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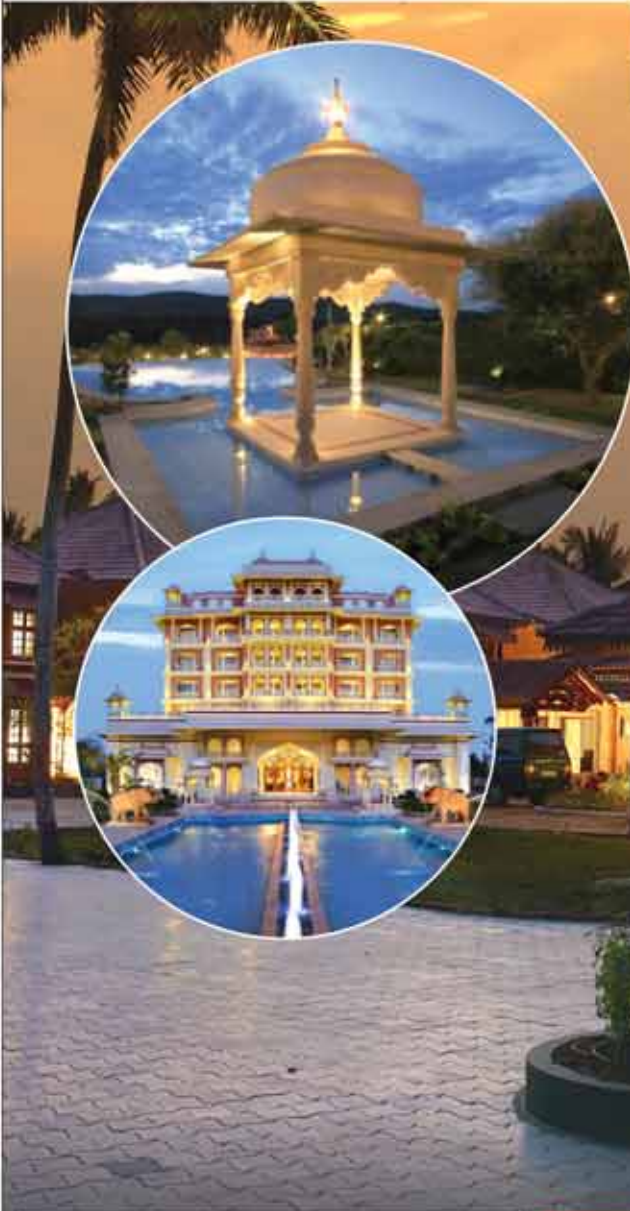
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Varanasi

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Regional chapters rejoice

The Regional Chapter Chairmen of IATO took up member issues in their respective regions and keep the association flag flying higher. They discuss their work and initiatives in the past year and talk about how they have resolved problems of the members and achieved the goals.



TT Bureau



Sunil C Gupta
Chapter Chairman—
Northern Region, IATO

“ IATO is represented on most of the tourism related committees and contributes with suggestions on policy matters and its implementation. We closely follow up with all the state governments to remove hurdles in the growth of tourism. Amidst the many challenges, we have to cope with the changes in terms of government policies and taxes, technology, online tools, infrastructure, scarcity of language guides, etc. The road-map is to provide a platform to all stakeholders for continuous dialogue and keep the government engaged to allot more funds and priority to tourism. IATO shall continue to impart training and HR development workshops to its members and staff ”



NS Rathor
Chairman—Western
Region, IATO

“ The Western region suffers from one long-standing problem – shortage of authorised, foreign language-speaking tourist guides. I have discussed the need to get more bilingual guides with our national committee. Moreover, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) guides are not allowed to visit Elephanta Caves because it is an ASI monument and most of the MOT guides are too old to climb. We have been discussing this problem with India Tourism and MTDC over the last few years. Online applications for certified guide training programme have started for 100 youth each in Mumbai, Nagpur, Aurangabad and Sindhudurg. With cruise tourism finally having taken off in Mumbai, we hope to see more foreign tourists visiting Mumbai and Maharashtra through cruise liners. ”

“ It has been my continuous endeavour to promote the tourism industry of the eastern region by closely interacting with both central and state government officials and bringing to fore the critical issues affecting tourism for growth. An important issue which we have been following up with the Ministry of Civil Aviation is withdrawal of Air India flights from Bhubaneswar to Bangkok. A memorandum in this regard has already been submitted. Stagnancy in the hotel accommodation sector for the last 20 years has already pulled Odisha much behind other states. Aggressive marketing and promotional campaigns for promotion of Odisha Tourism in the world market in association with the central and state governments are the needs of the hour. ”



Jitendra Kumar Mohanty
Chairman—Eastern
Region, IATO

“ Chairmen of all the Southern State Chapters have been active and working sincerely in delivering good leadership to their chapters. I have always been in close coordination and interaction with them on all important matters. The chapters of IATO, though they function as per the needs of local conditions, primarily follow the policies and objectives of the national body. The chapter activities are also monitored by the sub-committee assigned for it. IATO works with the objective of working for the professional welfare of tour operators in India. It also has another objective of promoting 'Destination India' and enrich tourism industry in the country. ”



EM Najeeb
Chairman—Southern
Region, & Sr. Vice
President, IATO

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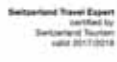
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IATO techs the way forward

With the Incredible India 2.0 campaign and the new website, Ministry of Tourism has furthered its digital cause. IATO members are following suit and believe that digital marketing and adopting technology is the way ahead.

TT Bureau



Subhash Verma
MD, Travel Plus – Unit of
Ibis Travels

“More small inbound tour operators must use online to increase their business and grow in the industry. I believe that digital is the present and future solution for travel and tourism. I wish to add one more specific point, which can surely increase inbound numbers. There needs to be a global campaign where for any inbound traveller coming by Air India, the MOT will subsidise air ticket by USD 200 by paying USD 200 to Air India.”



Lally Matthews
Director, Vacation Travels
& Tours

“I am still using conventional ways of marketing through travel shows and meetings for selling and promoting my products to the international market. My company hasn’t made use of digital marketing for this. However, that is the in thing right now and people are slowly moving towards digital as that is the need of the hour. In fact, using digital marketing and other online mediums are the future of travel industry and doing business. Even the Government is in favour of this and wants the tour operators to move to the digital medium.”



Dipak Deva
Managing Director
Travel Corporation (India)

“Since we do not sell our tours to the consumer directly, we are not using digital media to sell our products through online mediums. However, to reach out to our B2B partners and to build our brand, we use social media. In fact, we still use the traditional mediums of engaging with the B2B industry of marketing through travel shows, both international and national. In addition, we are in constant touch with our partners and engage with them on various levels.”

“Goa Tourism was perhaps the first tourism board in India to enable all tourism services on its official website as an e-commerce platform to get direct access to customers. We’re also focusing heavily on speaking about local events, festivals and the off-beat side of Goa online. Our goal is to innovate our communication repeatedly. Goa Tourism through Goa Tourism Development Corporation has also launched an app-based taxi service GOAMILES.”



Menino D’Souza
Director, Department of
Tourism, Govt. of Goa

“We have been using the traditional digital medium, that is, our website and the main online travel agents to capture a significant chunk of our business. We have been a little slow to use the social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Whatsapp to capture business. However, I believe that digital is the future of doing business, especially in the travel and tourism industry. It is the best way to go forward.”




Jack Sukhija
Partner
WelcomHeritage Panjim Inn

“We make the most of mobile technology and propagate what makes us unique on social media. The destination videos we have are excellent and we have many online influencers that drive exposure online. We promote what’s new in our area and create multiple tourism packages for many destinations. We have adopted Search Engine Optimisation and have number one google search position for most of tour related keyword phrases in our state.”



