

UNDER THE LEMON TREE

The Lemon Tree Hotels design is fresh and tangy as its name.

The stark-white, lanky, minimalist-in-style, 11-storeyed building located on a prominent road of Bengaluru is among the newest hotels dotting the cityscape. Upon entering the lobby of the Lemon Tree hotel, the first thing that catches you unaware is the pleasant blast of citrus fragrance. This probably is the first sign of what you can expect from the interiors of this upscale, full-service business hotel in Bengaluru. The interiors, unlike an impression of minimalism that you may have formed looking at the exterior, are spirited and full of spunk. An abstract, contemporary, stained glass art work hoisted down from the ceiling assumes center stage of the lobby interiors. A metal and glass bull on the side makes for a very offbeat statement, and you realize that such offbeat elements are peppered across the hotel contributing highly to its alternative quotient. Thankfully the in-house architect and interior design team has steered clear from an overdose of citrus colors and ventured into the deeper shade of the palette with fuchsia pinks, browns, olive greens and bronze hues which dominate the furnishings of the interiors at the coffee shop. Also, the interiors are designed for maximum passage of light, creating an environment that is full of life.

Lemon Tree is amongst the largest hotel chains in India, offering five-star comforts at affordable prices. Each of the properties across India, follow a similar theme in the interiors, except for slight variations depending on the geography and the location of the hotel. The hotel in Bengaluru too, has a 24x7 coffee shop called Citrus Cafe, a pan-Asian fine dining restaurant - Republic of Noodles, and a recreation bar and lounge called Slounge. The top floors nestle the 187 rooms of the hotel, and a conference hall, with a work area facility that is enabled with Wi-Fi. The terrace has a swanky gym, a spa - Fresco, and a breathtaking terrace pool that offers a gorgeous view of the city. The poolside is lined with wooden flooring and wooden pergolas with foliage enhancing the ambience.

Citrus Cafe has been designed to create a cheerful, sunny, coffee shop dotted with interesting paintings that makes it look like one of those street cafes in Europe. The dominating visual element is a tall glass shelf stacked with mint-green glass bottles, that when stacked together create a stunning visual effect. The mats on the tables have jokes adding to the fun element of eating at the cafe. T-shirts with witty and humorous captions are framed on the walls, and share space with interesting re-prints that are inspired by those you will find in quaint European cafes.

The Republic of Noodles in Goa is an award-winning restaurant that serves authentic pan-Asian cuisine. The interiors of the restaurant in Bangalore are designed using far eastern design principles with statues of warlords and busts of the Buddha welcoming guests at the entrance. The interior is warm and inviting with wicker-like seating in hues of brown and orange. The fiber optic lighting at the entrance of Slounge arrests your attention. It looks like thin fibers of light immaculately arranged in a glass shell. The space is warm, with exposed brick walls and functional seating and an expansive bar area.

The most important part of the hotel for a business traveler is the stay. And Lemon Tree's hotel experience is a good blend of comfort, functionality and luxury. Beautiful paintings by upcoming artists dot

the corridors as well as the suites in the hotel. The paintings don't conform to any style or genre; they are eclectic and sourced from different parts of the world. The suites are extremely functional with smart utilization of space. While there is plenty of sunlight illuminating the rooms, the furnishing is cozy and exudes warmth. Extra emphasis is laid on the fixtures, lights, the work stations and the seating area in the suites ensuring that space is utilized to the maximum without compromising on comfort.

An interesting feature at Lemon Tree is a floor that is exclusive to women travelers. These rooms come in with a few more features such as a select range of personal care products, a foot massager, a facial steamer, a soft toy, a potted plant and a yoga mat. There is extra security provided on this floor, with only housekeeping women present offering their services. A nice touch indeed! Aradhana Lal, Vice-President, Sales and Marketing explains, We have taken that extra effort in one, reducing wastage of space to the bare minimum, and two, adding fun elements across the hotel to make it as cheerful and fun for our patrons. This explains the quirky marble inlay figures that dot the corridor flooring, which completely breaks the elegant monotony of the marble flooring. Lizards, sea shells, and little snorkeling men, snakes: they are colorful and compel the visitor to stop and look. Murals of funny faces are again installed across the hotel, and lastly the male staff also prompts a second look. All of them sport formal haircuts, but also a surprise tiny ponytail which brings a smile to the weary visitor. The interiors are exuberant and light-spirited, in line with the freshness and tang that a lemon brings to the table. The Lemon Tree, Bengaluru has managed to recreate their brand philosophy successfully in the design and architecture of their property.

December 17, 2011