

## **Lemon Tree aims to be 2nd largest hotel company**

### **TRAVTALK**

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**Lemon Tree Hotels will continue to follow its strategy to own, develop and manage its hotels. Patu Keswani, CMD, Lemon Tree and Red Fox Hotels, assures that the group makes no compromises in quality, standard and branding.**

By 2012, Lemon Tree Hotels, as disclosed by Patu Keswani will become the second largest hotel owning company in India after Taj. The company's current inventory size is 1132 rooms, including 949 rooms under Lemon Tree brand across 11 properties in 10 locations and a 183 room Red Fox Hotel at Jaipur.

"We would be the second largest hotel owning company in India after Taj by 2012. With our current pipeline of properties under construction, see us managing an inventory size of about 2500 rooms under the Lemon Tree brand and 1200 rooms under the Red Fox brand that caters to mid-scale market. All our existing, or upcoming properties are owned, developed and managed by us," informed Keswani.

The hotel company is readying to open four properties totalling 670 rooms, over the next few months. Under the lemon Tree Hotels brand, the company is readying to open a 267 room property at Hyderabad and a 188-room property at Bengaluru. Other Lemon Tree properties are coming up at Pune, Gurgaon, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Shimla, Jaipur and Delhi International airport.

It will soon open a 94-room Red Fox Hotel in East Delhi. Another Red Fox Hotel, a 121 room's property, is coming up at Hyderabad. The brand caters to budget to mid-scale market. Red Fox Hotel opened its first property, a 183 room's hotel, at Jaipur in November last year. Besides, more Red Fox properties are coming up at Kondli in East Delhi, Delhi International Airport and Gurgaon.

Throwing light on company's policy to drive its future growth, Keswani said that the company will continue to own, develop and manage its properties. "The best assurance that no compromises are made in quality, standard and branding is through owning and managing our properties. We are building brand. If we don't control the asset, we don't have control over the brand," he said.

Explaining the reason behind the 'own and manage' model, Keswani said, "In India, major power lies in the hand of owners. And, as most owners or developers have other source of income, they seem to get into hotel business for no obvious reason but to pamper their ego. And this contradicts with the nuances of hotel operations."

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