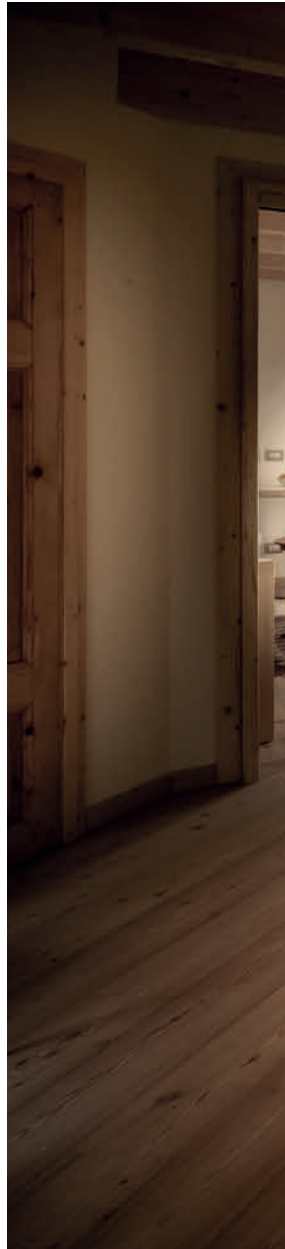

TRENTINO'S CASTELIR SUITE HOTEL

IN ITALY MANY MOUNTAIN HOTELS ARE EMBRACING THE SUSTAINABILITY TREND. LIKE THE FAMILY OWNED CASTELIR WHICH FEATURES A SET OF GREEN CERTIFICATIONS

BY: **FRANCESCA MAFFEI**





The growing hospitality trend of ecological sustainability can well match with luxury. An example is Castelir Hotel, which lies on the eastern side of the Italian Alps, in Trentino Alto Adige region and not far from the Austrian border. Castelir Hotel belongs to EcoWorldHotel, an Italian network founded by a group of small independent hotel owners committed to reducing the environmental impact. Its rating is based on leaves, from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5.

The 7 suites Castelir Hotel has obtained 4 eco-leaves and is owned and managed by a married couple, Rolando and Graziella Delugan. "We had been dreaming about an ecological building for decades" - says Mrs. Delugan -. After 10 years of bureaucracy, we eventually succeeded in

developing our 6.000 square metres of land project. Once we obtained the authorisation to start, we looked for an architect able to meet our needs". The architect, Paolo Facchini, attended the first course ever delivered by Anab (National Association of Biological Architecture), under the guide of Anton Schneider. However, despite being a so-called bioarchitect, Facchini was not specialized in hotel building. "This was not a problem - notes Graziella -. We shared a vision, the concept of a villa-like hotel: the main building, which hosts some conventional facilities such as the 200 square metres Spa, plus 7 little houses as bedrooms. Or better, suites". And actually Castelir is one of a kind. It is an authentic eco-house built with biological criteria by using



CASTELIR IS AN AUTHENTIC
ECO HOUSE WHICH RESPECTS
BIOLOGICAL CRITERIA BY USING RAW
MATERIALS AND NATURAL WOOD

raw materials, surrounded by a garden and a small forest. Furniture is made of natural wood with no laque, enriched by some salvaged pieces, top-quality bedding and spaces which have been ad hoc designed. Wood plays a major role, as the lady explains: "Floors are made of antique larch brushed parquet and each room shows a different kind of paneling: pine, longleaf pine, larch, plum, apple, fir, birch, walnut tree." As a matter of fact, the valley where the hotel is located, called Val di Fiemme, is worldwide famous for its wood - which is the same of Stradivari's violins - together with the quartzite, used for the swimming pool, and the pink granite. The basement is made of 70 cm wide eco-bricks, retrieved from a local furnace factory, useful to keep out cold.

Nevertheless, difficulties did not come to an end even after opening. "A crucial point was the Ecolabel certification, with its 37 strict criteria - continues Graziella -. The inspector who came here, for instance, stubbornly focused on a handful of little lights whose low-power version did not exist yet, passing over our more than 200 energy-efficient bulbs. Moreover, he growled about the gas stoves and the hydromassage tubs that some of our suites feature". Another pivotal achievement for Castelir was the ClimaHotel certification, the version of ClimaHouse dedicated to hotels, released by the South Tyrol Energy Association.

Actually, the importance of eco-sustainability in hotel is demonstrated by the review sites, too. On TripAdvisor,



for instance, Castelir is marked as one of the “Gold Level Green Leaders’ and has gained 5 balls out of 5. On Booking.com, the Delugans’ hotel shows a 9.5 score and according to the semantic analysis the word “eco” and its derivatives appear quite often in the reviews. All the existing partnerships between Castelir and the OTAs, like the one with Ecoturismoline.it, deal with the eco-theme.

As sustainability is playing a bigger part in the entire guest experience, tourists are encouraged to relax and detox but also to follow some basic rules. This draws to Castelir

Hotel selected customers and allows the limited staff – one housekeeper and one waitress, besides the Delugans - to cuddle each one of them.

A factor that seems to be one of the best ways a hotel can turn its clients into repeaters. “We do not impose any “sacrifice” to our guests. Initially, we planned to avoid wi-fi in favour of Lan connections, but due to a lot of complaints we finally installed 3 wireless devices”. According to Mrs. Delugan, guests should become more “green” just by staying in such a place, with a homelike atmosphere and nestled

CASTELIR SUITES HOTEL

Address: *Via Nazionale, 57, 38030 Panchià (Tn) Italy*

Phone: *+39 0462.810001*

Web: *www.castelir.it*

Ownership and management: *Rolando and Graziella Delugan*

Rates: *from 70 euro for person per night*

(source: *www.visittrentino.it*)

Number of suites: *7*



in nature. It is probably due to the fact that spaces are so intimate that every action is somehow controlled: "That's inevitable - confirms Graziella - even though everybody should feel completely free. Room directories include only recommendations, such as towel washing, water and electricity, recycling etc.". Silence is another keyword. The choice of only 7 rooms scattered on an area of 1.200 sqm is aimed at fostering peacefulness. Soundproofing is guaranteed by the 20-cm empty space left inbetween rooms and by the absence of a central vacuum cleaner. Electricity

and heating are provided thanks to renewable sources of energy, such as the solar and photovoltaic panels placed on the roof, able to heat the swimming pool.

As far as food is concerned, breakfast pastry and products are either homemade or "0 km", that is coming from a short distribution chain. Castelir is therefore a hotel with a difference. It is not only eco-sustainable, but it also respect human natural rhythms, thus ending up to be a best practice in the effort of leaving the environment as pristine as possible.