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hotelier india

A DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL

PEOPLE
LAUCALA ISLAND'S
KURT WACHTVEITL

TECHNOLOGY
SOUND SYSTEMS

DESIGN
AMBIENT LIGHTING
FOR DIFFERENT AREAS

SPOTLIGHT
10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT
THE LEELA PALACE UDAIPUR

THE CONCERN
OF PROCUREMENT
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NEW FORMATS
IN DINING
EXPERIENCES

SOUTHERN COMFORT

JOSE DOMINIC REDEFINES THE PARAMETERS OF LUXURY AT CGH EAR

The luxury formula

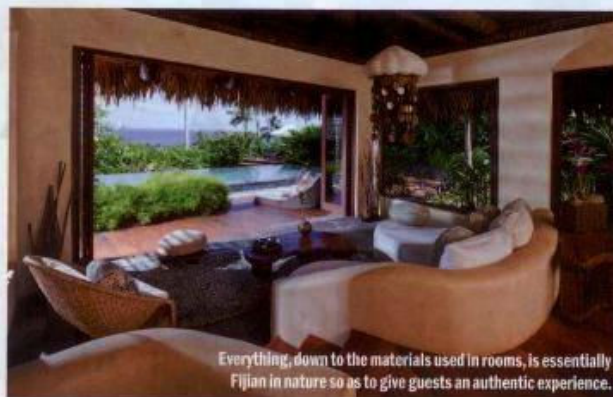
Hotelier India gets Kurt Wachtveitl, global advisor of uber-luxe resort Laucala Island, to break down its formula for catering to the evolving demands of the luxury guest

When it comes to delivering extreme luxury, it is about letting the globetrotters and jet-setters of the world, live like billionaires... like one per cent of the world's population is able to live. As such it must be easy, authentic and experiential. The hotelier behind Laucala Island is Red Bull owner Dietrich Mateschitz — also owner of Formula 1 team, Red Bull Racing. He built the product and services around the lifestyles of his social circle. You can be certain he has got the recipe right.

EXPERIENTIAL

We've gone with a formula that combines nature, culture and activities, to ensure that there is something for this segment of the market — that already lives in designer homes — to savour, that is new to their already luxurious lives.

Today's luxury guest is conscious of his footprint. He wants to consume in an organic fashion. We build a connection here. About 90 per cent of the products that find their way to the table are grown on the island itself. We have a herb and vegetable garden, and also cattle — even wagyu beef comes from the island itself. Everything is organic and we take guests on a tour of both the front and back-of-house areas. There are hydroponic gardens — even the water comes from the island's volcanic interiors, our spa products, too, are produced on the island. Nonetheless, guests remain spoiled for choice. For example, innumerable varieties of mushrooms and 12 different kinds of tomatoes are grown on the island. The chef and his team check what is ready to be picked and precisely that finds its way to the table.



Everything, down to the materials used in rooms, is essentially Fijian in nature so as to give guests an authentic experience.

“ **WE HAVE COMBINED NATURE, CULTURE AND ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE TO SAVOUR THAT IS NEW TO THEIR LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLES** ”

Interestingly, our guests see the island as a place to gain new hobbies — people have been taught horse riding, to play golf, to dive and sail. We ask them to tell us what kind of holiday they have in mind. We've conducted cooking classes, exotic cocktail lessons and crash courses in fishing. For example, people appreciate chancing upon little-known details like the fact that a catch has to be frozen overnight before being cooked. A detail such as this can be taken home from a holiday, increasing its value to the well-heeled guest.

AUTHENTIC

The resort has been designed keeping the needs of the global traveller

in mind, but it retains its Fijian roots. There is tremendous representation of Fijian culture across the hotel — from the materials used in the guestrooms, to a cultural evening that every guest is treated to during their stay. Most of our staff is Fijian — especially with people from the Western world, the warmth of service from people who are very visible steeped in culture and religion, is very appealing.

BIG, LITTLE THINGS

We see it as important to offer them a variety of options — in many all-inclusive island-like settings, with small inventories, the F&B options are luxe but sometimes limited. We have 25 villas, but we offer five F&B

outlets, so they can sample a new dining experience every day.

Service, of course, has to be superlative. Even though we would probably have only 10 or 20 guests at a given time, we have 400 employees to cater to their needs. Nonetheless, we recognize that this market is very particular about privacy and exclusivity. As a result, we have ensured that except for our executive committee, none of the other employees live on the island — we want to ensure that they truly feel like the entire island is theirs, and private. We've given DND a rustic spin — red coconuts signify DND, while green coconuts give housekeepers the green signal, literally. Moreover, we teach them to get into a guest's psyche and offer services accordingly. A large chunk of the market prefers unobtrusive service, but they are geared to seek out exceptions.

Also, pocketed roles have been put in place for the staff — for instance, even with guest relations, we have a team specially dedicated to activities. Customisation is another minute detail that invites immense focus. Even within a single family, we would create different itineraries based on each member's preferences.

Exclusivity is obvious in many forms — for instance all the cutlery and tableware are specially prepared for the island.

It is apparent that all of this works — 30 per cent of 2013's bookings are repeat guests. ■



KURT WACHTVEITL,
global advisor of
uber-luxe resort
Laucala Island