



Hotels Go green

Sustainability—in the context of hotels—is changing, with many green initiatives becoming the norm and also ensuring guests carry the green ethos forward.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

Balcony view of The Oberoi, Bengaluru

Hotellers are conscientiously working towards prioritizing eco-friendly measures to minimize their environmental footprint. Implementing energy-efficient lighting, water-saving fixtures, recycling programs, biodegradable toiletries, and sourcing food and amenities sustainably, are all on the cards.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Taking an environment-friendly stance involves a holistic assessment of all aspects of operations to implement sustainable choices. Hoteliers have embraced special environmental occasions such as Earth Hour, Global Recycling Day, World Earth Day, and others, initiating impactful campaigns to commemorate these significant events. "Furthermore, hoteliers have adopted broader concepts such as 'Go Green', implementing comprehensive waste management systems, striving for zero carbon foot-



Varun Sahani, Senior Vice President, Kamat Hotels (India)

As guests are more interested and careful towards any project that helps to limit climate change, this is making them think too. "The carbon label project at the Raj Pavilion restaurant of ITC Windsor highlights the carbon footprint of the product which gives a choice to the consumer to combat climate change by opting for the low-carbon food menu. Carbon labelling of more than 200 menu items gets calculated in this project and it is the first restaurant on this large scale. Under the carbon footprint of the guest stay, the unit provides a carbon impact report of



The carbon label project at the Raj Pavilion restaurant of ITC Windsor

print, and emphasizing water conservation efforts. Recognizing the feasibility of integrating these sustainability measures within hotel operations, they have realized the dual benefits of environmental preservation and cost reduction. This strategic approach not only contributes to environmental welfare but also enhances the hotels' gross operating profits (GOPs) by streamlining operational expenses," says Varun Sahani, Senior Vice President, Kamat Hotels (India).

CARBON FOOTPRINT

In line with the trends to address the carbon impacts of stay and dining, ITC Windsor executed the project of carbon labelling of food menus and the carbon footprint of the guest's stay.



Deepak Menezes, General Manager, ITC Windsor

the guest's stay, appreciating the guest's commitment to sustainability," says Deepak Menezes, General Manager, ITC Windsor.

ENGAGING GUESTS

While embarking on ecological trends, hotels are making sure their guests are also clued in. Mayfair Hotels and Resorts offers immersive experiences to engage guests. From nature-based activities like trekking and river rafting to cultural immer-



Educational tours to showcase eco-friendly practices (boiler plant) at Le Meridien Gurgaon, Delhi NCR

sion through local art, music, and cuisine, guests are given meaningful and authentic experiences that promote environmental awareness and preserve local traditions. “At Mayfair, we believe in engaging our guests in our sustainability journey. We actively encourage them to participate in our linen and towel reuse programs. Through clear communication of the environmental benefits, we offer incentives such as discounts and loyalty points, ensuring they are a part of our responsible resource usage initiatives,” says Rishi Surya Puri, Senior Vice President - Operations, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts. “We ensure that our guests are actively engaged in our sustainability efforts through various channels such as signage, in-room literature green initiative, linen reuse program, dual dustbin with green and black containers to segregate the waste, and staff training. Additionally, we offer interactive experiences and educational tours to showcase our eco-friendly practices and encourage guests to participate in responsible tour-



Solar panel at JW Marriott New Delhi



Shrinivash Yadav, Director of Engineering, Le Meridien Gurgaon, Delhi NCR



Pratiti Rajpal, General Manager, Ronil Goa - a JDV by Hyatt Hotel



Swaroop Raj, Director of Engineering, JW Marriott New Delhi

ism,” adds Shrinivash Yadav, Director of Engineering, Le Meridien Gurgaon, Delhi NCR.

TECHNOLOGY PUSH

Hotels use a range of advanced technologies to bolster sustainable practices. This includes utilizing non-chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) equipment for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, employing heat pumps instead of traditional boilers to reduce carbon emissions, and integrating solar water heater panels to optimize energy usage. “Our commitment extends to waste management, where we segregate waste into wet and dry categories, ensuring proper disposal and recycling with the assistance of a dedicated wet pulveriser machine for efficient food waste processing. Moreover, our wastewater management strategy focuses on minimizing water pollution through optimized sewage treatment plant (STP) operations, with recycled water utilized for landscaping and rainwater soak pits aiding in groundwater recharge while maintaining property cleanliness,” says Pratiti Rajpal, General Manager, Ronil Goa - a JDV by Hyatt Hotel.

