

**Niki Leondakis on Kimpton Hotels' Great Green Program  
Vok Dams Revs Up Vegas for a Lamborghini Launch**

# SPECIAL<sup>®</sup> EVENTS

**NOVEMBER 2008**



## HO-HUM HOTEL? HARDLY.

SEXY, SOPHISTICATED AND ANYTHING BUT ORDINARY,  
HOTEL EVENT SPACES SHOW SOME CHARACTER. P. 31

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## EDITOR'S PAGE

# GOT GREEN?

**Our November edition** brings you articles we traditionally run—our cover story on exciting hotel event spaces, our annual hotel event forecast. But this issue has a special feature: a focus on eco-friendly event trends.

Now, be honest—does seeing another story on greening make you rejoice or roll your eyes?

Lori Hill, a special event pro in Burtonsville, Md., who greens every aspect of events she can, says her commitment sometimes brings eye rolls from her clients.

I know that's true. I know talented event pros who think the current eco focus is a mix of faddishness and fuzzy thinking. Dallas-based event pro Steve Kemble tells of an eco-earnest bride he worked with recently who thought she could add an environmentally friendly element to her wedding by asking all the guests to dress in green-colored clothing.

Some event pros find the eco approach faintly annoying. A special event is a Grand Marnier cake, not a rice cake. A special event is exciting. Source-separating solid waste is not.

Making the situation worse is the hypocrisy of businesses that claim to be eco-friendly but actually do little. Greenwashing, as it's often called, gives the whole green movement a black eye.

For those who still doubt that going green is good business, turn to page 20 for our interview with Kimpton Hotels chief operating officer Niki Leondakis. Her company is widely recognized as a leader in eco-conscious operations, and she can back it up on the bottom line.

We look at green practices in all event disciplines in the feature beginning on page 37. Part of what is daunting about going green is that the task seems immense. But as anyone who ever tried to save money or lose weight knows, it's better to start small than do nothing at all.

One of the toughest arguments to counter about going green is that it means extra effort and costs, a lot to ask for in tough economic times. But tough times make us run a tight ship, and that's much of what eco-friendly operations are about. As Clayton Frech, vice president of sustainability and operations for Los Angeles-based party rental giant Classic Party Rentals, told me, "Many times an industry has been forced through regulation or other means to make a change for environmental reasons, but ended up saving significant money. Often when you start reworking systems and processes, you find redundancy and waste in places you didn't intend to."

You're welcome to join our new social networking site for greening special events. Just visit [specialevents.com/green\\_talk](http://specialevents.com/green_talk).

*Lisa Hurlay*

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