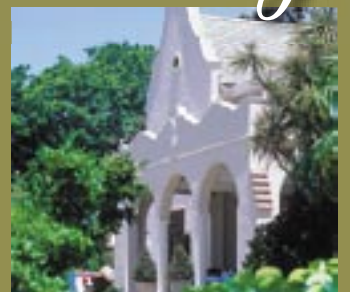


Lighting the way



Seasoned travellers know that in any city there are hidden gems – perfect hideaways that offer peace and serenity to rest and relax, but which are situated conveniently at the heart of the Mother City's attractions. Nestled in an enchanting woodland with a vista of Table Mountain, Greenways Hotel is one such place.

A Cape Dutch manor house, Greenways offers traditional comfort of a bygone era but with all the creature comforts that can be expected of a five star modern establishment.

Greenways was originally named for its botanical surrounds, but there is a deep commitment by owner Susanne Faussner-Ringer to greening of the non-botanical variety. For Susanne, understanding that reducing one's environmental footprint is far more important than just purchasing a quick carbon off-set, and she has invested a significant amount of time and effort over the last few years finding ways to run a more efficient establishment without compromising on quality. From saving energy and water, and reducing their waste, to supporting sustainable seafood choices in their on-site restaurant, they have considered it all. We visited Greenways to learn more about just one of their projects – saving energy.

The Greenways Showcase

We have all changed some of our home incandescent bulbs to energy-saving compact fluorescents. But Greenways has gone the whole nine yards, having changed all of their bulbs across their entire establishment to energy-saving options.

This is a very significant achievement. Why? Because the hospitality industry has long been charged with lagging behind when it comes to eco-friendly practices, claiming in its defence that there is a lack of innovative technologies that enable them to retain their aesthetic look and feel, while reducing their environmental impact.

Greenways partnered with Eskom, FEDHASA (Federated Hospitality Industry of SA) and lighting importer and distributor Eurolux, to create a showcase of just what savings can be achieved by converting an establishment's lighting to energy-saving lights. All the hotel's 570 energy-hungry incandescent lamps were replaced with the Eurolux energy savers, spanning the lobbies, bedrooms, bathrooms, conference facilities, kitchens and restaurants.

'The need for eco-friendly practices within the hospitality industry is obvious, not only to curb its impact on the environment and to cut costs, but also to combat the negative influence that power cuts have on tourism,' comments Susanne. 'At Greenways we adopted ecologically sound practices many years ago already, recycling our glass, plastic, and so on. The only reason we did not replace all our lights with energy-savers was because traditionally they could not be dimmed, which posed a problem when it came to ambiance, especially in terms of chandeliers.'

'For years the hospitality industry has been reluctant to adopt energy-savers, partly because of being unable to dim them, and because there was also concern over colour rendering,' says Eben Kruger, marketing manager at Eurolux. 'Although we launched the Eurolux dimmable energy-saver last year, the hospitality industry has not had the opportunity to see for themselves exactly what results can be achieved and that is why we opted to completely retro-fit Greenways with energy-savers and show the industry just what can be done.'

A Greener Way





Since the completion of the retro-fit, Susanne confirmed that no change has occurred in the ambiance of the hotel.

'The CFL colour rendering is perfect and the fact that we can now use dimmable energy-savers in our chandeliers is really fantastic. It has allowed us to retain the traditional charm and elegance our guests have come to associate with this historical Manor House,' she adds.

So if a five star establishment such as Greenways can switch to energy-efficient lighting, then there's no reason why every one else in the hospitality industry can't do the same. According to Susanne, not only has the switch saved money, but it is also becoming increasingly important to overseas tourists that the facilities at which they stay are doing their bit for the environment.

Beyond lighting

Greenways may have cracked the code when it comes to energy-efficient lighting, but this does not mean that they are not always on the look out for new opportunities to save energy.

Of course, they also recognise that there is a limit to how much energy they can save and so have had the carbon emissions associated with this inevitable limit calculated for Greenways. Their goal? To offset what they can't save so that they will be able to brand themselves as a carbon-neutral establishment in the near future.

And if that's not enough, they are also pursuing accreditation under the independent Green Leaf Environmental Standard to satisfy the most critical of eco-conscious travellers out there. **SG**

<http://www.greenways.co.za>



We have a romantic weekend away for a couple valued at R5000, including a champagne breakfast, to giveaway. Send your details to subs@simplygreen.co.za, subject header 'Greenways Giveaway' by 15 Aug 2009 to stand a chance to win.