Alok Maharana
Managing Director, Sand
Pebbles Tour n Travels,
Bhubaneswar

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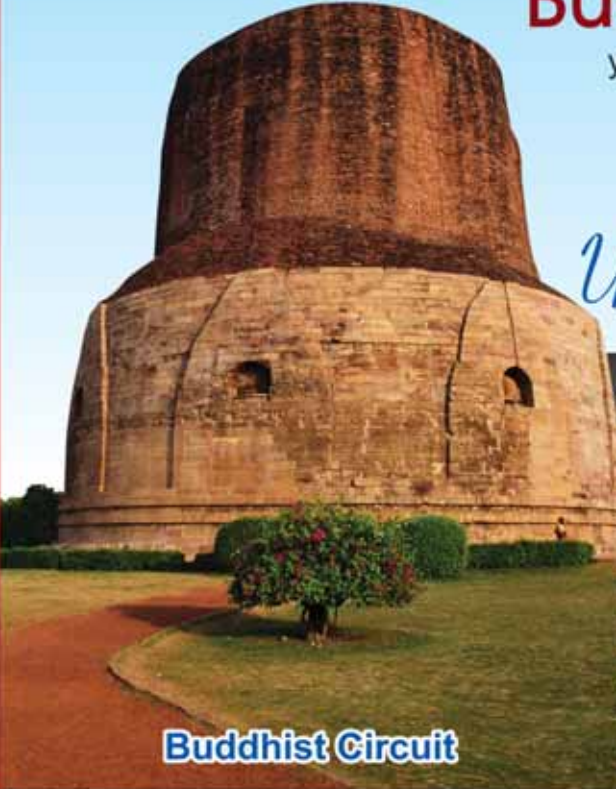


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Hotel Mansingh, Jaipur

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Mansingh Palace, Agra

Cherish the luxury of elegantly furnished rooms and relive the centuries-old romance. 100 beautiful rooms. Ripples is the 24-hour coffee-shop and Sheesh Mahal the multi-cuisine restaurant. Tequila, the well-stocked hotel bar, swimming pool and health club to rejuvenate the self as well as soul. A delightful experience to savour for a long time.



Mansingh Towers, Jaipur

An Executive Block with 53 well-appointed rooms & suites, designed to mix business with pleasure, with the provision of personal valet, mini bar and jacuzzi in every suite. Fax machine and PC on demand. There's more an executive lounge, a well-equipped business centre, library, a well-stocked bar and multi-cuisine restaurant Garden Court to delight the palate.



Mansingh Palace, Ajmer

Rejoice in the holy and festive environment of the town and bask in the ancient and majestic ambience of the hotel designed like an 18th century fortress. It's a memorable experience to live in the family suites that are an architectural marvel and to savour Continental, Chinese, Mughlai & Rajasthani cuisines at its Sheesh Mahal restaurant.

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25 years

IATO special IATO special IATO special

Trav Talk

IATO Convention

The deliberation of the 10th annual convention of IATO will be watched with interest by the industry throughout the country because of the agenda it has set for itself.

Concerted action by tourism organisations has been a much sought goal over the past few years, but it has remained elusive. The absence of a pressure group on behalf of the industry has been a persistent limitation. While competing destinations in the region are trying to improve their product at competitive, the industry here is inhibited by divisions. Though the government has recognised its potential and importance as a major earner of foreign exchange, in practical term it has not received the priority status that should go along with its assigned role. Foreign investment in this sector are yet to come in a substantial measure. Indian expertise in the industry is of a high order but the large investment required in all the segments of the trade together is of a scale that in our national order of priorities, it cannot be a state responsibility. The private sector has to build on the infrastructure provided by the state. The convention at Khajuraho, whose temples are one of the splendid manifestations of the Indian tourism products should provide some sign posts.

Adopting digitisation

► Contd. from page 4

“I am of the generation that has worked practically and completely manually unlike those who just work through mouse clicks. I have therefore seen and enjoyed the golden period of travel trade of the 1990's. Having said that, we have accepted the need to change and grow. Yes, we are now present on various business and social media platforms and using online tools to fit just right in with today's travel trends. We also have a website as well as a Facebook page that helps us with social media marketing along the way. Today, life with search engine is much more relaxed but sharpness and expertise comes only with experience.”



Jyoti Singh
CEO & Proprietor
Sailor Travel & Tours

“At a rapid pace, the new shape of digitalisation is evolving with consumer adoption. In the past years, MPTB has begun several new initiatives for traveller engagements like channelising e-bookings, providing e brochures, e-guides and a whole 360-degree solution for package bookings with information on seasonal schemes and offers. All these aim to promote responsible and sustainable tourism development. Furthermore, we will be actively promoting MP, known as the 'Heart of India' through social media platforms like we have always done.”



Yuvraj Padole
Deputy Director (Events & Marketing), Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board



R Nandakumar
Director
Madras Travel & Tours

“We are using the form of digital media wherever possible in the form of Google ads, SEOs and radio advertisements. We are also participating in all the travel trade fairs and using other forms of digital marketing, wherever possible. Digital marketing is a crucial tool for us, since social media is rapidly flourishing in the travel trade business; more people are taking resort of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to know about the destination and also to promote their business. WhatsApp is also playing a crucial role in informing the clients about the latest updates and happenings. Overall, it is helping us spread a word about our business and company. Apart from this, we want IATO to focus more on tourism in the Southern India since the convention is taking place in Visakhapatnam; more attention should be paid to Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. We want more inbound tourists to come to Tamil Nadu.”

274 buyers at ITM

The upcoming India Tourism Mart (ITM), jointly organised by MOT and FAITH, has selected a total of 274 buyers out of over 600 applications received for the same.

TT Bureau

MOT and FAITH, with representatives of its various member associations held a curtain raiser of the India Tourism Mart in New Delhi, where updates were shared on the progress of the event scheduled to be held from September 16-18, 2018. Subhash Goyal, Honorary Secretary, FAITH, shared, “We have selected 274 buyers out of over 600 applications by a screening committee to ensure that we only have genuine buyers. For sellers, we have about 16 participating states, out of which the major partner states are Punjab and Gujarat. Around 70 small booths have been taken by tour operators, worth `60,000 on individual basis and `30,000 each on sharing. This totals to about 100 tour



Subhash Goyal
Honorary Secretary
FAITH

operators. Besides, IATO has taken six booths with 12 operators each, for whom IATO has subsidised the rates at around `15,000 each. Similarly, ATOAI has taken a number of booths. We have even given booths for operators in the Northeast. Many events are being conducted to benefit the smallest of the smallest operators because

the objective is to bring as many world-class buyers as possible.”

Goyal shared that the buyers are coming from over 60 countries, including new markets like Iceland, South America, Africa, China, Ukraine, and many Middle Eastern countries. “It is for the first time that many operators from countries like Iran are coming. We are confident that the mart alone will be responsible for at least 10-15 per cent increase in inbound tourism in the country. It took us only five months to create this event. For the next edition, we will have an entire year to plan and hope to have a much larger exhibition with many more buyers.” Another achievement, according to Goyal is, “FAITH and all the partner associations have contributed a sum of `11 Lakh to the CM Relief Fund for Kerala.”

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GHR on a growth spree

OP Mendiratta, Managing Director, Global Hotel Representations, reveals how the company is growing whilst sharing its strategy to boost business.



TT Bureau

It was around five years back when Global Hotel Representations was founded. **OP Mendiratta**, Managing Director, Global Hotel Representations, revealed, "We started with a view to promote hotels in Delhi/NCR, which for some reasons, do not have presence or need additional support. We started with one hotel and today the company is representing 15 hotels which are mostly part of groups."

He shared that despite facing issues and problems, the company was able to record growth for the hotels that they represent. "The year 2017-18 was full of challenges and opportunities to prove our worth as we were able to help associates grow in double digit in terms of ARR, RevPar and Revenue," claimed Mendiratta.



OP Mendiratta
Managing Director
Global Hotel Representations

When asked about how they do it, he revealed, "Our strategy is very simple — to reach

tion, interaction, reminder rate and relationship helps us to maintain repeat business."

Talking about the latest property on board with Global Hotel Representations, he said, "Recently, we have started promoting Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, a 263-key, five-star centrally located with a casino. The results have been positive and following the visit of the Prime Minister, business has grown manifold."

He added, "We cover inbound tour operators, domestic tour

“The year 2017-18 was full of challenges and opportunities as we were able to help associates grow in double digit in terms of ARR, RevPar and Revenue”

in person or electronically or both. Our formula of introduc-

operators, MICE operators and hell-operators.”

Latest jewel of Jodhpur

The newly-opened Radisson Jodhpur is already on the way to become one of the top three properties in the Blue City, claims its General Manager **Subhashish Gupta**.



