

Glimpses



Ranvir Bhandari, COO, ITC Hotels and Raj Rana, CEO, Carlson Rezidor Group congratulate Nitesh Kapur of Le Meridien Gurgaon, winner of the 'Front Office Manager of the Year' award.



Abhishek Sharma, business development manager-India of Ecolab and Ashish Jakhanwala, MD and CEO of SAMHI with Akanksha Lamba of The Oberoi, Gurgaon who won the 'F&B Manager of the Year' award.



Edwin Saldhana, MD of Boon Edam, Vijay Thacker, director of HTL Horwath India and Deepak Uppal, executive director of Vatika Hotels with Vijayanand Thantni, head-procurement, Intelistay Hotels - Mango Hotels who bagged the 'Procurement Manager of the Year' award.



Ayman Sheet, CEO and founder of Foodlinked, Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India with Janine Fernandez of Marriott International who won the 'HR manager of the year'.



Sanjay Sethi, MD, Chalet Hotels and Prashant Govindan, senior director-India and Sri Lanka, professional division of Harman India present the 'IT Person of the Year' award to Arindam Banerjee of The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata.



Rashmi Naicker, deputy editor and Yinita Bhatia, editor of Hotelier India along with Rishi Kapoor, senior VP-international development of MGM Hospitality congratulate Nidhi Verma of Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences on winning the 'PR Person of the Year' award.



Hitesh Gunwani, COO of TLC Relationship Management and Sanjay Sharma, area GM of Marriott International congratulate Imran Ahmad, winner of 'Marketing person of the year' award.



SK Mohapatra, executive director Mayfair Hotels appreciates the efforts of Devender Singh of Shangri-La's Eros Hotel, New Delhi, who won the 'Unsung Hero of the year' award.



Ranjit Batra, president-hospitality of Panchshil Realty and Chitra Randhawa, regional director-sales, APAC for IDEAS fondly wish Vinay Singh of St Regis, Mumbai, winner of the 'Sales/Revenue Person of the Year' award.



Ricky Teo, regional director-India Simmons South East Asia Pte Ltd, Yuichi Uchiyama, regional marketing manager-India Simmons Japan, Anuraag Bhatnagar, area GM-India, Marriott International and Satyen Jain, CEO of Pride Hotels wish Deepak Pulavarti of ibis & Novotel Bengaluru Techpark, winner of 'Housekeeper of the Year' award.



Host Amruta Raichand flanks Chef Vasu Venkat Reddy of Lemon Tree Premier Delhi Airport, winner of 'Chef of the year' award while master chef Sanjeev Kapoor, SK Maratha, president of Food Service India and Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India cheer him.



Shalquat Ali, consulting group editor of ITP Publishing India, host Amruta Raichand, masterchef Sanjeev Kapoor, Ulrich Martin, country business manager of Nestlé Professional India and Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India with Chef Vikramjit Roy of ITC Maurya, New Delhi, winner of 'Masterchef Sanjeev Kapoor Choice Award for Pan-Asian Chef of the Year'.



Manav Thadani, chairman of HVS APAC, Rahul Pandit, CEO of Roots Corporation and Rajeev Karwal, founding director of Milagrow wish Vinayak Trivedi of Hotel Fairfield by Marriott, Rajajinagar, winner of 'Director of Rooms' award.



Hospitality consultant Naveen Jain and S Saikumar, deputy MD of ITP Publishing India call for a round of applause for Vinay Dimri of JW Marriott Bengaluru, winner of 'Laundry Person of the Year' award.



Dhruv Moon, director-hotel development, south Asia and Indonesia, Marriott International, R Ramesh, senior VP-sales, Roca Bathroom Products, and Indrajeet Saoji, director of ITP Publishing India wish JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar's Mahima Sharma, winner of 'Spa/Fitness Person of the Year' award.



Glimpses



Shruti Shibulal, director-strategy and development at The Tamara Group, winner of the 'Editor's Choice Award: Sustainability Person of the Year' award made an impassioned speech about the need for sustainability in hospitality.



Rattan Keswani, deputy MD, The Lemon Tree Hotel Company and Gurmeet Sachdev, director, Hoteller India present the 'Editor's Choice Award: Project Person of the Year' award to Prem Thakur of Marriott International.



S Saikumar, deputy MD, ITP publishing India, Rattan Keswani, deputy MD of The Lemon Tree Hotel Company and Gurmeet Sachdev, director of ITP Publishing India with Vibhav Tomar of Prestige Group, who won the 'Editor's Choice Award: Project Person of the Year' award.



Neeraj Govil, Market VP-South Asia, Marriott International accepting the 'Excellence in Leadership' award on behalf of Rajeev Menon, COO-Apac (excluding Greater China), Marriott International, from Patu Keswani, MD of Lemon Tree Hotels and Hemanshu Lodha, founder of AH International.



S Saikumar, deputy MD and Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India affectionately congratulate Dipak Haksar, CEO of ITC Hotels, winner of the 'Hall of Fame' awards, while Vir Advani, MD of Blue Star India and Shaquai Ali, consulting group editor of ITP Publishing India look on.



Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India, Rajiv Kaul, president of The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts and Patu Keswani, MD of Lemon Tree Hotels cheer KB Kachru, chairman emeritus and principal advisor-South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, who was honoured with 'Lifetime Achievement of the Year' award.



Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India, Rajiv Kaul, president of The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts and Patu Keswani, MD of Lemon Tree Hotels present Anil Bhandari, former MD of ITDC with the 'Lifetime Achievement of the Year' award.



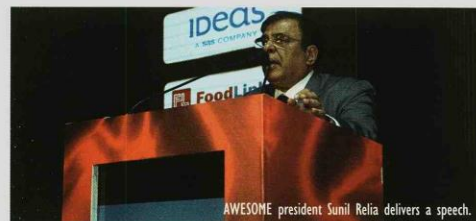
Dilip Puri, MD-India and Regional VP-South Asia, Marriott International, R Ramesh, senior VP-sales, Roca Roca Bathroom Products, Rahul Pandit, CEO of Roots Corporation, Neeraj Govil Market VP-South Asia, Marriott International, Shaquai Ali, consulting group editor and Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India, applaud for Saied Heidari of JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar who won the 'General Manager of the Year' award.



Michel Koopman of The Leela Ambience Gurgaon Hotel & Residences accepts the 'General Manager of the year' award from Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director and Shaquai Ali, consulting group editor of ITP Publishing India, while Dilip Puri, MD-India and Regional VP-South Asia, Marriott International, R Ramesh, senior VP-sales, Roca Bathroom Products, Rahul Pandit, CEO of Roots Corporation and Neeraj Govil Market VP-South Asia, Marriott International look on.



(From left to right) Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director, and S Saikumar, deputy MD of ITP Publishing India, Edwin Saldhana, MD, Boon Edam and Ranjit Batra, president-hospitality of Panchshil Realty felicitate the AWESOME members Mahendra Pargoankar of Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore; Sunit Relia, VP-technical, JLL; Neeraj Kaushik of Clariages, New Delhi; Prem Thakur, senior manager, global design, Asia Pacific, Marriott International; Rajesh Mohan, GM, Sahara Star, Mumbai; and Rothin Banerjee of Taj Palace, New Delhi.



AWESOME Felicitations

The Academic With Excellence Spectrum of Maintenance Engineers (AWESOME) has completed 10 glorious years in the service of the country's hospitality industry. This is an association of engineers from various industry verticals — hospitality and hospitals to commercial space — with an objective to share their best practices, experiences and knowledge. In a bid to acknowledge AWESOME's contribution to the Indian hospitality industry, Hoteller India felicitated key members of the association at the awards night.

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LEADING LIGHTS

WINNERS OF HOTELIER INDIA AWARDS 2016 FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT **KB KACHRU** AND **ANIL BHANDARI** FLANK HALL OF FAME AWARD WINNER **DIPAK HAKSAR**. TOGETHER THEY HAVE LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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SHOWING THE WAY

JW MARRIOTT SAHAR, MUMBAI, GM **SAEID HEIDARI** HAS SET AN
EXAMPLE FOR THE INDUSTRY BY LEADING FROM THE FRONT

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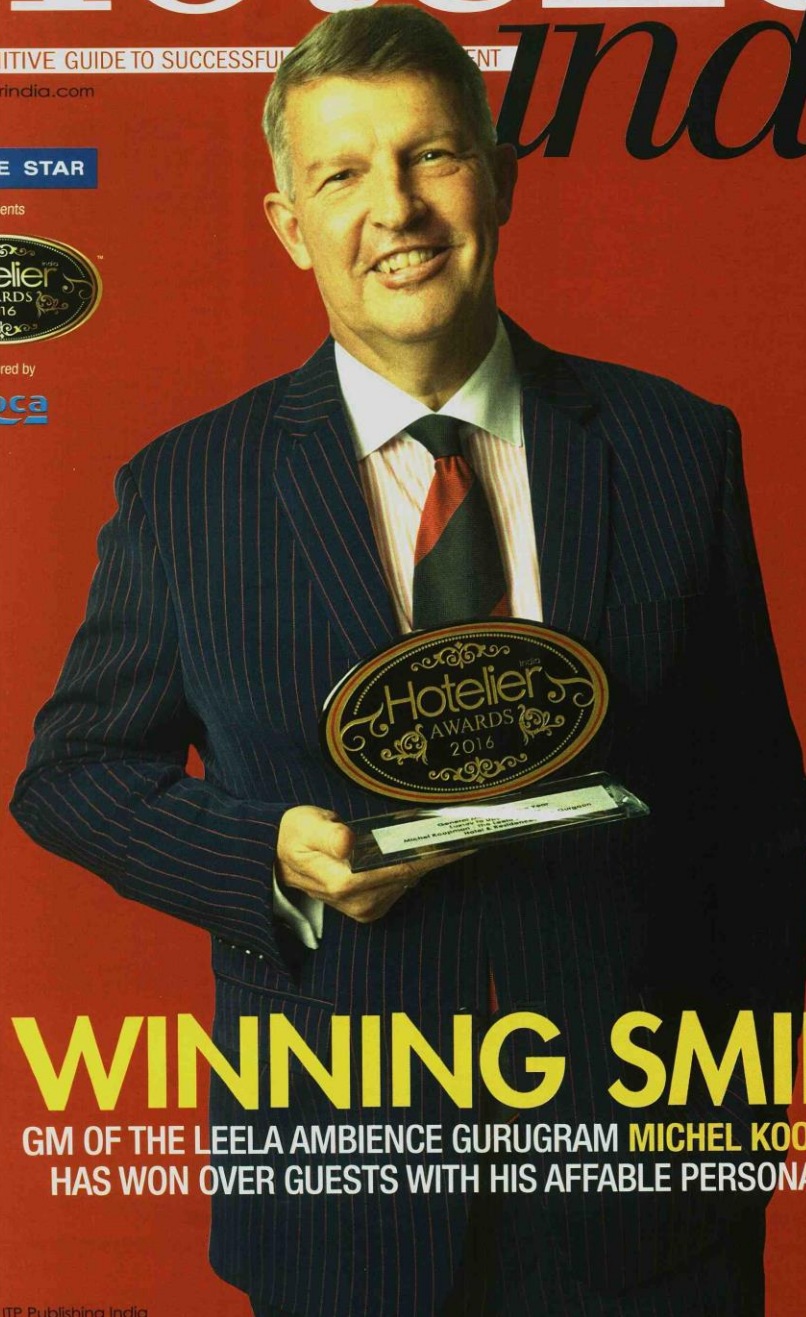
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WINNING SMILE

GM OF THE LEELA AMBIENCE GURUGRAM **MICHEL KOOPMAN**
HAS WON OVER GUESTS WITH HIS AFFABLE PERSONALITY

Published by ITP Publishing India



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AND THE WINNER IS...

