

Wholesome Wellness

Hoteliers are focusing on wellness with a renewed focus in the backdrop of the pandemic, with good reason

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO



→ The focus of Spa Alila is to ensure guests find a way to really let go, to pause, and take time to reconnect with nature, each other, and themselves.

Hotels are betting on wellness in a big way as the post-pandemic trump card, and it seems to be auguring well for the industry. After all, post the COVID-19 pandemic, if there is one thing that's on top of everyone's mind, it is wellness. In fact, some hotels have maintained wellness as their primary focus and are evolving their offerings as a destination for health, with the luxury aspect kept intact.

BE WELL

The last couple of years has highlighted the importance of physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Dr Jitendra Varshney, Wellness Director, Six Senses Fort Barwara, says, "Our program, Reconnect with Six Senses, includes three wellness days focused on building a stronger body, boosting brain power, and looking inwards to reconnect with your heart. 'Boost Your Immunity Wellness Day' is a one-day spa takeover, which is a great immunity reboot if one is feeling sluggish, sniffly or fatigued from a stressful few months or long-haul flight. 'Mind Your Brain Wellness Day' is another one-day program that helps one care for and improve their state of mind through ancient practices of yoga, meditation and modern bio hacks including brain games, developmental drawings, and binaural beats."

SEEKING ZEN

The concept of wellness is also changing to become holistic and inclusive. Given the current state of the world, travellers are seeking wellness-based amenities and a focus on fitness, nutrition, and



➔ Dr. Jitendra Varshney, Wellness Director, Six Senses Fort Barwara

holistic experiences from our hotel. "Now the pandemic has intensified wellness as a priority. We are putting mental wellness, the awareness of personal health and well-being at the forefront. Wellness is no more just restricted to superficial spa treatments, but is more about fitness, nutritional value and mindful eating," says Jaidev Dutta, GM, Holiday Inn Bengaluru Racecourse (an IHG Hotel). In fact, the best way to keep



➔ Wellness Programs at Six Senses, Fort Barwara, include Discover Yoga, Sleep, detox, fitness and Ayurvedic Rejuvenation which range from three to ten nights.



➔ The spa at Six Senses Fort Barwara offers an extensive Ayurvedic whole body healing system, meditation, and personalised wellness programs based on the preventative principles of Eastern medicine and result-oriented Western influences.

guests of all ages involved is to offer activities that are appreciated by different age groups.

Amaan Kidwai, Area Manager, Welcomhotels North, and GM, Welcomhotel Sheraton New Delhi, adds, "Guests can indulge in a range of therapies including eclectic massages, beauty treatments and much more at our signature spa, K by Kaya Kalp at Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels Chail. The outdoor recreation centre, Cubs Corner, allows guests to engage in excursions with captivating activities such as archery and canvas painting or spend exhilarating moments indoors with pool tables. Children may enjoy an outdoor and indoor play area - Ollies Corner- creatively designed, especially for them. Guests can find their inner Zen at our on-premises meditation centre on the hilltop or unwind in nature's lap during a hike on our on-site adventure trails - Oak and Pine trail."

HOLISTIC WELLNESS

Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy, fitness, and healthy organic cuisine are being touted as the best way to restore balance and harmony. 'Namaste Dwaar' is a wellness retreat based on individualised treatments that combines the most powerful Indian healing systems of Ayurveda, Vedic acupressure, reflexology, naturopathy and yoga. Arvind Rathi, Founder Promoter, Namaste Holidays, says, "The Indian countryside is the ideal destination for wellness through its simplistic ways of being; the village landscapes serve as a reminder that we often overcomplicate our lives. We want to showcase rural living activities, farming, and handicrafts as these reflect the local culture. When combined with tourism opportunities in the locality, this can give a fillip to the local economy and provide employment opportunities. Our property will also assist the women in the villages to become financially independent and support their families as well."