TT Bureau

Radisson Jodhpur is the perfect address for those who want to experience contemporary luxury with traditional hospitality in the Blue City. Talking about the property, **Subhashish Gupta**, General Manager, Radisson Jodhpur said, "The USP of our hotel lies in being a 100 per cent vegetarian hotel in the world of Radisson. The property is a heritage structure recreated with international standards in service with a city centre location."

Having opened on January 31, 2018, the hotel has been operational since the last seven months. "There is an overwhelming response from both international and



Subhashish Gupta
General Manager
Radisson Jodhpur

domestic markets. In terms of occupancy, we are close to the city average and also maintaining the ADR as the third best in the city. We are negating the RevPar route as the hotel is yet to be positioned in the right category," he revealed.

“Our primary source market for international guests is Europe and secondary market is the USA and the UK”

When it comes to guests from domestic and international markets, Gupta informed, "From April to September 2018, we mostly have inbound travellers. The ratio of inbound:outbound guests is 85:15. If we talk about the period between October and March, the ratio will be 54:46 as per the local market intelligence."

Gupta also shared that the primary source market for domestic guests for property is Jaipur and Delhi while the secondary markets are Ahmedabad and Mumbai. "The primary source market for international guests is Europe (Germany, France, Italy) and secondary market is USA and the UK," he shared.

Currently, Gupta aims to position Radisson Jodhpur in the first three best hotels in the city.



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Terra has its unique tales

Based in South Delhi, this marketing company offers innovative marketing strategies to hotels in India and looks for experiential properties in beautiful locations that offer something unique.



TT Bureau

Terra Tales is about unexplored experiences. Based in South Delhi, this marketing company offers innovative and creative marketing strategies to hotels by putting together a hotel sales and marketing plan. It has pre-selected a range of best of technologies, tools and solutions to offer its clients a strong reach in domestic and international segments through online and offline marketing.



Gita Chaudhry
Founder & Owner
Terra Tales

Speaking about its offering is Gita Chaudhry, Founder & Owner, Terra Tales, who says, "Our objective is to increase the productivity of our hotel partners by a good percentage year after year. We basically operate as a local extension of their sales and marketing team at a tiny cost."

The interesting idea about Terra Tales clients is that it picks up experiential properties that offer something unique in beautiful locations. It currently has about eight hotel partners in the inbound and domestic segments along with corporate consolidators. They are a cluster of properties offering different experiences such as wellness, wildlife, hill stations, etc. They are Atmantan Wellness Resort in Pune and The Tamara in Coorg, Norwood Greens in Palampur, La Villa Bethany in Landour, The Terraces in Kanatal, Tiger Trails in Tadoba, Tiger Lagoon in Bandhavgarh and PL Palace in Agra.

Sharing more details about the new developments, Chaudhry adds, "We will add two more

“ Our objective is to increase the productivity of our hotel partners by a good percentage year after year ”

properties to our portfolio soon. They will be two leisure resorts. We have also invested

a lot in digital marketing. Our aim is not to service too many properties but service the

ones we have well. We want to justify our partnership with them with good sales and revenue. One year out we will have more plans."

As an individual, she has been participating in IATO conventions since

many years but this is only the second time that Terra Tales is part of the event. "It is great for getting more exposure in the industry, learning about new trends and connecting with more travel agents who gather here from across In-

dia. We see a few challenges in our space and I request IATO to enforce restrictions on certain agents making bogus advance bookings at safaris in India as it hampers genuine bookings. I hope the IATO takes this up," Chaudhry says.



CONFERENCE IN PROGRESS.

For out-of-the-ordinary business conferences & corporate training programs, Leisure Hotels Group presents The Riverview Retreat as a *destination extraordinaire*. Situated at the periphery of the Corbett National Park, the retreat boasts of fully equipped state-of-the-art conferencing facilities combined with the best in Indian hospitality. A panel of experts with customised and meticulous planning capabilities await to make any event not just successful, but also an enjoyable and memorable experience for the participants. So, get ready. It's time to change the corporate rules a bit and take a few tips from Mother Nature.



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Redefining the city of Kurukshetra

Divine Clarks Inn Suite Kurukshetra ushers in a new world-class experience to the holy town of Kurukshetra, Haryana, blended with the finest traditions of hospitality and excellent service standards.



TT Bureau

Clarks Inn Group of Hotels has opened Divine Clarks Inn Suites in Kurukshetra, a city with huge religious significance as the site of the epic war of Mahabharata and the land where Holy Gita was revealed. The latest addition of Clarks Inn has taken the brand's portfolio to four hotels in the state of Haryana, with a property each in Gurugram, Ambala, Punchkula and Kurukshetra. On the other hand, with this property, the national footprint for Clarks Inn has reached 87, including 50 in operation, spread across 19 states in India and one in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Located in the city centre and close to the city's landmark holy sites, businesses and entertainment and shopping centres, the property is just a



Rahul Deb Banerjee
Associate Vice President—Operations,
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

stone's throw away from the railway station and bus stand. Talking about the property, **Rahul Deb Banerjee**, Associate Vice President—Operations, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels, said, "We are absolutely thrilled to announce the opening of Divine Clarks Inn Suites in Kurukshetra. The latest addition underlines Clarks Inn's growing

commitment to the growth and development of new and upcoming destinations and firmly establish them on the hospitality map of India and overseas. As one of India's leading hotel companies, we are hugely committed to growing Kurukshetra's hospitality and tourism sector. Besides, we would also like to leverage on our network strength and resources to promote and strengthen the city and the region's rich historical and holy legacies." He added that he is particularly thankful to Divine Group CMD **Harish Luthra** for trusting Clarks Inn with the management of the property.

With 44 aesthetically designed guestrooms, featuring contemporary amenities, the property offers great comfort to guests. It has two restaurants, including Clarks Inn's signature

multi-cuisine restaurant brand The Bridge and a specialty restaurant Café Clarks. Banerjee shared, "Divine

Clarks Inn Suites is a wonderful hotel property not only in the Kurukshetra but also in the region with tastefully furnished rooms, local and in-

ternational culinary offerings, the finest and well-equipped business and corporate meeting venues as well as banquet offering for various social events the hotel."



Enhanced and updated

Sandeep Jain, MD, Hotel Park Ocean, claims that they are reaching out to the market via travel agents as well as different marketing channels to boost numbers.



TT Bureau

Reinvention is the key to keep guests happy, believes **Sandeep Jain**, Managing Director, Hotel Park Ocean. "In order to enhance our guest experience, we continue to upgrade our product and ensure up-to-date facilities to meet guest expectations," he claimed.

He believes that the location of the property works in its favour. "Park Ocean, Jaipur, located in the heart of the city, is a short distance away from Sikar Road, Jaipur. The hotel is easily accessible from the railway station (2 kms) and the Ajmer-Delhi National Highway (3 kms). It is close to major tourist attractions like



Sandeep Jain
Managing Director
Hotel Park Ocean

Jantar Mantar, Hawa Mahal, City Palace and the walled city of Jaipur."

He claimed that they have slightly witnessed a positive growth as compared to last year, especially from the in-

bound market. "As per business on books, we have great expectations for the coming one year. We have a huge business share from travel partners because of our flexibility with all the ones we work closely with. It is important to understand their business requirements, specially market specific requirements, such as business needs from European Market, Far East Market or GCC market. We then design market-specific tailor-made packages with our travel partners. We also organise business networking events and familiarisation trips to update them about our product," stressed Jain.

Speaking on promotion, he said, "We are aggressively approaching on a global level to promote our brand via electronic media, print media and presence in all travel trade exhibitions in India and abroad. We are also doing tactical promotions from time to time."

“It is important to understand the business requirements of our travel partners, such as business needs from European, Far East or the GCC market”

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The ultimate Delhi address

For **Davinder Juj**, General Manager, Eros Hotel New Delhi, Nehru Place, the right marketing, promotion, engagement with trade and offering new experiences to guests, is the key to stay relevant in the market.



TT Bureau

Strategically located in the business district of South Delhi, Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place is in close proximity to major corporate hubs as well as tourist attractions. "Spread across 25,000 sq

apart from other hotels in Capital," shared **Davinder Juj**.

Since innovation is the key for hotels to perform well, Juj revealed, "Our hotel keeps offering refreshing deals in dining through various food promotions that uniquely appeal to the



Davinder Juj
General Manager
Eros Hotel New Delhi, Nehru Place

saying, "The year 2018 has experienced a notable growth over previous year. Both occupancy and pricing has seen a significant increase at the property. The trends are expected to continue, which makes the entire industry hopeful for increased top and bottom lines. The overall sentiment in the market is positive for next year. However, due to general elections, there can be certain fluctuations in the overall

performance. In general, leisure and business tourism seem to be delivering better results in coming years. There is not any new inventory expected in near future and the expected business is on a continuous rise."

