



Green Leaders

EcoRooms & EcoSuites new Board of Advisors hopes to raise the environmental standards of the hospitality industry, educate consumers and differentiate green from ‘greenwashing’

Saint Charles, Missouri — August 8, 2007 — In the past few years, most hotels have adopted some kind of “green” policy, asking guests to conserve energy, water and re-use bed linens and towels. For both the environment and the hotel’s bottom line, it’s a positive step. However, the greening of the hospitality industry shouldn’t stop there.

In an effort to promote real environmental and hospitality policy change, EcoRooms & EcoSuites (www.EcoRooms.com) — an online directory of environmentally oriented hotels, resorts, inns, motels and B&Bs — has brought together a group of the industry’s leading environmental advocates to serve on its Board of Advisors. Together, these eco-visionaries are helping define what it means to be truly green, by following — and when need be updating — the directory’s rigorous “Significant 7” Criteria.

“We do not believe a large number of properties will currently qualify for a listing on our directory. What we are attempting to do is “Raise the Bar” and establish some consistency of what is ‘Green’ in the hospitality industry,” says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality, which operates the EcoRooms & EcoSuites website.

“The members of our Board of Advisors manage some of the greenest hotels on the planet. We are proud and excited that they have committed to serve on the Board, and together we will become the leading resource others in the hospitality industry turn to when developing or expanding their greener hotel programs,” Burger adds.

Who’s Who in Green Hospitality

The new members of EcoRooms & EcoSuites Board of Advisors includes Dierdre Wallace, Natalie Marquis, Wen-I Chang, Rauni Kew and Stefan Muhle.

- As Director of New Development for MOA Hospitality, **Diedre Wallace** spearheaded the development and construction of The Ambrose Hotel to its opening in 2003. Wallace formed The Ambrose Group LLC in 2003 to continue the development of boutique hotels. The Ambrose Group is currently developing the “greenest urban hotel” in the US, Ray, located in Venice Beach, Ca. and is expanding the eco-boutique brand The Ambrose.
- As General Manager of Habitat Suites Hotel for the past 10 years, **Natalie Marquis** has hands-on experience implementing sustainable business practices and measuring the business, economic,

and social successes that follow the decision to do business with a responsibility for stewarding the land and its occupants for future generations. Natalie has marketed the hotel with “ecological consciousness in action” as its motto and its call to action.

- **Wen-I Chang** is the President of Atman Hospitality Group and the owner/developer of California’s premier green hotel brand: GAIA Hotels. His passion for preservation, entrepreneurial spirit, and deeply philosophical perspective on the relationship between business, society, and the environment have brought inspiration and innovation to the green hospitality movement. The GAIA Napa Valley, Chang’s LEED Gold certified hotel, is a monument to the principles of green design.
- **Stefan Muhle’s** marketing savvy, business sense, and green prowess were on display last year when he opened the stunning Orchard Garden Hotel, San Francisco’s first LEED certified property. Muhle puts his sixteen years of hospitality experience to use as the GM of both the Orchard Garden and Orchard Hotel, properties that balance boutique aesthetics with environmentally sound ethics.
- **Rauni Kew's** background is in marketing and PR. Currently working in the hospitality industry, she heads up PR & Green Programs for the Inn By The Sea in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, a certified Maine DEP Green Lodging. Previously she was Marketing Director for a manufacturing company in the Chemical Process Industry for 16 years. She marketed the company’s sludge reduction equipment for activated waste water treatment plants.

“Serving on this board of advisors gives voice to the urgency of igniting in others the passion we have for conservation and change,” says Marquis, whose 96-room Habitat Suites is the host of the largest onsite solar PV system on a hotel in the U.S. The hotel also recently installed a solar hot water system that will decrease dependence on natural gas by 60 percent.

“Education is the key, and outreach is the messenger,” she continues. “If we can get in front of the people in charge of making the decisions, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that we can turn things around dramatically and make a significant improvement in air quality, water quality, reducing emissions, and reducing factors which contribute to global warming.”

“If our board of advisors can educate the hospitality industry that 'green' means more green in their bank accounts, we have a triple win. We can leverage further greening, like not using pesticides and toxic cleaners, on the savings from these initial programs being implemented,” Marquis adds.

