

# hotelier india

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL HOTEL MANAGEMENT

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT  
FDI  
GROWTH  
JOB CREATOR  
GST  
BIZLEISURE  
FDI  
FSI  
FOREIGN EXCHANGE  
POLICIES  
LEISURE TOURISM  
BIZLEISURE  
POLICIES  
GDP  
GST  
GROWTH  
POLICIES  
FDI  
FSI  
GST  
GROWTH  
POLICIES  
LEISURE TOURISM  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
SPIRITUAL TOURISM  
GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES  
POLICIES  
BIZLEISURE  
FOREIGN EXCHANGE  
TOURISM  
SPIRITUAL TOURISM  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
POLICIES  
BIZLEISURE

POLICY AND GROUND REALITY  
**NEED TO  
FORGE NEW  
SYNERGIES**



# MAKE A SPLASH

Swimming pools have progressed from merely being a given in a hotel to an aesthetically pleasing, sustainable and technologically advanced space.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

**W**ater, the elixir of life, can be therapeutic. A swim, then, is the perfect way to relax and also get that much-needed exercise. Swimming is not just a great cardio workout but also a wonderful way for friends and family to hang together. And, if the pool is in a luxury hotel, your experience is elevated to another level altogether. Hoteliers are increasingly opting for infinity pools, rooftop pools, heated pools and more to make them more attractive for guests.

## Design mantra

Simplicity is the key to designing a cost-effective swimming pool. "Using FRP (Fibre Reinforced Plastic) for construction is the latest trend in low-cost swimming pools. You not only save in terms of civil work but also the finishing cost is low," explains Piyush Mehra, Principal Architect, PS Design, Mumbai. For a swimming pool, the focus is not just on the design but also its other features. Kush Kapoor, Area General Manager, Roseate Hotels & Resorts says, "Our



➤ Piyush Mehra, Principal Architect, PS Design Mumbai

rooftop infinity swimming pool at Roseate House has vacuum points within it so no external machine or equipment is required to clean the pool water. This system is economical as it keeps our maintenance cost low."

For a resort property, a swimming pool is one of the major attractions. "Even though we have many beaches around, majority of the guests love to spend most of their time in and around the pool. It is their chosen place to detox. As a design element, it has to aesthetically compliment the look of the entire resort. We want people to be able to relax and lounge

around, therefore the size and space needs to be kept in mind. It should be simple, yet elegant,” says Cajetan Araujo, General Manager, W Goa.

### Nature inspired

Designers and hoteliers are using natural influences while designing various facets of a hotel, and swimming pools are not far behind. An infinity edge pool is popular as it merges with the natural environment. Atif Ansari, Chief Engineer, Le Meridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa states, “In most of the recreational properties, there is a trend of incorporating rocks and cascading waterfalls that create an illusion of natural water for continuous flow in the pool. In our property, we have built a leisure pool on the ground level, specially designed with trees around, the pool in a bid to retain the natural beauty of the property. The swimming pools are an integral part of our hotel architecture and landscape. Its shape and profile are either derived from, or compliment the designer’s concept as envisaged for the overall hotel.”

Changing rooms have to be very well planned—covered, but with a touch of a natural element added to it. Hetal Bhanushali, Director of SPA by JW at JW Marriott Bengaluru adds, “The design is important for both sundeck as well as any pathway. The pool should not be kept in close vicinity of hotel traffic to ensure peace and tranquillity.” Landscape plays an equally important role. “Usually, the landscape designer integrates the softscape with the hardscape of the pool and its surroundings. For example, in resort hotels, the pool could be free-flowing in shape, which gets further enhanced by the planters, trees and water fountains in and around the pool. The other way is to have steps leading into the pool or have loungers placed in the shallow end of the pool,” says Shiv Kashyap, Vice President - Technical Services, Accor India & South Asia.

