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Hospitality BIZ

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SupPort aiming to ease supply chain challenges of restaurants through technology

Samarthya Bhargava's enduring interest in the restaurant business led him to invest in a few restaurants in Delhi NCR and Goa. His learning from these ventures was that the back-end of the restaurant business is fraught with problems of adhocism, opacity, unscientific buying, lack of precision in inventory management, and unreliable supply chains. The drive to provide solutions for countering these challenges was the prime motivation for him to launch SMS SupplyPort or SupPort. In a conversation with **Asmita Mukherjee**



Bhargava said that the aim of the brand is to aggregate restaurant demand for consumables, systemize the buying process, organise the supply chain, manage the inventory efficiently and also deliver good pricing through the use of tech-based applications. "As a brand, we help organise orders, deliveries, payments and inventory for restaurants by implementing a tech solution at our warehouse level and extending it to the restaurants. We have built our backend tech and are now focusing on the consumer-facing tech that will help us reach our goal of tech adoption," he said.

the inventory management tech available. "Using these solutions would help with bottom lines up to 15%," he stated.

While describing the supply chain problems faced by the restaurant industry, Bhargava said that a majority of problems lie with the supply chain of packaged foods. "Availability is scarce and inconsistent. This problem further extends to restaurants and their offerings to their consumers. Another huge problem faced by almost everyone in the industry is the industry standard of offering credit which leads to debt collection," he added.

As a venture, SupPort has not only survived the pandemic and the lockdowns, but has also thrived in its journey, getting an enthusiastic response from the restaurant community and even from the major brands interested in supplying their wares to the HoReCa sector. With the recent funding from strategic partners, Bhargava is confident that SupPort can now launch an aggressive expansion drive and cover all major restaurants in Delhi NCR in the next few months and the rest of the country thereafter. "We are currently focusing on Delhi NCR and wish to expand to the metropolitan cities first before moving to Tier 2," he concluded. ■

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While speaking on the inception of SupplyPort, Bhargava said, "Having been involved in a few restaurants of my own I have faced with the backend and the lack of transparency between the owner and the staff. Once I started digging deeper into the day-to-day problems, a lot more disorganisation

and discrepancies came to light."

According to Bhargava, the rate of tech enablement is very low when it comes to restaurants. He stated that the POS systems offer comprehensive inventory management solutions but the staff is often short-handed and doesn't end up taking the advantage of

Absolute Barbecues mulls rapid expansion

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Barbeque buffet restaurant chain – Absolute Barbecues (popularly known as AB's) is aiming to reach its 100th outlet by 2024. In a recent interaction with Hospitality Biz at a press conference organised at Hyderabad, Vivek Kolukula, Territory Manager, Andhra Pradesh (AP) & TS, Absolute Barbecues informed that the brand which has 60 outlets across India, covering 23 cities is now mulling a rapid expansion.

"Within the next 18-24 months we want to hit 100 marks across India. To be in line with the current expansion plan we are targeting to open two outlets per month. We are opening 3 outlets this month. Attapur

in Hyderabad, Pune and Kolkata each will have 1 new outlet by this month," Kolukula informed.



While speaking about the company's plans specifically for Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, Kolukula said, "We already have 11 outlets in Hyderabad and will soon be adding two more outlets in Attapur

and Medipally in our portfolio, which will increase the count to 13. As per the expansion plans, we are targeting 20-25 outlets in Telangana and AP soon." The restaurant chain also has an international presence with three outlets in Dubai.

AB's boasts of being India's first wish grill restaurant, and has waived off the pandemic blues with an eye on rapid expansion. As part of their promotional strategy, the brand is now planning to organise various food festivals to attract patrons with its various offerings. Due to the festive season knocking at the door the brand is expecting increased footfalls. Recently it introduced Sea Food Festival across Telangana and AP outlets. ■

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18th edition of HICSA to be hosted at Bengaluru from April 11 to 13

Announces stellar line-up of speakers

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

After a hiatus caused by the global pandemic, Hotel Investment Conference-South Asia (HICSA) by Hotelivate had organised an in-person conference in 2022 to instil confidence in the industry after the devastating pandemic. The upcoming 18th edition is going to be the second in-person event after the pandemic. HICSA is again gearing up to bring forth interesting sessions, meetings, conferences and networking opportunities exclusively designed for the hospitality industry.

Golfshire Resort & Spa and Hilton Garden Inn – Embassy Manyata Business Park. In its new avatar, HICSA is poised to witness a new city, new hotels, a new format and a new theme.

HICSA 2023 is scheduled to be held on April 11th – 13th. The theme for this year is AI – Artificial Intelligence, Astute Investments and Aesthetic Interiors - all three being an integral part of the hospitality sector, going forward. This edition comes with exciting new experiences which include exclusive golf tournaments at the JW Marriott Bengaluru Golfshire Resort & Spa and bar hopping to

Executive, ITC Limited Hotels Division; Dilip Rajakarier, Group CEO, Minor Hotels; Dimitris Manikis, President, EMEA Wyndham Hotels and Resorts; Jitu Virwani, Chairman and MD Embassy Group; Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, Executive Director, Historic Resort Hotels; Neil Jacobs, CEO, Six Sense Hotels Resorts and Spas; Puneet Chhatwal, CEO, IHCL and Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and VP Operations, South Asia Radisson Hotel Group.

Commenting on the 18th anniversary of HICSA, Manav Thadani, Founder Chairman of Hotelivate said, “This year’s



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ZUBIN SAXENA
MD and VP, Operations - South
Asia, Radisson Hotel Group

In the past 17 years, HICSA has come a long way from 190 attendees to having between 500-600 delegates from more than 25 countries across the world and evolving into the premier hospitality event of the South Asian Region. Traditionally the conference has always been held in Mumbai or Delhi, but this year, it is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru for the first time at The JW Marriott Bengaluru

some of Bengaluru’s extravagant bars.

“In line with our theme for this year, we will be emphasising on major topics such as Capital for growth, A step ahead with Tech, The Art of Making Deals and, Sustainable Interior Design,” a statement by HICSA said.

A few notable speakers this year who have already confirmed their attendance are Anil Chadha, Divisional Chief

edition will be unique and special in many ways. We are excited to host the event in a new city in a new avatar. Over the years we have had a similar format, but change is truly the only constant! We are delighted to be in Bangalore which brings us closer to the new hospitality tech start-ups as well as in close proximity to some of the brands based in the South which have never traditionally attended HICSA.” ■

'Today more than ever Hospitality Management is an excellent career option'

The British Columbia College of Management recently unveiled its first institute in Delhi NCR. The 1,500 sq mtrs campus, with a built-up floor area of 40,000 sq ft is surely a great place for students for strengthening their skills in a good environment. The college has partnered with an eclectic mix of entities like the National Skill Development Council (NSDC), Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC), Revolution Hotel Group, Niagara College, and World Trade Centre in Canada to optimise career opportunities for its students. The college also has tie-ups with major recruiters in the hospitality industry such as Marriott, IHG, Accor, Fortune Hotels, Lemon Tree Hotels, Radisson and the Taj. **Hospitality Biz** spoke with **Deepak Jha, Managing Director and CEO, BCCM** to know the scenario of hospitality management studies amidst an environment filled with flux.



Q Please share your thoughts about the current hospitality career environment.

Today more than ever Hospitality Management is an excellent career option. Not only in India, where improved pay scales, 100% placement and fast promotions offer an excellent career path, but now it has become possible for students to pursue international courses and get a job abroad very easily. I would like to mention that these international programs are more affordable than one perceives. The hospitality job scenario has been changing and students are getting placed in the hospitality and tourism sector, thereby proving that the hospitality sector is the best job provider.

Q What is the model for higher education in the hospitality sector?

What prospects does your institute offer to students?

