

CHIEF AWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Winner

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

“Aruba is not in the tourism business, Aruba is in the nature business. As without our unspoiled nature there is no tourism.” Ewald Biemans, founder/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort founder and noted environmentalist. Biemans has long recognized that Aruba’s powdery white sand beaches have long drawn travelers from worldwide. As a tiny island devoid of natural resources and export potential, its biggest asset is its “white gold,” as Biemans refers to the spectacular beaches. Nearly 30 years ago, Biemans envisioned a concerning future for the tourism-dependent island of Aruba. Biemans understood that with the growth of tourism a drastic increase of pollution was potentially damaging Aruba’s delicate ecosystem and in turn, the island’s economy. Since the development of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in 1987 Biemans has sought to protect the island’s beauty and economy by proving a memorable vacation experience and sustainable tourism can be mutually inclusive and a successful way of doing business. He’s done so by leading Bucuti to become the World’s Most Sustainable Hotel/Resort according to Green Globe (2016). Today, Bucuti is on track to become the Caribbean’s first carbon neutral resort. All it took was making the first step and building on it to make a difference in peoples’ lives and protect the environment.

What Lessons Have You Learned?

Bucuti’s journey toward a greener, safer resort has entailed deviating from widely accepted business practices, and investing heavily in time and resources to research and implement new initiatives. However, the resort’s efforts have proven successful at protecting the environment, boosting occupancy and revenue, and strengthening the island’s economy. Several lessons have been learned along the way. First, contrary to popular belief, being green is not cost-prohibitive and in fact, reduces operating costs over time. Each effort, however small they may seem individually, adds up to make significant strides in protecting the environment. Second, it is important to approach sustainability with new ideas and new technology. Aruba currently does not recycle plastic; therefore, Bucuti gives guests a reusable water canteen upon arrival to eliminate plastic bottles. In more than seven years since the program began, it is estimated that Bucuti has kept more than two million plastic bottles out of Aruba’s landfill. Additionally, energy-efficient technology continues to become more advanced. While the initial cost to upgrade to better technology may seem high, the return on investment is tenfold. Third and most vital, success can only happen when everyone – staff, guests and vendors – share in the plan. Thus, the resort finds it imperative to communicate the “what” and “why” of its green efforts. Further, in addition to communicating with guests, it is critical to prioritize the guest experience – increasing comfort, quality, service and amenities while, at the same time, reducing their carbon footprint. Bucuti is honored and humbled that it’s guests help drive the sustainability initiatives at the resort and beyond as it takes everyone to protect the environment. Together, there is hope.

How Do You Measure Your Success?

For Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, success is creating a memorable vacation where guests are extremely satisfied while achieving minimal environmental impact. Guest experience is measured internally through feedback and surveys as well as occupancy rates, which average 95 percent year-round. Externally, the resort relies on TripAdvisor and other review sites, where it has nearly 4,000 reviews.

Each are personally read and responded to by Biemans. For its sustainability initiatives, the resort has found that green certified standards are valuable tools to measure and improve environmental impacts. Bucuti is the first property in the Americas to receive ISO 14001, is one of only two properties in the world to be Green Globe Platinum, is Travelife certified, and is the only LEED® Silver certified property for a retrofitting in the Caribbean. Each of the resort's certifications vary in focus and depth, but all require tracking which is imperative to developing environmentally friendly habits, establishing benchmarks and achieving realistic expectations. The certifications help to structure the resort's continuous improvement program, which is led by an on-staff sustainability and certifications manager.

Upload File [bucuti_-_chief_awards_-_2017_environmental_sustainability.pdf](#)

Finalist

Ocean Terrace Inn

Ocean Terrace Inn's objective is to be one of the most environmentally sustainable hotels in St. Kitts, thereby helping minimize the negative impact of tourism on the destination and maximize the positive benefits of tourism for the local citizenry. Through a multi-faceted environmental campaign that conserves energy and natural resources; reduces waste and teaches Eco-friendly policies in a local school, OTI uses environmental best practices to positively contribute to tourism's sustainability in the small island it calls home, enrich the lives of the employees who make up the OTI family, and operate the resort in a fiscally responsible and economically viable manner. Through guest outreach, OTI provides visitors the opportunity to contribute to the conservation of the island's natural attributes for the enjoyment of future generations. Ocean Terrace Inn's green practices include:

- **Saving Energy:** From signs at check-in to signs in the rooms, guests are gently reminded of the fragility of the environment and asked to help us protect our island by turning off lights/TV when leaving the room, keeping the windows closed when air conditioner is on and to conserve water.
- **Reducing Pollutants:** All of soaps, conditioner, soap gel and shampoo bottles in the room are 100% Gilchrist & Sommes bio degradable and proven as environmental friendly.
- **Recycling Program:** Guest room door hanger signs are printed on grass seed stamped paper. After use, they are recycled and the seeds planted in the garden.
- **Teaching Tourism Education & Eco-Friendly Awareness:** OTI sponsors St. Kitts' Irishtown Primary School where we teach the role of the consumer, the farmer, the food products, perishables, consumption and the entire re-cycling process to our youth. Last year garbage receptacles were donated to the school to reinforce the sustainability message.
- **Waste Reduction:** Recycling and composting organic waste to produce fertilizer to grow organic fruits and vegetables in OTI's onsite garden

What Lessons Have You Learned?

