

Reinventing the Ad(venture)

Set up with an investment of ` 250 crore, Della Adventure in Lonavala is a unique mixed use project that has an adventure park, a luxury resort, residential villas and several restaurants. It is also a project whose success is driven by the fact that its enterprising founder constantly reinvented every aspect to meet client expectations. By Sudipta Dev

It was almost by default that Jimmy Mistry, chairman and managing director, Della Technica Architects & Interior Design forayed into hospitality and founded Della Adventure, one of India's largest adventure parks that is also a unique project with residential villas, a luxury resort and multiple F&B options. The initial plan was a second home for himself in Lonavala where he could do horse riding and dirt biking. As the land was more than five and half acres, he also wanted to get into the venture of second homes - luxury villas that are specialised second homes with designer elements. It gradually emerged as a vast project that has probably the largest number of adventure activities being offered anywhere in the country - 86 till the last count with many more to come.

Explaining how the project took off Mistry says, "We started off with 24 villas in phase I and subsequently we added some more land to it to create ATV and riding track. That led to adding horses, followed by a cafeteria. We set up a small cafe that turned

into a restaurant. In 2009 everyone was going through peak recession and we had a lot of time on hand. At that time we had 1600-1700 employees in our company and I thought that instead of laying some of them off we could divert our energies into this. Along with retaining all our employees we put our passion for adventure sports into this place." The villa owners also get the entire infrastructure of a five-star resort, F&B and security. The phase II villas is an extension of phase I which was a Spanish concept while this is more contemporary. The phase I resorts are 55 keys while the phase II resort has 50 keys. There are junior suites, presidential/queen suites and a handicapped room.

Della Adventure has been set up with an investment of ₹220 crore and another ₹30 crore to be completed - including the villas, 100 odd room resort, adventure park, banquets, restaurants and entire land development. Mixed used projects are a new concept in India and Mistry realises that he has got into it by default. Despite



competition coming up in the form of new five-star properties in the area Mistry says that he has a unique proposition - the adventure park.

Adventure park

Activities that were easily available like archery, zorbing and paint ball were set up first and the difficult ones like zip lines and high low rope activities were added later. Mistry travelled to Switzerland, South Africa, East Africa, Singapore and other places to understand and explore the activities that could be replicated at Della



Jimmy Mistry

Being in the field of design and construction it was easy for Mistry to see a concept and implement it. The park was opened in December 2009. 2010 commercial operation began.

"We are very clear that we are naive in hospitality. We are also very new to adventure like everybody in India. There was no preset norm regarding what the guests/clientele expected from us. We were quick to adapt circumstances and change that were required. Only if you listen to people we will get the formula right," acknowledges