Different institutes have different offerings, but the standard is 4 years of Hospitality Management study to get a Bachelor's Degree. After that, a world of options opens up, like Post Graduate Diploma with various specialisations and Master's programmes. Like any other stream, professionals can also procure a Doctorate. Several universities offer such programmes. At British Columbia College of Management (BCCM), besides a three-year BBA in Hospitality in India, we allow students to pursue an international career through our International Advanced Diploma program. Here, the students do a foundation course in India and then complete their course through a two-year Advanced Diploma in Canada. There are 100% placements in both courses. In the Canadian program, students get a three-year work permit and can take up a job there and move on to become permanent residents.

Q According to you, what are the new emerging business opportunities, which students can tap into to revive their careers?

For the ones who have completed their 12th Grade, getting into management courses assures wonderful job opportunities. These students can also think about studying abroad for their Bachelors' degrees. Hospitality education opens up a range of fields to explore; right from mainstream careers in hotels, and restaurants, to areas like amusement parks, entertainment, cruises, sports, recreation, health care, travel and tourism, etc. which offer a range of employment options.

Students can also come up with their own start-ups and entrepreneurial ventures with some imagination and innovation. The world is ready to accept everything mainstream and offbeat.

Q Has there been a dip in Applications? According to you, what does the future hold for hospitality education?

The lack of demand in enrolment has crept in because of the overall negative sentiment towards the industry. This sentiment was amplified when employees overall were poorly treated by their employers during the pandemic. Almost 95% of employers let their employees bear the brunt of unemployment, because of a business slowdown. Today, the industry is facing a talent crunch and shortage of labour, and changes are being made to address the key issues that employees have always felt. An attempt to migrate from personnel management to human resource management and treat employees as human capital rather than inputs into the business process is a welcome change and will have a positive impact in the times to come. Key issues of long working hours, lower pay, hire and fire, and slow career pathing from entry to management level are being actively addressed.

Today the industry is becoming better paid as talent shortage is fueling higher compensation levels, experienced employees are able to fast-track their careers by switching jobs and getting promotions in the process. Many employers are shifting to 5-day working scenarios to create better work-life balance. For these aspects to take effect and percolate down will at least take a few more years. For now, the best way forward would be to have the industry make a concerted communication effort with society in creating awareness of these positive developments.

This journey begins much earlier at BCCM, and we nurture dreams. We offer scholarships up to 50% for deserving talented students and support them by arranging student loans which are instrumental in mitigating the burden on parents.

Q Do you have plans to expand into other Indian cities?

We have plans to expand to other cities as well and to reach out to more students who aspire to make a career in hospitality. It is our dream that BCCM should be recognized as the leading and renowned management college in India. We are also working on setting up international centres; the first one in the line is Canada. ■

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TIME FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT HOTEL DESIGN

The laws for energy-efficient construction are set to get tough.

A young researcher from Roorkee has worked on studying how Indian hospitality is faring in the field of energy efficiency of its buildings. He avers that developments in energy efficiency have brought energy preservation and management to the centre stage of building construction and design.

The awareness about 'Green Buildings' in India has risen and India crossed the milestone of achieving 500 million sq. of registered green building footprint two years ago. Though it is a remarkable milestone, the share of green buildings in the hospitality industry is still low, particularly in small-scale projects.

The ratings and certifications of energy efficiency in green buildings are issued on the basis of a theoretical comparison between the proposed designs for the building using Building Performance Simulation (BPS) tools.

Let's face it- much of building design is usually outsourced by Architectural consultants which costs them substantially. His research indicated that almost two-thirds of architects surveyed do not use BPS in their day-to-day practice since these tools are 'user-hostile, inadequate and too incomplete', especially for the early design stage. He found that BPS is generally being performed for buildings in India after the architectural design has progressed to a reasonably advanced stage when there's not much scope for incorporating corrective changes in design based on evaluations made using BPS.

The study suggests artificial intelligence and data-mining-based techniques to assess and predict the energy consumption and performance of buildings in the early design stages.

Now that hotels have to legally be particularly conscious of their energy efficiency construction, they have realised that AI-based techniques outperform even BPS when it comes to predicting building energy consumption of operational buildings.

Time is near when those that use more energy than the set bench-marks may be asked to pay more for its consumption. The designers and architects of the hospitality business and the industry on its own need to ensure keener adherence to these specifications.

Anurag Yadav
Industry Expert

Anurag Yadav is a travel author and columnist, writing on hospitality and design. An avid traveller, he has published five books and divides his time equally between Delhi and London.

The views expressed in the column are of the author, and may or may not be endorsed by the publication.

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Little Italy Hyderabad: An Italian gastronomic paradise nestled amidst Jubilee Hills

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Little Italy restaurant which was founded in Pune by Raj Mehta along with an Italian chef is known for its unmatched authentic Italian fare. About 33 years ago in 1989, Mehta saw a blank space for a good vegetarian Italian fine dining experience. Pioneering ahead, he grew Little Italy to a nationwide footprint with over 60+ outlets across 20 cities and 4 countries. Now the reign is being helmed by his son Amrut Mehta. Under Amrut's able leadership the brand has explored branches internationally and different QSR formats.

At Hyderabad, Little Italy is located in the posh by-lanes of Jubilee Hills and has successfully brought the authenticity of Italian fare, ambience and decor to the city.

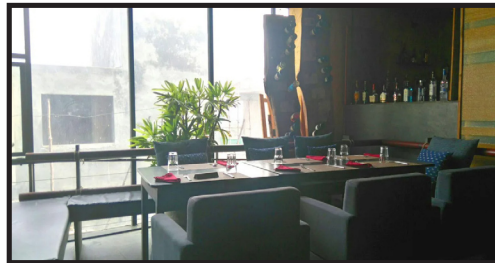
While entering the restaurant a huge wood log engraved with the name of the restaurant welcomes visitors lending a rustic charm to the initial impression.

The restaurant showcases a live kitchen right at the entrance where the patrons can see their food being prepared to display the authenticity and openness of the brand. The interior of the restaurant which was recently renovated is minimalistic yet impressive.

The restaurant is ensconced in glass and can surely refresh all senses of natural light during the day time and at night the lights around the city light up the whole area. At night it is cosier romantic, the yellow lighting at the restaurant welcomes patrons with its superb hospitality and warmth.

We learnt that the food which is purely vegetarian has managed to capture the heart of many celebrities such as Mahesh Babu, Anushka, etc.

The menu shows the reasons why Little Italy has gained popularity as one of the best veg fine dining restaurants in a very small span of time, as the options are numerous. It offers not only Italian fare but a plethora of authentic Mexican cuisine too.



The Italian fare started with Zuppe/ Soup - Crema Di Funghi, which is a treat for mushroom lovers. The creamy texture of the warm soup perfectly managed to open all the senses, which was followed by Nachos with Cheese sauce. The Nachos were perfectly crisp and the topping of warm creamy cheese garnished with spring onions was a hit for the taste buds, the irresistible dish was so good that one could not have enough.

Classic Wood Burn Pizza was next – Pizza Napoli containing toppings of fresh tomato sauce, onion, capsicum, sundried tomato, mozzarella and jalapeno peppers, drizzled with chilli oil enthrals with its

taste and plays perfectly in tune with the marvellous experience of the soup and Nachos.

Funghi Alla Trapanese was the next dish, containing roasted mushrooms mildly flavoured with garlic, lemon, and parsley, and drizzled with olive oil served with warm farmer's bread. No meal can be complete without savouring mocktails and Little Italy offers such a vast range of unique mocktails that one needs to diligently go through the menu before choosing one. A concoction of mango juice, passion fruit syrup, lime juice, sugar, mint and soda perfectly blended into Mango Passion Fruit Mojito is a personal favourite.

A proverb says 'You can't go to Italy without having pasta'. The land of wine - Italy is known around the world for its fine and comforting cuisine. Little Italy has perfectly managed to do justice with unmatched Italian cuisine. Masala Mafia under the Classic Pasta section was next to be explored. This was a perfect combination of penne pasta, bell pepper, and onion with a beautiful mix of tomato sauce and béchamel sauce which stole the show.

