

Hotel Verde recognised as best urban hotel at Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards

During the 15th annual Skål International Sustainable Tourism Awards, held in Monaco, Africa's greenest hotel, [Hotel Verde](#) situated at Cape Town International Airport, was voted the global winner in the Urban Accommodation category. Skål is a professional organisation of tourism leaders around the world, promoting global tourism and friendship.



Image Source: [WTMAfrica](#)

The [Skål International Sustainable Awards](#) global winners were announced by the President of Skål International, Nigel Pilkington and the judging panel made the following comment about Hotel Verde, the winner in the Urban Accommodation category:

“Hotel Verde is outstanding in their efforts and their consistent dedication to creating the least environmental impact on the local community. Their LEED certification, and various investments to ensure that their infrastructure, maintenance and operations are green - something that made them very notable among other submissions. They’re highly innovative and appear to have a good grasp of how to create a project that will enable a long-term positive difference.”

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The panel concluded with "Hotel Verde, in Cape Town, South Africa, serves as a good example to other hotels in the world, providing a role model for a higher ecological hotel management."

A leader in energy and environmental design

Hotel Verde is the first hotel in the world to be certified LEED ([Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design](#)) Platinum for both Design and Construction, as well as Operations and Maintenance, from the United States Green Building Council. The LEED certification, developed by the USGBC (United States Green Building Council) and administered and audited by the GBCI (Green Building Certification Institute), is considered globally as the premier mark of accomplishment in green building and provides independent third-party verification that a building was designed, built and/or operated sustainably.

Sustainable, in this sense, refers to a comprehensive list of factors including, but not limited to, energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 and other greenhouse and harmful gas emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and

stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Carbon neutral auditable certificates

In addition to the LEED certification, Hotel Verde has brought a number of firsts to the African continent: carbon neutral auditable certificates for either guest or conferences held at Hotel Verde. Guests and conference delegates receive a carbon offset certificate after their stay or conference with the hotel, stating the amount of carbon (in kg) that they have personally offset by choosing the hotel.

This is an auditable and trackable certificate which is emailed to the guest, can be shared on social media and can be used directly towards sustainability and integrated reporting. These certificates are provided at no extra or hidden cost to the guests.

Other initiatives included the installation of an industrial scale vertical geothermal loop system, the first hotel carbon management initiative of its kind, the installation of regenerative drive elevators and power generating gym equipment.

Thrivability

Hotel Verde is managed by [Verde Hotels](#), Africa's very first responsible hotel management operator. The group take on the retrofitting of existing properties and the constructions of new developments and delivers a turn-key hotel management model based on the principles of Thrivability, extending the conventional borders of sustainable and responsible tourism.

Verde Hotels integrates Thrivability into the design, construction, refurbishment and operations of their hotels, in order to showcase social, environmental and economic best practice. In 2015 Hotel Verde teamed up with the [Green Building Council of South Africa](#), to assist in piloting the Existing Building Performance toolkit. The hotel was subsequently certified as the very first, six-star Green Star SA Project, based on this tool. This provided yet another third party verification of Hotel Verde's status of world leadership in green building operation, ensuring the hotel is continually operated with stringent efficiency and sustainability targets.

In three years, Hotel Verde has become known locally and internationally, not only for its sustainable design, construction, and operational practices; but also for being one of Cape Town's most quirky and creative hotels.

"We are proud that our aim to be a Thrivable environmentally protective hotel has been recognised by our industry peers, on a global level. My team at Verde Hotels is committed to ensuring we operate hotels for the future benefit of the planet and its people, yielding a thrivable business for owners and investors, on an international level," said a very proud Samantha Annandale, CEO of Verde Hotels, during the awards ceremony.

Striving for greater sustainability

In conclusion the Minister of Tourism for South Africa, Derek Hanekom had this to say, "Hotel Verde, managed by Verde

Hotels, and others in the tourism sector who are striving towards greater sustainability, are maintaining our country's competitive edge in the global tourism market. Their success comes from taking a responsible approach right from the start of their planning, and then ensuring that all their products, services, and activities are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable into the future.

We must now spread these world-leading responsible tourism practices throughout the entire tourism industry. Tourists are becoming increasingly concerned about social and environmental issues, and they want to support destinations and products that take responsible tourism seriously."

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