

Sustainable Tourism Adviser in (North Canterbury) Regions 2009 Fontainebleau Luxury Retreat, March 2010



i. Business Vision

“At Fontainebleau Luxury Retreat, we understand that our business has an impact on the environment - we are committed to a sustainable future and progressing the social, economic and environmental interests of the community. We pride ourselves in our sustainability initiatives, and welcome opportunities for improvement. This is demonstrated through our policies and procedures with regard to workplace practices, community and conservation involvement, resource management, pollution prevention and procurement.”

ii. Business Background

Virginia worked in hospitality before meeting John, a sheep farmer from Southland. Together, while raising four children, John and Virginia did farm hosting in Southland for 16 years. They moved to Hanmer Springs in April 2006, where they oversaw the finishing of the “dream home” that they had cooperatively designed.

Opened in June 2006, the purpose-built 5star luxury resort captures forest or mountain views from all guest suites, reflecting North American influences alongside French and Italian design. Guests are predominantly from NZ, although overseas guest numbers are increasing. Fontainebleau is a *couples only* retreat for people looking for a special experience with a touch of lavishness.

Virginia and John’s youngest daughter Annalise helps out, as does friend and local business woman, Anne (who helped Virginia set up the business). Otherwise, Virginia and John operate and host Fontainebleau Luxury Retreat without staff.

iii. Sustainable Business Practice

Fontainebleau was designed with the environment in mind. Many materials and fittings are above standard specifications; of particularly high quality and longevity, so minimising replacement costs. Some of these include insulation, double-glazing, floor tiles, fly screens, wool carpets, outdoor pavers, veranda and solar heating options.

Energy efficiency is achieved through thermostatic under floor heating in interior tiled areas, fly screens (to allow us to utilise natural ventilation), quality refrigeration equipment, well maintained air-conditioning units and thermal curtains.

Water filters are installed on all inflows and quality dual flush toilets reduce water use. Irrigation is turned on automatically at 5 am to reduce evaporation. All assist with efficient water use.

Initiatives to minimise waste include putting a kitchen bokashi system in use; bulk purchasing of toiletries, cleaning products and kitchen supplies to lessen packaging and cost; separating and recycling shredded office paper, glass, newspapers, plastic, aluminium and tin, and systems are in place to ensure efficient use of office equipment and time efficient processes.

Virginia and John use the local garage, shops, trades people and services when ever possible to keep the local economy buzzing and maintain connections in Hanmer Springs. They are involved in the community through church, the Business Association, Accommodation Ladies Group, fitness & wellbeing groups, showcasing local art and NZ music plus much more.

iv. Analysis of Sustainable Business Practices

“Fontainebleau Luxury Retreat gained a more sustainable business practice with the help of the STAR Programme. The programme taught us how we can make our business more sustainable with information provided through seminars

and networking with others in our district. Being aligned with the 'The 5 Star Group,' (5 Star Qualmark accommodation providers, most who are also EnviroGold) was also of great support.

Many of the initiatives involved both time and money. The liquid cleaning/washing eco products we now purchase are more expensive than other non eco supplies. There is certainly time and effort required to fill containers from bulk purchases (20 litres to 5 litres and then again down to dispenser bottles for the daily cleaning routine).

We also try to buy food, wine and beer in bulk but are mindful of wastage with out of date products. Most food is purchased at the local super-market or organically grown by John.

When suites are not in use we maintain the following procedures of turning off all electronic appliances, towels rails, turning down under/floor heating in bathrooms.

Specifically, monitoring usage of power, water etc has been helpful in improving efficiency and reducing usage; this involved establishing good record keeping for power, water and rubbish. Building with above standard materials and fittings did add significant costs to the initial build, but all are prudent for the years to come."

v. Assessment of the STAR programme

"The main outcome we sought by participating in the STAR programme was Qualmark green certification. We achieved EnviroGold and this would not have been possible without the STAR programme.

Because we achieved this distinction, Fontainebleau is able to stay in the 5Star Accommodation Group which requires a minimum of Qualmark EnviroBronze with encouragement to all members to obtain Qualmark EnviroGold. Fontainebleau was also able to retain Qualmark 5-star guest and hosted (they too have a minimum requirement of EnviroBronze for 5 star status).

Improving the STAR programme for us would involve having a better understanding of the Qualmark requirements from the outset so we were crystal clear as to what to expect of the work we did under STAR with regards to Qualmark requirements."

vi. Future plans and outlook

"We will continue improving our business practices, implementing new initiatives as opportunities come to hand. To maintain the level of service to our guests currently being provided while continuing to make improvements to our business is important. New initiatives in the next 12 months are to install fly screens to the suites upstairs and lounge upstairs, and in June 2010 we plan to up-grade our website."

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