The Greening of Paradise

From smart city hotels operated entirely by wind power to repurposed ancient architecture, here is *Werte*'s pick of leisure destinations making a positive environmental impact without sacrificing the guest experience

1 Cempedak

Riau Islands, Indonesia
A private hideaway dedicated to supporting local culture and the island's rare wildlife

Former Australian banker Andrew Dixon has set up this private-island retreat to provide a five-star experience for guests while actively preserving the surrounding nature and the local culture. Named after the native fruit tree, Cempedak in the Riau Archipelago also has the larger ambition of alleviating poverty and improving health and education in the region. It does this through The Island Foundation, created by Dixon and his partners in 2012, which facilitates forward-thinking projects such as micro-finance and entrepreneurial initiatives. For the visitor, a 30-minute journey by boat from Singapore will bring you to Cempedak and its 20 thatched bamboo villas, each with a private beach garden and plunge pool.
Worth visiting because: Endangered scaly pangolins, hawksbill turtles, sea otters and silver-leaf monkeys provide rare wildlife-spotting encounters.
Feel-good factor: The price you pay not only affords you a holiday, but will also support wildlife and the lives of local people.
cempedak.com

2 Amanyangyun

Shanghai
At this Aman resort, the ancient is exquisitely conserved, from the guest villas to the trees

After he heard of government plans to create the Liao Fang Reservoir, and the damage that would be done to the area's history and culture by the flooding, philanthropist Ma Dadong relocated 50 Ming and Qing dynasty villas stone by stone and more than 10,000 camphor trees, some ancient, over 700 kilometers (435 miles) from his native Jiangxi province to just outside Shanghai to preserve them. The resulting resort, Amanyangyun, is now part of the Aman hotel group, which has matched the historic architecture with restrained contemporary interiors in its 24 Ming Courtyard Suites and 13 Antique Villas.
Worth visiting because: A triumph of ambition and conservation, Amanyangyun blends ancient and modern and has an authenticity rarely found in such resorts.
Feel-good factor: During the dismantling of the original villas, ancient carvings and reliefs were uncovered. It is thought some would have taken decades to complete and represent family histories from 2,000 years ago.
aman.com

By Juliet Kinsman

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3 Fogo Island Inn

Newfoundland, Canada
Whales and icebergs can be spotted from this hotel inspired by vernacular buildings

With one end of the building standing on angled, slender stilts, this white rectangle of 29 suites cuts a dramatic silhouette at the very edge of Canada's rugged and remote northeastern coast. Designed by Newfoundland-born, Norway-based architect Todd Saunders, the 4,000 square meter (43,000 square foot) inn was the personal vision of founder Zita Cobb, who built it with the support of private donations and government grants and with a commitment to securing a stable future for the island. The inn's architecture and decoration takes inspiration from the island's vernacular traditions of building and design. Cobb describes the project as "a servant of the nature and culture of this place". With that in mind, all surplus income is channeled back into the surrounding community, making the inn an innovative model for how hospitality can be a force for good.
Worth visiting because: Its nouvelle Newfoundland cuisine uses locally acquired, seasonal ingredients and is served in the ocean-view restaurant while you gaze through the floor-to-ceiling windows at passing icebergs and whales.
Feel-good factor: As well as admiring the rugged landscape, visitors can explore the local art scene to buy arts and crafts, such as patchwork quilts and Scandi-style furniture.
fogoislandinn.ca

4 Shinta Mani Wild

Cardamom National Park, Cambodia
A luxury camp in a private nature reserve that is devoted to protecting the rainforest

The sleeping quarters in this resort of 162 hectares (400 acres), which opens in mid-2018, consists of 16 custom-made canvas tents overlooking the rapids immediately outside and the surrounding forest beyond. One objective of Shinta Mani Wild is to provide long-term employment to local people of this region. Another is to protect the river valley sanctuary and the neighboring Bokor and Kirirom National Parks from poaching, mining and logging. To achieve this, resort designer Bill Bensley's Shinta Mani Wild has teamed up with Wildlife Alliance, Fauna & Flora International, the Cambodian government and the Royal University of Phnom Penh.
Worth visiting because: You can accompany rangers into the parks' forests.
Feel-good factor: You can zip-line into the main reception and have drinks by the waterfall.
shintamani.com

