

The Royal Yacht brings down its carbon footprint with VDA

The Royal Yacht is a modern, luxury hotel situated in St Helier, Jersey. Founded in the 1820s, it is thought to be the oldest established hotel in St Helier. In 2005, after securing planning permission to build on adjoining land, its owners embarked on a massive refurbishment and extension programme to turn it into an ultra-modern, cutting-edge establishment with the very best facilities and technology. The multi-million project refurbished the existing 34-bedroom hotel and linked it to a magnificent new build, transforming it into a luxury four-star hotel with 110 bedrooms, two penthouse suites, conference rooms and leisure and banqueting facilities - in just 18 months.

With environmental concerns mounting and guests becoming increasingly eco-conscious, the hotel owners also saw the multi-million pound redevelopment as a prime opportunity to focus on the hotel's green credentials and ensure that it was as environmentally friendly as possible in both its design and operation. So the new hotel makes full use of the very latest available technology to keep its carbon footprint as low as possible.

“At Royal Yacht we are making a conscious effort to reduce our carbon footprint. We already used energy efficient-light bulbs and non-toxic cleaning products and promoted waste reduction, for example. But one of our biggest use of resources comes from heating and air-conditioning, which is why we wanted to go a step further with an energy-management system,” explains Nigel Robson, group chief executive of The Royal Yacht.

After reviewing the best technology available, Royal Yacht selected Micromaster from VDA, a specialist provider of hotel systems. Micromaster is a complete intelligent building-management system that can monitor and, importantly for Royal

Yacht, control aspects of a building's energy use. Micromaster considerably enhances energy efficiency by monitoring power consumption in the bedrooms and communal areas and the 'econometer' controls or deactivates electricity or gas supplies as required.

Micromaster allows the hotel to see how much energy it is consuming so assessments can be made to curb inefficient use. The Royal Yacht particularly makes use of Micromaster's door and key entry technology which ensures all lights are turned off when a guest leaves the room. Micromaster's building sensors also ensure that when a guest opens a balcony door in summer, the air-conditioning is programmed automatically to turn off.

Micromaster also allows lights thorough the hotel to be managed centrally and, as it uses convergence technology to link with the back-office and reservation systems, it knows the current, future and predicted occupancy of all rooms and can adjust room temperatures and boiler optimisation accordingly.

“Inefficient use of air conditioning is a huge source of waste,” explains Robson. “That's why the auto-turn off is so important to us. Guests rarely give a thought to their energy consumption when away from home, and left unchecked would unknowingly air condition the world. Micromaster prevents this from happening. And because we can also monitor and control room temperatures from the front desk, should guests request a certain room temperature we can make sure they are kept comfortable in the most environmentally friendly way.”

“Micromaster is the most effective tool on the market for hotels looking to integrate and maximise energy savings,” says Gary Francies, director of VDA. “At Royal Yacht we were involved at the start of the project so we could seamlessly integrate the system straight into the new hotel management systems like the POS, video monitoring and anti-fire systems.”

Robson adds, “One of the things we particularly liked about Micromaster is that it is very easy to use. Everything is centrally managed from one computer and our front-of-house staff have had no problems operating it thanks to the simple touch-screen function. But we also really liked the VDA team. Not only did they offer us great design flexibility but they gave us confidence that they could deliver what they were promising. Since deploying Micromaster we have seen a huge reduction in our energy use and therefore in savings on our energy bills.”

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