

## IH&RA Environmental Award Winners in 2005 Announced

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Recognized at the IH&RA 42nd Annual Congress in Beijing, China 28-30 October Hotels in Brazil, Canada, India and the Caribbean Excel in 'Engaging the Guest In Environmental Actions'

The 2005 winners of the International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA) Environmental Award were announced before 400 international and Chinese delegates attending the IH&RA 42nd Annual Congress Gala Dinner on 30 October at the Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center in Beijing, China. This Awards Ceremony culminated a power-packed 3-day Conference with industry leaders speaking on the hottest issues impacting the hospitality industry today. So, which hotels really inspire and encourage guests to 'engage in environmental actions?' - Take a look at the winners of the 2005 IH&RA Environmental Award 'Engaging the Guest In Environmental Actions' for the answer!

Meliá Jardim Europa in São Paulo, Brazil, part of the Sol Melia hotel chain, is the winner of the IH&RA Environmental Award of 2005 in the 'chain' category, while the Monterey Inn, Resort and Conference Center from Ontario, Canada is the winner in the 'independent' category. 'Highly Commended' in the chain category is Spice Village in Kerala, India, member of the CGH Earth Group and 'Highly Commended' in the independent category is 3 Rivers Eco Lodge & Sustainable Living Centre in Rosalie Commonwealth of Dominica, West Indies. These properties were selected from a wide array of applications received from hotels located in more than 25 countries worldwide!

The IH&RA Environmental Award is one of the industry's longest running awards recognizing the industry's outstanding and proactive work to protect the environment. It is conducted in association with UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme and is made possible thanks to founding sponsor American Express. Programme partners and judges also include Conservation International, Green Globe 21 and the International Tourism Partnership.

The Meliá Jardim Europa in São Paulo, Brazil was selected as the winner in the chain category notably for its innovative 'Green Floor Project' which recreates the tropical Brazilian forest inside the hotel. The Green Floor Symbol is displayed throughout the property and is comprised of three green leaves symbolizing the 3 Rs - reduce, reuse, recycle. Guests are encouraged to contribute to the World Wildlife Fund and the hotel matches each donation. Margarida Yassuda, General Manager of the Meliá Jardim Europa, who accepted her award in Beijing said, 'We intend to demonstrate that an urban hotel can be more environmentally friendly and still maintain a successful business administration.' According to the Environmental Award judges, the 'Green Floor Project' is a 'truly a holistic approach to sustainability where all the actions adopted by the management are clearly visible to the guests and are fortified by their contribution. The Green Floor Project brings together all the elements: communication tools, staff involvement and sustainability actions.'

The Monterey Inn Resort and Conference Center in Ontario, Canada was recognized for its outstanding work, most notably its Carbon Neutral program. The hotel enables the customer to calculate their carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) produced during their own travel and offers ways to offset the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by taking part in the Tree Canada Foundation's carbon credit program. The hotel collects the cost of planting trees from the customer, and facilitates the planting of trees with the Tree Canada Foundation. This program has already led to hundreds of trees being planted on behalf of guests. The judges commended, 'The facility has built its customers' awareness program as part of a larger environmental sustainability engagement that has been recognized by many certification systems. The specific focus on offsetting carbon emissions related to travel is a very important education element that visitors can take home and apply to other aspects of their lives.'

The two 'Highly Commended' properties were also praised for their outstanding work in engaging the guest in environmental actions. Spice Village in Kerala, India provided concrete examples of how guest and customer feedback were used to improve hotel environmental best practice initiatives, 'The guests are encouraged to pen down their valuable suggestions on environmental issues, which make their stay an engaging experience. 'Tiger club' as a wild life interpretation centre was a significant suggestion given by Shri Valmik Thapar, renowned environmentalist and wild life conservationist.' The 3 Rivers Eco Lodge & Sustainable Living Centre in Dominica, West Indies was recognized for integrating communication 'as a structural part of its offer by setting up a 'sustainable living centre' that also extends the discussion beyond the 'travel' experience but to the guests' every day lives.'

The judges also noted the exceptional work being done by Fairmont Hotels & Resorts that provided specific examples of how its comprehensive corporate policy is implemented at the property level. One of the judges remarked, 'this chain has taken some brilliant initiatives. It is wonderful that a major chain has embraced the environmental message so comprehensively throughout its operations' while the JW Marriott Phuket in Thailand was praised for 'its excellent work and dedication to the conservation of leatherback turtles.'

The IH&RA Environmental Award winners were recognized at the IH&RA 42nd Annual Congress held 28-30 October in Beijing, China before some 400 international hospitality leaders and international media including BBC World. The final winners in each category received a plaque of recognition and 2500 USD in prize money which each committed to reinvesting into their environmental programs. Meliá Jardim Europa in São Paulo, Brazil General Manager, Margarida Yassuda stated 'I dreamed to travel to China...It is a dream to be the winner in a project that has taken many years to develop and to also receive the Award in China...Nothing could be better!'

Learn more about the excellent environmental initiatives of the IH&RA Environmental Award Winners!

IH&RA Environmental Award Winner - Chain Category

Meliá Jardim Europa in São Paulo, Brazil

<http://www.solmelia.com>

IH&RA Environmental Award Winner - Independent Category

Monterey Inn Resort & Conference Center in Ontario, Canada

<http://www.montereyinn.com>

Highly Commended - Chain Category

Spice Village in Kerala, India

[www.cghearth.com](http://www.cghearth.com)

Highly Commended - Independent Category

3 Rivers Eco Lodge & Sustainable Living Centre in Dominica, West Indies

<http://www.3riversdominica.com>

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