

PRESS RELEASE

Hotel sustainability receives international recognition

The Westin Resort Costa Navarino awarded Travelife Gold

14 October 2015. The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino, Greece, is the latest hotel to become Travelife Gold-certified.

This luxury resort, is one of the two properties of Starwood Hotels and Resorts in Costa Navarino located in Messinia, a Greek region, in the southwest of the Peloponnese.

The Travelife Gold certification plaque was officially awarded at the annual ABTA Travel Convention, to recognize the substantial sustainability achievements of its operations.

Travelife Gold sustainability certification is awarded to hotels having proved their efficiency in respecting key social, economic and environmental issues.

The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino was certified following an extensive on-site audit, demonstrating that it met all the Travelife Gold certification criteria.

In that respect, **Mr. Jirayr Kececian, Complex General Manager Starwood Hotels, Costa Navarino** affirms that: *“Environmental and social responsibility is at the heart of Costa Navarino’s philosophy. Moreover, for us at Starwood Hotels & Resorts, sustainable, responsible behaviour is a priority. We are committed to pursuing a triple-bottom, line approach of environmental, financial and social responsibility.”*



In particular, the achievements of The Westin Resort Costa Navarino are two-fold, covering both socio-economic and environmental factors.

Social and economic achievements:

- Hiring 70% of employees from the local area.
- Creating a strong company culture, with 94% of employees being proud to work for The Westin Resort Costa Navarino.
- Buying 60% of supplies from local sources.
- Helping to increase the annual income of local restaurants by €2.35 million via Costa Navarino's visitors.
- Investing in international promotion of the Peloponnese region resulted in an 80% increase in visitor numbers to the area in 2014.
- Creating the Navarino brand and product lines in order to promote the international flair of traditional Messinian food and culture.
- Establishing the Captain Vassilis Foundation to educate local farmers and investing in agriculture.
- Providing training to more than 450 participants from local tourism and hospitality businesses.
- Improving the local economy and effectively promoting the public perception of Greece abroad.

Environmental achievements:

- Constructing the largest photovoltaic solar energy park in Greece, generating surplus renewable energy, which is supplied back to the national grid.
- Developing the biggest geothermal system in Europe with 123km of pipes laid underground.
- Planting 16,000 ancient olive trees and 8,000 other trees during resort construction.
- Establishing habitat protection programmes for the African Chameleon and 271 bird species.
- Protecting loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) by using GPS monitoring.
- Developing the Navarino Natura Hall interactive environmental education centre, so far visited by 3,000 children.
- Using 100% renewable water sources (local river runoff and on-site waste water treatment plant) for all irrigation.

On the importance of sustainability, **Vasilis Karakousis, Environmental & Sustainability Manager, TEMES S.A.** mentions: *"The notion of sustainability and our will for a touristic development that respects the environment and the traditions of Messinia are embedded in the concept of the development of Costa Navarino. They compose a fundamental design factor and a guiding principle that determines our actions from the planning phase, to the construction and the operation of this new sustainable destination. We are very proud to receive such a significant international recognition and we continue our efforts strongly believing that tourism can be one of the main driving forces towards a sustainable future."*

Coincidentally, **Jirayr Kececian, Complex General Manager Starwood Hotels, Costa Navarino** adds: *“Being honoured with the Travelife Gold certification, makes all us at The Westin Resort Costa Navarino very proud as this distinction proves that we make the right choice towards positively impacting the community in which we operate, while we are building resilience into our properties.”*

According to **Nikki White, Managing Director Travelife for Hotels & Accommodations**: *“Costa Navarino has played a significant role in helping to develop and promote the whole of the Peloponnese region. It has helped drive local investment, infrastructure and visitor numbers at a time when Greece has struggled economically. And at the same time Costa Navarino has led the way in terms of supporting local people, local businesses and protecting the local environment.”*

She concluded that despite the exceptional achievements of Costa Navarino within the industry, the Travelife programme provides an easy to follow, step-by-step approach that can be adopted by all – no matter where they are at in their sustainability journey.

