

# Waste management on Aruba at Divi Hotel

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## **Interview with the energy manager of Divi Resort Aruba**

On Wednesday 8/11/2017 we had an interview with Javier Sint Jago for the course environmental science. The interview is about the waste management in the Divi resort on Aruba.

Javier's task is to reduce the energy bill for the Divi company. You can think of the lights outside the hotel who are now most LED lights, but also the reduce of the amount of water, gas and waste. He is hired to find solutions for the whole scope of electricity. The Divi resorted took the step-in investing in recycling by hiring Javier because he must reduce energy cost and is the only person in Aruba who is doing this job. Personally, Javier tries to have less as possible waste, he buys everything he could in bigger amounts and avoids projects that he knows beforehand will end in a lot of waste. According to his opinion there are not many recycling opportunities on this island.

The waste management at the Divi is done by using the facilities that ECOTech provides them. They separate the general waste from the carton and oil and at the end they make diesel fuel from that oil. The food waste is collected and given to the local farmers who have pigs. Javier is now working on a project in which they collect plastic at the Divi resort and bring it to a company who is making souvenirs out of it for the guests. The guest normally don't care a lot about the waste management at the hotel because they are on vacation and just want to relax although we see that some guest did participate with this year's beach clean-up.

Javier goal for the future is eventually to have no waste, and he claims that Divi is doing ok. The resort buys everything in big amounts and tries to select companies to work with who are producing in an environmental-friendly way. The ultimate goals: zero waste is ideal, but right now the focus lies on reducing the minimum. This is not always easy because a lot of products are imported and wrapped up in packages. The waste management in Aruba in general is bad, Javier says. He believes they should use the waste as a product of which you can make energy. The best solution for Aruba's future regarding Javier's opinion would be to discard the laws that rules about the monopoly of the energy firm. This basically means that every company can produce energy today, but they are not allowed to sell it. So, if you discard those laws, you would create a lot of business opportunities. In his opinion, the whole system doesn't work right now. Recycling can also make money but he doesn't think the government and the people understands that yet.

## **Interview with the executive chef of Divi Caribbean**

The second interview we did was with Matt Boland, the regional chef of the Caribbean of the Divi resort. His job is to go around to the different Divi resorts in the Caribbean and do different checks from menu items to the kitchen of the hotel. Matt Boland is aware of the amount of waste hotels having in the Caribbean. He personally uses drinking bottles instead of plastic bottles because he considers the plastic bottles as the biggest offender.

He mentioned that the waste management in the Divi resort is done by recycling the cardboard and the food. The cardboard is picked up by ECOTech and the food waste is given to local farmers for their pigs. Plastic and glass are not recycled at the Divi resort although he knows that there is room for improvement on this aspect. Nowadays we are all more aware of the amount of waste we are producing. But we see that the hotel guests are not proposing to recycle because Divi is not giving them the opportunity. If the guest would have the possibility to recycle, they will. When the hotel

doesn't take the initiative itself to act for a better recycle system guests will not propose for it, and Matt is aware of that.

The amount of waste in the future at Divi can be reduced by putting separate bins out so that people start recycling. This initiative should also come from the government because the Arubans are not used to recycling. There should be a proper removal service company and employees who do the recycling in Boland's opinion. The waste management now in Aruba is tragic according to Matt, all the garbage goes to the dump where they mix everything together and harmful fluids probably pile in the sea. A better way of getting rid of the garbage should be taking in consideration but a solution for how to do that is yet not known by Matt Boland.

The desired future image Matt has is being the leader in the Caribbean of recycle initiatives like Aruba is with solar power and with the economy. Matt claims that Aruba is a great organised island and a leader in the whole Caribbean. Leadership should be taking in recycling, reducing plastic and a lot more. The obstacle Aruba faces is that introducing recycling brings a change in habit to the population and issues about money. The minimum wage in Aruba is not much, so recycling must be accessible and affordable, it should be government initiative.

As far as Matt knows there has not been invested a lot in waste management but he says that there is absolutely room for improvement. Divi will bring changes to their waste management and this will improve community wise.