey stresses the importance of emotional intelligence and soft skills in hospitality, a people-centric industry that is based on the delivery of experiences. Managers and their staff rely on sensitivity, flexibility and excellent communication skills to build and nurture guest relations. And with more than one billion international travellers crossing borders each year, awareness of different cultural viewpoints and expectations is indispensable for businesses to provide the personalised level of service that makes guests feel welcome.

Unfortunately a majority of Indian hospitality education institutions do not realise the growing importance of Soft Skills and Emotional Intelligence at workplace. This is why graduates with international experience of studying hospitality abroad have an upper edge over those who study in India. Exposure to multicultural team management and adaptability, foreign language skills, diverse student body representing multiple nationalities and internships in a broad range of industries help students develop a global perspective and gain valuable skills.

This is why Indian institutes should immediately take steps to create international synergy, a globally focused curriculum and innovative teaching methods. This will help our graduates learn appropriate skills to cater to international guests and also get jobs abroad.

Mr Sudesh Poddar

Chairman, Administrative Committee, HRAEI

Cover Story

January - February 2019

28 | ICONIC RESTAURANTS

Some of the heritage restaurants of Kolkata are walking along the path of rejuvenation





8 NEWS

HRAEI collaborates with FSSAI to groom Master Food Safety Trainers

10 Restaurants lose appetite with tax sop on menu

12 The hospitality sector should be given individual industry status: K.J. Alphons

16 CHOICE OF GENX
Engaging millennials throughout their stay is difficult but not an impossible task

21

HEADWINDS OF GROWTH:

Hotelivate 2018 report affirms positive vibes in the hospitality market



The biggest takeaway of the survey is the rise of average occupancy rates to the 70 per cent mark

22

INTERVIEW

Nothing else comes close to Hilsa: Chef Vijay Malhotra



Without doubt the Hilsa cooked in its traditional avatar with mustard is my favourite dish



30

**BRIDGING THE
HOSPITALITY SKILLS
GAP IN INDIA**

Interview with Dr Stuart
Jauncey, Managing Director
of Les Roches Global
Hospitality Education



34

**BOSS IS
THE BEST**

It's the first-line supervisors
who matter most as they
drive employee engagement

40

**TOUGH
CUSTOMERS**

Worried about handling irate
customers in your hotel?
We've got you covered

44

**SHADOW ON
HEAVEN**

In spite of having great tourism
potential, Arunachal Pradesh has
only 3.71% share in tourist inflow



HRAEI COLLABORATES WITH FSSAI TO GROOM MASTER FOOD SAFETY TRAINERS

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Eastern India (HRAEI) has collaborated with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to educate and equip hotels and restaurants in the eastern region of India with food safety and security guidelines.

As part of the initiative, the association organized a certification programme for Master Trainers with the support of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from FSSAI to counsel and guide representatives from hotels and restaurants through a series of conclaves held at various locations across the western region.

The session was held at Fern Residency, Rajarhat, Kolkata, on June

March 22. The objective behind the HRAEI-FSSAI Certification Programme (FoSTAC) for Master Trainer is to familiarize the hoteliers and restaurateurs with the finer nuances of food safety and hygiene and to effectively pass on the communication to the grassroots levels in the establishment in order to uniformly implement the processes.

The Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has made it mandatory for hotels and restaurants to have at least one person trained in food safety in order to check adulteration in food. The Food Safety and Standards Act means to serve the interest of the consumers with reference to food safety, and standards of cleanliness

and hygiene.

Representatives from 40 hotels attended the training session. Mr. Pranav Singh, President, HRAEI, took a key role in organizing the event. Said Mr Singh, "This initiative is a part of a programme to upgrade the level of food safety and hygiene in hotels and restaurants."

"These Master Trainers [trained through FoSTAC] in turn will then be in a position to train the appointed Food Safety Supervisors in their respective establishments," said Mr. Singh.

Representatives of several member hotels and restaurants along with some government officials learnt received hands-on training from the FSSAI staff and trainer.

DIGITAL SIGNAGES FOR NEW-AGE HOTELS



TOP hotels chains and high end restaurants across the globe are introducing specialised digital display solutions with onscreen multi format visibility as a primary method for customer engagement within the property. Some are also converting it to generate revenue and spread social message. The new age digital signage solutions are aggressively used with a view to engage customers and make them feel at home informing them about the hotel brand, facilities and relevant information. Bars are places where liquor companies can advertise their products. Restaurants can use the displays to broadcast advertisement for liquor and their in house menus and promos at the same time. This will help them monetise the digital displays effectively.

The powerful thing about these digital signages is the fact that it is customizable to meet every hotel or resort's unique needs, wants and

branding. They may be used as an emergency alert system and also carry social messages. All being controlled from one central location with same or targeted message for a particular display. Report generation about the status of the on or off display. It should also work as an aggregated platform for media feeds.

Digital signage displays information in a classy way for your guests who will find it useful for: daily events at hotels, menus of restaurants, banquets reservations, conference and events with content play from event sponsors, offerings, promotions and amenities of the hotel, social messages (like don't drink and drive) in bars etc.

Digital Display Solutions work best in waiting areas and locations with high foot-traffic such as spaces near: reception, waiting areas, entrance of restaurants, elevators, taxi or valet waiting areas, gift shops, entrance to

conference venues, service desks, spa area and swimming pool.

Livesignages, run by a team of qualified display technology professionals with deep national and international foot print in providing solution to the smart displays industry, can provide the digital display solutions. They have over the years built extremely reliable supply chain for digital display signage products. This is a product made in India which can be easily connected to the hotel's television switchboard and to power the in room guest communications.

Livesignages solutions (www.livesignages.biz) are 4G enabled powered by MS or Android meant to work long hours allowing multiple formats to run on a single screen at the same time. You can run Video, still, slide show, RSS feeds, contents from your social media posts and aggregate them to give the customer an engaging experience.

RESTAURANTS LOSE APPETITE WITH TAX SOP NOT ON MENU



ABOUT a dozen prominent restaurant brands have either halted expansion in the country or revised targets downwards over a year after the government scrapped input tax credit (ITC) under the revised goods & services tax regime. A few others said they would set up only online outlets or within hotel premises where they can continue to avail of the tax credit.

“We are dealing with a 25-30% loss in EBITDA after the restaurant sector was denied input tax credit. We will stop expanding in India and set up outlets only overseas if a rollback

doesn't happen this year,” said Priyank Sukhija, chief executive of First Fiddle Restaurants, which operates Lord of the Drinks, Warehouse Cafe and Townhouse.

In November 2017, the government cut GST rates on restaurants to 5% from 18%. But it also scrapped ITC, which the industry said escalated capital expenses and rentals by 15-18% as they could no longer claim credits on the GST they paid on raw materials and rent, and use those to offset tax liability. Hiking prices by 3-5% and passing on some cost to customers have not been enough to protect mar-

gins, they said.

“We have decided not to invest in new brick and mortar stores this year, unless things for the sector improve. Instead, we are planning to set up an online-only restaurant brand,” said Anurag Katriar, CEO of deGustibus Hospitality, which runs the brands Indigo, Tote on the Turf and Neem. “The denial of input tax credit has led to capital expenditure going up and margins coming under pressure. Besides, a lot of business is moving online,” Katriar said.

Source: The Economic Times

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN INDIA: A BIG CONTRIBUTOR TO ECONOMY'S GROWTH

THE hospitality sector has the potential to be the main driving force behind the growth of the economy. With a consistently growing middle class and increasing disposable income, the tourism and hospitality sector is witnessing a healthy growth and accounts for 7.5 per cent of the country's GDP. According to a report by KPMG, the hospitality sector in India is expected to grow at 16.1 per cent CAGR to reach Rs 2,796.9 thousand crore in 2022. The hospitality sector encompasses a wide variety of activities within the services sector and is a major job provider both direct and indirectly. The sector attracts the most FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflow and is the most important net foreign exchange earners for the country. It also contributes significantly to indirect tax revenue at the state and central level which includes revenues from VAT, Service Tax, and Luxury Tax etc.

The growth in the hospitality sector and its contributions to the GDP will continue to be substantially higher than other sectors of the economy on the back of huge tourism potential in the country. However, the hospitality sector is one of the most heavily taxed industries and is saddled with

multiple layers of tax such as VAT, service tax, luxury tax, etc. ranging from 20 per cent - 30 per cent. This multiple taxation adds to operational costs and reduces profitability. While the operationalization of the much awaited GST regime is expected to rationalise the taxation structure, bring a positive outcome with streamlined taxes, enhance ease of doing business and lower cost for the consumers, there is an urgent need for lowering the tax levied, to incentivize and attract more investments to the sector.

The hospitality sector has the potential to be the main driving force behind the growth of the economy. It, however, will be possible only with the right amount of support and incentives from the government in all categories of hotels and not only limited to the luxury and ultra-luxury segment. I believe that the government must provide its full support in incentivizing the sector and the overall taxation on the hospitality sector should be reduced to stimulate its growth and make India competitive against other internationally renowned hospitality chains.

Source: Businessworld



THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR SHOULD BE GIVEN INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRY STATUS: K J ALPHONS



TOURISM is increasingly becoming a growth engine of the Indian economy, contributing around \$250 billion or 10 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The catalyst behind the change is the Ministry of Tourism, which has transformed the idea of travel and exploration from plain sightseeing into an experiential one. In an exclusive interview with BW Hotelier,

K J Alphons, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism, talked about his idea of India which goes beyond physical statistics like 36 UNESCO World Heritage Sites or 3600 ASI protected monuments. "For me, tourism to be meaningful has to be a transformative experience. Anybody who comes to India and leaves should have a spiritual experience, which will bring out a new outlook towards the

world. The fallout of all these are, people will stay longer, our rooms will be occupied, they will go out for shopping, hire taxis which ultimately will create jobs," he started with.

Alphons wants travellers to soak in the spirit of India. Adding more to it, he said, "People who will come for Yoga or Ayurveda, will stay for 10 or more days or if someone comes here to see the wildlife, they would stay

at least for a week. Any tourism that doesn't bring benefits to the local community is useless. Tourism has to generate employment, it has to generate money for the people." The tourism industry is one of the biggest generators of employment in the country. The industry employs 81.2 million people which is about 12.38 percent of the total jobs in the country. In the last four years, 13.92 million jobs have been created by the tourism sector, among which, 10 million jobs benefited the lowest rung of the society.

