

New “green” hotel in Bucharest city center

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 31 May 2009 03:34 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 September 2009 01:10

Four- star Hotel Berthelot is located on Berthelot Street, behind the headquarters of the Romanian Information Service (SRI) and is one of the few hotels with “green” structure elements in Romania. Opened at the beginning of 2009, in a period when all the hoteliers are facing a considerable drop of the occupancy rates Hotel Berthelot is fighting the competition with flexible rack rates, central location and low number of rooms that contribute to the maintenance of a high occupancy degree during the week as well as at the weekend, the general manager of Hotel Berthelot, Constantin Arsene tells Bucharest Herald.

Bucharest Herald: When did you start this business and what were the reasons that determined you to look at tourism?

Constantin Arsene: The hotel is the property of a software firm in Pitesti, Arges county, which I own with my son Costin Arsene. I set up the firm 19 years ago, in 1990. In 2003 I wanted to invest in a new business. I looked at tourism, from an older passion. I wanted to build a similar project in Poiana Brasov, but I gave up on the idea.

B.H: When did you buy the land plot and what was the total price?

Constantin Arsene: I bought the land in 2003, but I had many problems with the former Bucharest chief architect, Adrian Bold. It was very difficult to get the construction permits and I had even 15 daily checks from the authorities during the construction. The land plot belonged in 1989 to Tractorul Brasov and the waste dump of the area was located here. It covers 650 sqm. I bought it for 500 USD per sqm, so its overall value exceeded 300,000 USD.

B.H: What was the value of the investment in the hotel?

Constantin Arsene: The total investment in the hotel was of 3.5 million Euro. The investment was very well managed. The costs for the development of a four- star standard hotel are around 100,000 Euro/ room. Hotel Berthelot will be a “green” hotel. All the water will be heated by a solar installation system. The insulations are very good, so it is very warm during the winter and cool during the summer. Everything is conceived to function in a low cost economical regime.

B.H: Why did you choose this location?

Constantin Arsene: The location was well chosen. We took into account the fact that those who come in Bucharest and want to go out in the city, want to walk, instead of using the car. And this location allows the easy access to the city center and to all the important locations: Universitate, Cismigiu, Piata Romana, the Royal Palace, in maximum 5 minutes.

B.H: What are the criteria according to which the tourists chose the hotel where they want to accommodate, in this moment of financial crisis?

Constantin Arsene: Right now the customers are interested in the prices and then in the service quality. The quality is not on the first place, the price matters most. We attract many clients from the four and five star hotels, who want to save money and get similar services, close to the quality of five star hotels services. For a good while from now on, the price will be the most important.

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B.H: What is the occupancy degree during the week and what are the facilities of the hotel?

Constantin Arsene: The occupancy degree is high during the week, because the hotel is small, it has 43 rooms. Most of the tourists are foreigners. The restaurant offers products at accessible prices and we offer daily a 25 RON menu. The hotel also has a bar and a terrace. We organize events, conferences and workshops for 50-60 people. We do not have conference rooms, but the restaurant can be divided for business tables. There are also 15 parking places outside and in the garage, enough for the size of the hotel. We have subcontracted a number of services. The transport is ensured by luxury Mercedes E class cars. We have also concluded a contract with a beauty saloon for services in the room. It is not profitable for a small hotel owner to ensure all the services it is more profitable to subcontract these services.

B.H: What are the advantages of a hotel with a small number of rooms, compared to a large hotel?

Constantin Arsene: People are looking for discrete, warm hotels, because they feel the need to communicate with the hotel staff, to get preferential treatment. They prefer a small and warm hotel, instead of a large, cold and shiny hotel. We are focused on quality and a close relationship with the client.

Un nou hotel “verde” in centrul Capitalei

Hotelul Berthelot 4* este localizat pe Strada Berthelot, in spatele sediului Serviciului Roman de Informatii (SRI) si este unul dintre putinele hoteluri cu elemente structurale “verzi” din Romania. Deschis la inceputul anului 2009, intr-o perioada in care toti hotelierii resimt scaderea considerabila a gradului de ocupare, Hotelul Berthelot se lupta cu competitia prin tarife flexibile, locatie centrala si numar redus de camere, care contribuie la mentinerea unui grad de ocupare ridicat atat in cursul saptamanii, cat si in weekend, a declarat pentru Bucharest Herald, managerul general al Hotelului Berthelot, Constantin Arsene.

