



Focus on...



Having been awarded Green Hotelier of the Year, technical director, Kempinski Hotel Mall of the Emirates, **Mohamed Zeid** talks to *TTG* about the importance of sustainable operations

How do you feel about having been awarded the title of Green Hotelier of the Year?

We are very grateful to receive the award in recognition of our efforts over the last three years to conserve

the natural environment. Even though the award was given to one person only, it is a prize acknowledging the hotel and awarding all people that have contributed to our successful environmental campaign.

When did you become committed to preserving the environment and why?

There was no specific event that I can pinpoint, but I realised during my time as an engineer in the hospitality industry that it is only logical to be resource efficient and minimise our impact on the environment. There is no obvious reason why we should use more resources than necessary. In my opinion, a modern engineer in a hotel is a manager of the various processes taking place within a hotel, with the key goal to make them more efficient and ecologically sound.

How important is it for hotels to utilise sustainable practices in their operations?

I believe that it has always been absolutely necessary and I believe it is important to use exterior sources assisting in areas where we as hotel staff do not have the needed expertise. In our case, we are working together with Green Destinations, a Swiss company based in Dubai, who are the absolute experts in designing buildings that are truly green and operating them in a resource-efficient manner.

Can you outline some of the environmentally friendly efforts being made at the hotel?

At the very beginning of our environmental campaign,

we carried out a comprehensive audit regarding the resource performance of our hotel, showing us our strong and weak points. We then divided our different initiatives into technical and operational parts. On the technical side, we exchanged over 21,000 light bulbs and achieved a reduction of 570,000 watts. We also retrofitted most of our water fixtures, which has resulted in a 35 per cent reduction of our domestic water consumption. The key element however, is that we operate a sophisticated building management system that allows us to monitor all our resource consumption and react immediately if there is an irregularity such as a water pipe leak.

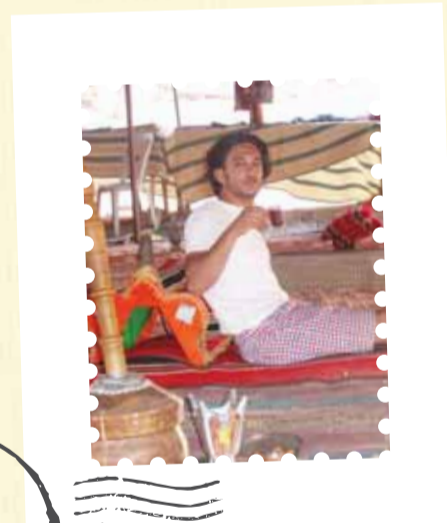
On the operational side, we focus on changing our own behaviour at work. This includes more environmentally-friendly cleaning processes or waste management.

What is the best way to substantially reduce the carbon footprint of any property?

The term carbon footprint is somewhat difficult to comprehend since it is a quite an abstract topic. I believe that it is easier to work with components we can relate to in our daily lives. These are foremost the resources of water, electricity and materials. If we manage to reduce them, we have already achieved a lot to directly reduce the carbon footprint.

We also introduced a green policy on transportation which determines our mobility strategy. By just revising the daily schedule of our staff shuttle buses and adapting it to the work shifts, we were able to reduce the number of commuting trips by over 50 per cent. This shows that it often does not need large investments to reduce the amount of carbon emissions.

Postcard from Jordan



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Firstly I should mention that my visit to Jordan would have not been possible without the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), who initiated the trip in order to showcase this truly wonderful country to the travel trade. And in this goal JTB succeeded, while at the same time gaining an avid traveller's upmost respect, appreciation and affinity. My six days in Jordan were masterfully organised by JTB, ensuring I got the very most out of my trip, creating a lifetime's experience for me.

In Amman I found myself roaming downtown, delighted by the scents and sounds of the capital, indulging in the simple pleasures of good coffee and sumptuous sweets. The ancient city of Jerash saw me come face-to-face with the largest and most well preserved Roman city outside of Italy. At the world-renowned Petra site one cannot help but be amazed at the magnitude of human achievement, while Wadi Rum provides an example of the awe-inspiring miracle of nature.

The itinerary took me to Mount Nebo - an elevated ridge of humongous significance to both the Christian and Judaist religions; Aqaba - Jordan's tourist hot-spot built around the Red Sea; and the Dead Sea - the lowest point on earth, in which swimming is one of the world's top must-have travel experiences.

All of these experiences were certainly enhanced by the warmth and hospitality of the Jordanian people, the travel professionals I came across, and the hotels and resorts that put me up. Mövenpick Resort Petra for instance, which makes for the perfect stay when visiting Petra as it is adjacent to the site, or Mövenpick Resort & Spa Dead Sea, which is located directly over the Dead Sea's therapeutic waters.

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