



A monthly e-newsletter
brought to you by Merit
Swiss Asian School of
Hotel Management,
Ooty.



A gamut of events at MERIT!

SPECTRUM



"Success comes when
preparation meets
opportunity."
- Mr. Pumpko

FEBRUARY 2011

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HAPPY NEW YOU!!

A look-back can not only encourage us for our endeavours ahead; it can be a spiritual guide also.

How was 2010? For us all at MERIT, it was 'the best of times'. A flurry of activities like the Inter-school Sports, Anti-AIDS rally, First Aid workshop, E-Spectrum, District-level Quiz competition and all that made learning really fun. Academics also ran smoothly, as we know that only fun cannot be learning.

Now we are in 2011. Only a year to go for 2012- the year of the Apocalypse. It (2012) signifies the end of the great cycle of 5000 years. How many changes humanity and civilizations have undergone in 5000 years...

Coming to the individual - I or you, do we appreciate the fact that we have to change for the better? In fact, I suggest we wish each other 'Happy New You' not just 'Happy New Year'! Like a new toy, a new dress, a new perfume, a new car that gives us happiness, a new 'you' will give not only you but everyone else, happiness. Right, is it not?

Discard the age-old garments of selfishness and greed, anger and jealousy, mistrust and hostility, lust and bitterness! Shake off the accumulated negativities. Assume a new self - that is higher, a self of purity and prayer, sympathy, service, selflessness and simplicity.

You must become 'new'! HAPPY NEW YOU!!

This New Year issue of SPECTRUM is virtually a special bouquet for you, that contains assorted, florid articles. Rochelle Otter has presented a fiction story that will send shivers up your spine, turn to page 2 for *The Haunted Hotel*. Prerna Ghadge had given us an interesting review of the superlative hotels of the year 2010. Preetu Trivedi breaks the myriad myths of the Hospitality profession for you, on page 5. My colleague Ms. Anju Mahbubani's account of her paragliding experience is definitely worth a read and might encourage you to set new adventurous goals for yourself this year! A special word of thanks to Ms. Shwetha Khandelwal, a certified Nutriiionist from Rajasthan, and sister of Nipun Gupta, a III B.Sc- (HM) student at MERIT, for sending us an informative article on the benefits of Vegetarianism as a way of life. All this and more, in this issue of SPECTRUM.

We are sure you will join us in making SPECTRUM more colourful during the New Year, with your feedback and valuable suggestions. Write in to us at spectrum@meritworldwide.com. Bye for now!

Dr. N. Gopalakrishnan
Editorial Advisor- SPECTRUM

SAVE OUR TIGERS

In our quest to save our Tigers, no action is too small. Here's how you can help.

Spread the Word : Let everyone know that our tigers are on the brink of extinction and that they need us. You can start by joining the Save Our Tigers movement on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and spreading the word wherever you go - online or offline.

Donate : Organizations such as WWF and The Corbett Foundation work for tiger conservation and need our active support. If possible, you can chip in with funds, volunteer for work or donate clothes, etc. for the forest guards by tying up with such organizations.

Preserve our Natural Resources : Loss of habitat is one of our tigers' biggest problems. We can reduce pressure on forests by avoiding unnecessary use of forest-derived products, such as paper and timber.

Be a Responsible Tourist : Visit tiger sanctuaries and national parks to discover our natural heritage. But remember that the wilderness is to be experienced, not to be polluted.





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The Haunted Hotel

Rochelle Sarah Otter,
I B.Sc-HM & CS

Staying a night in a haunted hotel is perhaps an insane thing to do, but staying a week in one is way past insanity!

This story revolves around three girls: Angel, Margaret and I, Alexis. The three of us were majoring in Psychology and decided to stay at the allegedly haunted inn, Darlington Manor. We decided to check out the recently abandoned manor ourselves, so we organized to stay in the 66 roomed hotel.



DAY 1: The week started off with us girls setting up camp for the week long stay. That night as Angel and I drifted into a deep sleep, Margaret was left pondering over the events to come. At 1 a.m. Maggie still found it hard to sleep, that was when she had her first paranormal encounter!

The door of a cupboard mysteriously opened by itself. She anxiously called us but to no avail. Filled with fear, Margaret closed her eyes and eventually dozed off. The next morning, the cupboard door was closed as if it were never opened at all.

DAY 2: We girls discussed and debated every possible explanation to the night's experience. We decided that the next night would be spent in room 213. Room 213 is said that banging can be heard on the doors and windows at exactly 02.43 a.m.

