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Readers: Our Most Precious Asset

Two Mumbai Marriott group properties gear up for IMEX



Nicholas Dumbell



Vinay Singh

Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel & Lakeside Chalet

It was when my good old friend Monica Edara, marketing communications manager, Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel & Lakeside Chalet – Mumbai, mentioned that the GM of her hotel is going to IMEX, Frankfurt that got me interested. She and the GM of the hotel, Nicholas Dumbell were kind enough to invite me with my family to the hotel.

Having been to Renaissance several times to cover events (and also recommended it to my corporate friends who have successfully held select global events), I knew that this was one of the best hotel based venues in Mumbai and ideal for my IMEX issue.

Situated on the banks of Powai lake and amidst 15 acres of lush greenery and with 600 rooms it is a luxurious oasis ideal for global events. “Location – close proximity to the airports, large open spaces, gardens, terraces, huge room inventory, extensive restaurant offerings spread across seven F&B outlets and one of India’s largest convention spaces - 1,30,000 Sq ft including indoor and outdoor spaces with some giving you the with best view of the Powai lake make us the best option in Mumbai,” said a smiling Nicholas Dumbell.

With 18 years in Marriott, I found Nicholas a truly multi-cultural global citizen who was born in Brunei to Mauritian and

British parents grew up as an expat in five different Asian countries of which four years in India. “I have truly fallen in love with this country. Hospitality is in the heart of you people which makes it a dual pleasure working in India,” said a smiling Nicholas.

While the hotel is already considered a lifestyle destination, its events and banqueting that has turned out to be the lifeline of the hotel. “45% of revenue comes from MICE and another 15% from group check-ins. I have noticed F&B is the top priority for Indians and the guests expect Indian food to be spot on. So we have invested a lot on hiring the right staff. Our chefs not only meet the clients before the event, but also half an hour before the event our chefs invite the organisers to taste the food and spices. They also feel involved in the process,” said Nicholas.

The hotel being in partial process of renovation Vinay Singh, DoSM of the hotel said, “I have to appreciate the vision of the owners that way back in 2001 decided to have a lakefront view hotel. It was a destination for the rich and affluent. But with more International brands coming in Mumbai this hotel lost its ‘top of mind recall’. Now we are renovating the hotel – both rooms and restaurants – to make them trendy.”



Vinay has over 15 years of experience in the hospitality sector including the prestigious St. Regis where he worked under the guidance of Anurag Bhatnagar, Marriott International's multi-property VP, Luxury, India. "I have learned a lot from him and this is helping me a lot in my role as a DoSM here. This is my first MICE hotel and the uniqueness that I found here is that it gives guests an opportunity to breathe fresh air," said Vinay.

Since Vinays arrival he has been able to attract quite a few top end events to the property including lifestyle and fashion events. This year they are the partners for Miss India events. The hotel is also planning to start a discovery tour which will be a nice cruise

for guests. "Our first cruise will take stars, socialites and guests on a luxurious yacht across Mumbai. Later on we plan to offer this as an add-on service to our MICE guests," said Vinay.

Apart from expansive convention facilities the hotel has an excellent pool, gym and Quan spa with 6 treatment rooms. I was pretty impressed by the executive lounge located on the top floor - probably the largest in the country. Spread over a total area of 12,500 sq ft it's meant for the exclusive few including Marriott reward Gold and Platinum members. "We do give out this lounge along with the Renaissance terrace and the garden for events as they offer an excellent view of the Powai Lake," said Nicholas.



JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar

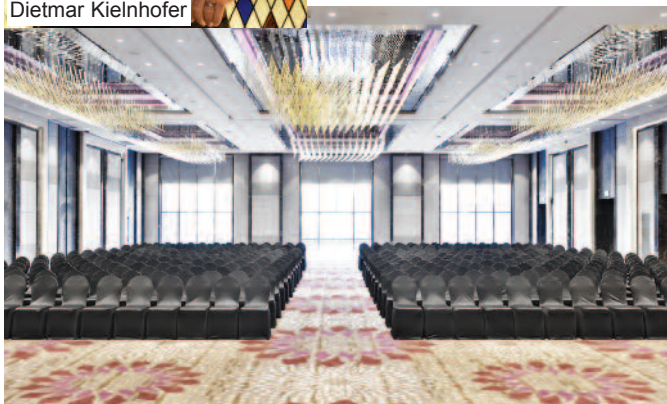
When Monica invited me to experience Renaissance Mumbai she talked highly of Dietmar Kielnhofer with whom she had interacted a lot during her Hyderabad days - when he was Complex GM at Starwood Hyderabad. He had recently moved to JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar as the GM of the 580 room property and would also be at IMEX, Frankfurt.

Co-ordinating with Sanhita Ghoshal, senior marketing & communications manager, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar who arranged a meeting with Dietmar Kielnhofer at such a short notice, I visited this huge property located just adjacent to the airport - literally walking distance.

"There is huge potential for



Dietmar Kielnhofer



MICE in India. At IMEX we expect to showcase what India has got and how we can attract International MICE. There's huge MICE potential across India that can be tapped by International tour and MICE operators. I and Nicholas plan to work in tandem to promote India, and not just only our properties, as an alternative option to the oversold Bangkok, Hong Kong and Singapore. I believe India will be the hottest destination for tourism and MICE in next 5 years," said Dietmar, who has had over 30 years of industry exposure across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar is a recent luxury addition to the existing Mumbai airport hotels. The hotel offers over 95,000 sq.ft. of indoor and outdoor convention spaces and has 11 meeting rooms. "It's our unique 50,000 sq.ft. of outdoor landscaped garden space that can accommodate 2000 pax at any given time that has made us a favourite for large events and weddings. Add to this being an International brand, Marriott stands for quality and our loyalty program is considered the best in the world," said Dietmar.

JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar in a short time since its opening has attracted a lot of events in various fields - Pharma, Medical, Diamond merchants, IT etc. They have successfully held expos catering to 60-70 exhibitors along with their conferences in their grand ballroom spread over 10,000 sq.ft and a Junior Ballroom of almost 4,000 sq.ft. On the F&B side the hotel is quite strong with several renowned chefs and award winning restaurants. The group also rates their spa as the best in Asia.

Talking on his plans at IMEX, Dietmar said "I have a threefold agenda which I feel hoteliers world over can adopt. You have to first promote the destination ie, India, followed by the city ie, Mumbai and finally your own property ie, JW Marriott Mumbai."