

Saybrook Point Inn & Spa Champions Environmental Responsibility - By Glenn Hasek

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Situated on the site of one of New England's first settlements (1623), the Saybrook Point Inn & Spa here has a rich history. Located in an environmentally sensitive area on the Connecticut River, one that recently has seen eagles return to it, the property is a champion of energy conservation and environmental protection.

The 82-room inn has been run by the Tagliatela family since it opened as a renovated property in 1989. Stephen Tagliatela, co-owner, says the inn is the first full-service lodging establishment in Connecticut to earn the Energy Star from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy. Programs to minimize energy and water consumption have been implemented in guestrooms, public spaces and back-of-house areas.

'We have always taken a good look at what the cost of the building is over time,' Tagliatela says.

When the inn opened in 1989, the owners took advantage of a lighting rebate program and implemented PL fluorescent lamps in exterior and public areas. They have since transitioned to electronic ballasts, T-8s and then super T-8s.

'We try to stay up with the latest technologies,' Tagliatela says.

Guestroom Energy Consumption Controlled

In each guestroom, an energy management system powers the heating and cooling system up or down based on occupancy. Each room has its own water-source heat pump. In the cooling tower, a large heat exchanger was installed to capture heat from the boiler. It helps raise the temperature of water coming in from the outside from 65 degrees to 85 degrees before entering the boiler. Tagliatela estimates this measure will save the inn 5,000 gallons of heating oil every year, with a payback of less than two years. Speaking of heating oil, the Saybrook Point Inn & Spa recently transitioned to B5 fuel, which includes 5 percent biodiesel.

No chemicals are used to keep the cooling tower clean. A system was put in place to kill bacteria electronically. In the laundry, an ozone system was installed about seven years ago. It reduces energy and water consumption while also helping to minimize the need for chemicals. High-speed extract machines have water reuse capability and help save on laundry drying time.

The inn uses a septic system to handle its liquid waste. Tagliatela says sonar devices were installed in the system to monitor when septic tanks need to get pumped.

'Before implementing this system, we were pumping them more often than we needed to,' he says.

Salt Water Pool System

The inn has one indoor pool, an indoor whirlpool, and one outdoor pool. A salt water system keeps the water soft. Chlorine is generated via a device that uses titanium electrodes. The fully automated system ensures that employees do not have to handle chlorine. Fewer chlorine odors are also a result of the salt water approach.

To reduce water consumption at the inn, low-flow showerheads are used. Low-flow toilets were recently introduced in the inn's new addition. Natural cleaning products help ensure a high level of indoor air quality at the 100 percent nonsmoking property.

To minimize waste, recycling containers are available in every guestroom. Office paper, bottles and cans, and cardboard are recycled.

Adjacent to the inn is a marina that can accommodate up to 140 boats. The marina is a recognized New England leader in green practices. In 1995, it offered the first pump-out station in the region. In 2003 it received the first Clean Marina Award ever issued by the State of Connecticut. The resort has its own power generator which allows it to go off the grid during peak demand periods. A watering system on the marina's grounds has weather sensors to allow it to shut down if rain is likely. Grounds are maintained with organic fertilizer.

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