The Greening of Paradise

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

1 Cempedak
Bintan Islands, Indonesia

A private hideaway destined 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 island technology 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 1999, which facilitates forward-thinking projects such as microfinance and entrepreneurial initiatives. For the visitor, a 90-minute journey by boat from Singapore will bring you to Cempedak and its thatched bamboo villas, each with a private beach garden and plunge pool.

Worth visiting because: Endangered sea turtles, blacktip reef sharks, and silver leaf monkeys provide rare wildlife spotting opportunities.

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 Amanresort, the ancient is expertly 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 Min Dahong relocated 32 Ming and Qing dynasty villas stone by stone and more than 20,000 camphor trees, some ancient, over 500 years old, from his native Jiangsu province to just outside Shanghai to preserve them. The resulting resort, Amanyangyun, is now part of the Amanbrand group, which has matched the historic architecture with restrained contemporary interiors in its 24 Ming Courtyard Suites and 31 AmanVillas.

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 panels were recovered. It is thought some would have taken decades to complete and represent family histories from 2,000 years ago.

amanyangyun.com

By Juliet Rinsman
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 an angled, slender stilts, this white rectangle of 12 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 36,000-square-foot (3,300-square-meter) inn was the personal vision of funder David Gevaert, 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 design take inspiration from the island’s vernacular traditions of building and design, and it describes the project as a “repository of the nature and culture of this place.” With that in mind, all surplus income is returned back into the surrounding community, making it an innovative model for how hospitality can be a force for good.
Worth visiting because: Its aesthetic Canada's newfoundland exists in the little-negotiated, seasonal ingredients and is served in the ocean view restaurant while you gaze through the floor-to-ceiling windows at puffins taking off 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 handmade style furniture.

4 Shinta Mani Wild
Cambodia
A largely private nature reserve that is devoted to protecting the rainforests.
The sleeping quarters in this resort of the hotel’s 50 acres, which opens in mid-2023, consist of 20 treehouse-like canvas tents overlooking the temples 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 Koh Preah and Kbal Knet National Parks from poaching, mining, and deforestation.
Feel-good factor: It’s a 16-room eco-luxury hotel in Cambodia that is a nature reserve.

5 Blackadore Caye
Belize
A Caribbean retreat with a sustainability agenda set up by a Hollywood star.
After environmental activism won him to be host of Letterman’s 10th April, he’s putting his money where his initiatives are. When it opens in 2024, his resort off the coast of Belize will provide a lush, green, and a sustainability-focused experience for guests. The resort will have a 6,000-square-foot (1,200-square-meter) spa, a 1,000-square-foot (100-square-meter) restaurant, and a 1,500-square-foot (150-square-meter) room with a infinity pool and a 20,000-square-foot (4,000-square-meter) spa. The resort will have a 6,000-square-foot (1,200-square-meter) spa, a 1,000-square-foot (100-square-meter) restaurant, and a 1,500-square-foot (150-square-meter) room with a infinity pool and a 20,000-square-foot (4,000-square-meter) spa.
Worth visiting because: It will be the first hotel to adhere to the “ecosystemic living building challenge sustainable certification standards.”
Feel-good factor: It’s the first hotel to adhere to the “ecosystemic living building challenge sustainable certification standards.”

6 Bambu Indah
Bali, Indonesia
Natural swimming pools and bamboo-built rooms some help maintain a minimal footprint.
Jewelry makers John and Carol Hardy are serious about sustainability at their bamboo-built resort in Bali in the heart of the island. In 2013, the couple brought back Japanese bamboo homes to Bali, restored them and opened them as guest rooms to friends and family. Panoramic views over the Merah River from the Sugar Ridge, where the resort sits, can be enjoyed from almost every room. And the owners have made sure they continue to thrive lightly on the land they have adapted, having kept the resort the same size as it was when it first opened.
Worth visiting because: The natural swimming pools use a stone-and-plants to organically filter and oxygenate the water.
Feel-good factor: Spend your morning strolling for the river while contemplating Hardy’s plans to make the world greener.

7 1 Hotels
Brooklyn, Manhattan and Miami
City hotels that go beyond organic food and spa to merging cow policy with luxury.
Reclaimed materials and opened furnishings are integrated into the architecture and interior of Barry Sternlicht’s states of 1 Hotels. The founder of the Starwood hotel chain and W Hotels wanted 1 Hotels to be a leader in environmentally minded luxury hospitality, and all three 1 Hotels properties in Manhattan, Brooklyn ( pictured), and Miami make a point of being green.
Feel-good factor: It’s the first hotel in the US to be a leader in environmentally minded luxury hospitality.

8 The Brando
Tahiti, French Polynesia
Scientific research informs this Tahitian beach’s serious contender in green tourism.
The Brando is a 22-minute flight north of Tahiti on the island of French Polynesia. Its 36 beachfront villas are built from all natural materials that have been sourced from the island, such as the nourishing, deep-sea water, and cooking oil, for guests. The resort has total dependence on solar power and coconut oil as a fuel for its energy. It is not all about holiday villas. The 22-minute flight north of Tahiti on the island of French Polynesia. Its 36 beachfront villas are built from all natural materials that have been sourced from the island, such as the nourishing, deep-sea water, and cooking oil, for guests. The resort has total dependence on solar power and coconut oil as a fuel for its energy.
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