

Sustainability Case Studies



Flames of the Forest, Daintree, Tropical North Queensland

www.flamesoftheforest.com.au

Flames of the Forest is located in the Daintree Rainforest which is ten minutes from Port Douglas and fifty minutes from Cairns. This dining experience is set in the heart of the rainforest and includes a 6 course banquet dinner, traditional Aboriginal performances including music and storytelling. It has gained an international reputation for the ultimate experience in rainforest dining. Flames of the Forest has recently undergone environmental transformations in order to lower their carbon footprint.

1. Getting started

Flames of the Forest re-opened its doors in 2010 after a major refurbishment to the venue. This refurbishment included environmentally friendly aspects which have not only added to the magic of the dining experience, but also have helped Flames of the Forest lower their carbon footprint. These environmentally conscious additions have made significant contributions to the environment as well as creating a more magical atmosphere.

2. Major initiatives

Flames of the Forest have reduced their carbon footprint dramatically by implementing environmentally friendly initiatives into their business. Their entertainment requires special effects and lighting, and therefore the team have installed LED lights, which are environmentally friendly and very effective.

Three custom-made flaming vessels are also used to entertain the guests. These vessels are run on renewable bi-ethanol fuel and are clean burning with no fumes.

However, it is not just the entertainment area that is environmentally conscious. Behind the scenes, a solar hot water system has been placed in the kitchen to minimise power use and maximise efficiency.

Flames of the Forest's commitment to the environment has meant the creation of the One Person, 'One Tree, One World Program'. This program, in conjunction with Conservation Volunteers Australia, plants one tree for every guest that comes through its doors. As they exit the venue, guests sign their name in a handmade book and a tree is planted on their behalf.

The business has also implemented small initiatives that go a long way:

- a. Guests cannot travel to Flames of the Forest by car; all guests must arrive by coach
- b. All waste is removed from the venue on a weekly basis to reduce impact on the environment
- c. Only cleaning products which are eco friendly are used on site
- d. No pesticides or fertilisers are used in the gardens
- e. There is no permanent buildings or infrastructure on-site to minimise impact on the environment
- f. Only local products are used in the establishment, which helps to support local communities.

3. Key outcomes

The use of the LED lights has meant a 30 per cent reduction in power than the use of their original lighting. This has meant a major reduction in carbon emissions, without compromising the quality of the entertainment.

The 'One Person, One Tree, One World' program is an initiative which has made an enormous contribution to the environment since its inception. The program has contributed to the planting over 25, 000 Australian native trees in local areas that were degraded. This program has greatly benefited the natural environment and the rainforest, and has also reduced the venue's carbon footprint.

4. Major challenges

The major challenge to the business is the tropical climate. The venue is susceptible to flooding on a yearly basis, and without a permanent building and infrastructure, the restaurant may be closed for days at a time during wet weather, without being accessible to anyone.

5. Next steps

Flames of the Forest has been preparing the soil for their own organic garden which will grow the business as much of their own produce as possible. This idea will help the restaurant become more sustainable as well as becoming more self sufficient. As more produce will be available on site, the restaurant will have fewer deliveries of goods, which will in turn lower their carbon footprint.

The establishment also hopes to introduce a daytime experience, which will allow patrons to participate in a walking track, for example, and learn about the various species within the rainforest and the different indigenous uses for these native species. The owners believe this will be a great learning tool for visitors of the restaurant and will provide a greater understanding of Australian rainforests, as well as native Aboriginal culture.

Due to the overwhelming success the business has had, the future prospect is that the idea will be expanded globally. The owners would like to use their experience to develop low impact tourism products that focus their attention on unique environmental areas with a cultural heritage in other parts of the world.

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