

It's not easy being green, so pick a property that does it for you, says Katie McGonagle

# Stay sustainable

**FAST FACT**  
Twelve Uniworld ships were audited to help create river cruising's first 'best practice' guide to sustainability

Turn the clock back a decade or so and the very mention of recycling rubbish or keeping a compost heap in the back garden would have seen you written off as a tree-hugging hippy.

Fast-forward a few years, and being environmentally friendly is part of everyday life; we barely bat an eyelid at opting for energy-saving lightbulbs, offsetting our carbon footprints or growing our own vegetables.

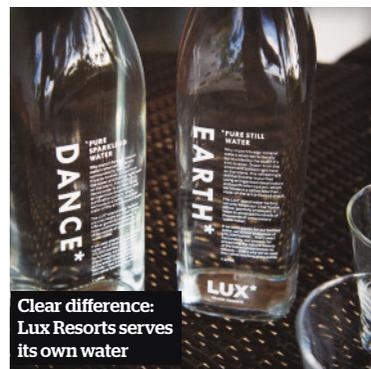
As homes have been getting greener, hoteliers have been getting in on the act with all kinds of measures to show their property, big or small, is doing its bit to look after the planet. Admittedly, it might not rank as highly on customers' criteria as the size of the swimming pool or the quality of the food, but choosing an eco-friendly hotel is an easy way to make a great holiday that little bit greener.

## ● WATERWORLD

We've all seen notices politely asking us to reuse our towels, but that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to cutting water

waste. Sensatori Crete has devices in each room to control water flow, which helped the hotel cut water consumption by 44% between 2009 and 2011 – equivalent to 15 Olympic-sized swimming pools. The resort also favours indigenous plants in its gardens that don't require much watering.

Despite being surrounded by the beautiful Indian Ocean, water use in Mauritius and the Maldives is a real issue. That's why Lux Resorts doesn't import mineral water, serving its own brand of water drawn from the ground or desalinated on-site. Jumeirah Dhevanafushi and Jumeirah Vittaveli in the Maldives also introduced water-bottling plants



Clear difference: Lux Resorts serves its own water

in September, meaning they can forgo shipping-in around 100,000 plastic bottles per year, instead serving desalinated water in recyclable glass bottles.

Reusing waste water is also increasingly popular, and it's paying off for properties such as Riu Guanacaste in Costa Rica, where filtering soapy water from showers and basins for use in toilet tanks, halving the amount of water in each tank, and using purified waste water for irrigation has seen a 60% drop in consumption.

## ● FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Sampling local ingredients is one of the joys of travelling, but it's also a great way to reduce food miles. Grand Pineapple Beach Resort in Antigua grows its own herbs and vegetables, using them in everything from homemade Antiguan lemonade to minty mojitos. Closer to home, a third of the fruit and vegetables served at Aldemar Hotels in Crete and Rhodes are grown in on-site organic farms, plus around 85% of water is heated using solar power.

