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His POINT OF VIEW

ELEVATING HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCES - LEMONTREE HOTELS

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this exclusive interview with Mr. Vikramjit Singh, the President of Lemon Tree Hotels. With an extensive background in the hospitality industry and a passion for providing exceptional service, Vikramjit Singh, President, Lemontree Hotels has played a pivotal role in the growth and success of the brand. In an interview with Urban Melange, he shares his vision for the company, his insights on luxury hospitality and more.

1 Could you tell us about your background and how you got started in the hospitality industry?

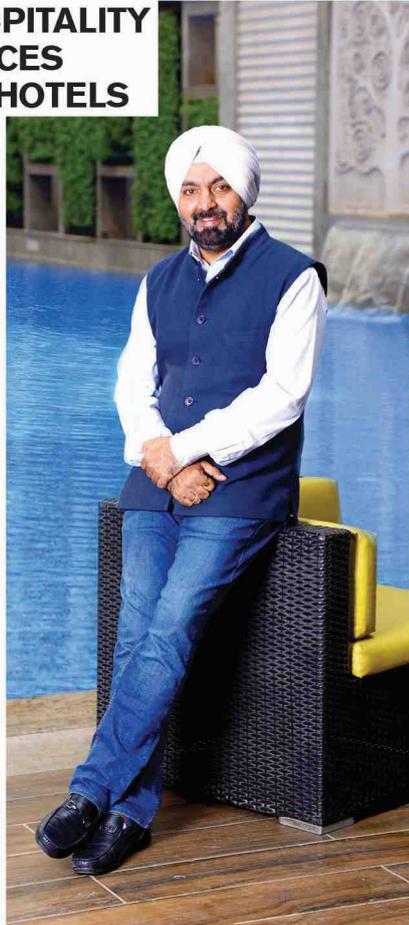
My family owned a hotel in Assam; hence hospitality was always in my blood. I got my Post Graduate Diploma in Hospitality Management and Administration from the Taj Group of Hotels, which is also where I started my career as an assistant manager in the front office department. I subsequently returned to run the family business for a few years, before joining Lemon Tree Hotels over 15 years ago.

How has the hospitality industry changed during your time in the business?

It has been evolving consistently to become more advanced, with hotels reaching new heights, literally. Also, with the growth of digital distribution, alternative accommodation options such as Airbnb and shared vacation rentals have opened up a new segment in the hospitality industry. Even the way traditional hotel companies' market and distribute their inventory has changed completely. People can see the availability, photos, and reviews from other users.

The pandemic has accelerated the growth and usage of technology in the industry even further. For an entire generation that has grown up on smartphones, who are the customers of today, the usage of technology before, during and after their travel is a key component.

One thing does remain for certain – despite all the changes the industry has seen and will continue to see, the customer has always been and will always be the center of the evolution.



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What is your vision for Lemon Tree Hotels and how do you plan to achieve it?

There are two aspects to the vision. One is the way we plan to transform as a company which is future-ready and able to take up any challenge that comes our way. This includes adopting technology that is equipped to take on the future and making the transformation seamless.

While we have always focussed on sustainability, we plan to take it even further in the coming years and ensure that we implement sustainable practices in as many areas as possible.

The second aspect is the physical expansion of our footprint through the asset-light model.

We plan to expand by opening over 20 hotels in the upcoming financial year by adding approximately 2,000 rooms. The aim is to have hotels not just in Tier I cities but also in Tier II, III and IV. So, there are hotels coming up in places like Chandausi, Banswara, Tezpur, Sri Ganganagar and more.

How do you stay up to date with industry trends and innovations?

I abide by the time-honoured traditions that are applicable not just in hospitality but across all professions.

- 1) Determine skills and knowledge required for success and engage in continuous learning.
- 2) Attend professional events and conferences.
- 3) Take Professional Development Courses.
- 4) Use social media effectively, follow organisations and professionals in the field and join groups that share common interests.
- 5) Engage actively in knowledge sharing forums with other industry leaders.
- 6) Listening and learning from my colleagues and peers, both within and outside the industry, to understand and implement best practices.

For me, what has additionally worked is observing other related industries and seeing the way they adapt and adopt changes while understanding how it can be adapted to hospitality.

What are some of the key qualities you think are essential for success in the hospitality industry?

In the hospitality industry, the key qualities essential for success include:

- Exceptional Customer Service
- Communication Skills
- Attention to Detail
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Professionalism
- Cultural Awareness
- Continuous Learning

How would you define luxury hospitality? Your take on the same in today's time?

Luxury hospitality refers to the provision of high-end accommodations, and personalised services and amenities, to affluent and discerning travellers. It entails delivering exceptional quality with personalised attention, and a refined experience that exceeds guests' expectations. Crafting an experience that is tailor-made for each individual is what would give a luxury brand an edge over the other.

In today's world, luxury hospitality has evolved to cater to the changing preferences and demands of modern travellers. It emphasises exclusivity, privacy, and unique experiences that are tailored to individual tastes.

Overall, luxury hospitality today combines opulence, personalised service, cutting-edge technology, sustainability, and authentic experiences to create memorable and exceptional stays for discerning guests.

How does Lemon Hotels cater to guests who seek luxury and high-end hospitality?

With the launch of our upscale brand, Aurika Hotels & Resorts, in 2019, we forayed into the high-end hospitality space. With two resorts in Udaipur and Coorg and an upcoming hotel in Mumbai, Aurika seeks to offer upscale accommodation exclusive experiences in an extraordinary ambience. With an emphasis on sustainable design inspired by local culture and history, these properties combine beauty and elegance with comfortable informality.

Our efficient service goes beyond the unusual and is anticipatory yet unobtrusive. Inspiring spaces, unexpected dining experiences, innovative technological solutions and seamless delivery ensure that guests can work, play and relax effortlessly. In keeping with the changing definition of luxury stays, we focus on providing curated unique local experiences to our guests.