We thought this would be another good place to start.

03.00 a.m.: We just shared our experience for the first time. I awoke to loud thudding against the window. I rose to find a dark figure standing over Angel! I screamed for Maggie and Angel to wake up which they did. Just as she opened her eyes, the figure disappeared. We have no explanation to this just yet. We hope to find some evidence of foul play in the morning.

DAY 3: Angel just had an experience of her own. Margaret and I left early this afternoon to research the background of this hotel at the local pub. We didn't return until 10 p.m. that night. Angel called in a flurry and we rushed back. It was then that she told us her tale.

At 8 that evening, she heard the splashing of water in a toilet. She opened the door to see that the toilet was empty and there was not a drop of water to be found! We think that the ghosts apparently haunting this place are of employees who feel it hard to move on from here. We did some research and discovered that an entire staff of the hotel were slaughtered during the massacre of 1929.

DAY 4: 08.00 a.m. :Maggie just saw something unusual. She was having her shower when the steam from the hot water brought to her attention a message on the mirror. It said "13.13". Quite frankly we are baffled by what it means. Is it a date? Is it a code? Who knows!

02.00 p.m.: We know what the numerals mean. We found a copy of the old testament in the parlour. The thirteenth line of the thirteenth book read, " was carried out". Just as we read that, Maggie felt as if she were being tugged at to get out of the room.

DAY 5: Angel, Maggie and I have officially left Darlington Manor and none of us intend on going back there again. We found a diary that belonged to old John Darlington. The massacre of 1929 was initiated in his hotel! He was the one responsible for the slaughtering of his own employees! Also, he had written a queer statement saying that he vowed to see the fall of his hotel. Maybe that's why they decided to abandon the manor.

We now realize that the ghosts we were seeing were not ones who were trying to harm us. They were trying to warn us. The dark figure and the water splashing must have been to frighten us away. Old man Darlington had a tendency to take away all life from that hotel, even if it were from the grave. 🍊



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MERIT student bags First Rank in University



Andreana Wheeler, MBA-Hotel Management student of the 2008-2010 batch has won the First Rank in the University Exams held by Alagappa University, Karaikudi. The Convocation Ceremony is to be held in June 2011.

Andreana's aggregate score over the 04 semesters of the course is 79%. She is currently working as Guest Relations Executive at Chaaya Reef Ellaidhoo, Maldives.

Congratulations Andreana, for doing us proud!!

Pic : Andreana Wheeler

It is a matter of pride for us that this is the third consecutive year in which MERIT students have bagged the University First Rank.

MERIT students participate in ODC at The Gateway Hotel, Coonoor

10 students from MERIT participated in an ODC (Out Door Catering) Activity at The Gateway Hotel, Coonoor, Nilgiris on Wednesday, 26th January 2011 and served approx 750 guests at the Hotel.

The Hotel authorities were very appreciative for the efforts put in by the students and placed on record it's appreciation for their dedication and efforts by honouring the students with a Certificate each.

The students who participated in the ODC include :

Vishal Wahane, Venkat Mukesh, Shrey Rodrigues and Wasim Akram from the MBA-Hotel Management batch, and Rochelle Otter, Upasana Sahu, Shoba Sridhar, Tejas, Arjun and Deepak Francis from the B.Sc-Hotel Management batch.

Congratulations to all of you on a job well done!!

Placements Activity in full swing at MERIT

MERIT has witnessed an eventful year in terms of Job Placements in 2010. The calendar for Jan-Feb 2011 is also exciting and includes star category recruiters including :

January 20th : Intercontinental Hospitality Group is hiring for Management Trainees for its I-Grad program.

February 15 : Hyatt Regency, Chennai

The upcoming property is hiring Entry Level candidates for all departments of the Hotel.

February 23rd : Jet Airways

The Corporate Office in Mumbai is hiring Cabin Crew.

We wish the students the best of luck for all the upcoming Interviews!

62nd Republic Day celebrated at MERIT



Pics(L to R) : Mr. C R Sankaran, Sr. Faculty at MERIT hoisting the National Flag. Dan Dominic, III B.Sc. (HM & CS) delivering the Republic Day Address. Republic Day Salute by the Security and students.

Faculty, staff and students of MERIT celebrated India's 62nd Republic Day with fanfare on Wednesday, 26th January 2011.

The date 26th January 1950 is one of the memorable days in Indian history, as it was on this day that the Constitution of India came into force and we became a truly sovereign State.

