

THE WESTIN

RESORT & SPA
WHISTLER

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THE WESTIN RESORT & SPA IN WHISTLER GETS THE NOD FOR ITS ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

WHISTLER, BC, June 26, 2008 – ‘Going green’ for a hotel is no longer just offering an option to travelers to have the linen and terry washed in their guest room. It is a lot more, and the reason why The Westin Resort & Spa won this year’s Whistler Environmental Business Award presented by AWARE (Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment). The award comes on the heels of the Hotel Association of Canada presenting the Westin with Three Green Keys for 2008, a rating which recognizes the environmental initiatives in place at a hotel.

“There is no question that hotels have come a long way to being contributors to a friendlier green environment,” explained Bryce Beatty, director of operations of The Westin Resort & Spa, and champion for the hotel’s Green Team. “Over the years we’ve learned so much more about global warming that we’ve added to our hotel lexicon of acronyms of ADR and RevPAR, GHG’s and VOC’s – greenhouse gases and volatile organic compounds – and in doing so, approach environmentalism in more concrete terms.”

In addition to the typical green initiatives of installing compact fluorescent lighting and low-flow toilets and showers, implementing recycling programs for glass, paper and plastics and using VOC-free paints, The Westin Resort & Spa did more. The hotel has purchased Energy Star-rated office equipment, set up composting from food waste from the kitchen and staff cantina, added environmental initiative education as a mainstay to its new staff orientation (which also included an afternoon-at-the-movies, where hotel associates watched “An Inconvenient Truth” complete with popcorn and beverages), upgraded their HVAC system with hybrid technology (Sempa project) and implemented a carbon footprint program for all guests. It was the composting, Sempa project and carbon footprint program that edged out The Westin Resort & Spa as the winner for the large business category of the Whistler Environment Business Award.

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The Westin's carbon footprint program invites guests to choose whether they want their guest room serviced by the housekeeping department during their stay. If not, The Westin Resort & Spa purchases on their behalf \$5 credits (per day per guest room) from *The CarbonNeutral Company* (www.carbonneutral.com). The credits are then used towards climate-friendly projects around the globe, e.g. a waste heat recovery technology project in India to a sustainable forestry project in Mexico. Every month the Westin receives a certificate identifying the climate-friendly project the credits are going towards and the total amount of metric tons of CO² that was neutralized.

“Offering the carbon footprint program is more than just neutralizing our carbon footprint by paying for a project that removes greenhouse gases or creates renewable energy”, added Beatty. “It’s about reducing water consumption, conserving electrical energy and removing carbon emissions from service vehicles that travel to Whistler daily from Vancouver.”

The hotel's green team is comprised of associates from nearly every department of the hotel, and they meet regularly to explore new environmental programs, review existing ones and are encouraged to participate in projects in and around Whistler.

Located steps from Whistler and Blackcomb Mountain gondolas, the 419 all-suite Westin Resort & Spa opened in April 2000 and has been twice-named the #1 ski resort hotel in North America. An AAA-Four Diamond resort hotel and spa, The Westin Resort & Spa has been awarded numerous meeting, travel and food & beverage awards. The Westin Resort & Spa is managed by O'Neill Hotels & Resorts Ltd., a Vancouver-based hotel management firm which also manages The Westin Grand on Robson Street in Vancouver and The Residence Inn by Marriott in Whistler.

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