As per the latest World Tourism and Travel Council report, India was ranked third, behind China and the US, in revenue generated by the sector. With proceeds from tourism exceeding 234 billion dollars a year, the sector makes a substantial contribution to the economy. "What is wonderful about this whole revenue part and the statistics is, out of 234 billion dollar income, 87 percent comes from domestic tourism," Alphons told us. According to the report, Indians embarked on 1.8 billion domestic trips last year. Over the past four years, the ministry has been trying to build remarkable infrastructure for the tourism sector. The rate of construction of national highways has jacked up to 29 km per day from 12 km per day earlier.

Not to forget about the airports, some of them like Indira Gandhi International Airport, Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport and Kempegowda International Airport are among the best in the world. "The country is beautifully networked and there is still a lot more to happen. Like on the Buddhist Circuit, the roads are still not very good and work is to be done. But, across the country we are trying to connect these tourist destinations and create world-class infrastructure," the Minister commented.

Under the UDAN scheme (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik), the Government of India, with the objective of "letting the common citizen of the country fly", has made air travel affordable and widespread. Alphons informed us that under the scheme, 71 lakh fresh seat capacity has been created. "People are now able to fly for nothing. The whole ideology of the Modi government is to promote people across the country to travel," he added.

Stressing upon the hospitality sector, Alphons feels that the sector should be given individual industry status, considering the amount of contribution it makes for the Indian economy. According to him, a much bigger amount of investment should be made for the hospitality sector so that more infrastructure can be developed. "This is essential because we have an amazing multiplier ef-

fect in this sector," he added. When asked about the need of single-window time-bound clearance for the commencement of a hotel, Alphons replied that all these approvals are not a federal subject and thus not controlled by the government. However, he suggests that land parcels must be given to the budget hotels on a long term lease. "Through this person will be able to build affordable hotels which are very important," he added.

Giving credit where due, the Minister called people like tour operators, travel agents, hotel owners, taxi drivers and guides the building blocks of the tourism industry and coined the term "ambassadors" for them. "All the work is actually done by the hospitality sector. These people do the real job for me," Alphons signed off.

Source: Businessworld



INDIAN HOSPITALITY SECTOR MAY SEE MANY MORE DEALS IN 2019: STUDY



HOTELIERS and analysts expect 2019 to be a bumper year for deals in India's hospitality sector following Brookfield's purchase of Hotel Leelaventure's assets, the sale of Keys Hotels to Lemon Tree and Blackstone's potential acquisition of Golden Jubilee hotels, apart from a robust performance in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Hotel transaction volumes could cross \$800 million in 2019, the highest for the Indian hospitality industry, HVS Anarock estimates.

"The sale of the Leela Hotels portfolio is a welcome development as it releases a leading Indian luxury portfolio from the crippling crisis it had been facing over the last several years," said Mandeep Lamba, president, South Asia, at HVS Anarock. "This also indicates a renewed interest in the Indian hospitality sector from leading global investors and augurs well for the

transaction markets."

Last week, Leelaventure said Canadian alternative asset management company Brookfield had agreed to buy its hotels in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Udaipur and Chennai for Rs 3,950 crore. Lemon Tree Hotels signed a non-binding term sheet with Berggruen Hotels this month to acquire its loss-making Keys Hotels for an estimated \$70 million.

It has about 20 owned, managed and franchised hotels in Mumbai, Chennai, Pune, Gurgaon, Shirdi, Tirupati and Mahabaleshwar. "There is a positive sentiment in the market now that if you have assets that are credible, you will get a buyer, which was never the case at that level. It appears that institutional investors like Brookfield, Blackstone and KKR are serious about doing business in the hotels space. They were focusing on real es-

tate," said Jaideep Dang, MD of Jones Lang LaSalle's hotels and hospitality business.

The Blackstone Group received approval from lenders to acquire bankrupt Hyderabad-based Golden Jubilee Hotels, which shot into the limelight after hosting Ivanka Trump in 2017, ET reported in December. This is the first case of international institutional capital coming in for financial resolution of a company under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

"We are receiving a lot of traction on the deals we are running from institutional investors as well as family offices. We have the mandates to sell some very credible assets in tier-one leisure markets across mid-scale, upscale and luxury. There are motivated buyers and sellers," Dang said.

Source: The Economic Times

JOIN US AT PETER CAT FOR A MEAL PREPARED IN THE TRUE HONOURED TRADITION OF INDIA. BEGIN WITH A FISH MAKHMALI AND A TANDOORI BROCCOLI FOLLOWED BY THE MOUTH WATERING DUM KI RAAN. A PORTION OF VEGETABLE MALAI KOFTA OR IF YOU PREFER OUR CHICKEN RISHMI BUTTER MASALA. THEN OUR SIGNATURE ORIGINAL CHELO KEBAB AND LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST A MERINGUE WITH ICE CREAM AND HOT CHOCOLATE SAUCE TO MAKE YOUR LUNCH AND DINNER COMPLETE EVERY COURSE A SPECIAL TREAT. EVERYDAY AT PETER CAT.



19A, PARK STREET, KOLKATA-700016, INDIA
+91-33-22298841, +91-33-22172942
INFO@HERITAGEDINING.IN

IN CALCUTTA THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE MEAN BY A WELL-BALANCED MEAL



JOIN US AT MOCAMBO FOR A MEAL PREPARED IN THE TRUE HONOURED TRADITION OF EUROPE. BEGIN WITH A DEVILLED CRAB, GARLIC HERB PRawns, FOLLOWED BY A CHICKEN PAPRIKA, CHICKEN TETRAZZINI AND ASPARAGUS CREPES, ELSE A VEGETABLE ALA KUVY OR IF YOU PREFER OUR BECKTY MEUNERS, LONSTER, THERMIDOR, AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST A BAKED ALASKA TO MAKE YOUR LUNCH AND DINNER COMPLETE EVERY COURSE A SPECIAL TREAT. EVERYDAY AT MOCAMBO.

Mocalbo

25B, PARK STREET, KOLKATA-700016, INDIA
+91-33-22290095, +91-33-22654300
INFO@HERITAGEDINING.IN



► Several hotels have just recently announced partnerships with Amazon's Alexa

DESIGN

CHOICE OF GENX

Engaging millennials throughout their stay is difficult but not an impossible task

MILLENNIALS are believed to be somewhat of an unpredictable generation who have their own choice, passion and quirks. They are known as great disruptors in many areas of business. But with keen observance and a careful study it's not difficult to understand this generation. From the integration of technology, to the creation of open-concept floorplans, what millennials crave is transforming how hotels approach design concepts in order to better attract and serve their guests.

Technology and Hospitality Industry Design

Technology-based design elements are the primary way that the millen-

nial shift is occurring. Amenities like TVs and Wi-Fi have not always been as ubiquitous as they are now. In fact, providing a flat-screen TV in a hotel room is now becoming an industry baseline for even the cheapest accommodations. A strong Wi-Fi connection is now more coveted than parking or even complimentary breakfast at hotels. Readily available Wi-Fi access has proven to be a necessity for both business and leisure travelers.

As the millennial generation continues to age and have children of their own, even more will be expected of hotel design, such as the addition of Amazon's Alexa and smart control panels for lighting, room temperature. Hotels have even begun media partnerships with a variety of stream-

ing services that be offered for free to hotel guests like the Showtime Hotel App. Several hotels also just recently announced partnerships with Google's New Google Assistant Interpreter Mode, in which users are able to receive translations for dozens of languages and conduct conversations in real-time.

Because technology moves at such a fast pace, hotels have no choice but to update. The consumer demand for more technology in travel accommodations is driving a plethora of innovation within hotel design and function. In addition to utilizing technology for hotel guests, smart hotels brands are also seeking ways in which technology can help improve work for its employees.

While housekeeping isn't the first thing you think of as it relates to a hotel's design and when it comes to making a hotel millennial friendly and high tech, there are some surprising new technologies that help the staff with cleaning tasks, therefore making the housekeeping easier, and ultimately, providing better guest satisfaction. Some hotel properties have begun utilizing sensors on room service trays which sends out alerts to pick it up after the sensor has passed through the guest's doorway into the hall.

Another aspect of advanced housekeeping is the use of an iPad Touch to notify maids when a guest has checked out or left the room for a period of time. This enables the staff to come in and clean without disturbing guests during their stay. It also creates a more time efficient schedule for hotel personnel. Millennials may have the chance to engage with this technology as some hotels are moving towards app-based innovations for guests to request housekeeping to better align with their schedules or even receive notifications from housekeeping when the room is being serviced.

The Influence of Airbnb

The changing landscape of hospitality cannot be discussed without the mention of Airbnb. This service has swept the globe, and while it makes travel accommodations more affordable, it also threatens the classic model for hotels and their design. However, 53% of millennials are still choosing hotels as their first choice of accommodations, with only 23% saying a short-term rental service was their go-to. Instead of wiping out the traditional hotel industry, Airbnb has simply inspired hoteliers to utilize architects as a resource for innovative ideas.



► **Tapping into an architect's skillset in order to design for new consumer tastes, as well as for the future, has given new life to the hotel industry**

Tapping into an architect's skillset in order to design for new consumer tastes, as well as for the future, has given new life to the hotel industry. This desire and willingness to compete with short-term rental services has renewed the competitive nature of business among hotel brands across the nation. Unique amenities are what truly differentiate hotels and Airbnb. Hotels can take advantage of these points of differentiation because the architect can plan for more experiences and additional services, unlike an Airbnb, such as access to a pool or outdoor lounge, a gym, in-room dining and, housekeeping.

The Power of Authenticity & Experience-Based Travel

Since millennials crave authentic and

experience-based travel, the locations they stay in must reflect these qualities as well. In order for the hotels to compete, certain design elements must be changed or updated to attract millennial clientele. One particular change architects have been implementing for hoteliers is the trend of designing smaller rooms. This creates more capacity to house guests and increases budget to focus on plush amenities, such as a premium mattress and luxurious bath fixtures. This resonates with this demographic given that the Millennial guests prefers more key amenities to the size of the room.