THE WHO'S WHO OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY DESCENDED TO
RAISE A TOAST TO WINNERS OF THE 8TH HOTELIER INDIA AWARDS 2016.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

An elegant seven-course dinner, champagne on ice, TV cameras on the ready, flashing photography bulbs, an open bar – the 8th Hotelier India Awards held on 13th December, 2016 was the biggest event in the country's hospitality calendar for the year. And the who's who of the industry descended at The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences to raise a toast to the winners.

What makes Hotelier India Awards stand out is that it gives the victors a chance to personally interact with jury members who handpicked them, while hoteliers, developers, suppliers, consultants, etc., can meet each other in an informal setting. This camaraderie was in full display at this year's event too, whilst the awards was in progress and much after as well.

Spotted in the audience were Vir Advani, MD of Blue Star India, Prashant Govindan, senior director-India and Sri Lanka, professional division of Harman India, Ayman Sheet, CEO and co-founder of Foodlinked, SK Maratha, president of Food Services India Ltd, Ulrich Martin, country business manager of Nestlé Professional India, Himanshu Lodha, MD of AH International, Edwin Saldanha, MD of Boon Edam, and many more. The crowd cheered as each winner's name was announced from the roll call of 24 categories that spanned the gamut of hospitality services and departments, in addition to special awards.

That these awards mean a lot to the winners was very much evident, as several of them articulated their exultation on receiving the top spot, especially in the presence of their peers and mentors. And that underlines why the Hotelier India Awards were created in the first place – to celebrate revolutionaries in the hospitality industry and to encourage others to follow in their stead.



Celebrating Excellence!

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LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

KB KACHRU

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS-SOUTH ASIA,
CARLSON REZIDOR HOTEL GROUP

KB Kachru has been instrumental in building Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group's business in India since 1998. Prior to being appointed as the company's chairman emeritus and principal advisor in South Asia in July, 2016, he served as its executive VP, and was responsible for its overall strategy, hotel development, management and functional support of key markets in the region.

An industry veteran, he is an active member of various tourism and hospitality advisory committees at the state and national level and has been on the board of directors for the Tourism Corporation of various state governments and on the board of governors of the Institute of hotel management in New Delhi. He has also served as an executive member of Pacific Asia Travel Association's India Chapter, the American Society of Travel Agents of India, Hotel Association of India, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India and India Convention Promotion Bureau.

Nominated co-chairman of the Travel and Civil Aviation Committee of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and executive member of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Kachru has been a trailblazer for positive change in the hospitality industry. He spearheaded the formation of the Institute for International Management and Technology in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University, UK.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

ANIL BHANDARI

CHAIRMAN, AB SMART CONCEPTS AND
FORMER CMD OF ITDC

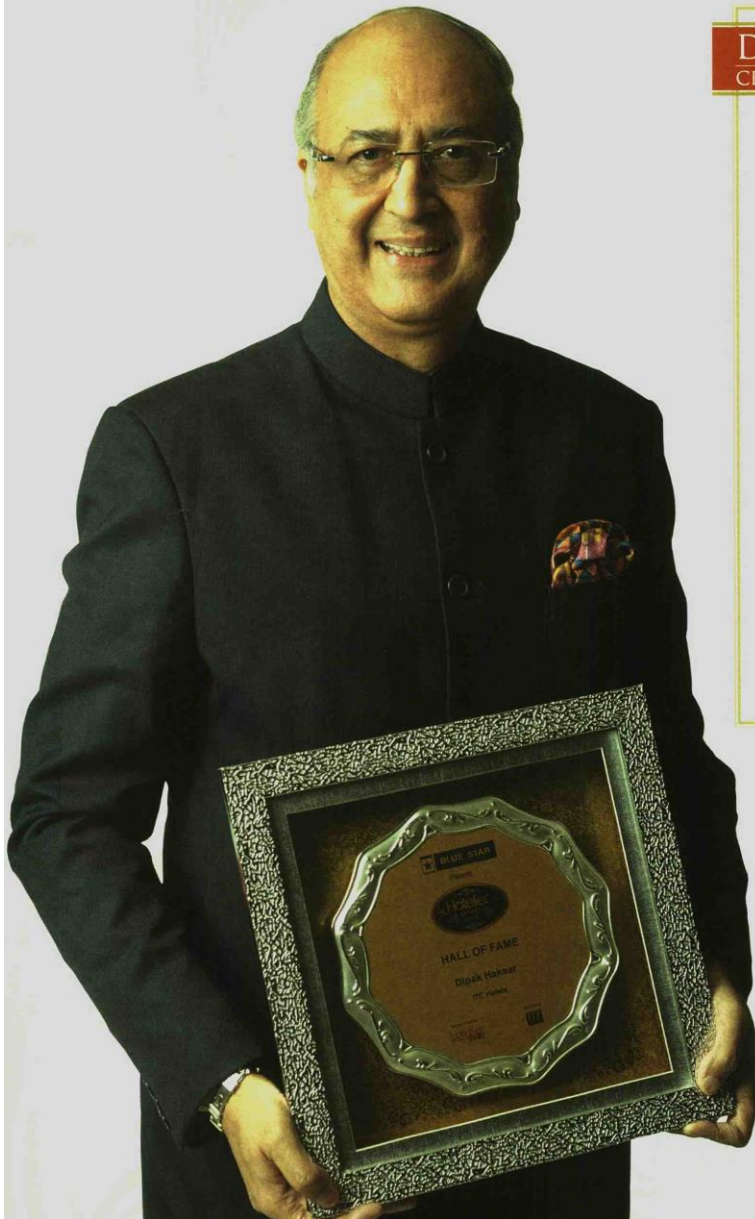
With a well-regarded experience of around 30 years in the hotel and tourism industry, Anil Bhandari has served as MD of the International Travel House and was also the MD of Hotel Corporation of India. He was appointed MD of Indian Tourism Development Corporation Limited (ITDC) from 1992 to 1997 and later joined ITC Limited as an advisor of Travel and Tourism in 1998.

Over the years, Bhandari has worked at various positions in ITDC and was chairman of the entity from 1992 to 1997. He also served as an executive director of the International Travel House. He was on the executive committees of some of India's premier trade and industry bodies such as FICCI, PHDCCI and Member Industry Council, and is the proxy director of PATA, WTTC and ACTE. He is presently chairman of AB Smart Concepts.

Bhandari holds a three-year diploma in hotel management from New Delhi's Institute of Hotel Management and Catering, and has completed a two-year advanced course in hotel management and marketing conducted by Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft, Germany. He is armed with a certificate in hotel administration from the Institute of American Hotel and Motel Association, and is also a Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality, London. Additionally, he holds a diploma in German language.



HALL OF FAME



DIPAK HAKSAR

CEO, ITC HOTELS & WELCOMHOTELS

With a GMP from Cornell University, the soft-spoken Dipak Haksar has spent close to four decades with ITC Hotels. He began his career at ITC Maurya, New Delhi in 1978 and during his long tenure with the brand, he has held numerous positions managing both leisure and business properties. From ITC Maurya, he moved to ITC Windsor, Bengaluru, a hotel he nurtured as resident manager before moving to ITC Rajputana, Jaipur as manager. This was followed by a stint at Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur as general manager.

In 2001, Haksar was entrusted with the launch of ITC Maratha in Mumbai, which won the 'Best Luxury Business Hotel' award in its first year of operation. It also earned Haksar the Hotel & Food Service (H&FS) National Award for best general manager. He later moved to New Delhi as VP-operations for luxury hotels and general manager, ITC Maurya. In 2008, he was appointed COO of ITC Hotels and WelcomHotels.

An industry veteran, Haksar is also the chairman of the Assocham National Council for Tourism and Hospitality.

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

RAJEEV MENON

COO-ASIA PACIFIC (EXCLUDING GREATER CHINA), MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

Rajeev Menon's association with Marriott International began in 2001 when he joined Renaissance Mumbai Hotel and Convention Center and Marriott Executive Apartments, Mumbai as general manager. In 2004, he moved to Sydney, Australia where he served as the general manager of the Sydney Harbour Marriott and Country General Manager for Australia. In 2015, he was appointed as chief operations officer for Southeast Asia and Pacific.

Over the years, he has led the company's growth in India, from six operating hotels in 2007 to 27 Marriott managed hotels operating under seven brands (with a pipeline of another 49 hotels under construction in 2015). Under his leadership, Marriott is recognized as one of the best performing international hotel brands in the country and has received numerous best employer awards for the past several years.

A graduate of Naval Public School in New Delhi, Menon holds a diploma in Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition from PUSA in New Delhi. He began his hospitality industry career in 1991 with Welcomgroup Sheraton Hotels as an assistant manager of F&B and progressed in various F&B and operational capacities with Radisson Hotels & Resorts and Stamford Hotels & Resorts.

During his career, he served as deputy chairman of the Australian Hotels Association, was named 'General Manager of the Year' in 2004 by Marriott International and was recognized as 'Young General Manager of the Year' in 2003 by the Indian Hotel & Restaurant Association.



EDITOR'S CHOICE SUSTAINABILITY PERSON OF THE YEAR

SHRUTI SHIBULAL

DIRECTOR - STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT, THE TAMARA

Shruti Shibulal's passion for sustainable hospitality is evident in every aspect of the Tamara Coorg. However, what is impressive is the way she has tried to assimilate sustainability in various business practices of the property. While constructing the resort, its design and architecture was conceptualised to have little impact on the hill's natural topography and ecosystems. That explains why its rooms are constructed on stilts - it minimises cutting of trees. Shibulal also ensured that her property planted as much, if not more, timber than was used in the resort's building.

After starting operations, the Tamara Coorg has undertaken numerous environmental-friendly initiatives, including segregation of waste at source, appropriate disposal of non-biodegradable waste and in-house composting of organic wastes, recycling waste by using it for the estate's cardamom plantation, etc. And this is just the tip of the iceberg - Shibulal is now exploring options to make Tamara Coorg self-reliant in power generation in the future. By taking such proactive steps in sustainability, is it any surprise that she has bagged the Editor's Choice for the 'Sustainability Person of the Year'?



GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

SAEID HEIDARI

GENERAL MANAGER, JW MARRIOTT
MUMBAI SAHAR

German national Saeid Heidari brings with him 29 years of hospitality experience with Marriott hotels in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and now in India. As general manager of JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, he has deployed marquee guest satisfaction initiatives that have pushed the hotel's ranking to #2 on TripAdvisor and has pinned its F&B outlets at par excellent ratings on Zomato. Apart from his resilient focus on digital media, he has driven a 173 percent growth in room revenues by way of growing RevPAR at 172.7 percent whilst growing the F&B profitability by 9.5 percent over last year. A people's person, he is popular for celebrating his team's achievements. Heidari advocates a healthy male-to-female manning ratio, encourages women in leadership and is known to recruit from diverse geographic regions. He has been a part of various industry forums and has initiated a robust CSR wing for the hotel.



GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE RUNNER UP

MICHEL KOOPMAN

GENERAL MANAGER, THE LEELA AMBIENCE
GURUGRAM HOTEL & RESIDENCES

Since joining The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences in 2013, Michel Koopman has focussed on initiatives to enhance guest experiences, including uplifting of services at The Royal Club Lounge, personalized check-in, etc. Multilingual teams speaking languages like French and Japanese were also appointed. Rooms were fitted with media hubs and smart TVs so guests could stream videos or complete their presentations. This inventiveness resulted in guest satisfaction scores that increased year-on-year from 62 percent in October 2015 to 85.92 percent in October 2016. Koopman also ensured that associates maintain a healthy work-life balance; employees spending over nine hours on a daily shift qualify for equivalent time-off on another day. A Leadership Development Program was created for employees at staff and supervisory levels, for 12 weeks and six weeks duration respectively.



GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

GAURAV SINGH

GM, COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT & FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT BENGALURU OUTER RING ROAD

Starting his journey with the Marriott brand in 2013 as GM at Courtyard by Marriott, Ahmedabad, Gaurav Singh later opened the dual property complex of Courtyard by Marriott & Fairfield by Marriott, Bengaluru Outer Ring Road in 2015. Both hotels broke-even operationally in the second month of operations. Within a year, Singh managed to initiate various cost optimization strategies, which bore great results. As on September, 2016, the properties managed overall savings of INR 86 lakh in utilities cost as compared with the budgeted cost. For the same period, it achieved an overall savings of INR 69 lakh in payroll cost through continuous training of associates by ensuring they performed their work efficiently and effectively. He also propagated gender inclusivity in the workforce and at present 40 percent of the key operational associates are women.

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET RUNNER-UP

PERKIN ROCHA

AREA GM, LEMON TREE PREMIER, DELHI AIRPORT

Perkin Rocha joined Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport in 2014 and was recently promoted as area general manager. In his current role, he takes care of the revenues for the properties in Delhi besides overlooking and maintaining a close relationship with the Indian Armed Forces and para-military forces pan-India, since this is a key account for the hotel brand. Since the hotel has limited space for conferences and banquets, Rocha decided innovations were needed to help the F&B department to meet topline targets. A poolside deck was created to extend boutique banquet events and conduct corporate and social functions in the evening, hosting parties for up to 300 people. This move saw the banquet business register a 77 percent growth over the previous year.



PRESENTS

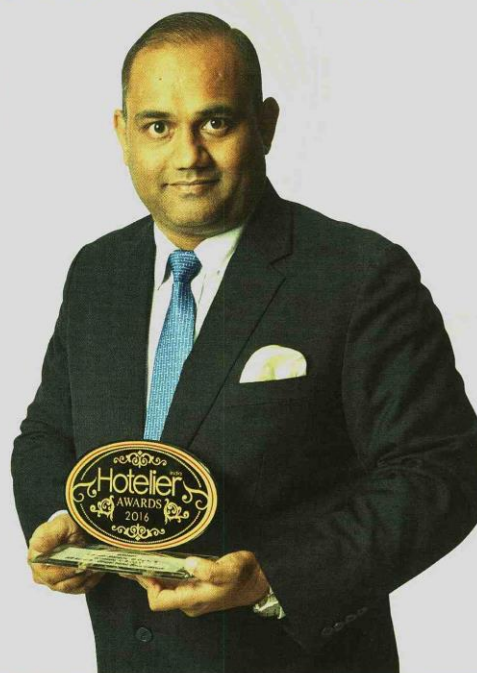
GENERAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

ARIF ASMATH

GENERAL MANAGER, GINGER HOTEL
BHUBANESWAR

As GM of Ginger Hotel Bhubaneswar since 2014, Arif Asmath was completely hands-on when additional 60 rooms were added to the property taking its total inventory to 161 rooms. He fielded the responsibility of pre-opening the new wing, starting the F&B operations at The Square Meal restaurant and MICE/banquet operations with aplomb. Under his guidance, the hotel achieved EBITDA of 62.74 percent for FY 2015-2016. Asmath continuously ensures that top lines are increased by pursuing aggressive sales activity and by tapping new accounts monthly. In the last financial year, his team has added almost 40 new key accounts, which will yield more top line revenue. He also plans to continually deliver consistently better GOP through better fiscal management and by monitoring cost across various expense lines.



ECONOMY TO BUDGET RUNNER-UP

ASHISH KUMAR SINGH

GENERAL MANAGER, GINGER HOTEL NOIDA,
UTTAR PRADESH

Ashish Kumar Singh put his managerial skills to good use when the second 96-room property was opened adjacently in April 2014. At the existing hotel the YTD occupancy stood at over 90 percent and was registering robust year-on-year growth. Singh had the additional responsibility of the new property to helm. Within two months of opening, his team managed sold-out dates for both properties with stable occupancy of over 70 percent for the new hotel. This was possible by undertaking initiatives like giving Friday-centric bookings. Long-stay guests were encouraged and this inventory was closely monitored and pre-planned as it helped the revenue administration in upscaling the best available rate sales. Potential accounts were successfully converted to core accounts leading to stable occupancy in sales. This helped Singh's team in achieving over 90 percent occupancy.





A Class Apart

Known to the industry for their undisputed legacy that is defined by credible service and an exemplary range of products, Anuj and Tarun Sawhney, directors at Aksai Creations, share with us the reasons behind their success

Your company has come a long way covering over three decades in the hospitality industry. Can you trace the journey so far?

AS: Our father, Anil Sawhney, started this company in 1982, when there was a complete absence of professional service providers for the hospitality industry. The industry was still at a nascent stage. It all dawned with the announcement of the Asian Games being held at New Delhi that year. This resulted in a sudden surge in hotel openings and with it increased the demand for quality products. It was this surge that prompted us to venture into manufacturing of high-quality service trays, which were pressed into service by some of the largest hotel chains, like The Indian Hotels Company Limited, EIH, ITC and other hotels.

Further catering to the specific needs of chefs and purchase managers, we started manufacturing customised products. Since the custom duties at that time were also high, people refrained from importing products, which helped us to immensely boost our business as the demand was high for these products.

TS: In the early 1990s, we also started trading in customised stoneware and crockery. Our initial client list included The Taj, Hyatt and the Oberoi Group. The economic liberalisation of 1991 was the period that saw a phenomenal growth in the hospitality industry. Many international brands like Marriott, Starwood, IHG, etc, entered the Indian markets. We cater to each of these brands today, as they prefer suppliers that meet their standards and product specifications.

Today, we specialise in undertaking complete projects and are a one-stop solution provider for the best food service products in India. We have a plant in Gurgaon and in New Delhi that caters to customised products. At our factories we harness the skills of artisans, which is our USP.

Could you shed some light on the complete design and delivery process adopted by your company?



1. Anil Sawhney (centre), founder of Aksai Creations along with the company's directors, Anuj (left) and Tarun Sawhney (right).

2. Revol Porcelain.

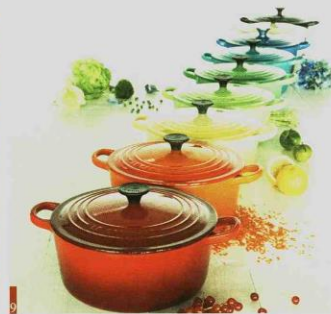
3. Robert Welch Cutlery.

4. Schott Zwiesel Glassware.

5. Sambonet tableware.

AS: We start the process by understanding the basic objective of the client, and then try to figure what exactly they require from us for the selected product mix. Furthermore, we ask the client to share the mood boards that outline the colours, material, texture and style of the property's interior landscape.

TS: Based on the mood board, our in-house team of product designers first understand the concept, on which we make the final presentation to the client; and in accordance develop a prototype. It is after several iterations and desired modifications that the product is finally created. We also help customise in-room amenities or buffet props.



6. The Rosenthal range.
7. Paderno kitchenware.
8. Villeroy & Boch dinnerware.
9. Le Creuset cookware.

Which brands are you currently working with in the industry?

TS: Aksai has been associated with leading groups of the industry like Marriott, Starwood, Indian Hotels Company Ltd (Taj Group), EIH (Oberoi Group), ITC Limited, IHG, Hyatt, Shangri-La, Lemon Tree, to name a few.

What are the latest trends and innovations in this segment?

AS: Nowadays, hotels prefer a palette of rusty, handcrafted and antique designs for their interiors. With the increasing demand for bespoke and handmade collections, we have supplied our artisan collection to even contemporary hotels such as W in Goa.

At the same time, we also see continuous demand for elegantly designed products from Villeroy & Boch for tableware and cutlery from the Sambonet and Rosenthal collection.

TS: Concept-based food presentations also have become a huge trend in the Indian restaurant industry. The quirkiest and unconventional designs are the ones that are most trending. Clients want innovations that differentiate them from the rest. The 'all-white' tableware concept is out of vogue. There is an increasing demand for colours.

What are the aspects that help you stand apart from the competition in this vertical?

AS: The one thing that sets us apart from the industry is our service. Unlike other vendors, we do not select projects based on minimum guarantee. Whether it is a six glasses or six-hundred thousand glasses order that comes our way, we cater to every hotelier's requirement, irrespective of minimum numbers.

TS: Another important aspect is that we not only supply to new hotels but are also capable of replenishing the stock

as and when needed by hotels throughout their complete life cycle. We hold huge stocks to cater to the re-supply demand of our clients, which sets us apart from others. We hold sufficient inventory of our key ranges in duty paid as well as bonded warehouses.

What are some of the best product ranges that you have in your portfolio?

AS: We represent over 40 leading international brands from the food service segment and some of the finest are:

Schott Zwiesel Glassware, which is coated with Tritan protect, which enables the glass to be much stronger than any other glass in the industry. Furthermore, it ensures that the sheen of glass is retained for a longer time.

Villeroy & Boch dinnerware stands out like no other brand in the world for first-class and exceptional design combined with functionality. Porcelain crockery by this brand is the first choice for banquets and dinners of many renowned hotel chains.

Le Creuset: Le Creuset is a premium French cookware and kitchenware brand, with a global footprint and by far the most premium and popular brand in its category. Established in 1925, the brand boasts of its long heritage and legacy, and coupled with exemplary design and innovation, today dominates the market with over 65% market share in cast iron products globally.