CORPORATE PROGRAMS

Stay Well is an integral pillar of Westin, which provides wellness programs with on-site amenities such as group retreats, fitness, spas, and beauty treatments. At Westin, guests are empowered to maintain their well-being routines when they travel through a range of wellness programs. With a focus on 'Eat Well, Sleep Well and Move Well', they have designed guest experiences that enhance wellness on the move. Under the 'Move Well' pillar, they have many programmes for guests, which help them to stay active while on the move. Some of which are WestinWORKOUT, Run-Westin, Running Maps and the Run Concierge program. The WestinWORKOUT Fitness Studio features state-of-the-art equipment and amenities that you are more likely to find in your health club at home, like fresh fruit and chilled towels. It is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for guests. To help travellers stay fit, Run-WESTIN has a host of running-related programs to ensure they can stay active while on the road. They also offer Running Maps with 3- and 5-mile routes through the city. Runners of all levels are welcome to join a group run with their Run Concierge at their hotel or grab a running map and take off on their own. "Some elements that fall under the Sleep Well pillar are the Westin Heavenly Bed and Sleep Well Lavender Balm. The Westin Heavenly Bed is the first hotel brand to create, name and market a superior bed product, Westin transformed both the sleep experience and the industry with the introduction of the Westin Heavenly Bed," says Raghav Sawant, Director of Facilities, The Westin Pune.



➔ Jaideep Anand, VP and GM, The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre



➔ Ashis Rout, Executive Chef, The Leela Gandhinagar



➔ The Leela Gandhinagar has curated menus to help their guests realise and achieve the right balance between health needs and gastronomic expectations.

WOWING GUESTS

Taj West End has launched the Wellness Voyage package to create a holistic approach toward wellness; the offer includes daily immersive experiences, signature healing therapies, in addition to the immunity-boosting curated meals, and Indian healing wellness consultation, all in the serenity of the destination. Offering three-, five- and seven-day itineraries, the Wellness Voyage program begins with a consultation with a wellness coach, followed by a range of spa therapies and treatments at the hotel's Jiva Spa. Guests can indulge in guided yoga and meditation sessions to invigorate themselves in the calm and tranquility of the Gardens. Sandip Narang, Hotel Manager, Taj West End, Bengaluru, says, "we believe that the secret to overall well-being lies in maintaining a healthy balance of mind, body and soul. We have recently added to our existing



➔ Spa Alila is the only spa in Goa that features a Spa Kitchen where they blend their own oils and prepare scrubs and masks with natural ingredients.

INNERgise program - an array of initiatives designed specifically to enhance one's immunity through curated stays, rejuvenating spa treatments, captivating experiences, and nourishing meals in collaboration with Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal. Catering to the growing demand for gourmet food experiences, Qmin - IHCL's culinary platform and food delivery app has launched an independent menu under INNERgise. In consultation with Arya Vaidya Sala, Kottakkal, our chefs have curated a nutritious and energising menu using fresh, home-grown ingredients, traditionally known for their immunity-boosting nature, to create a holistic menu. Guests looking to satiate their taste buds with wholesome meals packed with antioxidants and superfoods can order from the Qmin app."

GOING NATURAL

Post the pandemic, several large hotel chains are increasingly focusing on various aspects related to wellness. Wellness at Araiya extends not just from their Ayurveda-inspired spa offering but to the guest's nutritional choices, physical well-being, and sleep health. "Araiya was one of the first hotel brands in India to introduce a bottling plant at the Araiya Resort in Palampur, where we follow a five-step filtration program to filter the naturally available Himalayan spring water sourced from the mountains to not only help our guests alkalise their bodies but also be a part of a program that eliminates single-use plastic waste and the carbon footprint from transportation. We take sleep and health very seriously, and our brand guidelines dictate a complete Araiya sleep experience that includes the elimination of light and sound through adaptive design," says Amruda Nair, Director, Araiya Hotels. Guests at Araiya appreciate how as a brand, they help them make lifestyle choices that are both positive, sustainable and impactful. A good example would be a physical activity such as a trek that is healthy in terms of exercise and provides exposure to natural light and local sights and sounds. Furthermore, by employing local guides, including women from neighbouring villages, we offer our guests the opportunity to learn about the customs and culture of their surroundings," adds Nair.

Ayurveda calling

Wellness is the new health. The COVID-19-induced pandemic has made people realise that they are never safe until they do not naturally improve their immunity by strengthening their core. Abhilash K Ramesh, Executive Director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group, says, "Over the years, we have introduced various other wellness solutions for our guests that rejuvenate them and treat their ailing problems and keep them healthy. These include farm-to-fork, and consultation with authentic Kerala form of astrology to heal them spiritually. Even our new additions and amendments to Kairali, like the new yoga and meditation hall, and the inclusion of 33 new species of herbal healing plants, are for guests to be surrounded by nature and breathe fresh healing air. These initiatives are part of a healing program that will rejuvenate and de-stress one's mind and body."

