

Green Conscious Hotels and Destinations Promoted by Travel PR Firms

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Green living means green hotels for many of today's eco-conscious travelers. People are making their choices of where to stay based on hotels that have programs centered on ecologically sensitive building approaches and service practices. Boutique PR firms that specialize in travel public relations are sending the message out that the properties they represent and the destinations they promote are eco-friendly.

What exactly does green mean? It can cover anything from planting trees to increasing oxygen in the locales of the hotels to fully sustainable properties.

One travel pr firm, Abelow PR, has issued news about their client, Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, which has built entire oases of greenery in such crowded cities as Mumbai and Bangalore, and has planted thousands of trees from the airports to their properties along main boulevards. Trees, of course, take in carbon dioxide and emit oxygen during photosynthesis. The Leela Hotel's Chairman was recently honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his involvement in developing environmentally sensitive hotels.

Meanwhile, America's first Leed-certified hotel brand, Element by Starwood, has just opened its first property under that brand in Lexington, MA. The property is a mix of smart design and eco-chicness and will be the concept lab for the brand. Their travel public relations efforts have worked as the hotel is off to a roaring start.

Although there are plenty of non-government standards (such as the renowned Green Seal), the Environmental Protection Agency's U.S. Green Building Council's rating system for environmental buildings is called Leed certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). It's truly the gold standard in eco-construction.

Travel destinations in general have grown in popularity over the past few years as travelers make decisions to visit places where conservation and protection of the environment and wildlife plays a role. Environmentalism is becoming an integral part of the eco-friendly vacation, as people fly to see glaciers in Alaska, rainforests in Central and South America, and other disappearing parts of the planet. Spotting endangered species while on safari such as the black rhinoceros or exotic birds is a wonderful way to become educated about the importance of maintaining the fragile eco-system and encouraging awareness of conservation practices currently underway to protect the animal's habitat.

A recent article in Forbes Traveler noted, "Being green has entered every part of many people's lives, including travel," says David Krantz, a coordinator with the Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development in Washington D.C. "Americans take their impact more seriously than ever before." Forbes highlighted Black Rock Lodge in Belize and Rangel Holiday Village in Sri Lanka, which are catering to the new ecotourism ethos through environmental conservation, light-on-the-land building techniques and embracing local culture. Sure to redefine eco architecture when it breaks ground in 2008, Star Island in the Bahamas is a private island resort being developed in a fully sustainable way using innovative technology and standards.

Another hotel, The Hilton in Vancouver, Washington was renovated to receive a LEED certification, and the Orchard Garden Hotel in San Francisco was built to LEED-certified specs. 'It's not mutually exclusive anymore to be green and luxurious,' said Stefan Mühle, the general manager of the Orchard Garden. 'It's not all Birkenstocks, granola and austerity. It's not just a fad, it's bound to become a standard, so it makes sense to get on board early.'

Boutique PR firms, especially those that specialize in travel PR will continue to get the message out to the public to enhance their awareness about green hotels, eco-sensitive design and protecting fragile environments around the world. The public is realizing the important contribution they can make during their leisure time to the destiny of the earth.

Contact

Lorraine Abelow

LAPR

www.abelowpr.com

203-226-5390 EST

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