Revol Porcelain buffet ware is the only brand offering induction-friendly products (technical ceramic). Most of the products offered by this brand enable one to cook and serve in the same products.

Robert Welch Cutlery's extensive range has a classic and enduring design that is versatile enough to complement any table setting.

Rosenthal's range offers the finest products that unifies aesthetics and functionality. Its quality and well-conceived functionality are designed to meet the requirements of everyday usage in the gastronomy field.

The brand is positioned as a guarantor for elegant and sophisticated table-top culture in the top international hotels and catering establishments. The Rosenthal name also stands for modern and elegant design in the gastronomic arena.

Paderno & Sambonet: The portfolio of this leading Italian manufacturer of top quality designer items for the tabletop and kitchen boasts of products that are cutting-edge and very durable.

EDITOR'S CHOICE PROJECT PERSON OF THE YEAR



PREM THAKUR

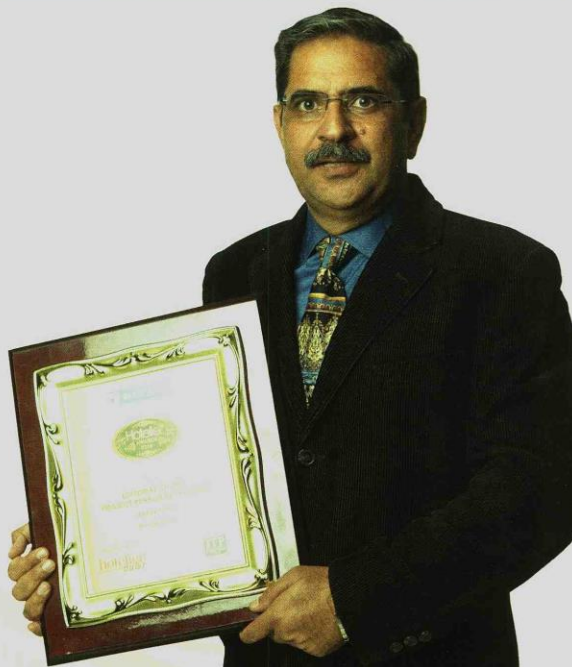
SENIOR MANAGER, GLOBAL DESIGN-ASIA
PACIFIC, MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

Prem Thakur handles various projects for Marriott International across the sub continent. With a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, he brings with him over two decades of experience in project design and management, engineering operations, architectural and engineering consulting services, budgeting, cost control, engineering design review, value engineering, systems installation management, etc. He has wide-ranging skill in managing engineering operations for complex properties like Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, and The Oberoi, Mumbai. Thakur is a Member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors MRICS and an accredited professional of IGBC - Indian Green Building Council. He is also a member of ISHRAE Mumbai and was a core committee member of IGBC's Mumbai chapter.

VAIBHAV TOMAR

VP AND CHIEF PROGRAM MANAGER -
HOSPITALITY, PRESTIGE GROUP

Since 2015, Vibhav Tomar has worked on projects in Bengaluru, including Hotel Conrad in Ulsoor, Hotel Sheraton Grand in Whitefield, Hotel JW Marriott in Golfshire and Hermitage Residences in Ulsoor. Aware that controlling costs can be quite daunting, he initiated various measures like introducing new materials and creating a ownership culture across all levels in his team like contracts, purchase, designers, quality and safety departments, by hiring resources from various walks of life. He also helped in ensuring that timelines were adhered to by modularizing fan coil unit installation activities and other MEP works inside guestroom vestibule area. This move reduced a significant amount of time that was otherwise spent in doing complicated activities inside congested places like a vestibule.



PROJECT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

SUYASH KUMAR WASNIK

HEAD-PROJECT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT, IBIS
HITECH CITY HYDERABAD & IBIS STYLES CALANGUTE GOA

A development and project management professional with core expertise in hotel and real estate domains, Suyash Kumar Wasnik is currently working with InterGlobe Hotels (IGH) where he leads project planning and management for developing a network of ibis branded hotels pan-India. His career, spanning over 14 years, has seen him take on multifaceted roles across portfolios of project controller, technical services, development, planning and project management.

Kumar was previously associated with the Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces where he spearheaded the Gateway Hotel Projects handling its management, contracts and investment partnerships. His interests lie in sustainable development, green buildings, smart cities, eco-friendly hotels and business excellence. He has been a key member for Innovation and Business Processing Exercises at InterGlobe. Kumar is an alumnus of IIT Madras and University of Wollongong Australia and has management certifications from SP Jain Institute of Management and IIM Ahmedabad. He is also an IGBC accredited professional.



EDITOR'S CHOICE

GREEN HOTELIER OF THE YEAR



MS UTHAPPA

RESORT MANAGER, THE TAMARA COORG

MS Uthappa joined The Tamara Coorg in 2008 as an engineer, but he eventually developed an interest in the hotel's operations and guest management services and in 2014, the management promoted him as resort manager. Since then, he initiated many sustainable programs like replacing plastic packaged water bottles with UV-filtered water served in glass bottles, making around 26,000 plastic bottles annually redundant. In-room slippers were replaced by sanitized and reusable Crocs, leading to a reduction of 300 slippers monthly. Other initiatives include judicious waste management, where wet garbage is converted into organic compost 'Manthan' system manually without using electricity or any other energy. Similarly, dry garbage is segregated and delivered to the Pollution Control Board-approved recyclers to ensure proper recycling of waste.



PRESENTS

MASTERCHEF SANJEEV KAPOOR PAN-ASIAN CHEF OF THE YEAR



CHEF VIKRAMJIT ROY

HEAD CHEF - TIAN, ITC MAURYA NEW DELHI

Chef Vikramjit Roy was exposed to the hospitality industry as an industrial trainee at Grand Hyatt, New Delhi where he worked with all the major departments like food production, F&B service, front office and housekeeping. However, realising that food was his calling, he joined Oberoi Hotels & Resorts in 2004 as a commis to learn the finer nuances of cooking and understand how to manage different F&B business areas and maintain inventory. He later worked with brands like Intercontinental Eros, Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi before joining ITC Hotels in 2015. Over the years, he has learnt the knack of making his food a gastronomic affair that is also a feast for the eyes. He uses his ingenuity in mixing ingredients imaginatively and presenting it to diners in a fashion that will enthrall all their five senses and keep them coming back for more.

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

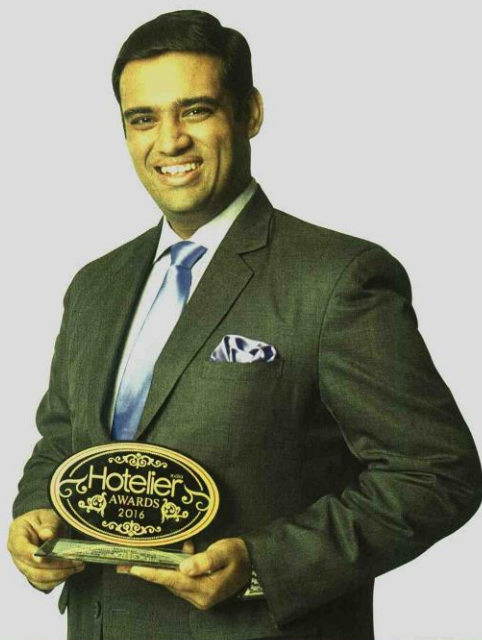
ABHISHEKH MENON

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER, ITC MARATHA, MUMBAI

Abhishekh Menon is an industry veteran who can proudly state that he literally hails from the ITC family. After working with various ITC properties such as ITC Grand Central, ITC Maurya and ITC Kakatiya, he currently oversees the front office operations at ITC Maratha, Mumbai. Some of the quality initiatives implemented by Menon include introducing monthly competition between internal sub-departments of the front office to motivate them to excel in their core functions, like promoting rigorous PR activities, introducing day controlling concept that intimates the entire hotel about special requests and send information about next-day arrivals and implementation of car check-in for guests requesting airport pickups. He also ensured that the hotel maintains contingency rooms, in each category, so that no guest ever walks in to find his room is not ready. This has worked well, especially as the number of room not cleaned (RNC) issues have been reduced to nil.



FRONT OFFICE MANAGER OF THE YEAR



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

NITESH KAPUR

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER, LE MERIDIEN GURGAON

Nitesh Kapur started his career with Intercontinental Group in 2005 and later worked with Shangri-La Delhi and Hyatt Regency Delhi. Joining Le Meridien Gurgaon as a front office manager in 2015 was a huge change for Kapur as the hotel had been newly launched and the changeover from Pullman to a Le Meridien brand was literally overnight. He always believed that a team is only as strong as the weakest link and taking care of the weakest link is what gives outstanding results. "I would sit down with my line managers monthly and discuss our short-term goals for the month and ways to achieve them," explained Kapur. This helped him instil a sense of ownership in his team and has also aided in driving phenomenal results as his colleagues believed it is their ideas that were being executed on the hotel floor and put their complete strength towards achieving it.

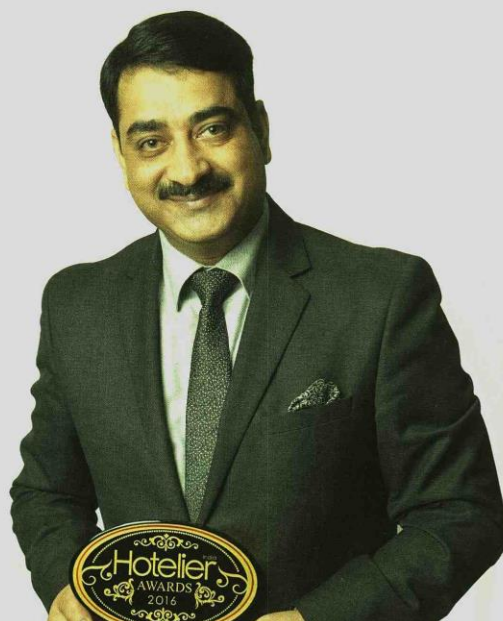
UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

RAJIV SAS

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER, ITC FORTUNE SELECT EXCALIBUR, GURGAON

Having worked with reputed hotels for over 13 years, Rajiv Sas holds specific expertise in managing the rooms division and tying it up with the revenue strategies of the properties. Known as an initiator of ingenious marketing strategies, he has promoted various concepts to positively impact profits. These have reflected in the hotel's occupancy rates, which grew by almost 18 percent in upscale versus 10 percent in the upper mid class segment. The RevPAR also grew by 19 percent in the upscale and 11 percent in mid-class segment.

Sas has been a catalyst in forging long-term relationships with corporate clients by working in cohesion with his marketing team. He has maintained strong customer service orientation focused towards guest loyalty and retention and retained close coordination with various online marketing agencies to stay abreast of ongoing events in the city.