Even in terms of inbound, the property has registered a

a very important role in achieving the competitive advantage and reaching the right people. "We, at Eros Hotel, have adopted a balanced approach for promoting our brand which includes personal selling for targeting domestic customers in the market; public relations for effective engagement with

potential customer; customised offerings and an option of hi-speed internet, airport transfers, sight-seeing, spa and bridal packages to suit all clients and last but not the least; a strong engagement with people on social media platforms for communicating important news, events, awards and festivals," he shared.

"We believe in a symbiotic relationship with our travel agents who open us up to new FTOs, and this is driven through an enticing business proposition for our partners after which sales follows inevitably"

ft area, the hotel facilitates banqueting space, which easily accommodates major events and functions with indoor and outdoor options. Another USP of the hotel is a set of choices it offers for shopping, dining, entertainment in and around the hotel, which makes it stand

guests' palate. Our Health Club also offers an array of group fitness classes, which include Bollywood dancing, yoga, zumba, body conditioning and cross fit."

This year has been positive for the property. Juj confirmed



double-digit growth in inbound business, which is reflective of a robust demand in this segment. Juj claimed that the right promotional strategy plays

media and spreading positive word of mouth among people; advertising and digital marketing for brand recalling, website for interactive relations with the

Another strategy to grow the business is engagement with trade. "We believe in a symbiotic relationship with our travel agents who open us up to new FTOs and this is driven through an enticing business proposition for our partners, after which sales follows inevitably. Familiarisation trips to showcase our product and services is key to gain confidence of tour operators. Furthermore, we promptly attend to any feedbacks which keep us constantly engaged to FTOs for a strong working relationship," he stressed.



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Assistance from state boards

IATO's State Chapter Chairmen have to deal with the local tourism boards on a regular basis to solve members' issues in their respective states. But, how supportive the tourism boards are and what kind of infrastructural needs are available in the states, is what one needs to know.



TT Bureau



Prateek Hira
Chairman—Bihar, Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand Chapter, IATO

“The government of UP is working closely with IATO on many spheres. New destinations including Bundelkhand are being taken up as new avenues for tourism. IATO had suggested many measures to the government of Uttarakhand that were readily accepted. Higher reaches of the hill state that otherwise were seen as a challenge for foreign tourists are coming up well. Bihar, which until now was only figuring on Buddhist itineraries, has started breaking its stereotypical image. IATO has been pressing to have state level tourism boards in all states in boosting international tourist arrivals.”



Umesh Kapur
Chairman—Chandigarh & Haryana Chapter, IATO

“With no support from government agencies, even Chandigarh Tourism is also not incorporating our inputs in government policies from time to time. However, there is no infrastructural requirement documented by Chandigarh Tourism. The tourism industry in Chandigarh and Haryana is taken as a least priority sector despite the region's great tourism potential if marketed well on an international level. Having said that, I am sure that tourism to the two states has certainly been increasing over the years. In fact, the overall tourism for the country is increasing year on year, which is quite motivating for inbound tour operators in the country.”



Pandian K
Chairman—Andaman & Nicobar, Tamil Nadu & Puducherry Chapter, IATO

“The Tamil Nadu government is very receptive to all our ideas, suggestions and feedback. We do submit many representations in writing with regards to what Tamil Nadu requires to promote tourism, how we shall promote the state as a multi-faceted destination and what infrastructure is required to handle tourists. Unfortunately, things remain confined to discussions only. Tamil Nadu lacks basic infrastructure like clean toilet facilities for tourists and cleanliness in parking areas in major tourist destinations. Even tour operators in the state suggested a PPP model where the government can just extend its support but even that remains restricted to papers.”

“After the bifurcation of Telangana from Andhra Pradesh in 2014, the state government has been more proactive towards the upliftment of weaker sections. So, the government's priority is not tourism, but they did conduct state festivals like Bathukamma and International Sweets Festival in Hyderabad to bring world's attention to the state. I am happy to work with Andhra Pradesh tourism because I believe it is one of the best tourism-friendly states in India. Initiatives like the renovation of tourism board hotels, Buddhist circuits, identifying and promoting Bongo Chicken and other ethnic cuisines of this state are commendable. Perhaps this is the only state in India where the Chief Minister himself presides over to review the tourism meetings every month.”



Ranga Reddy
Chairman—Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Chapter, IATO

“Our tourism minister has constituted a Kerala Advisory Committee and ensured meetings are conducted in every quarter to update action plans laid for the industry to work together in achieving the goals. The Kerala Travel Mart is the best example of support from the government. IATO has been working very closely with the government for all its initiatives. IATO is also part of the tourism advisory committee, hotel classification committee and accreditation of tour operators. The association has now requested the government to speak with neighbouring states to bring down the tax while bridging the gap between the three southern states. It has also requested for the development of infrastructures like roads, waste management and wayside amenities.”



Sejo Jose
Chairman—Kerala Chapter, IATO

“The state tourism board participates at all major tourism trade fairs in both India and abroad. We are trying to make Karnataka a preferred tourism destination for travellers around the country and the world. The biggest challenge we are facing in Karnataka is interstate taxes. We are closely working with the state government to find solutions and re-implement the South Zone permit. We were hoping that the RTO border will be removed for tourist vehicles. Unfortunately, it has been only done for goods and not for the passengers. The other issue is that of connectivity. We are working with the state departments to liaison with infrastructure department for building and developing better infrastructure at tourist places including proper marking and signage of the places.”



S Mahalingaiah
Chairman—Karnataka Chapter, IATO



Debjit Dutta
Chairman—West Bengal Chapter, IATO

“I'd like to classify the support from state tourism board into two broad categories, namely, business opportunities and ease of doing business. IATO always gets free space while participating in any trade show or roadshow. The association also enjoys the privilege of being a part of a state tourism pavilion. An exclusive initiative in this regard is the Kolkata Heritage Taxi Tour, a PPP project by IATO and the state tourism department to preserve the iconic yellow ambassador taxis in the city. Moreover, West Bengal Tourism has also been very supportive in re-modifying the reciprocal transport agreement between Sikkim and West Bengal.”



Himanshu Agashiwala
Chairman—Maharashtra Chapter, IATO

“The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has never interacted with any trade body or association. It functions independently and invests money in a haphazard way on irrelevant advertisements of their choice and at trade fairs without any guidance from either IATO or any other recognised trade association. The investments made by MTDC are also not on the right track. The administration takes its own time to move files. It took us a very long time to get MTDC guides after repeated follow-ups. Even today, the development at the port area is confined to papers. Mumbai is looking at a huge arrival of cruises but there is no word on the same by MTDC.”



Adolfo Fernandes
Chairman—Goa Chapter IATO

“The Goa Tourism Development Corporation as well as the Department of Tourism, Government of Goa, regularly send us updates of the various trade shows they will be attending with an invitation to members to participate in the same and use their stall space for meetings and publicity. In Goa, the primary infrastructure challenge is waste management and maintaining cleanliness of the beaches. We, along with other trade bodies, have made petitions to improve the beach cleaning process and garbage handling issues in the state.”

“The Tourism Cooperation Gujarat Limited (TCGL), the state tourism body in Gujarat, has been a useful partner for us in pushing growth of foreign tourist movement into Gujarat. They have undertaken a strong promotional campaign to increase awareness about the state in overseas markets. In addition, they have shown openness to host familiarisation tours for travel agents and tour operators to promote 'Destination Gujarat'. A few of the tourism infrastructural requirements to improve tourist experience include better equipped and clean tourist points, tourist midways and restrooms across tourist circuits, foreign language-speaking, well-trained guides and trained hospitality staff. As an association, IATO is working hand in hand with TCGL to address these concerns.”



Randhirsingh Vaghela
Chairman—Gujarat Chapter, IATO


“Achieving the goal of 20 million tourists is only possible if all regions of India are actively promoted by stakeholders of the industry. Northeast India, with its grand mountains and valleys, beautiful rivers and pristine forests, should feature prominently in all promotions within and outside India. Infrastructure in the Northeast is rapidly improving with updation of existing airports, opening of new airports, operation of more flights, building new bridges and improvement of roads. Luxury river cruises of the highest standards are being operated on the Brahmaputra river in Assam. With a new treaty with Bangladesh, Indian river cruise vessels will be able to sail through Bangladesh and into Assam, thereby giving river cruise tourism a further boost in the region.”



