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Press release: Africa's greenest hotel at Cape Town Airport

Domestic and international travellers to Cape Town International Airport will soon be able to check into what will be **THE GREENEST HOTEL ON THE CONTINENT**. Currently in the final stages of approval, the hotel will be built by the Cape Town-based developer Dematech, the luxury hotel has been earmarked for completion in early 2013 in nearby Michigan Street, less than 500m from the terminal building.

Aptly named **HOTEL VERDE** – “verde” meaning green in Italian – the 143-room, contemporary hotel will fall into the three-star category, although the room sizes, services and fittings will be similar to a four-star hotel. The focus will be on sustainable construction as well as operation practices. Hotel Verde will generate an estimated 103 direct jobs and a further 247 indirect jobs.

Hotel Verde is registered with the certification goal of LEED Gold, a stringent programme spearheaded by the US Green Building Council. Called “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design” (LEED), the programme is an internationally recognised green-building certification system that uses third-party verification to confirm that a building was constructed to excel in performance aspects such as energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions-reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, as well as the stewardship of resources and the sensitivity to their impacts [www.en.wikipedia.org].

Unfortunately the relatively new, yet fast-growing Green Building Council of South Africa's Green Star SA set of rating tools does not yet include a rating tool for hotels. However, the internationally renowned US rating tool is appropriate for an airport hotel of this stature with a large anticipated portion of international guests.

A number of sustainable features make this hotel special and, indeed, Africa's greenest:

- A geothermal-heating ventilation and air-conditioning system that makes use of a constant ground temperature of 19°C to heat up the building in winter and keep it cool in summer.
- Three 17m-high wind turbines will assist with the generation of renewable power.
- For guests there will be free electric shuttles to and from the airport terminal building, as well as electric-car shuttles to the city at a nominal fee. Guests will also have the exclusive opportunity to hire out electric cars for their Cape Town-based travel.
- Greywater from the guestroom showers will be fed into a greywater recycling system which will harness aerobic bacteria rather than chemicals. The recycled water will then be used to feed all toilets and urinals in the building
- Double-glazed, high-performance windows will be used throughout the building. Solar heat gain and thermal insulation will thus be optimised.

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- Dishwasher and washing machines with the lowest available energy and water-usage consumption rates will be carefully chosen. Water will be recycled, making laundry facilities extremely efficient.
- Laundry dryers will use excess heat from the building to dry linen and table cloths via the heat pumps.
- The north-facing roof will be covered with a photovoltaic solar panel, helping to generate a large amount of power that will be stored in battery banks. The hotel aims to slash its energy usage even further by using the battery banks in case of power cuts, rather than a traditional emergency power generator
- Sport equipment in the gym will be equipped with power-generating devices as a practical learning tool for demonstrating how much work is required to generate a certain amount of electricity.
- Public areas such as lifts, toilets and passages will be equipped with movement-sensor-controlled lighting.
- The hotel kitchen will be fitted with energy-saving induction stoves and energy-efficient appliances and fridges.
- All showers and washing basins in the hotel will be fitted with water-saving taps and shower heads. This and other water saving measures, will reduce the potable water consumption by roughly 50%.
- The concept of “dematerialisation” will be implemented wherever possible. For example: the concrete slabs will utilise void-forming Cobiax spheres while maintaining structural integrity. Introducing the voids will reduce the amount of concrete used and thus the weight of the slabs.
- Rainwater-filter and collection tanks will capture, clean and aerate rainwater during the winter months. This will be used for irrigation and cleaning purposes when rainfall is scarce.
- A jogging trail will be set among a fynbos garden for hotel customers.

The design and construction will not only be as sustainable as possible, but complement sustainable practices during the actual operation of the hotel. The hotel's operations will also include local community involvement and social-upliftment schemes.

Ecolution Consulting's André Harms – who recently returned from Antarctica after heading up the team that managed South Africa's high-tech, eco-minded polar research station between 2009 and 2011 – is responsible for the hotel's entire green concept. Together with a further sustainability consultancy he is leading the entire design team in the project's pursuit of LEED 'Gold' certification. Heinrich Gerstner Harding Architects from Constantia is the leading

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architectural firm for this exciting green property. The project will be managed by Atvantage Project Managers. Stefanutti Stocks has been chosen as the main contractor.

The directors of Dematech, Annemarie and Mario Delicio, strongly believe that going green is the only way for companies to operate on a sustainable basis. We do not only owe it to our environment, but also to future generations who will inherit this planet from us.

Issued by Mario Delicio.

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