5 Blackadore Caye

Belize
A Caribbean retreat with a sustainability agenda set up by a Hollywood star

Actor, environmental activist and soon-to-be hotelier Leonardo DiCaprio is putting his money where his idealism is. When it opens in 2018, his resort off the coast of Belize will provide glamorous-yet-green hospitality next to the world's second largest barrier reef. Blackadore Caye, developed by Restorative Islands, is situated on a small, 42 hectare (104 acre) strip of land, which the actor and his business partner bought a decade ago. As well as building 36 solar-powered bungalows alongside a similar number of residential estate homes for purchase, the developer has undertaken to restore the island's natural environment by replanting mangrove trees to replace invasive species and adding an armature to help regenerate the reef.
Worth visiting because: This will be the first luxury resort to adhere to the rigorous Living Building Challenge sustainability certification standards.
Feel-good factor: It is hoped that the resort will create up to 400 permanent jobs for residents and that its estimated revenue of 400 million Belize dollars ($200 million) over the next 20 years will help local communities.
restorativeislands.com

6 Bambu Indah

Bali, Indonesia
Natural swimming pools and bamboo-built rooms help maintain a minimal footprint

Jewelry makers Jon and Cynthia Hardy are serious about sustainability at their bamboo-built resort in Ubud in the heart of Bali. In 2005, the couple brought 11 antique Javanese bridal homes to Bali, restored them and opened them as guest rooms to friends and family. Panoramic views over the Ayung River from the Sayan Ridge, where the resort sits, can be enjoyed from almost every room. And the owners have made sure they continue to tread lightly on the land they have adopted, having kept the resort the same size as it was when it first opened.
Worth visiting because: The natural swimming pool uses lava stones and plants to organically filter and oxygenate its water.
Feel-good factor: Spend your morning strolling by the river while contemplating Hardy's plans to make the world greener.
bambuindah.com

7 1Hotels

Brooklyn, Manhattan and Miami
City hotels that go beyond organic food and spas in merging eco policy with luxury

Reclaimed materials and upcycled furnishings are integral to the architecture and interior of Barry Sternlicht's state-of-the-art city stays. The founder of the Starwood hotel chain and W Hotels wanted 1Hotels to be a leader in environmentally minded luxury hospitality, and all three 1Hotels properties in Manhattan, Brooklyn (pictured) and Miami make a point of bringing nature inside. Design choices with eco-friendly Bamford Haybarn Spas and Keetsa mattresses, as well as culinary links with chef Jonathan Waxman (known for his farm-to-table approach), signal the 1Hotels ethos, as does the fact that the Brooklyn outpost operates entirely on wind power.
Worth visiting because: The rooftop plunge pool at 1Hotels Brooklyn Bridge has views of the Manhattan skyline across the East River.
Feel-good factor: To get around town, 1Hotels offers complimentary rides in the house Tesla car.
1hotels.com

8 The Brando

Teti'aroa, Tahiti
Scientific research makes this Tahitian atoll a serious contender in green technology

The Brando is a 20-minute flight northeast of Tahiti on the 13-island Teti'aroa atoll. Its 35 beachfront villas are built from all-natural materials but serviced by clever technology, such as a pioneering, deep seawater air-conditioning system. The resort has total dependency on solar power and coconut oil as a bio-fuel for its energy. It is not all about holidays, either. There is some serious science being carried out on the island at the Ecostation, which is run by the Tetiaroa Society, a non-profitmaking organization dedicated to promoting sustainability through education and scientific work.
Worth visiting because: Marlon Brando bought Teti'aroa in 1966, after filming *Mutiny on the Bounty* on the island a few years before. He even built a small holiday village.
Feel-good factor: Total privacy during your stay, as the private seven-seater plane is the only one with permission to land here.
thebrando.com

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