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Hotel Connect

Lemon Tree

Planning to touch the 100 operational hotels' mark by 2023

Located in the city's iconic business and shopping hub on Rajpur road, Keys Prima by Lemon Tree Hotels, Aketa, Dehradun is an iconic property in the region. In an exclusive conversation with HRANI Hospitality **Vikramjit Singh**, President, Lemon Tree Hotels talks about the strategies adapted by the hospitality chain to survive the pandemic and its growth strategy post it.



■ Vikramjit Singh

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Operational Strategy:

Our strategy now is completely focussed to drive higher ARR's and we are clear that we would like to take this route going forward. We kick-started the season with a revenue meet where it was decided that it's time we relook at pricing across the portfolio and aim for ARR recovery in Q1 itself. We see corporate pent up demand playing out in Q1 along with a plethora of auspicious wedding dates resulting in what we feel will be a start of a great recovery for the industry in general. An interesting trend that has emerged is the exponential growth in our retail

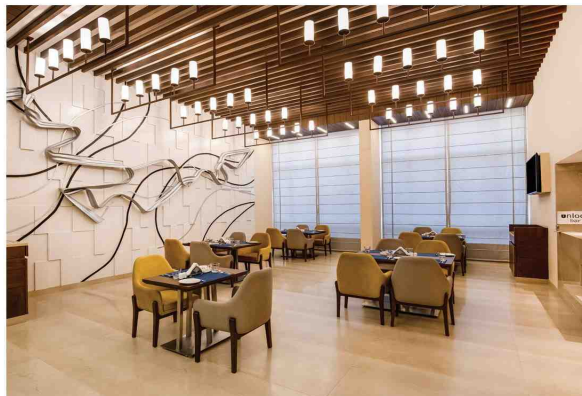
demand resulting in our average rates hardening. The first half of the quarter has also seen a resurgence of corporate demand, which has added to the recovery

We witnessed the fastest recovery in occupancy and ARR in the leisure portfolio and are now seeing a strong uptick in corporate demand as well. Along with transient demand, weddings and MICE have done well in most leisure destinations. Along with corporate demand, we have also seen the impact of staycations playing out in our city hotels, which have augmented the occupancies there. Cities like Gurgaon,



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Bangalore and Hyderabad, which were lagging till the previous fiscal, are now showing a very heartening bounce back.

Recovery Strategy:

Our strategy now is completely focussed to drive higher ARR's and to aim for ARR recovery in Q1 itself. We can see corporate pent up demand playing out in Q1 along with a plethora of auspicious wedding dates resulting in what we feel has been the start of a great recovery for the industry in general. An interesting trend that has emerged is the exponential growth in our retail demand resulting in our average rates hardening. The first half of the quarter has also seen a resurgence of corporate demand, which has added to the recovery.

We witnessed the fastest recovery in occupancy and ARR in the leisure portfolio and are now seeing a strong uptick in corporate demand as well. Along with transient demand, weddings and MICE have done well in most leisure destinations. Along with corporate demand, we have also seen the impact of staycations playing out in our city hotels, which have augmented the occupancies there. Cities like Gurgaon, Bangalore and Hyderabad, which were lagging till the previous fiscal, are now showing a very heartening bounce back. Delhi and Mumbai have started to surpass their pre-Covid numbers and are on course to scale to even greater heights.

Expansion Plans:

We opened our first hotel of 49 rooms in May 2004 in Gurugram. As of May 2022, in just 18 years, we stand at 84 hotels with 8250 rooms across 52 destinations in India and abroad. Of these, 40 hotels are owned, and the rest are managed or franchised. As part of our expansion on the owned side, we are building a large hotel in Mumbai and resort in Shimla, which will add a combined inventory of 738 rooms to our portfolio.

Going forward, our predominant growth will definitely come from the management and franchise route. We started managing hotels in 2012 and for a decade-old company to reach 44 hotels is a decent number and effort. But there is a huge scope to grow further, especially since we now have seven brands across different segments to work with.

On managed and franchised side, we have 24 hotels with over 1,600 rooms in the pipeline. We are optimistic of touching the 100 operational hotels mark by 2023. By 2024, we should have 108 operational hotels at about 10,600 rooms in 65

Keys Prima by Lemon Tree Hotels, Aketa, Dehradun

Located adjacent to the Survey of India, just 7.5 km from the railway station, and 32 km from the airport, this modern hotel offers easy access to the snow-capped mountains of Mussoorie (a 45-minute drive) and is about two hours from the holy cities of Haridwar and Rishikesh.

Keys Prima by Lemon Tree Hotels, Aketa, Dehradun caters to both business travellers and tourists, with its close proximity to not only the key corporate offices of National Hydrographic, SBI and Reserve Bank of India, but also popular tourist spots like Sharadhrara, Robber's Cave, Tapkeshwar Temple and the Buddha Temple. This hotel, with 40 rooms, is equipped with a multi-cuisine coffee shop – Keys Café, a restobar – Unlock Bar, and a fitness centre. The hotel also features expansive banquet spaces and conference facilities, including spacious conference rooms, a large pillar-less ballroom, and a sprawling garden. The event venues are designed to meet discerning guests' business and events requirements by seamlessly transforming into an impactful destination for residential conferences, weddings, office retreats and social events.

destinations, and this doesn't include what we sign in the near future. We aim to be present in over 100 destinations in India and abroad over the next five years. We are especially looking to strengthen our presence in Tier II and Tier III cities in India, and strategically also wish to be present in global destinations with high volumes of traffic from India, such as Manhattan, London, Dubai, Kathmandu, Bhutan, Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore.