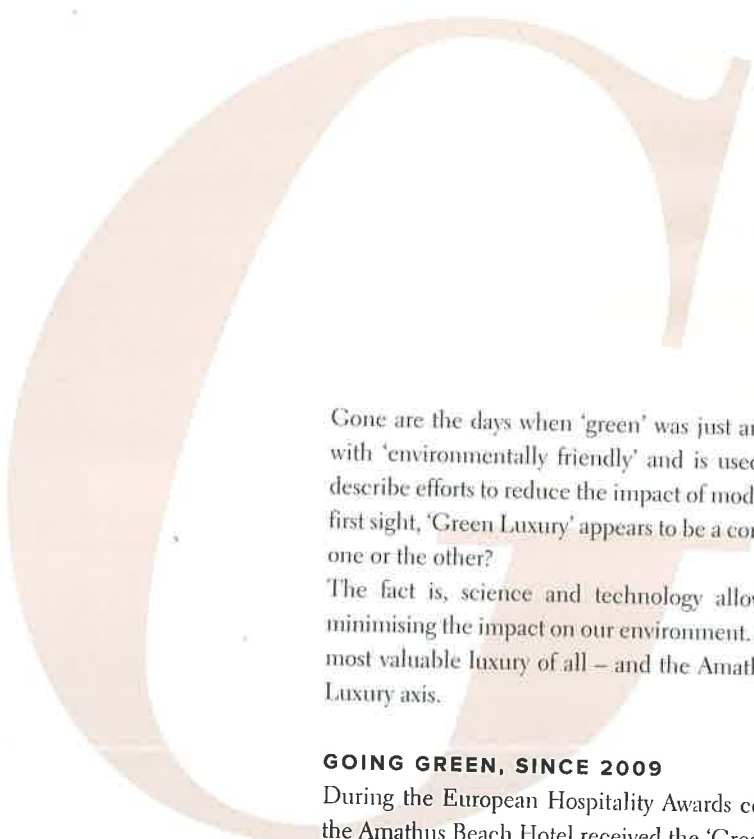




# GREEN *LUXURY*

OVER THE YEARS THE AMATHUS BEACH HOTEL HAS COLLECTED AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER OF AWARDS THAT UNDERLINE EXCELLENCE IN ALL THE OBVIOUS AREAS OF HOSPITALITY – ACCOMMODATION, GASTRONOMY, LEISURE FACILITIES AND SERVICE. BUT ONE OF THE MOST RECENT AWARDS, THE 'GREEN HOTEL OF THE YEAR 2015', REVEALED A VERY DIFFERENT YET EQUALLY ADMIRABLE FACE OF THE AMATHUS.

TEXT  
DINA MYLORDOU



Gone are the days when 'green' was just another colour. Today the word is synonymous with 'environmentally friendly' and is used across industries from cars to cosmetics, to describe efforts to reduce the impact of modern man on the rest of our natural world. So at first sight, 'Green Luxury' appears to be a contradiction in terms; but must we really choose one or the other?

The fact is, science and technology allow us to enjoy our modern comforts while minimising the impact on our environment. Indeed, achieving a sustainable balance is the most valuable luxury of all – and the Amathus has firmly established itself along Green-Luxury axis.

#### **GOING GREEN, SINCE 2009**

During the European Hospitality Awards ceremony in London on 12 November 2015, the Amathus Beach Hotel received the 'Green Hotel of the Year' award, which recognises a hotel that maximises environmental operations and strives for energy efficiency and conservation. Although the Amathus already holds the Cyprus Energy Authorities' prestigious 'Save Energy Award', this European Award instantly increased the return on the hotel's investment in 'green capital' since 2009.

The real achievement, however, is that the green wheels at the Amathus have been quietly spinning for years without making the slightest dent in the 5-star comfort and facilities that guests enjoy at this member of The Leading Hotels of the World. The magic happens silently, either underground or behind the scenes.

#### **HIDDEN MEASURES**

Like most luxuries, the green ones also come at a cost, payable in either time or money. But it's an investment that pays off, both in hard and environmental currency. Sotiris Ioannou, the hotel's Chief Engineer, is proud of his precious baby: the central geo-exchange and heat recovery system in the basement engine room. Installed in 2009 at a cost of €740.000, it is an underground wilderness of water tanks, pumps, pipes and chillers. Although the laws of physics behind them are no secret, and Sotiris is happy to explain them, the bottom line is what's really remarkable. With the help of sea water that passes through the system and flows back into the sea, this feat of engineering significantly reduces the energy required for air-conditioning and heating, as well as heating pools and running water. Savings in electricity and heating oil correspond to an annual reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in excess of 1200 tons, making a significant contribution to environmental protection and sustainability.

Energy conservation is only half of the story. Given the water scarcity in Cyprus, the hotel's on-site seawater desalination plant secures the needs of guests and allows the hotel to



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maintain the beauty of the lush gardens. Also operating since 2009 and with a price tag of €280.000, it has a capacity of 250 tons of water a day. Sotiris did the math: the plant covers 80% of the hotel's annual water consumption. He says: "We do not compromise the high standards our guests expect. In fact, the desalination plant ensures a consistently high quality of water. We are the only hotel in Cyprus and one of the very few in Southern Europe that have such systems." Green luxury indeed.

**EVERYDAY EFFORTS**

To keep an eye on current eco-friendly measures and new opportunities, the Amathus appointed an 'Environment Committee', with Duty Manager Antonis Kyriacou as its Project Manager. He says: "There is so much we can do without any major investments, but simply by introducing a different way of doing things, new procedures." And recycling is the classic example. This is where all members of staff join forces, from the offices to housekeeping and the kitchens. Waste separation, low consumption lighting, eco-friendly detergents – every department does its bit. Antonis pulls out a list and says: "Last year we recycled a total of almost 80 tons of glass, over 35 tons of paper, and just over 33 tons of plastic. Cooking oil, batteries and ink cartridges are also recycled, and we're always looking for new measures that will help us achieve higher levels of sustainability. We're currently working towards Travelife accreditation, which is much more than just recycling, and we expect to receive it soon."

**SETTING AN EXAMPLE**

The real beauty – and value – of a hotel with a green conscience is not only the reduced negative impact on the environment but also the increased positive impact on society, which is increasingly engaged in green initiatives. But individuals often feel frustrated when larger players – companies and organisations – remain indifferent. Knowing that a big and busy hotel is also making the effort boosts collective awareness.

Sotiris and Antonis agree: "The Amathus is one of the best hotels on the island. We are among the leaders in hospitality, so we want to be a leader and a role model in this area too. It's not that difficult." Once you have the mindset and the procedures in place, Green Luxury is not only possible, it becomes second nature.