Additionally, Millennials crave connection and as such, the lobby needs to feel comfortable and social, as it has become a central "hub" for guests to hang out, enjoy curated F&B



► **Millennial travelers are searching for a home-like feel when they walk in the door**

menus and enjoy local entertainment or even beer flight tastings from a local brewery, for example. Beyond the social aspect of the lobby, another reason Millennials are attracted to this space is their penchant for social media. Having an aesthetically appealing lobby provides great "share-worthy" material.

70% of American travelers are on social media at least once a day, spending an average of 82 minutes perusing and posting. When examining this data more closely related to Millennial travelers, research has shown that this demographic spends significantly more time on social media during travel, at 113 minutes and accessing their social accounts at least once a day.

Feels like Home

Rather than creating a formal, business-like atmosphere that many hotels have strived to uphold in the past, Millennial travelers are searching for a home-like feel when they walk in

the door. One way to achieve this in the hotel's design is by giving guests the choice to dine in, or out. More recently, hotels have begun adding kitchenettes to their properties as a key amenity, providing the option for guests to cook for themselves if desired.

Additional ways designers have helped create this "at home" feel is through the use of select materials and lighting. For example, natural and locally-sourced materials such as wood and warm tones can make a space feel cozier without being boring. And environmentally conscious materials, especially native to the area, make a difference for the guests and the eco-system. Natural light has countless health benefits for guests including stress management, and even promoting natural production of melatonin, to aid guests in a more restful sleep.

Seeing as Millennials tend to be very eco-friendly, these types of touches can make all the difference in

attracting the Millennial guest to the property.

Components like skylights and floor-to-ceiling windows in hotel can make a huge difference in the look and feel of the hotel, in addition to aiding in natural light benefits. As an alternative, more hotels have begun designing with LED lighting since this is a big energy saver, and is relatively easy to incorporate into a space without a full re-design or renovation. LED lights have been shown to be a good investment as while they are often more expensive up front, they last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs and consume less energy. From a design perspective, LEDs are also great for use in hard-to-reach or unconventional places since the bulbs so rarely have to be changed.

All in all, designing for millennials is essentially designing for the future. According to a study by the Cornell Center for Hospitality Research, Millennials already make up more than one-third of the world's hotel guests and are expected to represent half of all travelers to the United States by the year 2025. Seeing as Millennials are largely driving the travel economy and have many choices including Airbnb and other services that continue to remain popular, hotels need to continue to innovate through design.

By embracing and incorporating the latest in technology, adding and maximizing key amenities, keeping a focus on authentic and experience-based travel, and making guests feel at home, hotels will keep their guests coming back time and time again. Ultimately, it comes down to what hospitality is known for in the first place: understanding, implementing and delivering five-star service based on what hotel guests want and need in every aspect of their stay.

HEADWINDS OF GROWTH

Hotelivate 2018 report affirms positive vibes in the hospitality market. Occupancies are up, but rates not so much



THE 2018 Indian Hospitality Trends and Opportunities report by Hotelivate, too, like the past retains its authoritative stamp and a close watch over the hospitality scene across the country. It is yet another exhaustive document by the same team that has curated several such insightful reports for close to a decade, lead by Manav Thadani. It continues a leadership positioning for reporting on hospitality and looks at emerging trends in the hotel business bringing to fore the unfolding in supply and demand by scanning 13 major cities in the country, identifying the best and worst performing markets on varied counts such as occupancy rates, average rooms

rates and RevPar, among others.

The sample-set is considerably larger and involves 1020 hotels, which in their own reckoning is a 10-fold increase over the first such industry report put together a couple of decades ago. They mention that a wider base of 1,28,163 rooms has a more equitable representation, with hotels from all segments in the fray to crunch a more realistic data.

The finding has more good news than the bad for the industry, the biggest takeaway being the rise of average occupancy rates, now tantalizingly close to the 70 per cent mark. That is when the finding has excluded the new supply. While authors have egged the industry to make the most of the positive change in the

business environment, they have refrained from getting into the specifics of why or why not the industry has chosen to capitalize on the tailwinds.

Goa has emerged as the number one state in terms of average room rates, much to the delight of local industry stakeholders. In terms of market specifics, the capital city of Delhi continues to have the largest base of branded inventory and sustained demand is forecasted to outpace supply in the near future, the report says. Gurugram, on the other hand, has witnessed a fall in the room rate but on the positive side, the robust supply is being absorbed, while occupancy rates too also registered a modest 2.7 per cent uptick. The re-



► **The biggest takeaway of the survey is the rise of average occupancy rates, now tantalizingly close to the 70 per cent mark**



► **In the east, Kolkata, surprisingly, has clocked the highest increase in supply**

port, however, has cautioned hoteliers and management companies to assess their ARR strategies. Noida continues to disappoint as the NCR city has seen a dip of 3.2 per cent in occupancy rates and 6.5 per cent in average room rates in the last fiscal. Much of the sluggishness has been attributed to “the lack of meaningful growth in commercial demand and quality office supply.”

In the east, Kolkata, surprisingly, has clocked the highest increase in supply in the major markets across the country, compared to the previous fiscal. Over 20 per cent increase in supply has been attributed to sporting events, economic and infrastructural

growth, rising air traffic and the advent of submarkets – which has aided the absorption of a significantly faster supply. The report has forecasts that Kolkata would continue to witness a healthy growth in occupancies in the near term.

In the west, Mumbai and Goa continue to dominate, with Mumbai clocking the highest occupancy rate in the country, upwards of 75 per cent. The city also has the second highest average room rate. Goa ranks first in the average room rate, charging an average of INR 7844 per room. Its occupancy levels are also in the 70s for the fiscal year 2017-18.

Looking at the bigger picture, the

report has stressed that the changing demographics of the country and rising income levels are making senior living homes a major trend to watch out for. It also forecasts that the upswing in the mid-market and the budget segment is boosting the leasing model as a preferred mode for hotel development. It further pinpoints the growing necessity of employing total revenue management in the hotel business, apart from suggesting that guests are increasingly looking for unique experiences and hotels need to understand the change by infusing the vibrancy of the local community to provide a truly authentic experience to the discerning guest.

‘Nothing else comes close to Hilsa’



FOR Chef Vijay Malhotra, the passion for cooking started from a very young age where experiments in the kitchen were shared with his family. This passion was nurtured into a profession on his induction into the ITC Hotels.

A strong advocate of globalising Indian and local cuisines to foreign palate, he enjoys innovating and working with new indigenous ingredients creating interesting textures and flavours especially with seasonal fruits and vegetables using western methods of cooking.

An alumnus of the Institute of Hotel Management, Mumbai and ITC Hotels Management Institute, Chef Malhotra has been associated with the ITC Hotels for more than three decades both in India and abroad.

Tell us about your personal journey. (When did the passion for cooking start? Where did you graduate from? What was your first job? How many years are you with ITC Hotels? What were your earlier postings?)

I was interested in cooking from an early age. I was also a fussy eater and would often trouble my mother. I would get



► **Caesar Salad, is fusion food I have invented with Bandel Cheese and Paanchphoron spice**

CHEF'S CHOICE

Favourite tool in kitchen: Mortar Pestle

Favourite Spice: Black peppercorn

Favourite traditional dish: Sarson bata maach

Favourite vegetable: Begun or the omni present Egg Plant

Favourite drink: Jaljeera made with Gondaraj lemon

FUSION FARE

CAESAR SALAD USING BANDEL CHEESE AND PANCHPHORON

Serves: 4

Ingredients for the salad:

Romaine lettuce, 300g Red and yellow bell peppers, 6 (roasted, peeled, de-seeded and cut into 1-inch dices) Grilled zucchini slices, 10 Asparagus spears, blanched, 8 Croutons 1-inch square, 16 Bandel cheese dressing, 240g Cherry tomato, cut into halves, 16 Caperberry, 4 Bandel cheese, sliced, 1

into the kitchen and innovate combinations to satisfy my hunger.

My Alma Mater is Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Mumbai. After completion of the three year course, I joined ITC Hotels as Kitchen Management Trainee and have been working with ITC Hotels since 1988.

I have crisscrossed the entire country covering up east, west, north and south of India - having worked at ITC Maurya, ITC Maratha, ITC Gardenia, ITC Windsor, ITC Mughal & My Fortune Chola. I also served as the Chef Trainer as well ITC Hotels Management Institute at Gurgaon.

What is your impression of Calcutta cuisine? What's your favourite local dish?

Calcutta cuisine has helped me in ac-

complishing my food trails from all four corners of the country - eastern region was the only one which I hadn't worked on and with. I have always been interested in Bengali cuisine.

Without doubt the Hilsa cooked in its traditional avatar with mustard. The aura that this fish has catches every fish lover's imagination. To me, nothing else comes so close to Hilsa.

Have you invented any fusion dish based on the local cuisine?

There are plenty. I have worked with Bandel Cheese which I have used instead of Parmesan cheese for making the Caesar Salad (see the recipe) and the result was outstanding. The panch-phoron spice mix to season the grilled meat preparations and finishing their sauces were a great combination as well.

Have you ever tasted street food in Calcutta? What's your favourite Calcutta street food?

Yes a number of times. Chaats at the Vardhan market are quite nice, and my personal favourite will be club kachori with aloo hing ki sabzi.

ITC is going to open ITC Royal soon? What are your plans for the new hotel?

ITC Royal Bengal is not only going to redefine city's skyline but also change the city's dining landscape. ITC Hotels East will be two unique Hotels with ITC Ltd's legacy. The two distinguished hotels next to each other, linked by a walkway will offer two different experiences yet be connected in soul by providing Kolkata an unprecedented choice of Food & Beverage in restaurants and conference venues. ITC Royal Bengal will have six F&B Restaurants of-



► **At ITC Sonar I have been able to learn more on Bengali and other local cuisines**

fering Globe's Finest Indian and India's finest Global cuisine. Kolkata may look forward to the following ITC Hotels culinary brands Ottimo, Royal Vega, Roof Top Bar Jazz Bar and of course an exclusive 24X 7 Café- The Grand Market Pavilion.

How has been the journey at ITC Sonar? What is your biggest achievement as the Executive Chef at ITC Sonar?

It has been very enriching journey and I have been able to learn more on Bengali and other local cuisines as well as Cuisines from North East. The team here has been great - one which always stands up to the challenges. Kolkata is one city where socials are big and the discerning hosts do not mind spending money for the functions they host to express themselves.

