

Hotels Struggle to Find the Right Eco-Message

2008-06-03

The hotel experience, as all business travelers know, has become partly a lecture hall experience about saving the planet.

Green marketing is big, especially in hotels, many of which have deftly combined real environmental concerns (more efficient energy use, a better awareness of one's footprint in environmentally fragile areas) with clever marketing.

Here, the save the sea turtle campaign is accompanied by a promotional offer that the hotel calls its 'Fertile Turtle Package aimed at couples looking to conceive' so that 'lovebirds have the opportunity to watch the sea turtles hatch.'

Hotels that care about the environment often have a delicate balancing act. They want to offer guests the opportunity to stay, without guilt, in a pristine environment. Yet their very existence there is an intrusion. So a good option is to leave the message that drawing your room curtain helps keep the baby turtles from getting disoriented by artificial light on their fledgling crawl to the sea.

Who, then, would be so churlish as to point out that turtle protocols are actually enforced by law? Several hotels in nearby Naples, for example, were cited last year for violations that included failure to shield the beach from the glow of their lights during sea turtle nesting season, from May through October.

Whatever works, I say.

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Source - New York Times

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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