FRONT OFFICE MANAGER OF THE YEAR



ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

ASWATHY HARI H V

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER, KEYS HOTEL
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Besides handling the front office operations at Keys Hotel Thiruvananthapuram, Aswathy Hari plays a critical role in driving fundamental initiatives that improves the overall functioning of the hotel. With the realisation that happy customers are a reflection of happy staff, she implemented various strategies such as recognising team efforts with a token of appreciation, hearing out disputes and involving the staff in the ideation process, and empowering them. She has also improvised on guest satisfaction practices by sending out birthday wishes, personally looking into guest safety, coordinating with booking agents to know more about customers, etc. This helped the hotel reap immense intangible benefits and assisted it in ascending to the fifth position from 16th out of 87 hotels in the city on various online surveys.

ECONOMY TO BUDGET RUNNER-UP

ASHUTOSH BHARDWAJ

FRONT OFFICE MANAGER, OYO FLAGSHIP
PAHARGANJ

While his designation states that he is the front office manager, Ashutosh Bhardwaj is better known as the Guest Leader at OYO Flagship Paharganj. His job role not only includes manning the front desk and answering all kinds of queries that guests might have, but also overlooking the property's management and helping his teams to ensure smooth functioning at the hotel. Hailing from an agricultural family from Bulandshahr, he knows the importance of teamwork at an early age while working at the farms. He joined OYO after completing his education and received hospitality training from the OYO Skill Institute. Bhardwaj works closely with his staff to deliver an exceptional experience to guests staying at the property. He is a firm believer that hard work and perseverance are the two very important factors that influence success in the hotel industry.





PRESENTS

HOUSEKEEPER OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

SHILPI KHANNADIRECTOR OF SERVICES, JW MARRIOTT
MUMBAI SAHAR

Shilpi Khanna has worked towards optimizing departmental productivity through time and motion studies, controlling cost-per-occupied-room and increasing departmental profitability. She has given numerous trainings on room snagging, room set up procedures and room checks, optimal utilization of the Marriott App by housekeeping associates, vendor management and power of negotiation. An active member of the Indian Professional Housekeepers Association (IPHA), she was recently awarded the 'Rising Star in Women Leadership' by Marriott International Asia Pacific.



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE RUNNER-UP

SHARAD DIXITEXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER, SHERATON
GRAND BANGALORE HOTEL AT BRIGADE
GATEWAY

Sharad Dixit increased his hotel's profitability of the mini-bar division by 76 percent after taking handover from the F&B department and also increased the laundry revenue by 29 percent. He was instrumental in bringing down the two-digit attrition rate to single digits by introducing various staff engagement activities. He also undertook several projects to improve the Room Villa condition scores.



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE RUNNER-UP

ACHAT SABINA YADAVA

HOUSEKEEPER, THE OBEROI, AMARVILAS

An alumnus of The Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development, Achat Sabina Yadava has been associated with the Oberoi Group since 2001 and has been part of The Oberoi, Amarvilas since 2014. In her current role, her core responsibility is to maintain consistency and overall upkeep and maintenance of the property. She managed to maintain an average an overall leading quality assurance (LQA) score of 85.5 percent in housekeeping and overall 88.6 percent in products in the last three LQA audits of the hotel.





PRESENTS

HOUSEKEEPER OF THE YEAR



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

DEEPAK PULAVARTI

EXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER, IBIS & NOVOTEL
BENGALURU TECHPARK

Starting his career with the Oberoi Hotels & Resorts in 2002, Deepak Pulavarti has worked with the Carlson Rezidor Group before joining AccorHotels. He consistently maintained high room cleanliness scores for ibis & Novotel Bengaluru Techpark since taking charge as executive housekeeper in 2015. ibis' room cleanliness year to date (YTD) rating was 90 percent making it the #1 among 13 ibis hotels pan-India, while Novotel Bengaluru Techpark's room cleanliness YTD rating was above 85 percent making it #3 among 13 Novotel hotels pan-India. As a part of the Accor Planet-21 initiative, his team initiated the 'Bin-liner free housekeeping operation' and introduced high-density polyethylene (HDPE) as an inexpensive alternative to regular plastic bin bags. Pulavarti estimates that this move will save the hotel INR 10 lakh annually.

ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

PREETHI JAVVAJI

EXECUTIVE HOUSEKEEPER, COURTYARD BY
MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

With over 21 years of hospitality experience, Preethi Javvaji has been a part of the Marriott family for over four years. At Courtyard by Marriott Mumbai, she revamped the housekeeping operating procedures, making the process 50 percent more efficient. She operated within departmental budgets by implementing effective cost controls mechanism. Her ability to constantly train and motivate her staff has helped her maintain a low attrition rate, which makes her an inspirational leader.

Prior to joining the Marriott brand, Javvaji worked with The Leela Mumbai for 17 years. She began her career as a trainee-floor supervisor and her last stint with Leela was as a deputy housekeeper. A hardworking manager and dotting mother, she believes in maintaining a work-life balance by spending time with her family and enjoys travelling whenever she can.



PRESENTS

IT PERSON OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

ARINDAM BANERJEE

HEAD - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
THE OBEROI GRAND, KOLKATA

At The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata, Arindam Banerjee developed an online webchat solution for guests through intranet that they could access by laptop, tablet or their smartphone. He also introduced online audits and ensured that the hotel was video conference-ready for business travellers who wanted fully HD video conferencing facilities. This aside, he oversaw the installation of WiFi-enabled lockers, and ensured that the staff gymnasium, library and dining area were also WiFi-enabled. Deployment of these solutions helped increase the hotel's business operational efficiency.

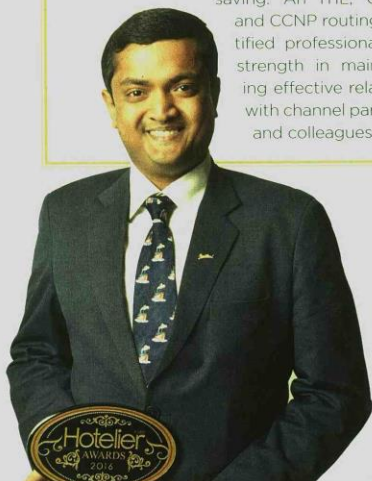


UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

ARIJIT SARKAR

HEAD - INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
RADISSON BLU DWARKA, NEW DELHI

A highlight for Arijit Sarkar last year was saving the hotel around INR 3 lakh from an Opera interface and HP AMC during a new implementation. He also implemented dual ISP with BGP redundancy over Fiber+RF technology, resulting in significant cost saving. An ITIL, CCNA and CCNP routing certified professional, his strength in maintaining effective relations with channel partners and colleagues.

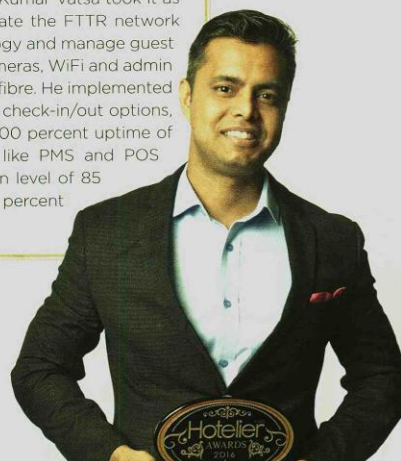


ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

PRASHANT KUMAR

IT MANAGER, IBIS NEW DELHI AEROCITY

When he was promoted in 2014 to manage the IDA hotel of 445 keys with an advanced IT system, Prashant Kumar Vatsa took it as a challenge to operate the FTTR network over GPON technology and manage guest IP TV, IP security cameras, WiFi and admin network over single fibre. He implemented initiatives like online check-in/out options, WiFi in hotel cabs, 100 percent uptime of server applications like PMS and POS and WiFi satisfaction level of 85 percent against 25 percent last year.



CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

GAURAV WALIMBE

CHIEF ENGINEER, WILDFLOWER HALL, SHIMLA

A highlight of Gaurav Walimbe's tenure at Wildflower Hall Shimla was the installation of an organic waste converter (OWC) for garbage disposal, which has resulted in an annual saving of INR 1.6 lakh, besides being an environmentally-friendly move. He also initiated the insulation of the Spa Pavilion's pipeline, as providing hot water to the outdoor spa facility in the cold climate was a massive challenge. The pipe was laid three feet below ground level, which required lots of planning and coordination, but it ultimately saved the hotel INR 1.8 lakh per year in electricity cost.



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

NAYAZ AHMED

CHIEF ENGINEER, KEYS HOTEL, WHITEFIELD, BENGALURU

Since joining Keys Hotel, Whitefield, Bengaluru in 2012, Nayaz Ahmed has kicked off initiatives to achieve higher gross operating percentage for the hotel and provision for rooms with minimal defects. He undertook projects like installing a heat pump for hot water generation, setting up a central remote control unit for the VRV air conditioning system, putting in aerators for water conservation, fixing an ultra-filtration system for waste water treatment, switching over to LED lighting system, etc.

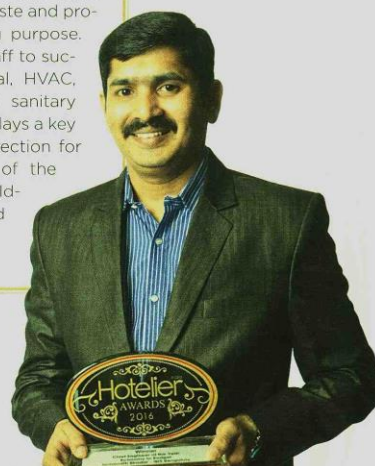


ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

SOMANATH BIRADAR

CHIEF ENGINEER, IBIS BENGALURU CITY CENTRE

Under Somanath Biradar's guidance, ibis Bengaluru City Centre installed a bio-gas plant to manage its natural waste and produce natural gas for cooking purpose. He trained the engineering staff to successfully handle the electrical, HVAC, mechanical, firefighting and sanitary tasks independently. He also plays a key role in providing technical direction for operation and maintenance of the building and equipment, upholding budget, expenditures and energy conservation.



PRESENTS

PROCUREMENT MANAGER OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

ABDUL KAREEM

PURCHASE MANAGER, THE LEELA PALACE
CHENNAI

When Abdul Kareem joined The Leela Palace Chennai in 2011 during the pre-opening stage as an assistant purchase manager, he was the only person solely responsible to handle the entire procurement division and drive the entire team of professional key handlers with well-focused, cost effective procedural procurements processes. There was no looking back since then and he has enhanced his skills in vendor handling, forecasting, negotiation, cost savings, etc, which has inspired him to dedicate the rest of his life to become a better purchase and procurement professional.



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

BIRUVARAJ LAKSHMANAN

COMPLEX PROCUREMENT MANAGER, ALOFT
BENGALURU CESSNA BUSINESS PARK

Joining Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park during the pre-opening stage, Biruvaraj Lakshmanan ensured that the project was completed before schedule by astute pre-planning. Last year, he procured perishable and non-perishable items through local vendors and managed to maintain food cost at 22 percent. By closely maintaining monthly inventory of guest supplies and monitoring consumptions, he saved INR 11 lakh in room costs.

