



**HOSPITALITY**  
AWARDS

**BEST  
INITIATIVE  
IN SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

**XII**

Rendez-vous le 21 novembre 2011  
Save the date: November 21<sup>st</sup> 2011  
InterContinental Paris Le Grand

**HOSPITALITY**  
AWARDS



Dakhla Oasis, Egypt

**Entry Presentation 2011**

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# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## WHO WE ARE:

DESERT LODGE is the result of collective thinking of five international tourism experts, people who like outdoor life, nature and the beauty of the desert. The hotel opened in 2003, is privately owned, has 32 rooms, 12 employees and runs under Egyptian-Swiss management.

We are small and had limited funds. These two factors challenged us at the beginning a lot. We told ourselves that if we are creative and innovative enough, we can accomplish individual and big ideas. With this thoughts in mind, DESERT LODGE was built.



# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

WHERE WE ARE:

The Oasis of Dakhla lies in the Sahara desert, almost 1000km south of Cairo and sits in a depression surrounded by pink cliffs. There are about 30,000 acres of cultivated land. In these areas the farmers grow wheat, corn and animal food; gardens are filled with palm trees, guavas, mangos and citrus fruit.



Al Qasr, where DESERT LODGE is located, is one of the villages belonging to Dakhla oasis and is Egypt's most beautiful one. It is built over the foundations of a Roman town and has little changed from mediaeval times. It is now under the protection of the Department of Heritages.

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# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## WHAT WE DO:

### a) General Efforts

- Only local craftsmen from the village were hired
- Local building materials were used for construction
- The construction of the hotel is hand made.
- Only Egyptian cotton is used
- The Hotel staff is 100% local from the oasis
- Hot water is generated from solar energy
- We use, where ever possible, low energy light bulbs
- Products we buy are local and come with little packaging
- We separate food waste and feed our farm animals with it



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# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## WHAT WE DO:

### b) Local Community

For our hotel guests we organise visits to connect with the local community. They can take part in:

- making bread „Aish shams“
- visit a herbal pharmacy / a teacher/school / the pottery / date or palm factory
- take lessons in Arabic / a guided walk through the oasis gardens / cooking classes



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WHAT WE DO:

c) Artist's Workshop

We offer art classes in our specially built workshop. Here are some examples:

- Arabic calligraphy
- Painting
- Yoga
- Meditation



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# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## OUR SPECIAL EFFORT:

### a) Drinking Water

GOALS: - No Plastic bottles (PET) / no cans / no CO<sub>2</sub> emission  
- No waste / no transportation / no pollution.

PROJECT Tap water is filtered with Hi-tech-filters and offered to our guests in glass bottles for drinking.  
All soft drinks are offered in glass bottles only and fruit juice in cardboard boxes. We sell no cans.



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## OUR SPECIAL EFFORT:

### b) Pool + Irrigation

- GOALS:
- Swimming pool with natural water
  - Irrigation of our three organic farms with used water

PROJECT DESERT LODGE drilled its own water. The well now feeds the swimming pool with natural hot water (38°C). The overflow of this pool is directed by a canal system to three small organic farms for irrigation.



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## OUR SPECIAL EFFORT:

### c) Organic Farms

GOAL: Serve our clients healthy, home grown food

PROJECT: In our three organic farms grow animal food, wheat vegetable, herbs, spices and fruit trees.



- GOALS:
- Proper disposal of Hotel's waste
  - Model character for other Egyptian villages

PROJECT In 2009, DESERT LODGE took the initiative to work out a solid waste management plan with the local authorities and started to separate and recycle the rubbish of the whole village (about 7000 inhabitants). This unique project is supervised by the hotel.

One worker is paid by the village council and one by the hotel. The separated items such as cardboard, glass, metal and plastic are sold to a recycling company. The generated funds are used to pay one worker for several months.

situation before



situation after

# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## OUR SPECIAL EFFORT

### e) Cleaning the Village

GOALS: - Raise awareness / obtain a clean village  
- Connect with the local community

PROJECT: Each year DESERT LODGE organises a “clean up day”. First we go to classrooms, talk to teachers and children about the importance of taking care of their village and keeping the desert unspoilt. Then, all of us, Hotel manager, staff, children and teachers go and pick up trash. Once this is done, DESERT LODGE invites the children to the Hotel for a delicious meal to say Thank you!



# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## OUR SPECIAL EFFORT:

f) Regional  
Desert Park

GOAL: Keep the beauty of the oasis, the desert and neighbouring cliffs for future generations

PROJECT: DESERT LODGE initiated the creation of a small Desert Park (1km<sup>2</sup>) where nature will be protected and kept virgin. (On hold because of the Spring Revolution > the new governor first has to be elected.)



Idea of Hotel + Concept	Ahmed Moussa
President	Eng. Abdelhamid Moussa
Responsible + CEO	Ahmed Moussa
Architect + Design	Khaled Etman
Construction	Khaled Lotfy
Interior Decoration + Quality control	Ursina Rüegg
Responsible for Ecology	Ursina Rüegg

Who created this program?

- ° Co-owners and Responsible for Ecology

Who is in charge of making it evolve?

- ° Responsible for Ecology

What are the structures for ensuring the follow-up?

- ° Frequent visits to the site
- ° Strict follow up by the responsible person + CEO
- ° Constant training of staff
- ° Questionnaires, filled out by our clients
- ° Keep track of the hotels energy expenses

Does the program involve external partnerships?

- ° Local authorities, teachers and governor

# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

Communication

+

Implementation

Staff

Motivate personnel for "Green thinking" training

Clients

Webpage, presented in 5 languages  
Eco-documentation in rooms and bathrooms  
Information at Check-in  
Publications in Travel magazines & press releases

Business partners

International Travel Fairs  
Sales trips

# HOSPITALITY AWARDS

## Awards + Recognitions

- 2007 Prize for Best Environmental Tourism by DRV (German Travel Association)
- 2005 Certificate for High Standing Quality by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism (only award given to an Ecolodge in Egypt)
- 2003 “Green Tourism” given by the Arab League for our efforts, protecting the desert in Egypt

## Publications

“Green Places to stay” by Alastair Sawday’s

“Exotic Retreat” - Eco Resort Design by Julia Fairs

Articles in various magazines and newspapers in Egypt, Switzerland, UK and Germany

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**THANK YOU!**



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