



Q&A With Stefan Muhle on Sustainability Efforts at San Francisco's Argonaut Hotel

The Argonaut, a Noble House Hotel, has been named an SF Green Business by the San Francisco Department of the Environment. We talked with the hotel's area managing director Stefan Muhle to get the inside scoop.

Meetings Today: Why was the SF Green Business distinction important to the property?

Stefan Muhle: We went through a rigorous process, focusing on key areas of purchasing, use and disposal, to become sustainable in pollution prevention, waste management, conservation practices, water and waste water management, and energy efficiency.

MT: What practices were put in place to make the hotel more eco-friendly?

SM: We realize that the cost of NOT operating a sustainable business is far greater than the expenses associated with "going green." Here are some efforts and practices we put in place:

- The hotel's water-saving systems account for a 15 percent reduction in annual water use.
- No more tiny bottles of shampoo, conditioner and body wash. Instead, there are large bottles in rooms.
- We recycle our kitchen grease into bio fuel and compost.
- We raise indoor air quality by circulating large amounts of outdoor air into guest rooms.
- We use Green Seal-certified cleaning products.
- Our guests are free to check out complimentary bicycles. Our garage offers complimentary juice bars for electric cars.
- We reduce greenhouse gases by using LED lights.

MT: How do these measures extend to event spaces?

SM: The ballroom and meetings spaces have natural daylight and various indoor/outdoor options. We offer local and sustainable cuisine, local craft beers and wines. There are linen-less conference tables, LED lights and motion sensors in all spaces and improved air quality through the use of low VOC carpets.

MT: How does the restaurant play into this?

SM: Our famed Blue Mermaid Restaurant & Bar features a menu of dishes prepared in an Earth-friendly fashion respectful of the Monterey Bay Aquarium's sustainable fisheries guidelines.

MT: Can you expand on your partnership with the National Park Visitors Center?

SM: Aside from the Argonaut housing the National Park Visitor Center, the partnership has created opportunities to directly benefit the community. One co-op is the Historic Waterfront Walking Tour, offered every weekend.

Hotel guests, visitors and locals alike get to stroll with a park ranger to discover the history of this vibrant area.

www.argonauthotel.com



