

# Ending the Year on a High

As the curtains come down on another year, here is how hospitality is making sure you end it in style...

By Bindu Gopal Rao



Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri is curating memorable festive experiences designed to appeal to both leisure travellers and the local community.

**T**he year-end festive season is a key period for leisure and local travel, and hoteliers have a strategy to attract both through differentiated celebrations.

## Memorable Moments

Hotels across India are gearing up for the holiday season by curating experiential packages. Properties are going beyond traditional hospitality, focusing on wellness, cultural immersion, and personalized celebrations that cater to diverse traveller preferences seeking meaningful year-end escapes.

Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri is curating memorable festive experiences designed to appeal to both leisure travellers and the local community. For the upcoming holiday season, the focus is on creating vibrant celebrations paired with exceptional dining and live entertainment. “We’re introducing live band performances and themed evenings at both our signature outlets—Siliguri Kitchen Poolside and Cinnamon Terrace—offering two distinct experiences tailored for varied guest preferences. The Siliguri Kitchen Poolside event caters to families and couples seeking a relaxed yet lively atmosphere, while Cinnamon Terrace is designed for premium guests who prefer a more exclusive, high-energy celebration. Together with our staycation packages and dining offers, these initiatives aim to boost both occupancy and F&B revenue during the season,” says Manish Chakraborty, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri.

## Family Fun

The festive season is a time for families and friends to come together, and hotels offer packages that are designed to capture exactly that sentiment. By offering bundled experiences with stay plus festive meals, live entertainment, and special inclusions like early check-in and late checkout, they are providing greater value to guests. These curated experiences, supported by digital marketing and regional sales, are expected to drive strong weekend and holiday occupancy.

Mukesh Kumar Rakshit, General Manager, Sayaji Kolhapur, says, “We are welcoming the festive season with renewed energy and exciting offerings designed to make year-end celebrations memorable. Our focus this year is on creating curated experiences from specially designed festive buffets and themed brunches to exclusive staycation packages combining dining, wellness, and entertainment with New Year celebrations. We’re also introducing Christmas and New Year décor themes across the property, designed to enhance the guest experience and create a warm, festive atmosphere.” Their ‘Festive Staycation’ offer includes complimentary breakfast and festive dinner, along with access to the pool and gym facilities. Guests can also enjoy a ‘Stay & Celebrate’ package for New Year’s Eve that combines accommodation with entry to the party, ensuring a seamless celebration experience.



Manish Chakraborty, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Siliguri



Mukesh Kumar Rakshit, General Manager, Sayaji Kolhapur



Gaurav Sinha, Hotel Manager, JW Marriott Hotel



Devendra Parulekar, Founder, SaffronStays.

### Celebrations in the Air

At JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru, the holiday season is all about turning the hotel into an immersive celebratory destination that honours cosiness, decadence, and camaraderie. From the exquisite décor and sparkling lights to the start of the yearly Christmas Cake Mixing ceremony and Christmas Tree Lighting, holiday customs have started in full swing. Gaurav Sinha, Hotel Manager, JW Marriott Hotel, says, “Our main goal is to provide something so enticing in the city so that our local customers don’t have to drive far to take part in a top-notch party. While actively trying to bring in new, well-known performers and elevate engagement throughout Christmas and New Year’s, we are creating trademark experiences, such as private wine-paired dinners at ALBA and lively, opulent festive brunches at JW Kitchen. The celebrations have already begun with the opening of a new location and our cake-mixing ceremony at The Patio at 24/1. After mid-December, business travel is usually restricted, so we put a lot of emphasis on locals by creating custom programmes for families and couples.”

### Food Files

Food and Beverage (F&B) teams are elevated to the forefront, serving as crucial revenue centres. Developing signature festive menus, featuring seasonal ingredients and traditional holiday favourites, they are turning hotel restaurants into destination dining spots. Simultaneously, the bars are introducing unique, holiday-themed drinks and cocktails to enhance the festive spirit and boost income throughout the property.

*“Our focus is on creating curated experiences from specially designed festive buffets and themed brunches to exclusive staycation packages combining dining, wellness.”*

- Mukesh Kumar Rakshit



Gateway Bekal is launching stay packages with complimentary Ayurvedic wellness consultations and spa credits, encouraging guests to truly unwind.





Nihal Kurian, Commercial Director,  
Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks



J. Gopalakrishnan, General Manager,  
Gateway Bekal



Supreet Roy, General Manager,  
Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden  
Hotel



Tejas Chavan, Director at Grape  
County Eco Resort & Spa.



Gateway Bekal blends Kerala's natural beauty with festive celebrations through special holiday packages featuring authentic Kerala Sadya.

