



Urbis magazine August 07 Apartments Kakera list in world 8 best eco resorts

Vigilius, Italy
www.vigilius.it
 Architect Matteo Thun (personal motto: "eco not ego") is renowned for his technically adventurous structures that remain sympathetic to the surroundings. When he designed Vigilius in the South Tyrolean Dolomites, his inspiration was the idea of a fallen tree that would continue to give back to its environment.
 Reached by a seven-minute cable car ride from the carpark, the resort is perched on a mountainside 1500m above sea level. Surrounded by larchwood forest and boasting panoramic mountain views, guests report that the air is tangibly cleaner and more invigorating than anywhere in Europe. Aside from this and the coolly minimalist architecture, most come here for the health benefits, including unusual sounding spa treatments like alpine whirling, hay baths or watsu; and more indulgent feed up at either of the top-notch restaurants or hire Ferraris to take tours of the nearby vineyards.
Greenie points: local renewable building materials, ecologically-sound heating and plumbing solutions like the CO2-neutral bio-mass plant, aesthetically sensitive architecture.

Apartments Kakera, Cook Islands
www.apartmentskakera.com
 Set between a pacific lagoon and mountains swathed in mist and rainforest, these recently opened apartments are modern and plush, but with an eco bent. Owners Melinda and Andrew Ponga reckon they spent ages "climbing trees and lying around the land to find out where the wind, sun and moon travelled on its path," in order to minimise energy use and reliance on air-conditioning.
 Naturally ventilated and insulated, apartment Pepe has one-bedroom and the slightly larger Ra has two. Both have their own plunge pools, sunny courtyards, views, lounge areas, and modern, spacious kitchens. Next to one of Rarotonga's most popular beaches, there's also a warm, safe lagoon for snorkeling. islands to wade out to and a well-stocked town nearby. Melinda runs a spa offering everything from haircuts to full wedding makeup, and regular yoga retreats.
Greenie points: Recycled roofing and wall-cladding, natural ventilation, organic gardens, biodegradable cleaning and beauty products, bio bacterial septic tanks, recycling.

Chongwe River Camp, Zambia
www.chongwe-river.com
 In the Lower Zambezi National Park, the elephants far outnumber the people and the family-run Chongwe River Camp is in prime viewing position. Herds of them regularly graze on the seed pods dropped by the thick grove of Winterthorn Acacias next to the camp, and the Chongwe River that borders the camp is one of the main sources of drinking water for big game animals. The camp has a non-intrusive policy towards enjoying the wildlife, meaning the animals have right of way and the fishing is on a strictly catch-and-release basis. Guided walks and canoe trips are the preferred means of safari, and camp staff will arrange gourmet picnics in even the remotest of spots.
 Stay in a cluster of comfy Mulati tents underneath the a canopy of trees or rent the private Flintstones-esque River House. With hardly a straight line to be seen, it features hand-carved basins and taps, open-air bathrooms with waterfall showers, tunnels to the bedrooms and furniture carved from a single fallen tree.
Greenie points: non-obtrusive methods of wildlife safari, catch-and-release fishing, locally-sourced natural building materials.