Risotto Con Verdure was next on the list - brown rice perfectly amalgamated with veggies and cheese truly fills guests to satisfaction.

For dessert, the recommendation was Chocolate Bomb, which is their bestseller. The rich warm and gooey melted chocolate sauce oozing inside from the bomb is a perfect end to a hearty meal at Little Italy. For two people Italian fare at Little Italy will cost around INR 2000. It also offers buffet on the weekends and brunch on Sundays. ■

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'The UK, Canada and USA are three big opportunity zones for us and we're in the process of tying up with partners'

Rajan Sethi, Founder & Director, Bright Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. is a proud Indian restaurateur who spent his college days in Sydney. He identified the current gap of connecting food to the local produce in the culinary world. Sethi who has immense belief in the country's culture thinks that Indian cuisine can give a healthy competition to any of the International cuisines, provided it is promoted correctly. In its portfolio, the brand boasts of restaurants like The G.T. Road, Ikk Panjab, OMO, and AM.PM., which promotes Indian culture and its cuisines. His concerted effort for elevating the position of Indian cuisine, across the world is aimed at ensuring continuation of the country's culinary legacy. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with Sethi to know more about his plans for the brand.



Q Every brand of Bright Hospitality offers different vibes and different cuisines. What was the idea behind each of your restaurant?

Fifteen years ago, we penned an audacious vision –'To herald a revolution in the hospitality industry'. Today we have 4 brands and each one of them is inspired by the history, geography and cultural codes of India.

The G.T. Road is a 2600 kms food journey that begins in Kabul, ends in Chittagong and we serve food from 40 odd towns it runs through. It's a royal buffet where one can eat like an Emperor but pay like a Commoner. The entire eatery is laced with artefacts such as weapons, coins, and photographs which transport the guest to an era gone by.

Ikk Panjab pays homage to the 'before-partition' Punjab. My ancestors were farmers and they lived in Peshawar before politics and greed broke this glorious state into two bitter halves. We curated recipes from East and West Punjab and serve the food in the same manner in which it was served almost 200 years ago with a big heart and a lot of love.

OMO is a 100% vegetarian restaurant which procures fresh organic produce from farms across India.

AM.PM. is a youth hangout that morphs by geography and time. It's a café in the morning and becomes a bar post sun-down.

We don't see ourselves as a food and beverages company. We see ourselves as the 'custodians of the heritage, culture, traditions of India' and we express it through the medium of food and beverages. It is a big

responsibility that fuels our passion to create masterpieces which enrich the soul.

Q Since you operate both dine in and cloud kitchen models, according to you what are the pros of each model?

As the pandemic ravaged the world, the



hospitality industry was impacted the most. The adage 'necessity is the mother of invention' was clearly evident in the way cloud-kitchens flourished, neighbourhood aunties doled out home-made foods, FMCG majors rolled out ready-to-eat offerings and consumers craved to taste outside the home. As the spectre of virus receded, restaurants opened their shutters.

A cloud kitchen can deliver food at your doorstep but it only delivers on the aroma and taste dimension of eating. Hospitality and F&B are experiential hotspots. The magic lies in the experience and that's the big differentiator. I hope this is the end of the pandemic and sincerely pray that there F&B industry thrives so that our guests and patrons can experience the best eating joints in the world.

Q What are your expansion plans?

The G.T.Road and Ikk Panjab are two brands for which we get the maximum queries from international parties as it caters to a huge diaspora. Having visited most of the Indian subcontinent restaurants across the world, I believe that The G.T.Road and Ikk Panjab are leagues ahead in product, concept and execution. The UK, Canada and USA are three big opportunity zones for us and we're in the process of tying up with partners whose dreams are aligned with our ambitions.

We have a dozen fresh concepts on the table which we are very excited about. The next 100 days are very important to us as a few new spaces will be up and running. Our innovation pipeline is packed until 2026 and we're sure that Indian cuisine will give a lot of the international cuisines a run for their money. We will be announcing our international plans soon.

Q Kindly elaborate on your growth plans.

A restaurant is like a baby which needs full time parenting. Handing the reins of the baby to someone would be emotionally gut-wrenching. We are very clear that the first three outlets of our brand have to be completely owned, invested and operated by BHPL, with no external partners or investors. That gives us freedom to take fearless decisions without interference or financial burden. We will look for VCs or financial partners who want to invest and grow with us. ■

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The Indian Hospitality industry has been witnessing steady progress lately. After the pandemic, the industry has shifted to digital payment, bookings and infusing tech into other operations. Now the industry is becoming a key consumer of Web3, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT) and AR/VR environments. The industry is also exploring various areas like marketing, advertising, and guest experiences with the metaverse. While some industry experts are gung-ho about adopting these advanced technologies, others are a bit sceptical due to the high initial expense involved. **Asmita Mukherjee** spoke with industry experts to understand the sentiment around these technologies.

Metaverse

The Immersive Future of Hospitality

According to a recent Gartner research, 30% of global organizations will have products and services for the metaverse by 2026 and 25% of people will spend at least one hour daily in a metaverse for work, shopping, education, social, or entertainment purposes. While major MNCs of the world like Coca-Cola, and Nike are eager to prove their presence in the metaverse, the hospitality industry is also keeping pace with progress by joining hands with technology companies to build its presence in the virtual world.

Many hotels are also exploring the metaverse due to the potential of the guest experience. Singapore-based Millennium Hotels opened the first virtual hotel of the metaverse, M Social Decentraland. Marriott was one of the first hotel brands to create and sell its own NFT. The company and other hotel brands such as Atlantis are also collaborating with platforms like RendezVerse to create digital twins of real-life hotels.

DEFINING METAVERSE

According to AD Singh, MD & Founder, Olive Bar & Kitchen Group metaverse is an alternate online universe which has increasingly become more important and more real for many of us.

Ajit Singh Garcha, General Manager, THE Park Hyderabad stated that Metaverse

is a virtual world which allows a person to live a virtual life in the form of an avatar or immerse all senses into a digital world. It is another form of communication, connection, interaction, marketing, public relations, branding and advertising.

Supreet Raju, Co-Founder, OneRare believes that the metaverse is an extension of our current digital lives. "It is an immersive social experience taking place in a completely virtual environment."

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

The Olive Group, which operates Olive Bar & Kitchen and other brands such as Toast & Tonic and The Grammar Room, is one of the first few Indian restaurant groups to offer NFTs and virtual experiences to customers, to engage with them in the metaverse. To make this possible, The Olive Group joined hands with Hey Hey Global, an online platform powering experiential engagement between celebrities, influencers, and creators globally via new-age technology where fans can discover and buy creator-powered NFTs. The tie-up plans to engage with Olive's wider community, via NFT and the metaverse.

Another F&B brand Massive Restaurants under the guidance of Zorawar Kalra, Founder & Managing Director of the brand has tied up with OneRare. OneRare and Massive Restaurants will together explore the blockchain world to power up table

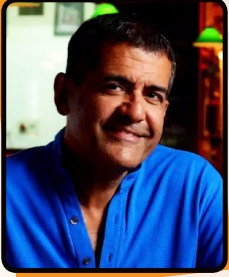
reservations, online ordering, and much more.

TRANSFORMING THE INDUSTRY

Raju believes that community ownership of platforms and self-expression will become the driving forces and brands will be able to grow their reach globally. "From the time we spend on various apps and social networking sites today, we are already digital-first. With the Metaverse, the quality of this experience will improve - the same way as our phone cameras have steadily improved with the growing reach of social media."

However, as the technology is pretty new in the industry most of the brands are still exploring its uses and benefits. The technologies – Virtual reality and Augmented Reality that the metaverse uses, enable users to have immersive social interactions in the digital space by creating a virtual identity. Sanjay Vazirani, CEO, Foodlink opines, "I think it is still in its nascent stage and its full potential is yet to be explored and it is definitely yet to reach a point where it touches the lives of the common man. It is far from becoming a real necessity and until that happens; I am not sure how it will be adopted at scale by the masses. I have briefly read about some restaurants which have ventured into the metaverse but we are yet to dive deeper into the case studies and the effectiveness of activities taken up in the virtual worlds that form metaverse."

