Beat: Lifestyle

Mission Hills Wins 2016 National Geographic World Legacy Award

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USPA NEWS - [Shenzhen] Mission Hills China was announced as the global winner in the Earth Changers Category of the 2016 National Geographic World Legacy Awards at the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest travel industry gathering in the world.

“Mission Hills has clearly demonstrated itself to be at the forefront of sustainable tourism development among large hospitality resorts in China. “The judges were particularly impressed with Mission Hills´ sustainable operations across their three resorts, including a Green Practices Manual and educational displays and programs for Chinese guests and international visitors to learn about the importance of biodiversity conservation, including rare and endangered species such as rhinos and elephant,“ said Costas Christ, editor-at-large for National Geographic Traveler magazine and chairman of the World Legacy Awards.

In addition to the award, announced this week in Berlin, the group´s flagship resort, Mission Hills Haikou, became GEO Certified®, golf´s international and third party audited eco-label, in 2015, and they also won the 2016 IAGTO Sustainable Golf Course of the Year Award for Asia Region.The World Legacy Awards, Mission Hills´ latest accolade, are a partnership between National Geographic Partners, a joint venture between National Geographic Society and 21st Century Fox, and ITB Berlin, the global travel industry's leading trade show.

The World Legacy Awards showcase the leading travel and tourism companies, organisations and destinations that are driving the sustainable tourism transformation of the travel industry based on National Geographic´s work of inspiring people to care about the planet.

Mission Hill were amongst 100 entries from 51 countries across the world which were reviewed by an independent international panel of 23 judges coordinated by National Geographic Traveler magazine. The 15 award finalists all underwent a rigorous on-site judging inspection.

The Earth Changers category won by Mission Hills recognizes cutting-edge leadership in environmentally friendly business practices and green technology, from renewable energy and water conservation to zero-waste systems and carbon-emission reduction.The Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the Honourable Taleb Rifai, gave the keynote address at the World Legacy Awards Ceremony, during which he called upon the global tourism industry to support sustainable tourism.

Upon receiving the award on stage in Berlin, a National Geographic video about Mission Hills described the company as a leader in advancing sustainable tourism and green operations, including establishing a high-tech field station for monitoring air quality and climate change impacts. Mission Hills was also identified as being among the first resort companies in China to ban shark fin, while also helping to educate Chinese travelers and the Chinese tourism industry on sustainable best practices.

Ken Chu, Chairman and CEO of Mission Hills said, “At Mission Hills we focus on being the positive change in China that we believe is needed for tourism to deliver prosperity for our people and a greener future for the world. We set out to advance green operations at our resorts by embracing sustainable tourism practices. This includes building awareness among Chinese travelers, local authorities and travel businesses on how tourism, when planned properly, can help to protect the environment. We are honored to be recognized by such a world-renowned organization as National Geographic, and it shows we are on the right path and inspires us to do even more.“

China is one of the largest travel markets in the World. It is a challenge to accommodate increasing demand for travel while reducing pressure on resources, ensuring socio-economic development and wellbeing, and addressing climate change, water scarcity, poverty reduction, and community engagement. Mission Hills´ example is especially important to demonstrate to the rest of China the importance of sustainable best practices, and that a business can be successful and also responsible.

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