At MERIT, the function began promptly at 9:30 am. Mr. C R Sankaran, Sr Faculty presided over the function and did the honours by hoisting the Flag. He also spoke to the students on the significance of Republic Day as a National Festival. Dan Dominic of III B. Sc. (HM & CS) gave a speech on the future of India as a corruption-free nation.

The students solemnly pledged to dedicate themselves to creating a corruption-free, fully developed India, as dreamt by our former President Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam, by the end of the decade 2020.

Ms. Sowmya, Faculty at MERIT rendered the Vote of Thanks. Sweets were distributed to everyone present and the National Anthem was sung with fervour.



My flight into Nirvana

Ms. Anju Mahbubani, Faculty
B.Com, MBA (Marketing)

Float like a cloud. Sway with the breeze. Nestle in the lap of Mother Nature as she whispers to you high up at 1500ft above sea level. . .

Paragliding has topped my list of must-do adventure sports for many years now, and when my wanderlust took me to the laid-back town of Old Manali in June last year, I seized the opportunity to fulfill my dream.

Old Manali is every bit a wanderer's paradise - chaos, clutter, trash, humans, cows and alley cats, all thrown together in total disarray. Look beyond this rather sad welcome though, and you'll find the town quite enchanting. I did.

It's narrow alleys guide you towards hidden treasures and the myriad German Bakeries lure you with their cinnamon rolls and Spanish omelettes (why they are called 'German' bakeries when the fare they serve up is pretty much international, I could not fathom; but I realized that it is best to accept certain things as they are without getting too pokey-nosey. It helps maintain a sense of mystique.).

The town has a very cosmopolitan flavour to it with Jews, Italians, Ukrainians, Poles and people of all other ethnic races inhabiting it and infusing their culture, giving the town it's special 1960's hippie flavour. It is no wonder then that you'll find bike rental shops, pizza sellers, dreadlock weavers, tattoo artistes, hemp and bead sellers, and massage parlours, all advertising their services at street corners. Taking in the strange sights, sounds and smells of this quaint town, many a time I got this awkward feeling that I was the 'tourist' in this territory dominated by firangi-locals!

Anyhow, cotton kurtas, patch-work skirts, stray dogs on rope leashes, lots of beer, dense cigarette smoke, trance music and revelry-that's Old Manali for you!

But hey, I'm digressing. As a launch-pad to my paragliding adventure, this town became lovable. And Vinay, my adorable benefactor! That is, before we climbed into his dusty, rickety old Gypsy. He took us on a hair-raising, gut-wrenching drive to Café Zeppelin, his base camp at Nimoo, a few miles out of town, by which time I was pretty sure the fillings in my teeth would fall off! When we reached there, we learnt that Vinay's paragliding company was not certified by the Government to conduct these sports. My heart sank. Had I risked my expensive fillings only to give myself up to some crazed guy who could have me dead? But the philosopher in me immediately rose to the surface and quipped, "If you have to die paragliding, so be it." And yippee! I didn't die. In fact, I had one of the most awesome experiences of my life!

All you need to do is stand still while the guide straps the gliding equipment on you, trust him (inspite of his untrustworthy appearance), trust yourself and remember God. And, as if this weren't too much to ask for, you also have to lead the pair of you into the sky by running against the wind and jumping off the cliff. Literally!

Once airborne though, the sensation is one of pure bliss. You might fear about plunging into the valley, but you suddenly surface and actually float. Light as a feather, you sway gently with the breeze from side to side and sudden gusts of wind carry you along with them awhile. You leave the mountains, trees and people way below you and soar towards to the azure sky above. I was instantly reminded of the bucket swing we had at home when I was a child. It was fitted on to a grand old Jacaranda tree and some of my happiest moments were spent trying to reach higher and higher on my swing.

The glider though, is a different feeling. One of nothingness. No one need push the swing from behind to give it momentum. The elements of Nature take care of that. I just sat back, savoured the moment and drank in the fresh Himalayan air.

Ah yes, I also made a special wish that day - if I am to be born again O Lord, make me a bird.

And when my 'bird' came landing down, I realized I'd lost count of the time up there. Sheer joy and accomplishment permeated my soul, and Vinay's joy-ride back into town didn't dull my elation one bit! 🌈



Pic : Paragliding at Nimoo, Old Manali, Himachal Pradesh



Breaking the Myth!

The Hospitality Industry - misconceptions & answers..