The traditional dining scene is constantly evolving and we have seen some massive changes post-covid. Users are steadily embracing technology for ordering, table reservations, and booking experiences. With the metaverse, a whole new spectrum of virtual interaction will open up to the patrons.

**AD Singh**

MD & Founder, Olive Bar & Kitchen Group

**Ajit Singh Garcha**

General Manager, THE Park Hyderabad

**Supreet Raju**

Co-Founder, OneRare

**Sanjay Vazirani**

CEO, Foodlink

According to Raju, virtual restaurants & food experiences will allow food businesses to create a better, more immersive experience for patrons and grow their global presence. “In our Foodverse, for example, foodies can interact with Celebrity Chefs, Restaurants, and Food Brands. They can visit them in their virtual restaurants, play games, join

them, enabling accurate table reservations and so much more.

Singh mentioned that the metaverse can offer a huge opportunity for the industry. “Large amounts of the earth’s population, particularly newer generations spend more and more time online which should be seen as a huge opportunity for the industry to

the last two years due to the pandemic resulting in the industry utilising technology to successfully navigate the pandemic. While the adoption of immersive technologies like metaverse is still at a very nascent stage in the industry, slowly it is opening up to the various positive use case of the technology. Although the benefits of adopting the metaverse are undoubtedly many, several industry experts are wary of the expenditure involved in adopting it, considering that the industry has just emerged from the wrath of the pandemic and is now in the throes of a global recession. Also, the fact that not a lot many use cases of metaverse for the hospitality industry have been defined yet, deters its acceptance.

Garcha shared his thoughts by saying that virtual experiences cannot replace actual travel, especially leisure travel experiences. He said that it is difficult to measure the timeline of the transformational impact of metaverse on hospitality from a guest or client perspective. “Also, Metaverse is a very expensive proposition to implement at this moment in time with no definitive timeline of ROI,” he added.

According to Vazirani, the usage of the metaverse is limited for the F&B industry at the moment, he said, “While there is a lot more that can be thought of, it will still be limited for an F&B service enterprise since actually experiencing the taste of the food in the virtual world will not be possible and that is the core of what we do. But surely it is evolving at a fast pace. There is now a Foodverse too which as I understand is gamifying food experiences where people can go and engage with farms, farmer markets & kitchens, cook their dishes, farm their ingredients, attend and host cooking workshops, etc. People earn NFTs in games in the Foodverse and the same can be exchanged for food in the real world.”

Although currently, the use cases for metaverse in the hospitality sector are limited, the situation is quickly changing for the better. Considering the many benefits that metaverse brings to the table, hotels & restaurants need to keep watching the space to know when it is the right time to invest instead of denying its future usefulness. ■

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Probable use cases of Metaverse

- Metaverse may be helpful to restaurants, hotels and wedding venues to showcase their ambience, décor, food and overall experience to their potential customers in the virtual world enabling them to take their decisions without actually having to travel to the venue.
- It can also be used to have a tete-a-tete with customers from across the world in a virtual environment to aid in understanding their requirements better and curating personalized experiences for their guests by offering them a unique tailor-made experience. It will be great if we can give a venue tour virtually.
- Restaurants will be able to showcase their menus in the virtual world and also help them see how the food is being prepared perhaps. The cloud kitchens might be able to take orders through the metaverse and also encourage interaction between customers and the culinary and ops teams.
- Metaverse will also play a huge role in the events industry. Geographical boundaries will no longer matter and organizers will be able to hold large concerts, meetings or exhibitions in the virtual world. This will truly be a disruptor like no other for the hospitality industry.

Members Clubs, and swap NFTs for real-life meals. The hospitality industry can grow from a local, physical ambit to global reach by leveraging the metaverse opportunities correctly,” she stated.

She said that the core tech of blockchain and the immersive nature of the metaverse combine for a great opportunity in both the front-end and back-end functions of any hospitality business. NFTs can be leveraged to replace Loyalty Programs and Membership Clubs, used as Room Access Keys as well as enable check-ins and check-outs. With their 3D hotel or restaurant in the metaverse, businesses can show people what kind of experience to expect when visiting

woo new customers,” he opined.

Sharing some interesting use cases, Gracha stated, “Metaverse at present can help hotels advertise better, allow guests to experience the product better. It can play a role in sales & marketing strategies to reach more guests. Instead of images and videos, the guests can have an immersive experience of spaces in a hotel be it a spa, nightclub, restaurant or the guest rooms before making a choice to book.”

CHALLENGES IN ADOPTION

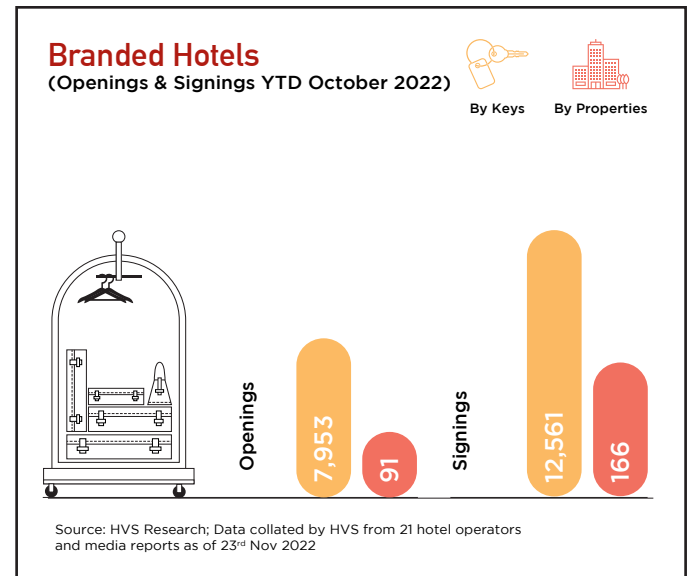
Although the Indian hospitality sector is historically known to be a late adopter of next-gen tech, the situation has changed in

Hotel occupancies dip in Oct amid fall in business travel, says HVS Anarock report

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

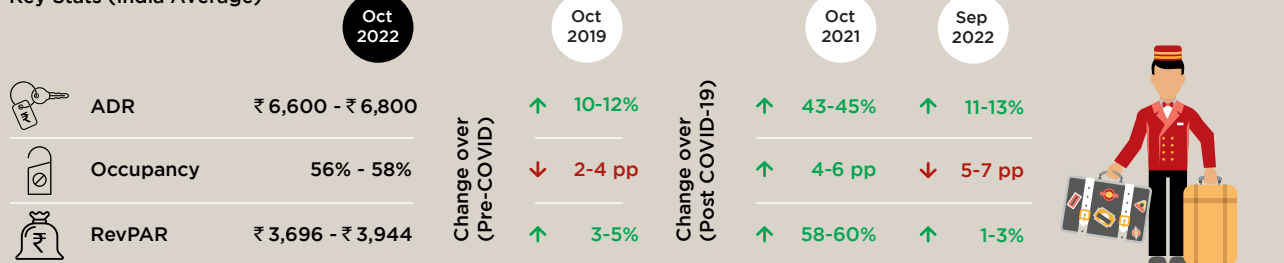
While nationwide hotel occupancy slumped for the month of October 2022, compared to September, owing to a drop in business travel because of the festival season, average room rates in the organised hotel industry continued their upward trend, helping hotels maintain their revenues to above the pre-pandemic levels for the month. According to a new report by hospitality consultancy HVS Anarock, Hotels & Hospitality Overview India, Mumbai and New Delhi remain the top markets with occupancy rates exceeding 65% in October 2022, while Goa had the highest average rate, over INR 10,000 for the month. In October, room occupancies slumped the most in cities like Chandigarh, New Delhi and Hyderabad between 5-10% as compared to October 2019. Mumbai and Bengaluru, too, saw a low of under 5%. The company, though, said that occupancies remained strong in Kolkata, Pune, Goa, Chennai and Kochi, higher by about 1-5%. Average daily rates remained strong in cities like Goa and Kochi, up between 20-30% as compared to October 2019.

Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, though, saw up to 10% lower rates than the same period in 2019. During this time, India's domestic air traffic increased by 10% in the month compared to the previous month. ■



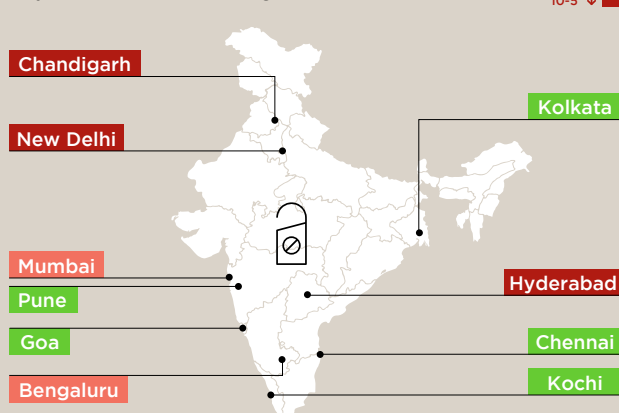
Hotels Sector

Key Stats (India Average)



Occupancy Change¹

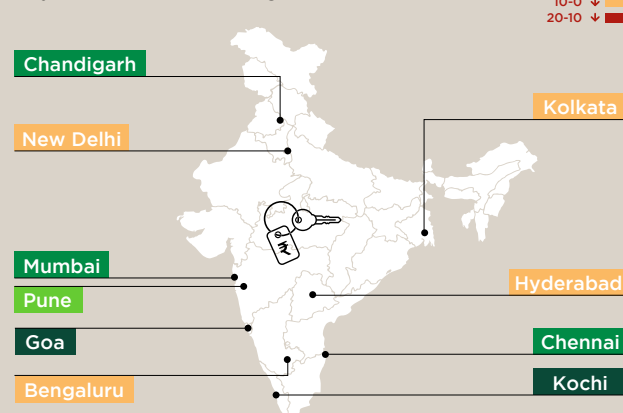
Key Indian Markets (Change over Oct 2019)



¹ Occupancy change in percentage points (pp)

ADR Change²

Key Indian Markets (Change over Oct 2019)



² ADR change in percentage (%)

Source: HVS Research

Profitability in hotel segment set to rise: Report

HBI Staff | Hyderabad

Higher average room rates (ARR) and hotel room occupancy will lift profitability of the domestic hotel industry, with Ebitda margins likely to increase to around 34% this fiscal against the 24% growth seen in FY20, the pre-pandemic year, according to Crisil Ratings. Ebitda is earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization.

The report said that revenue, on its part, will increase ~23% over the pre-pandemic level, riding on a strong recovery in business travel and continued traction in leisure travel. The strong business performance, coupled with limited capital spend, will improve the credit profiles of players.

Mohit Makhija, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings, said “Leisure travel had gained traction post the Delta wave last fiscal, while business travel has started picking up steadily after a much milder Omicron wave in Jan 2022. This has been fuelling demand in the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and events) segment. CRISIL Ratings believes that improvement in international business travel in the second half of this fiscal will strengthen the industry performance. Occupancy will rise to ~73% this fiscal (68% in fiscal 2020), while average room rate (ARR) should increase 8-10%.”

The gap between demand and supply will aid the improvement in ARR. Developers had held back on capex amid the pandemic-induced uncertainties. While the sharp rebound in demand may spur an increase in capex, supply will take a while to catch up because of the long gestation period for setting up a greenfield hotel. That will favour existing hotels.

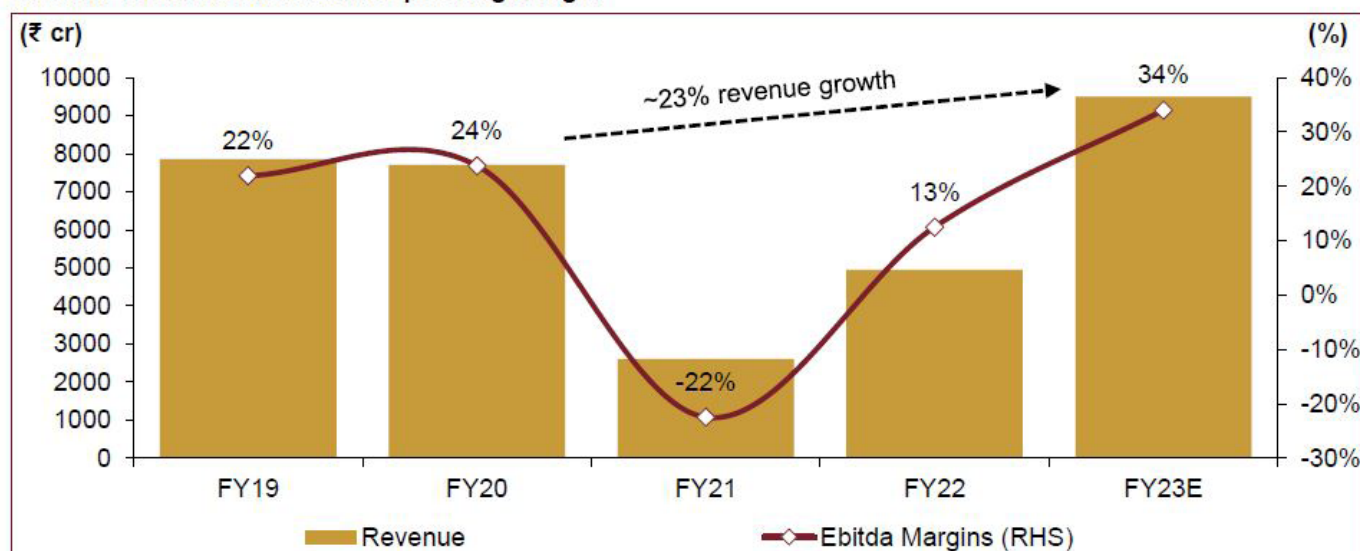
Meanwhile, organised players are increasing their footprint in an asset-light way. They are increasing capacity by entering into hotel management contracts for existing standalone properties, which will limit their upfront capital costs and keep leverage in control. Several standalone hotels couldn't sail through the challenges during the last two years. Some of them have been shut down permanently, while others are exploring opportunities to collaborate with organised players. The branded and organised players have been utilising the opportunity to expand their footprint in a market that is expected to grow well. In the wake of the pandemic, hotels had recalibrated their costs by taking a hard look at their fixed costs and efficiencies, many of which have led to permanent savings in operating costs. The measures include reassessing employee headcount using automation and better peak-hour manpower planning. Additionally, steps such as eliminating high-cost, low-preference items from food and beverage menus and ensuring efficiency improvement to keep utility expenses in check have helped improve their cost structures.

Anand Kulkarni, Director, CRISIL Ratings, said “Strong revenue growth and cost optimisation measures will boost profitability of organised players this fiscal. Furthermore, asset-light expansion augurs well for their balance sheets. While the credit profiles were stressed in the last two fiscals, this fiscal will bring a material improvement, with interest coverage estimated at ~4 times against ~2.6 times in fiscal 2020 and the debt to Ebitda ratio seen improving to ~1.7 times from ~3.4 times.”

