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New Hampton a Green Jewel in Miami's Emerging Brickell Area

By Glenn Hasek

I had an opportunity to stay at and tour the recently opened Hampton Inn & Suites Miami/Brickell-Downtown this past week. The 221-room property is yet another of Hilton Worldwide's highly successful 1,850-property Hampton brand. The 100 percent nonsmoking Miami hotel was built new from the ground up and should receive at least LEED Silver certification. If you happen to be visiting Miami, I highly recommend stopping by or even staying at this hotel that is bound to gain not only a reputation for its eco-efficiency but also for its outstanding contemporary art collection—a passion of owner Bernard Wolfson.

In a tour with Wolfson and later with general manager Eduardo Chapoval, I learned what makes the hotel highly efficient. From an energy management standpoint, compact fluorescents and LEDs are used throughout the property. Sensors keep lights turned off in public restrooms, the fitness center and meeting spaces when they are unoccupied. An energy management system in guestrooms that features thermostat-based occupancy sensors helps control PTAC-related costs. Windows on one side of the building are tinted to reduce the effects of the heat from the hot Florida sun. (You do not notice the tint if you are inside the hotel.) A master switch just inside the entryway to each guestroom allows a guest to turn off most room power upon exiting the room (not essential outlets used for laptops, clock radio, etc.) In the laundry room, an ozone system allows staff to launder linens using cold water and fewer wash cycles. Linens and towels washed using ozone also require less drying time.

To conserve water, low-flow faucets and showerheads and dual-flush toilets were installed. Below the ramp leading into the parking garage there is a 33,000-gallon rainwater cistern. It collects not only rainwater but also condensate from the hotel's air-conditioning units. Water in the cistern will be used for irrigation and also for cleaning exterior surfaces. It may eventually be used for fixtures in public restrooms.

RECYCLING CONTAINERS HIGHLY VISIBLE

Recycling containers are positioned in guestrooms and public spaces including elevator entry areas. The hotel's waste hauling vendor separates the recyclables at its facility. The shower curtain in each guestroom is made from 80 recycled plastic water bottles. A tag on each curtain explains this as being part of Hampton's "Take Care" initiative. Paper throughout the hotel, including toilet paper, includes recycled content. Plates, cups and utensils in the breakfast area are made from easily biodegradable material (potatoes, in part). In one elevator, a "be cool, carpool" banner is prominently displayed on the elevator door.

To accommodate electric vehicles (EVs) in the future, the parking garage was pre-wired for EV charging stations. Employees who choose to bicycle to work can use a bike rack and locker room with shower. The hotel is located very close to the Miami-Dade Transit's AirportLink, a 2.4-mile elevated Metrorail extension that will open next April.

The Hampton Inn & Suites Miami/Brickell-Downtown most likely will be the third Hampton to earn LEED certification. The other two include a Hampton Inn in Folsom, Calif., and a Hampton Inn & Suites in Sarasota, Fla. According to Phil Cordell, Global Head, Focused Service and Hampton Brand Management for Hilton Worldwide, the new Miami Hampton is typical of most new-build Hamptons in that it is an Inn & Suites. Hilton currently has big plans for the Hampton brand internationally, with target markets including Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Romania, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Ireland.

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