

## Green Your Gray Matter

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2nd Annual Green Lodging Education Week to be held March 16 -23, 2009

Don't get pinched. This St. Patrick's Day, don't just wear green. Go green. This year the holiday where everyone is a little Irish happens to fall in the middle of Green Lodging Education Week (aka Green Week).

After a successful inaugural effort in 2008, Pineapple Hospitality - the St. Charles, Mo.-based distributor of green hotel products, marketing programs, and sustainable consulting services for the hospitality industry - has declared that the 2nd Annual Green Week will be observed March 16-23, 2009.

This year, Green Week coincides with two of the hospitality industry's marquee events: the Hunter Hotel Investment Conference (March 15-17) and The Buyer Interactive Trade Alliance & Conference (BITAC) - International Luxury 2009 (March 22-24). Sustainability and Green Education will be a major focus at both events, with the industry's leading experts providing practical advice on implementing green programs, products and solutions, green development and the concept of environmental sustainability.

'Even in this economy, there's no reason to be blue when you can go green. Like St. Patrick's Day, Green Lodging Education Week should be celebrated for driving the waste out of your hotel's operations,' says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality, and a presenter at the Hunter Hotel Investment Conference.

Last year's Green Week was a call for action. Many attendees of Green Week educational events took home concrete ideas on how to implement their own environmental programs and improve their bottom lines in the process. But certainly the lodging industry, collectively, has a long way to go to fully green up its operations and bottom line.

A linen reuse program is a step in the right direction. But it is time to also look at energy-efficient lighting and plumbing, green/natural/organic cleaning products, guest recycling programs and much more. Some of the more forward-thinking hotels are offering bicycles to guests for short trips, reusable shopping bags and even projects as big as finding alternative energy sources such as solar power.

'We've come a long way in the past year - a lot has changed,' Burger adds. 'We saw how dramatically the industry was affected - both internally and externally - when gas prices skyrocketed. Now even though those prices have come down, the importance of conservation and preserving our natural resources has not abated. It is more important than ever for hotels to understand the financial and environmental ramifications of how we operate.'

### **Hunter Conference**

Celebrating 21 years in 2009, the Hunter Hotel Investment Conference is considered one of the top four conferences in the industry. It will feature a program of more than 100 speakers, 15 roundtables, 16 breakout sessions, seven main tent sessions and two keynote speakers.

With an emphasis on networking and education, the meeting is planned specifically to address the needs of hotel owners today. Key topics will include:

Where's the Bottom?,

Workouts/Foreclosure,

The Economy,

Where's the Financing?,

CMBS Restructuring, and

The Obama Effect!

"Due to the turbulent economic conditions and the sobering forecasts for 2009, hoteliers are more anxious than ever to get input about the direction of the economy and the hotel industry," said Bob Hunter, CEO of Hunter Realty Associates, Inc., and Conference Chair.

Included in the agenda is a 'Going Green' Roundtable Discussion co-hosted by Pineapple Hospitality's Burger.

That session will be followed by a Breakout Session titled, 'The Green Conundrum: Sure, going green is in. But do your guests and staff really care? And how can going green save some green without putting out boatloads of capital.'

The breakout session will feature Glenn Haussman, Editor-in-Chief of Hotel Interactive, moderating a panel that includes Burger, Ray L. Hobbs, Senior Vice President Kelco Management & Development, and Dennis Quaintance, CEO Quaintance-Weaver Hotels.

'In a hotel, utilities are the second highest operating expense after employees. If you are not watching those expenses, you are not managing your facility properly,' Hobbs says. 'The worst thing you can do is to not know what you can do. Education is the first step, and that's what this conference is about.'

Hobbs explains that the green conundrum many hotel operators are facing is that they don't know what they can do to be green, don't understand what green is and, more importantly, don't think they can afford it.

'The economy is making people reluctant to spend any money right now,' says Hobbs. 'Hotels are laying off employees, and they are trying to find ways to buy products cheaper. So will going green cost you more? - No, not if you do it right. But I can tell you for certain that it will cost you more if you don't conserve more.'

Hobbs says that in his years of consulting, he's seen so many small things that hoteliers can do to be more sustainable, and more profitable. Whether it's buying an inexpensive aerator that saves ½ gallon per minute on a faucet, or telling the laundry staff to wait for a full load before washing and drying towels.

That's why education and training are the foundation to a successful green program.

'Our primary focus will to just do what you can,' Hobbs says. 'Training really doesn't cost a whole lot of money. It's a common-sense approach that can really make a big difference for you in the long run.'

Hausman agrees.

'We have to stick to the idea that going green will save you money,' he says. 'The 'feel-good' aspect of sustainability isn't going to be successful in this climate. People want to make money. So we're going to drill down into the nitty-gritty and see how people can make a difference, how a little change here and there can add up to a lot.'

