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Winners of HICAP 2015 Sustainable Hotel Awards



Burba Hotel Network (BHN), Horwath HTL, and Stiles Capital Events, co-hosts and organizers of the Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific (HICAP), a major travel industry event which takes place annually at the InterContinental Hong Kong, have named the winners of the HICAP 2015 Sustainable Hotel Awards.

In the category of Sustainable Project Design, the winner is the **Element Suzhou Science and Technology Town, China**. This newly opened 188-key long-stay hotel was built with eco-friendly and healthy materials, wherever possible. Numerous components and actions have been incorporated into its sustainable design including: being designed in a symbolic figure 8 shape to help maximize daylight penetration, as well as allowing natural ventilation during the comfortable transitional seasons; the building orientation minimizes solar heat gain through the building envelope, especially for the western façade; regional materials have been used where possible to reduce transportation requirements and a Product Life Cycle analysis was carried out in the detail material selection stage; renewable energy systems have been implemented including solar photovoltaic and a solar water heating system, while highly water-efficient products have been installed. A water recycling system recycles rainwater and the adjacent river water for the landscape water and irrigation; and a comprehensive Hotel Operation Waste Management Plan has been implemented to minimize solid waste dumped to landfill.

In the category of Sustainable Operations, the winner is the **Alta Pension House Davao City, Philippines**. This 72-room budget-friendly family-run hotel, located in the heart of Davao City, Philippines, was recognized amongst the top ten Zero Carbon Resorts Energy and Resource Top Savers in 2014. Its attention to energy and water usage reduction is impressive. The hotel captures rainwater for laundry use, then connects laundry greywater to supply water closets outfitted with low-flush features, all undertaken with "DIY" ingenuity. Other innovative solutions include repositioning showerhead pipes to face downward to reduce leftover water and extend valve life, installing low-cost sky lighting in guestroom corridors to reduce lighting needs, and using chicken screen as an enhanced ventilation alternative to plywood. Since 2010, the hotel has reduced water and electricity use per guest by 73% and 44%, respectively, translating to a US\$36,000 annual reduction in utility bills, despite a 30% increase in conditioned rooms.

In the category of Sustainable Destinations, the winner is the **Tai O Heritage Hotel, Hong Kong**. In 2008, the Ng Teng Fong Family set up a non-profit company to restore and convert Lantau Island's Grade 11 listed Old Tai O Police Station into a 9-key boutique hotel. In 2013, the hotel was recognised by UNESCO, receiving a merit award for Cultural Heritage. In addition to restoring the buildings to their original state, the hotel is helping rejuvenate the history of Tai O, a traditional fishing village. Efforts include interviewing local villagers and retired marine police officers who served at Tai O, collecting old photographs and using both in displays open to the public. The hotel has become a catalyst for the local community to revive some of their own traditions. Initiatives include revitalising their century old wedding customs - involving a Marriage Parade through the main street - the reopening of the Chung Ying Theatre and visits to traditional stilted family homes.

In the category of Sustainable Communities, the winner is the **Lemon Tree Hotels Group (India)**. Lemon Tree Hotels uses a Triple Bottom Line Approach (People, Planet, Profit) to stand for more than just profit, focusing on creating a socially inclusive work environment bringing people of different backgrounds, abilities and ethnicities together as a unified team with common goals. In addition to environmental efforts benefiting local communities, their socially inclusive initiatives involve hiring Employees With Disabilities (EWD), including the Speech & Hearing Impaired, Orthopedically Handicapped and those with Down Syndrome. EWDs comprise 13% of total staff across several departments, with a goal of increasing EWD staffing from 400 to 700 by 2017. Providing skills training to EWDs creates a virtuous cycle of inclusivity for the industry and communities. Innovative ideas include EWD nametags indicating how best he/she can serve the guest to help set expectations, and numbered menu items to simplify ordering.

The Sustainable Hotel Awards were launched at HICAP in 2007 to recognize hotels in the Asia Pacific region demonstrating exemplary sustainable best practices.

The 26th annual HICAP will be held 14-16 October 2015 at the InterContinental Hong Kong.