That said, any economic slowdown and its impact on business travel, especially on a global scale, remains a monitorable.. ■

Annexure

Chart 1: Trend in revenue and operating margin



Changing Recipe Constructs | Reconceptualising Neo-Skilling

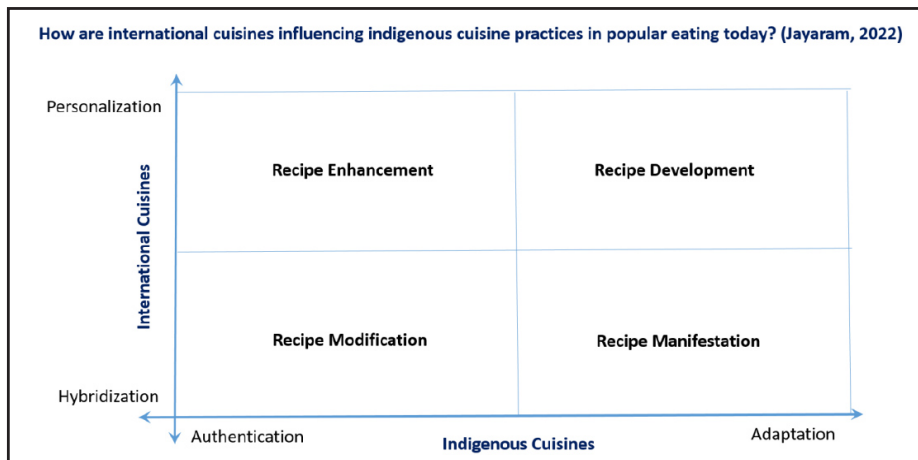
By **Prof. Satish Jayaram, PhD** – Ideator | Innovator | Incubator

Potential target audience mapping for training of future chefs must be largely advised by popular eating today. The gap in current curricula being practiced in institutions remains retrograde, requiring an overhaul of training methods, deploying informed approaches. In this column, a roadmap to build new menus for skilling chefs, is based on rational judgement. Influences by international cuisines that impact indigenous cuisines, in popular eating are demystified. Signature uniqueness moderated by cultural requirements, must apprise the transferrable skill as we train chefs. The case in point is that chefs must be able to cook cuisines that bring in sustainable revenue streams, so sharper focus is key.

While disruptive, creative and innovative food models thrive, the age-old debate between standardization and personalization must now evolve. International Cuisine application in India has gone through a great deal of hybridization in playing to local palates. Personalization to suit individual palates, is also a phenomenon observed in many cultures and communities. On the other hand, Indigenous Cuisines have renewed their authenticity, as traditional recipes get celebrated today. The natural outcome over time, is adaptation to suit a wide variety of variables – including health, taste, speed and acceptability in current contexts. A model structured alongside provides fresh perspective.

There is visible influence from proliferation of international cuisines in food formats today. The steady rise of food retail models is ample evidence. It is natural for international cuisines to hybridize as local ingredients and incorporations supplement. Personalization and co-creation options to meet individual expectations are also factored into food design. Indigenous cuisines in parallel have begun to celebrate authenticity by renewing long forgotten approaches. The pandemic and traditional recipe resurgence also contributed to a new order of post-pandemic eating. Quite like our palates, it is complex, culturally significant and unique. And international adaptation frugally fosters innovation!

1. Recipe Modification: While



authentication of indigenous recipes continues to be archived in many secret family confines, international influences have crept in modifying these recipes. The outcome of this is a tight-rope walk, trying to balance the originality of taste to evoke memories, incorporating quick-fixes to get the desired results. The availability of pastes, gravies etc. contributing to a quicker assimilation of indigenous flavours into locally produced international food formats in worth demystifying, as we reconsider how this alters skilling.

2. Recipe Manifestation: Availability of ready to eat, off the shelf options – where international packaged foods are easy to access, spawns the appearance of many individualistic adaptations. Additions, localization and spontaneous creative applications starting in homes, has led to multiple modern recipe manifestations. Many of these individualistic manifestations have also now found their way to the market place. Even if they are popularized by hawking systems, they challenge the status quo, it is also a reality to contend.

3. Recipe Enhancement: Natural local influences, enhancing international food formats to begin with, boost recipes to increase local acceptance. The addition of Indian ingredients, flavours, and cooking techniques to enhance personalization, is seen in many states, cultures and communities. Such enhancements get cemented in those cultures, even starting their own journey of customization as time and context change. International recipes personalized to meet local

contexts get the fillip - that in fact enhance the original recipe for local acceptance!

4. Recipe Development: Evolution of a new social order, emerging expectations and changed palates demand focused recipe development. While the foundations may lie in international hybridization or even indigenous adaptation, new age recipe creation - is the order of the day. The recently experienced resurgence of immunity boosting foods, alternate-medicine charged healthy foods, are some indicators to consider. The palates of current and future generations, stands changed - now this must be backed up by new recipe research/development for skills.

In conclusion, if we structure the influences on our current cuisine consumption formats, it becomes easier to map the skills needed for food production. Having experienced recipe modification, recipe manifestation and recipe enhancement, recipe development is the way forward. The answers lie in researching, testing, developing and documenting a neo-cuisine, which we all consume today. Sustainability of future food business models will require that all skilling to cook these new order meals, must be precluded by recasting menus that can be scaled up. Above all, it is time to evaluate century old recipes, ingredients and formats. Skilling must remain relevant to current contexts, by mapping new techniques required to serve an upcoming demand for a neo-cuisine, are we ready yet? ■

The views expressed within this column are the opinion of the author, and may not necessarily be endorsed by the publication.



The World of Brands launched its home-grown brand Great Indian Gin (GiG) on 11th June 2022 which is celebrated as the World Gin Day. The idea behind the brand was to create an Indian Gin which perfectly matches the country's palate. Speaking about the inception of the brand **Gurpreet Singh, Co-Founder & Director, World of Brands (WoB)** said, "Our first endeavour was to create a brand that Indians from across the world would be proud of. The Great Indian Gin is crafted for the Indian palate and represents the versatile youth of today. It is a perfect yet uncomplicated drink for all occasions."



Home-grown brand Great Indian Gin all set to capture the Indian market with its Indianised premium Gin

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

As a white spirit, Gin gained its popularity in India much later than the West. While speaking about his thoughts while entering the niche segment of Gin Singh said, "India has quickly caught up with the 'Gin renaissance' that the West started experiencing about a decade ago. The Gin category has undergone phenomenal growth with a lot of the white spirit consumers switching to the younger and more interesting category of Gin. In the spirit of this experimental mindset, we have at World of Brands explored multiple market penetration strategies on the Great Indian Gin."

He also added that after entering the market the next challenge was to introduce the premium Indian gin to the consumers, which was not at all easy as Vodka already had brownie points in the same segment. "We have redefined the entry-level premium pricing and bridged a large price gap that existed in the category. We have also invested in creating popular flavours in a familial format such as Great Indian Nagpur Orange Gin and Great Indian Shimla Green Apple Gin to attract the larger vodka consumer base to Gin and have also experimented with smaller packs of 180ml & 60ml to aid in trials and penetration," he added.

The brand in its continued effort is trying to create popular flavours which go with the Indian taste buds. Singh stated that investing in creating popular flavours in a familial format (colourless liquid with a great flavour and aroma) was a key strategy to attract Vodka consumers for the brand, many of which prefer drinking their Vodka as a flavoured drink. He informed, "Important to note that ~50% of Vodka consumers drink vodka in a flavoured format. The Orange and Green Apple flavours contribute to nearly ~90% of the flavour-preferring Vodka consumers in India. None of the Gin brands was targeting this consumer segment appropriately. We launched Great Indian Nagpur Orange Gin and Great Indian Shimla Green Apple Gin to address this gap and opportunity."

After its inception, the Great Indian Gin has successfully managed to grab the attention of consumers which helped the brand to climb up to leadership position. In line with its growing acceptance, the brand is soon planning to launch its offerings in Telangana. "Our current presence with the Great Indian Gin is in Karnataka, Puducherry and Goa. The initial response to the brand and three initiatives on pricing, flavours and small packs has been very encouraging. We have in a very short time run away to a market leadership position in the segment in Puducherry. The brand is among the top three-selling Premium Gin brands in Karnataka and we have had a very positive response in Goa as well. We are now gearing up for Telangana, our fourth market, which we are launching in the 1st week of December. We have a few more markets across the North and the East under consideration and should in the next 6 months be available across these 2 regions as well. We hope to have a pan-India presence within the first 15-18 months of our initial launch. This in the AlcoBev category is actually a pretty quick roll-out. We are not surprised at this early success as we have great belief in the quality of the product."