Preetu Trivedi
III B.Sc-HM & CS

I am in my Final year of Hotel Management Studies at MERIT and over the past three years I've met many people, each having many interesting and different, but rather baseless reactions to Hospitality as a field of education. I wish to use this space to clear some misconceptions about the Hospitality industry.

Hotel Management means cooking!

No! Hotel Management does not only involve cooking. Yes, chefs play a very important role in the Hotel industry but a hotel provides many other services to its guests apart from only food.

Oh, you are studying Hotel Management? You are so lucky, it's a very easy and tension free course!

Definitely not! It is not an easy course. It requires lots of intellect and hard work and we students need to constantly update ourselves on the latest trends in this ever-dynamic Industry. It requires a lot of practical knowledge and insight which we don't get from our text books.

You're studying Hotel Management, are you going to stand in the Reception?

Firstly, we don't 'STAND' in the Reception; we become Guest Relation Executives, who are responsible for welcoming guests and managing room allotments. Also, the staff handling the Reception are certainly not 'Receptionists'!

You are so lucky ! Your Hotel Management course has only four subjects; Front Office, Housekeeping, Food & Beverage Service and Culinary Art.

Another misconception. Hotel Management includes various subjects other than the four core subjects, such as Sales and Marketing, Accounting, Human Resources, Personality Development, Travel and Tourism, Supervision, Foreign languages etc,. We also study how to apply various management concepts to specific situations, incidents and problems in the Hospitality profession. My guess is that we probably study more subjects than students in any other stream of education.

You are interested in Food and Beverage Service? So you want to become a Waiter?

Food & Beverage Service is not only about being a Waiter or Waitress!

Yes, one has to start their career in Food & Beverage by serving tables, but this department of a Hotel is very vast. We could grow to become the host of a restaurant, a wine expert, a restaurant manager, a bar manager, and one day, even the Food & Beverage Manager of the Hotel! Nobody stays a Waiter their entire life.

In Food & Beverage Service you learn how to serve, but hey, what's there to teach in it?

On the surface it may seem like F & B Service can be done anybody, but if you want to work in a Star Category Hotel, then there are many etiquettes, customs and techniques to be followed while serving. Please don't compare it to the way you serve food at your home!

F & B Service requires specific knowledge and a distinct personality not everybody possesses. Food & Beverage teaches us about wines from around the world, how they are manufactured, how alcohol is made, what accompaniment goes with what spirit etc,. It is not only about serving food to a guest!

Since you're working in a five star hotel, you must be staying there, right?

No! The rooms in a hotel are for guests, not for the staff to stay. Where will the guests stay if a hotel starts accommodating its staff in it??

It's nice that you work in a hotel, you must be getting free meals in the hotel restaurant, right?

Yeah, but only if the hotel was owned by my dad!

There is a cafeteria that provides meals for staff; they don't get "free meals" in the restaurant. Yes, the managers get a discount on the meals but it is not completely free, unless he is the General Manager of the hotel.

What do you do in Housekeeping? Just mopping and cleaning ?

Housekeeping is not only about cleaning and mopping, housekeepers are responsible for making the guests feel at home, creating an ambience that makes them feel welcomed and special. It includes the art of decorating the rooms, the lobby, and the entire hotel, keeping in mind the guest's tastes & preferences and also the 'image' that the hotel wishes to promote as an entity. 🌈



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WOW Hotels of 2010!!

Compiled by : **Perna Ghadge,**
II B. Sc-HM & CS
Source : www.yahoo.com



World's Tallest Hotel: Burj Al Arab, Dubai

Currently the tallest operating hotel in the world until it is surpassed by Dubai's Rose Tower later this year, the Burj Al Arab stands 321 metres (1,050 feet) high.

A self-rated 7 star hotel built on a man-made island 280 metres from shore, Burj Al Arab also boasts its own Rolls Royce fleet, Versace bedspreads, and private shopper and helicopter landing platform.

World's Coldest Hotel: Icehotel - Jukkasjarvi, Sweden



The Icehotel has rooms built entirely from ice and snow, decorated with handcrafted ice art and sculptures, an ice chapel licensed for marriages and baptisms, and two restaurants serving a range of Lappish and Swedish dishes. Activities include snowmobile trips, northern lights tours, and dog sled tours.



World's Largest Hotel (by no. of rooms): The Palazzo Resort Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, USA

The Palazzo Resort Hotel & Casino, which operates under the same license as The Venetian hotel next door, has 8,108 rooms combined. The hotel is like a mini city, with a large selection of restaurants, fashion stores, its own casino, and seven pools.

