

# Shahpura scales up in India

Shahpura Hotels has signed up seven new properties with its eyes set on five more. The brand hopes to have a pan-India presence by 2022, aided by technological innovations and reach to travel agents through domestic and inbound travel shows.



**D**igraj Singh Shahpura, Director, Shahpura Hotels, has announced that the brand has signed up seven new properties to expand its portfolio. "We have signed up seven new hotels in Rajasthan. We already have five properties and with the new additions, the count will go to 12 with four hotels in Jaipur, three in Udaipur, two in Kumbhalgarh and

one in Ranthambhore. We started with two properties—Shahpura Haveli on the Delhi-Jaipur road and Shahpura House in Jaipur. These are owned by us. However, the properties that we are now signing are on management contract so as to expand our pan-India presence."

It is important to create your own niche in a market that has an abundance of heritage properties. "The new properties are all a mixture of weddings, boutique, heritage and business hotels. We cover everything now because that's the demand in the market. One needs business and MICE hotels as much as wedding hotels to all kinds of business. This is how we are expanding," he said.

Revealing more about the services at these hotels, Shahpura said, "All these properties are four-star and above. Majority of wed-



ding properties are in Jaipur and Udaipur. The business hotels are near the airport in Jaipur. In fact, we will be adopting the same marketing strategy we had for our previous hotels. We will be engaging with travel agents and even do online promotions, as well as get featured in magazines, both trade and consumer. Some of the hotels we have signed up are all existing hotels but new properties. The marketing strategy for those will be different from what it was earlier."

Participating in travel shows is also a step towards engaging with both inbound and domestic travel agents. Talking about GITB, he said, "GITB is an inbound show and we have been dealing with this market for the last 20-25 years. We already have a strong foothold in inbound. We also participated at Rajasthan Domestic Travel Market (RDTM) last year, which again caters to the domestic market, where we focus on wedding segment."

Shahpura Hotels is supposedly the most technologically advanced heritage hotel brand. "We are the only chain which has introduced automation in hotels in the heritage sector. This makes us stand apart from our competition. When we reach out to the agents, we tell them that we have introduced tablets in the room, dock stations and allow guests to give instant feedback digitally. The same technology will be seen in all

the new properties we are signing, including fast internet across the property," he asserted.

The brand is also associated with Preferred Hotels and Resorts, its global sales partner. "Two of our hotels were included in the Historical Hotels of the World list. Today, big brands and international chains sign up with hotels for only two to three years that disrupt the market. However, we have long-standing associations with all our owners and partners. With a brand consistency, when we approach anyone for a deal, they can see our long associations, the number of properties as well as the brand image," Shahpura elaborated.

Claiming that 2018 was a good year, Shahpura stated, "We were 15-20 per cent up from last year in terms of turnover and sales as compared to 2017. By 2019 we will be able to cover four to five more cities apart from the ones in Rajasthan. We are now signing new hotels in Mumbai, Goa, Gurgaon and Agra. We are also looking at leisure destinations like Manali and Varanasi to have heritage properties by taking over old havelis and refurbishing them."

## Awards Galore

- Shahpura House was awarded as Luxury Heritage Hotel by World Luxury Hotel Awards 2018
- Shahpura Hotels became a member of Historic Hotels of the World
- The brand was included as Lifestyle Member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts. It also joined hands with them for global sales alliance