For panchphoron croute:

Focaccia, sliced, 4 Garlic butter, 40g Panchphoron, powdered (mixed with garlic butter), 5g

For the Caesar dressing:

(In a vessel, blend in all these ingredients, reserve in a refrigerator till required. Can be made four hours prior) Bandel cheese, grated, 50g Olive oil, 30ml ITC mayonnaise, 100g Parsley, washed and chopped, 5g Garlic cloves, muddled, 6 Salt to taste Milled pepper to taste Capers, 20g

Method

- 1) In a steel bowl, put together the Romaine lettuce, bell peppers, zucchini, asparagus and croutons. Add the Bandel cheese dressing and gently toss together.
- 2) Add in the halved cherry tomatoes and mix again, ensuring that all ingredients are evenly coated.
- 3) Transfer into a salad bowl arranging the asparagus spears on top. Scatter a few slices of Bandel cheese and garnish with a caperberry.
- 4) Serve with a panchphoron spiked grilled focaccia by the side of the salad. Slice a focaccia into 8" by 1½" pieces. Apply the panchphoron flavoured garlic butter and grill on both sides on a ribbed hot plate till crisp and golden in colour

COVER STORY/FOOD

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Some of the iconic restaurants of Kolkata—lead by the legendary destinations in Park Street—are walking along the path of rejuvenation

IF you step into the glowing portals of Kolkata's iconic Park Street—renamed Mother Teresa Sarani in the recent times—it will be difficult to imagine that 250 years ago it was called 'Road to Old Burial Grounds'. Once haunted by 'thugs and rascals' and used mainly by hearses and carriages carrying the bereaved, this road metamorphosed by the turn of the last century into South Asia's prime 'good life' destination, before hitting turbulence in the late 1960s.

You'll find neon signs are aglow and an empty table would be scarce at all the 25-odd restaurants and pubs there on any evening. Apart from being the birthplace of India's first nightclubs, best fine dining destinations. Park Street also housed the subcontinent's first department store, Hall & Anderson. There was a time when the mansions housed restaurants and upscale shops on their ground floors and big apartments on their upper floors. Magnolia had India's first ice cream outlet and introduced the country to

hamburgers.

Park Street thus became a very fashionable area where the rich used to reside and which the elite of Calcutta would frequent to shop and dine. The rich, famous and beautiful people from all over the country and even as far away as Lahore used to visit Park Street to drink, dine and dance at the restaurants here. The best year-end revelries in the entire Subcontinent used to take place here. There was also a time when only the upper crust of Calcutta's society would "dare to walk down Park Street". To be seen on Park Street added to a person's social standing. Ladies with parasols and gentlemen with umbrellas and suits or dinner jackets promenading down this street used to be a common and expected sight.

Mocambo was independent India's first nightclub, where a 17-year-old chanteuse named Pam Crain belted out numbers with a six-piece band led by Anton Menezes. Only the crème de la crème would dine there, and dinner

jackets were mandatory.

Down the corner at Moulin Rouge, Carlton Kitto, one of the most popular jazz guitarists of the city, would enthral diners for hours. French lady Delilah used to own the place and would sing along with a band called Carlton Kitto Ensemble. Cancan dancers flown in from Mexico and Europe used to entertain patrons later in the evening. Louis Banks, Usha Uthup, Skinny Alley, Marie Samson (Australia's famous jazz vocalist) and Braz Gonsalves were regular performers at Trinca's, Blue Fox and other restaurants on Park Street.

A few of Park Street's restaurants still serve good food. But that graciousness, that class of diners, the genteel way of life is all gone. Park Street's air of stateliness has vanished. Now, only the restaurants remain, and banks and other offices have replaced most of the other establishments. Food at all the restaurants was, without exception, excellent. The continental fare served at

the eateries was without parallel in India; such outstanding dishes were not available at even the five star hotels.

The chicken a la Kiev at Mocambo, Lobster Thermidor at Blue Fox, Sizzlers at Moulin Rouge and the legendary prawn cocktails at Sky Room were to simply die for, say old-timers. Sky Room's Prawn Cocktails would be packed in ice and flown to Delhi for In-

dira Gandhi!

Sky Room is closed forever now. The turbulent 1960s—although Naxalite violence didn't reach here—followed the era of Communists watered down the glitter to some extent. Many establishments were held hostage by militant trade unionists and closed down. Stringent taxes on live entertainment choked the vivacious evenings at Mocambo and other restaurants.

In the recent times, however, there has been a rejuvenation of this iconic street. Park Street dresses up with an impeccable charm every evening and especially during the Christmas. Not just Park Street restaurants, but some of the legendary eateries—such as Aminia and Songhai—are also walking the path of rejuvenation.

Here's a list of the icons.

PETER CAT

Nitin Kothari started Peter Cat in 1975 after he graduated in hotel management from Salzburg, Austria. He chose the place vacated by Calcutta Customs for the restaurant which turned out into an icon. The initial menu was mutton chaanp, chicken chaanp and roomali roti. There was an open kitchen at the far end of the ground floor with a display window in which a chef threw the roti into the air and spun it. One could watch the naans and kebabs being made, and the chaanp would be there simmering in the gravy. But when the business picked up the display section was closed down to make the kitchen bigger. Kothari started an extension of the restaurant upstairs.

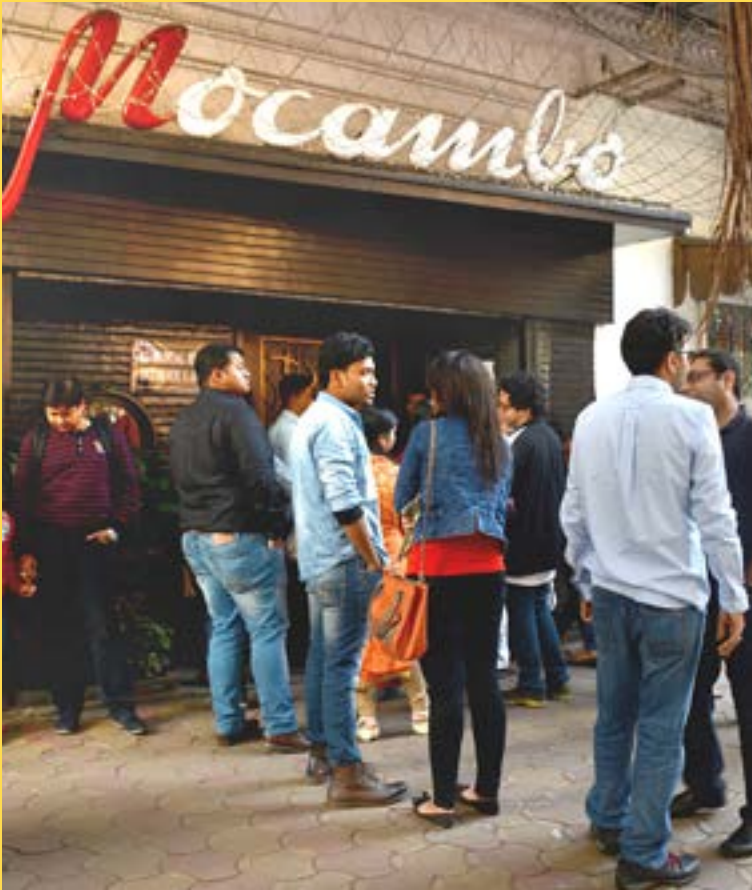


SONGHAI

The restaurant was once owned by a Chinese man called Mr Ling who started this in 1965. The word Songhai means 'Double Happiness' in Chinese. Its modest interiors with the double pillars twined by dragons, the red Chinese lamps hanging from the pearl-colored ceiling, the calligraphic lettering of a light box, the little nooks and private spaces with tables, created so thoughtfully by the designer, have a delicate charm.

Since this is the only restaurant in the city's central business district serving authentic Chinese food with drinks, Songhai soon turned into an icon. The food at Songhai has a variety that very few similar places would offer. Tasty, good-looking, generous portions and served in basic porcelain or stainless steel plates and bowls.

It's pork dishes turned legendary among the office crowd—especially those close to the Dalhousie Square. The restaurant was taken over by Mr Sudesh Poddar in 2013. He renovated the place keeping alive its old-world charm and retaining the same staff in the kitchen and services. Moreover, the prices were maintained as 'pocket-friendly' as before.



MOCAMBO

Mocambo was started by Shivji V. Kothari in the summer of 1956 with Antonio Prandhe as the first chef-cum-manager. Initially it began its journey on the Free School Street and later switched to the current location. Since he was Italian there are many European and Italian dishes on the menu, such as the Chicken Sicilian or the Cannelloni. Again, the European influence could be seen in the Au Gratin and the Russian dishes like Chicken A La Kiev and Chicken Stroganoff.

A German architect called Messerschmidt did the décor which haven't been changed at all by the current owner Nitin Kothari. However, he scrapped the live music, a six-piece band, with a male and female crooner. One could say Mocambo was the first nightclub; it not only had live music but a dance floor too. Not the standard wooden floor but a floor made of tempered glass, under which there was a two-foot pit where they put a whole lot of lights. Entry was exclusive, you could not enter without a DJ (a proper dinner jacket).

In its 60th year, Mocambo added a 70-seater section on the next door which serves a lot of dishes for the 'health conscious' customers, in addition to its heritage cuisine.



FLURYS

The iconic tea room at 18 Park Street recently turned 90. Founded in 1927 by a Swiss expatriate couple — J. Flurys and his wife — Flurys, or Flury's as it was spelt in the initial years, introduced Calcutta to Swiss confectionery. It has become synonymous with breakfast on Park Street. Now the restaurant is owned by Priya Paul, the chairperson of Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels. The takeover happened in 1965 when Jit Paul acquired it and Priya's mother Shirin Paul took over as the store manager. Later she got involved with the store and the bakery.

Flurys has always been this elegant place where people came in their chiffons, after the races. Families gathered for matrimonial meetings. Students from St. Xavier's used to come in early for breakfast. It has been kind of a meeting place in the true European tradition. It's not just a pastry sales place or a tea room but a space where you connect with people.

Priya's sister Priti brought in a lot of changes in terms of the store design in the '90s and then the radical change happened in 2004, when they started rebranding and redesigning of Flurys, with an idea of enhancing the brand and expanding it first in Calcutta and then rest of India. They developed three retail formats of different sizes that were rolled out throughout Calcutta and elsewhere.