World's Oldest Hotel: Hoshi Ryokan - Komatsu, Japan



The Hoshi Ryokan has been in operation for over 1,300 years. The 100-room hotel has been run by the same family for 46 generations.

World's Highest Hotel (floor height): Park Hyatt - Shanghai, China



The Park Hyatt in Shanghai occupies floors 79 to 93 of the 101 story Shanghai World Finance Centre with views over the Huangpu River and the city skyline and located in the heart of Lujiazui business district in Pudong.



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World's Most Expensive Hotel Room: Royal Villa at Grand Resort Lagonissi, Athens, Greece

Featuring a dedicated butler, chef and pianist, the Royal Villa at Grand Resort Lagonissi is the world's most expensive hotel room at \$52,000 a night!!

The room overlooks the Aegean Sea, which you can view from a private pool with a hydro massage device. The resort also has a private Lear jet.



World's Most Eco-Friendly Hotel: Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa - Queensland, Australia

Set in the world's oldest rainforest, Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa has 15 villas nestled inside the Daintree Rainforest, and is committed to complying with sustainable tourism standards. Practices in place include using solar power, low energy lights and an organic farm to grow its own produce.



World's Most Expensive Hotel to Build: Emirates Palace - Abu Dhabi

The Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi which opened in 2005, cost over GBP 1.9 billion to build with silver, gold and marble used throughout the hotel and the 1,002 chandeliers made from Swarovski crystals.



World's Largest Hotel Room: Royal Suite in the Grand Hills Hotel & Spa, Broummana, Lebanon:

The Royal Suite in the Grand Hills Hotel & Spa is set over six floors for a total 8,000 square metres (86,110 sq ft) with half of this living space and the rest two swimming pools, a garden, terrace and pavilions.

World's Highest Hotel (altitude above sea level): Hotel Everest View - Nepal:

The Hotel Everest View is 3,880 metres (12,730 ft) above sea level and is set in the Sagarmatha National Park. All rooms have views of Mount Everest standing at 8,848 metres (29,030 ft) and the only direct access is by chartered helicopter.



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Vegetarianism & Health

Ms. Shweta Khandelwal
Clinical nutritionist & Dietician

For a long time now, scientific research on vegetarian diets has focused mostly on malnutrition, whereas now-a-days research centers increasingly on the preventive potential of plant based diets. Vegetarian diets are those that do not contain meat, poultry or fish. In general, it includes relatively large amounts of cereals, pulses, nuts fruits, vegetables and dairy products. According to vegetarian ideologists, people who consume vegetarian diets have better health and live longer than non-vegetarians.

Meta analysis of studies have shown that people who follow a vegetarian diet are at a lower risk for obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, diverticulitis, renal disease and gallstones. The reason for these health benefits comes from the lower intakes of saturated fat and cholesterol and the higher intakes of complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, certain minerals, and phytochemicals.

Risks of certain types of cancer are also found to be less in vegetarians than non-vegetarians.

Researches have shown that red meat eaters are at higher risk of developing colo-rectal cancer when compared to non-meateaters.



Meat is difficult for the body to digest and especially for those who don't have an active lifestyle, as it stays in the digestive tract for longer. The risk of breast cancer is also low in vegetarians as they consume substantial amount of soybean or foods made from soybean which are rich in phytoestrogens that may reduce the risk.

Studies also claim that eating meat, beef, and pork results in more of acid production. The maintenance of acid base balance is critical for bone health. Excess acid leads to bone resorption, resulting in weak bones, better known as Osteoporosis. On the other hand, a vegetarian diet that is rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains has a high content of magnesium and potassium which in turn have an alkaline effect that reduces such bone resorption.

Vegetarianism is form of food restriction and in our over-fed society, restriction is a plus, unless of course, it results in nutritional deficiencies. Micronutrients of special concern for vegetarians are omega 3 fatty acid, Vitamin B12, vitamin D and zinc as the sources of these are from non-vegetarian diets. Hence, vegetarians should consume fortified foods or supplements to fulfill nutritional requirements for the same.

A sound conclusion would be that the overall health benefits of a vegetarian diet surpass that of a non-vegetarian one, but as with all dietary patterns, care is needed to ensure that the diet is as nutritious and well-balanced. 🍌

THE TIGER

- William Blake (1757 -1827)

*TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

*In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?*

*And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?*

*What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?*

*When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?*

*Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?*



Pics :Greg Goveas
II B.Sc-HM & CS