

# BW HOTELIER

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## EXPLORING THE UNEXPLORED

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# 51 YEARS AND COUNTING

SEEMA ROY FROM PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS TALKS ABOUT 51-YEAR LEGACY OF THE GROUP AND THE WAY FORWARD

BY: **SAKSHI**

SINCE JOINING Preferred Hotels & Resorts in 2010, Seema Roy has played a key role in successfully amplifying brand awareness of Preferred Hotels & Resorts. Presently she serves the company as the Area Managing Director for South Asia, Middle East and Africa, driving retention and development efforts of the brand's growing portfolio. She feels that Independent hotels need support with generating visibility, and through Preferred Hotels & Resorts, they can increase their global reach and compete with hotels from global brands. In a quick interview with Roy, BW Hotelier learnt about few developments that Preferred Hotels & Resorts has slated.

**BW Hotelier: What are the services provided by the Preferred Hotels & Resorts to the independent hoteliers?**

**Seema Roy:** Preferred Hotels & Resorts is the world's largest independent hotel brand with more than 750 distinctive hotels, resorts, and residences. With a 51-year legacy of business excellence and an established presence across 85 countries, we offer seamless sales, marketing and distribution services as well as I Prefer Hotel Rewards, the world's first points-based guest loyalty program for independent hotels – all of which our member hotels can benefit from at a fraction of the cost, while retaining their brand identity.

With 35 offices worldwide, Preferred Hotels & Resorts brings strategic advantage to hotel owners, operators, and management companies through brand prestige and global operating scale, supporting the goals of its member hotels by providing strategic group, corporate, and leisure sales,

integrated marketing solutions, comprehensive revenue management, global connectivity through reservations services, progressive distribution technology, and individualized guest support.

Earlier this year, we launched I Prefer Alliance, a powerful and innovative new loyalty platform that allows independent hotels and regional hotel brands to extend the full benefits of I Prefer Hotel Rewards to members of their own guest benefit programs. For the Indian sub-continent, this significant move will positively transform and enhance independent travel experiences in the region by empowering participating partner hotels with the tools to reward guest loyalty and create positive demand for the industry from around the globe.

**BW Hotelier: Tell us briefly about your current portfolio in India and expansion plan.**

**Seema Roy:** Preferred Hotels & Resorts established its presence in India in 2002, with the signing of their first partnership with The Imperial New Delhi, and they are still members with us today. Over a period of 17 years, we have witnessed incredible growth in the region. We now have a strong footprint in the Indian Subcontinent having strategic relationships with prominent Indian brands such as The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts; and ITC's WelcomHotels and Fortune brands.

At present, Preferred Hotels & Resorts has a diverse portfolio in India with 40+ distinctive member hotels across significant business and leisure destinations such as Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Goa, Gurugram, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Mumbai, Nashik,









New Delhi, Noida, Kerala, Udaipur and Vadodara. Some of the most recent additions in our portfolio includes:

Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa, Hotel Clarks Amer in Jaipur, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, as well as Fortune Park JP Celestial in Bengaluru. We are primed to grow our portfolio in the South Asian region to 50 hotel members by 2020, targeting key tier 2 cities such as Chandigarh, Pune, Visakhapatnam, and growing our presence in existing cities like Mumbai, Kolkata.

**BW Hotelier: How many hotels are in the pipeline to be added under the umbrella of Preferred Hotels and Resorts?**

**Seema Roy:** Preferred Hotels & Resorts has just announced the addition of 25 new hotel members in the first quarter of 2019 and recently also added several exciting new build hotels including Hotel EQ in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Lelewatu Resort Sumba in Indonesia.

**BW Hotelier: What are the criteria for an independent hotel to get into the Preferred members?**

**Seema Roy:** We partner with a range of unique and extraordinary independent hotels. At Preferred Hotels & Resorts, we believe in looking beyond traditional guidelines for selection criteria such as - number of rooms or restaurants.





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More importantly, becoming a member hotel is based on key parameters such as the standard of guest experiences offered by the hotel and the property's positioning within the market it serves. Each hotel in our portfolio is categorised into five unique collections that allow travellers to craft their own inspirations as they scale the world in search of memories, experiences and new opportunities.

**BW Hotelier: What future do you see for the independent hotels in comparison to bigger groups?**

**Seema Roy:** In recent years, we see the increase in “soft brands” being launched by the major chains and some of their acquisitions as validation of what we have now been doing for 50+ years - championing the true independent hotels around the globe. Travel will continue to evolve and our segment of independent travel will be larger than ever before. Technology will also provide us the ability to make personalisation of itineraries seamless, but I believe that there will be a strong return movement to people-driven services and experiences. This is something that sets independent hotels apart - their ability to deliver the unique characteristics of specific cultures within their own brand of hospitality, offering discerning travellers thoughtfully curated choices to “live like the locals” so they get a true sense of their destination.

**AUTHOR BIO:** SAKSHI IS EDITORIAL LEAD.