An environmental sustainability plan allows OTI to deliver economic benefits to our resort (and shareholders) and to the community by acting as a competitive, viable tourism business that minimizes the adverse impacts of tourism on the destination. Key to our program is engaging and working with our OTI team in planning and managing the implementation of the projects and activities. Employee buy-in ensures their acceptance and understanding of what we are hoping to achieve and gives them a viable role in improving their workplace and protecting their island. By having a role in delivering sustainable tourism, we have learned:

- **Visitor Fulfillment:** Our property provides a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors. By having green initiatives in place, it allows our guests to feel good about behaving responsibly towards the environment and our local community in travel choice and actions.
- **Participating in Decision Making:** Engaging our employees and local communities in the planning and decision making about the development and management of policy and practices at OTI helps them understand the importance and contribution of tourism carried out in a sustainable manner.
- **Environmental Purity:** The program allows the resort to minimize the pollution of our air, water and land

and the generation of waste and secure OTI's place as a better corporate citizen. • Community Wellbeing: Maintaining and strengthening the quality of life in our local communities by providing jobs and training helps OTI maintain its reputation as a good place to work and ensure a flow of qualified workers. • Culture Richness: Respecting and enhancing St. Kitts' historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of communities benefits our visitors and helps protect our Kittitian way of life.

How Do You Measure Your Success?

Ocean Terrace Inn is relentless in the pursuit of initiating and promoting Eco-friendly and sustainability awareness amongst its guests, internal and external customers and by extension, the community. Apart from educating and promoting awareness, management and staff attend training sessions and seminars to become more knowledgeable of sustainability practices in order to effectively carry out our initiatives. In doing so, we are able to save more than money. The success of our programs is assessed bi-monthly and is measured by: • Saving Energy: As a result of implementing our energy initiative, we have seen a substantial decrease in our monthly electricity bill. When our energy plan was first launched in September 2016, our electricity bill for the property was over \$58,000. After six months of our plan being implemented, our monthly electricity bill has been reduced by over \$30,000, and averages to about \$27,000 per month. • Guest Satisfaction: Since the launch of our multi-faceted environmental campaign, we have noticed an increase of positive comments left on our guest comment cards. Guests have commented that they appreciate being made aware of the green practices that are being taken around the property, and are willing to participate in the initiatives such as turning off the lights/TV and keeping windows closed when the air conditioner is on. Others have mentioned that they are pleased with the environmental approach the hotel is taking with the recycling door hanger signs, and prefer to stay at a hotel, like OTI, that values sustainable living and green practices. • Dollar a Day Program: Assess how much we have made per week in donations against how many guests we had for that particular week. This helps us measure how we can improve awareness. • Waste Reduction: By recycling and composting organic waste to produce fertilizer to grow organic fruits and vegetables, area farmers are able to collect the fruits and vegetables, which are then fed to the pigs. As a result of our waste reduction program, we were able to lower what we pay for pork per lb. and also receive one free pig monthly. • Tourism Education & Eco-Friendly Awareness: In a letter from the principal of St. Kitts' Irishtown Primary School, OTI was recognized for donating their time to educate the students on the importance of environmental practices. The letter also states that green practices have been incorporated into their school day by encouraging everyone to use the garbage bins donated by OTI, and reminding the students about energy and water conservation. • OTI Staff Energy Efficiency Award: To ensure that OTI's staff continues to practice sustainability, OTI awards one employee annually with the Energy Efficiency Award which recognizes their dedication to promoting awareness to environmental programs.

Finalist

CuisinArt Golf Resort and Spa

Every day is Earth Day at CuisinArt because conservation makes business sense every time. We generate an average of 3000kWhs of renewable energy every day of the year. That is enough power to run 200 average homes. Avoiding waste makes business sense. Accurate and invisible building controls make business sense. Reducing energy bills without affecting comfort or guest/employee services makes business sense. LED lighting makes business sense. Variable Frequency Drives on all our motors makes business sense. The reality is that good engineering and good business is good for the Earth. I have attached links to descriptions of our systems. The next steps will be to expand our PV array and to capture more loads such as Golf irrigation pumps, the Club House and the Air-conditioning Chillers for

both Hotels. Our masterplan details how we will reduce our energy bill step by step, year on year with clean, sustainable, renewable energy until we are virtually independent of fossil fuel generated electricity. We are Environmental Engineering Hoteliers and sustainable hospitality is our business. Please click on the 5 links below to understand the whole story.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/gridbms-off-pv-rory-purcell>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-off-grid-pv-makes-so-much-senseanguilla-rory-purcell>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/1mwdc-pv-array-750kwac-cuisinart-golf-resortspa-anguillapurcell>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/1mw-off-grid-pv-array-cuisinart-golf-resort-spaanguilla-rory-purcell>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8n1WqbhTz5I&index=12&list=LLFLBFZCqarWaaq05QBxaSPA>

What Lessons Have You Learned?

That our cloud compensating/smoothing battery should be sized to match the size of the inverter. That we must continue to expand the PV source and to capture many more Resort loads.

How Do You Measure Your Success?

The avoided cost of electricity. The avoided CO2 emissions.