



Master of mixed-use

Like many good hoteliers, Arjun Sharma thinks the world of hospitality. In his case, whether retail or travel, hotels, or working in India for international associations such as PATA or World Travel & Tourism Council, he says his various worlds converge in hospitality.

He runs his mall, Select Citywalk in Delhi, like a hotel, treating pampered shoppers as guests.

Fifteen years ago he created an all-inclusive resort in Goa. "No one can buy just a room.

F&B was transferred from being a profit centre to a cost centre," he says.

As the head honcho of tourism major TUI in India, he is a large buyer of hotel rooms. "We have been pioneers in opening new destinations such as Samode and Pushkar," says the single largest buyer of hotel rooms in the country – 1 million room nights a year.

Power quotient: Making hospitality inclusive

Arjun Sharma

MD, Select Resorts

He is one of the few hotelier-developers in India who can master mixed-use. "The concept is still not understood or embraced completely," he says. And he was one of the early starters. "My father gave me a budget of ₹25 lakhs to buy a piece of land back in 1990. I bought 12 acres of land in Gurgaon. It first started off as being purely a location for a restaurant since at that time there were no rest stops on the outskirts of Delhi city, but then it gradually became a hotel and we built it from scratch," he says.

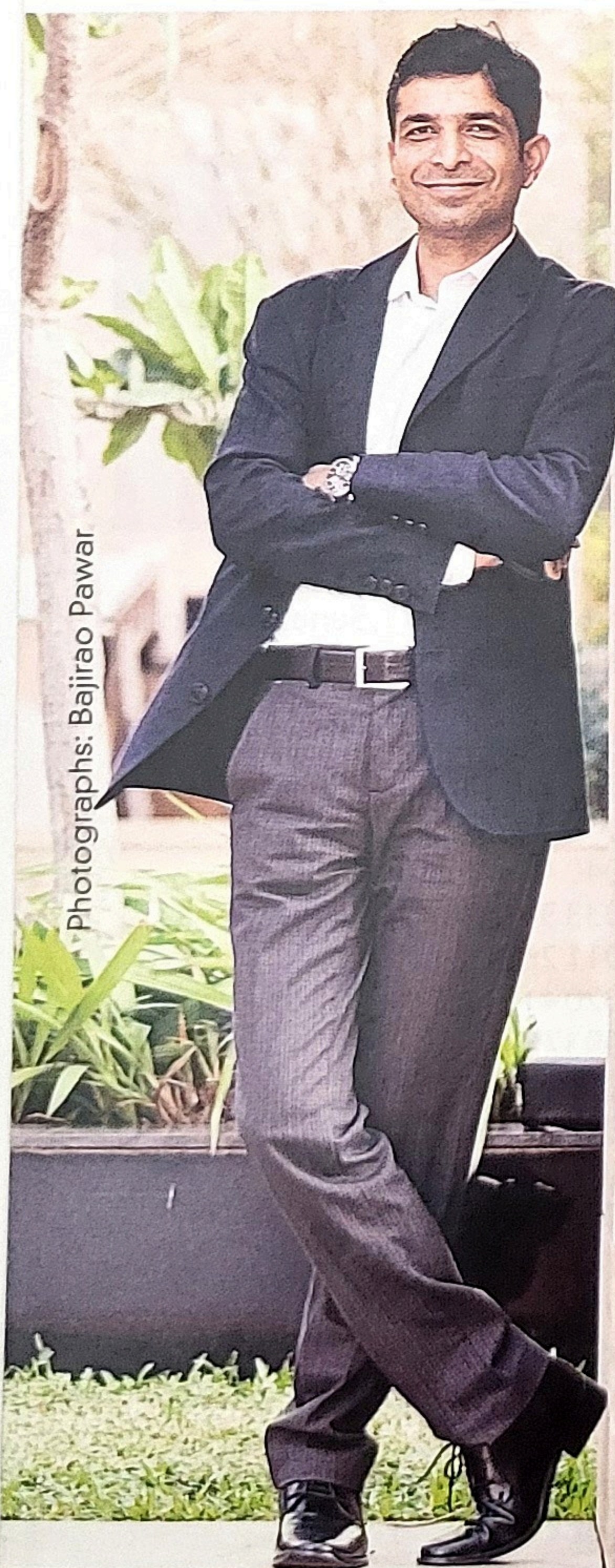
FUTURE WALK: "We see ourselves venturing into international development."

By Simona Terron

Brand box

Select Hotels has two resorts. Heritage Village Club, Goa is located on the Arossim Beach on in South Goa.

Heritage Village Resort & Spa Manesar, Gurgaon has 154 rooms and suites.



Photographs: Bajirao Pawar

Young, brash, hopeful

In a gathering dominated by grey hair and honorifics, young Ashish Jhakhawala's is likely to be the one voice questioning dearly held beliefs. Even before he was handpicked to head Samhi, an asset company set-up to develop and invest in internationally branded hotels, with \$30 million equity stake by the Marriott, Jhakhawala's career was one to watch out for.

Barely a decade after graduating from hotel management, he rose to become AVP at InterGlobe Hotels, where he led the team that built Accor's USD 1 billion hotel platform in India, acquiring over 35 assets.

Having got his hands dirty as an interiors and facilities design consultant, Jhakhawala can easily chalk up economics of project development. "If I want to tie-up with a brand I would like to do at least 10 properties with them. Then I can do mass procurement and the construction team gets a learning curve of building better," he says.

Samhi with a focus on high growth economy and mid-scale segment in the Indian sub-continent has been co-founded by Steve Rushmore, founder and president of international hotel consulting firm HVS, Jhakhawala

Power quotient: A JV in the bag with more to come

Ashish Jhakhawala

CMD, SAMHI

and Manav Thadani, chairman and founder of HVS India. As Marriott readies to announce Fairfield's blitzkrieg across India, Jhakhawala has a foot firmly in the door leading to the power corridors of Indian hospitality. "We're looking at delivering around 2500 keys with the Fairfield brand alone," he says.

The smartly worded JV leaves both partners committed to and free of each other. "Samhi is a brand independent company. We ensure our investors that we will create assets in the best markets... After that we will choose who the best operator or brand is for that site, with no exclusivity," says Jhakhawala.

His expertise, Jhakhawala says, lies in "market selection, deal origination, deal closing, construction, development and owning."

Brand box

Sites that have been identified include two in Chennai, one in Bangalore and one in Hyderabad. Coimbatore, Mumbai and Gurgaon are also in the early stages of procurement.