

Q&A WITH HOTELIER

ELISABETTA FABRI

TALKING WITH THE PRESIDENT AND CEO
OF STARHOTELS, AUTHENTIC ITALIAN HOSPITALITY
PAIRED WITH CHIC STYLE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITMENT. THE E.C.HO FORMULA

AN INTERVIEW BY: **FRANCESCA MAFFEI**



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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
AND CLIMATE CHANGES ARE TOP
PRIORITIES FOR US AND STARHOTEL
E.C.HO. CONCEPT REPRESENTS
A CRUCIAL PROOF OF AWARENESS
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STARHOTELS is an independent Italian chain whose property and management have belonged to the same owner for more than 30 years, the Fabri family. Elisabetta Fabri has been president and CEO of the group since 2000 and she has an important mission: spreading the Italian style in worldwide hospitality. A dream that seems to come true, considering also the recent

acquisition of 2 boutique hotels in London, The Pelham and The Gore. The collection now counts 20 hotels in Italy, 1 in New York, 1 in Paris and 2 in London, for a total of 24, consisting of 3.791 rooms and 148 meeting rooms. Mother of twins, socially responsible and multi-awarded entrepreneur, Elisabetta is also very environmentally sensitive. And this is the reason why E.c.ho, a

new Starhotel “green” concept opened in Milan in 2011, has been created, as the cosmopolitan president reveals to Hotelier International.

Hotelier International: Eco-sustainability as a lifestyle. Has this been imposed by circumstances or by a personal calling?

Elisabetta Fabri: Environmental issues



and climate changes are top priorities and E.c.ho represents a crucial proof of awareness. Even in the hospitality industry we can adopt technologies that reduce air pollution and make up for global warming. That's why we strongly wanted an eco-hotel, able to surprise and draw attention on nature. Original design, innovative fabrics, minimum energy consumption, excellent comfort

performances and eco-chic allure are our key factors.

HI: Can you say that E.c.ho. is a transition from a family dimension, meaning how the Fabris live daily, to a hotel dimension?

EF: Starhotels is a sound international hotel chain, but it expresses its owners' philosophy and way of living. Our "green side" goes hand in hand with our core

values, such as keeping in touch with people, caring about our planet and valuing its cultural heritage. Our major strengths are deeply interconnected and stand for our corporate ethics.

HI: As a top manager, how do you consider ecology in your country compared to the rest of the world?

EF: There's still so much to do in Italy,



but we can start from great-value low-effort actions. If we avoid architectural models that cause either acoustic or light pollution, we end up avoiding also invasive visual impacts such as huge hotels. Our recent acquisitions in London (The Pelham and The Gore, Ed.), for example, are two old-fashioned hotels that are harmoniously integrated with the surroundings.

HI: Is E.c.ho concept a sort of challenge, considered its urban-centred location?

EF: Yes, definitely! And after 4 years, we can say to have won it. E.c.ho is actually an intelligent oasis right in the middle of a metropolis. Our finely reproduced common areas are very bright and look like a real garden. In

addition, E.c.ho boasts a “dehors” with centenary trees and a renaissance little chapel by Donato Bramante dated 1492. While there, you feel totally away from the city traffic, even though you are only few steps from the Central Railway Station. It is a magic version of Milan, in an unexpectedly relaxing open space.

HI: How do you explain the buzz word “eco-chic”, isn’t it a contradiction in terms?

EF: The two terms are not contradictory but complementary. The respect for the environment does not always come along with something rural and simple, rather quite the opposite. Thanks to our research&development department, we can create new environmental-friendly







places with no lack of style, comfort, elegance and luxury.

HI: What kind of customer looks for an “eco-chic” experience?

EF: Travellers who choose us look for high-quality hospitality at a fair price. On average, they are very well learned and they truly appreciate being involved in our energy saving and low environmental impact programs. We also offer them our “Green Rules Key Card”, with some recommendations for an eco-friendly life.

HI: E.c.ho restaurant is named Orto, that means “vegetable garden”.

How did you gain credibility and reliability in such a metropolitan context?

EF: In the only way we know: keeping up with expectations and fine dining. Orto features a luminous scenography, with a perimeter of backlit pictures that portray a lush composition of fruits, flowers and vegetables. These images reflect what guests find in our kitchen: 0 kilometer products, bio ingredients and a genuine seasonal menu.

HI: What about the energy savings in a hotel like E.c.ho?

EF: During the construction of E.c.ho. we have included a series of

technical solutions that have reduced consumptions dramatically. Thermal insulation systems, caulking, wind-blocking window seals and led lighting, bring in energy savings that range from 15% to 20%.

HI: E.c.ho as a sub-brand of Starhotels; are you planning to build similar hotels?

EF: The former building underwent a total renovation to become E.c.ho. and this know-how heavily influenced all the subsequent works in many of our properties, from the choice of the materials to the upgrading of technology devices. We absolutely



believe that positive results will come, both presently and in the future.

HI: Are there any “soft” green initiatives that you’d like to recommend, which can also become cutting-edge innovations?

EF: In the last few years, as part of every significant change in our group, we have struggled to make our working procedures follow an eco-logic by means of sophisticated applications. We have optimized resource management, waste collection and recycling as well as paper-free communication, turning fact sheets and directories into electronic formats thanks to digitalisation.

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WE KNOW THAT OUR GUESTS
TRULY APPRECIATE BEING INVOLVED
IN OUR ENERGY SAVING AND LOW
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT PROGRAM

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