Food is a big draw, and when it comes to celebrating the end of the year, it becomes more important. "One of our strongest levers is our in-house chef model. For large families and diverse groups, planning meals outside can be stressful and limiting, especially with different dietary needs, age groups, and preferences. Our chefs design custom menus, from Jain and vegetarian spreads to kid-friendly meals and indulgent grills, all under one roof. Guests do not have to coordinate restaurant bookings, wait times, or travel with seniors and children. Everything comes to the table, fresh and hot, at the villa itself," explains Devendra Parulekar, Founder, SaffronStays.

#### Inclusive Getaways

The visual transformation is paramount. Hotels are heavily investing in immersive décor, applying a luxurious, often branded festive theme throughout the public spaces. Grand installations, including dazzling light displays, magnificent Christmas trees, and whimsical features like a gingerbread house, are used to create a warm, inviting, and instantly shareable ambiance that draws in both guests and local visitors.

*"Guests are looking for spaces that allow them to slow down, breathe fresh air, and reconnect with the outdoors, be it through guided forest walks, farm-to-table dining, birdwatching trails, or simply time spent amidst serene natural landscapes."*

- Tejas Chavan



Moving beyond just stay packages Grape County Eco Resort & Spa curates complete festive experiences that combine stay, dining, entertainment, wellness, and outdoor activities.

Nihal Kurian, Commercial Director, Hilton Bangalore Embassy GolfLinks, says, “We are transforming into winter wonderlands, shifting our strategy from simple accommodation to immersive festive experiences. The focus is on creating a ‘home away from home’ that not only drives bookings but also maximises ancillary revenue through carefully crafted seasonal offerings. A cornerstone of this strategy is the creation of comprehensive staycation packages. Recognising that guests desire convenience during the bustling holiday season, we are bundling core accommodations with amenities. These packages include holiday meals, sought-after perks like complimentary upgrades, and fun extras such as a beer bucket or other unique offers. This strategic bundling effectively raises the Average Daily Rate (ADR) while providing guests with an easy, pre-planned festive escape.”

### Staying Local

Showcasing the destination with a focus on all things local is something that hotels are actively seeking to do.

Gateway Bekal blends Kerala’s natural beauty with festive celebrations through special holiday packages featuring authentic Kerala Sadya and globally inspired cuisines alongside wellness retreats combining Ayurvedic treatments with seasonal rejuvenation. “Our backwater setting offers families and couples tranquil escapes from urban chaos. Enhanced offerings include sunset boat rides, cultural performances, and personalised riverside dining. Extended spa hours, special children’s programmes, and flexible event spaces accommodate diverse celebrations, ensuring guests experience both festive joy and serene relaxation seamlessly,” says J. Gopalakrishnan, General Manager, Gateway Bekal. The hotel is launching stay packages with complimentary Ayurvedic wellness consultations and spa credits, encouraging guests to truly unwind. The festive dining series features traditional Kerala feasts celebrating local heritage. Special family packages include curated experiences such as Theyyam, visits to the wildlife sanctuary, backwater boat rides, cultural performances, and children’s programmes.

### Overcoming Challenges

The holiday season is one of the busiest and most critical

periods in the hospitality industry, driving increased travel and bookings. Most of the hotels focus on delivering elevated guest experiences while managing high occupancy through enhanced personalisation, festive offerings, and efficient operations. However, this comes with its own set of challenges. During the holiday season, there is a significant increase in travellers seeking peaceful destinations, which creates the challenge of sustaining personalised service amid high occupancy. When bookings are made well in advance, managing extended stays becomes more demanding.

Supreet Roy, General Manager, Sheraton Grand Pune Bund Garden Hotel, says, “The holiday season presents challenges like managing increased guest volumes while maintaining personalised service. High demand for popular experiences and advance bookings during festivals can strain resources. We address these through meticulous planning to streamline operations. Prioritising guest engagement and customised experiences helps uphold service quality. By balancing operational efficiency with warmth and attention, these challenges become opportunities to deliver memorable stays and build lasting guest loyalty during the festive season.”

### In conclusion

Travellers today are increasingly seeking tailor-made experiences that go beyond the traditional idea of luxury. The modern guest values meaningful connections with nature, mindful relaxation, and authentic local interactions over standard resort indulgence.

“They are looking for spaces that allow them to slow down, breathe fresh air, and reconnect with the outdoors, be it through guided forest walks, farm-to-table dining, birdwatching trails, or simply time spent amidst serene natural landscapes. Hotels and resorts that can blend comfort with conscious living, offering sustainability, wellness, and a sense of place, are seeing the strongest resonance with this new generation of travellers,” says Tejas Chavan, Director at Grape County Eco Resort & Spa.

Year-end travel is no longer just about ticking a destination or attending the biggest party in town. Increasingly guests are choosing to invest in shared time with people who matter to them, and hotels are providing exactly what guests need to unwind and start the new year with fresh vigour. ■