ENDS

PHOTOS AVAILABLE OF HOTEL, SUSTAINABILITY ACTIVITIES AND GOLD PLAQUE PRESENTATION

CONTACT

Emma Lewis, Senior Relationships Executive, Travelife for Hotels & Accommodations

E-mail: elewis@travelife.org / Phone: +44 20 3693 0164

Gillian Edwards, Senior Public Relations Manager, ABTA

Email: gedwards@abta.co.uk or press@abta.co.uk / Mobile: +44 7850 712 325

Vasilis Karakousis, Environment & Sustainability Manager, TEMES S.A.

Email: vkarakousis@temes.gr / Mobile: +30 6970989229

Marina Papatsoni, Marketing & Business Development Director, TEMES S.A.

Email: mpapatsoni@temes.gr / Mobile: +30 6936863266

EDITOR'S NOTES

Travelife

Travelife is an international certification system, promoting sustainability within the tourism industry. It helps tour operators, hotels and accommodations to manage and monitor their social and environmental impacts, as well as communicate their achievements to customers. It is an easy to use, step-by-step programme which provides members with a practical approach to improve their business.

www.travelife.org and www.travelifecollection.com

The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino

The Westin Resort Costa Navarino is one of the two luxury 5-star properties of Starwood Hotels and Resorts operating at Navarino Dunes, the first resort area in Costa Navarino, the prime destination in the Mediterranean. Overlooking the Ionian Sea coastline of the Dunes Beach, at The Westin Resort Costa Navarino 445 rooms and suites, inspired by old Messinian mansions, spring from nature and create an ambiance of genuine hospitality. Voted as the “Best Family Destination” in the Mediterranean amongst Europe’s Starwood Hotels & Resorts, The Westin Resort Costa Navarino is the ideal destination for family getaways as it proposes a plethora of children activities such as a wonderful aqua park with water slides, playground and recreational center as well as two specially designed hubs for children, Cocoon and SandCastle. At Navarino Dunes there is also The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort, the 18-hole signature golf course The Dunes Course the 4,000 sqm Anazoe Spa, a state-of-the-art conference center, as well as a variety of culinary venues, sports, outdoor and cultural activities. Navarino Bay, the second area in Costa Navarino, features the second 18-hole signature golf course, The Bay Course. For more information on The Westin Resort Costa Navarino, please visit www.westincostanavarino.com, or follow us on Twitter.

Costa Navarino

Costa Navarino is the prime, sustainable destination in the Mediterranean, located in the Greek region of Messinia in the southwest Peloponnese. One of the most unspoiled and breathtaking seaside Mediterranean landscapes, this area has been shaped by 4,500 years of history. Its philosophy is driven by a genuine desire to promote Messinia, while protecting and preserving its natural beauty and heritage. It will comprise a number of distinct sites featuring 5-star deluxe hotels, luxury residences, conference facilities, spa and thalassotherapy centres, signature golf courses, as well as a wide range of unique year-round activities for adults and children. Navarino Dunes, the first area, is home to two luxury 5-star hotels, The Romanos, a Luxury Collection Resort and The Westin Resort, Costa Navarino; The Dunes Course – the first signature golf course in Greece- Anazoe Spa, a 4,000sq.m. spa & thalassotherapy centre; the state-of-the-art conference centre House of Events; specially designed facilities for children; as well as a variety of gastronomy venues, sports, outdoor and cultural activities. Navarino Bay, the second area is home to the signature golf course, The Bay Course.

Recent accolades for Costa Navarino include the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2014, World Travel Awards 2014, World Golf Awards 2014, National Champions at the European Business Awards 2014/15, Great Taste Awards 2014, as well as being selected by ABTA as the host destination for the Annual Convention in Peloponnese in 2015. The Anazoe Spa has been selected among Vogue’s ‘most magical spa breaks’ for 2015.

High resolution photos and logos can be downloaded from the press section of the website's downloads www.costanavarino.com, using the password: *nestor*.