20 Years With The Sunhill Group

The Sunhill Group of companies celebrated its 20th anniversary as a key player in

leisure, entertainment, and hospitality industries. Surendra Vasantha Perera, Chairman and Managing Director reflects on his two decades in the business, and his humble beginnings.

After Vasantha Perera returned from his studies in Japan in 1991, he proceeded to turn his family home in Nuwara Eliya into a 12-room hotel. The luxurious facilities offering unparalleled service, quickly gained popularity among both local and international tourists. With the Sunhill Hotel maintaining high occupancy levels, he then decided to expand into excursion packages with a fleet of vehicles. What resulted was a full-blown entry into automative sales and leasing – the first in the hill country to do so.

Next, the company established the Sunhill Property Development, a real estate and property development venture, which also acts as an investment company. Afterwards, in 1996 he moved his automative business to Kandy, where he further expanded the tourism aspect of the company by purchasing a seven room hotel.

Perera later ventured into the city of Colombo, where the Group underwent further diversification starting in 2001. He was determined to revitalise Colombo’s stagnated nightlife, first with the ‘After Dark’ nightclub in Colpetty and then with the Pier 3, one of the group’s signature properties. They were closely followed by other endeavours such as Winter Palace, Lush Night Club, Cosmos, Bistro Latino and several other pubs in the heart of Colombo. The Texas Pub was also opened to introduce a Western-style ambiance and entertainment.

Again Perera reverted his attention to the tourism industry by acquiring a hotel in Mount Lavinia, which became one of his biggest investments. The Group also ventured into the Telecom Industry by establishing businesses in Colombo 3 and Kotahena.

By 2007, they acquired a neglected property, which became the star-class Hotel Sunhill in Colombo, and another in Katunayake to cater to the Bandaranaike International Airport travellers and airline crew.

With the advent of peace in Sri Lanka, the Sunhill Group is well prepared to cater to the much anticipated boom in tourism, thereby making a significant contribution to the nation’s economic development and growth. “With the ending of the war the

leisure industry would be one of the key drivers of the economy, and the future of the industry looks even brighter," stated Vasantha Perera. Last year his pioneering venture – Sunhill Hotel Nuwara Eliya – won a global accolade when it was chosen as the best Economy class hotel in the World by Trade Leaders Club (TLC), in Spain.

Under the Sun Hill Group there are nearly 400 employees and the group allocates millions each year for their corporate social responsibility initiatives. They are also starting to emerge onto the international stage with a restaurant in Italy, a nightclub in Dubai, and a hotel in Thailand.

"We are really proud and jubilant about the progress the tourist industry is going to make in the future. We, as a forerunner in the tourist industry, announce with joy on the occasion of us completing 20 years of existence that we are committed to the progress of the country as well as to the tourism industry," added Vasantha Perera.