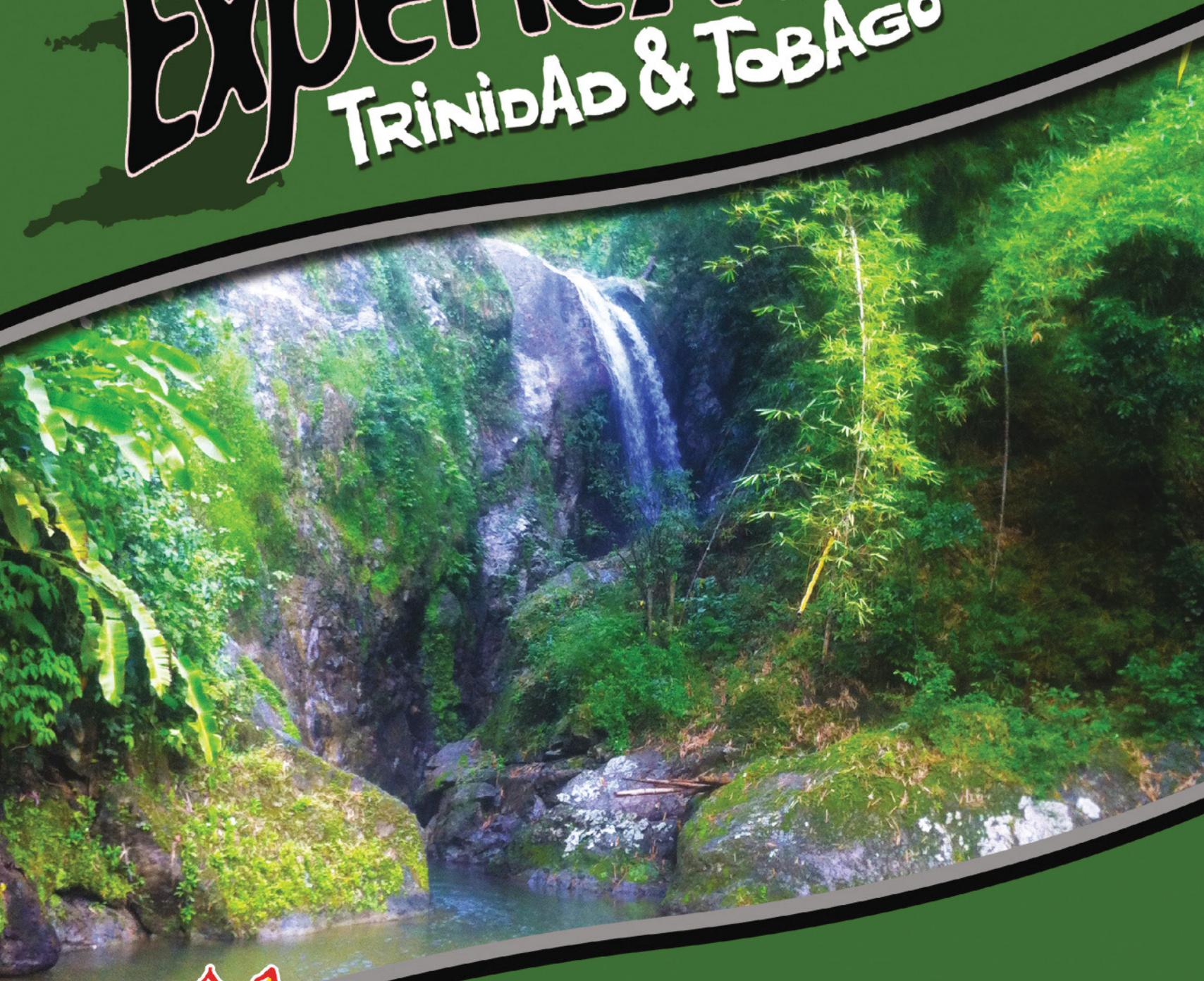
Taking this one step further,

Sun International's The Royal Livingstone in Zambia not only sources the vast majority of produce from local farmers' markets, thereby providing vital income, but also has a worm farm producing organic fertiliser for surrounding farms, the profits from which are reinvested into other green initiatives in-resort.

## ● BUILDING BLOCKS

As environmental awareness grows, new-build resorts are employing these principles from the start. Basecamp Kenya is known for its sustainable approach, which is why newest property Eagle View in the private Naboisho Conservancy not only pays guaranteed income to the 500 Maasai families who own

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Highway to shell: Caribbean resorts are involving guests in sea turtle protection



Splashdown: Riu Guanacaste in Costa Rica has cut water use dramatically

## SAMPLE PRODUCT

An 11-day Ecuador and Galapagos Island Hopper tour with **Contiki** starts at £2,045 including internal flights, 10 nights' B&B, local guides, transfers and sightseeing.

**contiki.com**  
**0845 075 0990**

A seven-night full-board-plus stay at **Sensatori Resort** Crete starts at £499, with a first child from £385 and second from £449, including flights from Luton departing May 4.

**thomson.co.uk**  
**0871 230 2555**

**Kuoni** offers a week with breakfast at the Royal Livingstone, Zambia, from £2,428 including South African Airways flights from Heathrow and group transfers.

**kuoni.co.uk**  
**01306 747008**

Think local: Peruvian group Inkaterra focuses efforts in the community



Life is sweet: Maya women make 'jungle jam' for Sensatori Mexico



the land, but was also built using recycled steel, sustainably sourced wood and other local materials.

