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INTERVIEW



Perfect Choice for Family Holidays



Sterling Holidays Managing Director, **Ramesh Ramanathan** in an interview with the Asian Traveller attributes the rapid development of technology enabled products and services to its impact on Leisure Tourism. He also stressed that the average Indian customer has changed a great deal over time with liberalisation and integration of the country with the global economy.

The brand name, no doubt, is catchy and hints at the sort of staying experience one could expect. Tell us how sterling a holiday experience that befits the name of Sterling Holidays is offered at your resorts.

Sterling Holidays is committed to delivering 'Happy Holidays' to all its members and guests and that service mission is reflected in our unique product and service design.

The strategic thinking for instance has gone into choosing our destinations and resort locations. While Sterling offers resorts at popular tourist destinations such as Kodai, Ooty, and Mussoorie, we are constantly looking for potential destinations which can be developed. Recently a resort was opened in Karwar on the northern coast of Karnataka, bordering Goa. Sterling was the first to open a resort in Munnar in the 1990s, at that time Munnar was not on the tourist radar. Today, Munnar is rated as one of the top 3 holiday destinations in Asia and Sterling is widely acknowledged for its role in development of Munnar as a tourist destination!

Your focus seems to be on providing fun filled family holiday experiences. Is that the reason why your

properties are located in some of the best leisure travel destinations in India?

Yes, as rightly pointed out, both the destination and resort location play an important role in delivering Happy Holidays to families.

While we are moving apace with the changing needs of the Indian traveller, our primary focus is still on family holidays. Yes, India is changing. However, there is one unchanged factor - and, that is, a family holiday to build togetherness and bond with each other. Indians still want to go for a holiday with their family and are still family values driven.

Sterling is primarily a Vacation Ownership Company. As such, when a family owns a membership, they feel a sense of assurance for the simple reason that the relationship between the consumer and the company stretches over a long time span, bringing with it the comfort of familiarity and the reassurance that the children will be safe and taken care of. Families also like revisiting memories of happy holidays. Here, too, Vacation Ownership triumphs as customers can choose to holiday at their favourite resorts over and over again.

What all products and services do you offer at your properties, to deliver a perfect fun filled holiday for families?

A leisure break at Sterling Holiday Resorts relieves the everyday stress of routine life for everyone. Our members

experience the comfort of full-service and contemporary accommodation at all our resorts. As pointed out earlier, we understand our members and that is why we cater to the tastes of different palates by offering scrumptious multi-cuisine menu. In addition, the specialist menu includes the local delicacies in order to familiarize guests not only with the destination but also with its rich culinary tradition.

Our Fun Rangers team at the resorts ensure fun-filled activities for all age groups. Hence, we have activities through the day - starting with yoga classes, outdoor leisure sports within the premises, adventure activities such as trekking and a whole host of indoor recreation ranging from board games to video gaming. On most evenings, our resorts organize an entertainment program and during festive occasions - celebrations on traditional lines interspersed with modern day activities are organized.

Can we expect new launches, in the near future? If yes, please do disclose the details.

At present, we have 19 full service resorts with an inventory of 1404 rooms. In a span of twelve months, we have added six resorts in our portfolio - Corbett, Karwar, Thekkady, Dharamshala and two in Goa. We do plan to add more resorts in the coming year and would be making announcements on new additions to our footprint soon. ■

