

IH&RA to certify sustainable tourism development

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The International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA) announces the launch of its Emeraude Hotelier certification, recognizing hotels that successfully implement the stipulated guidelines to enhance sustainable tourism. IH&RA believes that hotels can subscribe to sustainable development by practicing hospitality management that responds to both the climate change by reducing carbon emissions, and also to socioeconomic imbalances by respecting the culture of each community. The Emeraude Hotelier certification aims to achieve three goals. The certification should serve to motivate hotel managements as well as their staff to continuously develop and uphold sustainable practices. Secondly, the hotels' business partners will be positively influenced to restructure their practices. Lastly, the hotels' guests will perceive these sustainable actions, and thus be inspired to uphold responsible tourism. Hotels who wish to receive this recognition must apply for the certification process. Once approved, they will establish an internal team that aims to complete a number of the one-hundred total criteria.

The certification is based on a three-level scale. According to the number of criteria that the hotel fulfills, it will be awarded with one, two or three Emeraudes. The concept of Emeraude Hoteliers was born last year. The first Emeraude Hotelier of the Year was announced at the 46th Annual Congress in 2008 in Monterrey, Mexico, and was awarded to Mr. Richard Duvauchelle, Director of the Hotel Palais Stephanie in Cannes, France. It soon became apparent that in order to spread the Emeraude Hoteliers' message and encourage more hotels to practice responsible sustainability, a certification was needed that clearly defined the specific criteria. The guidelines are divided into four sections, covering the many areas of sustainability: (1) Effective Sustainable Management; (2) Social & Economic Benefits to the Local Community; (3) Impacts to Cultural Heritage; and (4) Environmental Impacts. With the launching of the Emeraude Hotelier certification, IH&RA hopes to see many hotels participate thoughtfully in sustainable hospitality. The next Emeraude Hotelier of the Year award will be announced at this year's 47th Annual Congress in Belgrade, Serbia, January 2010 -

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