

DIGITAL NOMAD HOTSPOTS / ENGAGING ECO TOURS

BUSINESS TRAVELER

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IDEAS THAT MOVE YOU

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BEST OF THE YEAR



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SUSTAINABILITY

All Access

Resorts around the world are proving their green bona fides with behind-the-scenes eco-tours

STORY BY
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IMAGES COURTESY OF CAYUGA COLLECTION

Tour at Senda Monteverde Hotel, Costa Rica

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▶ **NOT SO** long ago, hotels got kudos for stocking guest rooms with recycling bins and paraben-free toiletries (in single-use plastic bottles, no less). But as interest in sustainability increases, travelers have gotten savvy to sham claims about eco-friendliness. A few brands are putting their money where their mouth is by showing—not just shouting about—their sustainable practices. These standard-bearers for transparency invite guests behind the scenes to tour compost piles, organic gardens, desalination plants and other spaces traditionally marked “employees only.”

Jeff Smith, the global vice president of sustainability at **Six Senses**, says sustainability tours are standard at the brand’s 27 hotels and resorts. “We want to be as transparent as possible and offer opportunities to participate,” he says.

At **Six Senses Vana** in India, guests can tour The Village, where waste is meticulously sorted. A high-efficiency wastewater treatment plant hums continuously, and employees fill hundreds of glass bottles with filtered water from a nearby river conserved through spring regeneration and biodiversity enhancement. At the water-bottling plant, on-site sustainability director Manish Kumar Tomer loves telling guests that since 2014, the facility “has eliminated over 100,000 single-use plastic bottles annually.”

At **Cayuga Collection**, a clutch of luxury eco-resorts in Costa Rica, Panama and Nicaragua, president and cofounder Hans Pfister says behind-the-scenes tours turn first-time visitors into champions of the brand and its sustainability efforts. “When guests visit the back of house, they get to meet staff members—like laundry personnel, chefs, maintenance workers and gardeners—whom they typically wouldn’t see. This engagement makes those employees proud and eager to showcase their contributions.” And the cherry on top for management? Like open kitchens in restaurants, back-of-house tours leave no choice but to keep each space clean



FROM TOP
Grilled Himalayan trout at Six Senses Vana, India; Hotel Belmar, Costa Rica; mantled howler monkey at Jicaro Island Ecologde, Nicaragua

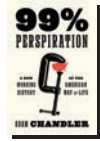
and organized, boosting operational efficiency.

At **CGH Earth** hotels and resorts in Southern India, daily sustainability tours often surprise guests with eco-friendly features hiding in plain sight: closed compost facilities tucked behind tennis courts and shaded by solar panels, for example, or a paper-recycling plant camouflaged within the sprawling vegetable and herb garden. And then there’s **Soneva** resorts, where stringent sustainability guidelines undergird Robinson Crusoe-esque barefoot chic. There, on-site Waste-to-Wealth centers showcase how glass waste is crushed to be transformed into art for the resorts’ galleries and food scraps feed compost that fertilizes the restaurants’ gardens.

At the **Hotel Belmar** in Monteverde, Costa Rica, guests don’t need an organized tour to know that sustainability isn’t just a thin veneer—it’s a way of life. The carbon-neutral, 26-key, family-owned ecolodge checks all the boxes on any eco-friendliness bingo card: an organic farm to supply the restaurant, a biodigester to transform organic waste into clean gas energy, and a laundry solarium to harness the sun for drying linens, to name a few. Guests can also request complimentary sustainability tours tailored to their interests. Managing director Pedro Belmar says tasting the on-site-crafted beer while learning how the brewery repurposes waste is a guest favorite.

“Our goal is not just to offer sustainable hospitality, but to plant the seeds of ecological awareness in our guests, empowering them to spread these values as they continue their journeys,” says Belmar. In a time of heightened fears about the future livability of the planet, he argues that showcasing eco-friendly solutions isn’t just a fun guest experience—it’s a way to combat helplessness and prove that “change is indeed possible.”

BOOKS



99% Perspiration: A New Working History of the American Way of Life by Adam Chandler (out 1/7)
Thomas Edison said, “Genius is one-percent inspiration and 99-percent perspiration.” All you have to do is work. Chandler pokes a hole in this thinking by investigating the so-called meritocracy, charting how people such as Bill Gates found success.



A Century of Tomorrows: How Imagining the Future Shapes the Present by Glenn Adamson (out 12/3)
Cultural historian Adamson looks at futurology. He tells the story of how technologists, trend forecasters and public intellectuals act as modern-day prophets, making predictions that have the power to sway opinion toward anxiety or hope.

—NICHOLAS DERENZO