

GT Global Traveler

Globility

TOP OF THE WORLD

Global Traveler celebrates the winners of the 19th annual GT Tested Reader Survey awards. p.36

BERLIN p. 58

BIRMINGHAM p. 64

İSTANBUL p. 68

MALDIVES p. 72

NEWPORT p. 70

TEL AVIV p. 66



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Ecology Report Card

Forward-looking travel brands excel at their sustainability efforts. BY SUSAN B. BARNES

According to the Intercultural Outreach Initiative, ecotourism came onto the travel scene in the early 1980s “... as a type of travel for people who wanted to learn about different and exotic environments without causing the environmental harm or damage associated with other forms of tourism.” Fast-forward to today, and a Sustainable Travel Study from Expedia Group Media Solutions shows “nearly 3 in 4 travelers would choose a destination, lodging, or transportation option that supports the local community and culture, even if it was more expensive.”

Here, we take a look at airlines and hotels leading the charge in sustainability efforts.

More than 30 airlines affiliated with the International Air Transport Association offer carbon offsetting to passengers “... to ‘neutralize’ their proportion of an aircraft’s carbon emissions on a particular journey by investing in carbon reduction projects.” To that end, LeafScore, a website fighting climate change by helping consumers make greener purchasing decisions, published “The 6 Most Sustainable Airlines for Flying Green in 2022” this year. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines ranked No. 1, followed by Alaska Airlines, Xiamen Airlines, Cathay Pacific (aiming for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050), Delta Air Lines and American Airlines.

Hawaiian Airlines, Southwest Airlines and Swiss International Air Lines all committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This fall, Southwest celebrated one year of its carbon offset program, becoming the first U.S. airline with a carbon offset offer with loyalty points and contribution match to offset its carbon emissions. Since 2020, Etihad Airways has reduced its total carbon emissions by 56 percent; restructured its fleet strategy to focus on modern, fuel-efficient aircraft; and launched the first aircraft carbon offset program in the Middle East. Additionally, Virgin Atlantic equips its aircraft with the most efficient engines and state-of-the-art technology designed to save fuel and reduce emissions, delivering a 20 percent reduction in fleet carbon emissions to date.

When it comes to sustainability in hotels, tremendous strides have been made, starting with Hotel Marcel New Haven, opened in May. The hotel is anticipated to be the first net-zero hotel in the United States, the first Passive House-certified hotel in the country and one of fewer than a dozen LEED Platinum-certified hotels in the country.

Earlier this year, the Hawai‘i Green Business Program recognized five of Outrigger Hospitality Group’s properties for exceptional environmental stewardship in light of its energy efficiency and sustainable business practices to advance the Aloha State’s clean energy and sustainability



goals. Outrigger applied for Green Seal certification for all seven of its owned or managed properties in Hawai‘i, making it the first in Hawai‘i to commit to earning the prestigious certification.

Opened in January, Rosewood São Paulo sourced all building materials within Brazil and committed to using 100 percent renewable energy within its first year of operation. Additionally, HomeExchange Collection, the luxury offering launched this summer, will take part in its parent company’s dedication to calculate its carbon footprint every year; the company intends to contribute to global carbon neutrality with the GoodPlanet Foundation by investing in social and environmental projects.

In Michigan, Daxton Hotel committed to The PLEDGE on Food Waste, an initiative aiming to limit the amount of food thrown away. Gravity Haus, a “social club for the modern adventurer” and a model of globally conscious hospitality, will open two new Colorado properties soon in Steamboat Springs and Aspen.

Last year, Inn at Laurel Point in Victoria, British Columbia, became the first hotel in North America to sign on to The Climate Pledge and committed to meet The Paris Agreement by 2040, a decade ahead of the agreement’s deadline.

Renewable Resources:
Rosewood
São Paulo

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