Nirmalya Choudhury
Chairman—North East States, IATO

Experience sustainable luxury

After opening its latest property—Jaagir Lodge in Dudhwa, UP—The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC) is set to expand in South India and other parts of the country, reveals **Dhun Cordo**, Co-founder, TUTC.

 TT Bureau

The latest property in the TUTC portfolio is Jaagir Lodge in Dudhwa, Uttar Pradesh, and **Dhun Cordo**



believes that it's a new experience altogether for guests. "TUTC has added to its rich portfolio of well-established properties in Ladakh and Kohima, a luxury jungle lodge experience, a semi-permanent accommodation with the launch of Jaagir Lodge in Dudhwa, Uttar Pradesh. Nestled deep within the Terai, Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa, a colonial property, is a getaway for travellers seeking wildlife encounters in the lap of luxury, a land boasting of diverse wildlife with many of them being critically endangered," she said.

Now, they are all

set to welcome guests at the Kohima camps in Nagaland. "After a successful season in Ladakh, we are preparing to welcome guests at our Kohima camps in Nagaland set to be operational from November 30

“After a successful season in Ladakh, we are preparing to welcome guests at our Kohima camps in Nagaland set to be operational from Nov 30 to Dec 12”

to December 12 around the Hornbill Festival," she revealed.

Talking about the plans ahead, Cordo revealed that they are now thinking of expanding their glamping services down south and other parts of India. She stressed that the latest prop-

erty has got just the right mix of guests. "Dudhwa, as an unexplored destination, is gradually attracting tourists. With our luxury offerings, we have generated a positive interest from many wildlife


enthusiasts in our first year. With the right kind of promotions, we expect the bookings to grow in the next season," she claimed.

In terms of promotions, Cordo revealed, "We engage with our travel partners on various platforms that include both social and trade gather-

ings. We intend to launch various promotions and loyalty programmes and partner with organisations supporting our business module. To stay relevant while marketing our properties, experiences and itineraries, we are focusing on integrated social media strategy across platforms in a big way."

The company has special travel incentive programmes for the travel trade. "We motivate them further to market and promote our packages in their own unique way. We have also been participating in multiple trade exhibitions and major trade events in India that give us access to more agents and their services and solutions," claimed Cordo.

With sustainability at its core, Cordo confirms, "We believe

in offering our guests transformative experiences while we nurture our environment, create economic value and enhance indigenous communities. At Jaagir Lodge, we lay emphasis on sustainable practices like avoiding plastic bottles. Instead, we gift a personalised water flask to each of our guests and encourage them to reuse RO water installed at our jungle lodge. We are training the local fishermen community to commercially use their water canoes and local knowledge whilst they take our guests for birding and mammal watching in the many jheels within the Terai macro ecosystem. We also disseminate proper jungle knowledge to not only forest guides and local naturalists but also to school children in the vicinity of the jungle." 

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Offering great Indian hospitality

TGI Hotels & Resorts has made itself a name to reckon with in the hospitality industry and is gradually shifting focus towards a growth path with expansions slated for this year.



TT Bureau

The Great Indian Hotels & Resorts or TGI Hotels & Resorts came into existence in 2014. Headquartered in Puducherry, the company today operates 13 hotels in four states and nine cities. "Our mission is to become the most admired and responsible chain of small luxury hotels and resorts delivering sustainable value to our guests," says **Amit Kumar**, Chief Marketing Officer, TGI Hotels & Resorts.

Apart from operating its own properties (We don't own any hotel/resort, we work on either lease else management mode), TGI Hospitality Management provides hotel and resort owners with turn-key management and marketing solutions. In fact, the brand has seen rapid growth in occupancy and hence,

has expanded further in different categories.

Kumar stresses that TGI Hotels & Resorts ensures personalised service to its guests by way of less than 100 rooms in its hotels and resorts. Talking about the growth and plans, he said, "We have witnessed a growth for more than four years. We started our first footprint in Yelagiri, followed by a portfolio of 13 properties across five cities in South India and one in Madhya Pradesh – Dewas. It is for the first time that a Puducherry-based hotel management company is stepping into Rajasthan with two hotels. Some of our focus segments are corporate, leisure and MICE. We also have inbound clientele to Puducherry, Ranthambore and Jaipur resorts."

TGI Hotels & Resorts aims to have 2020 rooms by 2020 in

three service categories - TGI Grand (upscale hotels), TGI Residency (business hotels), TGI Resorts and TGI Inns (B&B hotels). "We plan to launch in Central and East India, Kerala and other attractive locations. We will also be adding 10 hotels this year in Andamans,

“Our mission is to become the most admired and responsible chain of small luxury hotels and resorts delivering sustainable value to our guests”

Thekkady, Coimbatore, Ooty, Mahabalipuram, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Bhopal and Ghaziabad. The new hotels will be under a management contract as the company follows asset-light models. As part of our 10-year strategy, we may also raise funds through private equity and expand

operations to neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Dubai, etc."

Kumar also revealed that the brand is directing its marketing efforts towards mobile e-commerce and loyalty pricing for guests to book directly and

determine the value of each guest. TGI Hotels & Resorts is active on social media and is set to launch a customer loyalty card.

He believes that the hospitality industry is only going to grow from where it is currently, especially with

the government promoting business ventures in Tier-I and II cities. "For foreign tourists, we now have a visa-on-arrival programme to increase inflow. The growth in the hospitality sector and its contributions to GDP will continue to be substantially higher than those of the other sectors of the economy, given the huge tourism potential in the country. The tourism and hospitality industry have always been focus areas in India's service sector in view of the diverse products in their portfolios like cruises, adventure, medical, wellness, sports, MICE, ecotourism, film, ru-

ral and religious tourism," claimed Kumar.



Lost world of royalty

Jaisalkot is a picturesque heritage property within a majestic fort. **Arvind Singh Chauhan**, Chairman and MD, talks about the royal beauty of Jaisalkot.



TT Bureau

Jaisalkot is a luxury boutique resort built with the need of today's modern comfort while keeping intact the royal persona. The major source market for the hotel is the inbound market. Jaisalkot serves 65 per cent of inbound clients whilst catering to 30 per cent of domestic travellers. Counting on the speciality of Jaisalkot, **Arvind Singh Chauhan**, Chairman and Managing Director, says that the true luxury of Jaisalkot lies in its abundance of space. "We have bigger rooms as compared to almost all the hotels in Jaisalmer. The location and the landscape is an added advantage here," claims Chauhan.

The hotel offers 50 rooms with an indoor banquet hall spanning over 2000 sq ft with 4 acres of landscaped garden space for



Arvind Singh Chauhan
Chairman and Managing Director
Jaisalkot

With international guests comprising a large percentage of Jaisalkot's source market, the resort has a varied network of partnerships with both national and international travel operators. Expressing joy over the extended air connectivity in Jaisalmer, Chauhan says that it will give a boost to tourism in the region. "With the newly introduced air connectivity in Jaisalmer we are now motivated to focus on events,

“We have experienced phenomenal growth in terms of revenue, ARR and RevPAR with better results in all aspects in comparison to last year”

outdoor events and activities. On performance, Chauhan shares, "We have experienced phenomenal growth in terms of revenue, ARR and RevPAR with better results in all aspects in comparison to last year."

weddings and MICE," adds Chauhan.

Chauhan also mentioned that the brand is soon set to introduce its new outlet Marshall Sunset Grill.

Caring well through tech

With an aim to boost customers' business, ecare Technology Labs is adopting new technologies and methods, claims its Co-founder **Vivek Sanghi**.



TT Bureau

For **Vivek Sanghi**, ecare Technology Labs is only skyrocketing in every way. "We have grown in numbers from all perspectives—customers, booking volumes handled, services and functionalities supported, APIs, partners, team and most importantly, customer satisfaction. Moving forward, we wish to work more closely with customers and help them increase their profits and business," he said.

