Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate what attracts guest to resorts and having a destination wedding, while also examining how sustainability is considered to users in these settings. By doing this, this study will determine why people visit these resorts, which aesthetic they enjoy better in lodges and hotels, and what are sustainable solutions they would participate in at these resorts. Since hospitality impacts the environment, it is important that research is conducted on sustainable hospitality experiences. The results of the studies concluded that majority of participants would act on sustainability.

Review of Literature

Destination weddings have always been a popular selection amongst engaged couples in the United States. Because weddings can be a contributor to our waste problem, this study focuses on finding a way to merge these two popular aspects into a guilt-free, waste less wedding experience.

Sustainability

- Sustainability “as a concept contains environmental, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions” (Kim, Barber & Kim, 2019, p. 576-577).
- Feiock et al., (2013) investigates the possibilities of nature-based solutions for more sustainability in the tourism development to protect natural areas. They explain how cites can design a healthier and safer community based on its people and the environment.

Biophilia

- Biophilia is defined as “our inherent human connection to the natural world” (Interface, 2020).
- “Ecological friendly features, such as technology, will/can be used while not pushing away the other demographic characteristics” (Chen, 2015, p. 261). This also ties into our research that showed that 50% of the participants would consider receiving electronic confirmation/bills rather than paper.

The Wedding Experience

- “Carefully utilize elements such as architecture, décor, furnishings and ambience to enhance the guest experience” (Alonso & Ogle, 2008, p. 331).
- Design unique architectural features that can be used as a personalized element for events. (Carter & Duncan, 2016)

Methodology

In order to obtain accurate information regarding sustainable hospitality experiences, a survey and in person interviews were conducted.

Survey:
- Open 24 days
- Distributed through email listserve to students and faculty of North Dakota State University (NDSU)
- Likert scale questions focused on sustainability practices in hospitality
- 290 complete responses

In person interviews:
- 5 individuals interviewed
- 10 scripted questions
- Based off questions that pertained to their wedding experience

Conclusion

Sustainability

- Around 50% of the participants indicated they would reuse towels or consider receiving electronic confirmation rather than paper.
- 23% indicate they would utilize recycling receptacles within guest rooms; while almost 40% indicated they would utilize recycling receptacles within community spaces.

Biophilia

- Only 37% of participants were worried about if sustainability was practiced.
- About 42% preferred everything located within the resort.

The Wedding Experience

- Almost 50% of participants would choose a destination wedding if it was all inclusive or a vacation could be incorporated within the wedding.
- About 20% claimed that the location played an emotional role to them or their spouse.

Demographics

In person interviews (5 couples)
- Recently engaged couple in 2019
- Married in Walker, MN in 2016
- Married at Moon Palace, Cancun in 2006
- Married in the Dominican Republic in 2016
- Married in Maui, Hawaii in 2010
- Over 60% of participants were the ages of 18-25 years old
- Majority of the participants stayed at resorts for vacations

Survey:
- Total Responses: 290
- Male: 69 Female: 214
- Non-Binary: 1
- Prefer Not to Say: 4
- Married in Maui, Hawaii in 2010
- Married at Moon Palace, Cancun in 2006
- Married in the Dominican Republic in 2016
- Over 60% of participants were the ages of 18-25 years old
- Majority of the participants stayed at resorts for vacations

Survey Results

Sustainability

The results showed that people always do the following more often than not during their stay at hotels/resorts:

- Consider receiving electronic confirmation/bill rather than paper: 50.87%
- Utilize recycling receptacles within community spaces: 39.79%
- Utilize a recycling receptacle within the guest rooms: 23.53%
- Utilize refillable shower gels: 39.79%
- Reuse sheets: 48.44%
- Reuse towels: 38.76%
- Reuse napkins: 38.76%

Biophilia

What amenities would entice you to book your event at a hotel/resort?

- Biophilia (Ex. Plant Walls, Natural Woods, Natural Light, Etc.) is incorporated throughout the resort: 38.99%
- Sustainability is practiced: 37.38%
- Sustainable products are incorporated throughout the resort: 39.81%
- Everything is located within the resort: 42.20%

The Wedding Experience

Why would you choose a destination wedding?

- The honeymoon is an amenity when booking the wedding: 39.81%
- All inclusive (all services provided on-site: catering, photography, decorations): 41.28%
- Can host all the wedding events on one site: 44.95%
- A vacation can also be incorporated: 34.86%
- The location plays an emotional role to you or your spouse: 46.39%
- The aesthetic: 19.27%

Citations:

Feiock & Feiock (2008). “Carefully utilize elements such as architecture, décor, furnishings and ambience to enhance the guest experience.”