The tag line 'Five Generations of Fine Confections', reinforces its iconic status.

MOULIN ROUGE

Another Park Street legend known as much for its jazz gigs as for its delectable continental cuisine. Right from the decor to the cutlery, everything at this expansive restaurant spells affluence and heritage.

This is Kolkata's version of the real Moulin Rouge in Paris, complete with the trademark windmill at its entrance. Although it has no cabaret performances today, it was known to be much like the original, albeit less extravagant, in its golden years. Around the 1960s musical soirees were the norm and the entire place would resound with laughter and celebration that would continue till the wee hours of the morning. The sense of nostalgia may not touch upon a first time visitor, but the interiors do hold precious clues to the past. With Indian, Continental, Chinese, French and Italian preparations on offer, Moulin Rouge is a great place for a good evening out with friends even today. The Fish and Chips perfectly compliment drinks. The lack of live music is a definite letdown, but the restaurant never lets you down when it comes to good tasting food. Chicken Cordon Bleu, the mixed grill sizzler, Keema Parathas and Murg Tikkas are popular. The well-stocked bar has an expansive collection of a motley of liquors.



AMINIA

Their first outlet was started in 1929 in Kolkata, selling the famous Awadhi cuisine of Lucknow. The family grew and the second generation choose to expand the business sensing the growing demand for Awadhi and Mughlai food in the city.

The largest and most well-known outlet is located in the Futnani Chamber near the Kolkata Municipal Corporation in Sir Stuart Hogg Market or New Market. On the 15th of August 1946, the Aminia Restaurant opened its doors to the food loving public of Kolkata. Aminia's food at New Market has changed considerably over the years to cater to the Bengali palate. Bengalis are very sweet loving people and have a tendency to add some sugar to their food.

Abdul Qayum brought down the spiciness and oiliness in the food and made them sweeter by adding more onions in their mutton rezala and mutton/chicken chaap. The gravy consistency was made lighter to make it appear like 'jhol' (curry) as especially done with our famous 'Aminia Special'.

Aminia has come a long way since then. The restaurant is today being run by its third and fourth generations and has expanded to various parts of Kolkata. Although its oldest outlets still exist, over the years they have set up other outlets in Golpark, Garia, Tollygunge, Jessore Road, Rajarhat, Shyam Bazar, Behala and most recently Barrackpore

TRINCA'S

Another iconic restaurant in Park Street, Trincas indulges visitors in taking a trip to the old Calcutta. In the 1960s, this resto-pub hosted celebrated singers and was integral to the nightlife of the city. Live music and reasonably priced alcohol are some of the reasons why Trincas remains so popular even today. But the black and white pictures from early days are somewhat discoloured and hazy. Gone are the arches and the high ceiling; the ceiling has been lowered to cut cooling costs. Plush carpets have been replaced by white tiles for easy maintenance.

It all started with a tearoom, though. Swissmen Trinca and Flury started one in Park Street in 1926. They parted ways after a decade and Flury set up his own tearoom across the street. An opportunity to purchase Trincas came in 1959, and friends Ellis Joshua and Om Puri, who had been working at the Oberoi Grand, grabbed it. It was converted into a restaurant and night club in 1961.

Joshua would always look out for new musical talent and he's the one who saw Usha Uthup perform in Mysore and convinced her to come to Kolkata. If any lounge can boast of attracting the likes of Satyajit Ray, Moon Moon Sen, Amitabh Bachchan, Na-



resh Kumar and Jaideep Mukerjea, it's Trincas, the party place of the Who's Who of Calcutta.

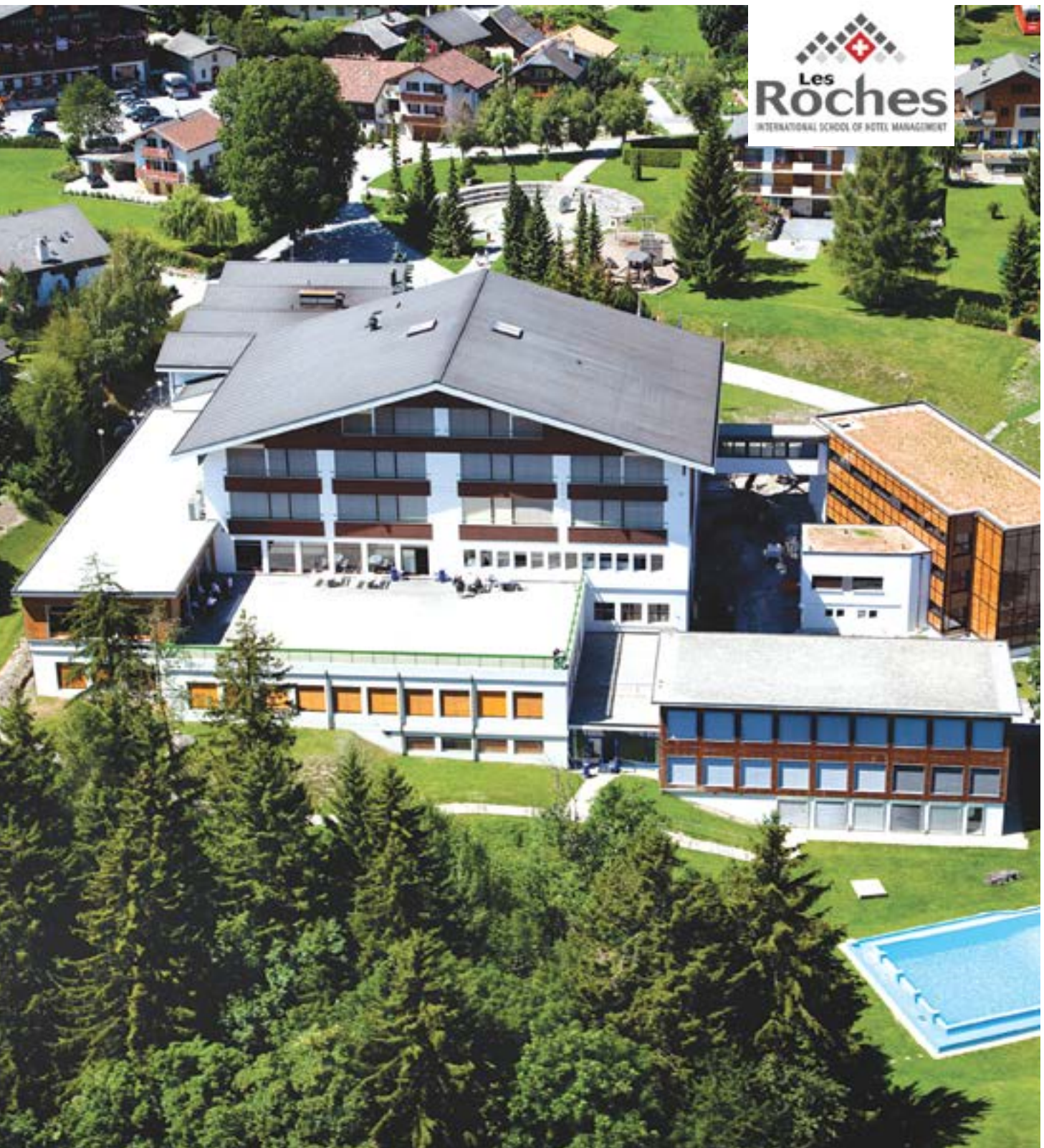
But live music lost its lustre when the state government levied a 30 per cent entertainment tax in the late 1970s. Political unrest made it dangerous for people to venture out. The Anglo-Indian community which was responsible for most of the music in the city, left the Indian shores for better opportunities in countries such as the US, Australia and Canada.

**OLYPUB**

Olypub opened on Park Street in Kolkata in 1947, as Olympia Bar and Restaurant. The actual name was Olympian Pub which has been shortened to 'Oly Pub' and simply 'Oly'.

It is among the handful of old dives in the city that stand still against the march of time, patiently watching the churn in Kolkata's nightlife. It remains the favourite haunt of writers, filmmakers, journalists, artists, professors, students, among others. Great personalities like Satyajit Ray, Uttam Kumar and Ritwik Ghatak used to drink here.

Olypub's cheap rates were revised after a fire in 2014. The renovation after the accident has also meant that instead of the rundown interiors that regulars were used to, there is now comfortable seating and generic music posters on the walls. The rats that used to scurry about are, however, not missed by anyone.



► Les Roches campus in Bluche, Switzerland

Bridging the Hospitality Skills Gap in India

FOUNDED in 1954, Les Roches Global Hospitality Education is a private institution based on the Swiss model of experiential learning, offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in the fields of hospitality, tourism and event management. Les Roches prepares entrepreneurial and innovative graduates across a global network of campuses in Switzerland, Spain and China.

Part of Sommet Education, Les Roches is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Educa-

tion (formerly the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.). Les Roches is ranked number six of the world's top institutions for hospitality and leisure management and number three worldwide for employer reputation (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2018).

The three primary programs available at Les Roches are: Bachelor of Business Administration in Global Hospitality Management (3.5 years),

Postgraduate programs (6 months- 1 year) and MBA in Global Hospitality Management (1 year)

Dr Stuart Jauncey, Managing Director of Les Roches Global Hospitality Education, discusses talent development and the skills that aspiring hospitality leaders need to succeed in an exclusive interview with Mystic East .

Why is the hospitality industry facing a skill shortage across the world?

The hospitality industry is a vast and



► Dr Stuart Jauncey, Managing Director of Les Roches Global Hospitality Education



► **By learning, working and living alongside classmates and colleagues from around the world, students develop a global perspective**

vibrant global employer that provides one out of every 10 jobs on the planet, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council. With an annual growth rate of nearly 4%, the industry also faces a skills shortage. A lack of properly trained staff and qualified managerial talent presents a hurdle to hospitality businesses worldwide and could threaten 14 million jobs by 2025.

What skills do hospitality managers need?

The industry's need for educated talent is clear — this can be seen in the high employment rates of hos-

pitality management graduates. At Les Roches Global Hospitality Education, over 90% of students have one or multiple job offers by graduation day. And while hospitality management graduates can look forward to a wide range of career opportunities, the most promising future leaders are distinguished by traits such as flexibility, multicultural awareness and disruptive thinking — qualities identified in research by Les Roches faculty members as crucial for the hospitality industry.

