

CASE STUDY: VEGETABLE GARDEN AT DEVON HOTEL



Audit Year: 2010

GTBS Award: GOLD

Business Name: Combe House Devon

Business Type: Hotel

Location: Devon, ENGLAND

Website: www.combehousedevon.com

Combe House Devon is an independent, privately run Grade 1 Elizabethan Country House Hotel & Restaurant. For the past 12 years the hotel has been committed to a sustainability policy of 'restore, revamp, re-introduce, repair, re-use, reduce & recycle'. During this time many interesting environmental projects have been achieved including the restoration of the old Victorian gardens leading to the on-site production of 60% of the hotel's seasonal fruit & vegetable needs.

The activities have also increased the hotel's status by guests as a place which is truly developing its food quality and local sustainability potential. It has a GOLD Green Tourism Business Scheme award and "Condé Nast Johansens" National Award 2010 awarded it the 'Most Excellent Innovation in Sustainable Hospitality'.

Environmental Benefits

The decision to develop the old Victorian gardens led to the development of improved soil condition. The soil is now organic and has resulted in a significant increase in the number and varieties of birds and insects. The area is now considered to be even more aesthetically pleasing for both staff and guests. There is less dependence on factory produce, less waste from the kitchens and pests have also reduced by investing in frames, insect- and bird-netting.

Growing produce locally has also reduced the need for van deliveries, resulting in a reduction in carbon emissions and traffic congestion on small country roads.

Social & Community Benefits

The restoration of the gardens has brought back to life a piece of shared community history and is now used to demonstrate aspects of the area's traditional growing methods which are an example of positive sustainable practice.

A local skilled gardener has been employed to manage the fruit and vegetables. This develops economic and social cohesion strengthening both the communities traditional roots and future potential.

Cost Savings

Combe House Hotel & Restaurant has identified that the cost of restoring the old Victorian Gardens and developing the fruit and vegetable project has been approximately £12,000. However this has brought about an estimated saving of 30% on the fruit and vegetable bill, giving a payback period of approximately 3 years.

Web Links

BBC: www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/basics/techniques
Garden Organic: www.gardenorganic.org.uk
Soil Association: www.soilassociation.org