

## Sterling's theme-based holiday resorts offer unexpected surprises to visitors



BHUBANESWAR: From luxurious accommodation to theme-based holiday resorts with a host of experiences and discoveries, one of India's leading leisure hospitality companies Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd has a lot in store for tourists.

The holiday lifestyle company has planned to add 17 more resorts to its existing network of 33 resorts. Most of the new resorts will be theme-based and located in Eastern and Western regions with a focus on nature, wildlife and adventure.

The company has plans to tie-up with local groups in nearby areas of its resorts to promote their art and culture. It has also approached the Odisha Government to launch boating facility for tourists in the river adjacent to its Puri resort.

Talking to 'The New Indian Express', Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of Sterling Holiday Resorts Ltd Peshwa Acharya said there has been a complete brand overhauling keeping in mind the new emerging and interesting holiday segments.

"Holidaying these days is not confined to accommodation and food. People are looking for experiences and discoveries. We have created opportunities for people to explore their areas of interests and make holidaying more enjoyable," he said.

Initially into vacation ownership, the brand has transformed into an experiential destination and moved from times-share to time-share and hybrid model to fuel the joy of discovery.

The holiday and hospitality major has its major destinations at Agra, Anaikatti, Corbett, Daman, Darjeeling, Dharamshala, Dindi, Gangtok, Goa, Kanha, Karwar, Kodaikanal, Kufri, Lonavala, Manali, Munnar, Mussoorie, Nainital, Ooty, Puri, Sariksha, Shirdi and Wayanad.

Founded in 1986, Sterling has recently invested more than Rs 300 crore for remodeling of its existing resorts and started promoting family holidays with new themes and service orientation which would help all age groups enjoy trips. "Travel and tourism are growing exponentially. Now people are enjoying multiple small vacations with diverse groups instead of a single long vacation, which was confined to only with family members. This prompted us to redesign our tour packages," Acharya said.

With a growing customer base, Sterling Holidays is looking for collaborations with local organisations and artisans at each of its destinations to promote local traditions, art and culture.

"We are introducing tourists to local tribes, traditions, cuisines, hand-loom and handicrafts. If there are people who can create experiences, we would love to use their services. Tie-ups with local groups will not only promote destinations, but also boost the local economy. We can create more job opportunities through tourism," he said.

In a first, the company has introduced a comprehensive travel and holiday insurance, which is now being offered complimentary to its customers. It is also set to release small videos of various destinations to attract more tourists to the country.

"There are many unexplored destinations across the country which needs proper branding. We intend to redefine the holiday landscape in the country. We have launched a special segment - 100 days of joy. Every third day there will be some activities, including celebrations of festivals, important national and international days," the CMO added.