



Six Senses Soneva Fushi

sustainable STRIDES

Noteworthy news from properties that are expanding their green horizons

By Margaret Coventry

The Leading Hotels of the World, the largest global luxury hotel brand, recently launched the **Leading Green Initiative**, a carbon neutral program whereby the brand will directly absorb the cost to offset guests' energy consumption for stays at any of its 440 hotels worldwide. It also spearheaded a new partnership between Sustainable Travel International (STI), the global non-profit leader in sustainable travel solutions and Leading Quality Assurance (LQA), a joint venture of Leading Hotels. Together, they created an innovative program that carries out evaluations in five areas: policy and documentation; energy conservation; water conservation; recycling; and community. In order to become LECS certified, hotels must undergo a preliminary desk audit, complemented by an on-site, third-party assessment handled by LQA. **Tabacon Grand Spa Thermal Resort** in Costa Rica just achieved STI's Luxury Eco Certification Standard (LECS), the first and only voluntary, global certification program of its kind. The **Fairmont San Francisco's** executive chef JW Foster teamed up with Marshall's Farm to **install honey beehives** in the hotel's new culinary garden to help support the bee population. About 250 pounds of honey will be produced this year, which will be served to hotel guests as part of Fairmont's commitment to

offering local, organic, sustainable cuisine. **Jakes on Treasure Beach, Jamaica, has introduced Farm Dinners**, a new program that's part of the hotel's growing "eat local" initiatives. Dinners are held monthly the Saturday closest to the full moon and serve up savory organic dishes. Set in the heart of Pedro Plains Field, beneath Jamaica's beautiful St. Elizabeth hillside, the dinners benefit the farmers of the region. **Anantara Golden Triangle** is deeply committed to helping Thailand's elephant population. Its on-site **Elephant Camp**, in conjunction with Thailand's National Elephant Institute and the Elephant Conservation Center, houses 34 rescued elephants, their mahouts' wives and their children. The camp is overseen by John Roberts whose professional background includes working with tigers in Nepal and national parks conservation in the U.S. and Australia. He and the resort have created The Golden Triangle Asian Elephant Foundation, a registered charity. **Six Senses Resorts & Spas** has discontinued offering a variety of trendy imported drinking waters at all of their properties. The choices now are Six Senses sparkling or still, or local water. The Six Senses drinking water is produced to the highest international drinking water EPA standards and is processed on-site at each of the group's resorts. In other Six



Left to right: Elephant Camp at Anantara Golden Triangle, The Ritz-Carlton, Naples



Senses news, **Soneva Fushi** in the Maldives, installed the **largest solar power plant in the Maldives** in an effort to achieve a zero carbon footprint. It has also inaugurated **Eco Centro**, a project that converts the waste generated by the resort operation into good use. **Hilton Worldwide's LightStay** initiative is a system that calculates and analyzes environmental impact. It measures energy and water use and waste and carbon output at Hilton properties. By the end of 2011, all 3,600 properties within the global brand will use LightStay, making it the first hospitality company, says a spokesperson, to require **property-level measurement of sustainability**. This past July, **Motel 6** in Northlake, Texas, became the **nation's first LEED certified economy lodging property**. **The Intercontinental Hotel Group** introduced Green Engage, a new group-wide online sustainability management system that works like this: Hotels input their site data into **Green Engage** which then generates reports and benchmarks against similar hotels globally, then advises the hotel on specific actions needed to reduce impacts, depending on location. To date, 900 hotels are set up to use this. **Wyndham Green** is Wyndham Worldwide's initiative, and involves numerous efforts, including training and educating 20,000 employees, using green guestroom key cards made from 87 percent recycled content (there are 370,000 cards in use), purchasing power from renewable energy sources,

installing solar panels, and minimizing waste. **Great Wolf Resorts**, North America's largest family indoor waterpark resorts, was the first to have all U.S. properties Green Seal certified. To date, 85 hotels in 20 states have been certified by **Green Seal**, a 20-year-old non-profit that certifies hotels as green after a rigorous reporting and inspection program. **The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company** recently introduced environmentally friendly water bottles at its North American and select Caribbean hotels. After learning of the waste that was caused by using nearly five million, 16-ounce plastic bottles per year at the properties, Simon Cooper, president and COO, challenged his sustainable team to find a solution. After 18 months of research, the company has developed a partnership with Prima and created a co-branded sustainable bottle that's made 100 percent from plants and that can decompose in 30 days or be reprocessed. In April, **The Ritz-Carlton, Charlotte was awarded LEED Gold certification**. The company's spas are pulling their green weight in different ways at different locations. **The Ritz-Carlton, Naples** features a specially designed Eco-Room and some of the more creative, results-driven organic treatments we've tried. More and more organic offerings and product lines are popping up at spa menus at the Laguna Niguel, Key Biscayne, Denver, and Georgetown hotels. **OS**

ELEMENT HOTELS

As frequent travelers can attest to, it often can be difficult to stay healthy and eco-minded when on the road. With this in mind, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide have unveiled Element Hotels, a chain of design-conscious, newly constructed properties that focus on healthful and green living and that—in a first for the industry—are each required to be LEED certified. In addition to implementing sustainable operational practices and incorporating

recycled materials in the décor, the hotels—which rolled out in earnest through 2009—are wellness- and eco-friendly in lots of clever ways: Every room has a full kitchen with Energy Star-rated appliances (to promote healthy eating) and filtered drinking water (to cut down on plastic bottles); paper “Do Not Disturb” signs have been replaced with door magnets; hybrid cars enjoy priority parking; and the on-site pantry stocks goodies from Whole Foods. Popular with long-stay

and corporate guests, the hotels are also just really comfortable to stay in, offering complimentary evening guest cocktail hours, well-thought-out work desks, free bikes, 24-hour gyms and chlorine-free pools. At press time, there are six Elements currently open (in cities like Dallas, Denver and Las Vegas), with several more—including a Times Square location—scheduled to open over the next two years.

www.starwoodhotels.com/element

—Sandra Ramani