

Proving luxury hotels can be green

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David L. Ryan/Globe Staff

Scot Hopps oversees environmental initiatives, such as filtered water stations, at the Lenox Hotel.

Scot Hopps gets plenty of teasing at the Lenox Hotel for his attention to detail, including his vigilance to “light patrol” — swapping out rogue incandescent bulbs with more energy-efficient ones.

Hopps, an environmental program manager for the Boston luxury hotel, is responsible for championing the hotel’s - numerous environmental initiatives, including hybrid vehicles, filtered water stations, LED roof signs, waterless urinals, and an entire hypoallergenic floor. It’s more than a “green” hotel movement, though, said Hopps. “Green is definitely the term du jour, but the duration and scope of what we are doing is more about sustainability and a long-term scope that encompasses not just the environment, but also a dedication to community, service, health, and business.”

Isn’t it difficult to be green and also a luxury hotel?

That’s one of the myths about sustainability — that it limits or reduces pleasure. But the opposite is the truth. For example, if you’re eating local seafood and taking the T instead of driving, these are all enhancing your experience of green travel in New England, as well as allowing you to really enjoy the city. For the Lenox Hotel, many of our environmental efforts are behind the scenes, such as employee uniforms created from recycled plastic bottles, soy-based ink for all our printing, or washable plates and cups in our employee cafeteria.

What projects are you currently working on?

We’re making an ambitious attempt to completely eliminate plastic water bottles from the hotel by installing filtered water stations on each floor as well as having attractive carafes and glasses in each room. And instead of single-use shampoo, conditioner, and moisturizer bottles, we’re also working on implementing amenity dispensers in guest rooms, which eliminates a huge amount of waste.

What’s the best way to find out if a hotel is sustainable?

More travel search engines are adding the option for guests to research which hotels are green. But there is an overuse of green marketing online — almost all hoteliers are making environmental claims, so the best way is to ask questions when talking to the front desk or when calling to book a room.

How did you get interested in sustainability?

Before I earned my engineering degree, I worked in just about every hospitality role from overnight bellman, room service, housekeeping, and hotel manager. Later, I worked for a company that installed renewable energy systems. So it was a great marriage of the two. In addition, as a scuba diver, I am very interested in protecting our natural world.

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