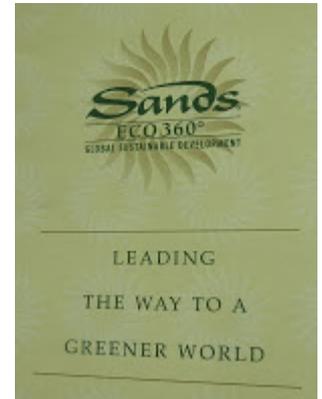


# Ideas From a Big Green Palace in the Desert

Yesterday I had the pleasure of getting lost in a big green palace (or palazzo in Italian). The Las Vegas Sands Corp. claims that The Palazzo, The Venetian and Sands Expo & Convention Center development is the “largest green building on the planet.” That’s quite a claim, but they do have LEED Silver certification and specific business practices to back up their assertion.



When we checked into the Venetian a few days ago, I noticed a “Sands 360” brochure entitled “Leading the Way to a Greener World,” and I was impressed with all that they’re doing to be greener than the average hotel. If the brochure wasn’t in the room, then I probably wouldn’t have had any idea of how much they’re committed to sustainability. You can’t find it easily on their website, so I guess they think it doesn’t matter to the majority of their customers.

Here are just a few elements of their beautiful green design:

1. Atria skylight that takes advantage of natural desert light:



2. Extensive planting areas and permanent built-in planters create a vegetated roof, which help reduce building temperature and storm water runoff. In addition, they're irrigated with a subsurface drip irrigation system which reduces water wasted through evaporation, typical of traditional irrigation systems. It also allows the pathways areas to stay dry so guests don't have to duck when the sprinklers are running.



3. Wall to wall mirrors in the elevators reflect and increase light. Although this is a good idea to reduce the need for lighting fixtures, perhaps they can put the elevators on outside walls in their next development so that they can utilize natural lighting for the majority of the day.



4. They installed five large mirrors in the bathroom and in the hallway just outside the door. The mirrors help to reflect and enhance light in this room that has no windows. This is good, but it could be better. In their future developments they can improve on this by bringing natural light into the bathrooms.





5. They give the customer the option to minimize the washing of bed linens & towels, and I like how the sign requires customers to put the sign in the bed if they want it to be made rather than the opposite. I've also stayed in hotels where customers are asked to place the sign on the bed if they don't want it made and this makes much less sense!



And check out the Green Palazzo link on the back of the sign where you can find more

details about their green design and processes.

6. It's difficult to take a picture of the indoor air, but I can tell that I feel good breathing the air in this hotel. In most hotels, I usually notice unpleasant odors. But not here.

7. And here's a great way they're helping the local community—they partnered with Opportunity Village's linen and terry (i.e., sheets and towels) recycling program. Opportunity Village converts used fabrics to cleaning cloths while providing jobs for local special-needs residents.

Not only is this a good idea for every hotel, it's also something you can do in your own home! Here's a colorful sample from my home. My mom always used old towels & linens for rags, so I've always done the same:



Thank you Sands for your green efforts. I'm happy to have the opportunity to be your customer!

But here's the best news about Sands that most companies haven't figured out yet. For every \$1 that Sands has invested in being more sustainable, they've gotten a \$4 return! Read more about this in their Sands Eco 360 Overview.

If you have more ideas about greening the design or business processes of hotels, please feel free to leave a comment.