Bucharest Herald: Cand ati demarat aceasta afacere si care au fost motivele care v-au determinat sa va orientati catre turism?

Constantin Arsene: Hotelul este proprietatea unei firme de software din Pitesti, pe care o detin cu fiul meu Costin Arsene. Am infiintat-o in urma cu 19 ani, in 1990. In 2003 am vrut sa investesc intr-o noua afacere. M-am orientat catre turism dintr-o pasiune mai veche. Am vrut sa fac un proiect similar in Poiana Brasov dar am renuntat.

B.H: Cand ati achizitionat terenul si care a fost pretul total ?

Constantin Arsene: Am cumparat terenul in 2003, dar am avut foarte multe probleme cu fostul architect sef al Bucurestiului, Adrian Bold. A fost foarte greu sa obtin autorizatia de constructie, am avut si 15 controale zilnic din partea autoritatilor in timpul constructiei. Terenul a apartinut in 1989 intreprinderii Tractorul Brasov si aici era groapa de gunoi a zonei. Are o suprafata de 650 metri patrati. L-am achizitionat cu 500 USD metrul patrat, deci valoarea lui totala a depasit 300.000 USD.

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B.H: Care a fost valoarea investitiei in hotel?

Constantin Arsene: Investitia totala in hotel a fost de 3,5 milioane Euro. A fost o investitie foarte bine manageriata. Costurile pentru dezvoltarea unui hotel de 4 stele standard sunt de aproximativ 100.000 Euro/camera. Hotelul Berthelot va fi un hotel "verde". Toata apa calda menajera va fi incalzita de instalatia solara. Izolatiile sunt foarte bune , astfel incat iarna este foarte cald, iar vara este racoare. Totul este conceput sa functioneze in regim ecologic si economic.

B.H: De ce ati ales aceasta locatie?

Constantin Arsene: Locatia a fost bine aleasa. Am luat in considerare faptul ca cei care vin in Bucuresti si vor sa iasa in oras, vor sa mearga pe jos, nu cu masina. Iar din aceasta locatie se poate ajunge in centru, catre toate locatiile importante: Universitate, Cismigiu, Piata Romana, Palatul Regal, in maxim cinci minute.

B.H: Care sunt criteriile in functie de care turistii aleg hotelul la care vor sa se cazeze, in acest moment de criza financiara?

Constantin Arsene: In acest moment, clientii sunt interesati in primul rand de pret si apoi de calitatea serviciilor. Calitatea nu este pe primul loc, pretul conteaza in primul rand. Noi atragem multi clienti de la hotelurile de 4 si 5 stele, care vor sa economiseasca bani si sa primeasca servicii apropiate calitativ de serviciile hotelurilor de 5 stele. Pentru o buna perioada de timp pretul va fi hotarator.

B.H: Care este gradul de ocupare in cursul saptamanii si care sunt facilitatile pe care le ofera hotelul?

Constantin Arsene: Gradul de ocupare este mare si in cursul saptamanii, pentru ca hotelul este mic, are 43 de camere. Majoritatea turistilor sunt straini. Restaurantul ofera produse la preturi accesibile. Oferim si un menu zilnic de 25 de lei. Hotelul dispune de bar si terasa. Organizam evenimente, conferinte si workshop-uri pentru 50-60 de persoane. Nu avem sali de conferinta, insa restaurantul poate fi compartimentat pentru mese de business. Exista de asemenea 15 locuri de parcare exterioara si garaj, suficiente pentru dimensiunea hotelului. Am subcontractat o serie de servicii. Transportul se face numai cu masini de lux Mercedes clasa E. Pentru servicii de manichiura si pedichiura am incheiat un contract cu un salon de infrumusetare care poate asigura si servicii la camera. Nu este rentabil pentru un proprietar de hotel mic sa asigure toate serviciile, este mai rentabil sa subcontracteze.

B.H: Care sunt avantajele unui hotel cu un numar mic de camere, comparative cu un hotel mare?

Constantin Arsene: Oamenii cauta hoteluri discrete, calduroase, pentru ca simt nevoia sa comunice cu personalul hotelului, sa primeasca un tratament preferential. Prefera un hotel mic si calduros, in locul unui hotel mare, rece si stralucitor. Noi ne axam pe calitate si pe

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aproprierea de client.