However, in today's date of increased competition, the company has created its own niche. This, according to Sanghi, is because, they under commit and over deliver. He explains, "Irrespective of the size, we consider every customer equal. The fastest time to market is our prime USP as we can bring customers live in as less as 24 hours. Rezofy is the only book-



Vivek Sanghi
Co-founder
ecare Technology Labs

adding new services and suppliers to ensure that we match the pace of business. With the changing business scenario, it is critical for us to stay ahead and offer solutions even before a problem arises. Among new initiatives, we are adding corporate self-booking tool, a communication layer for travel agencies to communicate with customers seamlessly including WhatsApp, setup promotional campaigns and emailers, Chatbot tool to help customers open a digital

“We are adding a corporate self-booking tool, a communication layer for travel agencies to communicate with customers seamlessly”

ing engine product in travel trade which works on a 'Try before you buy' model."

In terms of introducing new offerings, he said, "We keep

and human independent support centre for their customers, option to add ancillary services on the fly while booking a service, API availability and exposing content on market place."

Selling the experience

Ahead of its annual event 'Maan Ranakpur' from September 28 to October 2, **Ajay Seth**, Manager Sales—Rajasthan, Mana Hotels, talks about the journey of the brand.



TT Bureau

Foraying into hospitality business in 2008, Mana Hotels, a venture of Sheevam Group of Companies, has set a goal developing boutique hotels in niche destinations. With its first resort in Ranakpur, Rajasthan in November 2011, the company has recently commissioned a jungle resort in Kumbhalgarh. Providing more details, **Ajay Seth**, Manager Sales, Rajasthan, Mana Hotels, says the company has grown into a very well regional brand. "We have recently launched our second hotel at Kumbhalgarh. This is a leased hotel which gives you a unique experience compared to our resort in Ranakpur due to its breathtaking natural beauty and proximity to the fort. We wish to continue growing via the inorganic route and are currently scouting for hotels in Udaipur and Jaisalmer."



Ajay Seth
Manager Sales, Rajasthan
Mana Hotels

Helping grow the company into a regional brand, Seth says that at Mana Hotels they are focusing on selling the experience to the clients. "We offer our guests an opportunity to make their holiday experiential with culinary tours, cottage industry interactions, tribal community involvement and wildlife related activity around the property."

On facing challenges,

Seth mentions that a huge disconnect exists between the industry needs and the reality. "Having chosen to set up hotels and resorts in remote destinations, recruitment and retention of staff is a big challenge for us, as is for the entire industry. The quality of manpower coming to us is also a matter of concern. The previous financial year was also very challenging due to GST and increase of inventory in our region. The inbound market of Rajasthan is still not performing as per our expectations."

Seth further says that the inbound business holds a lot of potential for his company in Ranakpur, but unfortunately, the results are not as desired. "Aiming ahead, we are looking to lease hotels and resorts in Rajasthan and other leisure destinations in North India." 🐦

Get that bucket list ready

With an aim to create journeys that are immersive and truly personalised, BucketmyList is dedicated to provide experiential tours for senior travellers.



TT Bureau

Having come into existence after realising a lacuna in the space for senior travellers, BucketmyList is focusing on experiential tours with an emphasis on extreme localisation. **Shivali Bhargava**, Founder & CEO, BucketmyList, says that they want to create deeper, richer, more authentic and immersive experiences that are inspiring for the discerning traveller.

Talking about the popularity of customised vacations among senior and mature travellers, Bhargava suggests that they have seen a 110 per cent increase in inquiries by senior citizens in last one year. "A report by Frost & Sullivan suggests that the number of senior travellers in India is expected to increase sevenfold to 7.3 million by 2030. Being in a



Shivali Bhargava
Founder & CEO
BucketmyList

niche space, we don't intend to cater to several hundreds of tourists. Our mission is to grow into an Indian travel company of global repute by creating an innovative and intelligent solution for seniors that makes holiday planning, consulting and booking a transparent, self-reliant and enjoyable experience, affirms Bhargava.

She shares, "With personalised customer service from the planning stage to the actual trip itself, we ensure that each guest of ours is treated with special care by our handpicked suppliers across the globe. Our 'bucket list' experience is an absolute must-do for those seeking a once-in-a-lifetime memory. We will make sure you complete your bucket list with our top-of-the-line specialised suppliers."

Bhargava says that her company personalises tour packages for travellers who are interested in more than just sightseeing.

Customisation

🐦 Travellers are made aware of the difficulty level of the trip, accessibility of different facilities and medical fitness requirements



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Wellness retreat at Shreyas

Shreyas Retreat offers yoga, meditation and the best in Ayurveda whilst exclusively entertaining 25 guests at one time, thereby rendering itself as the most preferred choice for patrons.

TT Bureau
Shreyas Retreat, located 45 km from Bengaluru, is an exclusive wellness retreat offering yoga, meditation, naturopathy and Ayurveda in a sprawling 25-acre verdant retreat. One can opt for packages for three

to 28 nights as well for various kind of therapies. Its facilities include an infinity pool, outdoor jacuzzi, gymnasium, library, home theatre, spa, walking trail and cricket nets.
"This private, luxurious and tranquil haven accommodates

“Guests of all levels of experience from beginner to advanced are welcome at Shreyas, and Yoga classes are customised to suit their requirements”

just 25 guests in simple luxury in the lap of nature. Its elegant-ly appointed rooms comprising three Poolside, eight Garden

Cottages and one three-bedroom cottage. At Shreyas, we aim to demonstrate that yoga can be learnt and practised by all, irrespective of age, health and faith. Guests of all levels of experience-from beginner to advanced-are welcome at Shreyas, and Yoga classes are

customised to suit their requirements,” reveals **N Balaji**, CEO, Shreyas Retreat.

Shreyas Retreat is an exclusive wellness retreat offering the authentic practice of yoga, meditation, naturopathy and Ayurveda in a sprawling 25-acre verdant retreat. “Located just 45 km from Bengaluru, this private, luxurious and tranquil haven accommodates just



N Balaji
CEO
Shreyas Retreat

25 guests in simple luxury in the lap of nature. Its elegantly appointed rooms comprise of 3 Poolside, 8 Garden Cottages and one 3-bedroom cottage. At Shreyas, we aim to demonstrate that yoga can be learnt and practiced by all, irrespective of age, health and faith. Guests of all levels of experience from beginner to advanced are welcome at Shreyas, and Yoga classes are customised to suit their requirements,” reveals **N Balaji**, CEO, Shreyas Retreat.

A member of the Relais & Chateaux group, Shreyas also has a brand-new 16,000 sq ft Spa offering Ayurveda therapies including Panchakarma treatment, as well as western massages, naturopathy, hydrotherapy, acupuncture, acupressure, mud therapy and all-natural body scrubs, masks and facials. Balaji adds, “Rated as one of the finest yoga retreats in the world, a stay at Shreyas promises to be an unforgettable experience. We cater to a small group of guests, and hence can provide personalised attention at each step, from detailed wellness consultation at the beginning as well as at the end to understand the areas of concern. ‘Atithi devo bhava’ is the defining philosophy at Shreyas.”

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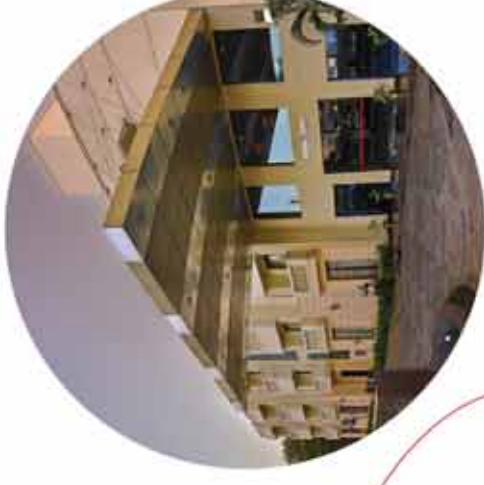
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AGENTS

New products on the anvil

Bharat Bhushan Atree, MD, Caper Travel Company, reveals that they are set to introduce an in-house travel technology, along with new products and itineraries.



TT Bureau

For Caper Travel Company, the last financial year of 2016-17 was sturdy, well-built and fair, according to the company's Managing Director **Bharat Bhushan Atree**. "Even though we were marginally under our projected sales revenue, we had a growth of about 20 per cent compared to the previous year. Rather than focusing only on the profits, we are enthusiastic of our passion for travel and the idea of strengthening ourselves every year. This automatically propels us to further our development, expansion and gratification," he shared.

