



One hotel, one story

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Novotel Auckland Airport: Maori heritage in the heart of a modern hotel

The first hotel located in the airport of New Zealand's largest city, which opened in May 2011, is quite astonishing. The ultra-modern building houses traditional symbols associated with Maori, the country's first inhabitants. At the cutting edge of sustainable development, the hotel was chosen as the pilot venue for the launch of the PLANET 21 program in New Zealand. Between tradition and modernity: a quick look at an innovative and environment-friendly establishment.

From the moment they enter, visitors cannot fail to be struck by the exceptional nature of the hotel. The Living Wall in the lobby, one of the largest in the country, sets the tone, resplendent in native fauna. Later, the eye is drawn to the ornamental leaf of the Tawas tree featured within the public areas; a New Zealand tree symbolizing the fertility and generosity of the natural world. The repeated triangular patterns on the exterior and the ceilings take their inspiration from Aramoana, yet another of the many traditional symbols reproduced in the Novotel Auckland Airport.



Futuristic design

The hotel, which recently celebrated its first anniversary, combines a contemporary structure with deep roots in the country's history. Built on a platform of basalt, a volcanic rock commonly found in New Zealand, it is surrounded by a garden of Pohutukawa trees, a flourishing species recognizable from its bright red flowers. Designed by the New Zealand firm Warren & Mahoney Architects, the massive building structure is remarkable for its glass facade. "*It is a representative of the new design hotels, drawing inspiration from the local environment*" explains its general manager, Paul Columbus. The 263-room hotel, with its sculpted forms and gigantic canopy rising up over the lobby, was specially conceived to recount the fascinating and epic history of the Tainui Maori. Attention to detail is encompassed with the exclusion of all external noise. Aircraft come and go and you would never know due to the glazed insulation cavity that offers both stunning views and a guaranteed good night's sleep.

The Maori Heritage

Novotel Auckland Airport is built in proximity where the Tainui Waka, the canoe carrying the first Tainui Maori migrants, landed, some 800 years ago. The hotel is built on the coastline and its transparent walls reflect the sea and nature, two elements characteristic of the lifestyle of Kiwis, as New Zealanders call themselves. "*All the public area furniture and fittings were crafted by local artisans. The rugs and carpets are entirely woven from New Zealand wool,*" explains the general manager, with pride. The bed heads and curtains feature a wild grass known as Toi Toi. The door handles reproduce the traditional triangular motif, while the steel staircase in the lobby recalls the shape of the Koru fern, which symbolizes rebirth and new life. Rich and promising metaphors for a hotel that welcomes travellers from all over the world.

Respect for nature

The modern hotel features the latest technological advances including the Next concept for its avant-garde and yet practical rooms. While it is full of the latest high-tech details, the hotel is chiefly remarkable for its focus on sustainable development. "*The thinking behind it was to respect the environment,*" confirms Paul Columbus. "*For instance, we use only LED light bulbs, the maple beech wood featured throughout the hotel is sourced from sustainable Southland forests; we will be using harvested rainwater in the near future to irrigate an organic rooftop herb garden; selective waste sorting is standard policy throughout the hotel, and our Chef sources local products wherever possible.*" These high standards obviously reflect Kiwi values. "*New Zealanders have great respect for the outdoors. We take great pride to have been chosen as the pilot venue for PLANET 21 last April. And we have also received several accolades for our contribution to sustainable*

development and architectural design."For instance, in March 2012, the hotel was awarded the sector's best environmental initiative award.



Making travelers' lives easier

The Novotel, located directly adjacent to the Auckland International Airport terminal, takes great care to ensure the first and last impression made upon its guests is a memorable one as they prepare to take off on their journey beyond. It has also hosted high profile visitors such as the former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, businessman Sir Richard Branson and more recently Their Imperial Highnesses the Prince and Princess Hitachi of Japan (brother and sister-in-law of the Emperor of Japan). Ease of access to the departure halls makes travellers' lives easier. *"But it is first and foremost a hotel full of warmth, providing a high level of friendly Kiwi hospitality,"* comments Paul Columbus.