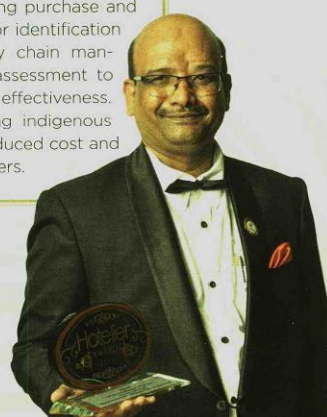


ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

VIJAYANAND THANTRI

HEAD - PROCUREMENT, INTELLISTAY
HOTELS - MANGO HOTELS

With an experience of around 23 years in material procurement, sourcing, contract negotiations/finalizations, planning and vendor development, Vijayanand Thantri's expertise lies in formulating purchase and sourcing strategies, vendor identification and development, supply chain management and analytical assessment to strengthen operational effectiveness. He is adept at identifying indigenous initiatives that result in reduced cost and better service from suppliers.





LAUNDRY PERSON OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

VINAY DIMRI

LAUNDRY MANAGER, JW MARRIOTT HOTEL
BENGALURU

Part of JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru since May 2013, Vinay Dimri has been instrumental in taking eco-friendly steps like reducing the diesel cost for boilers, switching to LED lighting, ensuring machines are switched off when not in use, etc. The hotel processes an average of 2,700 kg of laundry daily and is operational half day when rooms are on low-occupancy. This has resulted in cost and energy savings. Its laundry discard rate is limited and linen is well maintained by usage of sealed air products to warrant more wash cycles. Individual spotting is not encouraged and the entire load of linen is treated together to reduce power consumption. Dimri also ensures that his 15-strong associate team does not work beyond their stipulated work hours, resulting in 0 attrition rate. This includes three deaf and dumb members, who deliver their best under Dimri's guidance.

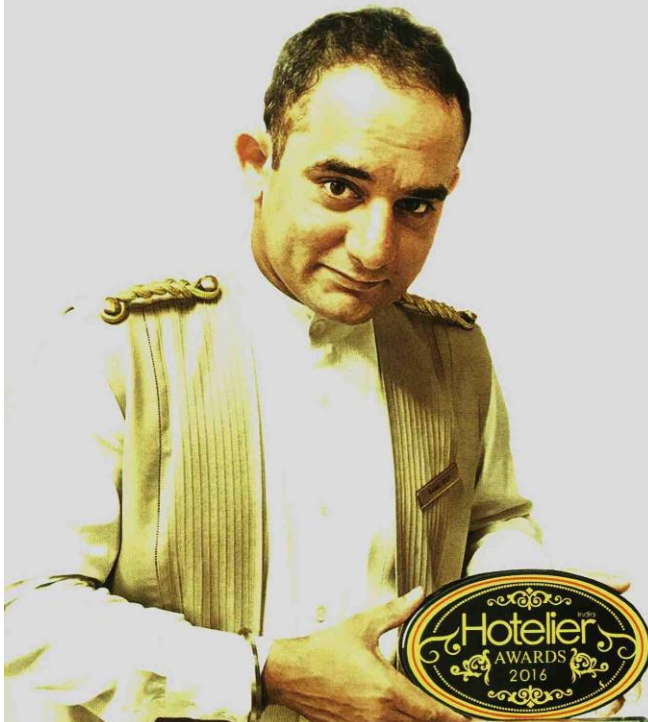


UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

KAMALDEEP SINGH

SENIOR ASSISTANT MANAGER-LAUNDRY,
TRIDENT, CHENNAI

Joining Trident, Chennai as a laundry executive in 2012, Kamaldeep Singh rapidly moved up the ranks to become senior assistant manager for the laundry department, overseeing the processing of around 1,500 to 1,800 kg of laundry daily. He brought down the daily boiler use by four hours in 2015-16, resulting in monthly savings of INR 2.14 lakh. Singh has also reduced the daily diesel consumption from 651 litres in 2014-15 to 496 litres in 2015-16, increasing operational profits by 23 percent. By optimal utilisation of resources, the use of laundry supplies and chemicals was brought down by 4 percent and 15 percent, respectively for the same period. Similar other initiatives resulted in Trident, Chennai's laundry department's profitability increasing from 21 percent to 46 percent last year, earning Singh accolades from the hotel's management.



PR PERSON OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

NIDHI VERMA

HEAD-PR & MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS,
THE LEELA AMBIENCE GURUGRAM HOTEL &
RESIDENCES

Nidhi Verma has been part of The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences' PR, communications and marketing team since 2013, but since the past few months she has started spearheading its online and social media portfolio as well. She was actively involved in the creation and launch of its Facebook page and within a month, the page amassed 600 likes, while few of its posts even reached 25,000 people.

Verma was very hands-on during the launch of hotel's mobile-friendly website, and was clued-on about content development on every page and image selection. The site is an important tool to gather guest feedback and queries for different offerings, including spa and restaurants.



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE RUNNER-UP

PINKY PADMARAJ

SENIOR MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS,
THE OBEROI, BENGALURU

A part of The Oberoi Group since 16 years, Pinky Padmaraj overlooks all deliverables under the PR and marketing umbrella for The Oberoi, Bengaluru and supports The Oberoi brand in any city-centric endeavours. Her team has initiated various dining experiences in the city and made breakthroughs amongst the emerging world of bloggers and social media influencers to reach new and aspirational audiences. It also pioneered community activity in Bengaluru through its CSR programs where it managed to create events that not only support various causes but creates an interest about the property amongst guests.



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

DIVYA AGHA

MANAGER-COMMUNICATIONS &
PR, THE LEMON TREE HOTEL COMPANY

Last year, Divya Agha, manager-communications and PR, introduced an efficient media tracking tool for The Lemon Tree Hotel Company and also got the company close to INR 8 crore worth of advertising value through earned coverage, generating PR impact of over INR 24 crore in FY 2015-16. She conducted Lemon Tree's first Communication Measurement Survey across 3,500 employees using formal tools of data collection like surveys, group discussions, personal interviews, etc.





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PRESENTS

SALES/REVENUE PERSON OF THE YEAR



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

VINAY SINGH

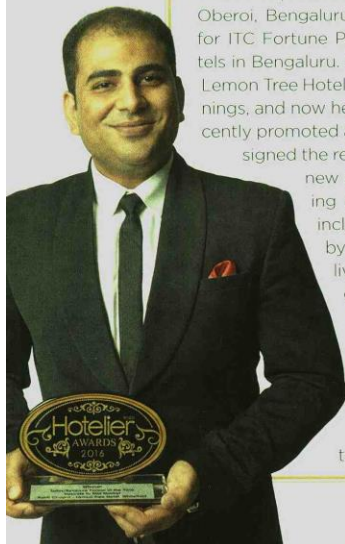
DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING,
ST. REGIS MUMBAI

Since his appointment as director of sales and marketing at The St. Regis Mumbai in January 2016, the property's YTD occupancy in 2016 stood at 68.1 percent at an ADR of INR 10,060. The property witnessed a volume and rate growth of 15 percent and 18 percent, respectively, compared to the same period last year. The recorded RevPAR growth was 5.6 percent over LY 2015. Singh devises strategies and formalizes yield maximization plan for every business segment to drive better performance and maintain ARR performance. He organizes weekly forums to discuss sales and revenue co-ordination points such as GDS productivity and strategy, city sold-out dates, up-selling strategy, assistance required from sales team so that channels perform effectively.

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

ROHIT CHOPRA

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR-SALES, LEMON
TREE HOTEL, WHITEFIELD



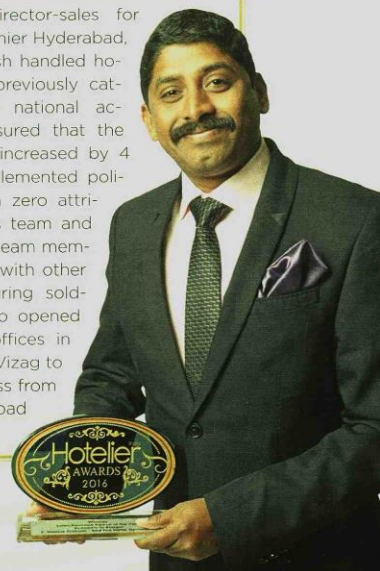
Rohit Chopra kick started his career at The Oberoi, Bengaluru and later headed sales for ITC Fortune Park and Premier Inn Hotels in Bengaluru. He charted his growth at Lemon Tree Hotel through two different innings, and now heads the hotel's sales. Recently promoted as a unit head, he was assigned the responsibility of handling a new territory and administering the hotel's budget. This included increasing the ARR by 10 to 15 percent and delivering within the budgeted revenue targets. He managed to increase the ARR by 10 percent as compared to the previous year, while the revenue growth was over 30 percent for the same period.

ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

P ELEAZAR PRAKASH

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-SALES, LEMON
TREE PREMIER HYDERABAD

As assistant director-sales for Lemon Tree Premier Hyderabad, P Eleazar Prakash handled hotels that were previously categorised under national accounts, and ensured that the overall revenue increased by 4 percent. He implemented policies to maintain zero attrition in the sales team and encouraged his team members to interact with other departments during sold-out dates. He also opened regional sales offices in Hyderabad and Vizag to drive the business from the Hyderabad properties.



DIRECTOR OF THE ROOMS



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

INDRANI GUPTA

DIRECTOR OF ROOMS, THE TAJ MAHAL
PALACE, MUMBAI

In April 2015, when Indrani Gupta was promoted as director of rooms, her key responsibilities included optimizing the operational efficiency of the room division, sale of room inventory and maximizing average room rate. Her initiatives saw the front office score register an 8.76 percent increase in both arrival and departure experience and housekeeping parameters improve by 6 percent, as per guest feedback. She initiated various guest engagement programmes, like bicycle and walking tour around Mumbai, guest of the week, availability of express mobile connection within two hours after document submission, a 4GB USB drive with a Taj of Apollo movie as guest souvenir, etc. For associates, she created a performance tracker for daily evaluation of mandatory functions like filing of C-form, introduction of room defect matrix to track defects in guest rooms and closure of the same, etc.

ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

VIKRANT VERMA

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT MANAGER – ROOMS
DIVISION, RED FOX HOTEL DELHI AIRPORT

Vikrant Verma has handled front office operations for four Lemon Tree properties since joining the company in 2013. Over the past few months, he embarked on eco-friendly and cost-saving initiatives like changing majority of the lighting from CFL to LED, increased use of solar-powered equipment and maximum utilization of recycled water. He was also instrumental in switching from property-owned cars to vendor cars, which reduced operational costs.

A guest's stay in Red Fox Hotel Delhi Airport averages 1.1 days, thereby multiplying their movement in the property. Verma introduced multi-tasking modules to allow everyone to learn different hospitality operations and enable them to contribute in any department whenever needed. This divisional cross-help during peak times assists control the volume (F&B to front office, housekeeping to front office, etc).



