

Protea Hotels by Marriott opts for biodegradable straws

Protea Hotels by Marriott has announced that it will replace plastic straws with biodegradable straws in all of its hotels - and that of its Protea Hotels Fire & Ice! by Marriot hotels - across sub-Saharan Africa. The brand recently also introduced Vivreau Water across all Protea Hotels by Marriott to limit the use of plastic water bottles. This announcement follows Marriot International removal of disposable plastic straws and stirrers from its more than 6,500 properties.



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According to Volker Heiden, vice president, Protea Hotels by Marriott, Marriott International, Middle East and Africa: "Responsible management of natural resources in our hotel operations is an integral part of our business. Globally, Marriott International has a robust sustainability strategy, with a strong commitment to preserve and protect the planet and its resources. We remain focused on making our supply chain more environment-friendly, addressing environmental challenges through innovative conservation initiatives and educating and inspiring our associates and guests to conserve and preserve."

Because they are small items, the control of where plastic straws end up is difficult. Plastic waste is turning oceans into death pools. A single plastic straw – which might be used for about 15 minutes – will never fully decompose. Biodegradable straws, on the other hand, are 100% compostable, taking 9-12 weeks to compost – they are not just waste, they can be reused to feed plants as they're naturally organic.

Despite the biodegradable straws being a more expensive alternative, Protea Hotels by Marriott has chosen to go this route as it believes this is the right thing to do. "The use of biodegradable and compostable straws will go a long way towards saving the environment and protecting ocean life. We are really pleased to introduce this change and we trust our guests will continue to support us in our commitment towards putting our environment first," continues Heiden.

The bio straw selected by the brand is 8mm in thickness, which is larger than the current straws in use. As such, it allows for a range of uses, including being both a straw and a swizzle stick. They are green in colour to give a natural feel and look. The straw is made of polylactic acid (PLA), which is essentially starch from mealie cobs and other plant sources. The brand may introduce other variants in the future.

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