SPA ESCAPE

Spas are also becoming the focus of many properties. At Alila Diwa Goa, Spa Alila focuses on ensuring guests find a way to let go, pause, and reconnect with nature, each other, and themselves. They have devised holistic and natural experiences that provide the much-needed balance and immunity boost through treatments and balanced diets. The range of



➔ Dr. Arjita Kumari, Wellness Director, Alila Diwa Goa



➔ Spa Alila's programs work to balance the wheel of the physical, physiological, and psychological wellbeing of their guests.



➔ Alilia Diwa offers residential wellness programs ranging from three to 14 nights.

therapeutic workshops includes meditation, art therapy, cooking workshops, hypnotherapy, Pranic healing and lifestyle consultation. "We offer a Self-Styled Wellness Experience that enables the guests to take charge and craft their own well-being routine by adopting a comfortable yet healthy lifestyle and yet enjoying a glass of wine at the end of the day. Our wellness director will speak to the guests, understand their goals, tastes, and preferences, and accordingly guide them through a healthy meal plan, exercise regime and other experiences without having to compromise on the spirit of holidaying in Goa. Spa Alilia is the only spa in Goa with a Spa Kitchen where we blend our oils and prepare scrubs and masks with natural ingredients. We believe that different oils and their blends have different therapeutic properties and depending on the guests' needs, we blend the oils so that they know exactly what is being used on their body," says Dr. Arjita Kumari, Wellness Director, Alilia Diwa Goa.

EATING WELL

The Leela recently launched the brand's signature wellness programme - Aujasya by The Leela- aimed at redefining the road to holistic well-being that promotes life's vigour, built around the two Rs of Well-being - Restore (Food) and Renew (Mindfulness). The first pillar Restore (Food), has been launched in collaboration with the renowned nutritionist and food consultant, Dr Ankita Jalori. "Led by culinary master executive chef, Ashis Rout, we have thoughtfully curated the menus to help our guests realise and achieve the right balance between health needs and gastronomic expectations by focusing on millets, lean proteins, low-fat dairy, and whole grains," says Jaideep Anand, Vice President and General Manager, The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre. The Leela has committed to curating experiences that resonate with the evolving needs of today's



➔ Amaan Kidwai, Area Manager, North & GM, Welcomhotel Sheraton New Delhi



➔ Abhilash K Ramesh, Executive Director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group



➔ Sandip Narang, Hotel Manager, Taj West End, Bengaluru



➔ Amruda Nair, Director, Araiya Hotels

discerning luxury travellers through this unique program.

FOOD FILES

Hotels today focus on crafting various food and beverage offerings to suit each traveller's individual dietary needs and preferences. Jubin Shah, Director, Viveda Wellness Village, adds, "A noticeable change is that people between the age group of 25 to 35 are opting for wellness holidays in their yearly travel plans. The food concept of tasty Sattvic food using healthy substitutes like jaggery, coconut sugar, Himalayan pink salt, ragi and whole wheat for refined sugar, table salt, and refined flours respectively has been widely accepted and appreciated." We are committed to our Travel with Purpose goals - 2030, ensuring our operations are environmentally sustainable and focusing on reducing our food wastage by over 50%. As the world begins recovering from the pandemic, the demand for wellness tourism will continue to increase, supporting the quest to live a healthy and long life. We continue to impart and share our knowledge and vision with our partners through on-site sessions and industry best practices acquired across regions. We have implemented Aayush in our a-la-carte menu at all Hilton properties across India. Considering the daunting scenario, the chefs at Hilton have curated a healthy, immunity boosting superfood menu for our guests based on Aayush recommended ingredients like turmeric powder, dry ginger, cumin, cinnamon, coriander, black pepper and basil," explains Rohit Chopra, Director, Food & Beverage, Conrad Bengaluru.

Wellness today is an aspect that hoteliers cannot overlook; hence, taking steps to integrate the concept into their various offerings will augur well for them and their guests. After all, wellness is becoming a significant driver as far as footfalls and revenues are concerned. Having said this much, stay well and stay happy, a little luxury will make it only better. **H**