Due to the immense love and support that the 6-month-old brand has received, it has big plans to launch three new products soon. "We were at an advanced stage of development in three other segments in the AlcoBev category. One of these three products has been fast-tracked for a launch in Q1 of the calendar year 2023. This launch will see 'World of Brands' enter the 'low spirits segment', making it one of the few companies in India that will have brands ranging from the high to the low spirits segments," informed Singh.

As the brand is comparatively new it is focusing on consumer awareness more than anything else at the moment, "We engage with the influencer community, invest heavily in digital media and participate in relevant consumer experiences to build brands. But most of all we invest in creating high-quality products with enviable packaging which offers great value to our consumers," Singh concluded. ■

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China Bistro brings Korean flavours in the Dolsot-Sizzling Stone Festival

Asmita Mukherjee | Hyderabad

Annyeonghaseyo India! Of late, Korean culture has gained significant popularity in India, all thanks to K- Dramas and K-Pop. The love for Korean culture has also amplified Korean food popularity in our country.

To cater to this dedicated passion for Korean food among Indians, China Bistro Restaurant – a part of Foodlink F&B Holdings India recently commenced the Dolsot – Sizzling Stone Festival. The food festival is named after Dolsot, which is actually a small-sized piece of cookware made of Pagodite - a variety of stone used by Chinese artisans for carvings in pagodas and similar objects. The stoneware is usually known for making Bibimbap which contains rice, vegetables, meat, sprouts, eggs and Gochujang. Since the stone gives off heat evenly and keeps the food warm longer, Koreans have long used it in kettles, pots and stone bowls. A Dolsot does not cool off as soon as removed from the stove, so the rice/ noodles/ quinoa continues to cook and arrives at the table still sizzling thus giving it a smokey, crispy flavour. On the bottom of a Dolsot, there forms a thin crust of scorched rice/noodles or Quinoa (as base as you choose), to be scraped off and eaten in the case of Bibimbap. The loosened chunks of the scorched base remain warm till the end of the meal, when it is typically savoured.

Bibimbap is considered to be a great source of energy with a healing effect and immunity-boosting benefits is a one pot meal. The ingredients used to prepare Bibimbap are green leafy vegetables, eggs, bell peppers, soy sauce, Thai basil, Sichuan sauce, and many more.

The Sizzling Stone Festival at China Bistro, Jubilee Hills Hyderabad which focuses on the popular Korean food – Bibimbap,



offers 8 different types of Bibimbap such as, Spicy Korean Stone Pot, Ultimate Butter Stone Pot, San Trio, Phi Phi Stone Pot, Yum Yum Tom Yum, Stone Smoked Chilli, Sichuan Old Stone (SOS) and Korean Noodle Bowl.

These 8 varieties of Bibimbap are available in vegetarian, chicken and prawn options. One can choose its base from Sticky Rice, Noodle, or Quinoa as per their likings. The Spicy Korean Stone Pot is made of bell pepper, water chestnut, mushroom, bean sprout & chives tossed in Gochijang Sauce, while the Ultimate Butter Stone Pot consists of bell pepper, zucchini, bean sprout, mushroom & coriander tossed in butter garlic sauce. We learnt that Bibimbap promotes healthy eating which is why a lot of crunchy vegetables are used in making the dish.

Apart from the exclusive Korean fare on offer at China Bistro, one should definitely try the Eight Treasure Chicken Soup which is a perfect blend of eight exotic vegetable and chicken broths. In the appetiser section, the soft and flavourful Chicken Basil Dumpling is a must try. Also, China Bistro is known for its unmatched Sushi, and the Truffle Mushroom Chicken Sushi is one of the most recommended dishes. The restaurant also boasts of a delightful Entrée on its menu which is its signature South Asian Chilli Chicken.

No meal can be complete without savouring mocktails and desserts. China Bistro excels at both with a wide range of options on offer. In mocktails, one can surely relish Sangria Basil Exotic Ice Tea, Blue Hawaiian, Cranberry Spitzer, Orange Mint Exotic Ice tea etc. Among the desserts, Buddha's Fu is a favourite among the patrons, and rightfully so. Buddha's Fu in Chinese means blessing of Buddha. Not only does the must-have dessert taste delicious, but it is also presented very uniquely. It is a delicious dessert consisting of chilled mango pudding, vanilla ice cream and chocolate mousse. The server drips caramel sauce from a conch shell on the mango pudding and then rings a handheld bell over the dessert to sprinkle the cocoa powder contained inside the bell. A truly delightful sight!

China Bistro which always offers its patrons something new and authentic has been receiving immense positive response from the patrons for the Dolsot – Sizzling Stone Festival and due to this they have extended the festival date till January 8. One Bibimbap would be sufficient for two people. The Korean fare at China Bistro can be enjoyed at prices starting from INR 675 plus taxes. ■

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Taj Amer Jaipur

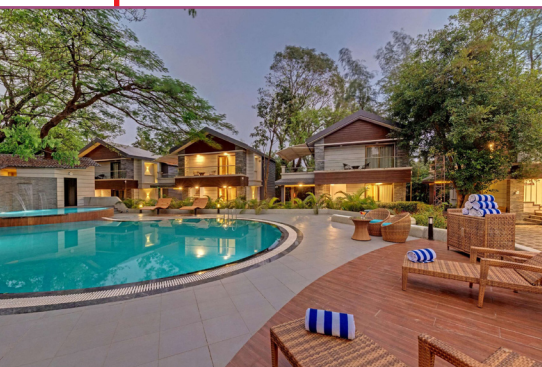
Strategically located in Kukas, Taj Amer is a short drive from the majestic Amber Fort and other popular tourist spots. Stunning marble arches at the entrance lead into the lobby with its high domed ceilings, lotus filigree work and carefully curated artworks. The luxurious 245 rooms and suites reflect the hotel's grandeur with peacock motifs, intricate lattice work and rich textures, offering picture postcard views. Hotel offers myriad dining experiences – from the legendary all-day diner, Shamiana; a selection of international cocktails with trademark local flavours at House of Nomad to small bites at Emperor's Court and the soon to launch Chinese cuisine at the signature House of Ming. The roof top infinity pool is the perfect place for a bird's eye view of the Pink City. Inspired by ancient Indian healing wisdom Jiva Spa will be a sanctuary that provides a soothing blend of ayurvedic massages and aromatherapy for holistic rejuvenation.

Fortune Park Kufri, Shimla

At a distance of just 18kms from Shimla railway station, surrounded by lofty mountains, in a dense trail of coniferous trees and apple orchards, the Fortune Park Kufri boasts of a perfect, almost enviable location.

The hotel comprises of well-appointed, spacious rooms, overseeing the magnificent Himalayas. All rooms are laden with comforts and luxuries that one would expect from a Fortune Hotel apart from being equipped with hi-speed Wi-Fi and satellite LED TV.

The hotel offers an array of culinary delights and sumptuous buffets at the Zodiac- an all-day dining, multi-cuisine restaurant. There is an excellent selection of spirits, wines, and beers to be paired with a variety of finger foods in a contemporary setting at the chic bar, Neptune, which makes for an ideal venue to relax.



Arova Woods Zinc Journey by The Fern

Arova Woods Zinc Journey by The Fern, Lonavala is a new-build upscale 23 room resort offering modern living spaces, Meraki, a finely-designed multi-cuisine restaurant, swimming pool and banquet hall. Located on the Old Mumbai-Pune highway in Lonavala, the resort has easy access to all the major sightseeing attractions and is in close proximity to the main market area of Lonavala.

Zinc Journey by The Fern is a lifestyle brand under The Fern that provides guests with an innovative environment of style and a dose of the local culture. The resort is in a layout of villas and row houses, with room options of DeluxZ rooms, Zuper DeluxZ rooms, Zuper Premium rooms and SuiteZ.

