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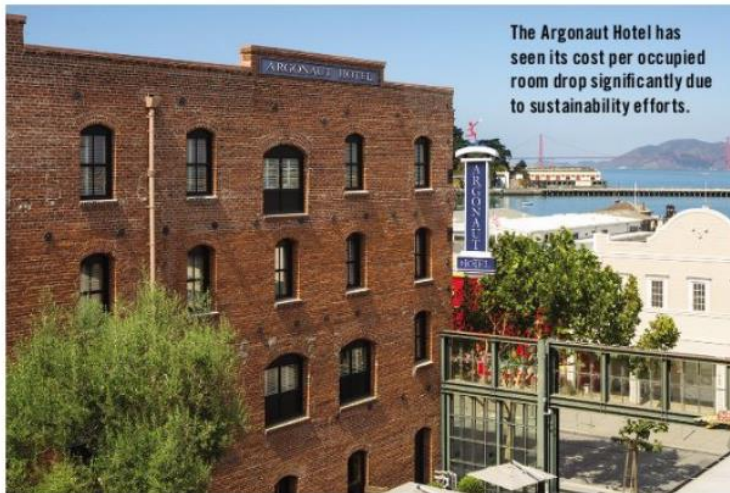
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The Argonaut Hotel has seen its cost per occupied room drop significantly due to sustainability efforts.



The hotel's guestrooms have been retrofitted with LEDs.

## San Francisco hotel in the park goes green, reduces costs

By Adam Perkowsky  
Contributing Writer

SAN FRANCISCO—For the Argonaut Hotel, located here, “going green” came naturally, considering it is part of a national park. After undergoing a year-long sustainability effort that included energy- and water-saving initiatives, as well as implementing strategies to reduce its impact on the environment, the Argonaut was named an SF Green Business by the San Francisco Department of the Environment.

Featuring 252 guestrooms and 13 suites, the property is part of an adaptive-reuse of the four-story, 200,000-sq.-ft. Haslett Warehouse, which was built in 1907 for Del Monte

Foods and converted to a hotel in 2003 with the National Maritime Visitor Center on the ground level. It is owned by the National Park Service and is part of the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

The sustainability initiatives serve as an extension of the hotel’s overall humanitarian efforts, noted Stefan Muhle, area managing director of the Argonaut Hotel.

“We believe in prideful practices to aid and assist our community. The team regularly donates and volunteers with local partners that benefit a variety of needful and impactful nonprofit organizations. The Argonaut seeks and assists various local partners, and donates time, space and services in an

ongoing effort to improve the community,” he said of the Noble House Hotels & Resorts-managed property. “We realize that the cost of not operating a sustainable business is far greater than the expenses associated with ‘going green.’ Being a green business is not only good for the environment, it saves money, improves the wellness and productivity of team members and guests alike, and provides a marketing edge over our competition.”

Energy savings was a major focus of the Argonaut’s sustainability strategy. The hotel, in partnership with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and the San Francisco Department of the Environment, recently completed a 100% retrofit to LED lighting.

“We reduce greenhouse gases by using LED bulbs,” noted Muhle, who added, “Guestrooms and event spaces are equipped with motion sensors, and the hotel is a recognized participant in the Step Up and Power Down initiative by PG&E.”

Also installed was a Stem battery, which “saves electricity during the peak demand on a daily basis,” said Muhle. “Stem provides automated peak reduction through a combination of high-definition data, which allows demand response signals to take a load off the grid.”

The housekeeping staff became part of the sustainability efforts with the introduction of the PathoSans system to electro-chemically activate water and produce a nontoxic, environmentally friendly solution to clean guestrooms, walls, carpets and back-of-house.

“We produce the Green Seal-certified solution right here on property, so it is automatically available as needed,” said Muhle. “Our team reuses bottles and reduces hazards with the non-irritating cleaner. We also eliminated monthly P&L expenses for cleaning and sanitizing chemicals by using this product.”

The hotel’s F&B establishment, the Blue Mermaid Restaurant, also got into the eco-friendly act, according to Muhle. The eatery’s signature seafood dishes are all prepared according to the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s sustainable fisheries guidelines, and grease is recycled from the kitchen to create biofuel and compost, “helping us divert as much as 74% of the hotel’s waste stream from landfills,” he noted.

He added that, in a further effort

to reduce waste, the hotel converted from single-use bathroom amenities in small plastic bottles to refillable shower pumps for body soap, shampoo and conditioner. It also employs a committed recycling champion dedicated to ensuring that all garbage is recycled properly, resulting in the hotel’s waste diversion rate of 74%. The hotel’s low-flow water miser valves and toilets have reduced annual water use by 15%.

Other eco-friendly directives the hotel has initiated include raising indoor air quality by circulating large amounts of outdoor air into guestrooms; using low VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) carpets and pads, sealants, paints and adhesives; offering bicycles for guests to use instead of them having to travel in cars; and handing out complimentary juice bar offerings to guests who valet park with electric cars.

Muhle said that the hotel’s cost per occupied room (CPOR) dropped significantly in 2017 due to the overall sustainability effort. Among the savings were five cents in CPOR from the electricity changes (LED retrofit and Stem battery); 13 cents from the water miser; six cents from PathoSans; and nine cents from the grease trap removal.

The green movement at the Argonaut Hotel is an ongoing effort, and Muhle hopes to get other area properties involved. “We openly share our field tests and findings—successes and failures—and encourage as many team members and other hotels to participate to push the proverbial envelope,” he said. **HB**



Stefan Muhle  
Argonaut Hotel