### **Walking the Walk**

The 2009 Hunter Hotels Investment Conference will be held at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in Atlanta - a hotel which, incidentally, has taken a strong stance in protecting the environment.

Current Green Initiatives at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis include:

Paper recycling program,

Linen-less tables in Atrium meeting spaces,

Water coolers in meeting spaces,

Distribution of daily green tips to hotel staff,

A light bulb and battery recycling program,

Energy-saving fluorescent lighting, and

Reclaimed water used for in-house laundry.

As a result, the Atlanta Marriott Marquis has been awarded as a Marriott Environmentally Conscious Hospitality Operations (ECHO) hotel, achieved \$1.2 million in annual savings, recycled five million gallons of water annually from laundry usage, reduced energy consumption from light bulbs by

13 million Kwh, a 32 percent reduction from the base year, achieved a 30% improvement in its Energy Star rating, a 19% reduction in natural gas, and a 32% reduction in electricity.

So while the educational sessions will offer some real-world advice on going green, the venue itself will present a case study to keep an eye on during your stay March 15-17.

For more information visit [www.hunterconference.com](http://www.hunterconference.com).

### **The BITAC Difference**



BITAC brings together the top echelon of both purchasing decision makers and suppliers while controlling the number of attendees to maximize everyone's productivity and overall experience. Known for its hands-on approach, BITAC is rated 'The Best' or 'One of the Best' industry events by 92% of attendees.

As the focus of the BITAC event March 22-24 is on International Luxury, this raises the obvious question of whether luxury and green can co-exist.

BITAC - International Luxury 2009 will provide 2 panel discussions regarding Sustainability: one from the Buyer's perspective and the second panel from a Supplier's perspective.

The Buyer's panel will feature comments from: Barbara Best-Santos, Hospitality Director for Gensler, Matthew V. Moore, Director of Rooms & Environmental Programs for the Seaport Hotel in Boston, Quentin Incao, Director of Operations, MTM Luxury Lodging, and Mr. Clark Pickett, Senior Designer for NBBJ.

From the Suppliers Perspective, the panelists will be: Burger, Steve Tipton, Vice President, Simmons Hospitality, John Tavares, Vice President of Marketing, Inncom, and Gene Faul, CEO, Cypress Hotel and Spa.

The moderator and provocateur for both panels will be Hotel Interactive's Haussman.

'We're moving past the whole concept that if it's luxury, it can't be green,' says Haussman. 'We heard a whole lot of noise at the beginning of the green revolution. But now a lot of that noise has subsided. I take it as a sign that people have stopped talking about going green, and now actually are doing something about it.'

'Eco-Tourism and Luxury Hotels don't have to be diametrically opposed,' adds Moore.

Moore's hotel, The Seaport, was the first hotel in Boston to provide in-room recycling services to guests, first location in New England to use the BioX (Bio-EZ) waste to water system, the second hotel in Massachusetts to provide the Pure Allergy Friendly Rooms for those suffering with allergies and respiratory problems, and the first hotel in the United States to use Grander Water Technologies.

'Sustainability can save you money in the manufacturing and supply chain process,' explains Moore. 'Many consumers of luxury goods are concerned and well informed about environmental issues. This provides a perfect opportunity for marketing and public relations to access a new and affluent eco-conscious market, allowing for expanded market share.'

At BITAC - International Luxury 2009, Moore will outline a number of luxury properties that are also green, why you should go green too, and how you should look at sustainability in your purchasing process.

Simmons Hospitality's Tipton will sit on the supplier panel regarding sustainability at BITAC - International Luxury 2009. Simmons is a key supplier of beds to many of the world's leading hotel groups, casinos and resort properties. The company also is working to improve the environmental performance of its products and its hotel customers.

Tipton will discuss how suppliers and hotel operators can work together to improve their environmental performance.

'Each of our 21 manufacturing plants is strategically located to help minimize the use of fuel and energy during delivery process,' explains Tipton. 'Simmons has a zero-waste policy and participates in national recycling programs for fabric, wood, foam and steel. In 2007 alone, Simmons recycled 9.5 million pounds of materials that otherwise would have ended up in landfills.'

BITAC - Internationally Luxury 2009 is being held at Fontainebleau in Miami Beach - rated One Palm by the Florida Green Lodging Program.

Visit [www.bitac.net](http://www.bitac.net) to find out more.

### **About Pineapple Hospitality**

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is an EPA ENERGY STAR(TM) partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(R) ([www.freshstay.com](http://www.freshstay.com)), EcoRooms & EcoSuites ([www.EcoRooms.com](http://www.EcoRooms.com)) Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), EO(R), Neutrogena(R), Earth Perfect and greenSPA(TM) amenities, AVIVA and WAVE dispensers, Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Key Cards, Green Earth Key Cards, Energy Management Systems and Controls, High Performance showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, Zero Odor, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit [www.pineapplehospitality.net](http://www.pineapplehospitality.net), or call us at 636-922-2285.

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