Green Hotel Trends

The recently released J.D. Power and Associates 2007 North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Study demonstrates just how important it is for hotels to improve green practices. According to the study:

When guests were asked if the hotel had conservation programs in place, 63 percent of guests answered yes, while 8 percent said no, and 29 percent indicated that they didn't know. When they are aware of a hotel's environmentally friendly programs, 73 percent of hotel guests indicate they participate. In turn, raising awareness of environmentally friendly programs among customers may help properties further increase participation.

"Since conservation is such an important issue globally, it is vitally important that hotel properties actively market their eco-friendly offerings and make them easy to recognize and participate in," said Linda Hirneise, executive director of the travel practice at J.D. Power and Associates. "Offering green programs is a win-win situation for both hotel guests and hotel operators. Guests are increasingly looking for these types of offerings, and hotels are finding that going green actually saves money."

is rife with opportunity.

“The response for our green program is just amazing,” says Muhle, describing the 86-room Orchard Garden Hotel, which opened in the heart of San Francisco in late winter 2006. “We don’t have to push our beliefs in our guests’ faces. Rather, we invite them to participate. We have beautiful trash cans that look like a piece of furniture, which tells the guests to take part in our recycling program. The maple furniture we use is sustainably grown and harvested; plus it will last us a very long time. The amenities and cleaning products we use are all natural products, so guests don’t have to worry about inhaling a lot of chemicals.”

“You can’t just take things away from guests to go green. You’d just look cheap. We’ve shown that you can have it both ways: good for the environment and still maintain that luxury our guests expect,” Muhle adds.

Chang talks about how the GAIA Napa Valley was designed using a holistic approach, balancing the environment, the cost and the function. For instance, Chang says the hotel spent an additional \$800,000 on an earth-friendly ventilation system. However, this has paid itself back in both guest satisfaction from quieter operation, and in energy savings, as the energy used has been cut by 26 percent.

“Our guests take pride in staying at our hotel, knowing our commitment to the environment,” Chang says. “They want to participate. We have a kiosk touch screen system near the front desks that shows all the things we’re doing for the Earth, and they’re always using it and asking our staff questions about it.”

“I’m not satisfied to stop at being LEED Gold. I believe it is time to transform people’s consciousness into a union with nature. Being a part of the Board of Advisors gives us all a foundation to begin that transformation,” he says.

Greenwashing

Wallace says that at the 77-room, sustainable Ambrose Hotel in Santa Monica, Calif., guests want to know what the hotel is doing for the environment.

“There’s not a lot of green hotels out there, but that will significantly change in the next 3 to 5 years,” Wallace says. “Even hotels that are being marketed as green will develop even more green practices.”

“The problem is that we’re also seeing a lot of ‘greenwashing’ — some hotels who just don’t wash the sheets everyday calling themselves green. Or they hang up signs asking guests to cut down on water. These are the most obvious, most easily seen, but they don’t take the time on the back end to look at their practices. And educated consumers are becoming frustrated. There’s so much more that goes into really being sustainable, to being green,” she says.

“This is why what we’re doing at EcoRooms & EcoSuites is important. There needs to be a standard for which consumers and individuals can look at to determine what green is. And as part of the Board, I’m excited to have my say about what the standards need to be.”

Increased Regulation

Even if hotels do not implement green policies of their own accord, some might be pushed into it soon through pressure from government regulators.

In the latest news on this front, Florida Governor Charlie Crist recently signed an executive order initiating new state energy-use policies, including one that requires state agencies and departments to hold meetings and conferences only at hotels with Green Lodging certification starting Jan. 1, 2008.

Hotels that do not want to miss out on the opportunity to host these conferences will have to attain Green Lodging Certification from Florida's Department of Environmental Protection. And with the move, Florida joins at least eight other states (California, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin) that have some form of green-hotel certification.

Florida's certification involves environmental practices in areas of communication, water conservation, energy efficiency, waste reduction and clean air. Some basic standards include offering towel and linen reuse, using low-flow showerheads and toilets, using Energy Star-rated appliances and lighting, offering staff and guest recycling, purchasing bulk items, recycling ink and toner cartridges and using environmentally friendly cleaners.

"I think the potential to help save our natural resources is huge," said Karen Moore, who coordinates Florida's Green Lodging program. "This has a direct impact on Florida's tourism industry, which is our biggest industry and has a tremendous environmental impact."

As the green movement takes off, we can expect more states, and more hotels, to follow.

"The green policies that we have put in place will be a standard soon, probably within 5 to 10 years," says Muhle. "What we consider cutting edge now, everyone will be doing. We've already seen this in Europe. We're still just a little behind."

"There's a lot of claims out there about what is green. With what we're doing at EcoRooms & EcoSuites, there will be standards in place that consumers can trust, that they'll know where they can turn to differentiate true green from greenwashing," he adds.

Eco-Criteria

Criteria to be an EcoRoom or EcoSuite:

1. Cleaning Products – General Purpose, Bathroom, Glass and Carpet Cleaning

- A. Must be Less than 10% VOC's by weight.
- B. Must Be Diluted at least 8 to 1.
- C. The Undiluted product shall not be toxic to Humans.
- D. The Undiluted product shall not contain carcinogens or any ingredients that are known to cause reproductive toxicity.
- E. The Undiluted product shall not be corrosive to the skin or eyes
- F. The Undiluted product shall not be a skin sensitizer
- G. The Undiluted product shall not be combustible
- H. The product as used shall not contain substances that contribute significantly to the production of photochemical smog, Tropospheric ozone, or poor indoor air quality. The Volatile Organic Compound as used shall not exceed the following:
 - 1% by Weight for Dilutable Carpet Cleaners
 - 1% by Weight for General Purpose and Bathroom Cleaners
 - 3% by Weight for Glass Cleaners
 - 3% by Weight for Ready to Use Carpet Cleaners
- I. The Product as used shall not be toxic to aquatic life
- J. Each of the organic ingredients in the product as used shall exhibit ready biodegradability
- K. The product as used shall not contain more than 0.5% by weight of total phosphorus
- L. The product containers shall be recyclable or Manufacturers may provide for the returning and refilling of their packaging.
- M. Prohibited Ingredients include the following:
 - Alkylphenol ethoxylates
 - Dibutyl Phthalate
 - Heavy metals including arsenic, lead, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, mercury, nickel, or selenium
 - Ozone-depleting compounds

Optical Brighteners

N. Training – The Product Manufacturer, its distributor, or a third party shall offer training or training materials in the proper use of the product. These shall include step-by-step instructions for the proper dilution, use, disposal, and the use of the equipment. A statement containing this information shall be provided to Each Supplier of cleaning products. They will sign the statement verifying that each of the products supplied complies with these standards.

2. Paper Products – Consumable Paper Products shall be made from recycled fibers, with the following minimum postconsumer content: Bathroom Tissue: 20%, Facial Tissue: 10%, Napkins and Paper Towels: 40%

3. Amenity Products – Property shall use refillable amenity dispensers or individual containers for shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion, etc. Individual products shall be the smallest practical size for the length of stay and minimally packaged in recycled and/or recyclable materials. Used amenities are collected for donation to charity or for recycling where practical.

4. Linen and Towel Reuse Program – Property shall implement and execute a well designed Linen and Towel Re-use program for all Guest Rooms.

5. Recycling Program – Property shall establish and maintain recycling programs for the common areas, administrative areas, and Guest rooms. The Guest Room Receptacle must be clearly identified for Glass, Paper, Aluminum, & Plastic.

6. Lighting – All Guest Room Lighting shall be Energy Efficient. No incandescent lighting is acceptable in Floor, Desk, Table or Nightstand lamps. Bathroom lighting shall be either Linear Fluorescent, Compact Fluorescent or a combination of each type.

7. High Efficiency Plumbing Fixtures – Property shall use the following: 2.2 GPM Faucets with 1.5 GPM or less aerators, the showerheads shall be 2.5 GPM or less and the toilet shall be 1.6 GPF or less.

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality is an EPA ENERGY STAR™ partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines — including FreshStay® (www.freshstay.com), Environmentally Sensitive Amenities™, the greenSPA™ luxury amenity and dispenser system, Energy Efficient Lighting Products, EcoRoom & EcoSuite Programs, Project Planet™ Linen Re-Use Programs, Guestat™ programmable thermostats, Oxygenics™ water-efficient showerheads, the Nature's Mist™ deodorization system, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call Ray Burger at 636-922-2285.

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