



ACORN HOUSE

Going green with panache

Acorn House is eco-friendly, and then some. Its green credentials are more lush and verdant than any restaurant has ever been, and it represents a wake-up call to the wastefulness of the hospitality sector, with a message that's right without being righteous.

After you've read this article, we'd like you to recycle this edition of *THEME* and plant a tree to offset the carbon produced in printing and transporting it to you. No kidding, really – Acorn House properly makes you question your own contribution to global warming.

Every aspect of the place, from its menu, its supply chain, the way it handles waste, its furniture – damn it, even the paint on the walls – is environmentally friendly. And it's no twee, rustic, yokel-style place either, but a serious restaurant that sets out to be easy on the planet, easy on the eye, helpful to the local economy through a Jamie Oliver-style apprenticeship scheme, and to make money – with no compromise in the quality of the food.

And it's not just 'organic', oh no. (Organic green beans flown from New Zealand have a carbon footprint the size of Wales). Better to call it ethical.

It has pledged never to use air freight, instead relying on bio-diesel fuelled trucks, rail, and for suppliers

further afield, shipping. It uses local, small producers for seasonal produce, refuses to use industrial animal farming techniques and its electricity comes from wind farms. It serves purified tap water, and a fizzy bottled water whose profits go to charity. All of its waste is recycled, there's a worm farm to help digest compostable waste, all packaging is either recyclable or can be sent back to suppliers.

From a design perspective, architects Waugh Thistleton provided only fixtures and fittings that were either recycled, recyclable or sustainable. Its resin floor from Altro is guaranteed for 10 years and can be recycled.

Inova sourced tables by Johanson Design made from sustainable Swedish forests, and its recyclable plastic Italian chairs conform to ISO 14001, a new environmental standard which makes Arper expects could form part of an environmental declaration on every new product in the future.

There are other nice touches. If you can't walk home or get the tube, there's an arrangement with a bio-diesel taxi firm to ferry you back; it offers fruit to nibble on the way; and the cardboard matchbooks contain seeds so you further offset your own carbon footprint.

The whole point is that while some restaurants may do