For the coming year, Atree is focusing on new products. "We will traverse new markets, expand the product portfolios with our current



Bharat Bhushan Atree
Managing Director
Caper Travel Company

collaborators and launch experiential programmes. Active and exploratory tourism is the emerging drift this year. Currently, our concentration on automation, training and education of human resources will be differentiators and help us manage our growth, expansion and deliverance of meritorious services," he said.

Technology is the need of the hour and that's what Caper is investing in right now. Atree revealed, "We are investing resources in our in-house technology company as one has to move with time to keep oneself afloat. Currently, we are automating our day-to-day operations and giving our clients easy access to products and booking facilities."

He added, "We are also looking for some acquisitions and new business opportunities and alliances. In terms of products, we are launching some special interest tours and cruise tourism."

The company is not only adopting the conventional techniques of participating in leading travel fairs but also using innovative communication through social and digital media. 📱

New avenues in tourism

Offering incredible experiences to travellers, **Canopus Holidays** aims to create affordable and luxurious travel packages for all age groups.



TT Bureau

Canopus Holidays has been trying to provide a world-class travel experience to its customers in the last decade and the company's dedication has helped it grow and become a popular name in the industry. **Dr Kunal Pathak**, Founder and President, Canopus Holidays, says, "We have always aimed to offer incredible experiences to travellers, the finest agendas and accurately-planned itineraries. All tours are conducted by professional and enthusiastic tour managers. Our team is well trained and has commendable experience in educational travel as well." The company also provides pan-India services and has its supporting team situated in New York (USA), Ontario (Canada), Belgium (Europe), and Dubai (UAE).

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Dr Kunal Pathak
Founder and President
Canopus Holidays

“Creativity and customisation of every destination increases the number of passengers every year with a minimum group size of 85 to 110 per batch”

Canopus Holidays caters to a wide range of travellers from students, to MICE, FITs and even GITs. Pathak adds, "Creativity and customisation of every destination increases the number of passengers every

year with a minimum group size of 85 to 110 per batch. In a year, we organise around 30 batches per destination and it works well for us."

Speaking about how he has seen the traveller profile from India change over the years, he says, "Surprisingly, the guest profile earlier was mainly the HNI clients. However, as the days passed the passion for travelling increased so much that people started obtaining

EMI options to travel which we provide to our clients." The company is currently actively working in creating an application which will be supported on Android devices and iOS devices. 📱



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Of enterprising achievements

Tourism Enterprises is undertaking various sales and marketing initiatives to attain a sales target of US\$ 5 million. Setting high targets for 2019, the company now plans to take itself to the next level.



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Tourism Enterprises (TE) is scaling new heights in the field of DMC representations in India. "In a brief period of five years, the company is promoting 10 DMCs in India from Asia, Middle East, Europe and South America. TE offers marketing, sales and operation support to

DMCs depending upon the kind of agreement they have with respective companies. Hence, showcasing our DMC products to prospective B2B customers in India and later providing them facilitation to mature their queries are one of our main objectives," says **Ravi Gosain**, Managing Director, Tourism Enterprises.

Claiming that 2018 has been a progressive year for the company, Gosain shares, "We have done great business to Dubai, Greece, Central Europe and Holland. Our newly added DMC, Saffron World BV based in Rotterdam, Holland, is receiving an overwhelming response from our clients. We have entered into a long-term strategic partnership with Saffron World to promote West Europe, especially to individual travellers and special groups."

“We have done great business to Dubai, Greece, Central Europe and Holland. Our newly added DMC, Saffron World BV based in Rotterdam, Holland, is receiving an overwhelming response from our clients”

Revealing a few figures, he explains, "If we compare our growth in numbers on half-yearly basis from January to June, 2018, we have grown over 22 per cent as compared to similar period in the previous year. Hence, we are on the right track and gradually moving towards success. We have increased our marketing force and added new executives in a few more cities, especially in Tier-II and III to reach out to more customers. We have conducted a study with various regions in terms of outgoing tourists and are focusing them as our business prospects."

Gosain claims that the company aims to be more aggressive in 2018-19 in terms of marketing by participating in various regional and local travel trade fairs apart from direct marketing. "We are advertising quite regularly in some travel magazines and are active on various social media platforms. We are in talks with our DMC partners to conduct joint roadshows and seminars for penetrating the India outbound market. We hope we can reach out to maximum tour operators and travel agents during this year. With humble beginnings, we are in a position to take

our company to the next level and set high targets for 2019. We have set USD 5 million sales figure as our target and we are geared up to achieve this if travel conditions remain favourable," he asserts.



Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Tourism Enterprises

Number Game

Comparing Tourism Enterprises's growth in numbers on half-yearly basis from January to June, 2018, the company has grown over 22 per cent as compared to similar period in the previous year

It has increased its marketing force and added new executives

Keep risks at bay

In its nascent stage, Book-N-Relax is gearing up for expansion and is set to take the B2B market by storm, claims **Neeraj Chawla**, Initiator (India), Book-N-Relax.



TT Bureau

As a young and fastest growing B2B travel company, Book-N-Relax provides exclusive services and is headquartered in Mumbai. "Book-N-Relax provides you with individual

the lowest rates (we match the deal) in the industry," said Neeraj Chawla.

Launched this year, the company has already grabbed good business from the western and southern parts of

“We are going to expand our business through our PSA and residential sales manager module. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh are in our list for the first phase”

bookings for hotels, sightseeing, meals and car rental. You don't need to buy the entire package at once and be bound by the time frame of your tour operator. The company has an exclusive tie-up with individual hotels in India and Far East Asia with expansion to other destinations in the offing. We would be promoting the hotels where we have exclusive rates; we offer

India. "We could also finalise some of the corporate MICE movements and leisure groups for Diwali and Christmas season," he said.

Talking about its plans, he shared, "We are looking forward to expand our services to all Tier-II and III cities of India. We are going to expand our business through our PSA



Neeraj Chawla
Initiator (India)
Book-N-Relax

and residential sales manager module. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh are in our list for the first phase."

The company plans to promote itself through different mediums. "We have our budget to promote the company through platforms such as travel media advertisement, tourism exhibitions especially in metros and Tier-II cities," revealed Chawla.

Aggressive growth plans

Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has signed 30 hotels out of which 15 are currently operational. By 2019, 12 new hotels are slated to become operational.



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With a focus on Tier-II and III cities, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts is cultivating bigger plans of expansion in its portfolio and services. Sarbendra Sarkar, Founder & Managing Director, Cygnett Hotels & Resorts says that he aims to add 1000 keys every year to make Cygnett stronger in market with 5000 keys in the next five years.

"We are targeting a double digit growth next year. We have strategic plans to grow and expand in other markets. We are targeting to open around 12 new hotels in India

and abroad by the end of this year. Our hotels are currently operational in two countries, namely India and Nepal. We are very aggressive towards our targets and looking to reach out to other Southeast Asian countries in the future," says Sarkar.

Talking about the performance of the company in 2018, Sarkar says the year has been really crucial for them. "We have seen an upturn in terms of occupancy in the hospitality industry. The occupancy and ADR has gone up. About 50 per cent of our hotels saw around 75 per cent of occupancy while the remaining 50

“We have seen an upturn in occupancy in hospitality. About 50% of our hotels saw 75% of occupancy while 50% of hotels witnessed around 65% occupancy in 2018”



Sarbendra Sarkar
Founder & Managing Director
Cygnett Hotels & Resorts

per cent of hotels witnessed around 65 per cent occupancy in 2018," adds Sarkar.

Announcing the new launches, Sarkar is hoping to make a number of hotels operational. He shares, "We are opening one hotel in Jaipur in the next month. We will then move forward to Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh where the opening is scheduled in mid-October."

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Retaining the numbers

Debasish Bhowmik, Senior VP, Hotel Clarks Shiraz, suggests that stakeholders in the tourism industry should become the decision makers in promoting India as one destination.

TT Bureau

Expressing his views over the growth of tourism in the country, **Debasish Bhowmik**, Senior Vice President, Hotel Clarks Shiraz says that it is important for the tourism industry to have more synergy in marketing India as a destination. He says, "India should be presented as one destination. It's good to say that the number of tourists is increasing but it is also very important to ensure that these numbers sustain over a period. All the states should be focused to present themselves as one. Everyone should come under one umbrella. The state tourism board should be more accountable to present India cohesively."