DIRECTOR OF THE ROOMS



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

VINAYAK TRIVEDI

ASSISTANT FRONT OFFICE MANAGER,
FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT

Vinayak Trivedi began his career with The Oberoi Udaivillas as front office associate in 2007. He later joined The Leela Palace Udaipur as a pre-opening member where he served for over three years and was also the golden key member of Les Clefs D'Or India Concierge Association of India. After working with these brands, he shifted to Westin Chennai as duty manager during the hotel's opening. He later switched over to Fairfield by Marriott Rajajinagar Bengaluru as head of the department, leading a team of nine associates and ensuring there was constant learning, motivation to get the best guest satisfaction scores and reviews for the hotel and customer satisfaction, while maximising the revenue and room profitability. Currently, he is the Marriott and Starwood merger change champion for Fairfield by Marriott.

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

ASHWIN SUNIL VAIDYA

ROOMS DIVISION MANAGER, COURTYARD
BY MARRIOTT AND FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT
BENGALURU OUTER RING ROAD

One of Ashwin Sunil Vaidya's highlights as rooms division manager at Courtyard by Marriott and Fairfield By Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road is that he has the maximum women employee ratio deployed in his department, which is also the highest in Marriott India. The 336-room property has 303 budgeted associates, including outsourced employees. To develop an emotional connect with this team, he always appreciation notes for associates recognized by guests on social media platforms or feedback forms. Similarly, a day prior to their departure, guests receive a bookmark with chocolates as a thank-you note. In a bid to go local, Vaidya's team often welcomes guests with sandalwood key chains or packets of Murukku, a Bengaluru savoury. This has ensured better staff interactions during high volume of lobby movement by guests.



PRESENTS

HR MANAGER OF THE YEAR



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

JANINE FERNANDEZ

HR, RENAISSANCE MUMBAI CONVENTION
CENTRE HOTEL LAKESIDE CHALET – MUMBAI,
MARRIOTT EXECUTIVE APARTMENTS

A seasoned professional with a career spanning 12 years, Janine Fernandez joined Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel Lakeside Chalet – Mumbai, Marriott Executive Apartments in June 2015. She managed to reduce the employee-to-room ratio from 1:32 to 1:1.23, which translates to 950 employees for 770 rooms. Some other initiatives she has taken included the 'Room Cleaning Incentive' that encourages associates to partner up and clear more rooms than the standard 15 rooms per section, thereby improving productivity. Fernandez also monitored business trends to ensure that contracted workforce is managed via peaks and valleys to drive efficiency in operational areas. She also leveraged the 'Marriott Internship Program' to hire a batch of 70 interns from hotel management schools per session of the summer and winter batches.

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

BHAVANI MANI SHANKAR DUTTA

DIRECTOR, TALENT & CULTURE, NOVOTEL
IBIS CHENNAI SIPCOT / OMR

After working with the Taj Group of Hotels, Novotel Hyderabad, and also with Patni Computers during a decade-long career, Bhavani Mani Shankar Dutta joined the Ibis and Novotel venture in August 2010. Presently posted with Novotel Ibis Chennai OMR, his role encompasses a range of responsibilities such as implementation of policies and procedures, performance management, talent and culture budgeting, culture diversity and inclusion, statutory compliances, T&C audits and dashboards, career management. His core competencies lie in managing employee relations and engagement, HRMIS and performance management. Dutta has procured his master in human resource management and is an Academie Accor certified trainer.





PRESENTS

HR MANAGER OF THE YEAR

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

PRADEEP GHORPHADE

MULTI-PROPERTY HUMAN RESOURCES
MANAGER, COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT AND
FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT BENGALURU ORR

Charting out various developmental initiatives, engagement activities and maintaining a general sense of belongingness have been Pradeep Ghorphade's key to drive associate satisfaction thereby keeping the attrition rate low. He has taken the onus to ensure that several HR-friendly practices are inculcated at Courtyard By Marriott and Fairfield By Marriott Bengaluru ORR. Few of these include woman well-being and engagement forum; focus on health, providing access to gym and other hotel facilities. The hotel has been responsible for fixing the road in the vicinity that connects to major tech parks. To tackle food wastage, a 'No Dustbin Day' is practiced every week. His key focus has always been towards growing internal talent, which has been a strong focus area of the company, and at the property level he understands and promotes this concept.

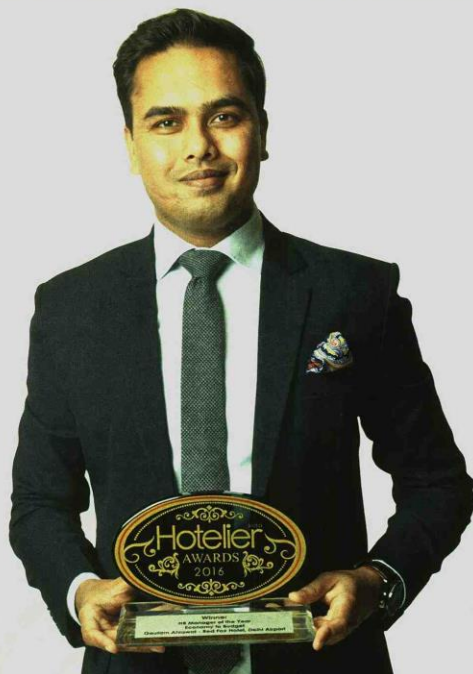


ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

GAUTAM AHLAWAT

HEAD-HR MANAGER, LEMON TREE PREMIER
& RED FOX HOTEL- DELHI AIRPORT

Gautam Ahlawat joined Lemon Tree Hotel, Udyog Vihar in 2012 as assistant manager-HR and presently heads the HR team for Red Fox Hotel, Delhi Airport. Effective at utilising alternate manpower, he has made a considerable impact on reducing attrition and retaining talent. At the hotel he maintains a healthy staff ratio of 1:0.87 including 16.5 percent differently-abled employees. An advocate of the 'stay fit initiative', he ensures employees maintain a good work-life balance. He organised several cross-training programs so that associates have a strong support system during peak occupancy and operational exigencies. Even heads of departments are moved across divisions i.e. front office, food and beverage service and production, housekeeping, sales and also the back of the house functions to improve their understanding of different departments and develop into 'holistic hoteliers'.



UNSUNG HERO OF THE YEAR

RAJESH TAVALLA

GENERAL MANAGER, LEMON TREE HOTEL.

When torrential rains lashed Tamil Nadu in December 2015, Rajesh Tavalla, GM of Lemon Tree Hotel, Chennai set up an emergency centre and he led his team to distribute biscuits and milk to people stranded in traffic jams. Pregnant ladies were given refuge in the hotel, while women were invited to use the washrooms. As occupancy surged to over 90 percent, Tavalla and his team marched almost 12 km on foot to buy supplies and keep the hotel functional. He would regularly reassure guests, despite being unable to get in touch with his own wife and son for over three days, as phone networks were down.

Later, when 40 guests and 25 staff members from Lemon Tree Hotel Shimona called for help, Tavalla and his colleagues swam through neck-deep water carrying food. They also toiled to provide a safe haven for people in the neighbourhood affected by the flood and distributed survival kits with clothes, food, etc to over 150 families.



DEVENDER SINGH

SERVICE ASSOCIATE-CONCIERGE,
SHANGRI-LA'S EROS HOTEL, NEW DELHI

It can be quite challenging for the differently-abled to settle in a job profile that requires them to interact with end-customers. However, Devender Singh, who is speech and hearing-impaired has become quite adept at taking the rough with the smooth. Since joining the hotel in 2011, he has impressed his colleagues with his perseverance and willingness to take on challenges that come his way. His teammates claim that they have rarely come across a person who is as attentive to minutiae related to his work, unhesitatingly. Frequently, he works overtime to complete his assignments and has become a source of inspiration for other employees in the bargain. Maintaining a positive disposition towards his colleagues and guests, Singh is capable of working under pressure and has displayed his ability to resolve stressful situations.





Roca

PRESENTS

SPA/FITNESS PERSON OF THE YEAR



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

MAHIMA SHARMA

MULTI PROPERTY – DIRECTOR OF SPA, JW
MARRIOTT MUMBAI SAHAR

Mahima Sharma launched Spa by JW, the first Spa by JW in Asia Pacific. She has driven a 9.9 percent in-house capture ratio as against the market average trend of 5 to 8 percent. Known for her strong inter-personal skills, she has seamlessly managed to achieve guest satisfaction at the spa to the extent that Spa by JW at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar finds itself ranked at # 1 on TripAdvisor in Mumbai.

This multi-property director not only undertakes rigorous research to consistently offer innovative spa rituals, but also proactively involves herself in marketing initiatives for the facility by participating in social media conversations with guests, both existing and potential. She is a panelist on the Asia Pacific Spa Advisory Board at Marriott International and has been lauded with the Edge Award – Asia Pacific, Marriott International for 'Spa Person of the Year'.

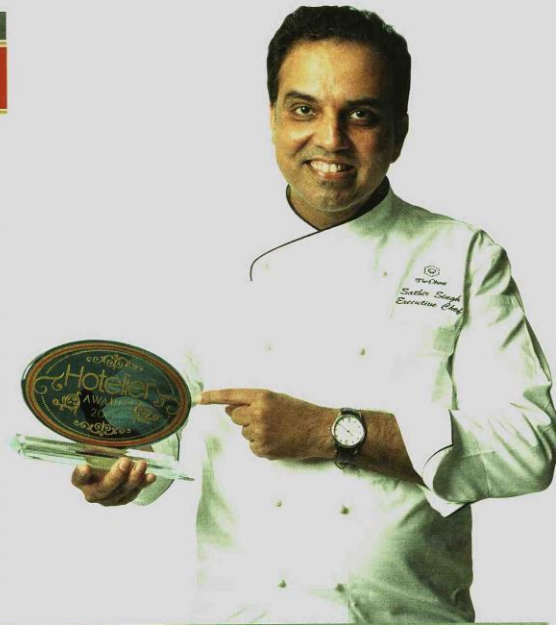
CHEF OF THE YEAR

LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

CHEF SATBIR BAKSHI

EXECUTIVE CHEF, THE OBEROI, MUMBAI

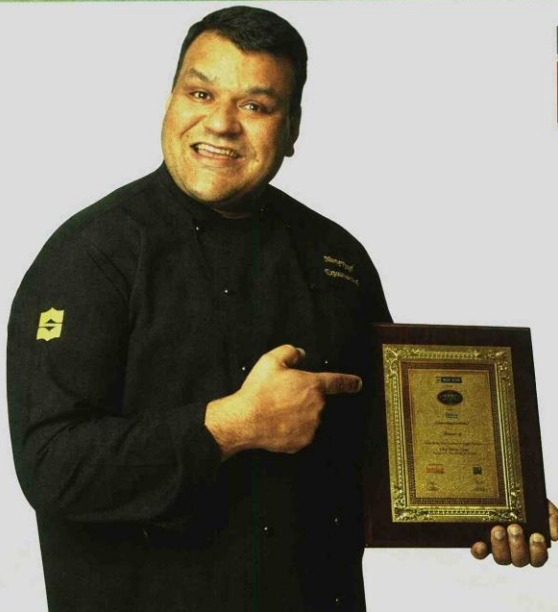
Chef Satbir Bakshi began his career at The Oberoi, Mumbai in 2003 as a senior kitchen executive and later helmed the affairs at the kitchen as executive chef in 2014. Currently, as he heads the F&B production portfolio with a team of 75 chefs at The Oberoi, Mumbai. Lately, he has been focusing on sourcing and promoting small vendors to get the best produce, which will also give his property a competitive edge over standalone restaurants. In the past year, he ran 24 F&B promotions and had six wine dinners at the property. Key food events included the Japanese food promotion, where the property made an incremental revenue of INR 1 lakh daily. In Vetro, he did the white truffle promotion, which contributed to an additional INR 22 lakh of sale in a week. Additionally, he revamped Vetro's menu along with the Italian chef, and the restaurant's sales grew by 8 percent over last year, besides garnering excellent guest feedback.



