

Zuri Group Plans big expansion

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To focus on Domestic market....

VW Bureau



Bobby Kamani



The Bangalore head-quartered Zuri Hotels & Resorts plans to launch properties at Bangalore, Nairobi, Delhi and with business hotel in Nairobi and in India a 5 star luxury hotel in Bangalore.

Speaking with Voyager's World, Bobby Kamani, Director, The Zuri Group, outlined the activities of the group.

How did performance of 2009 in terms of yields and turnover affect the need to recreate marketing plans?

Well yes we would say the industry and in General the world experienced a melt down of the economy so being a part of this industry we too were faced with the issue of revenues decreasing.

Our marketing plans had to be completely changed in order to, if not make revenues, but to stay afloat. We were very quick in realizing the market scenario and after analyzing the conditions we took a decision to go all out in the domestic market. The period in which the meltdown became the worst was unfortunately the peak season for our resorts in Goa and Kumarakom. But being proactive we were able to sail through these times with ease. The foreign market

segment, we knew would decrease substantially and India though in a meltdown was still far better than the rest of the world as India is a fundamentally strong economy and would be able to return back to normalcy before the rest of the world. Our focus on the domestic market substantially helped us to recover and not only maintain profitability but actually was a learning for us. The learning that the potential in the domestic market is extremely good and in future too even when times are back to normal we will continue our efforts increasing demand from the domestic sector.

2009 was a tough period as we experienced around an occupancy dip of 30% and that too in peak season. As we talk today we are in the peak season with occupancy of 100% at our hotels in Goa. Kumarakom too is now at an almost 90% occupancy and we can see that we will close this December in Kumarakom with the highest revenue earned in a month since our opening in 2006. Bangalore has

The ARR's of Zuri Hotels

The Zuri, Whitefield- Rs 7000

The Zuri, Goa- Rs 7000

The Retreat, Goa- Rs 5500

The Zuri, Kumarakom- Rs 9000

also seen a steady occupancy growth in the first 6 months post the launch.

What were the challenges you foresee for the Indian Hospitality Industry in the next year? What sectors of business you are bullish about?

The Next Year looks to be very promising as already we are seeing an upper trend in the market. The bookings have increased substantially and we are extremely confident that the next year is going to be the year full of opportunities. The main challenge that we foresee is the demand-supply gap. The ratio of the Demand Supply gap will increase and the market is likely to experience a shortage of hotel homes. One major contributor to this situation will be the proposed Common Wealth games in 2010. This we feel will temporarily be a reason also for increase in the charges of hotel rooms.

We are bullish about the hospitality sector with plans to start construction for two more hotel projects and are seriously looking at management contracts in order to increase the presence of brand Zuri Hotels in key Indian feeder markets. Floriculture has been one of our core businesses for many years. Primarosa

Flowers, based in Nairobi, Kenya, presently exports over 150 million roses a year to countries around the world.

What are the new products being unleashed in the near future?

Our business hotel in Nairobi is opening early next year. In India we are planning to start work on our next hotel in Bangalore (We have acquired 6 acres of land in Devanahalli and intend to have a mixed development there including a hotel, retail and a commercial property. This will be the closest hotel to the International Airport. Also we are constantly scouting for properties in Delhi and Mumbai. In order to establish in more cities, we are keen on exploring the management model wherein, existing properties will be taken over under management contracts, to be operated under the Zuri brand standards.

Going forward, we would soon foray into the green energy segment. The Zuri Group Global will be launching Green Energy projects across the country under The Zuri Green Energy name. The tagline for the new initiative is, 'Empowering today, preserving tomorrow'. We have already made investments in windmills located in Tamil Nadu, besides more initiatives under the green energy vertical overseas.