### Eco call

Usually, water usage is monitored through the metre in the waterline that also helps ensure there is no wastage. “We ensure that



➔ Manish Kumar, Chief Engineer, WelcomHotel, Bengaluru



➔ Hetal Bhanushali, Spa Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru Associates (BMA).

our pool water is recycled so the pool is built with an absorbed system to facilitate it. The pool water standards and parameters need to be met with for consistency. We treat and re-use water through a filtration plant, suction sweeping and backwashing,” says Kapoor. Most hotels have systematic operating procedures that monitor and record the pool water usage. The design of the pool is key to ensure sensitivity towards the environment. “We ensure minimum wastage through adequate water treatment mechanisms,” adds Manish Kumar, Chief Engineer, WelcomHotel, Bengaluru. According to Vivek Anandhan, Head of Design - GCC & India, The Ascott Limited, “Water is a very critical depleting resource. Hence, it is recycled. Also the underwater lighting system are LED types which saves energy. No excess energy is spent to heat the pool, considering we’re located in a tropical region. Moreover, the pool is strategically located on the eastern side of the building so that it gets ample amount of morning sunlight. The afternoon sun, which tends to be extremely hot, is taken care of by the shade provided by the gym structure, strategically designed to make the pool pleasantly habitable at all times. This also ensures the pool water comparatively remains warm even late in the evenings,” he says.

### Privacy matters

The location and design of a hotel pool are equally important since guests desire privacy. A resort attracts customers of all kind, from families to couples and individuals. “The fact that we do not have one pool but distinctly distributed three pools across the properties offers everyone an option to select their view and get their own space. ‘WET’ is our swimming pool with distinct demarcations, where sunbeds are used to divide the space. Our ‘Vitality Pool’ (spa pool for in-house guests and non-residents) is an enclosed indoor pool.



➔ Swimming pool at JW Marriott, Bengaluru



➔ Along with the design, the location of a pool is very important since guests desire privacy.



➔ Pools are designed with trees around them in order to retain the natural beauty of the property.

Finally, the 'ROCKPOOL' is where our events and W happenings are hosted. This is also famous for its spectacular view," said Araujo. The landscape layout, mainly the softscape is planned in such a way that it prevents direct view of the pool and ensures privacy for guests from other areas of the hotel, claims Kashyap.

### Cost versus quality

The pool water is usually recycled to prevent wastage and control the water bill, while pool filtration plants and dosing chemicals ensure the water is clean. The size of the pump and the balancing tank are the most important aspects while designing the pool as well as the supply and discharge pipeline layout. This one-time investment is beneficial in long-term management of the pool. Products and solutions to be used for a pool vary, depending on various factors such as pool size and type. "At our rooftop infinity pool in Roseate House and outdoor pool at The Roseate, we use astral

recommended chemicals such as soda ash, alum, copper sulphate, HCL and TCC 90 granules. It is important for a swimming pool to have an efficient filtration system. Chlorine-based systems should be avoided as they are harmful for the skin and the environment as well. Instead, ozone or chemical-free filtration systems must be used," informs Kapoor.

Accor Hotels use a robotic submersible suction sweeper, which only collects dust and dirt and releases water back into pool, to maintain the overall cleanliness of the water. "With a traditional suction sweeping system and an added filtration plant, we can use the same water without compromising on the cleanliness of the pool and maintaining the highest level of hygiene standards for our guests. This process helps us in preventing wastage. Having said this, there is some water loss due to evaporation which is unavoidable," added Kashyap.

### Beyond its intended purpose

Pools are becoming not just a place to swim or relax, but a space where guests love to try new adventures with water. Many upcoming activities such as zumba, acrobatic sports or even the hamster ball have become favoured swimming pool activities. "Glass-wall pools are the latest buzz in the market. A part or an entire length of pool is made with glass. This adds to the classiness of the design and the swimmer can enjoy a panoramic view," says Mehra.

The pool space in city hotels is premium, putting pressure on these spaces to contribute highly when it comes to generating revenue. This trend includes utilising the pool space as a food and beverage area as well. This not just allows multi-use of the area during the day, but the ambience and design is crafted in such a way that it becomes a destination outlet in the evenings.

Indian hoteliers are indeed redefining the phrase—life is cool by the pool! ■



➔ Atif Ansari, Chief Engineer, Le Meridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa



➔ Vivek Anandhan, Head of Design - GCC & India, The Ascott Limited