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE RUNNER-UP

CHEF NEERAJ TYAGI

EXECUTIVE CHEF, SHANGRI-LA'S - EROS HOTEL, NEW DELHI



Chef Neeraj Tyagi joined Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi as executive chef in June 2015 and since then his team launched four new outlets, starting with Mister Chai, a tea restaurant. Next was Grappa Bar where the concept of Cicchetti, or small Venetian tapas, was introduced. This was followed by the inauguration of Italian restaurant Sorrento, and the 39th Shang Palace, which brought Yunnan cuisine to New Delhi. Chef Tyagi also revamped the F&B offerings at the award-winning Tamra restaurant. His biggest challenge was to retain good talent, and align different mindsets in the culinary team. He endeavoured to do that by permitting them to experiment with different dishes. He regularly works in cohesion with the revenue team as the property also tracks outlet-wise revenues and cost. This helps in calculating the P&L of individual F&B outlets and Chef Tyagi can monitor the individual departmental expenses to ensure healthy profitability.



A VKL Food Solutions Enterprise

PRESENTS

CHEF OF THE YEAR

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

SANDEEP KUMAR

EXECUTIVE CHEF, ALOFT BENGALURU CESSNA
BUSINESS PARK

Sandeep Kumar's biggest contribution as executive chef of Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park has been maintaining the food cost at 22 percent year-on-year. He worked with his team to ensure that the F&B revenue and restaurant covers increased by 26.9 percent and 19.3 percent, respectively above the 2015 budget. He was also instrumental in ensuring that the property got 100 percent in brand standard audit, which is the highest Starwood rating globally, and 98 percent security audit, which put it amongst the top three hotels in the South Asian region, while the food hygiene and safety audit stood at 99 percent, which is the highest in South Asia for the company. Additionally, the property was ranked #3 out of 649 Bengaluru hotels by TripAdvisor, primarily driven by positive reviews received for the buffet spread at Nook Restaurant.



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET RUNNER UP

VASU VENKAT REDDY

LEMON TREE PREMIER, DELHI AIRPORT

As executive chef of Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport, Vasu Venkat Reddy's core responsibility includes kitchen planning and execution, along with menu planning of any upcoming Lemon Tree hotels in the region. He is also part of the product standardization, innovation and audit team. Since attrition is the biggest challenge he faces in managing his team, he constantly focus on training to improve skills and maintain consistency in food. Luckily for him, the brand's comprehensive training encompasses one-on-one sessions, demos, classroom instruction, etc, which is imparted to every team member regularly. Additionally, 'Chef tasting sessions', random ordering and audits are organized to ensure all chefs stay alert and hands-on. Team members are routinely sent to other hotels across the country to gain exposure for region-based cuisine trainings.



F&B MANAGER OF THE YEAR

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

AKANKSHA LAMBA

F&B MANAGER, THE OBEROI, GURGAON

After the closure of The Oberoi New Delhi, Akanksha Lamba conceptualised 'Patisserie at your Doorstep' so hotel guests could get their weekly shopping home delivered from Gurgaon. Besides setting up profitable home delivery logistics, it involved understanding the guests' preferences, replicating and expanding the offerings creatively; and constantly communicating with the Delhi client database. This effort resulted in incremental revenue of 50 percent over the same period in the previous year.

Under her guidance, Amaranta restaurant, underwent several changes. The cuisine shifted from coastal to contemporary Indian fare, while the décor, music, wine and cocktail offering were also revamped. A robust marketing campaign was unveiled to increase footfalls for the re-branded restaurant and the effort paid off when the outlet achieved 100 percent revenue growth when compared with the same period last year.



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET RUNNER-UP

HITESH SANGWAN

F&B MANAGER, THE LEELA PALACE CHENNAI

Starting his career as a management trainee at Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces in 2007, and after working with brands like The Leela Palace Bangalore, Hitesh Sangwan was promoted to The Leela Palace Chennai in November 2015 as F&B manager. Within a year of joining the Chennai property, he increased the F&B revenue by 9.5 percent and GOP by INR 3.19 crore over last year. Under his leadership, all three restaurants and the bar of the property won awards from various distinguished organisations of the country and abroad. With a keen interest in marketing of F&B and the world of wines, he has also been actively building a wine culture in the hotel through activities like 'Winemaker's Dinner', 'Champagne hours', 'Flights of Wine', etc. He works closely with the marketing and banquet sales department to ensure that the banquet operations are complaint-free as it contributes almost 50 percent to the F&B revenues.

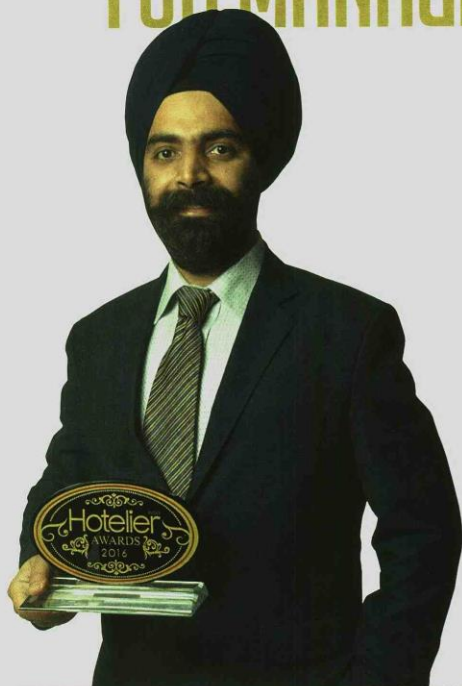




ECOLAB

PRESENTS

F&B MANAGER OF THE YEAR



UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

HARLEEN SINGH RAWAL

DIRECTOR-F&B, LE MERIDIEN GURGAON

Harleen Singh Rawal has over 18 years of cross-functional experience, starting his career as a pre-opening team members of the first Trident Cochin property in Cochin in 1999, where he managed the bar operations. Later, he worked with brands like Oberoi Rajvilas, The Claridges, New Delhi, Shangri-La New Delhi, The Imperial New Delhi, Taj Palace New Delhi, IHG Crowne Plaza, Okhla, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, etc. Heading F&B operations at Le Meridien Gurgaon, he recently opened i-Kandy, the poolside night club, which has been regularly generating high footfalls and revenues for the property.

Rawal believes that an F&B manager should focus on continual training of his team, especially for the new recruits. He holds frequent briefings with his colleagues to brainstorm on new ideas on how to give guests unique dining experiences.

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET RUNNER-UP

UTSAV GARG

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT MANAGER - F&B,
LEMON TREE PREMIER, DELHI AIRPORT

As executive assistant manager-F&B of Lemon Tree Premier, Delhi Airport since January 2015, Utsav Garg works closely with the corporate chef to conceptualize food concepts for the group and design new F&B products pan-India, besides streamline menu composition for banquets. Last year, he undertook various initiatives that resulted in 72 percent increase in F&B revenues. While the average food-cover realization increased by 35 percent, the banquet income grew by 77 percent over the previous year. The F&B team has a 104-strong team, with 53 in production and 51 in service. Of these 27 are people with disabilities, who are mentored by Garg. Last year, he introduced Nutan's waiter calling system at Alfresco restaurant, which reduced the service team by four people, saving in manpower cost. Garg was also closely involved in working with the team to get the ISO-22000 certification for the hotel.



MARKETING PERSON OF THE YEAR



LUXURY TO UPPER UPSCALE WINNER

SAADHVI MEHRA

SHERATON GRAND BANGALORE HOTEL
AT BRIGADE GATEWAY

Saadhvi Mehra adopted an integrated marketing and communications approach to build a strong brand affinity and highly engaged social media following for the Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway. Her efforts to promote over 50 F&B promotions in the year resulted in 26 percent growth in F&B revenue and an average sale of 127 covers daily. A social media action team was put in place and representatives from all departments ensured active engagement on online forums with rich and relevant content. The team constantly drives TripAdvisor and website reviews and ratings ensuring Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel remains on top across channels.

UPSCALE TO MID MARKET WINNER

IMRAN AHMAD

DIRECTOR-E-COMMERCE, THE LEMON TREE
HOTEL COMPANY

As director-e-commerce, Imran Ahmad's constant efforts saw a substantial growth in the brand's FIT movement on weekends helping it acquire new customers for entire lifecycles. Without spending any money upfront he cracked a deal for full page coverage worth INR 54 lakh in a national daily picking up around 5,000 room nights. He also promoted the staycation concept to bridge occupancy drop during weekends, and called them 'Weekend Sale' while marketing it to end-consumers.

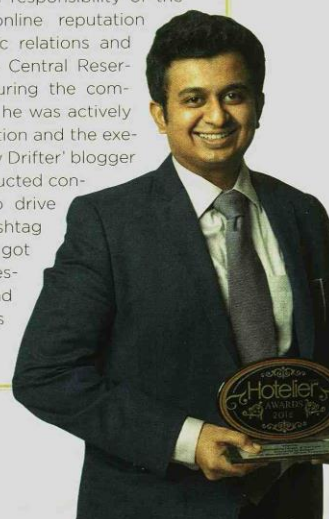


ECONOMY TO BUDGET WINNER

GAURISH DHARESHWAR

ASSISTANT MANAGER-MARKETING,
GINGER HOTELS

In recent times, Gaurish Dhareshwar is handling the additional responsibility of the brand's website, online reputation management, public relations and oversee the Ginger Central Reservations channel. During the company's blog launch, he was actively involved in the ideation and the execution of the 'Thrifty Drifter' blogger campaign. He conducted contests on Twitter to drive entries and the hashtag #IWantToTravel got over 2 million impressions and the brand added 583 followers within a hour.





Glimpses



Hotelier India Awards 2016's jury members gather for felicitation on stage.



S Saikumar, deputy MD (top above), and Bibhor Srivastava, group publishing director of ITP Publishing India welcome guests at the 8th Hotelier India Awards 2016.



Vir Advani, MD, Blue Star India delivers the keynote address.



Shafquat Ali, consulting group editor, ITP Publishing India, explains the award selection methodology to the audience.



It's selfie time for the jury members!



Hoteliers cheer for their peers as the victors are announced.