DOING THE MATH

Calculating savings from eco-friendly measures involves various



EV charging station at Rhythm Hospitality



The Oberoi, Bengaluru

methods. The MESH (Marriott Environmental Sustainability Hub) platform is used at Marriott hotels for tracking sustainability. "We calculate energy savings by comparing consumption before and after switching to LED bulbs. Water-saving measures are evaluated by monitoring usage before and after installing water-saving fixtures. We track recycling volumes and disposal costs to determine savings from recycling programs. Overall, we establish baseline metrics, monitor changes over time, and consider both direct and indirect impacts to calculate savings effectively," says Shomik Dasgupta, Assistant Director of Engineering, J W Marriott New Delhi. Namish Shetty, Chief Engineer, The Oberoi, Bengaluru adds, "We calculate the energy savings through dedicated energy meters installed for different areas of the hotel. The key performance indicators in HLP (heat, light and power) like units per available room and units per occupied room are reviewed in our weekly meetings and tracked for continuous monitoring."

BUILT ARCHITECTURE

Traditional architecture is also a focus area as the built structure contributes to a large part of the hotel's carbon footprint. Kairali - The Ayurvedic Healing Village in Palakkad, Kerala, for instance, is designed using traditional Kerala architecture, incorporating natural materials such as wood, bamboo, and natural stones. This not only blends harmoniously with the surrounding environment but also reduces the carbon footprint associated with construction. Anoop Vijayraj, General Manager, Kairali - The Ayurvedic Healing Village, says, "We are situated amidst lush greenery and natural surroundings. We actively participate in biodiversity conservation efforts by preserving and protecting the local flora and fauna habitat. The resort continuously explores and implements innovative green initiatives to minimize its environmental footprint and promote sustainable tourism practices." Dr Anmol Ahluwalia, Cluster General Manager - North Goa Taj Fort Aguada Resort & Spa, adds, "Taj Holiday Village Resort & Spa is spread over 28 acres of flat land which houses varieties of educational gardens, and butterfly gardens, through which visitors discover more about the regional ecosystems. Guests are encouraged to plant trees native



Namish Shetty, Chief Engineer, The Oberoi, Bengaluru



Anoop Vijayraj, General Manager, Kairali



Ajay Sharma, General Manager, Taj Corbett Resort & Spa

to Goa as well as the seasonal flowering plants. The retreat gifts seeds to guests who are into gardening; memorabilia crafted from repurposed resources are encouraged in jute bags, instead of using plastic."

VOCAL FOR LOCAL

Hotels are going local to procure items, provide employment to the local community, add to the development of the local community and culture, invest in harnessing renewable sources of energy, reduce the usage of single-use plastic, reduce food wastage, and reduce the dependency on paper. Ajay Sharma, General Manager, Taj Corbett Resort & Spa says, "The mindful plantation drive in and around the resort of indigenous plants during the monsoon has been a huge success. Approximately 8,000 to 9,000 plants have been planted in the past couple of years, a step that has helped the biodiversity to a great extent, simultaneously leaving a very positive impact on our guests. Use of 'mung' grass items for keeping guest amenities and other things in the room is another step that has helped not only make the guest feel happy but has also helped the tribe known to make the handicraft item from the same."



The facade of The Oberoi, Bengaluru



Cleanliness drive at Mayfair Hotels and Resorts

ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV)

As the focus moves to EVs, hotels are also installing charging stations to help guests. These charging stations facilitate the transition to cleaner transportation by encouraging guests to opt for electric vehicles, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. "By providing EV charging infrastructure, we, as hoteliers, support the growing number of environmentally conscious travellers who seek eco-friendly accommodation options. This amenity not only aligns with our guests' sustainability preferences but also enhances the resort's competitive edge and reputation as a responsible and forward-thinking establishment," says Nasir Khan, Corporate General Manager, Rhythm Hospitality.

HOLISTIC THINKING

Emphasizing ethical practices, fair trade principles, and organic farming in sourcing materials and products, ensuring responsible sourcing throughout the supply chain is gaining traction. Im-



Rishi Surya Puri, Senior Vice President - Operations, Mayfair Hotels and Resorts



Nasir Khan, Corporate General Manager, Rhythm Hospitality



Sumeet Suri, General Manager, The Westin Mumbai Garden City

As the focus moves to EVs, hotels are also installing charging stations to help guests.



Sourcing organic products at The Westin Mumbai Garden City

plementing comprehensive waste reduction strategies including organic waste composting, material recycling, and minimizing single-use plastics through the adoption of alternative packaging and reusable alternatives is also a norm. Sumeet Suri, General Manager, The Westin Mumbai Garden City, says, "Hotels are embracing renewable energy technologies such as solar panels, wind turbines, and geothermal systems to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources. Other initiatives include providing eco-friendly amenities and encouraging the use of plant-based menu options to promote environmental sustainability. Additionally, we are educating guests about animal welfare and fair treatment practices." Siddharth Chakravarty, Sustainability Director, Six Senses Fort Barwara adds, "During procurement, we ensure that we purchase energy-efficient equipment for our hotel. Additionally, all our lighting is LED, and our back areas have sensors installed to switch off lights during non-peak hours. We also use a building management system (BMS) to control the hotel's overall energy consumption. In our guest rooms, we have installed Lutron systems that allow us to manage electrical consumption easily."

Hoteliers are certainly upping the ante as far as going green is concerned. ■