

# THE BIG CHALLENGE OF A SMALL B&B



## INTERVIEW WITH **ARIELLA KRISTIANSON**

Interview by Bluebook srl

### CASE STUDY: ACCOMODATION

I have lived here for twelve years and my business, Verdmont, is a small bed and breakfast that has grown over the last nine to ten years. One of our guiding principles is to try to be as inconspicuous as possible. That way, when people go on holiday they can be sure that they don't cause any further problems for the environment.

Photo by Ariella Kristianson at Verdmont



Solar panels, solar thermal  
LED lights, heat pump  
80% reduction of emissions  
Collection of rainwater  
Environmentally friendly detergents  
Biodiversity protection



## WHAT ACTIONS HAVE YOU TAKEN FOR ENERGY MANAGEMENT?

Our biggest investments have been in this field. Over the past ten years we have used solar panels to cover a large part of our energy consumption, but to reduce the energy impact in all rooms, we have also implemented solar thermal. Of course, we have reduced energy consumption with LED bulbs and by using solar also for lighting in the garden. Another decision we made for winter heating was to install a heat pump, which means we reduced our emissions by 80 per cent because it is super-efficient and a great way to heat. As far as energy is concerned, we also offer charging for electric vehicles.

## WHAT ABOUT WATER MANAGEMENT?

Water management is more complicated in an old building because if it is a new building, you can build a system to collect rainwater and greywater and recycle it. We had to modify our house a bit, so we rethought a system in which at least three bathrooms can use rainwater and grey water from the laundry - because a hotel laundry is huge and consumes a lot of water. So we made a system to collect the water and use it only for flushing and irrigation. Of course, we use environmentally friendly detergents with a very low impact, so there is no danger to irrigation; they don't harm the plants at all. We also have a large water collection system, which is also used for the pool in case of emergencies, when it cannot be topped up due to lack of water. The other thing we did was to install a small pond. In a way, it serves to collect water, because it collects rainwater from the roof, but another important aspect is biodiversity. This is not directly related to saving water, but it certainly helps the other aspect which is the naturalisation of our environment

## WHAT ABOUT FURNITURE AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN?

Each room is individually furnished, they are all very different. Most of the pieces are second-hand and recuperated. If we cannot buy second-hand we try to make sure it is environmentally friendly, well made, designed to last or repairable. These are the main principles we consider with regard to furniture.

Regarding the supply chain, I would say that the most important thing for us is the food. When we prepare food, when we make pasta and pizza, we try to use local suppliers for all things, like flour and fruit. We always go to the organic market to buy from local farmers; there are some items that are really hard to get, but we always try to put local first. Besides, the organic farmers' market is a nice thing to be a part of. Once you get to know them, they put aside what you need and the next time they ask: "We have this now, do you want it?". So, in a way, it makes things a bit easier for lazy people; once you've made the effort to make that change. Of course, for most people, it is probably easier to go to the supermarket. But from a philosophical point of view, I think that helping small suppliers is more important, supermarkets will manage.

## A MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WILL WORK IN THIS SECTOR

I think that in general, in all sectors, we are in an era of change, so I would say that the most important thing is to become aware of these issues, such as circularity and sustainability. Once that awareness is created, do not be afraid to talk and act on it, because there are a lot of people who may have invested in their business and never considered this as something to invest in, maybe they never thought that this is a change they should make. So I think the real value of young people, at least from my point of view, is that they can bring new perspectives and energy to bring about the necessary changes. This is a big challenge and, I think, the main problem is that many people have not yet thought that they need to change. So a young person is the perfect person to lead organisations forward, also because young people are the ones who will benefit the most from this change.

Verdmont venue