Operational experience

When considering the skills that fu-

ture hospitality leaders need to thrive, operational knowhow is fundamental. Especially in the hotel industry, a thorough grasp of operations is essential for aspiring managers. No matter the brand, the operations of departments such as reception, rooms division and food and beverage form the backbone of the guest experience.

At Les Roches, bachelor's degree students spend their first semester immersed in hospitality operations on campus. They take on different roles in front office, kitchen and service, gaining experience in a range of food and beverage outlets that simulate current and emerging

trends, such as sustainable farm-to-table dining. Students further build on their practical skills by leaving campus for a six-month internship in hospitality operations, the first of two required internship semesters during their degree. Through these experiences, students not only master the various functions within hos-

pitality operations, but also develop soft skills such as cross-cultural communication, attention to detail and flexibility which are crucial for any manager.

Soft skills and emotional intelligence

In 2017, Harvard professor Dr David

Deming published a paper on the growing importance of social skills, in which he observed that from 1980 to 2012, the number of jobs in the US requiring high levels of social interaction grew by almost 12 percentage points. As automation increasingly replaces routine work, Deloitte predicts that creativity and social intelligence will be



► Les Roches Jin Jiang International Hotel Management College, Shanghai, attracts hundreds of students from across the world



► **By learning, working and living alongside classmates and colleagues from around the world, students develop a global perspective**

essential skills for most new jobs created between now and 2030.

However, only 36% of global Millennials and 29% of Gen Z feel they have the skills — including confidence and interpersonal skills — needed to thrive in this changing workplace.

The importance of emotional intelligence and soft skills cannot be overstated in hospitality, a people-centric industry that is based on the delivery of experiences. Managers and their staff rely on sensitivity, flexibility and excellent communication skills to build and nurture guest relations. And with more than one billion international travellers crossing borders each year, awareness of

different cultural viewpoints and expectations is indispensable for businesses to provide the personalised level of service that makes guests feel welcome.

Graduates with international experience will find that lessons learned abroad, such as foreign language skills, multicultural team management and adaptability, are advantages in a broad range of industries as well as hospitality. This is why Les Roches strives to provide students with global exposure, including through international internships, a diverse student body representing more than 100 nationalities and study abroad opportunities across a global network of

campuses. By learning, working and living alongside classmates and colleagues from around the world, students develop a global perspective and gain invaluable skills.

What is the situation in India?

The travel and tourism sector in India is no exception to global growth trends: The sector already accounts for 12 percent of total employment and the local Institutes of Hotel Management under the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) are doing their best to keep up with the demand. At the same time, foreign arrivals have reached a record high of 10 million in 2017, attributing to India's

global attractiveness as a destination and the effectiveness of different national tourism campaigns.

To deal with this influx of visitors from abroad, it is vital for hospitality professionals to gain international exposure and experience to better cater to the needs of these discerning guests and offer the service standards they have come to expect. This will require institutions to create international synergies, a globally-focussed curriculum and innovative teaching methods.

Tying up with the industry

Academics and professionals need to work closely together to address the prevalent skills gap in the hospitality industry. Academics need the inputs from industry leaders to adapt and make course content more relevant, while companies need to maintain close relations with schools to secure and retain the best available talent.

In order to ensure and maintain the high employability of our students, we work very closely with global hospitality brands, who visit our campuses to deliver guest lectures and directly recruit our students for graduates. These close industry relations are reflected in the latest QS World University Rankings 2019, where Les Roches ranks among the world's top three institutions for employer reputation in hospitality and leisure management.

Studying at Les Roches

At Les Roches, we are committed to attracting the best available talent, supporting motivated students in reaching their potential and preparing the industry leaders of tomorrow. We provide a range of different scholarships and financial aid packages on a case-by-case basis, varying in amount and duration. Merit-based scholar-

ships include a 10-20 percent reduction of first semester tuition fees and are awarded to outstanding students based on grades, motivation and recommendation.

Les Roches trains students in European nuances of hospitality. But is this training useful in Indian situation -- for instance, we've seen that Indian guests are often more demanding. Also we often come across irate customers difficult to satisfy. Does Les Roches help Indian students to learn these things?

As part of their practical learning during the first semester of the Bachelor programme, students practice complaint handling in service and reception and the application of their guest relations skills form an integral part of their first internship. It is our mission to equip first-semester students with the necessary skills to successfully complete a first internship in hotel operations around the world, meaning that general education courses, language classes and the mix of nationalities on campus are important to prepare students for an international professional experience.

Which are the Indian hotels that recruit students from Les Roches? How many of the graduates get jobs? What is the entry level pay package for the fresh graduates?

The combination of academic and practical learning on campus, coupled with real-life experiences through internships and strong industry relations provides students with the necessary skill set and network to join the industry upon graduation, at which point an average of 92% of our students

have a job or multiple offers. Indian students typically look for international work experience before returning to India, where Les Roches alumni can be found at all major national and international hotel companies.

Remuneration varies between markets and companies and salary information is hard to come by, but their skill set from Les Roches allows graduates to fast track their careers and rise quickly through the ranks.

Is there any entrepreneurship training for students? Are they encouraged to take up entrepreneurship? Approximately what percentage of students go for entrepreneurship?

Empowering students to achieve their goals is a core objective at Les Roches: The bachelor specialisation in entrepreneurship encourages students to create innovative solutions to industry needs. Working individually and in teams, students receive coaching and support on how to research, pitch and plan for a business launch.

After graduation, many alumni have gone on to found and lead their own business ventures. The entrepreneurship platform "Made in Les Roches" compiles and connects a selection of alumni businesses: <http://www.madeinlesroches.com/>

For any further information and to apply to our undergraduate and post-graduate programmes, please contact info@lesroches.edu

About the author: Dr Stuart Jauncey serves as Managing Director of Les Roches Global Hospitality Education, a leading hospitality management institution with campuses in Switzerland, Spain and China. An academic and hospitality professional, he has spent the past ten years as Dean of The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management (EAHM) in Dubai.

BOSS IS THE BEST

It's the first-line supervisors who matter most as they drive employee engagement

EMPLOYEE engagement is about each employee bringing their best, every day. It's about employees committing themselves to helping their departments, peers, managers, and organizations to reach shared goals. We've all worked with employees from both ends of the employee engagement scale.

The number one reason employees engage or disengage is how much they trust their boss. "Boss" in this case means immediate supervisor, the next level up, and the impact of these first-line leaders is so strong that leaders on each level above them can do little to overcome their shortcomings. Or for that matter, improve on their strengths. These leaders' day-to-day behaviours result in either good management styles or bad management styles.

Savvy supervisors move their engagement approach away from most companies' knee-jerk solutions, mainly one-size-fits-all programs, and instead aim this responsibility squarely upon themselves. These supervisors empirically know that their ability to build trustworthy relationships with each member of their teams brings out the best in each of their employees. And their employees feel such a resulting emotional connection that they work their hardest and smartest, while searching out ways to contribute more. And they also want to stay. Contrast this with bad management behavior where

leader-employee connections hardly happen at all.

This connect-the-dots combination of "You have built trust with me, so I will give my best and stay here for a long time" is the backbone of the holy grail all organizations seek, better employee engagement and retention.

How do bad supervisors break trust? The obvious ways are by commission, things they actively do such as tell lies, break confidences, and unjustly favor one employee over another. But many bad supervisors also break trust by omission, by failing to do things good supervisors do. And too often these supervisors fail to do these behaviors unintentionally, with no knowledge they are losing their team's trust in the process. Here are the top 3 ways that bad supervisors unintentionally break trust:

Provide the daily silent treatment

These supervisors provide little informal, voluntary interaction, and instead focus their energies on their own work instead of the work of their teams. Their core belief of "I do mine, you do yours" sets a bad leadership example. They become present for required meetings and expected interactions but for little else. And seeing employees as replaceable parts becomes natural to them because they never see their teams as humans. Trading their teams for robots

Savvy supervisors move their engagement approach away from most companies' knee-jerk solutions, mainly one-size-fits-all programs, and instead Savvy supervisors move their engagement approach away from most companies' knee-jerk solutions, mainly one-size-fits-all programs, and instead aim this responsibility squarely upon themselves



► **Millennials see a supervisor's lack of interaction as bad news as they crave daily interaction since they grew up working in teams**

would be terrific for them.

For employees, the silent supervisor is just a mystery. So his employees consult their imaginations to fill in the blanks on what their communication-absent supervisor thinks of them. For baby-boomers, this "no news" approach is seen as good news or at least "the boss will not fire me". However, millennials see this lack of interaction as bad news as they crave

daily interaction since they grew up working in teams. So the result of this bad management style is suspicion at best, and at worst lack of engagement that can lead to undesirable turnover.

Micromanage too much

Ultimately, supervisors who coach others too closely are simply saying "I don't trust you to get it right yourself"

which is a bad supervisor behavior. Regardless if their employees have 10 years of experience or 10 months, this type of supervisor wants full control of strategies, tactics, outcomes, and usually credit, too. Employees become their tools for their own success, and those employees never become quite good enough because the micro-managing supervisor cannot release the employee from his



► The micro-managing supervisor's ways produce the opposite environment for employee engagement and retention

over-reaching grasp. Instead, the supervisor's ego whispers to himself, "Good thing I'm so effective because other people never are".

The micro-managing supervisor's ways produce the opposite environment for employee engagement and retention. Which qualified employees would want to work under strict tactical management every hour, with little chance of growth and no chance of achievement?

Too much "feedback"

"Feedback" has grown to encompass

many forms of communication in our society, but for the non-trustworthy supervisor feedback has only one meaning: Telling others what they did wrong. Missing is telling them what they did right.

If all or most of the feedback is critical, the employees wear down over time from the broad-sided or subtle hits to their self-esteem, when going to work becomes a completely eclipsed, dark spot in their lives. Work harder? Give more? Stay longer? Instead these employees have been tossed into an emotional survival

mode, and they stop giving their best customer service or what they are held most accountable for.

What makes a good supervisor? The full list of trust-building behaviors is long, but these 3 ways leap out as core, as getting these methods right builds the foundation for deep-seated, engagement- and retention-building relationships. This list represents good management skills.