Comfort Inn, Udaipur

Comfort Inn is a business hotel located near Pratap Circle in Pratap Nagar, a prime area in the city. This is the 100th hotel by the group in India and 63rd Choice Hotel in India.

Comfort Inn Udaipur is designed to meet the needs of busy business and corporate travellers. There are 35 well-appointed rooms, a multi-cuisine fine dining restaurant, a roof-top bar, a restaurant and a banquet hall, which makes a perfect venue for hosting corporate events and meetings. The coffee shop serves multi-cuisine food throughout the day.



CaSa de Spirits Pvt. Ltd launches Fentiro in Goa

CaSa de Spirits Pvt. Ltd has recently launched its first-ever range of spirits under the 'Fentiro' brand in Goa. Its initial launch in Goa to see its two variants of party shots – “Fentiro Dusk” and “Fentiro Dawn”. They are the newest and coolest entrant to the party shots category. Fentiro Dusk unleashes the wilder side along with the setting of the Sun and Fentiro Dawn is just the perfect shot as the first light of the rising Sun appears in the dawn sky.

Fentiro prides itself as a lifestyle brand, whose priority is to bring exceptional quality, priced competitively, that appeals to the tastes and preferences world over. CaSa de Spirits Pvt Ltd. is founded by former Divitone Group Country Manager & former WWE Director, Marketing – Carl Sequeira along with founder of Go Fish Entertainment, Sajay Moolankodan. Fentiro Dusk and Fentiro Dawn are available in selective outlets and restaurants in Goa.



Duroflex introduces Wave Plus

Duroflex has launched 'Duroflex Wave Plus' – a highly functional, adjustable smart bed that aims to enrich one's sleep experience. With their new wellness offering, Duroflex remains committed to their mission of not just providing quality sleep, but improving overall health and wellbeing as well.

The new tech-enabled Duroflex Wave Plus is equipped with multifunctional sleep modes to provide a deeply relaxed and enhanced sleep experience. The bed helps one unwind and ease into bedtime with the press of a Remote button or simply using a

Mobile App. The luxury bed also includes Three Massage Modes and Two Memory Presets, which allow users to customise their sleeping position depending on their needs. The company has launched two models of the new adjustable bed 'Duroflex Wave' and 'Duroflex Wave Plus'. The latter comes with additional features. Both products are exclusively available on Duroflex's website and its experiential stores starting at INR 55,000.

Puratos Tegral Satin Plum cake egg-free offers a one-stop solution for bakers

With the growing demand for plum cakes during the season, bakers and artisans are working round the clock to offer the best and newest variations to their customers. Puratos Tegral Satin Plum cake egg-free offers a one-stop hassle-free solution that perfectly fits into the artisan scheme of things. Tegral Satin Plum Cake Egg Free Mix which is a perfect blend of spices gives rich dark colour and good volume to your bar cakes, cupcakes, and round cakes. With loads of fruits, and nuts and infused with a rich taste it will enliven the finished product and differentiate it through taste and innovation. Puratos global presence, long history of expertise, and R&D capabilities in India have enabled them to tailor products to match Indian preferences, value, and functionality.



Hill Zill Wines Pvt Ltd unveils Pomona's hand-crafted wines

Hill Zill Wines Pvt Ltd (HZWPL) has unveiled a new premium range of handcrafted fruit-flavored wines called 'Pomona's.'

The rosé-colored strawberry wine will take one on a walk through the luscious strawberry gardens in the monsoons. They have also introduced the very first chocolate-flavored wine that will surely add a Christmassy vibe to wine lovers during the winter. The richness of Pomona's wines will enable everyone to enjoy them in the purest form or as delicious cocktails and sangrias.

Packaged in see-through bottles, these wines first enthrall the consumer with a stunning visual of the liquid inside.

THE LEELA PALACES, HOTELS & RESORTS



Agman Bauri, General Manager, The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi

A seasoned and versatile hospitality professional with a career spanning close to two decades, Bauri has worked with hotels like IHG in UK (Holiday Inn, Crown Plaza), Park Hyatt Hyderabad, Trident-BKC Mumbai and Marriott Marquis City Centre-Doha. Over the years, he has sharpened his skills in managing a diverse team of people and has championed operational excellence.

With a strong commitment to pursue excellence, his attention to detail and meticulous diligence sets him apart from the rest. Bauri joined The Leela Ambience Gurugram in April 2017 as Rooms Division Manager and was subsequently promoted as Executive Assistant Manager in March 2020 and Hotel Manager in October 2021. Shortly after, he was transferred to The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi in the same capacity. In August 2022, Bauri was given independent charge as Hotel Manager for The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi.

PRIDE GROUP OF HOTELS



Shailendra Dharme, Corporate Learning and Development Manager, The Pride Group of Hotels

With over 16 years of experience across multiple brands like Taj Hotels, ITC Hotels, Radisson Hotels Worldwide, McDonalds India, Orchid Hotels, Ananta Hotels, and Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Shailendra has showcased his skills and talent at numerous events and platforms over the years.

He was also awarded the "Trainer of the Year" award in July 2022. He holds a Hotel Management Degree from SBT HMCT Nagpur, completed post-graduation at the University of Pune, and is also certified by the Advanced Train the Trainer programme at IIT Roorkee. He has also worked as an Assistant professor at the University of Pune.

ACCOR HOTELS



Rajesh Namby, General Manager, Raffles Udaipur

With a rich experience of over two decades in luxury hotels and resorts, Namby brings an exemplary vision for the property to his new role. Namby has previously been associated with renowned hotel chains in notable roles, wherein he ensured that the hotels ran in profits even during the difficult times of pandemic by targeting an influx of domestic travelers. Under his leadership, the hotels have received

high honors from renowned publications such as Travel + Leisure and Conde Nast Traveller, among its many other accolades.

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS



Shakti Singh, General Manager, DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bangalore

Prior to joining DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Bangalore, Singh was General Manager, Hilton Garden Inn Trivandrum since 2019. Under his leadership the hotel has been successful in a challenging environment and he has passionately driven guest and team member satisfaction. Shakti has been with Hilton for 7 years during which he also got the opportunity

to work at Hilton Mumbai as task force General Manager. Singh is a strategic and value driven business leader with 20 years' experience in hotel operations. He has earlier worked with hotel companies like Oberoi, Hyatt and Accor across the country in both business and leisure destinations. Singh will lead the team in all aspects of hotel operations, hotel administration to guest services and satisfaction.

Atul Nagarkar, Director of Human Resources, InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort



Nagarkar started his IHG journey in 2018 with Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park as Human Resources & Training Manager. Prior to becoming a Director of Human Resources Nagarkar has handled a Cluster Learning and Quality Manager role and Human Resources Manager role at InterContinental Chennai

Mahabalipuram Resort. He is currently pursuing his Advanced Diploma in Human Resources Management from XLRI Jamshedpur, India. Nagarkar will spearhead in driving Talent Acquisition, Talent Development initiatives, International Mobility, high-performance culture that emphasizes empowerment, quality workforce, productivity Compensation and Benefits, and standard HR operations matters.

HYATT HOTELS



Ishandeb Chatterjee, Director Sales & Marketing, Hyatt Regency Kolkata

Chatterjee's deep rooted Kolkata connection from growing up in the city to an experience of more than one and a half decade, in hospitality industry, enables him to build a strong relationship with the city, its culture and the people who have known him over the years through his professional and personal associations.

His latest assignment had been with Marriott International to open their flagship hotel in Dhaka, The Sheraton Dhaka. Prior to that he was associated with Swissotel Kolkata as the Director of Sales and Marketing where he had been in the various roles for 10 years.

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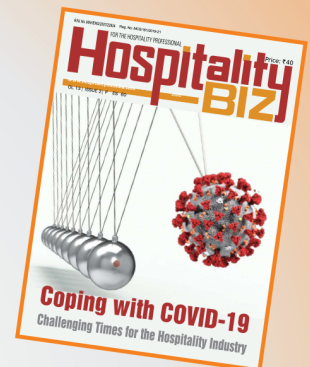
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