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OUTLOOK TRAVELLER BOUTIQUE HOTEL AWARDS 2017



Sharmistha Chaudhuri
October 25, 2017



The Aaliya Resort lawns, on the banks of the Ganges in Haridwar, was beautifully decked up. Dim yellow lights, a lovely tent in different shades of pink, lamps lit around the swimming pool, a food arena with cloches and cutlery, an open bar with unopened bottles lying in wait and the big white stage; everything was perfectly set for a gala evening at the Outlook Traveller Boutique Hotel Awards on October 23.

Held for the second consecutive year, the awards are a one-of-its-kind initiative to honour India's luxury boutique hotels for their unique excellence. This year, the **Outlook Traveller Boutique Hotel Awards** was presented by **Uttarakhand Tourism**. **Diageo** was the celebrations partner for the event and **Aaliya Resort** the hospitality partner.

The beautiful state of Uttarakhand is rich in flora and fauna. The biodiversity it offers, makes it a must-visit destination for tourists from all over the world. One can fall in love with wildlife at the various National Parks in the state. Head to Jim Corbett to spot tigers in the wild, the oldest national park in the country. For the adventure seekers, there's always sporting activities like whitewater rafting, paragliding, hang gliding and even skiing in different regions of the state. For natural beauty lovers, trek to the Valley of Flowers for an outstanding view of blooming flora. Uttarakhand also has beautiful hill stations like Mussoorie and Nainital, which are great weekend getaways for a group of friends and families. For the religious-minded, the state has various pilgrimage sites such as Kedarnath, Haridwar and Badrinath which are extremely popular among tourists. Uttarakhand also has various fairs and festivals, the most recent addition being the annual International Yoga festival. Overall, Uttarakhand is a great tourist destination which offers activities for every kind of traveller.

As the invitees started streaming in for the eagerly-anticipated event, new friendships were formed and old friends caught up after ages. The chief guest for the night was Satpal Maharaj, Uttarakhand's Tourism, Irrigation and Culture minister. As he along with his family made his way to the event, the evening began with a musical performance by Impulse which was greatly enjoyed. Their music, inspired from Indian classical and Sufi traditions, is widely acclaimed.

A five-member jury, after much deliberation, had decided on the winners from among the nominees in each of the categories. The members of the esteemed jury were Hari Nair (Founder & CEO, HolidayIQ.com), Shравan Gupta (Executive director- Leisure businesses, FCM Travel Solutions India), Kapil Goswami (Managing Director, Big Breaks), freelance author and journalist Charukesi Ramadurai, and the husband-wife travel writer duo Anurag Mallick and Priya Ganapathy.

The tourism minister spoke about what the beautiful state of Uttarakhand had to offer tourists-adventure sports, wildlife, culture, heritage, unique experiences which can't be found in other states along with the challenges they face and the plans to overcome them, to much applause.

As guests enjoyed the delicious local food of the region on offer, catered by the host resort, the main awards ceremony began. It began with **Roseate House** in Aerocity winning the **Best City Hotel** award. It's a popular watering hole for NCR citizens and an epitome of contemporary design in this great urban landscape.

Zuri Kumarakom was awarded the **Best Resort**. It's strategic setting on the embankments of Lake Vembanad, classy accommodation, tempting gourmet meals and the iconic Kerala backwaters a stone's throw away, are the many allurements that make them a popular choice for countless travellers exploring God's Own Country.

With a seamless fusion of modern-day designs and patterns and intricate architectural carvings in the iconic Haveli-style of the 18th century, the **Raas Jodhpur** has bridged the ancient and the modern with remarkable ease. No wonder it was awarded the **Best Designed** hotel.

Skyvilla, Beyond by Sula is set in the wine country of Maharashtra and the lovely lake-view retreat set amidst the hilly environs of Nashik, won for **Best Private Villa**.

Responsible Tourism is a major focus for Outlook Traveller and keeping in mind eco-friendliness, the charming **Dune Elephant Valley** organic farm and plantation, set upon an ancient elephant migration route in the Western Ghats, won the **Best Responsible Hotel** award.

The **Best Beach Property** went to the **Lalit Resort & Spa, Bekal**-a gorgeous luxury beach retreat sprawling over 26 acres of virgin land in Kerala while **Mosaic, Mussoorie** was adjudged the **Best Hills Property** for its countless quaint charms.

For romantics, there's nothing better than to experience nature in gorgeous wooden cottages offering forest and waterfall views. No wonder the **Best Romantic Hotel** was awarded to **Wilderness, Goa**.

Taj Faluknama, a stunning palace of the Hyderabad Nizams which has now been transformed into a splendid luxury hotel, won **Best Hotel for Honeymooners**.

Standing cheek by jowl by the Kipling-esque Pench National Park, **Jamtara Wilderness Camp** offers guests a delightful eco-friendly experience of one of the loveliest wilderness spaces in India. No wonder it was the top choice for **Best Wildlife Lodge**.

The **WelcomHeritage Fernhills Royale Palace** has been familiar with the business of providing private spaces of luxury and comfort for long. Thus, the **Best Suite** award couldn't have gone to anyone better.

Hosts play a major part in a guest experience. The charming, knowledgeable and attentive **Hemendra Singh** ensures guests have a wonderful time at Bhainsrorgarh Fort. It was so surprise he was awarded the **Best Host**.

Tijara Fort-Palace was the winning fortress hotel from the Neemrana chain with its hallmark hospitality and fabulous atmospherics for **Best Destination Hotel**.

The iconic and elegant **WelcomHotel The Savoy** opened its doors in 1902 and is today one of the top choices in Mussoorie. It was awarded the **Best Heritage Hotel**.

The lovely sea-facing villas of **Coco Shambhala** in the robust environs of the old fortress of Sindhudurg on the Konkan Coast won for **Best Debut Hotel**.

The **Champakali**, with its lovely twin villas in Old Goa near the Mandovi River delta, won for **Best Guest Experience**.

Boats are a wonderful way to experience a holiday. The award for the **Best Boutique Boat** went to **Sukoon**, the luxury houseboat, where one can be pampered and make memories that last a lifetime.

The **Jawai Leopard Camp** with 9 luxurious tents, including one royal suite, was adjudged the **Best Boutique Camp**.

The last winner of the evening was selected among all the nominations for the **Finest Boutique Hotel** and it went to **Alila Fort**, a unique heritage experience with no compromise on hospitality. Over 230 years old, the warrior fortress in its restored avatar, with 59 luxury suites, all supplied with modern conveniences, is a stunning testimony to traditional Rajput hospitality and rugged charm.



The winners at the Outlook Traveller Boutique Hotel Awards 2017 with minister Satpal Maharaj