Listen intently and patiently

Let's first acknowledge that supervi-

sors cannot always drop what they are doing to lend a fully-focused ear, but they can always say "Can we continue this conversation at 2 PM?" And, yes, some employees will talk that ear off, as they say, with non-work chit-chat. But savvy leaders know how to re-direct those conversations into meaningful ones.

Listening builds trust because it shows that the listener cares. Make time, delivering attention via eye contact, taking notes, and asking probing questions all convey the same message, that your thinking is important to me. Good listeners separate their own needs from the moment by resisting pulling the conversation to themselves, for example saying, "That happened to me once so let me tell you about it". They instead hear the speaker's words but listen for the speaker's emotions, as those emotions are always the most important message for the speaker. Responding by addressing those emotions such as, "You seem really happy/sad/angry about that" sends the clear, unfiltered message back that I am with you...and I care. Any listing of how to be a great supervisor must start with good listening skills.

Show genuine interest

Employees bring one hundred percent of their lives to work, not just the work part. Even though some employees express the non-work part more than others, all of those parts are with them each day. Smart supervisors understand this, so they draw careful but loving lines between work and non-work topics. Because they care, they listen to all parts of their employees' lives but rarely cross the line of giving advice.

Likewise, caring supervisors give feedback in ways that honor the full

Trustworthy supervisors look for good performance so they can co-celebrate it with their teams, both with individuals and groups

person instead of just the work one. They include phrases like, "I am telling you this because I care about you, and I want you to succeed", rather than delivering cold, uncomfortable declarations of improvement instructions. Best management styles must include caring for the whole person instead of just the "work" one.

Credit good work

Trustworthy supervisors look for good performance so they can co-celebrate it with their teams, both with individuals and groups. They intuitively know the difference between a common, expected achievement and a substantial one, realizing that making a small achievement large will hurt their credibility rather than grow it. They notice when an employee handles a particularly difficult customer situation well that results in a customer for life.

They have usually caught on early that the greatest of all motivators is achievement, so giving feedback regarding what the employee is doing right that is specific, timely, and with smiles/handshakes and other proper non-verbal behaviors go far to make their teams want to stay and work

harder.

Meet Individual Needs

The best way to bring all of these good traits into focus is to train supervisors to conduct Stay Interviews...so they learn what is important to each individual employee. A Stay Interview is a structured, one-on-one meeting between each supervisor and his employee to strengthen that employee's engagement and retention. And the top reason Stay Interviews work to improve engagement and retention is because they build trust.

Stay Interviews provide supervisors with the pathway to learn precisely what their individual employees need...and how effectively those supervisors are fulfilling those needs...and help each leader develop the very best management style. For example, one employee might crave public recognition in front of peers, whereas another believes she gets no recognition whatsoever. Or another employee defines caring as his supervisor delivering solid career guidance while his peer who works beside him just wants to work each day and go home. Employees come in all shapes and sizes, physically and emotionally, and the very best supervisors must stretch their own levels of understanding to learn, adapt, and accommodate to those various employee needs.

For managers, ask your supervisors what is important to each employee on their team so they understand your expectation is that they must build trusting relationships.

Coach them to stop exhibiting the behaviors of bad supervisors and instead demonstrate the trust-building behaviors of good supervisors. The result is the highest level of achievement for supervisors in engaging their teams to meet and achieve all of their operational goals.

ROYAL WEDDING DESTINATION

Holiday Inn Kolkata's banquet hall Durbaar promises to recreate the Golden Age of Kings and Emperors



► **Shrayans Jain**
Vice Chairman, The Jain Group

LOCATED in the northern part of Kolkata Hotel Holiday Inn Kolkata Airport is one of the most popular hotels in the city for business travellers and family holidays. The hotel started its journey two years ago when InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), the owner of the Holiday Inn brand, partnered with city-based real estate company, Jain Group, to launch its maiden property to the city. The hotel recently opened a magnificent new banquet hall – Durbaar by Jain group—

suitable for luxury and grandeur wedding and gala and prestigious corporate events to celebrate the third years of its opening.

With more than 10,000 Sq ft of vast pillar less space, Durbar and ambience of the hall promises to take one back to the Golden Age of Kings, Emperors and Princes. A team of highly skilled chefs curates extravagant menu featuring Mediterranean, Asian and Pan Indian exquisite cuisines for gala events. Weddings filled with grandeur and richness,

promises to make Durbaar a unique Wedding Destination in the city.

Durbaar is one of the perfect wedding destinations as it creates a royal ambience all around. Tying the knot at such exotic location of Rajarhat, New Town, can be a breath-taking experience. The architecture of this venue perfectly blends innovation with Rajasthani tradition, offering the perfect backdrop for a dream wedding giving the taste of Royal Courts and Grand Processions. Starting from its royal

decor to its imperial ambience, this magnificent banquet will have all the specialities to make a wedding a talk of the town.

It's a beautiful place that offers comfort, magnificence and a pleasant atmosphere to make a royal wedding. Durbaar is one of the perfect wedding destinations as it creates a royal ambience all around. Tying the knot at such exotic location of Rajarhat, New Town, is a breath-taking experience that can't be compared to any other destinations.



TAMING TOUGH CUSTOMERS

Worried about handling irate customers in your hotel? We've got you covered



► Often, the frontdesk staff are the ones that bear the brunt of every unhappy customer

DEALING with irate guests is a part of every hotel manager's job. A hotel guest may get agitated for a variety of reasons out of which some reasons may be truly justified, while others are not. As an hotelier, you are in the business of handling all kinds of customers- some may be calm in their demeanor to express their dissatisfaction whereas others may get agitated during the registration of the complaint. Even worse, they may complain elsewhere - on social media, creating bad brand reputation. So, handling irate customers in hotels can be quite a tricky job.

Guest complaints can often be looked at as a way to improve a hotel's service if taken in the right spirit.

Use these tips to cope with such situations where you'll learn how to deal with irate customers and respond to them effectively.

Knowing how to manage irate customers requires a certain kind of expertise. Often, the frontdesk staff are the ones that bear the brunt of every unhappy customer. Hoteliers must make sure their team members are well-equipped to deal with every kind of complaint in a professional manner and learn how to respond to an irate customer.

Maintain your composure

Whether you are handling irate customers on phone or dealing with them in person, maintain your com-

posure. It's easier said than done - but hey, they're your customers. A calm approach always puts the guest at ease. Reacting to a guest's anger with an agitated approach will only ruin the hotel's reputation. Maintain your own sense of calm and give time to bring down the agitation of the guest. Offer sympathy to get to the root of the cause and take the required action. It's imperative to avoid taking each complaint on a personal level. A customer has every right to be displeased if the hotel service is not found satisfactory. The complaint is always against the service and not against the person dealing with the irate guests, although the frontdesk professional may be made to feel so



► Whether you are handling irate customers on phone or dealing with them in person, maintain your composure



► **Your guest may come from any corner of the world. Yet, that should not dictate how you respond to the guest complaint**

due to an angry outburst.

Listen well, respond amicably

Your response to agitated guests, particularly guests within your hotel premises will be watched by many other onlookers. Always respond amicably and treat your guest well. Understand they want - empathy, apology.

Respond with an apology and pay attention to what your guest has to say.

An apology will calm down an agitated guest and you'll be able to address the problem well once you understand the issue. Use sentences such as, "I understand you have every right to feel angry..." or "I will escalate this issue immediately..." will provide reassurance to irate hotel guests. Listen to what they have to say and give them your complete attention. Avoid transferring the call if the complaint

is via the telephone. There's nothing worse than a call not getting transferred or the call being disconnected during the process of a call transfer.

Get the facts, find the solution

Wondering how to calm down an irate customer? Provide a solution immediately. However, knowing all the facts is vital before taking the decision. You must be impartial in your approach and understand what went wrong in your hotel's service. Certain complaints may take longer to resolve. In such cases, you can offer complementary services or waive off certain charges and upgrade the customer till you get to know what went wrong. Customers often look for quick solutions and offering special incentives will help calm down the current situation. Always ensure you address the customer's complaint right till the very end. This helps guests feel secure they will not be made to visit different departments to get their complaints resolved.

Respect your guests

Your guest may come from any corner of the world. Yet, that should not dictate how you respond to the guest complaint. Your behavior must be respectful regardless of the customer's language, appearance or region. Every staff member must be educated to respect all guests equally.

Always have a positive attitude

It's natural to feel a little annoyed when guests say offensive things that sets off the conversation on a wrong note. If how to handle an irate customer in person is one of your biggest concerns, then a positive attitude that reflects verbally and in your body language will help calm down the guest. Do not allow negative words to work as a trigger and demotivate you. You must always remind yourself – this is

a challenge for me to do better, work on the problem and turn the situation in our favor. One of your job KRAs requires ensuring your guests enjoy their stay. Now, when there's a reason to complain, you must use an optimistic attitude to solve the problem as soon as possible.

Follow-up consistently

Different guests have different kinds of complaints. While some problems can be resolved quickly, others require a check into details - much easier when you have the right hotel technology in your hands, instead of hunkering down to analyzing your ledgers, spreadsheets, etc. If yours is a hotel chain, the same customer might have used your hotel in another location at an earlier time - instant access to centralized guest history will cut down the analysis and resolution times by a great deal. Be regular in your follow-ups and keep a check on your team members. Ensure your team calls up the guest to show the hotel's concern. So, even if getting to the main cause of the problem may take time, your guest will be reassured with the follow-ups and will know the solution will be provided soon. In case of unreasonable demands, involve a person with a higher authority from your team.

Seek feedback

Do not wait to seek feedback till the end of the guest's stay. One of the most important things about guest satisfaction is the ability to keep a check on the guest during their stay. Questions such as "Are you comfortable, how is your stay?", "Is there anything you require? Did you enjoy the food?" will help gain quick feedback. If your customers respond negatively, you'd know the problem immediately and can rectify it during their stay.

This also reduces the chances of negative guest reviews online in case of customers who are not too open with feedback and prefer to check-out and write details on review sites such as Tripadvisor. On the other hand, you must have the control to ask for positive reviews from guests you think are happier after you fixed their issues. Again, the right hotel management solution will help you have better control over online reviews.

Dealing with irate guests need not

be feared by hoteliers. Using the tips above, it's easy to improve the guest satisfaction and turn customers into loyal visitors. Always go the extra mile and request them to place their next hotel room request through you so that all requirements will be taken care of personally. This is one of the easiest ways to win back the trust of an irate hotel guest.



