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# Solage Calistoga

*Good and Green*

**H**ow things change ... Several years ago, we asked the marketing director of a highly touted premium hotel whether they employed any environmentally-friendly practices; specifically, we had noted they didn't provide a card offering guests the option to reuse towels or not have their bed sheets replaced each day. Her response was to sniff and say, "We wouldn't be a luxury hotel if we did *that*." »

**T**oday, most hotels, luxury or otherwise, are taking steps to reduce water and energy use by letting guests determine how often to launder sheets and towels—and approximately 70 percent of guests do choose to use linens more than once when given the option. After all, who really needs their bedding changed every day? Perhaps hotels merely recognize that this ecologically sound idea also saves money—many environmentally beneficial practices are economically beneficial as well. Regardless, Project Planet estimates that a

bikes for guests to cruise around the property or into town.

While you may not get to take home the shampoo, in-room bath amenities are offered in bulk-size containers, minimizing waste—and the locally-sourced products are all chemical and preservative free. Appliances are energy efficient. The swimming pool has an ozone system that minimizes the use of chlorine. The housekeeping department utilizes nontoxic cleaning products. The landscape is drought tolerant and uses reclaimed water.

concrete, vaulted ceilings, and a pebbled-floor shower. Perfectly appointed with sumptuous beds draped in Italian linens and down bedding, fireplaces, and private patios, Solage competes with the best wine country getaways.

At **Solbar**, the property's hip bistro, guests can dine outside next to the fire pit under starry Napa skies, or inside the contemporary restaurant with its high ceilings and giant sliding glass doors. Brandon Sharp is the young-but-talented executive chef charged with the challenging task of creating a

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hotel with 100 rooms can reduce water usage by 6,000 gallons and detergent by 40 gallons each month through this program alone.

In charming Calistoga, at the northern end of Napa Valley, Solage is green at its core—going far beyond environmentally-friendly laundry practices and proving that luxury and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. Recently opened, this Auberge Resorts property is eco-conscious from top to bottom, and not just in building and energy practices, but in the company culture.

A staff *Green Team* works on resource conservation programs for the resort and employees are educated on environmental issues and participate in green operations. If they carpool they get preferred parking, and those who bike to work are provided with secure storage, showers, and changing areas. On the property, bicycles are the primary mode of transportation for bellmen and room service, and accommodations include complimentary

Solar panels line the tops of buildings. There is on-site composting and extensive recycling. Vendors with a commitment to sustainability and those located nearby are chosen over others whenever possible.

The incorporation of green building products and furnishings throughout the guestrooms and common areas includes the use of bamboo flooring, nontoxic paints, geothermal radiant heating in the spa, natural rugs and upholstery from sustainable materials that produce no off-gassing, furniture made from renewable materials or reclaimed timbers with nontoxic finishes—everywhere you look, a green effort has been made.

Green notwithstanding, this stylish property reeks of chic design—described as *Napa barn meets San Francisco loft*—and luxurious accommodations. Guestrooms, designed by Dowling Kimm Studios, former protégée of Michael Graves, are finished in muted natural tones of warm wood and stone, with polished

memorable restaurant in a valley full of highly acclaimed kitchens. His menu is healthy, seasonal, and distinctive: Shrimp and Local Melon Salad; Crispy Crust Petrale with lemon garlic risotto; seared California Halibut with creamed sweet corn. As Sharp's resume would suggest—he's been at Gary Danko as well as the renowned French Laundry—Solbar is a destination restaurant that competes with the best of them.

Then there's the spa. A visit to Calistoga isn't complete without a mud bath, and **Spa Solage** offers this ritual like nowhere else. Along with massages, Kate Somerville facials, and body treatments, there is the "Mudslide"—a three-part circuit of mud, water, and rest.

You **can** indulge yourself and pamper the planet. Solage is proof.

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