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Green Luxury in the Pacific Northwest

A Hotel with a Sincere Commitment to Being Green

By **Ann Carroll Burgess**

It began with the pen. The simple ball point by the message pad. But this pen was made of bamboo and recyclable corn based plastic. The pen was the start of a truly green commitment in a hotel. Cedarbrook Lodge in Seattle is possibly the greenest hotel I have ever encountered.

A lot of hotels tip their hats to incorporating green and sustainable measures by adding a recycling box or a tag to the towel bar asking that you reuse your towels. But few hotels are willing to not only go the distance but carve out a new path to true sustainability -- with a luxurious twist.

Set on the edge of a protected wetland the Cedarbrook was originally a multi-purpose center for a bank conglomerate. The buildings have been repurposed into a luxurious hotel/restaurant/conference center.

The rooms are comfortably furnished with deep duvets and comfortably large armchair and ottoman, not so very different from other hotels until you begin to cast a discerning eye around you. You'll have to look very hard to find anything plastic or not up to Green Key sustainability standards. The ice bucket is glass, as are the glasses and the tray on which they reside. You won't find a shred of any unnecessary paper, even the complimentary magazines are recycled from unsold copies. The coffee mugs are china, and if you must take your caffeine with you it will be in a completely biodegradable cup. Even the soap has been designed to not leave behind an unusable lump.

The Copperleaf Restaurant is taking green to an even higher level. On site raised garden beds provide as fresh as possible ingredients, and if they don't grow it, they source it from the local area. Tables near a fireplace and large windows that bring in the rain forest ambiance are the perfect complement to a very imaginative and local menu. Executive Chef Mark Bodinet favors seasonal menus that include such local specialties as Dungeness Crab Bisque, halibut and salmon fresh from the docks, and a visual palette of vegetables that ranged from young fennel bulbs to artichoke hearts, asparagus and fingerling potatoes. The menu was fresh, fun and inventive. A perfect finish to lunch was a freshly made cinnamon and sugar dusted donut with a demitasse of hot chocolate. As the rain poured down outside the windows we could not help but feel cosseted and cozy by this finish.

If I were a local I would come to the Cedarbrook restaurant on a regular basis to experience the changing menus and, because it is cozy and romantic with top notch service.

There are, of course, state of the art meeting rooms, surrounded by surprising break out "room" opportunities. A theatre style meeting room, 24 hour shuttle service to the airport and shopping, all the high-tech goodies including ipod ready stations, wifi, business center and fitness facility. All this for the basic nightly rate including a complimentary breakfast. No extra charges for parking, Wifi, bottled water, fitness center and the snacks in the sleeping building living rooms.

But at its heart is luxury. The luxury of comfortable surroundings. The luxury of knowing you can have it all and not feel guilty about bruising our precious environment. The luxury of its park like setting. The luxury of its quiet atmosphere. This is luxury without unnecessary or artificial opulence. This is the real enviro deal. This is so green its an emerald.

And it all began with a pen.

Cedarbrook Lodge is a surprising 5 minutes from SeaTac International airport (you won't believe that you don't hear the airplanes but take my word for it you do not), easily accessed from I-5. The hotel will also provide a shuttle pick up from the airport or local Amtrak and Seattle Link rail stations www.cedarbrooklodge.com

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