► While some problems can be resolved quickly, others require a check into details



STATE SURVEY: ARUNACHAL PRADESH

SHADOW ON HEAVEN

In spite of having great tourism potential, Arunachal Pradesh has only 3.71% share in tourist inflow indicating that the opportunities have not yet been tapped for attracting tourists

THE state of Arunachal Pradesh in the North Eastern region of India has huge potential to become a strong force in the tourism industry of the country. But the state is yet to get the attention of tourists. Efforts must be given to develop and promote tourism to get the attention of tourists and to boost the tourism business of the state which has tremendous scope for tourism activities.

However, developmental efforts in tourism should be based on expectations of tourists. A study in International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology tried to find the gaps in tourist expectations with respect to the tourist spot Tawang, which is considered as the most important tourist spot of Arunachal Pradesh and suggests steps to bridge the gaps. The research paper puts forward the view that if the gaps are removed by taking appropriate steps, the region can go a long way in tourism business.

UNEXPLORED HORIZON

Arunachal Pradesh is a state in the north eastern region of India which has tremendous tourism potential due to its breath-taking natural beauty of green hills and valleys, wildlife that represents unique Himalayan biodiversity, cool and pollution free healthy climate, simple people with great hospitality and their rich cultural as well as religious heritage.

Lush green forests, snow clad mountains, roaring rivers, deep gorges, places of historical and religious importance provide ample scope for a wide range of tourism activities such as wildlife tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, religious tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism etc. in this beautiful state of north east India. For tourists who love adventure, the state has the potential to provide attrac-

tions such as river rafting, trekking, mountaineering, snow skiing, angling etc. Again the state has a number of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks namely Eagles' Nest wildlife sanctuary, Dibang wildlife sanctuary, Namdapha National Park etc. to cater to the needs of wildlife enthusiasts.

Tawang's famous Gaden Namgyal Lhatse, a more than 300 year old Buddhist monastery, is one of the most important seats of Buddhism in the entire world. Parasuram Kund, located in the Lohit district of the state is an important religious place for Hindus. Vijaynagar, Itanagar, Bhismaknagar, Zimithang Chorten, Tawang etc. are places that attract tourists interested in ancient archaeology and history (Department of Tourism, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh).

In spite of having great tourism potential, the state of Arunachal Pradesh has only 3.71% share in tourist inflow to north eastern region of India and at the country level, the share of tourist foot fall of Arunachal Pradesh is absolutely insignificant (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India). This indicates that the tourism potentialities of Arunachal Pradesh have not yet been capitalized for attracting tourists. Again, if we see the nature of domestic tourist arrivals, we find that 50% of domestic tourists of Arunachal Pradesh come from the neighboring state of Assam, 30% from West Bengal, 15% from within the state and only 5% from other states (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India). From this it is clear that Arunachal Pradesh is not a sought after tourist destination even for the domestic tourists. The above figures provide ample logic to think that there is a gap between the tourism propositions offered by Arunachal Pradesh and the expectations of tourists. In this study, Tawang, the most important tourist spot of Arunachal Pradesh which re-

ceives maximum number of tourists of the state has been taken as a sample spot to study the tourist expectation gap.

THE STUDY

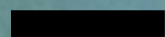
First, to study the expectations of tourists with respect to the selected tourism related parameters for the tourist spot Tawang. Second, to study the present status of the selected tourism related parameters for the tourist spot Tawang. Third, to find the tourist expectation gap with respect to the selected parameters for the tourist spot Tawang.

The paper is based on both primary and secondary data. For collection of primary data, at first 20 tourist expectation related parameters were selected and then responses from 50 tourists who visited the sample spot Tawang were taken in the form of a questionnaire. On the basis of two ratings for each parameter, the tourist expectation gaps have been determined. To calculate the gaps mathematically, weighted averages have been calculated for each of the elements. Secondary data were collected from govt. records, journals, websites and books to supplement the primary data.

The above analysis it is clear that there exist considerable tourist expectation gaps with respect to the selected parameters. Some gaps are large, some gaps are medium and some are small. Keeping in mind the size of the expectation gaps, the government as well as other concerned parties should prioritize measures to remove the expectation gaps. In order to make Tawang a popular tourist destination, adequate measures will have to be taken to bridge the expectation gaps.

NEW APPROACHES

For tourists who love adventure, the state has the potential to provide attractions such as trekking, mountaineering, snow skiing, angling and river rafting



▶ Tourists say it is very difficult to travel to most destinations mainly because of the poor road condition



► **Picturesque town of Tawang attracts several Buddhist pilgrims**

In this regard, the following approaches can be considered.

Developing and Promoting Concept Based Tourism: Tourism now-a-days has become highly concept based. For example, adventure tourism, rural tourism, medical tourism, wildlife tourism etc. Concept based tourism development and marketing help in attracting a particular target group of tourists. Such concept based tourism is lacking in Arunachal Pradesh particularly in the Bomdila-Tawang tourist circuit. This has been indicated by the findings in the study that there is gap in the expectation of tourists with respect to diversity of attractions. Therefore, a variety of well thought out

concepts of tourism activities, their planned development and marketing will bridge such expectation gap. Considering the tourist spot Tawang, a number of tourism concepts can be developed and offered to tourists. For instance, Tawang has the large Monastery based on which religious tourism can be developed. Developing required infrastructure to offer activities such as mountaineering, trekking, paragliding etc. to tourists will give a chance to promote and market Adventure Tourism.

Again, providing adequate facilities to visit nearby wildlife sanctuaries will give an opportunity for Wildlife Tourism. Steps towards developing and

promoting concept based tourism will also help to bridge the expectation gap relating to scope and facilities for adventure, sports and recreational activities.

Communication: Communication is a vital element of success in terms of marketing and promoting a product or service. In the study, tourists have highlighted that there is lack of reliable source of information about Tawang tourism. Moreover, they have also said that it is very difficult to travel to the destination mainly because of the poor road condition. There is no rail and air connectivity to Tawang. The expectation gap for ease of travel to the destination is 1.8 and that



► Buddha in Tawang monastery, gilded and decorated, is in a lotus position. It's 18 feet high

of accessibility to tourist information centre or offices etc. is 2 which are quite high. This shows that a huge expectation gap exists in the area of information and communication with respect to the tourist spot Tawang. Adequate number of active tourist information centers should be set up at places where prospective tourists are expected to visit.

Having tourist information centres at railway stations, airports will give access to information to prospective tourists. Govt. Tourism Department

**Tawang
Monsatery is the
largest in India
and second
largest in India
after the Potala
Palace in Lhasa,
Tibet**

website should posses all relevant information for tourists and these information (address of hotels, telephone numbers etc.) should be regularly updated. Regular meetings of govt. officials and people from tourist establishments, travel agencies etc. should be held to have a collective effort in promoting Tawang tourism. The condition of the road to Tawang is poor. Immediate action should be taken to improve the road condition up to the expectation of tourists.

Accommodation: The quality and

type of accommodation is a critical factor for the success of tourism business. It has been seen that the respondents in this study has shown a higher level of expectation gap (1.3) for quality of accommodation. This is mainly due to limited and quality wise substandard level of accommodation facilities available in Tawang. Tourists have the opinion that the tariffs for accommodation is quite high compared to the service delivered. Moreover, different type of tourists such as groups, single tourist, business tourist, leisure tourist, special interest tourist need different type of accommodation facilities and related services. Therefore, a variety of accommodation facilities should be developed based on the type of tourists and their interests to cater to the needs of all types of tourists. Authorities should make policies so that hotels, resorts etc. either recruit well trained competent people or make arrangements of proper training to the existing staff so that tourists can be served efficiently to give them a lovely memorable experience of staying in this tourist spot. Such initiatives will also bridge the tourist expectation gap related to Performance/ attitude/ behaviour of people working in tourist establishments.

Ancillary Services and Facilities: There are certain services and facilities that support and complement tourist attractions in a tourist destination. A tourist, apart from visiting the important attractions of a tourist spot, wants to experience the local art, culture, cuisines etc. In the study, it has been seen that there exist significant expectation gap in the opportunities for experiencing these. There is no night life in Tawang. People close their establishments and markets very early in the evening. There is hardly any show to display

local culture, dance etc. Govt. should give a serious thought in these matters by creating arrangements for showcasing the local art forms, culture and traditions through evening shows, developing tourist friendly places for experiencing local as well as other cuisines, improving scope for shopping unique local items etc. If we have to see growth of tourism in this area, Govt. will have to take proper steps to develop ancillary services and facilities for tourists.

Community Participation: Without the participation of local people, tourism cannot grow. All organizations working for the growth and development of tourism in this area should take steps for the involvement and participation of local community in tourism activities. Local community should be made aware about the benefits that they are going to have with the growth and development of tour-

ism in their area. Local people should be encouraged with proper training and support to develop tourism related business enterprises. This will also create a lot of employment opportunities for the locals.

Community participation will improve the behaviour and attitude of locals towards tourists and the tourists will also feel safe and comfortable in that area.

Focus on Sustainable Tourism Development: There is a broad consensus among the people thinking and working in the field of tourism development that tourism development should be sustainable in nature. Arunachal Pradesh is a nature's paradise, which is undisturbed and untouched. Therefore, tourism developments in this area should be sustainable developments.

Sustainable tourism development should be based on encouraging



► Pnkang Teng Tso Lake remains frozen during winter



► **The Golden Pagoda of Namsai is a Burmese Buddhist temple in Arunachal Pradesh**

value based tourism by developing tourism businesses that focus on conserving cultural heritage and traditional values. Informing tourists in advance about what is expected from them, fostering environment friendly tourism activities, minimum utilization of non-renewable resources and respecting local expectations and assumptions should get priorities in developing tourism in this area.

Effective Promotion and Marketing: Tourism is the biggest industry in the world and therefore we see presence of great number of tourist destinations and tourism service providers. As a result, the competition in this industry is tough. In order to make Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh in general, a prominent tourist destination, a well thought out, practical and result oriented

promotional and marketing strategy and its proper implementation is required. Creating a destination brand with a focus on special tourism activities along with elements of differentiation will help to attract tourists to this destination.

The brand and the tourism propositions must resonate with the expectations of tourists to encourage them to come and visit the place.

Source: International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology