

# HIGH 50 TRAVEL

AGE HAS ITS BENEFITS

22 October 2014 by Siobhan O'Neill



## The Seven Best Eco Resorts

An eco-friendly vacation doesn't have to mean camping. More hotels are taking extraordinary measures to balance sustainability and luxury – stay at these green hotels with a clear conscience



Visit Soneva Kiri in Koh Kut, Thailand for tree-top dining and infinity pools

There's no ignoring the fact that visiting remote destinations has a big environmental impact. Global air travel accounts for two percent of all human-created CO2 emissions. Consequently, ecotourism is on the rise as more of us look for ways to enjoy traveling, while ensuring we leave something of a planet for future generations to enjoy.

An eco-friendly vacation no longer has to mean sleeping under tents in the middle of nowhere and peeing behind a bush. Global hotel chains are increasingly eco-aware, and are taking extraordinary measures to balance sustainability and luxury.

These hotels around the world are going above and beyond with their sustainability initiatives:

### Soneva, Koh Kood, Thailand and The Maldives

Soneva luxury resorts in Thailand and the Maldives subscribe to SLOW LIFE (Sustainable-Local-Organic-Wellness Learning-Inspiring-Fun-Experiences). They work hard to use sustainable materials, recycle waste, conserve water and preserve ecosystems. They work with organizations such as Whole World Water to reduce the need for water in plastic bottles, and include eco features like tree-top dining and an eco-den for children. Prices for a one-bed villa start at around \$1,600 per night plus a two per cent carbon tax. Celebrity guests have included Paul McCartney and Madonna.

### Hotel Skyler, Syracuse, NY

Converted from a former Jewish temple, this attractive 58-room boutique hotel in the New York University Hill district is only the third US hotel to achieve a LEED Platinum rating (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design certification is a badge of honor in the US). Using organic fabrics and low-emissions carpets and upholstery, and with 20 per cent of its building materials locally sourced, the hotel has made every effort to reduce its environmental impact. Heating and cooling is provided by a massive geothermal heat pump. They hope guests will play their part by reducing linen and towel changes, and by dividing trash in the room. A King Room costs around \$199 per night.

### Proximity Hotel, Greensboro, NC



The Proximity is the first LEED Platinum certified hotel in the US, is privately owned by friends Dennis Quaintance and Mike Weaver. Their stated mission is "To be of genuine service to our Guests, Fellow Staff Members, Shareholders, and the Earth & Her People." They have over 70 sustainable practices at the property including 100 solar panels on the roof, a geothermal cooling system and ultra efficient materials meaning they use almost 40% less energy than an average hotel. A beautiful King Loft room costs around \$279 per night.



Stay at Inkaterra in Peru for the trip of a lifetime that also benefits the neighboring community

### **Inkaterra, Peru**

Inkaterra in Peru was founded nearly 40 years ago and has always operated on the principle of preserving the country's geography, nature, customs and culture, while sharing them with the world in a unique and memorable way. Their Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel was named Most Excellent Eco Resort by Conde Naste Johansens. More than 115,000 visitors stay annually at the five hotels in the Amazon, Machu Picchu and Cusco, having the luxury trip of a lifetime but simultaneously helping to protect the local environment and benefit the neighboring community. A Superior Deluxe room at the Machu Picchu Pueblo costs around \$600 per night.

### **H2Hotel, California**

In the historic town of Healdsburg in the wine valleys of California, the H2Hotel holds a LEED Gold certification for being a high-performance green building. With just 36 'eco-chic' rooms, the hotel construction included recycled materials and a 'green roof' which filters rainwater. With smart sensors in rooms and other energy-saving features, the hotel uses 28% less energy than most Californian hotels and is designed to minimize impact on the local micro climate. An Eco-King room costs around \$250 per night.

### **Bardessono, Yountville, CA**

The Bardessono is a contemporary property in the Napa Valley featuring 62 luxurious guest rooms with in-room spa services. The restaurant serves local, farm-fresh ingredients, and they loan carbon fiber bicycles for guests to explore the area. The property is another LEED Platinum hotel, generating all its own energy, and its homely wooden interiors come from salvaged trees. Room sensors detect when guests have left and automatically reduce heating, air con and lights, and they use special bathroom features to reduce water use. A King Spa Suite costs around \$650 per night.

### **Lefay Resort & Spa, Italy**

With a spectacular view from the shores of Lake Garda, Lefay Resort & Spa runs on the Leali family's philosophy of social and environmental responsibility. Using renewable energy including biomass and wind turbines, water saving and waste management initiatives, plus careful supply chain management to reduce supplier miles, and a good social responsibility program, they check all the boxes without skimping on a luxury experience. A prestige Junior Suite costs around \$310 per night. Celebrity guests include George Clooney.



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