The most recent addition to the Vivanta by Taj portfolio, Madikeri in Coorg, southwest India, follows similar principles: compressed bricks were made on-site from displaced soil, mud paints adorn the cottage walls, the cane artefacts dotted around were crafted by local tribes, plus only recycled roof tiles and wood were used. If that wasn't enough, the hotel has also planted more than 40,000 trees over the past five years to neutralise the carbon footprint from construction work.

Hotel sustainability service Ecomptner has also worked with 36 Best Western properties across Finland, Poland and the Baltic

States over the past year to cut carbon footprints by up to 29%, while in the Caribbean, Sandals has partnered with the Panasonic Corporation to introduce energy-saving technology including solar power, starting with flagship Montego Bay in Jamaica.

### ● CONSERVATION IS KEY

As well as on-site initiatives, many resorts extend environmental efforts to their surroundings.

Peruvian group Inkaterra was founded with a commitment to preserving its natural environment and local communities. So it's no surprise its achievements include research into the wildlife of the cloud forests around the historic sanctuary of Machu Picchu and Amazon rainforest at Tambopata; the restoration of five hectares of cloud forest at Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel; and the creation of a rescue centre for endangered Andean bears.

Caribbean resort operator AMResorts also channels its efforts into protecting the endangered green ebony tree found only in this region at the Dominican Republic's Ebano Verde scientific reserve, as well as inviting guests

to help monitor and protect the sea turtles that visit local beaches to lay their eggs. Tobago's Magdalena Grand Beach Resort is also engaged in this effort, working with local organisation Save Our Sea Turtles to ensure beachfront nests of native leatherback, hawksbill and green sea turtles are not disturbed, and dimming beachfront lighting to help hatchlings make their way to the sea.

A little fiercer, but equally in need of protection, is the shark, so 18-30s escorted tour operator Contiki has teamed up with conservation charity Sharksavers to encourage passengers travelling through Galapagos National Park to help identify and count shark sightings.

On a smaller but no less important scale, there's been plenty of buzz surrounding the demise of the bee in recent years. That's why Onyx Hospitality Group has devised 'Plan Bee' to combat the drop in the Asian honeybee population, with an urban beekeeping project at the Oriental Residence Bangkok and education for farmers around fellow property Shama Sukhumvit Bangkok. **TW**



**FAST FACT**  
Rainbow Tours has added a Sustainable Costa Rica trip linking five eco-friendly properties

# See the world differently

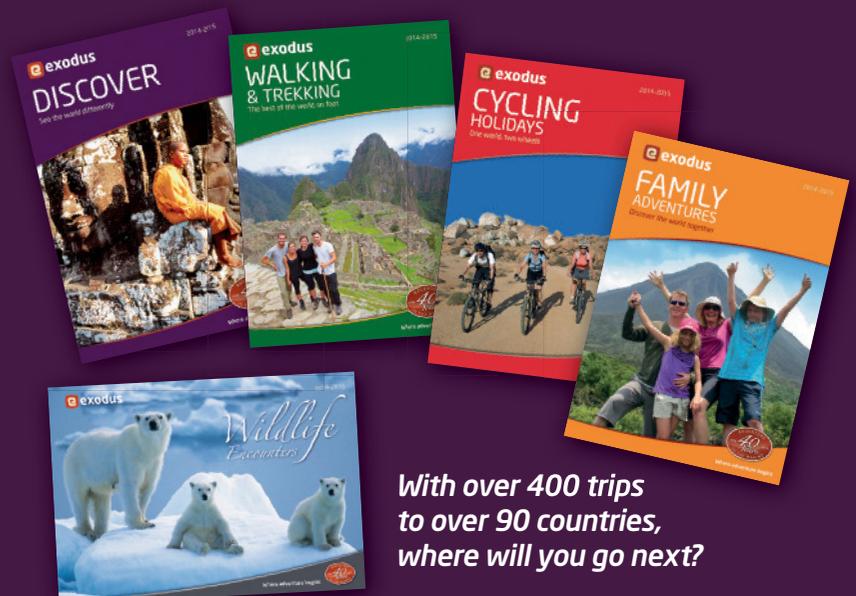


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- ▶ Economically we ensure that our hosts receive a fair share of wealth generated by our visits.
- ▶ Environmentally we always strive to leave an area exactly as we found it.

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