"Sustainable tourism means ensuring that India is more tourism-friendly with better



Debasish Bhowmik
Senior Vice President
Hotel Clarks Shiraz

connectivity and atmosphere. We need to play the role of a responsible stakeholder

“Our ARR is around 3500 while our RevPAR is more than 2000. We are targeting a growth of around 15 per cent in the coming year”

today. It is important for all stakeholders of the industry

to become decision makers," adds Bhowmik.

Talking about the growth, performance and targets of his hotel, Bhowmik shares that the property grew considerably in the last one year. "Last year, we experienced a growth of around 12-14 per cent. Our ARR is around 3500 while our RevPAR is more than 2000. We are targeting a growth of around 15 per cent in the coming year," briefed Bhowmik.

With 237 keys, the hotel has around 59 per cent of interna-

tional clientele and 41 per cent of domestic guests.

Eyeing new markets

Registering phenomenal success in 2018, the TravStarz Global Group is quickly cruising towards extending its presence in newer markets and planning bigger initiatives.

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After being acquired by RezB2B.com, a CTRIP subsidiary in January 2018, there has been no looking back for TravStarz Global Group in terms of growth and expansion. Experiencing a year-on-year growth of around 150 per cent over the last three years, the company is further looking to achieve new milestones. Discussing more about the company's plans, **Pankaj Nagpal**, Managing Director, TravStarz Global Group, says that there have been a lot of new developments in the last six months. "We have partnered with a number of tourism boards; our system merger with

“We have opened offices in Azerbaijan, Egypt and Almaty. We are looking at opening our offices in Sri Lanka and Maldives towards the end of September 2018”

RezB2B.com is now complete and we expect to release the first version of the system by the end of September 2018," adds Nagpal.

He further shares, "We have opened offices in Azerbaijan, Egypt and Almaty. We are looking at opening our offices in Sri Lanka and Maldives towards the end of September 2018. We are also looking at a lot of other new destinations besides getting into cruises. The Indian traveller is also maturing now and are willing to experiment to visit new destinations." Speaking about his future plans, Nagpal affirms to venture into bigger and better horizons.



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
TravStarz Global Group

"Our focus will be on shifting to online completely. As part of our DMC expansion, we are doing strategic investments and partnerships. We will enter newer markets like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan soon. As per our terms with CTRIP, we will now focus on the entire Indian subcontinental market rather than just the Indian market," mentions Nagpal.

A list of Innstant achievements

With a list of achievements this year, **Darryl Ismail**, CEO, Innstant Travel, is optimistic about the company's growth in India in 2019.

TT Bureau

Specialising in worldwide travel services powered by its proprietary technology, Innstant Travel has a variety of products worldwide—300,000 hotel, apartments and vacation homes; 45,000 tours and attractions; 20,000 sports events, shows and concert tickets; 18,000 transfers; and 15,000 car rental locations. "From a service and customer support perspective, we operate a 24*7 support international team including our Indian customer support staff. The

teams comprised experienced travel industry professionals. We offer live chat, centralised CRM, local number and service level agreements. Pricing of course, is always important. We have 80,000 direct contracts including multiple hotel chains including FIT, wholesale, package and BAR rates," said Darryl Ismail, CEO, Innstant Travel.

Commenting on the year 2018 in terms of growth, he shared, "It has been a very productive and strategically important year for Innstant in the India market.



Darryl Ismail
CEO
Innstant Travel

Firstly, we exceeded our set targets for the second year in the region with triple digit

“Some key highlights for early 2019 is the dramatic increase in direct content and reduced rates with addition of many new hotel chains, apartments and individual hotels”

growth from India. Secondly, we have successfully secured for our API to be connected with some of the leading Indian travel technology companies, thus enabling fast distribution of our product. We have also acquired several hundred new accounts including quite a few leading Indian names to our client portfolio and we are in

advanced negotiations with several Indian hotel chains for direct agreements with live availability."

For Ismail, 2019 is going to be another successful year. "During the month of September, we are planning to launch the first phase of our new platform which will feature faster speed,

more content and enhanced user experience. It will support B2B, B2C and corporate agent models which can be configured per client in one single mid-office tool. We expect the full product launch to be ready by early 2019. Some of the key highlights for early 2019 is the dramatic increase in direct content and reduced rates with the addition of many new hotel chains, apartments and individual hotels. This combined with additional content from specialised partners will increase the portfolio to over 1 million properties," he said.



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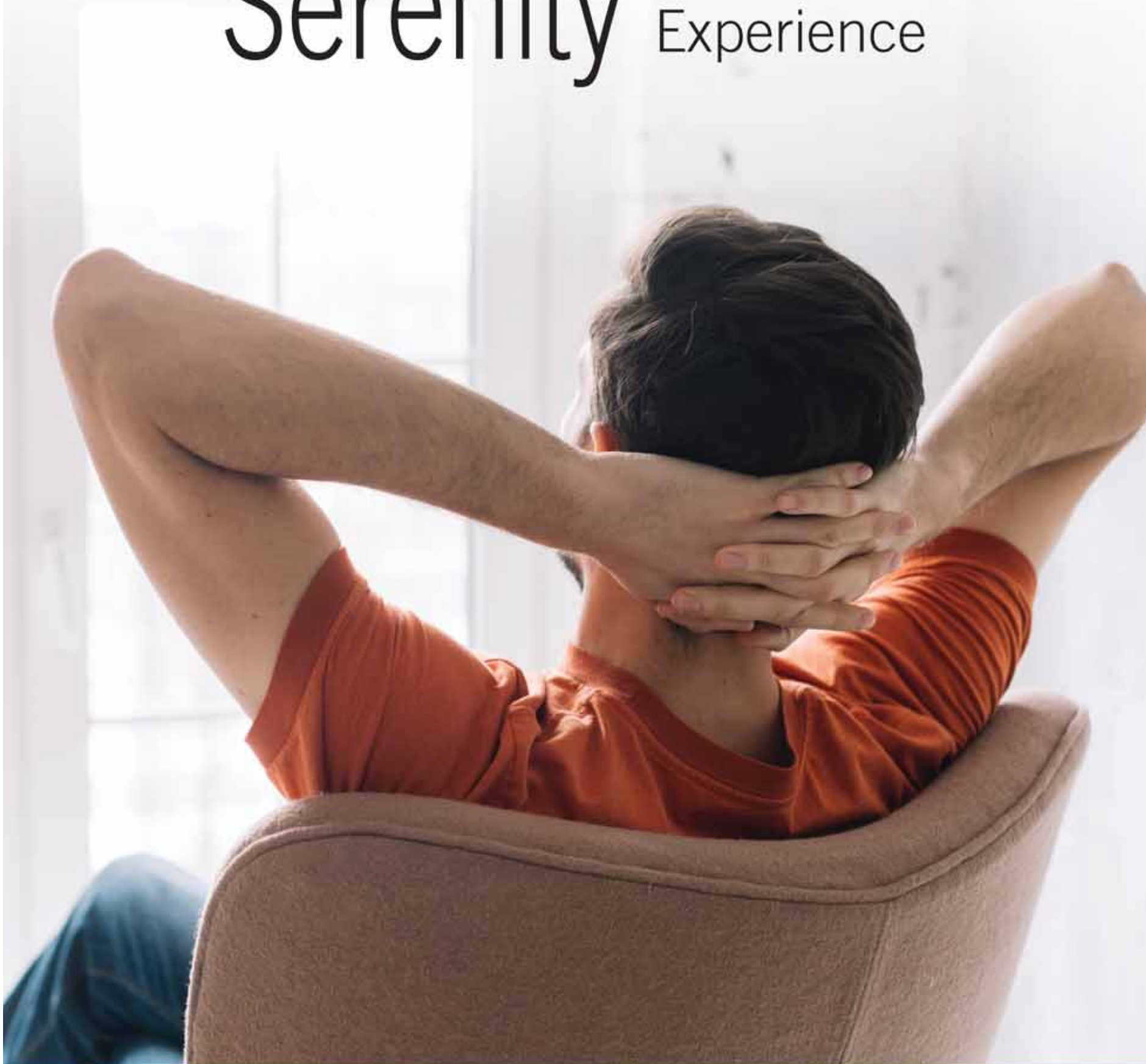
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